

LAUC Concerns about the Future of the Librarian Series and the Library Workforce

Note: Numbers do not signify order of importance and are for reference only.

1. The librarian series and LAUC has seen a steady reduction of numbers that was recognized at least as far back as 1998 where this was observed in a report by the Committee on Professional Governance (CPG). Where do you see this trend going and what are its implications for the UC library workforce?

2. APM 360-4 defines the librarian series as follows:

360-4

Definition

The librarian series is used for academic appointees who provide professional services in the University libraries in support of the University's educational, research, and public service functions. These services include:

1. selection and development of resources;
2. bibliographic control of collections and their organization for use;
3. reference and advisory services;
4. development and application of specialized information systems;
5. library administration and management; and
6. research where necessary or desirable in relation to the foregoing.

This passage is interpreted by some LAUC members as an imperative that individuals with academic training should be hired within the librarian series rather than in the various other positions both academic and non-academic that are proliferating at the UC libraries. What are your thoughts on APM 360-4? (MOU Article 4 has similar language.)

3. The creation of two classes of library professionals, inside the librarian series and out, has caused a good deal of confusion and divisiveness as reported by librarians and administrators.

- 3.1 Question: Wouldn't it be easier for everyone if new professional hires were included within the librarian series? Would redefining the series in the APM offer a solution?
- 3.2 Question: If new professionals are hired outside of the librarian series for higher salaries, could they be included in the librarian series at an equivalent salary? Are there particulars on just what level of salary is necessary to attract new professionals? There is a belief that the introduction of salary points was designed in part to help make the librarian series attractive to other professionals. If money is not the only consideration in hiring outside of the librarian series, what are other considerations? Concerns about

“additional flexibility” for non-librarian series positions are not clear to LAUC as the AUL series, for example, has a certain amount of flexibility built into it. Conflicts of interest in the academic review of AULs that has been cited can be dealt with through a variety of recusal mechanisms. The membership would like to hear a fuller explanation for hiring professionals outside of the librarian series.

- 3.3 Concern: LAUC’s first of two concerns here is based on our ongoing revision of LAUC’s Position Paper 5: “The Librarian as Academic.” LAUC understands professional library work as a form of stewardship comprehending the fundamental library services of reference, instruction, collection building and the services that support them. These activities rely on a unique mix of skills and values developed from an MLS and professional experience. Extracting specialties out of this at disparate salaries and separating them with different administrative statuses potentially hurts the compensation of the librarian series and devalues its work.
- 3.4 Concern: The substitution of non-academic managers for academic status AULs has dire implications for the librarian series in the form of peer review. AULs traditionally review the librarian series, and the managerial reclassification potentially opens review responsibilities to people with no training in the academic areas of scholarship and independent professional activity. A lack of knowledge is the next thing to a lack of interest which leads to a lower priority compared to other things. While the MOU guarantees librarians freedom to work in four areas of responsibility: (1) job (2) University service (3) Professional service (4) research—the activity in these areas is recognized through the review process, and unsympathetic reviewers could find a thousand ways to minimize the value of what is not in their area of interest. This process poses the real danger of eviscerating the academic character of librarianship and reducing it to a manager-based service activity after all. While LAUC appreciates the stated interests of ULs in safeguarding our interests and acknowledges the qualifications of the reclassified administrators, people come and go and these intentions do not carry the weight of precedent and legal protection. In fact, the best intentions of ULs and the qualifications of reclassified AUL qualifications could both (ironically) enable a mechanism that undermines the academic character of librarianship.

4. Administrative creep. There is a concern that this phenomenon in higher education is appearing in the hiring plans of UC libraries. Some divisions report an administrator to librarian ratio of 1:2. The MSP series has been identified as a particular area of administrative growth at UC.¹ There is general recognition of the need for new administrative approaches and for making our operation more efficient and scalable. However, LAUC has some concerns and questions.

¹ “In particular, assembly staff press on the size of administration. They highlight the fact that, as is the case across the country, the number of administrative personnel is rising at a far faster pace than the number of tenure-track faculty (8). Unlike much public discussion, they emphasize the expansion of the Management and Senior Professional Group (MSP). The Committee staff are right to note how difficult it is to account for the administrative growth--especially in the MSP group where the greatest growth seems to have occurred. I say “seems” because it is extremely

- 4.1 Concern: The contraction of the librarian series means that fewer people are doing the same workload.
- 4.2 Concern: There is a sense that administrative changes are not headed to relieve this burden anytime soon.
- 4.3 Question: In the minds of CoUL, has the nature of work changed so dramatically, that less librarians are needed to accomplish the tasks? If that is the case, what duties/activities have been identified as unnecessary to continue at various campuses?

5. What is CoUL's most positive vision for the librarian series and the library workforce in the foreseeable future?

difficult if not impossible to figure out exactly who is in the MSP, what job categories are included, where the individuals are located, and so on by using UCOP's publicly available data. UC will always respond to questions about administrative salaries and costs by pointing to the Senior Management Group because it is small. But the MSP group is large and growing so the assembly is right to push on that. The opacity of this category is a serious problem for the University."

<http://utotherescue.blogspot.com/2015/03/the-legislature-and-research-university.html>

The Assembly Committee Budget Report referenced in the blog post above can be found here.

<http://abgt.assembly.ca.gov/sites/abgt.assembly.ca.gov/files/UC%20Feb%2018%20agenda.pdf>