

2018

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Faculty Status for Academic Librarians: A Case Study at the University of Washington

Ashley Arrington

Abstract

Through a University of Washington case study evaluating a proposed transition to faculty status for all University of Washington librarians, this paper seeks to illustrate some of the many complexities associated with the issue of faculty status for all academic librarians, including law librarians. Among other considerations and lessons specific to the issue of librarian faculty status, two key takeaways for new academic librarians are highlighted.

I. Introduction

Being new to academic law librarianship, like many new librarians, I found myself easily confused when seeking to understand the various statuses assigned to academic law librarians. Naturally, I began to wonder why academic law librarians were only sometimes considered faculty members and yearned to understand the implications of such status. In speaking with other new law librarians, I encountered several librarians who were ill-informed about their own statuses, despite having already made their way into an academic setting, and quickly learned that my confusion was shared. Thus, in an attempt to make sense of the issue for myself and other new librarians, and upon learning that the University of Washington was currently in the midst of a proposed transition to faculty status for its librarians, I was inspired to delve deeper into what quickly revealed itself to be an issue with myriad complexities.

At its earlier stages, I approached this paper with four goals in mind. Generally speaking, I sought to learn more about the issue of faculty status in relation to non-director academic law librarians. More specifically, I sought to make sense of inconsistent and confusing terminologies, to gain some awareness of recent trends, and to evaluate best practices regarding faculty status for non-director academic law librarians.

As evidenced throughout, the key goals and relevant takeaways for this paper evolved as I delved further into the University of Washington (UW) case study. This occurred for a couple of reasons. First, because UW Libraries is seeking to transition all UW librarians to university library faculty, the case study naturally extended to include all UW librarians, rather than law librarians specifically. Second, as I delved further into the UW case study, I realized that, despite a decades-long history of advocating for faculty status, the proposed transition to faculty status at UW Libraries is still very much a work in progress.

Despite an unanticipated shift from my initial goals for the paper, there remain a number of key takeaways to be highlighted by the UW case study. While such takeaways are detailed throughout and further summarized in the conclusory section of this paper, suffice it to say that many of the complexities associated with faculty status for academic librarianship generally are complexities that should be weighed and considered by those seeking to understand faculty status in the context of academic law librarianship.

II. Previous Surveys on Faculty Status for Academic Law Librarians

In my initial attempt to gain information on the issue of faculty status for academic law librarians, and before delving into the University of Washington case study, I conducted a literature review that included a number of previous surveys on faculty status for academic law librarians. I quickly learned, however, that many of those surveys examined the issue of faculty status alongside other complex issues, such as library autonomy, salary, and most frequently, tenure. Additionally, I quickly realized that several of the existing surveys looked specifically at the status of director, rather than non-director, law librarians. To avoid a lengthy discussion of the related yet less relevant issues, I will summarize the key takeaways from those few surveys most applicable to faculty status for non-director academic law librarians.

Building upon a 1973 survey focused specifically on director law librarians, a 1978 survey examined faculty status for all academic law librarians, including non-director librarians, alongside issues of library autonomy and tenure. It concluded, most importantly, that “the majority of... law librarians... [did] not have any faculty status or tenure opportunities” at that time.¹

In 1986, the same authors followed up on their 1978 survey through another survey that once again focused on issues of library autonomy, faculty status, and tenure for academic law librarians. Such survey concluded that two-thirds of non-director law

¹ James F. Bailey III & Oscar M. Trelles II, *Autonomy, Librarian Status, and Librarian Tenure in Law School Libraries: The State of the Art*, 1978, 71 Law Libr. J. 425 (1978).

librarians did not have faculty status or tenure opportunities and, further, that “the faculty status [and] tenure situation for... law librarians [appeared to have] deteriorated somewhat since 1978.”² Such survey additionally noted that more than half of law librarians with faculty status or tenure opportunities held such opportunities through their law schools, while only one-quarter held faculty status or tenure opportunities through their university libraries.³ Both the 1978 and 1986 surveys noted that the granting of faculty status and tenure through the university library “[involved] a movement away from traditional autonomous status.”⁴

Most recently, in 2004, a survey conducted by law librarians at Texas Tech University School of Law evaluated faculty status and tenure for non-director law librarians “with the goal of helping [such] librarians make their best argument toward obtaining status and tenure.”⁵ Such survey revealed “that more than half of responding [Association of Research (ARL)]-affiliated law libraries [offered] some form of [faculty] status or rank with tenure or continuing appointment” to non-director librarians.⁶ Importantly, it noted that non-director librarians generally received faculty status or rank in one of four groups: law school faculty, law library faculty, university library faculty, or general university faculty.⁷ Additionally, such survey found that a majority

² James F. Bailey III & Oscar M. Trelles II, *Autonomy, Librarian Status, and Librarian Tenure in Law School Libraries: The State of the Art*, 78 *Law Libr. J.* 605 (1986).

³ *Id.* at 673.

⁴ *Id.* at 673.

⁵ Sharon Blackburn, Robert H. Hu, Masako Patrum & Sharon K. Scott, *Status and Tenure for Academic Law Librarians: A Survey*, 96 *Law Libr. J.* 127 (2004).

⁶ *Id.* at 136.

⁷ *Id.* at 145.

(53.5%) of ARL-affiliated law libraries offered non-director librarians faculty or academic status or rank with tenure, while only a minority (somewhere between 27.1% and 43.9%) of all academic law libraries offered the same opportunities to non-director librarians.^{8 9}

Apart from the provision of statistical analyses and some indication of recent trends, the existing surveys on faculty status for academic law librarians serve to highlight a number of the complexities associated with the issue of faculty status. Among other issues, such surveys highlight that faculty status is frequently connected to and considered alongside principal issues of classroom teaching, publishing requirements, participation in professional organizations, and participation in university governance.

