

The Academic Library as a Teaching Library: A Role for the 1980s

ALAN E. GUSKIN
CARLA J. STOFFLE
JOSEPH A. BOISSÉ

THE 1980s WILL CHALLENGE universities to make some serious choices regarding programs and priorities. These choices will arise, to a great extent, from the continued deterioration of the economic status of higher education in general. Following a period of extensive growth, and then one of relative stability, the 1980s will almost surely be marked by continuing fiscal constraint. The manner in which a university faculty and staff respond to the difficult choices of the next decade will be an indication of the educational values they consider important.

Maintenance of academic standards is the first and most significant of the choices that will have to be considered. Much of the financial problem which universities will face is a consequence of the reduction in numbers of 18- to 22-year-old students. For these institutions, the temptation may be to increase the number of students by any means possible. A danger in over-responding to the need for increased enrollment is to lower academic standards in an effort both to admit and to retain more students.

While open access to and increased availability of higher education are desirable goals, they can be justified only when academic standards are maintained. In fact, such goals make it essential that all students demonstrate that they have the necessary skills to remain students once they enter the university. If universities lower academic standards, grad-

Alan E. Guskin is Chancellor, Carla J. Stoffle is Assistant Chancellor for Educational Services, and Joseph A. Boissé is Director of the Library/Learning Center, University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha.

uates will be ill-prepared for their future careers, and, as a result, there will be a further erosion of confidence in institutions of higher education. The challenge then will be to maintain standards in the face of declining enrollment even if it means dropping some students from the university.

Other choices will have to be made as a result of the increasing diversity in the types of students who attend colleges and universities. Adults and part-time students may well become the majority group on most 4-year college campuses. These students will be on campus less, but will be demanding more of the university in terms of the type and quality of the education and educational services they receive. Because of their commitments to home, work and community activities, they will have limited time for their education. They will, therefore, need more flexible course scheduling than will their younger, full-time counterparts, as well as more challenging assignments, and better and more integrated services, all of which will require a greater share of scarce fiscal resources.

As institutions strive to deal with these internal pressures, they must also be concerned with rebuilding the public trust, which was seriously damaged in the late 1960s and early 1970s and has never been totally restored. A key element in reversing the damage will be the relationship that the university develops with its surrounding community. Universities can be important resources for the local, regional and state communities they serve. In order to realize this potential, however, they will have to reallocate scarce resources and reorder internal priorities. If they do so, they will have a powerful impact on the communities and, conversely, will be considerably influenced by these same communities.

These and other choices which colleges and universities must make in the next decade will bring old assumptions about educational programs and priorities under close scrutiny. How will a changing student body affect the curriculum, class scheduling and educational services in general? How can faculty and staff be encouraged to maintain academic standards in the face of declining enrollments? How can the basic skills of entering students be improved? How can universities relate to their surrounding communities and at what cost? On what basis will educational changes be made? How will necessary changes be introduced by and to the various constituencies? What impact will these changes, new priorities and the reallocation of increasingly scarce resources have on the traditional units, especially the academic library?

It is unlikely that academic libraries will remain unaffected by the manner in which their institutions meet the challenges of the next decade. The library can choose to stand aloof from the changing environment

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and continue business as usual, or it can seize the opportunity and move boldly and decisively into the educational mainstream of the campus. If the library chooses the former, it should be prepared to suffer the gradual and continuing neglect of the campus community. If the library chooses to accept the latter role, it can evolve into a dynamic unit receiving considerable attention from faculty members, students, administrators and community residents.

Most academic libraries are at crossroads and must select a path for the 1980s. Decisions are already being made in response to the pressures now on colleges and universities, and these decisions are affecting the library. Book budgets are static if not decreasing. Other library programs are being questioned because of the competing financial needs of campus programs which deal more directly with the changing student body, standards and community support. In other words, there is no status quo. Libraries cannot remain primarily committed to collecting, storing and retrieving information and materials. To do so will be to accept quietly a deteriorating condition.

THE TEACHING LIBRARY: A DEFINITION

One major way in which the library can respond to the present challenges in higher education, maintain itself as a viable campus unit, and realize its potential as the symbolic heart of the campus is to become a "teaching library." By the term *teaching library*, the authors refer to a library which is not only a support service for academic programs, but which is itself actively and directly involved in implementing the mission of higher education: teaching, research and community service.

