

information services of the Nation and their use by the public." The conference will be planned and conducted by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) with the assistance and advice of a 30-member White House Conference Advisory Committee (WHCAC) whose members represent all areas of the U.S.

NCLIS chairman Jerald C. Newman has written all state and territorial governors, informing them of the conference and urging them to submit applications for federal funds to help initiate preconference activities. Initial grants to the states will be shares of the \$1.75 million appropriated by Con-

gress. As additional funds become available, states and territories may be eligible for other support for preconference activities.

Participants in the state and territorial programs and at the National Conference are to represent a broad spectrum of the population. The law provides that a fourth of the participants will be selected from the library and information profession; a fourth will be selected from trustees, friends groups, and other individuals who are active library and information supporters; a fourth will be selected from federal, state or local officials; and a fourth will be selected from the general public. ■ ■

Benefits received by college librarians

By **John Robson**

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A survey of 119 college libraries in the Midwest.

Although ALA publishes annual salary surveys, no nationwide survey of the benefits received by college librarians now exists. We believe that benefit issues are particularly crucial for academic librarians due to the unclear social status and politically vulnerable position of many, if not most, librarians in higher education. Job classifications are a perennial problem for academic librarians, and they may admit an employee to the eligibility pool for significant institutional benefits or exclude that employee from consideration for institutional benefits granted only to individuals in more highly regarded job classifications. While recent legal changes have restricted the ability of employers to discriminate between classes of employees concerning access to crucial

benefits such as health care and pension funding, discrimination still exists even in these key areas.

The ACRL College Libraries Section's Ad Hoc Committee on Real Income thoroughly considered the issue of the benefits received by academic librarians between 1985 and 1988. Susan A. Stussy chaired that committee, and John Robson was a member. Unfortunately, this committee was unable to accomplish a great deal due to the inexperience of both the members and the chair.

After the committee concluded its work, the authors resolved to find out where college librarians in the five states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin stood in terms of access to standard employee benefits and eligibility for academic benefits such as sabbaticals and tenure.

To obtain this information, the authors sent a survey shown to the library directors of non-doctoral degree-granting four-year colleges and universities in the Midwestern states. Institutions marked R in the *American Library Directory* (41st Edition, 1988–1989) were excluded. With that exception, all private non-denominational, private sectarian, and public institutions were surveyed.

The authors mailed out the survey between November 1988 and January 1989, and all replies were received by March 1, 1989, so that the answers reflected conditions in late 1988 or early 1989, which may have changed in the time lapse between the conclusion of this survey and the publication of this article.

Of the 185 libraries meeting the authors' criteria in the targeted states, all received copies of the survey. The authors received 119 replies, which represented a rate of response surprisingly high at 64%. No clear pattern appeared to separate the institutions that responded from those that did not. Sadly, all respondents did not answer all questions, and many library directors seemed uncertain where they stood on significant benefit issues.

In the course of this survey, the authors confronted two major problems. These problems were: 1) their lack of grant funding and organizational support, which made it difficult to mail all surveys at the same time, and 2) their lack of statistical sophistication, which made compilation of all survey results in an efficient and timely manner difficult. They benefited from the cooperation received from St. Norbert College Computer Services, since Todd Maki and Dulce Hutchinson helped tabulate the survey results and gave very generously of their time to manipulate these results in graphic form.

The body of this article has been pulled from the responses to questions 8–13. Questions 8 and 9 covered academic status and responsibilities, while questions 10 and 11 covered librarian access to health, retirement, and vacation benefits. Question 12 concerned dependent care, and question 13 concerned librarian access to the education and travel benefits increasingly necessary to update professional skills in a rapidly changing work environment.

The answers to question 8 revealed that most librarians have at least some claim to faculty status. Seventy-eight respondents claimed faculty status, while 20 respondents claimed that they did not. Twenty-one questionnaires did not answer this part of question 8.

Answers to question 8, however, revealed that the faculty status held by college librarians is often very nebulous. Only 46 respondents held faculty rank, while 54 did not. Nineteen respondents did not answer this part of question 8. On the key question of tenure, only 43 respondents were ten-

ured or tenure eligible, while 53 respondents were in non-tenure track positions, and 23 respondents did not answer this part of question 8. Six fortunate respondents indicated that they had a choice between tenure and non-tenure track status, while 91 respondents had no choice, and 22 respondents did not complete this part of question 8.