III. A Case Study at the University of Washington

As previously noted, quite early in my attempt to learn more about the issue of faculty status for academic law librarians, I learned that the University of Washington Libraries was currently in the midst of a proposed transition to faculty status for all

⁸ *Id.* at 149.

⁹ Though it evaluates continuing appointment and tenure, rather than faculty status, a more recent survey might be of interest to readers. See Brian Huddleston, *ALL-SIS Committee on Continuing Status and Tenure Academic Law Librarian Tenure and Employment Status Survey (Non-Director Law Librarians at U.S. Law Schools)*, American Association of Law Libraries (May 31, 2013), <http://www.brianhuddleston.com/CST/Wholething.pdf>.

University of Washington librarians. Thus, in an attempt to examine faculty status for academic law librarians through such transition, I opted to conduct a case study.¹⁰

In the following sub-sections, I provide a brief description of the current status of University of Washington librarians as specified by the UW Librarian Personnel Code; identify the relevant associations and committees involved in historical attempts, and the current attempt, to transition University of Washington librarians from academic personnel to faculty members; provide a brief overview of historical attempts to transition University of Washington librarians to faculty members; describe the methodology relating to this University of Washington case study; summarize the information and documentation collected during the case study; and finally, through a thorough and comprehensive review of such materials, evaluate the results and value of the UW case study.

A. University of Washington Libraries Librarian Personnel Code¹¹

¹⁰ In truth, I had initially planned to conduct both a survey and case study for this paper. However, I quickly realized that such task would easily become overwhelming. Even in my initial review of the existing surveys, I felt overwhelmed by the long lists of questions asked, many of which related to concerns and issues I had not yet developed a sufficient understanding for. A review of the questions included in Appendix A of both the 1986 and 2004 surveys, for example, should suffice to convey why a new law librarian might feel overwhelmed in tackling such a survey. For this reason, I ultimately decided to use the proposed status transition at UW Libraries as a case study.

¹¹ *University of Washington Libraries Librarian Personnel Code*, University of Washington Libraries (Nov. 1, 2017), <https://www.lib.washington.edu/about/employment/hr/libpersonnelcode>.

At present, University of Washington librarians hold appointments as academic personnel.¹² They are appointed at the rank of assistant librarian, senior assistant librarian, associate librarian, or librarian dependent upon their qualifications;¹³ and their appointment status can be provisional, permanent, non-continuing, continuing or temporary, dependent upon qualifications and whether the librarian is supported by state-appropriated funds.¹⁴

B. The Association of Librarians of the University of Washington

The Association of Librarians of the University of Washington (ALUW) is a professional association of the University of Washington that has represented librarians from all three¹⁵ UW campuses since 1969.¹⁶ ¹⁷ According to its website, the ALUW “serves to represent the issues and advocate the concerns of the University’s librarians to the administration, campus, and... professional community.”¹⁸

The Association of Librarians of the University of Washington has three committees, including the ALUW Faculty Council and Faculty Committee, the ALUW Directed Fieldwork (DFW)/Capstone Assistance and Resource Committee, and, as is

¹² *Id.* at 4.

¹³ *Id.* at 5.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 10.

¹⁵ The three University of Washington campuses include Bothell, Seattle, and Tacoma.

¹⁶ *Association of Librarians of the University of Washington, Workers & Unions of UW* (2002), <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/uwunions/aluw.htm>.

¹⁷ All UW librarians are automatically members of ALUW.

¹⁸ *Association of Librarians of the University of Washington, University of Washington*, <http://staffweb.lib.washington.edu/committees/aluw>.

most relevant here, the ALUW Status Committee, which was set up to review the status of librarians at UW.

The formation of ALUW stemmed in large part from the issue of faculty status, and ALUW has worked to improve the status of UW librarians since its formation. Though the mission of ALUW encompasses more than the status issue alone,¹⁹ the question of faculty status remains a central issue for ALUW.

C. A History of ALUW and Faculty Status for Academic Librarians at UW

A 2002 University of Washington document provides an insightful description of the early actions on the issue of faculty status for UW librarians, as well as the formation and early years of ALUW, the key points of which I will summarize here.

The first collective action on the status of UW librarians occurred in 1947 and was initiated by the university chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), during which time such chapter “focused on the key issues of salary and faculty status as the most important areas in which librarians’ needs had been neglected.”²⁰ Ultimately, however, the chapter decided against the

¹⁹ According to its website, *supra* note 18, the official mission of ALUW is “to promote library service of the highest quality at the University of Washington, [to] promote the professional standing of the members and encourage professional development, [to] provide a forum for consideration of and action upon issues of professional concern to the members, [to] improve librarians’ working conditions and benefits, and [to] promote informal communication and fellowship among members.”

²⁰ Ross Nadal, *The Association of Librarians of the University of Washington: A Brief Description of the Formation and Early History, with Particular Attention to the Issue of Faculty Status* (June 2002), <http://depts.washington.edu/labhist/uwunions/nadal-aluw.htm>.

recommendation of librarian faculty status “because it felt the status issue was merely a manifestation of dissatisfaction with salary [that] could not ‘be solved by a nominal change in status.’”²¹

In 1957, the issues of salary and faculty status resurfaced when a group of UW librarians and administrators formed a Faculty Status Committee.²² Though their petition outlining demands for a “change of status from non-academic to academic” and for faculty rank, titles, and privileges did not result in any direct action, it did inspire the university president to ask the Faculty Status Committee to continue its work. The Committee next submitted a memorandum containing “largely the same demands,” with the exception of that for full faculty privileges, which was eventually brought to the attention of the Senate Personnel Committee. Importantly, such memorandum also noted comparatively lower salaries of UW librarians as well as “the fact that major neighboring institutions (University of Oregon, Oregon State, and Washington State) has already granted faculty status to their librarians.”^{23 24}

After some back and forth with additional committees and questions implying that the Faculty Status Committee “only desired the status change because of the accompanying changes in salary,” the Faculty Status Committee instead requested,

