

Faculty Perceptions of Librarians and Library Services: Exploring the Impact of Librarian Faculty Status and Beyond

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Abstract

ACRL prescribes that librarians with faculty status have the same privileges and responsibilities as other faculty on campus. Previous studies demonstrated that librarians believe that holding faculty status improves faculty-librarian relationships. Do disciplinary faculty feel similarly? This poster presents the results of an investigation into faculty perceptions of academic librarians in two types of institutions: those unambiguously granting and not granting librarians faculty status. We found that, among faculty who were *aware* of their local librarians' status, a higher percentage perceived closer relationships. Faculty at institutions granting librarians faculty status recognized the important role librarians played in service (e.g., campus/shared governance). Faculty also perceived librarians as relevant but less critical in assisting individual faculty members' research and teaching. Librarians integrated into the *academic lives* of their campuses are empowered to further institutional missions and strengthen faculty-librarian bonds.



* Image taken from "How Library Vendors Can Support the Changing Role of Academic Librarians" EBSCOpost, April 12, 2018. <https://www.ebsco.com/blog/article/how-library-vendors-can-support-the-changing-role-of-academic-librarians>, Nov. 11, 2018.

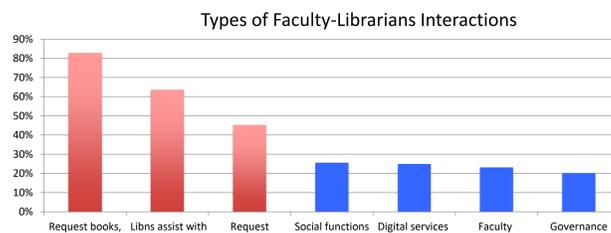
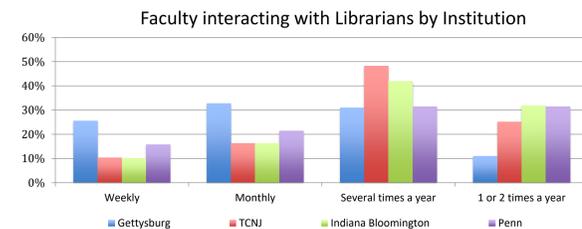
Results - Demographics

Institution	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn	Total
Responses	12% (61)	31.5% (159)	37.4% (189)	19% (96)	505

Faculty Rank	Full professor	Associate professor	Assistant professor	Adjunct professor	Lecturer
Responses	172	133	109	55	29

Discipline	A&H	Sciences	Social Sciences	Education	Business	Health Sciences	Engineering	Law
% (N)	33.5% (168)	19.6% (98)	17.1% (86)	10.6% (53)	8.8% (44)	6.4% (32)	3.2% (16)	0.8% (4)

Findings – Faculty Librarians Interactions



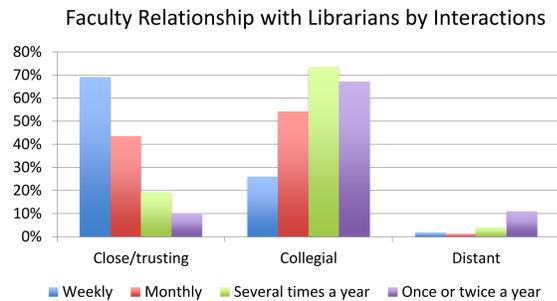
Perceptions – Library Services

Library Services	Very Helpful + Helpful	N/A
Collection development	86.22%	8.35%
Interlibrary loan (ILL)	84.00%	12.63%
Reference/research	79.45%	10.69%
Teaching/instruction	66.02%	21.72%
Digital scholarship	41.76%	42.42%
Campus governance	28.23%	54.70%
Work/social functions	26.71%	57.84%

Perceptions of Library Services by Institution (Very Helpful + Helpful)

	Gettysburg (NT)		TCNJ (T)		Indiana Bloomington (T)		Penn (NT)	
Coll. Dev.	95%	87%	87%	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%
ILL	88%	81%	81%	85%	85%	83%	83%	83%
Reference/Research	83%	78%	78%	77%	77%	77%	77%	77%
Teaching/Instruction	78%	69%	69%	61%	61%	64%	64%	64%
Digital Scholarship	58%	45%	45%	41%	41%	42%	42%	42%
Work/social functions	41%	35%	35%	25%	25%	26%	26%	26%
Governance	27%	24%	24%	23%	23%	10%	10%	10%

Faculty Status and Relationship

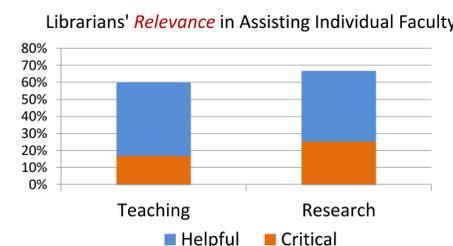
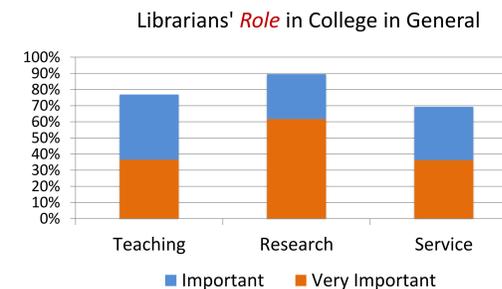


