Introduction and Background

"Faculty status" comes with no clear definition; it manifests itself in a wide variety of ways across different arrangements and institutions (Hosburgh, 2011). The topic of how librarians are/should be classified in an academic institution started to awaken well over 100 years ago. In the late 19th century, following the German model and the belief that the library should be the center of academic research or the “heart of the university”, as written in a previous chapter (Kozikowski and Payne, 2012), H.A. Sawtelle (1878) wrote of the need for librarians to have faculty status since they facilitated the research of students and mentored them in their college studies. Famed Harvard librarian Justin Winsor also spoke about the role of the library and librarian as playing a central role in the academic community, not a subordinate one. George Works (1927) echoed the same sentiments when he wrote, "too many faculty members and administrative officers are prone to think of the library staff, aside from the titular librarian [director], as persons who are discharging responsibilities essentially clerical in nature" (Bernstein, 2009).

In 1958, the Universities Library Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) established the Committee on Academic Status, which was the first body of the American Library Association (ALA) to officially and formally endorse faculty status as a policy and right (Bryan, 2007).

The dissatisfaction with the librarian classification status issue exploded in the 1960’s with the huge rise in higher education enrollment. Along with this college and university swell in attendance there followed a large increase in librarians joining the employment ranks at these institutions continuing into the 1970’s, which led to revisions and new ways in which librarians came to be classified. Academic librarians were struggling with issues of respect, compensation and professional status within their teaching faculty communities such as:

- generally low status of the library profession
- the autocracy of many library directors
- many state boards of education (dating back to the 1940s) opposing and refusing recognition of librarians as faculty
- the lack of support by the American Library Association
- the pervasive attitude of university faculty, dismissing librarians as merely academic support

In 1972, three important organizations collaborated on a “Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians” issued by the ACRL, the Association of American Colleges (AAC), and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and it was reaffirmed in 2001 and 2007.

Full document can be accessed from - http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/jointstatementfaculty,
which includes “College and university librarians share the professional concerns of faculty members… Faculty status entails for librarians the same rights and responsibilities as for other members of the faculty. They should have corresponding entitlement to rank, promotion, tenure, compensation, leaves, and research funds. They must go through the same process of evaluation and meet the same standards as other faculty members.”

In 2011, the most recent ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians was revised to formally recognize and endorse the importance of faculty status for academic librarians by adopting standards, defined under the topic headings below. ACRL are urging institutions of higher education and their governing bodies to also adopt these standards (ACRL, 2011).


1. Professional responsibilities 2. Library governance
3. College and university governance 4. Compensation
5. Tenure 6. Promotion
7. Leaves and research funds 8. Academic freedom
9. Grievance 10. Dismissal

These standards serve as a good benchmark for comparison to help determine if a person is actually faculty, and represent the “best case scenario”, that would most nearly equate library faculty with other campus faculty. However, in reality all standards are rarely completely implemented at any given institution. We see that ‘faculty status’ for librarians may be applied in a variety of ways, with some components present and others absent. The degree to which each component is applied is also not uniform, complicating the issue of how well the ACRL standards are being met (Hosburgh, 2011).

Where Does This Leave Us?

As noted, the ACRL and advocate groups can only bring pressure to bear on institutions of higher learning to adopt their standards. In the end it is still the individual college or university whose governance formulates the policies by which their academy and library must abide.

The abundance of literature regarding academic librarians and classification status and the scope of research that has been done tend to favorably support faculty status providing greater opportunities for librarians for professional advancement, tenure and better compensation with eligibility for development grants and sabbatical leaves as are their teaching colleagues. Not as tangible are the psychological benefits of having “equal status” to teaching faculty. Academic freedom and a greater sense of self-worth sparks motivation and initiative, increased commitment to the library profession and institution, and the entre to a higher level of participation in the educative mission of the library, and the college or university by sitting on faculty senate and campus committees, (Bernstein, 2009)
which can foster better relationships with other faculty on campus, lead to effective collaboration, and provide more opportunities to publish (Hosburgh, 2011). While this is a preferred mode of classification by librarians, it is not the common one in actuality. There are also exceptions even within the academic library community. In a famous editorial, "The Mother of all Myths," Blaise Cronin wrote emphatically about the irrelevancies and dangers of granting faculty status to academic librarians. "tenure and the paraphernalia of the academic calling have nothing to do with the praxis of librarianship" (Cronin, 2001, p. 144). In the same article, he writes, "the obsession with status merely detracts from customer service and weakens the profession's public image" (p. 144).