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ State and regional influence remains a significant piece of the current proposal to transition UW librarians to faculty status. Apart from the three UW campuses, each of the public universities, community colleges, and technical colleges in Washington state, as well as numerous regional universities and colleges, deem their librarians faculty members.

among other things, a designation as academic personnel.²⁵ The Senate Library Committee supported such request “on the grounds that librarians provided academic, rather than maintenance or administrative, support to education and research,” while the Senate Personnel Committee supported “on the grounds that five of the seven institutions with which [UW] used for salary comparisons granted all their professional librarians full faculty status... [as well as on] the need to improve morale and recruitment.”²⁶ After the modified request passed through the Faculty Senate and then the administration, the University granted academic personnel rank to all UW librarians.²⁷

In November of 1968, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Librarians renewed work on the issue of faculty status.²⁸ Around the same time, a group of UW librarians issued a document noting the major problems with the UW libraries, citing turnover, quality of staff, communication issues, and salary grievances as having a higher priority than the issue of faculty status.²⁹

In February of 1969, a survey was distributed to UW library staff to measure support for the creation of a new association focused on the aforementioned issues, and in March 1969, a vote resulting from the survey passed in favor of such formation.³⁰ Later that year, in November of 1969, the newly created ALUW Executive Committee

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

“addressed the need and desire by librarians to gain some kind of tenured status,” which next resulted in the formation of the Interim Implementation Committee and a report stressing the need for the adoption of faculty status in December of 1969.³¹

In June of 1970, the ALUW Executive Committee noted the need to address the progress made on the issue of faculty status in an internal meeting, but there was little follow up, and the issue “seemed to lose prominence in general” after 1970.³²

Additionally, in 1971, issues surrounding major budget reductions, collective bargaining rights, and heightened salary grievances began to take precedent over the faculty status issue.³³

In October of 1972, the issue briefly reemerged by way of a letter from the Director of Libraries that “urged the re-adoption of the effort to obtain faculty status,”³⁴ but it was soon replaced by salary and collective bargaining concerns and “largely died out” shortly thereafter.

By 2002, faculty status for librarians had “reemerged as a central issue for ALUW.”³⁵

In December of 2015, the members of ALUW approved the current proposal to transition UW librarians from academic personnel to faculty members.³⁶

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.* Regrettably, despite my best attempts, I was unable to obtain the accompanying report detailing the reemergence of the faculty status issue at UW.

³⁶ Under the current proposal, UW librarians would become faculty members yet continue to meet the appointment, promotion, and tenure guidelines in the UW Librarian Personnel Code.

D. Case Study Methodology

I collected information on the proposed transition to faculty status at the University of Washington Libraries by way of three methods. First, to gain an understanding of the current status and the institution-specific implications of the transition, I attended an ALUW Membership Meeting with an update and discussion on such transition. Second, in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the transition both generally and as it could potentially impact the Gallagher Law Library, I interviewed Mr. Jonathan Franklin, Associate Dean for Library and Information Systems at the University of Washington School of Law. Third, to gain additional information on the transition, I reviewed a limited set of documents collected and stored by the ALUW Status Committee in its work on such transition.³⁷

1. ALUW Membership Meeting with Update/Discussion on Faculty Status for UW

Librarians³⁸

³⁷ Unfortunately, despite several attempts, I was unable to access or evaluate a portion of the documents collected and stored by the ALUW Status Committee.

³⁸ I attended the membership meeting on February 27, 2018, but arrived only for the latter portion from 11 AM to 12 noon, specifically for the update/discussion on faculty status for UW librarians led by ALUW Committee Members Jessica Albano, Deb Raftus and Judith Henchy. The observations and conclusions listed were included in my personal notes from the meeting.

Attendance at the ALUW Membership Meeting revealed that the transition to librarian faculty status for UW librarians is very much a work in progress. ALUW Status Committee Members stated that the proposed transition necessitates changes to the UW Faculty Code, under which UW librarians would be overseen upon a transition in status, but also noted that it took approximately ten years to revise the previous Faculty Code. They further stated that approximately 75% of UW librarians were in favor of moving forward with the transition, but one UW librarian objected, stating another vote was necessary. When discussing the motivations for the proposed transition, Committee Members cited the primary reasons as relating to a desire for involvement and voting participation in university governance, respect from and a level playing field amongst faculty members, and involvement in teaching, though it was also stated that the current proposal did not include any plans to incorporate the teaching of credit-bearing courses. Importantly, the members stated that UW librarians would likely be considered university library faculty rather than general university faculty upon the transition. Regarding final conclusions, the members stated that the transition would not be an easy sell, that it would require a strong lobbying effort, and, lastly, that UW librarians did not currently understand what it would mean to be governed by the Faculty Code.³⁹

³⁹ After the meeting, I chatted briefly with a few librarians from various UW Seattle libraries, none of whom seemed particularly informed about the proposed transition or its ramifications.

2. Interview with Mr. Jonathan Franklin, Associate Dean for Library and Information Systems at the University of Washington School of Law⁴⁰

Mr. Franklin confirmed that the proposed transition is an ongoing project. Though he has contributed to some of the ALUW Status Committee documentation, he was unaware of any major updates or changes to the project at the time of our interview. He did, however, cite a few additional motivations for the proposed transition, which included additional support from the state legislature, stronger job security, more adequate representation, and increased pay. Additionally, he noted that UW has a broad definition of faculty and a strong tradition of collaboration amongst administration and faculty, and suggested that a transition to librarian faculty status would promote and remain true to these longstanding values.⁴¹

3. ALUW Status Committee Documentation⁴²

In total, the ALUW Status Committee documentation includes five sets of documents.

⁴⁰ Interview with Jonathan Franklin, Associate Dean for Library and Information Systems, University of Washington School of Law, in Seattle, WA (May 29, 2018) (on file with author).