On the positive side, 66 respondents indicated that they were eligible for institutionally funded research grants, and only 28 individuals responded negatively, while 25 persons failed to answer this part of question 8. It was reassuring to know that 88 respondents out of 119 had some paid professional development support, although the authors were very concerned for the 13 individuals who indicated that they received none. Eighteen individuals did not fill out this key part of question 8. Disappointingly, only 36 of 119 respondents received support for research.

The most surprising survey responses concerned question 9. Almost half of the respondents (53) indicated that librarians taught at their institution, and 34 respondents reported that librarians taught in the academic disciplines. As in question 8, a significant number of questionnaires were not responsive.

While only three individuals indicated in question 9 that they were required to publish, 64 individuals said that they were encouraged to do so. Sadly, the rewards reported for publication were minimal or non-existent, and the 79 librarians reporting 12-month contracts clearly had limited publication opportunities.

Responses to question 10 indicated that most librarians had disability, life, and medical insurance as well as a retirement plan. The responses received indicated that 95 institutions offered disability insurance, 91 institutions offered life insurance, 100 institutions offered medical insurance, and 99 institutions offered a retirement plan to librarians. While it is reassuring to note that most college librarians enjoy these basic benefits, the negative answers in this section (7 disability insurance, 10 life insurance, 1 medical insurance, and 2 retirement plan) are very disturbing along with the failures to reply.

Responses to question 11 in many ways paralleled question 10. Most librarians enjoyed basic holiday and vacation benefits, since 91 librarians reported holidays, 93 librarians reported vacations, and 92 librarians reported sick leave. A significant minority, or 36 librarians, reported paid maternity leave, although only nine librarians reported paid paternity leave, which indicated that a substantial degree of sex discrimination still existed in this area.

It is amazing to the authors that some college librarians still lack access to holidays, vacations, and sick leave. ACRL should give serious consideration to benefit-related issues and show particular con-

cern for the least fortunate members of the profession even while the more fortunate members of the profession fight for benefits such as maternity and paternity leave.

Answers to question 12 revealed that child care and dependent care assistance are still ideas whose time has not come for most college librarians. Since these benefits are being increasingly sought after in the corporate world, however, the availability of these benefits could increase dramatically very quickly, if colleges wish to compete for good personnel.

In tabulating answers to question 13, the authors found that librarians had good access to education benefits. Librarians at 68 institutions could take courses during normal working hours, and only 38 respondents indicated that they could not, which left a non-response rate of 15 completed survey forms. Spousal and child education benefits were

available to 78 librarians, while 10 librarians indicated that they did not enjoy these benefits, and 31 did not respond.

After completing this questionnaire and survey, the authors realized that: 1) specific mention of sabbatical eligibility should have been made in question 8, and 2) spousal and child education benefits should have been separated.

In summation, the authors conclude that most college librarians enjoy employee benefits standard in the corporate world and that vacation and tuition benefits are a big plus for academic librarians. We are, however, concerned that most college librarians lack standard benefits enjoyed by teaching faculty even though our credentials are gradually becoming equivalent, and some of these benefits may be needed to undergo the constant professional updating librarians need today, whether or not they have or desire faculty status. ■ ■

Time grants

By Cynthia Stewart Kaag and Nancy Shepard

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Resource sharing where the resource is time.

One of the eternal questions faced by academic librarians in tenure-track positions is where to find time to do the research and writing necessary for promotion and tenure. There is only so much reorganizing, reallocating and rethinking of priorities that can be done before we all come to the same point: too much to do, not enough time.

During a retreat set up to re-evaluate our goals and objectives, the faculty at the Owen Science and Engineering Library at Washington State University came up with a plan that would allow individual librarians time off from reference desk responsi-

bilities for the purpose of working on special projects. Originally, the idea came in the form of a pre-retreat proposal by one of the librarians for release time to pursue scholarly and professional activities. This was broadened to make possible grants of time for all librarians as needed for particular projects.

As hammered out during the retreat, those librarians who had projects they wished to undertake or complete submitted written proposals which were reviewed by all reference librarians and then discussed at a faculty meeting. The head of reference determined how many hours might be avail-