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Salary Equity

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Salary Equity Speech (CSU Librarians, 1981)

by Judy Reynolds and Jo Bell Whitlatch

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This speech was presented to the California Women In Higher Education Conference at the University of Santa Clara on Mar. 28, 1981. It summarized our work on librarian salaries and comparable worth.

A Woman's Occupation

In 1970, about 65% of all women were in occupational categories in which 50% or more of all incumbents were female. We wish to begin by describing librarianship as one of those female occupations. Librarianship shares all the characteristics of the other occupations in which women predominate. These characteristics' are as follows:

- (1) Within librarianship, the upper level managers and administrator tend to be disproportionately men.
- (2) There are few advancement opportunities
- (3) The wage scale is depressed relative to occupations with similar educational and experience requirements.
- (4) There is little investment on the part of the employer' in the training and development of employees in the occupation. The occupational image is one of very low status.

As a woman's occupation, librarianship has been identified as conservative, bureaucratic and overly strong in its personal "service" orientation. Librarianship has been labeled as a semiprofession, in which the main appeal is to the heart, not the mind. Other semi-professions are teaching, nursing and social work.

A sociologist, Harold Wilensky, has argued that women are concentrated in jobs that involve one or more of the following seven characteristics. As we go through each of these seven characteristics, I will illustrate the characteristic by giving a common librarian stereotype.

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Librarian Stereotype</i>
traditional housewives tasks - cooking, sewing, cleaning, canning	reshelving books, tidying up the library
few or no strenuous physical activities	sitting in a quiet corner, reading books
patience, waiting, routine	checking out books, stamping the date due
rapid use of hands and fingers	typing, filing
a distinctive welfare or cultural orientation	the library is motherhood cultural orientation and certainly the "heart" of the University according to tradition
contact with young children	we all remember the librarians of our childhood
sex appeal	"Marion the librarian" or "sex in the stacks"

Actually we couldn't think of a good stereotype for "sex appeal" other than "librarian as old maid" but we've made our point librarianship is certainly the true women's profession.

We hope this image is changing. In 1977, a research firm did a report on library cooperation in the California State University and Colleges System (CSUC) in which the qualifications of a librarian are described. According to the researcher, A.D. Little, "The librarian must be a person trained in evaluating books, informed about the campus instructional program and equipped to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the collection for both acquisition and weeding purposes." The Chancellor's Office of the CSUC paid a great deal of money for this study and the librarians were generally pleased with the outcome of the report for many reasons, including the acknowledgement of our value and close relationship to the academic program. However, in March 1978, Lois Feldheim, representing the Chancellor's Office, noted that "the work in a library involves sequential, interdependent activities and is performed in a hierarchical setting, typical of administrative functions." She also noted that the difficulty and complexity of rank in student affairs is, in general, greater than that in the library by virtue of the inter-personal relations, political impact, and controversial nature of such activities as financial aids, EOP, housing, counseling, etc. These functions are riddled by such factors as changing laws and regulations, political differences in program and funding philosophies as well as by personal conflicts, and decisions which ultimately affect individuals and groups.

As you can see, the Chancellor's Office still views us in the stereotyped woman's profession role.

Before leaving the image difficulty, we would like to give you one of our favorite quotes - Emerson said, "Meek young men grow up in libraries." In Emerson's day, they did not have meek young women in libraries in much abundance. Those meek young women were to come later.

Establishing Salaries

Long ago, in times now shrouded in a mist of time, the first California State College, or Normal School, was established. Many people were hired to help provide this new form of education, from professors to coaches to groundskeepers. Everyone was offered a salary, but we do not know exactly how the first salaries were set. Probably someone made a value judgment based on apparent worth and unless no one would work for the wages offered, the judgment formed the beginnings of a salary structure.

Over time, salaries must be adjusted to fit rises in cost of living, etc.. The most common mechanism for setting those new salaries is now the comparison surveys of prevailing wages in the same occupations which seem to work fairly well for such groups, as the California Highway Patrol and others, mainly to predominantly male job classifications. This may possibly be because, back in the days when those salaries were first set, men, who were, after all, "heads of households" and "doing a man's work," were paid more because it was well known that they could not work for "pin" money.