⁴¹ Mr. Franklin and I also spoke about the faculty status issue in relation to the Gallagher Law Library and to law librarianship generally. However, because the proposed transition would impact all UW librarians, I have chosen to exclude such commentary here.

⁴² ALUW, *supra* note 18.

The first set of documents includes a number of internal documents that appear mostly procedural.⁴³ Most relevant, however, is a white paper on the issue of faculty status for UW librarians, which, in sum, “describes the role of the University of Washington Libraries, reviews the contribution of librarians and their current status, and concludes with an articulation of the institutional benefits that would accrue from changing the status of librarians” from academic personnel to faculty members.⁴⁴

The second set of documents includes collective bargaining agreements for the Western, Eastern, and Central Washington Universities; the Evergreen State College; and a link to the American Federation of Teachers – Washington website, a state federation that jointly represents professors at each of the aforementioned universities and colleges.⁴⁵

The third set of documents includes the UW Librarian Personnel code and a related summary of librarian promotion criteria and librarian achievements, the UW Faculty Code,⁴⁶ UW promotion and tenure tips for administrators,⁴⁷ UW promotion and tenure guidelines,⁴⁸ and promotion and tenure requirements for peer institutions.

⁴³ Again, I was, unfortunately, unable to access a number of these documents.

⁴⁴ ALUW, *supra* note 18. I note with interest that such document does not make specific reference to the three-pronged mission of teaching, scholarship and service.

⁴⁵ American Federation of Teachers – Washington, AFL-CIO, <http://wa.aft.org/>.

⁴⁶ UW Policy Directory Faculty Code and Governance Chapter 24– Appointment and Promotion of Faculty Members, University of Washington (July 12, 2018), <http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/FCG/FCCH24.html>.

⁴⁷ Promotion and Tenure: Tips for Administrators, University of Washington (2018), <http://ap.washington.edu/ahr/actions/promotions-tenure/promotion-tenure-tips/>.

⁴⁸ Academic Personnel, University of Washington (2018), <http://ap.washington.edu/ahr/>.

The fourth set of documents includes three central ALUW documents, including the ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians; a document entitled *A guideline for the appointment, promotion and tenure of academic librarians*, which was approved by the ACRL Board of Directors in June 2010; and the ACRL Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians, each of which are further described in the following section.

Finally, as is most relevant and will be most closely evaluated, the fifth and final set of documents includes twelve articles on the issue of faculty status for librarians. Below, I will summarize those articles in the order in which they are included in the Status Committee documentation. I will evaluate them in turn as well as collectively, taking care to consider how persuasive they might be in the context of a proposed transition to librarian faculty status.

i. ACRL Statement, Guidelines & Standards

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians was prepared by the Joint Committee on College Library Problems, a national committee representing the ACRL; the Association of American Colleges (now the Association of American Colleges and Universities); and the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).⁴⁹ Though the statement lists a number of important roles in the educational and research

⁴⁹ *Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians*, Association of College & Research Libraries (Apr. 2018), <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/jointstatementfaculty>.

processes, it cites the essential criterion of faculty status as the librarian's function "as *participant* in the processes of teaching, research and service."⁵⁰

Written by the ACRL Committee on the Status of Academic Librarians, *A guideline for the appointment, promotion and tenure of academic librarians* is intended for use where librarians hold tenure or continuing appointment.⁵¹ It seeks "to propose criteria and procedures for appointment, promotion in academic rank, and tenure (continuous appointment) for use in academic libraries."⁵² Such document is intended for application within the context of the aforementioned ACRL Joint Statement, the ACRL Standards detailed below, and the AAUP publication *Recommended Institutional Regulations on Academic Freedom and Tenure*.⁵³

The ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians lists ten standards endorsed by the ACRL "to recognize formally the importance of faculty status for academic librarians."⁵⁴ In order, they include the ability to exercise independent judgment in the performance of professional duties; the adoption of an academic form of library governance similar in manner and structure to other faculties; eligibility for membership in the faculty senate or equivalent governing body; salaries and fringe benefits comparable to and within the range of those paid to faculty of

⁵⁰ *Id.* I note with interest the use of the word "participant" here.

⁵¹ *A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians*, Association of College & Research Libraries (Nov. 2010), <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/8461/8709>.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ I note with interest that this final document is not included within the ALUW Status Committee documentation.

⁵⁴ *Standards for Faculty Status for Academic Librarians*, Association of College & Research Libraries (Oct. 2011), <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardsfaculty>.

equivalent rank; coverage by a stated tenure policy; promotion in rank based on professional proficiency and effectiveness in performance, service and scholarship; opportunities for sabbatical and other research leaves; equivalent protection of academic freedom; access to an equivalent grievance process; and termination made only for adequate cause and through academic due process.⁵⁵ Of these standards, the University of Washington lacks only the ability to participate in university governance, as UW librarians currently serve on Faculty Councils but do not hold membership in the Faculty Senate.⁵⁶

ii. Articles Collected by the ALUW Status Committee

The following twelve articles are included in the ALUW Status Committee documentation. Here, I will provide a brief description of each article as well as their respective key points and relevant takeaways. Additionally, I will note the potential reasons for inclusion by the ALUW Status Committee and provide my best guess as to how and why each article might be helpful in the proposed transition to faculty status at the University of Washington.

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ It is worth noting that, unlike the ACRL, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) has not taken a clear stance on the issue of faculty status for academic law librarians.

Article #1: The 2016 Rankings: The Top 25 U.S. Universities Publishing Articles that
Advanced Subject Specialized Librarianship 2011-2015

Listed as the first document in the limited set of materials collected by the ALUW Status Committee, this article develops rankings for a top 25 U.S. universities list based on author affiliations from 2011-2015, using fourteen subject specialty library journals representing ten types of subject specialized librarianship, including law librarianship.⁵⁷ Such article provides an update to a 2011 study, in which the same methodology and sources were used to develop a top 50 list from 2000-2010.

