



BERKELEY DIVISION

March 8, 2017

This is the final report of the Task Force on the Professional Status of Librarians at Berkeley, which—under LAUC-B Executive Committee (hereafter ExComm) 2015-16 (I-Wei Wang, Chair)—was charged with undertaking fact-finding and providing recommendations to ExComm relating to the status of professional librarianship at UC Berkeley in light of recent hiring and work assignment practices in the Librarian series.¹ Members of the Task Force were Lynn Jones (Chair), Lillian Castillo-Speed, Jesse Silva, and Christina Tarr.

We are sharing the report because we believe that the important professional themes, trends, and insights that it discusses are of interest and benefit to all LAUC-B members. In your consideration of the report, you are encouraged to bear in mind the essential functions of LAUC, as an official unit of the University, to advise the University on matters of the “professional standards, rights, privileges, and obligations of members of the Librarian Series” and “to promote full use of UC librarians’ professional abilities.”

Although ExComm is not endorsing all of the recommendations listed in the Task Force’s report, we are committed to supporting librarians at Berkeley who wish to grow as professionals, develop opportunities for leadership, and be respected as experts and decision-makers in their fields. To those ends, ExComm has approved the following steps based on the recommendations of the report:

- Charge relevant LAUC-B committees with developing a mentorship program to offer career coaching and mentoring to librarians, at any stage of their careers, who would like support or guidance in developing their own plans for increasing leadership opportunities at work and beyond.
- Instruct CAPA to continue to emphasize the librarian’s personal responsibility to seek leadership opportunities at work and beyond during their annual workshop.
- Instruct CAPA to continue to offer an annual workshop specifically for review initiators, emphasizing the importance of encouraging professional activity and leadership among librarians.
- Advise the University Librarian and Library Leadership Team on national trends within technical services and other library functions, which view librarians as “decision-makers, trainers, and supervisors,” both in their daily work and in their contributions to the profession. This perception should be top of mind both in hiring decisions and in providing training opportunities for librarians already at Berkeley.

With the distribution of this report, ExComm would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude to the Task Force for their hard work and thoughtful execution of their charge.

Jennifer Nelson
LAUC-B Chair, on behalf of ExComm

¹ Full charge at this link:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/sites/drupal7.lib.berkeley.edu.LAUC/files/2016TFProfStatusLibsAtBerkeley.pdf>

Report on the Professional Status of Cataloging and Metadata Librarians at Berkeley

November 2016

Introduction

In 2016 the Executive Committee of LAUC-B learned of concerns from the membership regarding the professional status of cataloging librarians at Berkeley. Specifically, LAUC-B noted several trends that negatively affect career advancement and retention of Berkeley librarians, morale and professional development opportunities for librarians, the relationship between Librarian series and non-series personnel, and, potentially, the national reputation of Berkeley librarians and our standing as leaders in the profession.

These trends include:

- Reduction in the number of professional librarians in cataloging and metadata work
- Devolution of job functions, resulting in non-Librarian series personnel taking on job functions formerly assigned to librarians
- Reduced opportunities for professional development required by the Academic Personnel Manual

The Chair of LAUC-B charged a task group to investigate these trends in the area of Cataloging and Metadata Services, where changes have been the most apparent.

According to APM 360, Appendix B “The Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC) shall advise the Office of the President, campus administration, and library administration on the operations and policies of the libraries; on professional standards, rights, privileges and obligations of members of the librarian series of the University of California; and on the planning, evaluation, and implementation of programs, services or technological changes in the libraries of the University.” It is with this responsibility in mind that the following report is presented.

Findings

Literature Review

The task force consulted a selection of articles on changes in technical services and the role of cataloging librarians, in order to document trends. See Appendix 1: Bibliography

The professional status of librarians has long been a topic of concern in librarianship. The UC system, however, has considered librarians as professional staff since 1962, when Clark Kerr approved the recommendation of Library Council to recognize librarians as academic appointees, governed by the APM (Horn 1995). Though cataloging was once viewed as perhaps the apex of the profession in terms of specialized skills, concerns over the role and future of technical services librarians have been documented in the library literature since the 1970s, with the earliest library computing efforts.