The teaching library is characterized by the following:

1. a commitment to instructing students, faculty and staff in the effective identification and use of information resources;
2. a commitment to bringing all library resources to bear on the development of college students into lifelong learners;
3. a commitment to providing access to and encouraging the appropriate use of its resources by residents in the surrounding communities;
4. a commitment to developing a climate of learning in surrounding communities by working with other community educational agencies to facilitate the fullest possible use of the information resources available;
5. a commitment to maintaining a collection adequate to meet basic campus needs; and

6. a commitment to resource-sharing so that the campus community has easy access to materials not available in the library.¹

THE CORE PROGRAM OF THE TEACHING LIBRARY: BIBLIOGRAPHIC INSTRUCTION

One program must be present in all teaching libraries: comprehensive bibliographic instruction at the elementary and advanced levels. This essential program emerges from the one function common to all institutions of higher education — namely, education of the undergraduate. The need for bibliographic instruction was recognized early by librarians and university administrators. In his annual report for 1883, the president of Columbia University stated:

The average college student . . . is ignorant of the greater part of the bibliographical apparatus which the skilled librarian has in hourly use, to enable him to answer the thousand queries of the public. A little systematic instruction would so start our students in the right methods, that for the rest of their lives all their work in libraries would be more expeditiously accomplished.²

In 1886, at the annual conference of the American Library Association, Edwin H. Woodruff of Cornell University Library referred to the role of the college library in this manner:

The practical duty of a college library . . . is to teach the student how he may, . . . at any time in his post-collegiate years, seek out and use the books that have displaced or carried along the knowledge of his college-days. . . . He should feel that the college has done all it can for him when it has led him into the library (and) taught him to . . . use its contents.³

In 1902 W.R. Harper, president of the University of Chicago, stated rather emphatically: "The equipment of the library will not be finished until it shall have upon its staff men and women whose entire work shall be, not the care of books, not the cataloguing of books, but the giving of instruction concerning their use."⁴

Throughout these years and the decades that followed, many librarians developed courses and other instructional materials designed to teach students how to utilize more effectively library resources. There is ample reference to these efforts in library literature.⁵ For the most part, however, attempts to develop instructional programs into basic library services were isolated and, for a variety of reasons, short-lived.

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The past decade has witnessed a resurgence of instruction activities by librarians. Increasingly frustrated by the apparent futility of many, if not most, of the traditional librarian/student contacts, librarians have been directing their energies toward developing effective methods of teaching students how to use libraries. While many libraries today can point to very successful bibliographic instruction activities, few can claim to have comprehensive programs.

A comprehensive program of bibliographic instruction should have the following components: (1) a general orientation to available facilities and resources, (2) the teaching of basic research skills and strategies, and (3) the teaching of the organization of the literature in various disciplines, as well as the basic reference tools in each discipline. In addition, the program should be characterized by: (1) a written profile identifying the audiences for the instruction and their needs, (2) a written statement of instructional goals and objectives, and (3) a plan for evaluating the instructional program.⁶

In establishing a comprehensive program of bibliographic instruction, the library staff will follow essentially the same steps that will be outlined for the development of a teaching library. The recent library literature abounds with articles on how to plan a library instruction program,⁷ how to develop instructional goals and objectives,⁸ how to select appropriate methods and develop effective materials,⁹ and how to evaluate instructional programs.¹⁰ The key element in developing a successful instruction program is the relationship between faculty and librarians. Without cooperation and communication, librarians cannot prepare relevant instruction programs and faculty will not accept librarians in the classroom. Therefore, librarians must spend a substantial amount of time cultivating faculty members — providing information for them, obtaining information from them, and developing among them the concept of the librarian as a team member in the educational process.¹¹ Some examples of programs for achieving this relationship include:

1. creating faculty profiles, i.e., holding individual interviews with faculty members to learn about their courses, research and service activities, while at the same time providing faculty with information about useful library resources and services;
2. contributing to faculty newsletters or regularly issued publications in order to inform faculty about library services, staff, new collection items and programs, etc.;
3. attending faculty receptions, coffees and social hours;
4. initiating faculty routing of articles, *Choice* cards, etc. — activities

which provide a special service to the faculty by giving them information they might not otherwise have found and/or involving them directly in decisions about the development of the library's collection; and

5. holding faculty workshops, seminars, etc. which focus on materials and new technological advances, such as how to access data bases and use new instructional media.