**Modes of Classification**

Many combinations of models with blurred lines exist across the individual institutions and their various types in regard to this classification issue. One of the fundamental qualities of librarian faculty status is that it is usually based on the teaching faculty model.

The majority of literature indicates that academic librarians fall into one of three groups:

(1) “They desire to be classified as faculty because it is both philosophically, as well as pragmatically, appropriate given their role in promoting and participating in the educative mission of the college or university. This is, clearly, the majority opinion.

(2) They desire not to be classified as faculty if it means having to jump through the hoops of publication and presentation in order to get promoted or tenured. This view has a smaller, but particularly vocal, following.

(3) They do not care how they are classified so long as their pay and benefits are equitable geoeconomically with their professional peers. Research indicates this to be the least chosen option, yet there is strong anecdotal evidence for its popularity” (Bernstein, 2009).

Mary Bolin laid out a useful scheme for evaluating what type of status a given academic librarian might have by examining typologies of librarian status across 50 American land grant universities. The following types of data were gathered proactively from the libraries' websites (Bolin, 2008, p. 220):

1. Employee group (faculty or staff)
2. Title of library administrator (dean, director, etc.)
3. Rank system (professorial ranks, parallel ranks, librarian ranks, other)
4. Tenure eligibility
5. Representation on faculty senate

The findings reveal four status types: Professorial, Other ranks with tenure, Other ranks without tenure, and Academic or Professional Staff.
Employee Group - Rank System: Only faculty members are called professor, while two-thirds of Parallel and Librarian rank group members are faculty.

Employee Group - Tenure Eligibility: A large majority of faculty librarians have tenure. Among librarians who are staff, 40% have a form of continuing appointment.

Employee Group - Faculty Senate Representation: Only a small number of librarians who are faculty are not represented in the faculty senate. Even 50% of staff librarians are represented.

Rank System - Tenure Eligibility: There is a very high occurrence of tenure accompanying professorial rank. Librarian ranks are evenly split, while parallel ranks have tenure in the majority of cases.

Rank System - Faculty Senate Representation: In all rank systems where all or most librarians are faculty, they are overwhelmingly represented in the faculty senate.

Tenure Eligibility - Faculty Senate Representation: There is a 100% overlap between these characteristics. Even librarians without tenure serve on the senate more than 60% of the time (Bolin, 2008, p. 227).

RESULTS among land grants showed that 80% of librarians are faculty, and 70% on tenure track, leaving 20% as staff. (Bolin, 2008, p. 223).

The typology created for land grant universities was extended and applied to a wider population, since it had proven reliable for organizing information about librarian status. The following extended study again uses university websites as the source of data on the status of librarians, including rank system, tenure status, and representation in faculty governance.

The population includes all 119 US universities with member Association of Research Libraries (ARL). In addition to that group of ARL libraries, the population includes any land grant universities who are not also ARL members of, and any "flagship" state universities who are neither ARLs nor land grants.
LIBRARIAN STATUS TYPOLOGY & RESULTS

The distribution of types among US research universities
1. Faculty: Professorial ranks (33)
2. Faculty: Other ranks with tenure (28)
3. Faculty: Other ranks without tenure (13)
4. Non-faculty: Professional or academic staff (45)
(Bolin, 2008, p.418)

Extending the typology to a larger population is revealing....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Tenure Track</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Grant</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>37% (rate of librarians as staff is ~ 2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public institutions only</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private institutions only</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>80% (proportions are ~ reversed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarian Faculty Status and the Institution

When comparing conditions of faculty status that librarians held at the different types of institutions, patterns surfaced. Institutions granting Bachelor of Arts degrees showed librarians to have the most inequality in salary. Also, librarians at these institutions were not as likely librarians to be covered by the same tenure process as other faculty in other types of institutions. In general, institutions granting Associates of Arts degrees were the most likely to either partially or fully provide librarians the conditions of faculty status, and the Bachelor of Arts schools were the least likely to provide these conditions to their librarians. “This being said, there are usually differences in the ways that such conditions as rank and tenure are interpreted at associate level institutions. These conditions may be based more on longevity than on requirements typically found at universities, such as scholarly publication and professional service on a state or national level” (Hosburgh, 2011). Since most community colleges use the tenure-track faculty model, could it be that because many faculty members at community colleges do not have doctorates, their librarians seem more like peers? (Gilman, 2008).
The Other Side of Status

The faculty status option has the support of three professionals associations (the ACRL, AAUP, AAC), and while many advantages were mentioned earlier, the disadvantages must also be taken into account.