Women's occupations, however, have become more complex or, maybe, were undervalued in the beginning. In such cases, comparison studies will find, for example, that housewives, across the country, generally receive no wages and because the comparison uncovers a fairly uniform national pattern, the conclusion is that wages are not in need of adjustment. The same sort of thing occurs with professional librarians and many other female occupations.

This may be immoral, but it might not be illegal. There lies part of the problem with setting equitable salaries. Laws are however, being set that should help determine job value.

In 1971, in the case of *Griggs vs. Duke Power Co.*, the U.S Supreme Court stated that "practices, procedures, or tests neutral on their face, and even neutral in terms of intent, cannot be maintained if they operate to 'freeze' the *status quo* of prior discriminatory employment practices." And in 1975, the California Commission on the Status of Women wrote, "Equal pay concerns not only discrimination where women and men in similar jobs receive different pay, but also the more subtle kind of discrimination where wage rate is discriminatorily depressed because only women or minorities traditionally have been employed in a job classification. The fact that women predominate in a job classification tends to depress the wage scale for that category. The use of the prevailing wage system approach to the setting of salaries perpetuates the effects of sexually depressed wage."

Comparable Worth

So what can we do to adjust our wages? The solution lies in finding another method for salary analysis. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 states that we should analyze and compare the skill, effort and responsibility of a position in order to determine its relative merit, i.e. salary. As we said, the study must be of relative merit. In making comparisons, one must limit oneself to employee groups working for the same employer who are members of the same employee group. Because your goal is to prove that your employer's payscale is sexually discriminatory, it is not effective, initially, to compare yourself with outside groups. Your comparison should be to the in-house salary schedule as it relates to skill, effort, and responsibility and your profession's contribution to your company or institution.

In the CSUC System, librarians are one of three academic employee groups i.e. teaching faculty, student affairs officers (SAOs), and librarians. The first two categories are predominantly male and are paid on the same scale. The librarians are predominantly female and are the only group paid at a different and lower rate.

The [first chart](#), prepared by Ruth Roberts, demonstrates the optimum promotional pattern of SAOs and librarians. The BA positions are illustrated and are an example of a mistake in our methodology. There were over 20 "BA" occupations and they afforded our employer the opportunity to confuse the issue by saying we were not like this part of one job and not comparable to that part of another. Ultimately, we were only comparable to the "gopher" type of position. The [second chart](#) compares only SAOs and librarians and illustrates the tremendous salary overlap we face as well as the lower pay.

Once you have established the facts of the salary scale, you should move on to the question of the value of your services to your employer and the qualifications necessary for a person who provides those professional services. We prepared a document entitled "comparable Professions" which is a comparison of SAOs and librarians in terms of skill, effort and responsibility. Since our employer had never done a thorough analysis of our jobs, we based our information on the job descriptions which the CSUC Chancellor's office had prepared for the two work groups. None of Lois Feldheim's statements, quoted earlier, are supported by the job descriptions. This same type of comparison has been done in San Francisco where the city librarians compared themselves to other employee groups in the same "professional" classification, such as the predominantly male pool lifeguard, who, as you might suspect, receives better wages than a librarian. This is the kind of comparison many of you will probably be doing in the future.

Once you have made the comparisons with employees working for the same organization, you may wish to broaden your comparison, as we did, to your colleagues in other organizations. The [next chart](#) compares the possible salaries of librarians in the CSUC System and in the Santa Clara Community Colleges, pairing them up by groups with equivalent education. This comparison is especially relevant because a study done by the University of California (UC) librarians' organization reported that the community college system is the only one of the three public higher education systems in California that does not practice sexual discrimination in their salary setting.

Another [chart](#) shows librarians' salaries in the three systems, with CSUC winning the prize for paying the least!

Who needs to see your data on relative skill, effort and responsibility? First, your employer needs to know. The Chancellor's Office agreed, several years ago, that we needed an adjustment and suggested that the Governor's budget include a 5% equity raise for librarians. Next, we spoke to our Board of Trustees and they agreed that we should have a raise. You should be able to determine a hierarchy of persons to whom you should take your salary request. You should be certain to address them all, lest you be told later that you had not made sufficient efforts to exhaust all the informal methods of agreement.

