

Letters

To the Editor:

I have just finished reading the excellent group of papers on "Defining the Academic Librarian" (November 1985), and was moved to write my first letter to the editor expressing thanks for publishing them.

As I contemplate the new year and my past work in academic librarianship, I once again vow to take up the challenge to continue to educate my faculty colleagues about librarianship today even though my patience with the task has grown short over the years.

I am sure the works of Holley, et al., will be required reading in most library schools—let's also hope that all current academic librarians will read them.

DWIGHT F. BURLINGAME

Vice President for University Relations

Bowling Green State University, Ohio

To the Editor:

Richard Dougherty's "Research Libraries in an International Setting: Requirements for Expanded Resource Sharing" in the September 1985 *C&RL* does well to raise a variety of questions concerning resource sharing and I concur with much of what he says.

However his account of the University of California online union catalog, while not inaccurate, is potentially misleading because it is incomplete. The objective of the university was "to stimulate increased resource sharing" but that was not the only objective.

The University of California online union catalog, although not complete nor fully deployed, is used both as an online public access catalog for (local) campus holdings and as a resource for interlibrary loans from the 300-plus terminals in libraries and through the dial-in access now available on most campuses. During the one month of November 1985, for example, users issued 484,129 search commands and displayed over four million records. Limited evidence suggests that in more than 90 percent of these searches the user was concerned with his or her own campus' holdings. At one campus the catalog now displays that campus' records only unless the user *chooses* to inspect the other campuses' records.

In brief, in the University of California, where the libraries' operating budgets exceed \$100 million, the millions spent on the online (union) catalog should not be attributed entirely to resource sharing between campuses.

MICHAEL K. BUCKLAND

Assistant Vice President—Library Plans and Policies, University of California

To the Editor:

I am surprised that an article on the literature of innovation ("Academic Library Services: The Literature of Innovation" *C&RL* September 1985) would omit any reference to library-college which specifically addresses the key problem of academic libraries, ". . . traditional library organizations may inhibit change. . . ." (from summary of the above article).

Allen Veaner ("1985 to 1995: the Next Decade in Academic Librarianship, Part I" *C&RL* May 1985) indicates that the library-college style of "collective ownership and commitment" can overcome "overattention to narrow specialization and comparative inflexibility" in smaller libraries and suggests that a similar restructuring might also be possible in

larger libraries to result in "self-motivated continuing education."

The library-college concept offers the brightest hope for future academic library development. The writings of Louis Shores, B. Lamar Johnson, Patricia Knapp, Howard Clayton, Sister Helen Sheehan and others are still fresh, inspiring—and relevant!

ROBERT T. JORDAN

University of the District of Columbia

To the Editor:

There are a number of conceptual and methodological problems with Lisa Williams' study and its analysis reported in the March 1985 issue of *C&RL*. However, I was surprised by the factual omissions in Ms. Williams' account of the circumstances out of which her study grew and of the individuals who unknowingly contributed much of its substance.

Ms. Williams was hired in the late fall of 1982 by the Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, to perform a conservation survey of the John Crerar Collection of Rare Books in the History of Science and Medicine. This body of material, transferred early in the merger of the Crerar Library into the University of Chicago Library, was by then housed in the Special Collections area of the Joseph Regenstein Library on the university's campus. Under the supervision of Special Collections staff, Ms. Williams was assigned to develop forms and criteria for surveying the physical state of the collection, individually examine and record the condition of nearly twenty-eight thousand physical volumes there, and compile the resulting data into a concluding report applicable to the creation of a conservation program and fund-raising efforts for the collection.

The survey, which was but one small feature of a much larger project to assert administrative control over and provide access to the collection, was conceived by Robert Rosenthal, curator of Special Collections. Mr. Rosenthal, in consultation with James Green (rare books bibliographer at the time and now a curator at The Library Company) and myself, took a leading role in shaping the approach and procedural guidelines for the survey. In order to test the survey's validity, the department invited a panel of three consultants (including Paul Banks, head of the Columbia University Library School's conservation training program) to examine the project. The consultants' visit also became the occasion for a day-long symposium on the general problem of conservation surveys and their translation into practical results which was attended by a broad cross-section of the Chicago conservation community. The comments of those present, particularly Bonnie Jo Cullison (preservation librarian, Newberry Library) and Pamela Spitzmueller (then book conservator at the Newberry and now at the Library of Congress) were challenging and useful to our evaluation of the survey's effectiveness. A key point of discussion was the decision-making process in the setting of conservation priorities as individual volumes, selected as test cases, were handed around the seminar table to focus the debate. Ms. Williams' role in the survey ended abruptly in September 1983 when events required her moving to California.

My point in recounting the circumstances surrounding Ms. Williams' study is to assure that at least a few of the individuals whose knowledge and experience helped lay its foundations are properly recognized. Additionally, the survey, as part of the overall Crerar Library-University of Chicago merger, was made possible with a generous grant from the Chicago Community Trust. The results of this essential support, though readily visible to a mere handful, will benefit scholars for generations to come.

JEFFREY ABT

Conservator, Special Collections, University of Chicago

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