



Creating a Culture of Security in the University of Maryland Libraries

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abstract: Academic institutions must take a greater interest in the security needs of their libraries and invest management skills, time, and finances proactively in this sphere. Above all, the role of the library staff must be central to any envisioned program of library security. This article reports a recent intensive collaborative effort between the University of Maryland Libraries and the Association of Research Libraries to scrutinize and to revamp security practice and policy of the University libraries. We believe it was a fruitful association particularly because it made us focus on the active role of the library staff in fostering and maintaining a spirit of security.

In mid-October 2000, we had an object lesson that illustrates how much building a culture of security is still a work in progress in the University of Maryland Libraries. It was reported on the staff e-mail reflector that a young male had walked out of the front entrance of the McKeldin Library carrying a

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computer monitor. He was not questioned or otherwise detained. The incident occasioned a considerable amount of discussion on the staff e-mail reflector. A few days later the same young man was stopped carrying the associated CPU and questioned by a staff member. It is a relief to report that he was a graduate student

cleaning out his carrel and the equipment was his own. Nonetheless, this anecdote illustrates many of the core problems discussed in this paper and the challenges of

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developing a safety/security program that establishes continuous and effective practice among staff in a large research library. But it also illustrates that we are making progress.

Although the most extreme kind of safety and security problems are relatively infrequent in academic libraries, all library staff need to maintain a keen awareness of the fact that they are working in a busy environment that is open to the public many hours a week. Moreover, staff in academic and public libraries are part of a larger community where thousands of people live, work, and go to school every day. To be responsible members of this community and to protect our patrons, staff, collections, and facilities, we must all share responsibility for safety and security. Libraries are “systems” and security is a vital part of maintaining balance in the system.

Safety and security in libraries include a diverse range of topics, from the seemingly mundane—such as enforcing no-food/drink policies—to more serious incidents that include theft and disruptive behavior. Therefore, it is important to provide staff with the information and the tools to respond to a variety of situations. These include clearly stated policies that outline what all staff should know and the training to understand these policies and take action when called upon to do so—what might be called a shared culture of mutual responsibility for security and safety. Again, to be successful, this culture must be embraced by all library staff.

Literature Review

As with many other topics in library administration and management, the literature reflects the profession’s effort to deal practically with the knotty problems of safety and security. Several handbooks and guides, some developed locally by libraries and shared with the larger community, provide advice on handling theft and mutilation of library materials, personal safety, building security, and other related topics.¹ Another practical resource is the Association of Research Libraries SPEC Kit #247, *Management of Library Security*, which reports results of a survey of ARL members on safety and security issues.² The kit includes a checklist of low-cost means of improving security.

A search of the *ERIC* and *Library Literature* databases suggests that the journal literature is also rife with articles on all aspects of library safety and security. The journal *Library and Archival Security* has been covering comprehensively security planning, policies, and practices since 1975. Also, special issues of journals have been devoted to the subject. For example, *Journal of Academic Librarianship* published a special issue in 1998 on collection theft, mutilation, and protection,³ and *Library Administration and Management* included a special section focusing on personal safety called “Violence in the Library” in its summer 1997 issue.⁴ *Library Technology Reports* focused on technologies issues related to security and reviewed products in its special issue, “Security Technology for Libraries.”⁵ There are numerous other articles similarly focused on the security needs of libraries.⁶

In addition to the journal literature, conference proceedings and websites reflect the profession’s keen interest in library safety and security. The conference *To Preserve and Protect: The Strategic Stewardship of Cultural Resources*, a Library of Congress Bicentennial Symposium in affiliation with the Association of Research Libraries and the Federal Library and Information Center Committee, was held in fall, 2000. The

conference offered presentations on electronic information security, materials theft and mutilation, preservation, collections security planning, and personal safety. An early version of this paper was presented there.⁷ A website, "*Planning and Building Libraries*," which describes itself as a resource for "Architects, Librarians, Design Consultants, and students" includes a link to security information that provides design guidelines and links to vendors (<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/resources/architecture/Security.html>).

Despite the wide array of resources available, there is limited information on the role of staff in library safety and security. When staff is discussed, the focus is useful but narrow, usually targeting the subject staff training in the management of disruptive patron behaviors.⁸ Given the wide variety of problems that staff face, a more comprehensive approach is needed to create a culture of shared responsibility.