Some disagree with the basic tenet that librarians are primarily teachers. Beth Shapiro wrote that the work librarians do is “fundamentally different” from teaching faculty and claims that “empirical research is not essential to the basic mission of librarians” (Shapiro, 1993, p. 562).

Respect must be gained via the effective services offered by librarians, rather than a nomenclature offering token status. At universities with Ph.D. faculty, there is wide spread resentment toward librarians with a terminal master’s level degree (Hosburgh, 2011).

As for faculty governance, Shapiro says faculty status is not required to ensure a system of collegial governance and that “faculty status provides no guarantee that librarians will be considered central to the educational process”, nor does it guarantee fair compensation or academic freedom. (Shapiro, 1993, p. 563).

“The pressure to publish that often accompanies tenure-track positions can be an enormous source of stress and can actually limit the ways in which librarians are able to contribute directly to the university community” (Hosburgh, 2011).

Ten years’ worth of cross-sectional data drawn from member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) looked at the impact of tenure on starting salaries exploring Issues related to both a union wage premium and a compensating wage differential due to tenure. The results of this research suggest that tenure does not have the predicted impact on starting salaries (Lee, 2008).

Alternate Models Needed

Eric Schnell, Associate Professor/Librarian of Prior Health Sciences Library of Ohio State University argues that academic libraries need to create rewards systems based on the unique attributes of our field as well as individual departmental goals and needs and that recognition and achievement must be measured using criteria that both value the activities of academic librarians as they exists today and are flexible enough to adapt to future changes (Schnell, 2009).

From the Library Hat, Ms. Kim blogged that traditional model for faculty activity—teaching, scholarship, and service—“is not a basis upon which librarians’ activities and academic librarianship can be properly evaluated, measured, recognized, and rewarded. We need to find a way to reward librarians who work differently and appropriately in the fields of their choice so that they can prosper no matter how they choose to pursue and develop their academic librarianship. We need a definition of academic librarianship that would represent well what successful librarians do most of their time, not what they
may do during the weekends or outside the work hours in order to meet the promotion criteria” (Kim, 2009). Consideration should be given to pursuing the creation of a new status of “academic professional”, which seems to provide the best of both worlds (Bryon, 2007).

Choose Wisely

Academic librarians in each college and university should seek the model that works best for them in their individual situation (Bryan, 2007).

New librarians are faced with much confusion and apprehension when entering the field of library science in regard to faculty status. “The realization that faculty status is not a static state and may be very different across institutions should offer these librarians more hope in finding a particular library that offers the responsibilities and opportunities commensurate with their own skill set and attributes.” It is also possible for a new librarian to opt out of faculty status altogether, taking a position involving a non-faculty, yet academic status or as a staff (Hosburgh, 2011).

We have seen that there are many variations of faculty and academic status for librarians across different institutions and even within the same institution. You may be considered faculty and “accorded all the benefits of teaching faculty. You may be eligible for promotion, but not tenure, or vice versa. Your ranking system may be identical to teaching faculty, or you may have parallel ranks, such as Librarian I or Senior Librarian.” The most critical aspect of steering through the essentials of a career is to fully understand the system at a designated institution and how to succeed within that system. It is imperative to know and abide by the campus and library policies (Hosburgh, 2011).

A guide to the professional status of academic librarians in the United States (and other places)

It’s interesting to take a look at many of our schools to see where they fit in the classification discussion. The institutions are listed under one of the four categories described in this chapter in the wiki below.

This is a wiki that in it’s own description gathers information about the professional status of academic librarians. Specifically it is intended as an aid to Rank and Tenure committees, library administrators, librarian job applicants, and others interested in issues related to professional status in the library science field.

http://academic-librarian-status.wikispaces.com/
References


A guide to the professional status of academic librarians in the United States (and other places. Accessed from http://academic-librarian-status.wikispaces.com