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 and library services 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.

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
- Relationships 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 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 do faculty perceive librarians’ roles in facilitating teaching, research & service (i.e., “campus governance”)?

Findings – Faculty-Librarians Interactions
Perceptions – Faculty-Librarians Interactions
Types of Faculty-Librarians Interactions

Findings – Faculty Status and Relationship
Perceptions of relationship with librarians

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.

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 faculty/librarian partnerships on librarians, not faculty.
- Efficacy of academic collaborations: The goal should be a commitment to building a trusting environment conducive to open collaborations and partnerships.
- Efforts can be made to strengthen the faculty/librarian relationship and enhance librarians’ relevance. The goal 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.

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’ role.
- Two open-ended questions captured additional comments and views on how faculty-librarian relationships could be strengthened and enhanced.

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

Librarians’ Role in College in General

Faculty’s Teaching & Research

Library Services
- Collection development
- Interlibrary loan
- Reference/research
- Teaching/instruction
- Digital scholarship
- Campus governance
- Work/social functions

Perceptions of Library Services by Institution

Faculty Rank/Status

Librarians’ academic status

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Faculty Rank/Status and Relationship

Faculty’s Teaching & Research

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- 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.
- Efforts 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.