Campus Environment and Library Security

The University of Maryland, College Park, is a Carnegie Research I institution located in suburban Maryland, "inside the beltway" of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Student enrollment is slightly over 33,000 with more than 11,000 university faculty and staff rounding out the campus population. Despite its big city surroundings, the campus spans 1,500 acres and has the look and feel of a large residential university. Campus safety and security issues mirror those of similar institutions with burglary topping the list, followed by motor vehicle theft, assault, and sex offenses.⁹ Campus safety and security is provided by the University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD), whose approximately seventy-five officers have all the powers of any peace or police officer in the State. UMPD also shares jurisdiction in some areas with the Prince Georges County Police Department Staff.

The safety and security environment in the University Libraries prior to 1997 relied heavily on services provided by UMPD. The Libraries contracted with UMPD to recruit, train and manage Student Police Aides (SPAs), part of the Police Auxiliary unit. Frequently undergraduates, the SPAs were posted at the entrance of the two largest library buildings, McKeldin (at that time the graduate library) and Hornbake (at that time the undergraduate library). SPAs also staffed a security point in the "24 hour room" on the ground floor of Hornbake. Their principal duties were to monitor the 3M™ exit gates and enforce the "no food, no drink" policy. On an hourly basis SPAs also did rounds through the building looking for food, drink, and disruptive behavior. No provisions were made for SPAs at the four smaller branch libraries on campus except at closing when SPAs were asked to sweep the branch libraries and to ensure that all patrons had vacated the facilities. Otherwise, staff in the branches carried the full responsibilities and this created a significant inconsistency in security practice.

In September 1997, the UMPD indicated that it wished to terminate the library SPA contract. It was difficult for them to recruit, select, train, and retain an adequate number of SPAs to meet the contract and they were experiencing the criticism that naturally resulted from any shortcomings in the service. Complaints about SPA services were many—among them not showing up for duty on time, not enforcing the food/drink policy, and sleeping on the job. It is clear in retrospect from the dearth of "incident reports" that the SPA system did not really provide security, only the illusion of it.

Security Audit/Timeline and Process

The UMPD's interest in discontinuing the library's SPA contract and new leadership in the library (Dean of Libraries arrived fall 1996; Director of Public Services fall 1997) provided the occasion to review the SPA practice. Philosophically, we agreed that staff should assume principal responsibility for safety and security of library users, collections, and facilities. Indeed, we have more than once observed the irony of having undergraduates deal with sensitive and often difficult matters while full-time staff were outside observers. Although staff members could be critical of an incompetent SPA, they were unwilling to take responsibility themselves. Pragmatically, we also were interested in reallocating the \$160,000 annual budget that went into the SPA contract for other staff needs. As chance would have it, the Association of Research Libraries was seeking to pilot a security self-study with a nearby member of the association, and Maryland was approached. Since the ARL proposal would give us an opportunity to make a "top-to-bottom" review of our safety/security capabilities and to explore alternatives, we were eager to participate.

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need for a more coherent approach to library safety and security that reinforces a philosophy of shared responsibility among all staff, the University of Maryland Libraries embarked on an assessment of policies, procedures, and facilities in partnership with the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Begun in the fall of 1997, the security study and subsequent development of

practice and policy were implemented over a two-year period and now serve as a model comprehensive approach for a large academic library system.

After some negotiation, the ARL project commenced in October 1997 with a meeting among the Library Executive Council (senior managers reporting to the Dean), Glenn Zimmerman from ARL, and Robert Morse, a representative from George P. Morse and Associates, a local loss prevention firm hired to consult on the project. The plan was to have Morse conduct a comprehensive audit of the UM Libraries' safety/security environment as a foundation for developing the self-study materials that might be used in other libraries. The audit would be both a management study—focusing on philosophy, policies, procedures—and an assessment of current facilities and practices with recommendations for corrective action as needed. Morse presented the libraries a project proposal in November with an anticipated completion date of April 1998. The Director of Public Services and Director of Planning and Administrative Services were designated as the in-house contacts for the audit. Throughout the project we remained in regular communication with ARL.

