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Faculty Status For Nigerian University Librarians: THE IBADAN UNIVERSITY CASE

By

G.D. EKPENYONG

Faculty Librarian, Faculty of Technology,
University of Ibadan

The fight for faculty status by university librarians has been on for more than a century and is still being debated the world over today. The writer outlines the *meaning* of faculty status and how it affects university librarians in developing country - Nigeria. Suggested solutions to this problem are made including the recognition of the Ibadan University library step-up to reflect a faculty with corresponding faculty titles and ranks.

INTRODUCTION

For many years now, a lot of controversy has centered on the topic of academic or faculty status for University Librarians. As far back as 1875, President Eliot of Harvard University expressed the view that "Performance of tenure and security of income are essential to give dignity and independence to the teacher's position." The continuous struggle for academic freedom by American Professors, led to the issuance of "Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure" by the American Association of University Professors in 1940. No sooner had academic freedom been granted University Professors than the University Librarians began to feel that academic freedom should also be granted them.

In 1956, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) took a significant step towards this goal by accepting University Librarians as members. It was until later, however, that both the Association of American Colleges and the AAUP issued a paper "Joint statement on Faculty status of Colleges and University Librarians" which urged that faculty status with all its rights and privileges be given college and University Librarians. It is surprising, however, that even in the United States of America today, this goal is still to be generally accepted in all Universities.

WHAT IS FACULTY STATUS?

In the academic world, the functions that characterize faculty are instruction and research. The extent to which these duties are performed by University Librarians should determine their status in the university community. As a result of their

functions, (teaching and research), faculty members are given the following privileges which constitute faculty status:-

- (1) Academic Freedom
- (2) Entitlement to sabbatical and study leave
- (3) Faculty salaries
- (4) Faculty title for promotion
- (5) Financial support for research
- (6) Release time for research
- (7) Representation on university senate
- (8) Travel expenses for research.

ARE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS TEACHERS?

The primary objectives of a university are teaching and research. Teaching involves education and education is the acquisition of the art of utilization of knowledge. Librarianship, per se, is the acquisition, organization and interpretation of the materials necessary for intellectual growth and knowledge. The role of a librarian in a university or academic community is therefore very vital. The question of academic status for university Librarians seems to cause raised eyebrows to many but if one takes a critical look at the services performed by university librarians, it would be clear that university librarians should be considered as custodians of the tools necessary for the acquisition of knowledge and therefore are teachers.

There is a growing awareness in the world today that the literature of most disciplines, especially in science and technology, is growing enormously in size. As a result, the bibliographic tools designed to make these materials accessible are correspondingly becoming more and more

complex. It is therefore the duty of the university librarian to interpret these bibliographic tools in a way that would be easily retrieved and made more meaningful to the university community to enhance teaching and research. A primary assumption underlying most programs in bibliographic instructions is that librarians are teachers and that the activities in which they engage in the execution of the programs they devise constitute teaching. Academic librarians seeking equal status with faculty colleagues often point, and rightly perhaps, to bibliographic instruction programmes as visible signs of their participation in the teaching functions of their institutions. One could also argue that reference work, the creation of bibliographic guides, research aids, as well as work that generate the card catalogue are all activities that seek to interpret the library and its resources to the academic community; they are therefore manifestations of the teaching process.

That librarians function as teachers in many respects cannot therefore be disputed. As interpreters of the library collections to users, they are indeed the key in the overall educational process. The modes in which librarians traditionally operate (such as in reference, cataloging and acquisition), however, are not ones that directly prepare them for classroom teaching.

THE IBADAN UNIVERSITY CASE:

In the University of Ibadan, as of now, the position of Librarians is still not well-defined. Though Ibadan University librarians had been regarded as academic from the inception of the university in 1948, it is, however, debatable if they have been enjoying the full benefits of academic status or not. The University of Ibadan Calendar 1977/78, groups the library among the list of academic departments, but the full implication of the word "academic status" as it affects librarians in this university is still unclear. Recent events in the university senate have shown that the senate itself is a bit confused about this topic. So far, the senate has not yet issued a statement on the status of librarians in the Ibadan University Library.