OTHER PROGRAMS OF THE TEACHING LIBRARY

While a comprehensive bibliographic instruction program is an essential component of a teaching library, it is not the sole component. A variety of other activities will flow from the commitments of the teaching library, activities which are not new to libraries. However, they will have new objectives and will be part of an overall plan rather than being isolated. To enrich the climate of learning on campus and generate greater use of its resources, a teaching library might:

1. develop displays of its materials on topics of current interest nationally, locally or to the campus;
2. establish regular showings of library films or videotapes during lunch hour or at other appropriate times;
3. set aside special areas for recreational reading with current book collections of popular materials available;
4. create special areas for displaying student art work;
5. sponsor lectures, poetry readings, etc. either in the library or at other locations on campus; and
6. provide bulletin boards for posting notices of cultural activities on and off campus, or for posting book reviews, film reviews, etc.

From its commitment to provide access to and encourage the appropriate use of its collections by community residents, the library staff may: (1) develop book lists or bibliographies describing the resources of the library in areas of interest to community agencies or special interest groups; (2) establish special circulation privileges for community agencies, schools, businesses; and (3) issue to community residents library cards which will allow them to enjoy the same circulation and use privileges as students.¹²

From the commitment to work with community educational agencies to create a climate of learning in the community, and as a natural extension of a bibliographic instruction program, the teaching library may provide programs of library instruction for area high school classes. The

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availability of these programs will enable teachers to upgrade coursework and expand research assignments because of access to specialized materials — materials which the students will be taught to find and use. Following from the same commitment, librarians may provide instructional sessions or inservice workshops for local government employees, area businessmen, professionals in local social service agencies, teachers, and members of community organizations (such as historical societies) on locating and using specialized materials to which they might not otherwise have had access.

Other community-related activities of the teaching library may involve programs developed in conjunction with other area libraries. The programs may involve traditional resource-sharing activities or may extend to joint programming. The preparation of joint book lists on topics of interest to the community, the cosponsoring of film programs and lectures, joint displays, and the loan of specialized collections — such as a public library's current fiction collection to the academic library, or conversely, specialized academic library materials to the public library — are only some examples of what might be done. Examples of other programs include staff exchanges, joint continuing education activities, joint circulation systems, cooperative acquisitions, and cooperative processing. In addition, the libraries involved may even develop cooperative reference and circulation policies. These activities will assure the community of both the efficient use of available resources and more effective library services.

Because of its commitments, the teaching library must be genuinely concerned with the problem of providing an adequate basic collection and quick access to research materials. Since a major objective of bibliographic instruction is to teach people how to access and use information, it is obvious that the reference collection gains added importance as a prime vehicle for leading people to information. The necessity for careful, well-planned development of the general collection is further emphasized by the fact that a successful bibliographic instruction program will increase the level of sophistication of the users. Finally, because of this increased user sophistication and because all libraries are experiencing fiscal constraints, greater importance will have to be given to the establishment of fast, efficient, effective resource-sharing mechanisms. Unless attention is paid to these collection development factors, all of the activities and programs of the teaching library will flounder and fail since it will be impossible for the library to maintain any degree of credibility.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING LIBRARY

The development of a teaching library is not a simple process. It takes careful planning, flexibility, tenacity and commitment on the part of both the library administration and staff. This process begins with an analysis of the external and internal environmental factors directly affecting the university. Such an analysis involves examining institutional goals and objectives, priorities, curriculum, long-range plans, and other factors which are likely to affect substantially the future of the institution. Following the analysis, the population to be served must be identified. This population may include undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, institutional administrators and staff, and community residents such as teachers, businessmen, city officials, etc.

