view of the administrator; the setting aside of the question of status in order to take on the larger, more fundamental, and infinitely more important question of how the unique knowledge of academic librarians should be identified and used by the institution in support of institutional missions, concerns, and needs. Only when shifts in administrative—and faculty—perceptions have occurred will academic librarians be accorded the high status they will be seen to truly deserve.

Editor's Note: This article is based on a speech given before the Wisconsin Association of Academic Librarians at the WAAL Spring Conference, April 24, 1987, and published here as a follow-up to the author's "Beliefs and Realities," C&RL News, September 1986, pp. 492–96.

■■

Academic library funding and professional ethics

By J. Richard Madaus

Dean of Library and Learning Resources
Northeastern State University
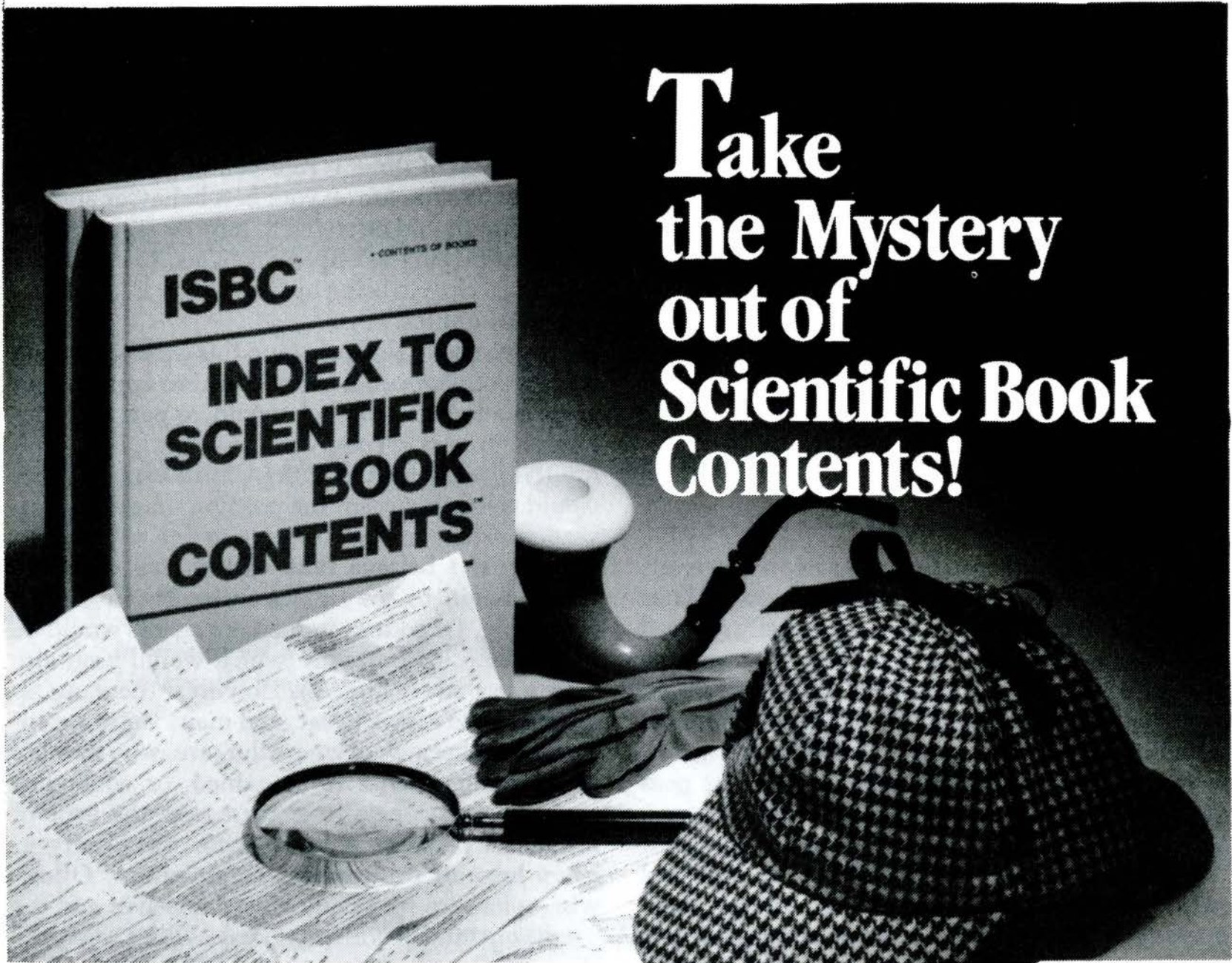
6% library funding as an employment consideration.

