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Seating Achievement in Larger **University Libraries**

A questionnaire was sent to the thirty-six largest university libraries in the country inquiring as to their current ability to seat their students. Thirty-two replied. They indicate that the larger libraries, as well as those in private universities, were generally able to seat larger proportions of their students than were smaller libraries and those in state institutions. Plans indicate that these averages will be considerably improved by the year 1970.

HE STANDARDS for seating in academic libraries are generally well known. The most familiar of these, developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries, recommends reader stations for at least one-third of the student body in colleges and universities granting the bachelor's and master's degrees.

There is a dearth of inclusive and current information, however, with respect to actual percentages of library seating maintained among types of academic institutions, although such information would be extremely helpful for planning purposes. The most recent general statistics available are for 1957 and provide seating ratios derived from reports from institutions in the United States representing 95.7 per cent of the enrollment in higher education. These reports showed average seating percentages for the fall 1957 enrollment to be as indicated in Table 1.1

It is apparent from these figures that,

¹U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Wel-fare: Office of Education, College and University Facilities Survey; Part 3: Inventory of College and University Physical Facilities (OE-51007, 1965), p. 389.

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as of ten years ago, academic libraries in every category fell considerably short, on the average, of meeting generally recognized standards of seating. Whether the over-all average has improved in the last ten years is difficult to determine in the absence of adequate statistical evidence, but the impression of many observers has been that the trend is in the direction of providing reading stations for an increasingly larger proportion of the student population.

Certainly the greatly augmented expenditures on academic library buildings in the last few years would lend strength to that belief. In 1957, for example, only \$20,800,000 was spent on new library construction and rehabilitation projects

TABLE 1

Types of Institution	Public	Private		
All types	13.4	16.0		
University	15.1	12.3		
Liberal arts college	12.7	19.6		
Teachers college	15.6	16.1		
Independent technological school	9.5	6.8		
Theological and religious school	2.20	25.7		
Other independent professional school	13.8	11.7		
Junior college	9.0	22.1		
Technical institute	6.5	5.0		

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Institutiona	Library Seats Current	Seating Ratio Current	Add. Seats Expected 1970	Ratio Expected 1970	Standard for Undergrad.
Harvard	. 6,381	43.0	600	40-45.0	none
Yale	1.152 ^b	13.5	1,600 ^b	27.5	
Illinois	3.892	13.4	1,905	18.5	25.0 ^d
Columbia	4,208	25.0 ^g	3,150	37.0	37.0 ^g
Michigan	5,783 ^h	20.5	2,923		1
California-B.	4.591 ^m	17.0	6,448	24.0	25.0
Cornell	4,466	32.0	158	30.0	
Stanford	4,000	36.0		36.0	
Chicago	2,474	33.0	1.706	47.0	25.0
Minnesota	4.457°	12.3°	2,800°	15.0°	
Princeton	2,946	62.0	572	73.0	
Wisconsin	4,220	14.0	4,145	23.0	25.0
Penn. U.	3.242	27.0	1.571	36.0	-0.0
Indiana U.	2,700ª	10.0ª	5,500ª	25.0 ^q	20.0
Ohio State	4.010	10.0	4,000 ^r	20.0 ^r	30-38.0*
Texas U.	4,241	15.5	1.052	16.5	18.0
Duke	1.764 ^v	25.0 ^v	2,547*	54.0 ^v	35.0
Northwestern	1.349	16.0	2,200 ^x	x	40.0 ^x
New York U.	1,219	6.0	4,800	25.0	10.0
North Carolina	2,813	21.0	1,909	28.5	25.0
Johns Hopkins	1,400	22.6	255	20.0	20.0
U. Washington	3.631	13.0	2,250	20.0	25.0
Virginia	1.240	16.0	300	15.0 ^z	25.0
Louisiana State	2,068	11.0	500	10.0	20.0
Iowa U.	2,575	14.0	2,500	20.0	
Missouri	2,850	16.0	6,250	25.0	20.0
Michigan State	2,500	7.0	3.000-	10-15.0	25.0
Michigan State	. 2,000	1.0	5,500	10-13.0	20.0
Kansas U.	. 2,020	13.8	1,085	18.2	-
Brown	1,366	27.0	600	37.0	30-37.0
Florida	3,172	17.6	1,221	19.9	30.0
Kentucky	2,228	16.8	1,272	21.8	25-30.0
Oklahoma U.	2.360ªª	15.3	2,304	20.8	15.0

TABLE 2. SEATING STATISTICS FOR LARGER UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

^a Arranged by size of book collection.

^b Central Building.

° 25 square feet currently provided.

^d Includes students in Master's programs.

^e 25 per cent standard for doctoral students in areas with high laboratory research demands; 60 per cent standard for doctoral students in areas with low laboratory research demands.

t 10 per cent standard for faculty with high laboratory research demands; 50 per cent standard for faculty with low laboratory research demands.

^g Does not take into account student readers from affiliated institutions such as Barnard and Teachers College. ^h Does not include 5 off-campus libraries.