Notably, with sixteen percent of the nation's articles on law librarianship in 2011-2015, the University of Washington is listed as the leader for articles relating to law librarianship. Additionally, with 52 articles published in 2011-2015, the University of Washington is ranked number one with respect to total articles from all included subject specialty library journals.⁵⁸

Of course, this article is helpful in that it first works to highlight the success of the UW law librarianship program. Additionally, it helps to highlight that UW librarians are already doing the publication and scholarship work necessary for faculty status.

⁵⁷ Amy Hardin & Tony Stankus, *The 2016 Rankings: The Top 25 U.S. Universities Publishing Articles that Advanced Subject Specialized Librarianship 2011-2015*, 35 *Sci. & Tech. Libr.* 241 (2016).

⁵⁸ Other types of subject specialized librarianship included agriculture, archives, art, behavioral and social sciences, business, medicine, music, rare books and manuscripts, and science librarianship. *Id.*

Article #2: Perceptions of Faculty Status among Academic Librarians

The study detailed within *Perceptions of Faculty Status among Academic Librarians* summarizes the opinions of academic librarians regarding the advantages and disadvantages of faculty status in academic librarianship.⁵⁹ Through responses from faculty and non-faculty librarians, as well as tenured and tenure-track librarians from Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member institutions, such study analyzed perceptions surrounding the issue of faculty status from each of the four aforementioned groups.⁶⁰ The article concluded, first, that faculty members reported more positive perceptions of faculty status than non-faculty librarians.⁶¹ Further, it concluded that tenured librarians generally reported more positive perceptions than those on the tenure track.⁶² Notably, the article “[offers] insight into the potential [advantages] and disadvantages of faculty status in academic librarianship.”⁶³ As a broader yet key conclusion, such article suggests “that faculty status [for academic librarians] improves relationships with teaching faculty, even if status alone cannot make [librarians] full peers.”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Quinn Galbraith, Melissa Garrison & Whitney Hales, *Perceptions of Faculty Status among Academic Librarians*, 77 C. & Res. Libr. 582 (2016).

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ *Id.*

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Id.*

Such article cites seven primary arguments in support of faculty status for librarians: the ability to earn respect from teaching faculty, the ability to be considered peers by teaching faculty, the ability to participate in university governance, the ability to engage in professional development and growth, the ability to participate in scholarship opportunities, the ability to promote library publication, and the ability to benefit to library patrons.⁶⁵ With respect to arguments against faculty status for librarians, three key arguments were cited. The first was the negative impact of “publish or perish.”⁶⁶ Second was the argument that the duties and roles of academic librarians are different than those of teaching faculty.⁶⁷ Similarly, and building further upon this, the third was that librarians should not be faculty because of such role differences.⁶⁸

Importantly, such article examined the importance of faculty status to faculty and non-faculty librarians on two separate bases: that of the personal importance of faculty status as well as the importance of faculty status to the librarianship profession.⁶⁹

Such article may have been included in the ALUW Status Committee documents for multiple reasons. First, it is fairly recent as it was published in September of 2016. Second, it looks specifically at ARL member institutions, of which the University of

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 587.

⁶⁶ *Id.* at 589.

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 586.

Washington Libraries is a member. More substantively, such article details not only the advantages and disadvantages of faculty status for librarians but more specifically the primary advantages and disadvantages as perceived by each of faculty, non-faculty, tenured, and tenure-track academic librarian groups. Finally, it examines the impact of librarian faculty status on academic librarianship more generally.

Article #3: *Framing Librarianship in the Academy: An Analysis Using Bolman and Deal's Model of Organizations*

In an attempt to “examine the dynamics, tensions, and implications associated with librarians’ professional status within the academy,” this article looks at the issue of librarian faculty status using Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal’s “Four Frames” model.⁷⁰ Such model “provides a mechanism for exploring [professional status] dynamics from four different perspectives, resulting in structural, political, human-resource related, and symbolic explanations for challenges facing organizations.”⁷¹ After discussing the role of the academic librarian in the context of each of the four frames, the article concludes that librarians “are positioned to address human resource, political and symbolic factors contributing to their status in the academy.”⁷² While acknowledging that the issue of librarian faculty status “is constructed by a number of forces,” it notes

⁷⁰ Rachel A. Fleming-May & Kimberly Douglass, *Framing Librarianship in the Academy: An Analysis Using Bolman and Deal's Model of Organizations*, 75 C. & Res. Libr. 389 (2014).

⁷¹ *Id.* at 390.

⁷² *Id.* at 389.

the relationship between librarian faculty and disciplinary faculty as playing a role in the issue of librarian faculty status.⁷³ Further, it concludes that “many of the political and symbolic conditions experienced by librarians are rooted in structural and human resource factors controlled by upper-level administration in both libraries and... universities.”⁷⁴

Such article provides a unique and more comprehensive look at the issue of librarian faculty status. Unlike previous articles, it examines librarian faculty status from multiple perspectives and considers multiple players in the library and university setting in its evaluation of such issue. Thus, the ALUW Status Committee likely sought to incorporate such article in an attempt to ensure consideration of a more comprehensive view of such issue and its potential impact on multiple and varied university constituents.

Article #4: *Library and university governance: partners in student success*

As its ultimate objective, this article aims to examine the value of library participation in university governance. Additionally, and more specifically, it looks at the implementation of a model for student success through a case study involving three components. First, the study compares “the historical and governance structure at a

⁷³ *Id.*

⁷⁴ *Id.*

high research university.”⁷⁵ Second, it examines “the relationship between a new governance structure and the implementation of a comprehensive student success model.”⁷⁶ Third, and finally, it examines “the inclusion of the library in creating, implementing, and participating in student success initiatives.”⁷⁷ Upon evaluation of each of these components, the article concludes that “participation in university shared governance enhances the library’s role in contributing to student success, retention, progression, and graduation.”