We had made sufficient noise that the legislature asked the California Post-Secondary Education Commission (CPEC) to study librarians' salaries. This Commission "suggests" salaries to the legislature. Judy served on a technical advisory committee to the Commission, but was not able to convince them to do anything but prevailing wage studies based on very sketchy comparisons of jobs. The final CPEC report concluded that, because there was a surplus of librarians on the job market, "both UC and CSUC are in a sound competitive position in relation to librarians' salaries paid by their respective comparison institutions. They are also competitive within the California market in spite of the higher salaries paid to California Community College librarians." They further stated that, "No evidence has been found that the higher salaries paid in the two-year segments are justified on the basis of educational requirements or professional responsibilities." Of course, no study of the skill, effort and responsibility necessary for these positions was undertaken. What CPEC really wanted was to further exploit librarians and to lower the salaries in the community colleges also since it was possible to hire librarians so cheaply.

Besides writing a minority report to CPEC and having the original report reviewed in a nationally respected journal, what could we do? We went to the legislature, less than a week before "Proposition 13" was passed and pleaded for equity funds, backed up by a letter from the California Commission on the Status of Women which condemned the CPEC report methodology. Not surprisingly, the politicians were too distracted by the possible layoffs of public employees that they were facing to really listen to us.

The next step? We filed a class action complaint, not a suit, a complaint, with the California Department of Fair Employment Practices Commission. A class action complaint would benefit all CSUC librarians rather than just those persons filing. In the complaint, we listed all the bodies to whom we brought our equity requests from the smallest right up to Governor himself, for we had spoken to him too. The actual complaint was sent to our employer, the Chancellor. As his office made some efforts on our behalf, we did not wish to point a finger of blame, but rather, gain a measure of political clout the next year's salary

hearings in the legislature. In the year's budget, the Chancellor's Office found sufficient funds to give us our 5% equity raise as a start in adjusting our salaries and our complaint was withdrawn with the expectation of a settlement within this next year.

However, if we had not seen some action toward pay parity, we could have filed a formal suit with the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. Backpay in such a case could have been required, should we win, for up to two years before we had filed the complaint with FEPC, a costly possibility.

Can one do this sort of thing alone? Yes, but it is certainly risky and not at all advisable. We were backed by the State University and Colleges Chapter of the California Library Association as well as by United Professors of California. Without such support, we would hate to file a class action complaint, wondering if all one's colleagues would stand behind one. And lawyer's fees that such actions sometimes require, are not easy for a person in a low wage, predominately female occupation, to pay. No organization, however, is likely to support you, unless you are active, contributing members of that body who have established credibility for your cause. And, as librarians, we can attest to the fact that documenting your information and being able to counter arguments, usually based on conjecture about your profession, with statistics will contribute to eventually winning your cause. It is also highly advisable to publish your data as widely as possible in order to make your employer justify data publicly.

We still have much left to accomplish. Today there are four principal ways in which librarians are treated differently from the majority of CSUC academic employees:

1. Our sabbaticals are not funded although theoretically we are eligible.
2. Librarians are the only group of academic employees on a different and lower salary schedule.
3. The majority of librarians have been compacted in the lower two of the four ranks.
4. We have substantial overlap in the pay schedule as illustrated by our [final chart](#).

Equal Pay

The 1976 *Women's Rights Handbook*, issued by the State of California, states that, "Federal and California laws require that employers pay equal wages and benefits to men and women employees who are performing substantially the same work." The handbook goes on to state that equal work does not mean that the work must be identical. However, in actual practice, equal pay for equal work has focused on wage differentials between men and women in very specific occupations. Thus, equal work has been narrowly interpreted as almost identical. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 states,

"Equal pay should be provided for work of equal value, with appropriate consideration of both national and local rates paid by employers in the private sector and appropriate incentive and recognition should be provided for excellence in performance."

These two pay principles appear to be in direct contradiction when applied to women's occupations since the prevailing wage theory only continues to discriminate against women in depressed wage occupations. Equitable and fair job rating systems which are based on skill, effort and responsibility and do not discriminate on the basis of such factors as sex appear to be the best answer. EEOC has requested that the National Science Foundation do a study on job rating systems and whether they discriminate against women and minorities. The results are due soon and we hope this is one more positive step in our struggle for equal pay.

In closing, we would like to note a few resources which were particularly helpful to us in obtaining a more equitable promotion system and an equity raise. We found our professional associations, the American Library Association and the California Library Association, good sources for useful contacts, particularly at such association conferences as sex and salary. We found being librarians a very useful asset. Information, if well used, is definitely power. Such organizations as the International Labour Office, the State of California and the U.S. Department of Labor publish very good materials. We also read

numerous periodical articles and received great assistance from Ruth Roberts, Library Systems Analyst, in preparing all statistical tables and charts.