The **reduction of cataloging librarians** and staff nationwide is well documented. Wells (2003) surveyed technical services units at selected public universities in the Southeast to determine the impact on their staffing and operations. “Over 60 percent of the respondents had lost technical services positions, with cataloging being particularly affected. Departmental reorganization and shifting of work from professional to paraprofessional positions were the predominant ways of dealing with the losses.”

There is a consensus that technical services **librarians should be focused on management and decision-making**, as well as the most challenging original cataloging, since automation, outsourcing, loss of professional cataloging jobs and the increasing use of paraprofessionals for original cataloging have changed the role of librarians. “The professional’s job is to ensure that tasks which fall under their purview are performed to the appropriate professional standards. Professionals are decision-makers, trainers and supervisors. They decide how tasks are to be performed, and by whom. They evaluate and reevaluate the work which takes place in their units and how this work effects the library as a whole. They define standards, set goals, design systems, initiate and tweak workflow.” (Grenci 2000).

Librarian jobs in technical services are changing rapidly due to technology. **Librarians in technical services must learn new technologies and participate in trends in metadata management** such as “involvement in non-MARC metadata cataloging, work with institutional repositories, creating access to unique local library collections, and reviewing vendor records for batch loading into the library’s catalog. (Boydston 2014)

“Contributions [of professional catalogers] will include but are not limited to: creating non-MARC metadata using a variety of schemas, mapping among various metadata schemas, reviewing and analyzing data, identifying strategies for extending and reusing existing metadata, creating and maintaining documentation; as well as collaborating to develop cost-effective, efficient best practices.” (Riemer 2009)

This trend has been made visible by the many Cataloging Departments that have renamed themselves with the word “metadata” (Davis 2015).

Survey of peer institutions

We interviewed heads of technical services at Stanford, Yale, Michigan, UT Austin, Illinois, Washington, Davis, and UCLA. We also interviewed librarians in Berkeley’s Catalog and Metadata Services department. Harvard and Ohio State did not respond to the survey request. See Appendix 2: Survey Questions and Appendix 3: Survey Responses.

Responses to our survey confirmed the trends documented in the literature review. At the request of our respondents, comments have been anonymized.

Fewer professional catalogers are being hired. Despite the ongoing reduction of the size of technical services departments, our peer institutions have ratios of between 1 librarian to 1.5 non-librarians to as low as 1 librarian to 4 non-librarians. Most seem to have ratios closer to 1 librarian to 2 non-librarians.

New skills and expectations. Librarians are moving into project management and planning, cataloging new formats, using RDA [Resource Description and Access] standards, developing linked data and metadata schemes, while there is continuing increased use of non-professional staff to perform

original cataloging. *“Librarians in tech services main responsibility is training, software evaluation, planning and evaluating services/workflows, library committee work. Librarians in technical services do less original cataloging and have shifted their work to bigger picture issues (more of the brains of the department, not the productivity). Librarians also work in new areas for technical services: data, archives, digital collections, etc. Librarians also manage classified staff, and are coordinators of their work. Non-librarian staff do the cataloging, including original, and many of the other clerical functions in the department.” “[Librarians are] trusted as professionals, [we] expect them to be independent. Expect [them] to fully understand trends, interpret them for staff, consult with them on how to implement trends. [We] expect them to be leaders and trainers and experts.”*

Professional development. Our peer libraries recognize and expect ongoing professional development and participation in professional activities outside the primary job responsibilities. Because of the focus on learning new skills, professional development is encouraged, not limited. Our peers tell us that librarians in technical services are active at the state, regional and national levels. They take webinars and classes to develop new skills. **Four peer institutions set aside fixed percentages of work time for professional development, because it is expected of professionals for their advancement.** *“[we] Need to be very clear that there can be many problems if approval falls under the guise of “departmental discretion” because departmental discretion can vary widely depending on who the department head is. Unless there have been previous issues, professionals should be trusted to make the choices that are right for them, their work, and the needs of the Library.”*