Tough economic times and/or budget problems in academic libraries are common experiences in our profession. An academic library represents considerable fiscal commitment (even poorly funded) for any higher education institution. The ACRL "Standards for College Libraries" clearly state, "the library's appropriation shall be six percent of the total institutional budget for educational and general purposes." Should we, as professionals, treat this six percent level as a goal or a minimum for basic quality services?

How do we (or do we at all?) consider the basic budget construct of a library as part of our paradigm of acceptable working conditions? Ethics, by definition, deal with principles for conduct. Logically, there should be a place in the interpretation of our professional ethics for a review of our institution as it provides us with the basic resources to carry out our profession. Funding is, of course, the key to these resources.

Professional ethics should, in my opinion, extend to the basic level of the acceptance or rejection of the conditions and circumstances under which we as professionals will allow ourselves to work.

Just how do we really act about our working conditions during good economic times (or bad times), and does it affect our funding? I am firmly convinced that it does. I am also firmly convinced that in our efforts to keep service going in tough times we may dilute our efforts simply too much. I believe this has, and will continue to keep academic libraries underfunded unless we make significant change. This is not to say we don't do very good jobs with what resources we have. I think we do. Perhaps we have done so well, with so little, for so long that now it has become expected of us. Scraping by (at 4%–6% of E&G—education and general—funding levels) has become definitially part of our job.

We will keep the library open at all costs, even if

it means destruction of our own personal health, both mental and physical. We are so committed to serving students and faculty that we simply cannot refuse requests for service. In tough economic times that type of approach may represent the kiss of mediocrity for the long haul. If budgets are severely cut and library service doesn't appear to suffer, we are eventually doomed. Because any academic area is expected to look after its own interest, librarians screaming to the administration about the demise of collection quality are usually ignored because such screaming is expected. We sound no different than science teachers with insufficient chemicals and specimens, or business professors without enough PCs. Our backbreaking work, overtime hours, and service commitment goes overlooked by funders because it has all become a basic part of the job and is no longer considered "extra effort." If they cut the budget by 20% and nothing obvious happens (i.e. the building keeps opening, students still check out books, and there is no outcry by the teaching faculty), then it *has* to appear that we didn't really need that 20% anyway. If no damage (other than collection quality) is perceived, then the money will probably not be restored in good times. Who (besides us) cares if we don't have enough new books? History (and the nature of our business) has proven to funding administrators that we will *never* have enough new books!

The needs of the library can, in many ways, reflect the needs of the institution as a whole. A healthy library usually indicates a healthy university. Conversely, shabby treatment of the library will probably be an index of other marginal university programming (good academic programs cannot exist without good libraries). This to me is a very good reason why the ACRL standards describe library financial needs in percentages rather than specific amounts. Our national standards call for a minimum 6% of the E&G university budget. This percentage relates the library to the institution as a whole in the proper perspective. This percentage is applicable in both good times and bad times: if in place in good times and kept during bad times, the library will suffer no more, but no less, than the university as a whole.

How do we, as individual librarians, recognize and promote the national standards of a minimum

It's what you do during the good times that gets you through the bad times.