It appears to me that such article might be included in the ALUW Status Committee documents for several valuable reasons. Importantly, it notes that faculty rank “[generally] translates into a tri-partite role [involving library-related] teaching, scholarship and service,” thus highlighting the three essential components of faculty membership.⁷⁸ It looks specifically and more deeply at university governance, a crucial component of university service. Additionally, it looks at how academic librarians, as faculty members, could play a positive role in student success and thus “contributes to the discussion of the value of academic libraries to student success efforts in retention, progression and graduation for university students.”⁷⁹ Through this, it appears to additionally ask whether librarian faculty status might contribute to the betterment of the library and university as a whole. Such article might be limited, however, in that the

⁷⁵ Vickie Lynn Mix, *Library and university governance: partners in student success*, 41 Reference Services Rev. 253 (2013).

⁷⁶ *Id.*

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *Id.*

⁷⁹ *Id.*

results relating to student success are evaluated through a new model, rather than one experiencing a more long-term and proven success.

Article #5: The "Multihued Palette" of Academic Librarianship

This brief editorial article summarizes some of the key points from Article #6, a description of which follows immediately below. It first calls attention to the issue of librarian faculty status as "a complicated one"⁸⁰ and summarizes a few of the key arguments for⁸¹ and against⁸² the promotion of such status. With reference to Article #6, it calls particular and specialized attention to "dramatic and continuing change" in the roles of librarians and other academic professionals as well as to "the changes shaking the foundations of the academic professions more broadly."⁸³ It further notes "how diverse and complex the composition of faculty has become," asserting that "a unified model of faculty work... simply does not exist anymore." Next, it briefly discusses the complexity and broad range of academic professionals at the University of Illinois at

⁸⁰ Scott Walter, *The "Multihued Palette" of Academic Librarianship*, 74 C. & Res. Libr. 223 (2013).

⁸¹ Cited arguments for librarian faculty status include those "made on the basis of concerns for intellectual freedom, of the librarian's role in building collections and designing services that promote and support the teaching, learning, research, and service components of the academic mission, and of the direct contributions made to teaching and research by librarians." *Id.*

⁸² Cited arguments against librarian faculty status include those noting "that the "terminal degree" recognized for faculty appointment as an academic librarian is at the Master's level, rather than the doctoral; that many librarians do not receive in-depth training in teaching or research methods as part of their initial, professional education; and that the commitment by librarians of time for research and university service takes away from time that might otherwise be dedicated to the direct provision of library services." *Id.*

⁸³ *Id.* at 224.

Urbana-Champaign, “which has long been considered one of the strongest bastions of faculty status for academic librarians.”⁸⁴ On this point, the article highlights “a stronger and more diverse professional ecosystem at Illinois even as the commitment to the role of the librarian as faculty member has remained intact.”⁸⁵ Such article concludes by highlighting previous studies on the issue of librarian faculty status available through the *College & Research Libraries* website, including Article #15 discussed below, and by encouraging all members of the academy to “consider the issue of [librarian faculty status] within the broader context of the harsh realities facing all [faculty members] today.”⁸⁶

I believe this article is likely included, in some part, on account of its relation to Articles #6 and #15. Apart from providing a helpful reiteration of some of the key arguments on both sides of the librarian faculty status issue as well as key points from Article #6, such article, most importantly, highlights ongoing and critical changes in the make-up of faculty within the academy. Thus, above all else, it seems this article best serves to remind the ALUW Status Committee of the importance of considering such changes in its proposed transition to librarian faculty status.

Article #6: *As Their Roles Change, Some Librarians Lose Faculty Status*

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ *Id.* at 225.

Published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in March of 2013, this brief article discussed a recent transition in librarian status at the University of Virginia and a proposed transition at East Carolina University. In each case, the librarians at such institutions had been or would potentially be reclassified as staff rather than faculty members. The article additionally notes similar changes, primarily at community colleges, enacted in then-recent years. It cites a survey regarding librarian faculty status from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.^{87 88} As noted within Article #5, such article highlights the “dramatic and continuing change” associated with research libraries as justification for the aforementioned status transitions. Problematically, though, such changes appear inadequately discussed. At each institution, the librarians themselves failed to understand the necessity of such transitions and desired to maintain their faculty status when polled. Such article makes additional reference to the joint statement by the Association of College Research Librarians and the American Association of University Professors, which, as previously mentioned, advocates for librarian faculty status.

Again, such article appears to be included for its relation to Article #5. It is more likely included, however, to highlight somewhat recent trends signaling status

⁸⁷ Sydni Dunn, *As Their Roles Change, Some Librarians Lose Faculty Status*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Mar. 18, 2013), <https://www.chronicle.com/article/As-Role-of-Librarians-Evolves/137937>.

⁸⁸ Such survey found that nearly two-thirds of the librarians at roughly 1,600 institutions polled held faculty status.

transitions in the opposite direction, and perhaps even a lack of justification for the removal of librarian faculty status.

Article #7: Librarian Faculty Status: What Does It Mean in Academia?

With an initial goal of defining the meaning of librarian faculty status, this article examines “the various manifestations of [librarian] faculty status found across academic institutions and its many ramifications.”⁸⁹ It examines other types of academic statuses in relation to librarian faculty status, but regarding the latter and more central focus, it ultimately concludes that such status “manifests itself in a wide variety of ways across different arrangements and institutions.”⁹⁰ Among other ideas, such article discusses the ACRL Standards for Faculty Status; the continuum of librarian faculty status across academic institutions; the applicability of “the three pronged mission” of teaching, research and service to librarian faculty status; the challenges resulting from ambiguities surrounding librarian faculty status; how and why librarian faculty status is highly institution-specific; the ramifications of librarian faculty status, including major advantages and disadvantages; and finally, a plan for developing a clear understanding of institution-specific expectations surrounding librarian faculty status.

⁸⁹ Nathan Hosburgh, *Librarian Faculty Status: What Does It Mean in Academia?*, *Libr. Phil. & Prac.* (2011), <http://unllib.unl.edu/LPP/hosburgh.htm>.