The importance of the audit was emphasized when, shortly after we began, the UMPD informed us that there would be a dramatic increase in charges for SPA services once our contract expired at the end of the year. Rates were to increase from \$8/hour to

\$15. It was clear that the Libraries budget could not sustain a nearly twofold increase in so large a line item in the budget. In anticipation of that change, and in recognition that the audit and its recommendations would not be available until spring, Hornbake Library security was turned over to the Hornbake circulation staff. We continued to use the services of the SPAs at a negotiated slightly lower rate in McKeldin Library with the proviso that we would terminate the contract if the recommendations of the audit pointed in a new direction.

A detailed description of the Morse and Associates methodology is not necessary here. They conducted numerous site visits and interviews during the winter and early spring, including meetings with UMPD, Physical Plant, Campus Security, security-related vendors such as 3M™, and numerous library staff. These meetings were intensive in-depth considerations of the current environment. In addition, a thorough investigation of six library facilities was conducted. In June of 1998 a draft report was presented and discussed with the Library Executive Council (LEC) and revisions and clarifications were suggested. The final report was accepted by LEC in November 1998. This was six months later than we anticipated, which reflects the complexity of the library security environment and the demands we made on Morse and Associates to make the work as comprehensive and comprehensible as possible. Above all, we wanted recommendations that could be implemented effectively.

Morse Report Recommendations

The Morse Report is a 100-page analysis based on interviews, documents, and direct observation. We are still using it more than three years later. Existing conditions were examined for risks and hazards, and current safety and security capabilities were assessed. The resulting report makes numerous and detailed recommendations for action to improve security—from quite detailed technology recommendations to those directed at general policy and practice. The recommendations may be summarized as follows:

- The UM Libraries have no single authority for safety/security matters. It is vital that a locus of responsibility and authority for practice be established at the level of Director reporting to the Dean.
- There is a wide divergence in employee attitudes toward safety and security, “ranging from substantial involvement to disinterest and apathy.” The Libraries must develop an articulated philosophy along with policies and procedures, followed by a training program for all staff.
- An emergency response team should be formed.
- Hard data must be collected through inventories to accurately assess collection loss.
- Effective access control systems and other safety/security technologies such as video cameras need to be improved for all library facilities. In this regard, several levels of technology implementation were described, but the recommendation was that at least Level I should be achieved early on.
- Use of student police aides should be discontinued, and staff should assume full responsibility for safety and security in the UM Libraries in close cooperation with the UMPD.

This last recommendation was the most far-reaching because it pointed in a direction that was dramatically different from current practice. The report stated matters quite forcefully:

The Security history of the Libraries indicates that a full-time police presence is not required, but that rapid police response must be virtually certain. The current SPA staff has no greater authority, training, or capabilities than should be provided to similar library staff. There is no reason to expect that security conditions will deteriorate. . . .

The assignment of the Protection function to Library staff requires that very specific responsibilities, duties and training requirements be developed and utilized. Library personnel must be instructed regarding their responsibility to monitor their areas of responsibility and, particularly, in actions to be taken in the event of an incident.

Once the Morse Report was submitted, the libraries began to implement the recommendations, particularly those that did not require financial resources. Key recommendations included the development of a procedures manual. Work was begun, using the former SPA manual, various library policies and procedures, and the security audit as a foundation. New "University of Maryland Libraries Safety/Security Guidelines" were prepared in late 1998 and may be viewed on the Libraries' website.¹⁰ At the same time, the Libraries discontinued the services of the SPAs and security for McKeldin and opening/closing of all library facilities became the responsibility of library staff. In McKeldin, the circulation and information services staff bore the brunt of these changes.

To assist in the transition, UMPD provided training in food and drink enforcement, managing the exit gates, coping with disruptive patrons, opening and closing procedures, and medical and facilities emergencies. This training, along with the procedures manual, served as the foundation for a library-wide training effort that was also planned during the fall and implemented in the early months of 1999. Nearly 250 staff have participated in training that addressed the following objectives:

- Staff will understand security procedures and be able to implement them.
- Staff will be able to use techniques for dealing with problem customer situations (e.g., communication skills, conflict resolution).

Training sessions began with the discussion of a "Richter scale" instrument that assesses staff perceptions of the environment in which they work and their comfort level with handling uncomfortable situations. Following discussion and application of the scale, participants received a detailed orientation to the safety/security guidelines. The session ended with role-plays of various situations described in the guidelines.