Librarians' academic status	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn
Faculty rank/status	0.00%	70.47%	62.60%	2.13%
No faculty rank/status	62.00%	0.67%	4.40%	37.20%
Don't know	38.00%	28.86%	32.97%	60.64%

Perceptions of relationship with librarians	Gettysburg	TCNJ	Indiana Bloomington	Penn
Close/trusting	41.40%	28.20%	18.70%	24.50%
Collegial/courteous	53.40%	59.06%	59.34%	59.57%
Distant	1.70%	4.00%	9.30%	6.40%
Indifferent/no thoughts	1.70%	8.10%	11.50%	7.40%
Unfriendly	0.00%	0.70%	0.50%	0.00%

Perception of relationship with librarians	Aware of faculty rank	Aware of no faculty rank	Don't know
Close/trusting/collaborative relationship	29%	39%	15%
Collegial/courteous relationship	60%	56%	58%
Distant relationship	5%	3%	9%
Indifferent/no thoughts	5%	1%	16%

Faculty's Teaching & Research



Findings/Discussion

- No noticeable differences in overall faculty perceptions of librarians or services between the two types of institutions: faculty vs. non-faculty.
- Faculty in institutions granting librarians faculty status *failed* to perceive closer relationships with their librarians but were nonetheless more *pleased* with librarians' local status.
- Proximity matters. Faculty at smaller institutions perceived closer relationships with their librarians.
- Faculty's *awareness of librarians' status* (faculty status or no faculty status) appears connected to a perceived closer relationship with librarians due to frequent interactions.
- Librarians' faculty status effectively accords better visibility to librarians. A higher percentage of faculty respondents at TCNJ and Indiana Bloomington, where librarians have faculty status, were *aware* and *pleased* with their librarians' status.
- Librarians' participation in campus governance in the two institutions granting librarians faculty status were acknowledged and recognized.
 - A disparity in perceptions of librarians' institutional *roles* in teaching and research and librarians' *relevance* in assisting individual faculty members' own teaching and research.
- Academia remains to a certain extent an isolated and proprietary environment in which faculty "maintain exclusive control over teaching and research projects." Faculty do not generally see librarians as experts in faculty members' own fields, minimizing opportunities for academic collaboration around teaching and research.



*Images taken from "Finding the findings" posted on Feb. 18, 2016 by David Coale, 600 Commerce website, <http://600commerce.com/?p=3800>. Accessed Nov. 12, 2018; PennState, Department of Social Work Education, Assessment findings, <http://www.fresnostate.edu/chhs/social-work/assessments/index.html>, Accessed, Nov. 12, 2018.

Vision – Librarians as Colleagues

- Selected open-ended response: Librarians should be "more interested in advancing faculty research rather than quickly locating a source that may or may not be the ticket. They should be willing to truly get involved and stay with a problem." Faculty perceived onus for strengthening faculty/librarian partnerships on librarians, not faculty.
- Librarians' role: To what extent can librarians advance faculty research? How can the potential benefits of such skills and services be highlighted and promoted to faculty?
- Efforts can be made to strengthen the faculty/librarian relationship and enhance librarians' relevance. The goal should be a commitment to building a trusting environment conducive to open collaborations and partnerships.
- Results of the study can be used to promote better understandings and enhanced relations between teaching faculty and librarians, whether librarians have faculty status or not. Results can also help determine strategies that might lead to more active, productive, and positive collaborations.



*Image taken from "The challenge of making change in academic, Part II" Resources for Academics Kardla Group LLC, <https://kardlagroup.com/the-challenges-of-making-change-in-academia-part-ii/>, Accessed Nov. 12, 2018.

Faculty-Librarians Relationship

Librarians (with Faculty Status)

- Believe that faculty status...
 - Improves the faculty-librarian relationship.
 - Motivates librarians to fulfill the university's mission.
 - Strengthens librarians' voices and validates their roles.
 - Increases librarians' participation in campus-wide governance structures.
 - Develops research skills that strengthen patron service and academic librarianship.

Disciplinary Faculty

- Relations with librarians are of little or no concern.
- No solid understanding of librarians' work and are generally not seeking contact.
- Believe the function of the library and librarian is the organization and facilitation of access to resources.
- Acknowledge that a "disconnect" exists between faculty and librarians, but do not consider it problematic.

Research Questions

- Whether and how librarians' faculty status may affect the faculty-librarian relationship and perceptions of librarians?
- How disciplinary faculty perceive librarians' roles in facilitating teaching, research & service (i.e., "campus governance")?

Methodology

- Surveyed four institutions: Gettysburg College (no tenure); The College of New Jersey (tenure); University of Pennsylvania (no tenure); and Indiana University, Bloomington (tenure).
- Included demographic questions and questions related to faculty use of libraries, interactions w/ librarians, awareness of librarians' local status, and perceptions of librarians and library services.
 - Two open-ended questions captured additional comments and views on how faculty-librarian relationships could be strengthened and enhanced.



* Image taken from Bhadi, Adi, "What is Research- Definition, Methods, Types & Examples," QuestionPro, <https://www.questionpro.com/blog/what-is-research/>, Accessed Nov. 11, 2018.