⁹⁰ *Id.*

In discussing the aforementioned continuum, such article references and summarizes finding from Article #10, discussed in greater detail below.

Such article is helpful in that it provides an excellent summary of the many complex sub-issues embedded within the larger issue of librarian faculty status. Again, it touches on a host of key points, such as the extent to which such issue is institution-specific, the connection between the three-pronged mission and librarian faculty status, and the major advantages and disadvantages of such status. Further, it highlights the critical importance of developing an awareness of how such issue is addressed within a given institution when hired. Overall, such article is a concise and helpful summary of librarian faculty status and its many complexities, which appears to aptly explain its incorporation in the ALUW Status Committee documentation.

Article #8: *Academic Librarians and Faculty Status: Mountain, Molehill or Mesa*

With specific attention to “job satisfaction, sense of worth and place, and commitment both to [librarianship] and... the [educational] mission of the librarian’s academic institution,” this brief white paper examines the literature surrounding librarian faculty status.⁹¹ It references the issue of librarian faculty status as ever-present in respected library journals and notes that the existing literature “reveals a decidedly

⁹¹ Alan Bernstein, *Academic Librarians and Faculty Status: Mountain, Molehill or Mesa*, 46 Ga. Libr. Q. 12 (2009).

higher percentage of authors favoring some form of [librarian] faculty [status].”⁹²

Notably, such article summarizes the primary problems faced by librarians in seeking to gain support for faculty status from teaching faculty members, the primary benefits relating to librarian faculty status,⁹³ the primary arguments for and against the promotion of librarian faculty status, and the preeminent psychological components relating to librarian faculty status.⁹⁴ It concludes with personal support for the promotion of librarian faculty status from the author.

Clearly, such article provides a helpful summary of a number of considerations specific to the issue of librarian faculty status. In contrast to previous articles, it highlights important counterpoints and arguments against the promotion of librarian faculty status, which need be closely evaluated by the ALUW Status Committee in midst of a proposed status transition.

Article #9: Librarian Status at US Research Universities: Extending the Typology

Building off of Article #10, discussed below, this article extends a typology of librarian status developed for land grant universities to U.S. research universities. The previous study having found that land grant librarians were tenure-track faculty in 70%

⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ The primary benefits included promotion and tenure opportunities, participation in university governance, access to grants and sabbatical leave, and increased pay. *Id.* at 13.

⁹⁴ The preeminent psychological components included “the increase in general motivation and initiative, the greater sense of commitment both to the institution and the library profession, and the facilitating of a higher level of involvement with the [educational] mission of both the library, specifically, and the college or university, generally.” *Id.* at 14.

of institutions, it finds that librarians in U.S. research universities hold the same status slightly more than half of the time.⁹⁵ Such article calls specific attention to institution size, geographic region, and both public and private governance in its evaluation of librarian faculty status. Additionally, it describes the nine ACRL Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians, stating that such standards “[imply] that the particulars of [librarian] faculty status are as important as the status itself.”⁹⁶

Such article may be helpful to the ALUW Status Committee for a few reasons. First, it applies a new typology to the issue of librarian faculty status. Though the study and its ultimate findings connect status and tenure classifications, it nonetheless provides fairly recent and useful statistics regarding the number of tenure-track faculty in U.S. research institutions. Further, because of the connection between status and tenure classification, this article additionally helps to highlight that such classifications are indeed interrelated and are many times considered, offered and evaluated together.

Article #10: A Typology of Librarian Status at Land Grant Universities

The predecessor to Article #9, this article applies a typology of librarian status to fifty land grant universities sharing a number of fundamental characteristics. Such universities are defined primarily as state universities that “share the tripartite land

⁹⁵ Mary K. Bolin, *Librarian Status at US Research Universities: Extending the Typology*, 34 J. Acad. Libr. 416 (2008).

⁹⁶ *Id.*

grant mission” of teaching, research and service.⁹⁷ The study reveals four librarian status types: professional, other ranks with tenure, other ranks without tenure, and academic or professional staff.⁹⁸ Additionally, it finds that eighty percent of institutions have librarians who are faculty and that 85 percent of those are tenure-track faculty.⁹⁹ Importantly, such study notes that, “while appointment, assignment, and workload for teaching faculty at similar... institutions fall into predictable patterns,” neither librarian faculty status implementation nor institutional environments for librarians are uniform.¹⁰⁰ From this, the study highlights a key takeaway: “A candidate for a faculty vacancy in an academic library cannot assume that [faculty status] implies rank, tenure, participation in governance, a publication requirement, [or more].”¹⁰¹

Although such study does not include the University of Washington, this article is nonetheless helpful in providing background information on the issue of librarian faculty status. Additionally, it works to highlight the differences between faculty and tenure classifications and to distinguish such classifications as two separate questions. Most importantly, such article works to highlight that, unlike traditional teaching faculty status, librarian faculty status can vary significantly from institution to institution. Thus, it further highlights the importance of gaining familiarity with

⁹⁷ Mary K. Bolin, *A Typology of Librarian Status at Land Grant Universities*, 34 *J. Acad. Libr.* 220 (2008).

⁹⁸ *Id.*

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

institution-specific rules and procedures on librarian faculty status when pursuing an academic librarian position.

Article #11: Faculty Status for Librarians in Higher Education

This literature study attempts to “define [librarian] faculty status and [to]... objectively and thoroughly address the advantages and disadvantages of faculty status for librarians in higher education.”¹⁰² It uses the nine ACRL standards to define librarian faculty status.