In addition to the development of the manual and the training program, we began to examine the many recommendations in the Morse Report for improving security of our facilities and collections. As time passed we allocated more fiscal resources to the effort. 3M™ was brought in to evaluate our security gates and to present a proposal for their replacement. Funding was sought through the university's enhancement fund process, and gates in all facilities were replaced in early 2000 at a cost of over \$82,000. Because of the closing of undergraduate library services in Hornbake Library, McKeldin Library opened for 24 hour / 5 days a week access in the fall of 1999. This change gave us the opportunity to upgrade some video camera systems and provide card access



readers to the building so that only members of the campus community with appropriate IDs have late-night access. The cost for the initial equipment installation was \$22,000; an additional \$54,000 has recently been quoted to expand and upgrade the video camera system in McKeldin Library. In addition, the University provided \$45,000 in new ongoing funding to support the personnel needs for this service access. In summary, by the end of fiscal year 2000 (July), we had spent \$104,000 in one-time physical improvements and added \$45,000 to the budget for personnel. In addition, we have reallocated \$160,000 in personnel costs that formerly were devoted to funding SPAs. Most of this was absorbed by two rounds of increases in the Federal minimum wage paid from our “labor and assistance” budget to student employees. We plan additional equipment expenditures of more than \$50,000 for FY 2001 and 2002.

Once the initial staff training was completed and the manual was distributed to all staff, responsibilities for safety/security were transferred from the Public Services Division to the Planning and Administrative Services Division. PASD includes the Staff Training and Development Office, which has assumed responsibility for continued safety/security training. Conflict resolution training was offered in summer 2000 as part of this effort. A Safety/Security Committee—the “emergency response team” called for by the Morse Report recommendations—was also formed and charged to monitor and improve the safety/security environment in the library, to recommend training, and continually to update the procedures manual. In addition, floor-marshals were identified and trained to assist in building emergencies such as fire. This group went through training that included the campus fire marshal and has subsequently coordinated practice fire drills. In the summer of 1999 the Safety and Security Committee membership was appointed. Within a year the Floor Marshals had been incorporated formally into the Committee’s operations to ensure effective management of emergency response. It is worth mentioning that they work closely with the Libraries’ Disaster Team, which has the primary function of responding to crises that threaten collections. The Disaster Team has had to act in at least four major water-related crises during past few years, but that is another story.

We also wanted to educate our users better and to involve them in safety/security practice. In the spring of 2000 a Library Conduct Working Group was charged to review our food/drink policy and make

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recommendations for improving communications with our users about their role as partners in the stewardship of library collections and facilities. The group recently has submitted its report to the

Library Executive Council. These recommendations were informed by contact with the University’s student disciplinary system to ensure that our policy and practice reflected the campus practice.

While much activity has taken place, one of the original goals for participating in the audit—to encourage staff involvement in and responsibility for safety and security—has remained a challenge. It is much easier to write procedures and to improve equipment than it is to change an organizational culture! Throughout the course of the past three years, some staff continue to question their role and ability to handle safety and security

responsibilities. Indeed, as recently as spring 2001, in a meeting of the Safety/Security Committee, it was suggested that we create a security force within the Libraries to assume responsibility for these duties rather than to expect staff to undertake them. This note of dissent in the very group most responsible for safety indicates how deeply resistant the staff psyche is to those duties. In *Reframing Organizations*, Bolman and Deal point to four major forces that inhibit organizational change. All proceed from groups and individuals—loss of individual ability to feel effective and in control; disruption of existing roles and relationships; conflict among “winners and losers;” and perceived loss of “meaning” for individuals.¹¹ At the same time the solution is pretty obvious.

It sounds simplistic to point out that investments in change call for collateral investments in training. Yet countless reform initiatives falter and fail because managers neglect to spend time and money on developing necessary knowledge and skills.¹²

We have made some progress in this regard, but it is clear that the training dimension of the problem is far from solved. Equally important, staff are engaged with the decision-making process and may influence implementation.