Following the identification of these groups, the library staff can proceed to the assessment of the information-related needs and the information-gathering skills of the various populations to be served. Some ways that this might be done are to:

1. interview representatives of each segment of the population about their needs, and available resources and programs which already meet those needs;
2. interview faculty and administration about the perceived needs of other population segments;
3. examine course syllabi, the college catalog, student assignment sheets, listings of reference questions asked, etc.;
4. attend faculty meetings whenever possible;
5. establish contacts in the community, with educational agencies, other librarians, etc., and attend meetings involving these people or their organizations; and
6. examine the library literature, including articles about patrons and services in other than academic libraries, to gather ideas and place the information collected on the library's specific population in a broader context.

While assessing the needs of the population to be served, the library must also analyze its resources which can be utilized to meet these needs. Most critical is an assessment of the available human resources: the commitment and ability of library administrators to implement a teaching library in terms of their technical expertise, internal leadership skills, and influence on central university administrators; the skill of the present library staff to implement the array of programs that make up a teaching

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library; and the availability of staff to carry out traditional library functions along with the new programs.

Besides the ability and availability of staff, the library resource assessment must include consideration of the finances available in the library and the potential for funds reallocation to new programs, fiscal resources available within the university that can be allocated to the library, the needs of the collection and the capability of fulfilling them, and the availability of equipment for present and future needs. Of course, each university has special circumstances that may require assessing unique campus resources which could help fulfill the needs of the teaching library (e.g., specialized libraries on the campus, and libraries within the community with which there is a consortial relationship).

The need for clearly defined goals and objectives in the teaching library cannot be emphasized too strongly. In the most general sense, people need objectives to tell them where they have been, where they are going, why they want to go, and when they will get there. In the process of developing goals and objectives, library staff must gain clear understanding of their self-interests, the university's interests, their conceptions of a library generally and of a teaching library specifically, as well as what can and should be accomplished by the desired conception. Moreover, objectives are useful not only because they help chart a course of action, but because they make evaluation possible.

A critical element in the development of goals and objectives is the process itself. Faculty, staff, students and appropriate community members should be involved in discussing the early drafts. Through this participation, these individuals and groups not only lend constructive insights, but also become committed to the outcome — the actual goals and objectives. Obviously, this commitment is dependent on the sincerity with which the consultation takes place; if the process is open and has the potential to produce changes in the draft — whether or not each comment leads to an adjustment — the involvement in the development of the goals and objectives will more than likely lead the participants to an understanding of the teaching library and to support of its implementation. This type of consultation is especially important in periods of fiscal constraint, as the development of some of the programs in the teaching library may displace other more established library activities, which under the new plan may have a lower priority.

Developing programs and activities carefully designed to implement the goals and objectives is the next step. This program development function must take place within the context of all resource analyses and needs

assessments previously completed. Since each university has a unique configuration of internal and external resources and needs, the nature and/or the type of programs that emerge will be distinct from those of other institutions.

Once the library has decided which programs and activities to implement, it must develop an evaluation component. Unless the library is involved in evaluation on an ongoing basis, there is a grave danger that many programs and activities will become entrenched simply because they have been started. The whole purpose of evaluation is to provide the library with a method of improving its programs, of redirecting them when necessary, of changing them when appropriate, and of quietly laying them to rest when they have served their purpose. Evaluation methods used can vary from the informal and subjective, such as interviewing students, faculty and staff and checking use statistics, to more formal and objective methods involving carefully constructed questionnaires and the use of elaborate research designs.

THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING A TEACHING LIBRARY

Creating a teaching library requires sensitivity to the political and administrative processes of university life. Since it demands a reorganization of library priorities and activities, the building of elaborate relationships between the library staff and faculty, and the use of scarce fiscal resources, implementation of the teaching library is in itself a political process which requires considerable skill to manage.

The implementation of the teaching library, especially the bibliographic instruction program, is a major undertaking entailing considerable organizational uncertainty and some risk for those involved in the process. Uncertainty must be reduced as much as possible and the risk involved must be seen as reasonable to those responsible in order for them to be willing to undertake the change process. Furthermore, because such new programs upset routine activities, some people are always going to resist the change. Not all the uncertainty, risk and resistance can be avoided, but a great deal can be done to reduce it through good planning, understanding of the process by which new programs are developed and adopted, and careful analysis of the people and organizational units involved in the implementation of the teaching library.