¹ No official standard. Minimum desirable is 25 per cent average. For science students, 15 per cent; for humanities and social science students, 33 per cent. ¹ No official standard. Minimum desirable is 50 per cent average. For science students, 50 per cent; for grad-

¹ No official standard. Minimum desirable is 50 per cent average. For science students, 50 per cent; for graduate students in humanities and social sciences would like to provide 100 per cent for those engaged in writing dissertations, 33 per cent for others.

* No official standard. Modest standard might be 16 per cent in humanities and social sciences, 4 per cent in sciences.

¹ Includes allowance for aisles.

^m Law students and Law Library excluded in all figures.

ⁿ No specified standard, but 25 square feet is commonly used in planning.

^o Minneapolis and St. Paul campus only.

P In closed one-station carrells.

^q Bloomington campus only.

r Estimated.

* For humanities, 30 per cent; for sciences, 33 per cent; for social sciences, 38 per cent.

^t For sciences 25-30 per cent; for humanities and social sciences, 45-60 per cent.

" For sciences, 10 per cent; for sciences, 50 per cent; for humanities, 55 per cent.

* Includes Law and Medicine. The Law Library provides seats for 100 per cent of law students and faculty.
The Medical Center Library now being planned will seat 100 per cent of its students and most of the faculty.
* Applies to General Library. More space will be allowed in Medical Center and Law Libraries.

Institution ^a	Standard for Grad.	Standard for Faculty	Sq. Ft. Allowance Undergrad.	Sq. Ft. Allowance Grad.	Sq. Ft. Allowance Faculty
Harvard	. none	none	varies	varies	varies
Yale			40°	40°	40°
Illinois	. 25-50.0°	10-50.0 ^t	30	30	30
Columbia	. 37.0		30	30	
Michigan		k	30 ¹	40 ¹	64 ¹
California-B.	. 25.0		25 ⁿ	25 ⁿ	
Cornell		1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	30	32	80
Stanford			25-30	30-35	
Chicago	25-60.0		25	40	60
Minnesota			25	25	60
Princeton			25	18 ^p	45
Wisconsin	25.0		25	25-27	25-120
Penn. U.			20-25	30	60
Indiana U.	33.0		20-25	25-30	60-70
Ohio State	25-60.0 ^t	10-55.0 ^u	30	30-40	40-86
Texas U.	20.0	4.0	30	35	40-00
Duke	75.0	1.0	25 ^w	28*	28 ^w
Northwestern	80.0 ^x	25.0×	25	25-30	72
New York U.	. 00.0	20.0	20	20-00	14
North Carolina	50.0	10.0	25	25	50
Johns Hopkins	. 00.0	10.0	20	15	48
U. Washington	25.0	5.0	25	30	50-60
Virginia	50.0	75.0	25	30-35	40
Louisiana State	. 50.0	15.0	20	30-35	40
Iowa U.			00	00	
	35.0	10.0	30	30	
Missouri			25	35	50
Michigan State	. 30.0	25.0	30		
Kansas U					10.00
Brown	. 30-37.0	20.0	30	30	48-96
Florida	. 50.0		25	25	
Kentucky	. 35.0	25.0	25	45	60
Oklahoma U.	. 40.0	10.0	25-30	30	100

TABLE 2 (Continued)

x Humanities and social sciences only.

y Washington Square only.

^z Ratio expected in 1975 is 35.0.

an Norman campus only.

by all academic institutions. By 1962, the amount spent had risen to \$58,700,-000.² This increased to \$79,000,000 spent in 1963 and to \$90,000,000 spent in 1964. But the most impressive advances occurred in 1965 and 1966 when expenditures for academic library construction soared to an average of over \$288,000,000 per year-almost fourteen times the \$20,800,000 expenditures in 1957.³ It would be logical to assume that alloca-

^a The Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade Information (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1966), p. 32. tions of these proportions, representing the significant impact of the Higher Education Facilities Act, should eventually have a favorable effect on library seating achievement in spite of increases in enrollment and the factor of inflation.

In order to determine the extent of library seating currently provided or expected in the near future in larger university libraries, the University of Illinois library recently queried the thirtysix university libraries in the United States with book collections of one million or more volumes. The questions covered not only seating ratios but squarefoot allowances per reading station. Since

² Theodore Samore, "Academic Library Buildings: Needs, Legislation, Inventory," College and Research Libraries, XXV (July 1964), 296. ³ The Bowker Annual of Library and Book Trade

the column headings in the accompanying tabulation (Table 2) are necessarily brief, the survey questionnaire is given below for purposes of clarification if needed.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1. Total number of seats now provided
- 2. Percentage of student body for which seats are now provided ——
- 3. Additional number of seats expected by 1970 —
- 4. Percentage of student body for which seats are planned by 1970 —
- 5. Percentage figure used as a standard for undergraduate seating —
- 6. Percentage figure used as a standard for graduate seating —
- 7. Percentage figure used as a standard for faculty seating —
- 8. Square feet per reading station allowed for undergraduates ——
- 9. Square feet per reading station allowed for graduates ——
- 10. Square feet per reading station allowed for faculty ——

Thirty-two replies were received, and the results are presented in the accompanying tables 2, 3, and 4. These show that the median seating ratio for the university libraries in this survey is somewhat above the average for all university libraries as reported in the fall 1957 figures. However, those libraries with collections of over two million volumes show a markedly higher median. This seems to result chiefly from the preponderance in that group of private university libraries (seven out of eleven) which have attained higher than average seating ratios, while those libraries with holdings of between one and two million volumes are preponderantly libraries of public universities (fifteen out of twenty-one) which show lower than average seating accomplishment.