Before the Udoji Salary Review of 1974, professional librarians had faculty salaries at par with their teaching counterparts but this salary Review Commission, downgraded librarians unfortunately! (salary structure pre and post Udoji attached - tables 11 and 111). So far, all attempts

to rectify this seeming mistake has proved abortive. With this disparity in salary, the problem of academic status for librarians becomes more complex and this makes the university senate confused and undecided about this problem. As it is, the Ibadan University librarians are floating salary-wise, for they neither have parity with the faculty nor with the administrators! It seems that the only obvious benefits derived by the University of Ibadan librarians is entitlement to sabbatical and study leave and representation at the university senate. This is a delicate situation which if not well handled might frustrate librarians out of their profession.

PROBLEMS ARISING FROM ACADEMIC STATUS:

It is true that academic status is desirable by university librarians but there are critical problems to be solved.

First and foremost, academic status demands that librarians should undergo the same process of evaluation and meet the same standards of excellence as do other faculty members. Apart from instruction and excellence in performance of professional duties, research performed must be backed up with publications. Faculty promotions are decided by an overall campus-wide faculty committee - Appointments and Promotions Committee, which expects candidates from the university library to have identical points with their teaching counterparts to qualify for promotion. The "publish or perish" attitude affects all faculty members as it is seen to be an important criterion for promotion. As far as publications are concerned, most librarians have fallen below the minimum standard required to promote them from one level to the other. This has been the case in the Ibadan University library where some competent and experienced librarians have not been promoted because they have not published a yet unspecified number of papers for promotion. It is an unfortunate situation but one cannot really blame librarians who do not have as much time for research as their teaching counterparts. Librarianship is service-oriented and the university libraries are service organisations, and to serve an academic community, information must be retrieved from it when needed and within a very short time. This service will not be efficient if those that should give them are away doing one research or the other. It is difficult to accomplish any worthwhile research and write publishable papers when librarians have to work so hard, forty

hours a week, to keep the library organised for users!

Suggested Solutions

If the same panel is to judge the teaching staff as well as the librarians, then perhaps standards should be streamlined for both categories of staff as related to their jobs to achieve fairplay.

It may also be necessary to make the work hours more flexible for librarians so that they can have some hours off to do some research for their publications.

To achieve academic status, it might be necessary to reorganize the Ibadan University Library set-up and make it a university faculty as is obtained in some American universities (that have been given faculty status) like Iowa State University, the University of Nebraska where the library is headed by a Dean of Libraries. The library faculty in Nebraska is made up of fifty-five professionals who all have faculty titles and ranks.

(See table 1). When first employed from library school a librarian is given job as instructor. Three years after he is promoted to Assistant Professor. If the candidate has two masters, he is given the post of Assistant Professor. After five years and two papers, the candidate is promoted to Associate Professor and thereafter to a Professor after seven years and several publications.

It is suggested also that if an administrative review commission like the Udoji Public Service Review Commission finds it difficult to evaluate a specific category of university staff, something else should be done. As indicated earlier, one of the highlights of the report of the Nigeria public Service Salary Review Commission under the Chairmanship of Chief J.O. Udoji was the downgrading of university librarians. Since higher education in Nigeria, including university education, is the responsibility of the Federal Government, then the special agency responsible for university education should look into this problem. It is urged that the Nigerian Universities Commission should, as the government agency responsible for universities in Nigeria, take a closer interest in this problem of university librarians with the view of rectifying any acts of commission and omission arising from the downgrading of university librarians by the Public Service Review Commission of 1974. This salary review panel and the subsequent problem arising from it can be seen in Table 11. Though the two salary review panels established by the Federal Government in

1974 and 1975 have tried a system of salary harmonization in the public sector, university librarians, especially, have lost not only their academic role but also their remuneration when compared with their academic counterparts.

Table 11 shows a comparison of salary structures for librarians in the National Library of Nigeria, a typical Nigerian University Library with academic and library staff of the University of Ibadan. A librarian 11 in the university library has a first degree and a professional diploma in librarianship. An Assistant Lecturer has a first degree and in some cases a master's degree which could be obtained after a one or two-year programme. The disparity in salary between the *University teachers and the university librarians* (post Udoji) has still not been explained! In the academic world, the academics attend conference seminars, colloquial and are sponsored for special courses and higher degrees. Similarly the Nigerian Library staff participate in the International Graduate Summer School jointly sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh and the Welsh College of Librarianship and also attend conferences organised by professional bodies such as IFLA, ASLIB and others.

In Ghana, university librarians are graded at par with other lecturers and enjoy the same salary structure. Outside Ghanaian universities, the salaries of librarians are equal to or better than those of other teachers. In Sierra Leone (Fourah Bay College Library, Njala University College Library, Milton Margai Teacher's College Library) professional librarians in these universities and institutions of higher learning are in better positions with higher salaries than colleagues with similar qualifications in the civil service or the Sierra Leone Library Board. If in other West African countries, university librarians enjoy parity with the faculty members, it seems a pity that Nigeria, being such an important country and one that others look up to in Africa should fail in this respect.