The development of a teaching library should begin slowly. The program should start on a small scale and build acceptance through successful performance. The key activities in this social/interactional/political process (described here in the context of the bibliographic instruction

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program but also applicable to the other services of the teaching library) are as follows:

1. diagnosis of the courses which have the greatest need and where faculty members could use bibliographic instruction if they chose;
2. diagnosis of the type of faculty most willing to try this innovation in the classroom;
3. cultivation of those faculty likely to be most receptive, with an emphasis on those faculty who are opinion leaders among their colleagues. These individuals can be essential to gaining the acceptance of others, e.g., senior faculty members who have reputations as good teachers and scholars. Havelock, a leading scholar in the field of knowledge utilization and planned change, summed up the effect of such opinion leaders in the following way:

Diffusion of an innovation begins with the acceptance of the idea by a few key members of a community. From there on, it begins to spread more rapidly, usually through word-of-mouth contacts between friends, neighbors, and relatives. This person-to-person process is very effective; once it has started and there are clusters of people who accept the idea and are "talking it up," it gathers momentum. A chain reaction seems to be generated once this "critical mass" of key individuals has formed, and there is a rapid upswing in the rate of acceptance until a large majority has been won over.¹³

4. diagnosis of areas of likely resistance. Care should be taken to avoid individuals who would reject the ideas, large-scale faculty senate or even department votes on adoption, and situations in which the program could be challenged prior to successful adoption by large numbers of people. For example, the library must continue to provide high-quality traditional library services while implementing the new program. This is difficult, but essential if the library is to avoid negative criticism of bibliographic instruction and its other teaching library activities.

The purpose of diagnosing faculty need and interest and cultivating potential implementers of bibliographic instruction — or any of the teaching library activities — is to facilitate the acceptance by these individuals of the new programs. An important part of this effort to encourage acceptance is an understanding of the process by which people adopt innovations. The literature on the adoption of innovation indicates that the process of acceptance has six phases: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial,

adoption, and integration.¹⁴ Each stage is described here generally and in terms of how it relates to the implementation of bibliographic instruction and the teaching library.

Awareness: The individual is exposed to the new program or innovation and becomes aware of it. The manner in which it is presented at the outset may determine the individual's motivation to move into the next phase of the acceptance process. The purpose here is to stimulate the curiosity of potential adopters. This is a key period in the cultivation of these people to make them feel at ease with the librarian.

Interest: The individual seeks out information about the new program or innovation, and has expressed an interest even though he has yet to decide on its suitability to his own situation. Based on the information gathered, the individual may either decide against the new program or to move into the next phase of the acceptance process. The librarian at this stage should involve appropriate individuals, i.e., faculty members, librarians in other libraries, etc., in group discussions concerning the proposed program, and encourage them to seek out more information on how this new program can be beneficial.

Evaluation: This is a "mental trial" period in which the individual applies the new program or innovation to his own situation and decides whether or not it is worth trying. At this point, the librarian should demonstrate to interested individuals how the project will actually work so that they can envision its application. For example, in promoting a bibliographic instruction program, the librarian might discuss the specific benefits that will result and give some indication of how the program will actually operate in the classroom.

Trial: During this stage, the individual tests the new program or innovation on a small scale to see how it would actually work in his or her situation. For example, at this point in the adoption process of a bibliographic instruction program, the librarian should encourage the faculty member to let the instruction librarian take over a few class periods and actually demonstrate the program. It is particularly important at this point that the faculty member understand his/her relationship to the librarian during the classroom sessions, and to the program during classes prior to and immediately following the bibliographic instruction. In order to realize the potential in this situation, the faculty member must see how he or she relates directly to the process. At this point, the faculty member needs maximum support, both intellectual and emotional, to develop a positive atmosphere. Care must be taken to help the faculty member evaluate the bibliographic instruction program and personal

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reactions to it. The results of the trial may not be immediately apparent unless they are pointed out.

Adoption: As a result of the trial period, the individuals make a decision either to adopt or reject the new program or innovation. For example, after the faculty member decides to incorporate bibliographic instruction in class, care must be taken to continue close interaction in order to avoid any difficulties that might occur before or after bibliographic instruction. The key issue here is to help the individual adjust to the new situation and to provide necessary support.