The lower seating performance of the public university libraries in this survey is undoubtedly related to the substantially greater enrollment increases absorbed by those institutions in the last decade in comparison with enrollment increases in the private universities. Average full-time enrollment of the public universities in this survey is now 23,648 as opposed to 9,421 for the private universities, and the relative increase in the last decade has been 67 per cent for the public universities as opposed to 22 per cent for the private universities.⁴ On the other hand, the seating needs of the greater numbers of graduate students, proportionately, in the private universities tend to elevate somewhat the seating ratio of the private university libraries, although this factor would be a minor one in assessing the overall difference in performance between types of

⁴Based on comparable statistics of enrollment for 18 public and 13 private universities as reported in School and Society, LXXXV (Dec. 7, 1957), 373-74; XCV (Jan. 7, 1967), 11-12.

										Med Seat Rat 196	ing		Sea	dian atin atio 70	g		nge 966		Ran 197		In	Per cen crease Seats Expecte 1970	of
Libraries over a million volumes									16.0 ^a 25.0 ^b 25.0 ^c 30.0 ^d				6.0-62.0 12.3-62.0 6.0-27.0 6.0-62.0 7.0-21.0			$10.0-73.0 \\ 15.0-73.0$			73.8ª 49.3°				
Libraries between one and two million volumes Private university libraries Public university libraries					libraries		$\begin{array}{c ccccc} 15.5^{\circ} & 22.4 \\ 27.0^{\circ} & 37.0^{\circ} \\ 14.0^{\circ} & 20.4 \end{array}$.0 ^h		$\begin{array}{c} 10.0-54.0\\ 27.5-73.0\\ 10.0-28.5\end{array}$					94.5° 56.3 ^g 85.1 ¹						
				eplies			libraries	in		categor	у.		ased			replies	from		librari	es in	this	catego	ory
b	"		30	"	"	36 12		"	"		•	g			13 11		"	14 14		"	"		
d	"		11	"	"	12			"	"	*	1	"		19		"	22		"	"		
e	"		21	"	"	24	"	"		"		1	"	"	17	"	"	22		"		"	

TABLE 3. SEATING PERFORMANCE BY TYPE OF LIBRARY

	Se	Standard ating Ratio for dergraduates	Standard Seating Ratio for Graduates	Standard Seating Ratio for Faculty	Square Foot Allowance for Undergraduates	Square Foot Allowance for Graduates	Square Foot Allowance for Faculty
Libraries over a						1.1.2	
million volumes . Libraries over two	•	27.0ª	40.0ª	22.6 ^b	27.2°	30.3°	56 ^d
million volumes . Libraries between		28.0°	37.8°				
one and two million volumes Private university		26.5 ^t	41.6 ^t				
libraries Public universities		34.0 ^g	53.4 ^g				
libraries		24.3 ^h	35.6 ^h				

TABLE 4. SEATING STANDARDS BY TYPE OF LIBRARY

* Average based on 19 replies from 36 libraries in this category.

^b """12""36""""" No distinctive variation between types of libraries. ^e Average square foot allowance based on 27 replies from 36 libraries in this category. No distinctive variation between types of libraries. Represents in many cases individual enclosures without counting aisle space, stairs, etc. ^d Average square foot allowance based on 22 replies from 36 libraries in this category. No distinctive variation between types of libraries. Represents in many cases individual enclosures without counting aisle space, stairs, etc. ^e Average based on 4 replies from 12 libraries in this category.

ſ	"	"	"	15	"	"	24	"	"	"	"
g	"	"	"	5	"	"	14	"	"	"	"
h	"	"	"	14	"	"	22	"	"	"	"

libraries included in this survey.⁵ Other local factors affecting library seating requirements, such as the nature of the curriculum, quality of the book collection, adequacy of student housing, presence of residence hall libraries, and number of commuting students are all variables which may have a bearing when considering the needs or achievement of individual libraries.

The most optimistic sign arising from this survey is found in the responses to

⁵ Based on enrollment percentages in Library Statistics of Colleges and Universities, 1963-64; Institutional Data (OE-15023-64), p. 8-59. the questions relating to expected increases in seating accommodations and seating ratios by 1970. The great majority of libraries expect to make significant advances in seating performance by 1970, as is illustrated by Table 3. If these expectations are realized the total number of reading stations in the thirty-two libraries surveyed will increase from 97,318 in 1966 to 169,191 in 1970, an increase of 73.8 per cent, and the median seating ratio will rise from 16 per cent to 25 per cent, substantially narrowing the gap between seating achievement and seating standards.