Advantages discussed include an improved status in the university environment, more responsiveness to change and innovation, increased compensation, increased job security through tenure or continuous appointment, increased access to professional development, participation in university governance, the option to take a leave of absence or sabbatical, increased job satisfaction, increased opportunities for teaching, and support for publication with respect to both quantity and quality. Disadvantages detailed include resentment from other faculty members; pressure to publish; a decrease in publication quality given the increased pressure to publish; negative

¹⁰² Danielle Bodrero Hoggan, *Faculty Status for Librarians in Higher Education*, 3 *Libr. Acad.* 431 (2003).

lifestyle issues resulting from personal time spent on research, writing, conferences and preparation for instruction; the presence of nominal faculty status; a diversion of time and energy from library-related work; a decrease in the research productivity of the institution as a whole; and various economic issues. Interestingly, regarding this final point, such article notes that economists “believe that faculty status will eventually lead to a decreased demand for librarians because of the diversion of energy away from librarianship.”¹⁰³

The article further notes also that librarian faculty status is “positively correlated with indicators of student achievement, such as graduation rates and pursuit of graduate-level education.”¹⁰⁴ The author concludes by stating that the best status choice for a librarian “depends on that librarian’s preferences and goals” and that such a choice should be viewed as a personal one “that a librarian can make only after carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages and the librarian’s own values.”¹⁰⁵

Such article provides a clear definition of librarian faculty status as well as a concise and straightforward discussion of the advantages and disadvantages specific to such issue. In brief, it provides a helpful and understandable summarization of the topic. Unlike other articles included in the ALUW Status Committee documentation, it discusses a number of economical viewpoints specific to librarian faculty status.

¹⁰³ *Id.*

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ *Id.* at 441.

Further, it includes an important discussion of the issue's impact on student success. Finally, such article highlights the status issue as a personal choice that should be considered at the individual level.

I note additionally that Articles #8 and 11 each make specific reference to a particular article against librarian faculty status not included in the ALUW Status Committee documentation.¹⁰⁶ Given the multiple references, the ALUW Status Committee may benefit to look further at such article and the counterpoints listed therein.

Article #12: *Wearing Our Own Clothes: Librarians as Faculty*

Though its title appears to indicate a focus on librarians as faculty members, in actuality, this article centers on librarian faculty status in relation to the attainment of tenure. Such article is written primarily for the benefit of librarians already on the tenure track, and, as a key point, it argues that librarians "need to understand the functions and circumstances of non-librarianship faculty and individual accomplishments can be described in terms that teaching faculty understand."¹⁰⁷ Such article evaluates tenure in library faculty, the tenure review process, and the tenure decision, noting ultimately that many factors affect librarians' ability to achieve tenure. Much of the discussion is centered on an attempt "to articulate the special features of

¹⁰⁶ See Blaise Cronin, *The Mother of All Myths*, 126 *Libr. J.* 144 (2001).

¹⁰⁷ Janet Swan Hill, *Wearing Our Own Clothes: Librarians as Faculty*, 20 *J. Acad. Libr.* 71 (1994).

the landscape of librarianship that must be taken into account in assessing the worth of a library faculty member's accomplishments" for purposes of awarding tenure.¹⁰⁸

Though a host of librarianship characteristics as related to the faculty model are discussed, such characteristics are considered specifically for purposes of measuring their pertinence and value to the tenure process.

Given the aforementioned focus, it seems odd that this article is included in the ALUW Status Committee documentation. Again, it looks at librarian faculty status in the context of the attainment of tenure rather than from any real evaluation of the status issue itself. Given also that the University of Washington Libraries has an existing appointment structure, I see little reason why this article would be beneficial to the ALUW Status Committee.

E. Summary of the ALUW Status Committee Documentation and UW Case Study

Taken together, the sum of the documentation collected and stored by the ALUW Status Committee evinces a somewhat basic evaluation of faculty status for academic librarians and thus appears to merely scratch the surface. Though such documentation highlights a number of important considerations specific to faculty status, such as the primary advantages and disadvantages; the supportive stance promoted by the ACRL; and the impact on multiple university constituents, university governance, student

¹⁰⁸ *Id.* at 72.

success, and the betterment of the library and the university generally; it nonetheless fails to address a number of principal considerations. More specifically, such documentation neglects any real discussion of classroom teaching, publishing requirements, or participation in professional organizations, each of which must be considered during a proposed transition to faculty status for academic librarians.

To elaborate, while the ALUW Status Committee documentation evaluates some recent trends and statistics on faculty status, it should be expanded to include more recent articles on those trends. While such documentation includes some consideration of the counterpoints and arguments against faculty status, further consideration is needed, as the documentation fails to include articles consistently cited as containing noteworthy counterpoints. Additional documents, such as the AAUP documentation referenced alongside the ACRL documentation, need be collected and evaluated by the ALUW Status Committee. Similarly, more literature specific to university library faculty or general university faculty would be beneficial to ALUW.

In sum, despite a history of being in talks for over seventy years, the transition to faculty status at UW Libraries is still very much a work in progress, thus necessitating additional consideration and work by ALUW, the ALUW Status Committee, and other university constituents advocating for a transition to faculty status for UW librarians. Such lengthy history, and the ongoing debate surrounding the issue of faculty status for UW librarians, serves to further emphasize the many complexities associated with librarian faculty status.

IV. Conclusion

Though the UW case study relates to academic librarianship generally, it serves to highlight a host of the complexities surrounding librarian faculty status, each of which are further applicable to law librarianship. Notably, the study additionally highlights two key takeaways for new academic librarians.

First, the study serves to highlight the need for all academic librarians, including law librarians, to gain an understanding of the institution-specific complexities of status when contemplating a new position. Because the meaning of status can and does vary significantly by institution, new librarians should take the time to familiarize themselves with the applicable Personnel Code, Faculty Code, or other relevant institutional documentation. Taking this important step will allow new librarians to better understand how their status might impact their daily environment and work, and to perhaps avoid the wrong institutional environment.

Second, and just as importantly, the study serves to highlight that new academic librarians should weigh the importance of faculty status on a personal level, since the importance of status will vary from person to person. Having looked more closely at the issue of librarian faculty status, I now know that my ability to play an active role in teaching, scholarship, and service—regardless of status—is most important to me.

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