Integration: Even after a positive decision is made, it is extremely important that the new program or innovation become fully integrated into the ongoing work of the adopter. True integration occurs when the new program is seen as a routine activity. At this point, the librarian keeps in touch with program adopters through follow-up information about new developments or possible additions to the program. Continuing emphasis should be placed on the importance and usefulness of the program.

Throughout all of these stages it is important that the individuals who may adopt the new program are allowed and encouraged to make a personal commitment, to discuss their doubts about the program, and to seek out librarians when they need help. It is extremely important that those individuals who are among the first to utilize the program receive a great deal of support and encouragement when the program is initiated. Librarians should foster in those individuals positive feelings about the program and show them how it fulfills their desire for better service (in the case of local educational agencies), or for higher standards and better-prepared students (in the case of faculty). Such support is important in overcoming any fears or insecurity, and should be given to everyone involved in adopting the programs of the teaching library.

In addition to support of those responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the program, any major organizational change requires support from the leadership of the institution. Gaining support from the senior administration of a university requires both the cultivation of the individuals involved and the demonstration of a significant commitment by the proposing unit. This means that the library director and staff must demonstrate their strong support for the new program by reordering priorities and reallocating library resources to implement the new program.

Senior university administrators spend much of their time dealing with requests for funds. From this experience, they are often cynical about

the importance of new programs that are additions to present ones. They are easily surprised and their imaginations stimulated when someone does *not* ask them for money, but rather shows them a new and exciting idea for increasing the effectiveness of a unit, especially a traditional academic unit like the library. Since libraries are generally seen as mausoleums where books are accumulated, as "bottomless pits" for monies to increase collections and as passive servants of a student population with decreasing skills, administrators may well be pleased by and attracted to an aggressive library oriented toward teaching.

Senior administrators have a universitywide perspective, and are thus continually struggling to keep a proper balance between competing interests while maintaining a concern for the total array of university programs. In many ways, the library is one of the few campus units which shares a universitywide perspective and must deal with the problems of such competing interests. Librarians can utilize this perspective in working with senior administrators by showing them how a teaching library can serve the educational interests of the entire university rather than one small part of it.

From the viewpoint of senior administrators, the library is a resource that can respond to the changing needs of universities. First, library directors tend to be responsive to the leadership of senior academic administrators. Second, unlike academic departments whose highly tenured faculty members may emphasize more traditional concerns, the teaching library has the flexibility to adjust to the changing educational demands made on universities: to student needs for basic library research skills and advanced research methods, to the need for new instructional technology to teach students more efficiently and effectively, to the out-of-class needs of adults and community members, and so on. Given the pressures on universities to adjust to new types of students, senior administrators are looking for university units flexible enough to make this change. Library directors who understand this and are willing to make a commitment to a teaching library can find their organizations receiving considerable moral — and even financial — support.

The support of high-level university administrators does not assure the success of programs like bibliographic instruction or the teaching library; ultimately, that will depend on the faculty members, staff, students and community members involved in the many new activities. What high-level administrative support does provide is fiscal resources, if needed, and even more importantly, the endorsement of such an innovation as an important university interest and program. Without such sup-

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port, faculty and staff members will always be concerned about whether or not the program will receive the resources necessary to survive. The reality that they will receive the resources may be less important than the symbolic support of the senior administrators. Such support reduces the uncertainty ever-present in universities these days, and reduces the risk that a commitment to this program will prove embarrassing at some future point.

SUMMARY

Colleges and universities will undergo changes in the next decade in response to the pressures being brought to bear on higher education by the changing student body, the reexamination of standards, and the need to restore public confidence. Educational priorities will be reordered. Traditional campus units, including the library, will feel the impact of these changes. Rather than remain an amorphous symbol of the academic world, the library can seize the opportunity to become an active ingredient in the educational process of the university by becoming a teaching library.

The creation of a teaching library requires major effort. Careful planning must take place, priorities must be reordered, and the library staff must understand how to implement the necessary changes. The development of a teaching library is not a function of any single activity, but rather the configuration of programs and priorities focused on the manner in which a library can best serve the educational needs of the faculty, students and community individuals and institutions.

If academic libraries accept the challenge of the 1980s and respond to it in a manner similar to that described in this paper, they will not only gain control of their own destiny, but may well become a model of institution (and constituent units') responsiveness to the educational changes of the next decade.

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