Professional development such as participation in conferences and leadership in national committees such as RDA documentation and development, subject terminology, RBMS, and NISO are encouraged. These are considered part of the librarian’s job responsibilities, which must be managed along with the core responsibilities. *“...librarians have attended training sessions on RDA, CONSER, etc. Whatever librarians attend, they must report back what they learn and could possibly implement at our library. Librarians are allowed to do their outside committee work during normal work time.”*

Peer libraries offer in-house training as well. *“There are also division funds to do local trainings. Local trainings have included NACO, LC subject headings, metadata schemas, and Python training. Individual training has included BIBFRAME, MARC edit, project management classes, Ruby on Rails, Python.”*

Assessment of technical services librarians’ work is handled differently than that of non-professionals. There is explicit recognition that librarians do not catalog for 8 hours a day. Our peer libraries consider it inappropriate to enforce production quotas on professional librarians. Libraries have devised various productivity guidelines: *“Measure of work is based on projects (cataloging sets, collections with a deadline that is negotiated with the selector, implementing a new service). Were the projects completed in the agreed upon timeframe? How well was the work done, etc.? The catalog records statistics and these are reviewed only if there is evidence of a problem.”* The view of most is that professionals should be supervised by, and their work reported to, another professional librarian.

Recommendations

The Task Force urges Library Administration to note these trends in technical services, and to bear in mind how peer institutions are addressing them.

Advancement and promotion in the UC librarian series is predicated on professional activity beyond the primary job responsibility, especially at the higher levels of the series.

The APM states, "Evidence of professional competence and effective service may include, but is not limited to, the opinions of professional colleagues, particularly those who work closely or continuously with the appointee; the opinions of faculty members, students, or other members of the University community as to the quality of a collection developed, for example, or the technical or public service provided by the candidate; the opinions of librarians outside the University who function in the same specialty as the candidate; the effectiveness of the techniques applied or procedures developed by the candidate; and relevant additional educational achievement, including programs of advanced study or courses taken toward improvement of language or subject knowledge."

Without opportunities for professional development, collaboration with colleagues in the profession, and the exercise of new skills, librarians in technical services are unable to advance and develop their careers as professionals, to the detriment of the Berkeley Library, the profession, and personally.

APM 360 states, "Promotion shall be justified by demonstrated superior professional skills and achievement and, in addition, growing competence and contribution to the candidate's position, and/or the assumption of increased responsibility..." Thus, it is expected that librarians as professionals will willingly accept greater leadership roles as they grow in their careers, with the support and encouragement of the supervisor and administration.

LAUC-B Executive Committee and CAPA must support our colleagues in exercising the rights and responsibilities of professionals, including encouraging our colleagues to show initiative in determining their own professional development and career paths. The need for career self-direction by librarians should be emphasized at the annual Peer Review workshop.

LAUC-B must work with Library Administration and managers to ensure conformance to APM in appointment, advancement and promotion, which states "The University of California recognizes professional development of librarians as beneficial to the individual, the libraries, and the University. Professional development opportunities contribute to the professional growth of the librarian, enabling greater effectiveness as academic appointees and thus enhancing her/his service to the University."

1. ExComm should meet and discuss the report with the University Librarian, and should ask him to publicly endorse the professional role and responsibilities of librarians. This should include requiring all supervisors of librarians to encourage professional activity among librarians.
2. Library Administration, including AULs and division heads, must encourage librarians to take on leadership roles at work and beyond.
3. Library Administration should not deprofessionalize Berkeley's cataloging and metadata work by declining to hire librarians for positions in these areas.
4. As professionals, librarians should not report to, or have their work evaluated by, persons outside the librarian series, except for temporary reasons such as training.
5. LAUC-B should offer career coaching and mentoring to any librarian who feels stymied in his/her career, offering to help develop plans to increase his/her leadership opportunities at work and beyond.

6. The annual CAPA workshop on review should emphasize the librarian's personal responsibility to seek leadership opportunities at work and beyond.
7. An annual CAPA workshop specifically for supervisors of librarians is a good idea. Library administration should ensure that all supervisors of librarians attend.