As they become more practiced and accustomed to dealing with these problems, many staff have welcomed the authority to act. Others, however, are still inclined to turn a blind eye to a soft drink bottle coming in the front door or to a gate alarm sounding. The anecdote at the beginning of this paper is strong indication of how long it takes to imbue an organization with the spirit of shared responsibility in such matters. Through continued orientation and training, as well as constant vigilance to improve our facilities and security capabilities, we remain confident that we can achieve the goal of broadly shared responsibility for safety. Although we have had what might be called “basic training,” the Training Office has only recently developed a training workshop that will be repeated at regular intervals. With the assistance of the UMPD, the first monthly training sessions were offered in December 2000 and January 2001. Their goals are:

- To promote safety and security procedures in the UM Libraries
- To improve awareness of safety and security issues in the UM Libraries and on campus
- To improve interpersonal skills in order to reduce the risk associated with difficult situations/patrons within the library system
- To foster the relationship between the UMPD and library staff
- To set guidelines for conduct with regard to safety and security
- To supplement the safety and security provided to each staff member

After completing the training session with the UMPD, the Libraries’ staff are able to meet ten behavioral objectives that assure the baseline skills for participation in the Libraries’ safety and security program. They are able to:

- List the steps to identify problem situations/patrons as defined by UMPD
- State strategies that can be instituted within individual departments that would facilitate safety and security
- Demonstrate proper vigilance and promote sharing of information with co-workers with regard to safety and security
- Demonstrate constructive dialog that promotes conflict resolution through case studies practice sessions



- Recognize members of the UMPD
- Recognize and follow appropriate safety guidelines as provided by the UMPD
- Identify and record important safety information as outlined by the safety and security manual
- Understand and practice personal safety
- Set limits for enforcing library policy including knowledge of when to ask for additional staff or assistance
- State where emergency phones, exits and fire extinguishers are located within the normal working area

We are also exploring ways to test staff attitudes such as focus groups and surveys. We hope these will yield information that will be an additional guide to staff training needs.

We have addressed many of the Morse Report's larger recommendations save one, but there are still small items that need attention, particularly technology applications such as video cameras in branches, "panic" buttons, and cell phones. The major *lacuna* is the lack of collection inventories. This is a result of the fact that we have just completed the last phase of the procurement of a new library system, one with inventory capabilities that we do not have now. We selected Ex Libris in late October 2000. A collection inventory can now be planned. One of the original purposes of the Morse Report—to serve as a prototype and foundation for an ARL self-study activity—has not been possible because of the lack of funding. ARL remains committed to developing a generally applicable program and will seek the funding and/or partnerships with libraries to do so. We welcome the opportunity to continue to work with ARL because we recognize the value of this experience for our libraries.

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Notes

1. For example, *Library Safety & Security: A Comprehensive Manual for Library Administrators and Police and Security Officers* (Goshen, KY: Campus Crime Prevention Programs, 1992); *The Official Library Security Manual* (Dillon, CO: Layne Consultants International, 1996); and *Library Security and Safety Handbook: Prevention, Policies, and Procedures* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1999).
2. George J. Soete and Glen Zimmerman, Comp. *Management of Library Security, SPEC Kit #247* (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 1999).
3. *Journal of Library Administration* 25, (1998).
4. *Library Administration and Management* 11, (Summer 1997).
5. "Security Technology for Libraries: Policy Concerns and a Survey of Available Products," *Library Technology Reports* 35, (May/June 1999).
6. For example, see Otis A. Chadley, "Campus Crime and Personal Safety in Libraries," *College & Research Libraries* 57, (July 1996): 385–390; David H. Johanson, "Library Materials, Theft, Mutilation, and Prevention Security Measures," *Public Library Quarterly* 15, (1996): 51–66; and Sherelyn Ogden, "Security from Loss: Water and Fire Damage, Biological Agents, Theft, and Vandalism," *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship* 11, (1996): 43–47.

7. For information on the Symposium's program, including webcasts of presentations, go to http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/symposia_preserve.html > [July 9, 2001].
8. The American Library Association provides several resources in this area, including books and training videos. See Kathy Coster, *A Library Survival Guide: Managing the Problem Situation* (Baltimore: Library Video Network; Chicago: Distributed by ALA Video, 1987); Beth McNeil and Denise J. Johnson, *Patron Behaviors in Libraries: A Handbook of Positive Approaches to Negative Situations* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1996); and Mark R. Willis, *Dealing With Difficult People in the Library* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1999).
9. For campus crime statistics, see the UMPD website at <<http://www.umpd.umd.edu/brochure/CRIME.htm>> [July 9, 2001].
10. University of Maryland Libraries, Safety and Security Guidelines. Available: <<http://www.lib.umd.edu/PUB/WebSafetySecurity.html>> [September 4, 2001].
11. Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 339.
12. Bolman and Deal, 321.