The employee organization, to which we both belong, also proved to be a steady and very important source of support. Without the financial support, the political connections, faculty support and legislative influence of our union, despite all hard work we might not have come as far as we have today. In addition, it is important to remember that academic librarianship has more men than any other field of librarianship. While the profession as a whole is over 80% female, only 60% of all academic librarians are women. Thus, if true to form, academic libraries may have less hierarchy, bureaucracy and more autonomy for their librarians than any other type of library. We hope to lead the way for other librarians as well as library support staff whose work *could possibly* be as valuable as the carpenters and other skilled trades.

Chart 1

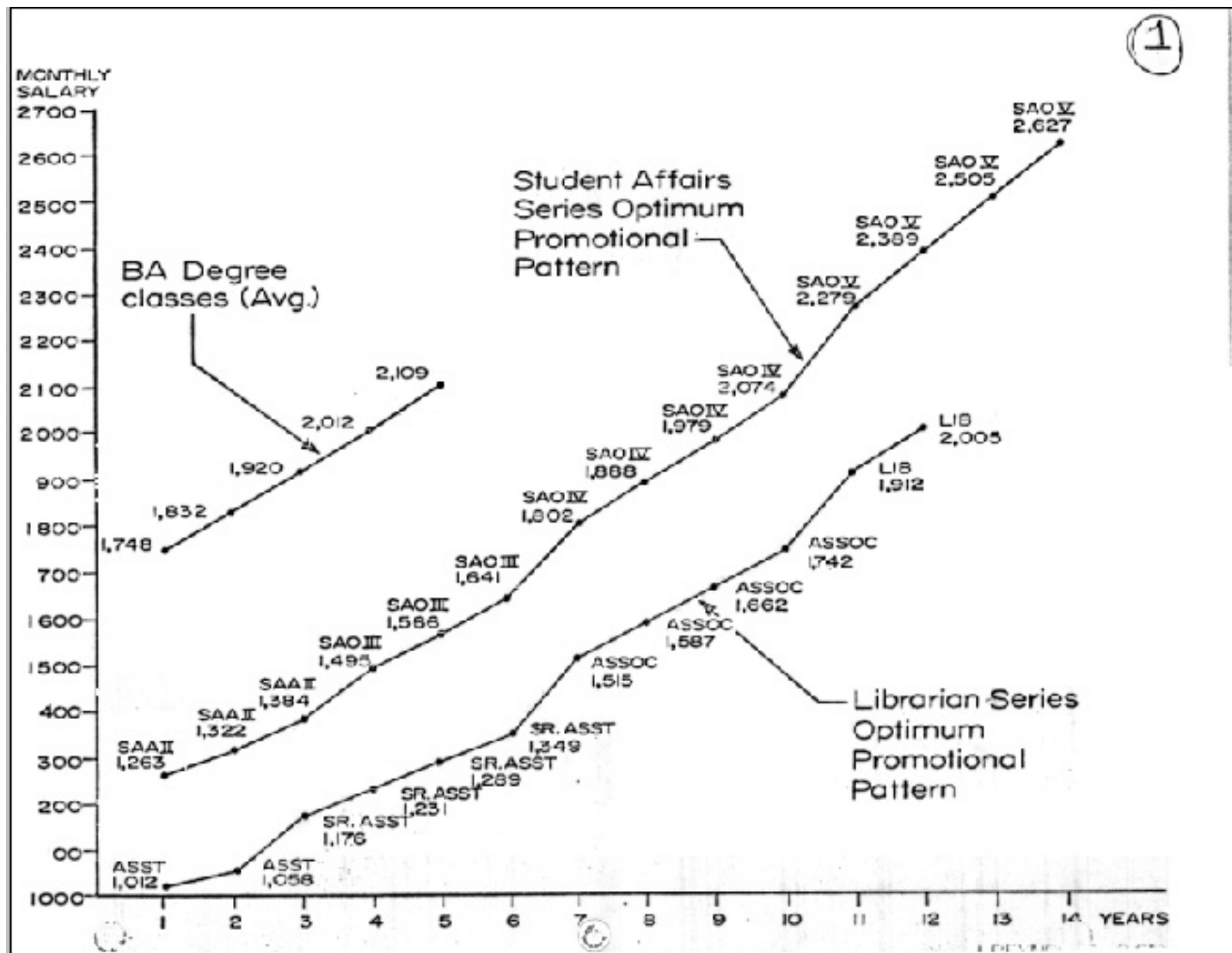
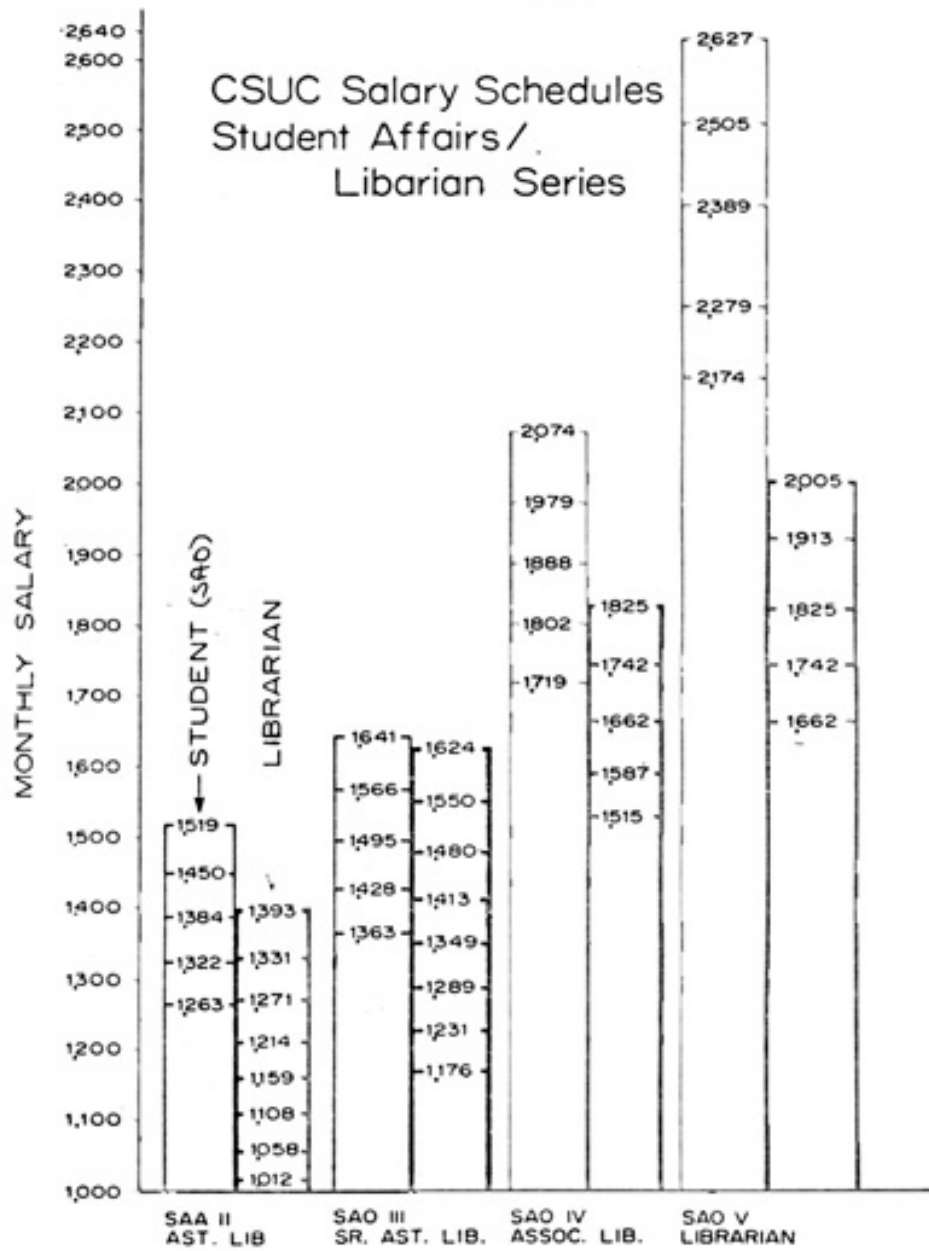