TABLE I

Heirachy of some American University Libraries e.g. the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.	Proposed heirachy for Ibadan Univ. Lib.	
	A	B
Dean of Libraries Professors Associate Professors Assistant Professors Instructors	Dean of Libraries Professors Readers Senior Lecturers Lecturer I Lecturer II Asst. Lecturer	University Librarian Professors Readers Senior Librarian Librarian I Librarian II Asst. Librarian (no professional qualification)

SALARY COMPARISON BETWEEN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS (Pre and post Udoji)

Pre-Udoji

Teaching Staff Designation	Library Staff Designation	Salaries (in ₦)
Professor	University Librarian	6,600.00
Reader	Deputy Univ. Librarian	6,100.00
Senior Lecturer	Senior Librarian	5,030.00
Lecturer I	Sub-Librarian	3,810.00
Lecturer II	Sub-Librarian II	2,760.00
Assistant Lecturer	Assistant Librarian	2,140.00

Post-Udoji

Teaching Staff Designation	Library Staff Designation	Grade Level	Salaries (in ₦)
Professor	Univ. Librarian	16	11,268.00-12,420.00
Reader	Deputy Librarian	14	8,868.00
Senior Lecturer	---	13	7,764.00
---	Senior Librarian	12	7,104.00
Lecturer I	---	11	6,444.00
Lecturer II	Librarian I	10	5,460.00
Asst. Lecturer*	Librarian II*	9	4,368.00
Grad. Assistant*	Grad. Asst.	8	3,264.00

*Graduate Assistant has only a first degree.

*Librarian II has a first degree and a professional diploma

*Assistant Lecturer has a first degree and sometimes a one year master's degree.

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF SALARIES FOR ACADEMIC AND LIBRARY STAFF IN NIGERIA

National Library of Nigeria (a)	Typical Nigerian University Library (a)	University of Ibadan Academic Staff	University of Ibadan Library Staff	Grade Level	Starting Salaries ₦
Director	University Librarian	Professor	University Librarian	16	11,268.000
Deputy Director	Deputy Univ. Librarian	Reader	Deputy Univ. Librarian	14	8,868.00
Snr. Principal Librarian	Chief Snr. Librarian	Senior Lecturer	---	13	7,764.00
Senior Librarian	Senior Librarian	---	Senior Librarian	12	7,104.00
---	--	Lecturer I	---	11	6,444.00
Librarian I	Librarian I	Lecturer II	Librarian II	10	5,460.00
Librarian II	Librarian II	Assistant Lecturer	Librarian II	9	4,368.00
---	Assistant Librarian	Graduate Assistant	Assistant Librarian	8	3,264.00

(a): Source: Aje; 1977.

CONCLUSION

History has proved that, trying to advocate for academic status for all university librarians in Nigeria would be un-successful as this has been the bitter experience of librarians in the United States of America. In the United States where this subject is still topical, this goal has not been widely reached: for some universities have given faculty status to their librarians while some have not. It is believed that individual institutions should dictate the type of status they would want their librarians to have since every university operates under different administrative policies and pressures. If university librarians possess the same educational qualifications and responsibilities as their teaching counterparts, they should be given faculty status otherwise it would be impossible to give them parity with their teaching counterparts. It has now become necessary for university librarians to devise a simple and descriptive definition for the term "Faculty Status" as it applies to them before the university administration can classify them as such. Faculty status should entail for librarians the same rights and responsibilities as for other

members of the faculty. They should have corresponding entitlements to rank, promotion, compensation, leave and research funds. They must go through the same process of evaluation and meet the same standards of excellence as their faculty counterparts. It will not be enough to have every other benefits as a faculty member but have disparity in salary as is the case in the University of Ibadan Library.

The onus now rests on the respective university librarians to see that their staff fully enjoy whatever faculty benefits are available. For faculty status to succeed, the present titles such as Assistant Librarian, Sub-Librarian 1 and 11 and so on should be changed for more definite title as attained in the teaching faculty (table 1). To strengthen the profession, full academic ranking by title should be given based on qualification, performance and experience. The University of Ibadan Senate and Council should be pressurised to make a statement on the status of Librarians in their university so that librarians in this university will know once and for all where they belong.