Conclusion

Technical services are changing in university libraries due to external forces such as reduced funding, and trends in information technology, production and management. Academic libraries are dealing with these changes in several ways, including staff reductions and reorganizations, as is Berkeley. However this task force found several strategies that Berkeley has pursued differently than our peers, trends that negatively affect career advancement and retention of Berkeley librarians, morale and professional development opportunities for librarians, the relationship between Librarian series and non-series personnel, and, potentially, the national reputation of Berkeley librarians and our standing as leaders in the profession.

The Library's draft Strategic Plan asserts the need to "Prepare, support, train and recruit a diverse and engaged staff in anticipation of the Library's strategic priorities," with an emphasis on, "learning and professional development opportunities that support the strategic directions of the library.... And to optimize opportunities for growth, leadership and new work experiences across the library."

Berkeley should not miss the opportunity to attract and retain professional librarians in technical services who can creatively contribute to initiatives identified in the latest draft Library Strategic Plan, which states that the Library needs to "develop new strategies to sustain metadata creation and material curation... Study metadata needs and uses to inform system design; address persistent metadata quality issues impacting access," the very activities technical services librarians at other universities are growing towards, but our librarians have not been involved in.

The task force also urges Berkeley librarians to continue to assert their roles as professionals by taking every opportunity to demonstrate creativity and leadership in their work and insisting on the rights and responsibilities outlined in the Academic Personnel Manual.

Respectfully submitted,

LAUC-B Task Force on the Professional Status of Librarians at Berkeley

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Appendix 1: Bibliography

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Appendix 2: Survey Questions

1. What is the number of librarians and non-librarians in your technical services (cataloging department) (not including student assistants)?
2. Can you provide some example of professional development activities that your librarians participate in? Are librarians in the department limited in what professional development activities they can participate in? [This may be affected by how librarians in these institutions are evaluated]
3. What quantifiable measurements of individual productivity do you keep? Are librarians required to meet a quota of cataloged items/processed items or other quantifiable accomplishments?
4. What are the performance expectations of librarians in technical services vs. staff in technical services?
5. Are technical services librarians treated as professional librarians to the same extent that public services librarians are?
6. What national trends are you seeing with respect to librarians in technical services? How does this play out at your institution?
7. Can you send us a current organizational chart for your department?
8. Can you send us a cataloger librarian job description?
9. What would you say is the major complaint of librarians in tech services regarding their work environment?

Appendix 3: Survey Responses

Responses have been anonymized at the request of the respondents.

What is the number of librarians and non-librarians in your technical services (cataloging department) (not-including student assistants)?

TS (acq. + cat) 10 librarians, 46 non-professionals

12 professionals & 17 non-librarians

6 professionals, 10 staff, in cataloging/metadata services. Currently being reorged so these numbers may change by December

Complicated. Cataloging and metadata creation happens in many units in the Library. Copy cataloging can happen in acquisitions. 3 levels of staffing in the library: 5 Librarians, 6 academic professionals (most hold mls, but do not do the tenure process), 30 fte civil service.

Complicated: some cataloging is done by Acquisitions Unit. 15 professional cataloger positions are empty at the moment. 6.5 FTE non-librarians working, but Acquisitions has 10 FTE. In practice the cataloger positions will have MLS but the job descriptions don't require it.

3 units. Cataloging & Metadata has 16 professionals (plus 1 vacancy) and 24 cataloging assistants. Acquisitions has 4 professionals and 20 cataloging assistants plus 2 vacancies). Electronic Resources has 2 professionals and 3 support staff (clerical).

11 librarians/20 paraprofessionals

5 in TS; 4 librarians in metadata (including her) -- cataloging 11 support staff (some part time)

5 librarians, 13 non, roughly, though many hired as staff do have MLIS degrees

Professional development activities?

participation in conferences -- travel, nat'l committees, rda documentation and development, subject terms, rbms, niso -- pretty active; supported at least with time-- part of job responsibilities -- must also manage core responsibilities.