Chart 2

FIGURE 10
SOURCE: TABLE VII & III-1



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Chart 3

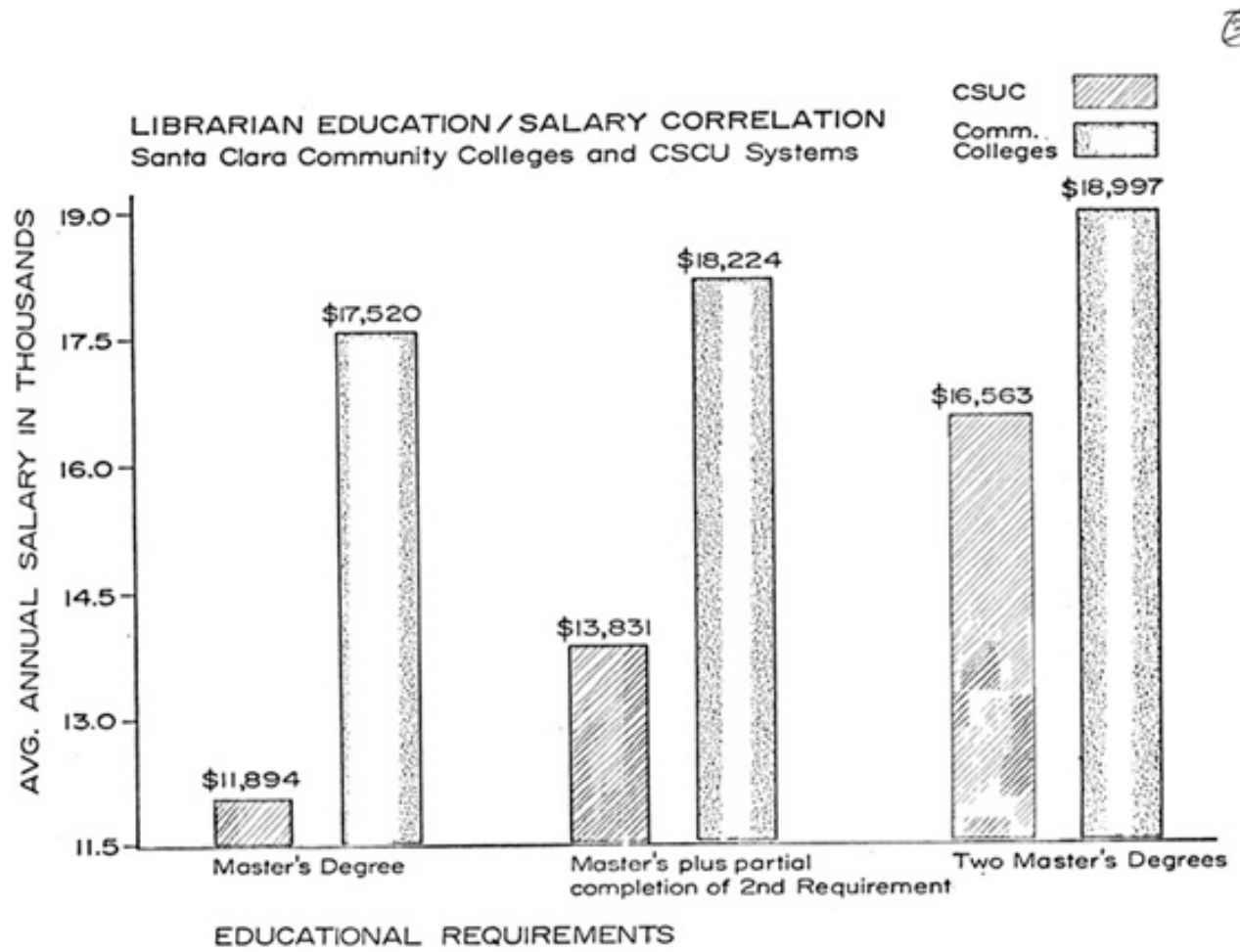


Chart 4

CALIFORNIA PUBLIC ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS' COMPENSATION 1977/78

④

<u>System</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>% Greater than CSUC</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>% Greater than CSUC</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>% Greater than CSUC</u>
Community Colleges						
San Francisco Academic yr.	\$14,484	26.8%	\$26,184	34.5%		
San Mateo Academic yr.	14,389	26.0	26,645	35.0	\$20,842.	14.4% SJSU 14.1 SSU
UC						
Davis 12 month	12,924	6.0	29,496	18.4	19,915	10.4 SJSU 10.1 SSU
CSUC						
12 month	12,144		24,060			
10 month	10,608		17,352			
SJSU					17,850	
SSU					17,895	