6% funding? I fear that too often we only bring it up at budget time and then to point out that we should have it, but don't. Or, in the worst case, we sit around and complain to each other about how much we cannot do. I believe that it's not what you do during the bad times that gets you through the bad times, it's what you do during the good times that gets you through the bad times. To me, one of the very best of times is represented when you apply for a job. You are on your best behavior and the institution should be trying to impress you as much as you are trying to impress it. This, to me, is the most ideal time to bring up library 6% E&G financial relationships.

On one end of the scale (and this is radical) think what would happen if every librarian applying for every academic library job would, as part of the interview process, strongly suggest that a 6% minimum is needed for the library. Furthermore, each would refuse to accept the position unless the university was committed to being in line with ACRL standards. I believe that within five years we would begin to see significant shifts in library budgeting. Of course, immediate results would be a lot of unfilled positions (which would itself also have a secondary impact). However, there are alternatives. We have to eat, and many times we apply for jobs because of where they are, who they are near, the experience to be gained, or what they pay. We *must* begin to at least raise the issue of minimum percentage funding for the library at *every* level of professional employment. Otherwise, what are we saying about ourselves and the conditions under which we are willing to work? We have already pragmatically said we are willing to take less than ACRL standards because we accept the position. If we are not willing to refuse to accept the position, shouldn't we at least make some pretty strong inquiries directly to the president and academic vice-president during the interview about library funding. If just asking about funding costs us the job, would we really have been happy there in the long run anyway? If these administrators are not part of the interview process, shouldn't they be? And again, if just asking to speak with them costs you the job, would you have been happy there anyway? As more and more people bring it up at interview time, it will gain more importance in the minds of the administrators. After we take the job it is too late, as we have demonstrated our willingness to work with less.

The more I study this area, the more I am convinced that the 6% proportional funding issue is the most significant issue to our long-term survival. The 1986 ACRL standards call for microcomputers and audiovisual support to be added over and above the traditional 6%. This presents some significant financial issues in higher education. The technological impact, the newer emphasis on access, and optical/electronic publishing are, and will continue to, impact our ability to service our students' needs. These areas all call for significant

realignment in library and university budgeting. The tired old phrases of the library being the heart of the university have to be backed up with funding, or hardening of the arteries and cardiac arrest are not too far off.

Personally, I believe that percentage funding issues should become a matter of professional ethics. If we are as good and as professional as we say we are, then we have to be willing to back it up in terms of where we will allow ourselves to work, and under what conditions. Our national standards will be credible only when every librarian applying for every job brings them up *before they are hired*. After all, in the words of sage Yoda from *The Return of the Jedi*, "there is no 'try,' there is only what we 'do.'" ∎∎

Onsite observations of automated library systems

By Evelyn Lyons

Interlibrary Loan & Online Services Librarian
Millersville University

A checklist to aid the automation observer.

The move to automate library functions, to replace manual circulation services and card catalogs with integrated systems continues to gather momentum. The library automation industry is approaching maturity and smaller academic libraries with fewer resources at their command are coming into the automation market. In this instance, as in so many other areas of rapid technological development, it is not disadvantageous to be among the late arrivals.

Economic historians have observed that there is an advantage to relative backwardness. The innovators struggled to design the first examples of these very complex systems and, when successful, were able to enjoy the fruits of their labor and their substantial risk-taking. Librarians today do not have to suffer the same pain of creation nor sustain the same awesome costs. It is now possible to approach a vendor of a developed syetem and receive an estimate of the ultimate price of an installation.

Today's automation marketplace, while not exactly stable, presents the smaller academic library with the possibility of making a rational choice among competing systems. Ganser Library at Millersville University in Pennsylvania, a member of a 14-unit state higher education system with a student body of around 6,000, recently began its evaluation of the available library automation systems.

The library faculty had formed an automation committee, and many of the 14 professional librarians began to read widely in the literature on automation. Some took courses at schools of library science. Nearly everyone visited vendors' exhibits at major conferences. Whenever possible we sought out libraries in our region that have installed automated systems.

In the fall of 1986 I was granted a sabbatical leave by Millersville University to study automation in representative libraries. The rationale for the study was that neither visits to vendors at con-