Librarians have a conversation with their supervisor and develop a strategy for professional service activities, based on what they are interested in. Need to be very clear that there can be many problems if approval falls under the guise of "departmental discretion" because departmental discretion can vary widely depending on who the department head is. Unless there have been previous issues, professionals should be trusted to make the choices that are right for them, their work, and the needs of the Library.

Activities they have approved: music cataloger attends music librarian's conference; other librarians have attended training sessions on RDA, CONSER, etc. Whatever librarians attend, they must report back what they learn and could possibly implement at our library. Librarians are allowed to do their outside committee work during normal work time.

Other than funding, no limits on what librarians can participate in. Librarians are allotted \$2000/yr for professional development and its up to the librarian to choose what to participate in with regards to their review process. There are also division funds to do local trainings. Local trainings have included NACO, LC subject headings, metadata schemas, and Python training.

Individual—bibframe, MARCedit, project management classes, ruby on rails, python. Librarians attend various conferences depending on their interests.

Attend conferences in their specialties, also attend webinars and take Library Juice classes. XML & RDA classes. There is \$ from the University for professional development. If they need more, e.g., to take a language class, they ask for it. A percentage of time is set aside for librarians for their own projects.

Not limited. Active in state, regional and national. Lots of seminars, webinars. Can take classes and there is \$ available if job-related. Even if not job-related, can get release time for classes. Some teach at nearby library schools--as long as no interference with job.

Not limited. Active in state, regional and national. Lots of classes, webinars. Active staff development committee in library.

One is past president of MLA, CLA, LAX, SAA -- presentations, attend meetings, very active. Fortunately know how to balance. She would never tell them not to do something, but might give advice. Principle of review -- importance of primary job, then have to do other activities. Shouldn't over commit. Attend a couple meetings -- make sense. Others know how to balance -- librarians also show professional judgement in being able to balance primary job and professional activities. That is part of what they are evaluated on.

Measurements of individual productivity?

No quotas -- production goals. Librarians -- 100 per month. For those who are more focused on original, they may not reach that goal. Rare book cataloger is also NACO coordinator -- she's not doing 100. Time and flexibility required.

We expect cataloging librarians to complete 1 original (MARC) cataloging records in one hour per title or less, for the time that's available for cataloging.

Measure of work is based on projects (catalog sets, collections with a deadline that is negotiated with the selector, implementing a new service). Were the projects completed in the agreed upon timeframe? How well was the work done, etc. The catalog records statistics and these are reviewed only if there is evidence of a problem.

"Quantitative data collection is a huge source of demoralization." xxx keeps cataloging statistics (original, record work, modifications, etc), but do not use a quota system for staff or librarians as a general rule. Quotas are used for those who are underperforming, and have only been used a couple times in her 7 years.

No quotas. They do have suggestions: 7 original catalog items per day for librarians. Copy catalogers: 20-30/day. No one is evaluated by this alone however.

Indiv. stats are kept. Not exactly a quota. They may have their own internal quota system, but it's not set by the dept.

No defined quotas. Monthly statistics of the unit are kept.

No quantifiable measurements. But they do pay attention to productivity, but not through quotas.

No quota per se -- but work is tracked. Productivity tracked for UCOP stats, so does see who is productive. If number is low, does ask. Average -- don't spend more than two hours on anything. Non-librarian staff has more restrictions -- we should all have some restrictions. Expects that librarians will balance workload with other things. Does take into account time spent with other projects -- transition. Reasonable but give expectation

Performance expectations of librarians in technical services vs. staff in technical services?

Everyone has own job description -- staff has different expectations, but process the same

Everyone has own job description -- staff has different expectations, but process the same

Librarians in tech services main responsibility is training, software evaluation, planning and evaluating services/workflows, library committee work. Librarians in technical services do very little cataloging and have shifted their work to bigger picture issues (more of the brains of the department, not the productivity). Librarians also work in new areas for technical services: data, archives, digital collections, etc. Librarians also manage classified staff, and are coordinators of their work. Non-librarian staff do the cataloging, including original, and many of the other clerical functions in the department.