NOTES: CSUC SJSU (San Jose State) and SSU (Sacramento State) salaries are all calculated as 12 month salary averages while San Mateo averages are calculated as academic year salary averages: Thus, if work year length is considered, actual salary discrepancy between CSUC and Community Colleges is 29% + .

prepared by Jo Bell Whitlatch
1-5-78

PAY SCALE OVERLAP
CSUC LIBRARIANS SERIES & STUDENT SERIES

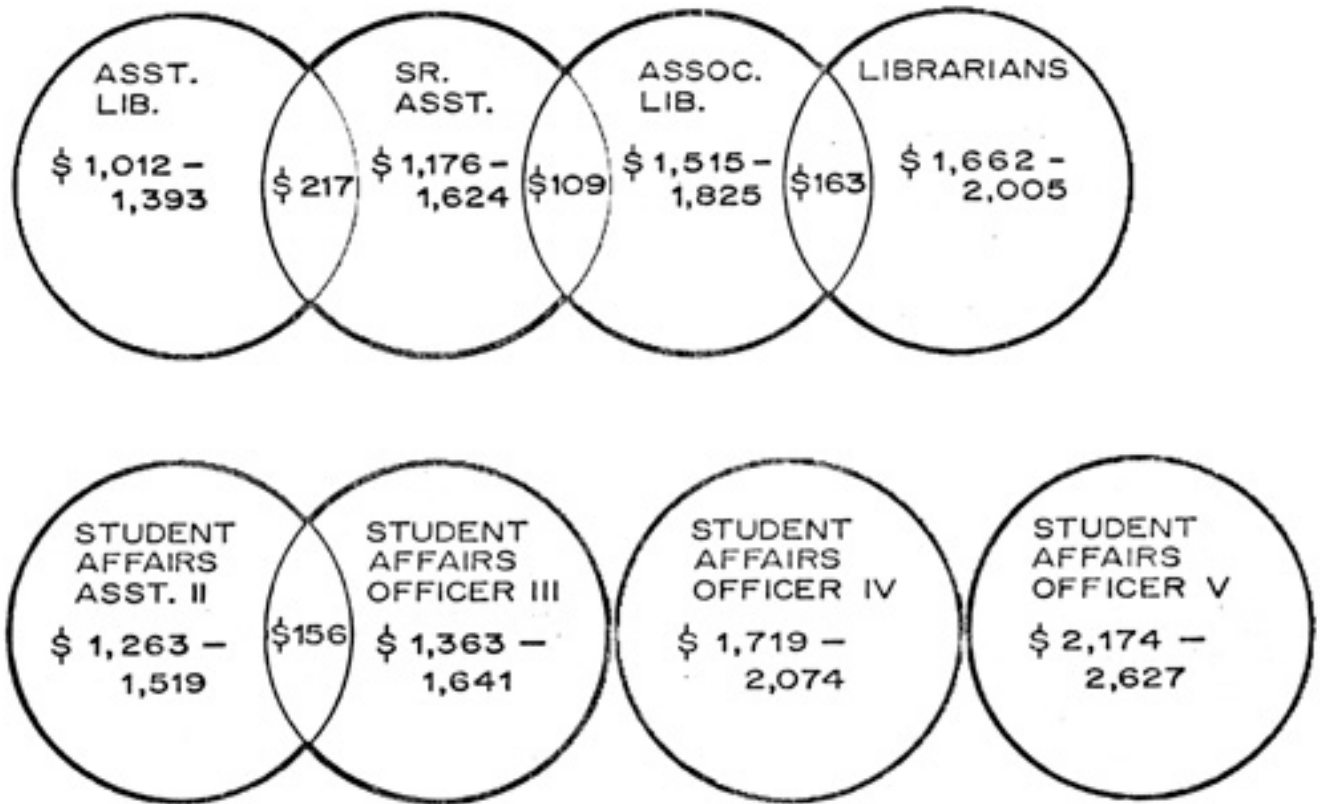


FIGURE 11
SOURCE: TABLES VIII&

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