Fortunately, the Ibadan University has now looked into the lot of its librarians. On the 24th March 1980, the Appointments and Promotions

Committee approved new Regulations and Guidelines (proposed by Senate for the promotion of its librarians. (See attachment 1).

With the increasing number of universities, public librarians and research institutes, the demand for qualified librarians is on a steady increase. The professional university librarian is qualified not only in the art of teaching and research but also in management. It is essential therefore, that in a university system, proper status should be accorded the profession so as to attract the right calibre of people to help in the graduate and research programmes of libraries in Nigerian universities.

ATTACHMENT 1

IBADAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY GUIDELINES ON THE REGULATIONS ON APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

Preamble:

Academic librarianship, which is a combination of professionalism and scholarship, is very strongly service-oriented. By its very nature, its professional service aspect tends to make disproportionate demand on the time of the practitioner. Moreover, a long period of initiation and experience is usually required before maturity, leading to meaningful research and publications, can be attained. Therefore, in all cases, but particularly up to the Senior Librarian grade, greater emphasis should be placed on professional competence and experience than on research and publications.

1. Professional Ability and Contribution

Professional ability and competence will be adjudged on the following:-

- (i) Nature of professional practice in an academic or research institution.
- (ii) Work-load and level productivity.
- (iii) Nature of responsibility including ability to manage a sub-section of the library.

2. Additionally, a librarian is expected to take keen interest in any activity capable of enhancing library and information science in and outside the university. The elements of contribution include:

- (iv) Level of professional practice/responsibility in an academic or research library.
- (v) Activities in professional associations.
- (vi) Contribution to the professional literature; and body of knowledge or practice.

3. Research

The Librarian in a university system should also engage in research. This shall include the following:

- (i) On-going research, particularly all studies aimed at improving professional practice.
- (ii) Theses and dissertations, subject bibliographies.
- (iii) Policy papers, manuals.
- (iv) Others.
 - (a) Unpublished bibliographies, indexes, guides and book reviews.
 - (b) Conferences and seminar papers.
 - (c) Abstracts (which have not otherwise been published).

4. Publications

- (i) Articles published in referred journals.
- (ii) Books or chapters in books (which should be relevant to the discipline of the candidate).
- (iii) Accepted articles or manuscripts for books may be used for promotion to all grades but these would be only on strict verification by the library Promotions Panels.
- (iv) Published conference papers.
- (v) Bibliographies, indexes and guides.

5. Experience

A minimum of two years since the last appointment or promotion to a grade shall be considered to fulfil the requirement of **adequate experience** at each level.

6. Assessment of Criteria

In every case, but particularly up to the Senior Librarian grade, a high rating in professional ability and experience shall compensate for deficiency in research and publications.

Note: Criteria for Appointments and Promotions

The same set of criteria shall be used for both appointments and promotions.

PROMOTION CRITERIA FOR ACADEMIC STAFF OF THE LIBRARY

1. Promotion to the Grade of Librarian II

A graduate assistant showing adequate ability in librarianship may be promoted to the grade of Librarian II.

2. Promotion to the grade of Librarian I

Promotion to the grade of Librarian I may be made on the basis of:

- (a) adequate experience.
- (b) evidence of professional ability.

3. Promotion to the grade of Senior Librarian:

Promotion to the grade of Senior Librarian may be made on the following grounds:-

- (a) adequate experience
- (b) evidence of professional contribution
- (c) evidence of research ability or publications

4. Promotion to the grade of Principal Librarian

Promotion to the grade of Principal Librarian (New)

Accelerated promotion to Principal Librarian may be made on the following grounds:

- (a) adequate experience
- (b) adequate professional contribution
- (c) adequate research and publications.

5. Promotion to the grade of Deputy Librarian G.L. 14

Promotion to the grade of Deputy Librarian may be made on the basis of:

- (a) adequate experience
- (b) significant professional contribution.
- (c) adequate research and publications.

6. Promotion to the grade of Senior Deputy Librarian G.L. 15

Promotion to the grade of Senior Deputy Librarian may be on the basis of:

- (a) adequate experience
- (b) outstanding professional contribution
- (c) significant research and publications.

With the increasing number of universities, public libraries and research institutes, the demand for qualified librarians is on a steady increase. The professional university librarians is qualified not in art of teaching and research but also in management. It is essential therefore that in a university system, proper status should be accorded the profession so as to attract the right calibre of people to help in the graduate and research programmes of librarians in Nigerian Universities.

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