Librarians do original cataloging, in addition to all the requirements for tenure and promotion. Two categories for library specialists: Sr. Library specialist can do original cataloging, Library specialists do copy cataloging. Some civil service staff do foreign language cataloging depending on their skill levels and may do some original cataloging, but as a rule only do copy cataloging.

That they act like professionals, go to meetings., including university-wide. Only librarians do original cataloging. Librarians are exempt, while other staff are non-exempt. Librarians can work later hours and may be expected to do so. Staff are more productivity oriented.

Defined in job descriptions. Non-professional staff process the bulk of the materials. Some professionals do some of that work if necessary. Non-professional staff is unionized and salary is not directly limited to performance. (Librarians are not unionized.)

Everyone follows the rules of the personnel system they're in. Paraprofessionals work 40 hrs. Librarians expected to work until the work is done.

Different expectations -- trusted as professionals, expect them to be independent. Expect to fully understand trends, interpret them for staff, consult with her on how to implement trends. Expects them to be leaders and trainers and experts

Are Technical Services librarians treated as professional librarians to the same extent as Public Services librarians?

Individually, librarians might say no -- has to do with type of work we do. We don't have faculty contacts. They work outside library. What we do is routine. New ideas are not small one-off things. Our customers are internal. Challenging to let TS librarians be evaluated for what they do, when it's so internal.

Yes.

This is an issue and has been for many years. There is a major advocacy problem with technical services librarians. They need to take responsibility for publicizing the impact of their work and advocate for recognition. Technical services folks need to stand and speak for themselves and separate any myths, rumors, etc from the facts. There are some good examples of TS units being involved in high profile projects: University of Houston—Technical Services is responsible for RDM, the institutional repository, and a few other high profile projects that fall outside traditional technical services but which technical services can play a major role.

Yes. Some folks have raised issues of technical services do their job 40 hours/week while public services folks don't spend 40 hours/week with the public. Librarians have full opportunity to work on all library committees, participate in shared governance issues, etc.

Yes.

Theoretically, yes. But when it comes to promotion review process, there are fewer opportunities for tech services librarians. But they are trying to make that a little more equitable--so more tech services jobs qualify for performance evaluation. They may feel they are a bit underappreciated and not acknowledged.

Yes.

Doesn't know because hasn't supervised PS librarians

What national trends are you seeing with respect to librarians in technical services? How do these play out at your institution?

Professional cataloging positions dwindling; music librarianship dwindling more -- Those positions are not refilled. Music library now not building with rare materials. Archival units are building up. At our library we are starting to collect papers. Researchers are asking for this -- Lots more archives stuff. But special collections won't take this stuff.

[This library] has implemented some of the trends found in the literature (dept name change, librarians moving away from cataloging, etc), but not all

Librarians in technical services are encouraged to identify and participate in national trends. They have participated in staffing change planning (including reorg), linked data, and are currently in an RFP for a new catalog.

They have been moving away from MARC and into non-marc schemas such as xml, Dublin core, etc. Name of the department has changed, more focus on metadata rather than cataloging in MARC. Last few positions have not been traditional cataloging positions, but more about metadata. Also doing work in web discovery, datasets, research data management. They are co-developing a tool called metadata maker which enables anyone to input data into a form and that data is used to create records in various formats.

Split between larger institutions and smaller. More use of non-professional staff doing original cataloging. Even some professional librarians are treated like staff. Some librarians are expected to know everything and some are expected to just work.

Tech services shrinking for many years--fewer librarians. But more work to do, especially in new formats, metadata, linked data. Risky to have fewer hands-on hours for librarians while they are also working on committees. Might lose the art of cataloging.

BIBFRAME -- has more experience on metadata side. They are required to know more and more about technology -- otherwise you become obsolete. Have to know more and more about technology. Required to

know own local system. Metadata side -- potential of so many new resources -- how to describe and organize. Requires more and more effort. Challenge. Also linked data -- have to figure that out.

You have to be an expert in cataloging, which is the actual work you do. You also have to have good understanding of technology. For acquisitions -- you need negotiation skills, now with e resources. As E Resources have become mainstream -- managing, working, -- mainstream but we have a lot to learn.