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THE PURPOSES, POLITICS, AND PRACTICAL IMPACT OF PEER AND SHARED GOVERNANCE IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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INTRODUCTION

The power of academic personnel across the university has diminished in recent decades and continues diminishing through the pressures of academic capitalism after neoliberalism's overtake of the mid-20th century's Keynesian compromise (Kezar & Dizon, 2021; Purcell, 2008). Academic capitalism is the practice of governing higher education based on financial principles rather than educational principles (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014). This article examines the implications of that trajectory for academic libraries. While scholars have explored reasons for and against tenure (McKinzie, 2010) and academic freedom (Leebaw & Logsdon, 2020) for librarians, scholars have not examined the benefits and barriers of shared and peer governance for academic librarians. This paper seeks to fill that gap.

It is important to consider the role of libraries within higher education institutions because libraries shape the educational resources available to students and researchers and provide instruction on the use of information. Librarians ensure learners and scholars have access to diverse, credible information. This paper will describe how marginalizing academic librarians endangers the quality of learning and research and the sustainability of the information market as well as why that marginalization persists.

We make a distinction in this paper between peer governance and shared governance. We use peer governance to refer to the role of librarians with disciplinary expertise in making decisions about the library versus having administrators make decisions for the library. This parallels the role of other faculty in making curricular and personnel decisions within their own departments and colleges. We use shared governance to refer to the role of librarians in contributing to institutional decision making along with other faculty members. This includes participation in Faculty Senate and other university governance committees.

This article is not an examination of whether librarians are referred to as "faculty" across higher education institutions. The title of "faculty" can be applied without the rights it is supposed to confer, such as academic freedom, and the title can be forgone while the rights are protected. Instead, this article is a conceptual exploration of the consequences of librarian versus non-librarian governance of academic libraries. Throughout this article, we refer to librarians as a type of faculty, but we recognize that librarians may or may not be referred to as a type of faculty member at their institutions.

Academic librarians experience a broad spectrum of roles in governance based on their institutional standing (Bolin, 2008). With increasing budgetary and political pressures on universities (Busch, 2017), and as sociopolitical norms shift, every institution must consider whose votes count in governance decisions. This

conceptual paper explores the reasons institutions decide to include or exclude academic librarians from academic governance and peer evaluation. Why do university practices continue to conflict with recommendations from organizations such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)? As libraries support every college and department, this decision ultimately affects every student and faculty member affiliated with the university.

THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

Administrators and educators have disparate goals in governing universities (Birnbaum, 2011). It is the duty of administrators to encourage enrollment, course completion, grant acquisition, donations, cost-cutting, and political favor to support the budget of the university. It is the duty of educators to create, preserve, and transmit knowledge for the public good (Bowen & Schwarz, 2016). These disparate and sometimes conflicting goals require disparate expertise and values. The nature of academic work is depth of knowledge in a specific domain while the nature of high-level administrative work is a shallower but wider breadth of knowledge. No individual can be an expert in everything and the values of different enterprises regularly conflict.

Accountability to one's disciplinary peers is central to the enterprise of higher education. Those with expertise in a discipline are best fit to make decisions regarding what constitutes quality in that discipline (Rabban, 2024). Academic personnel have a duty to teach and research in accordance with the values and principles of their discipline (Shleck, 2022). This is as true in academic libraries as in other academic units. Peer governance of libraries impacts the quality of library services and therefore scholars across the disciplines libraries serve.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) point out that since the latter half of the 20th century, many American higher education institutions have been moving more towards the managerial culture and away from the collegial culture of faculty governance, which is often viewed by managerialists as inefficient. Higher education is among the many public and nonprofit sectors to have made this shift to neoliberal organizational models over that time. "In the neoliberal imagination, open and competitive markets not only produce the most efficient allocation of resources, but they also stimulate innovation and economic growth. Thus, market logics and competitive discipline should be fostered in the economy, and they should even be extended beyond the economy, to institutions like the state, universities, hospitals, schools, and so on" (Purcell, 2008, 13). These assumptions, especially around efficiency, may not pan out in an institution such as a university that does not exist primarily for the purpose of profit. It also assumes that nothing of (non-monetary) value is lost by shifting the goals of an institution from the academic goals of the faculty to the managerial goals of the administration.

University administrators are responsible for pursuing the managerial goals of an institution (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). They are tasked with making decisions that perpetuate and advance that institution. By contrast, academic personnel, including librarians, are responsible for pursuing the goals of a discipline. Their mission is to collegially advance knowledge creation, verification, and transmission within that discipline (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). This mission crosses university boundaries to serve the needs of the discipline at the global level. At public universities, scholars are explicitly responsible for serving state and federal constituents beyond their institution. For example, the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill's mission statement states that they "extend knowledge-based services and other resources of the University to the citizens of North Carolina," which would very clearly apply to library resources (UNC, 2025). Both public and private universities strive to produce generalizable research, educate students as responsible citizens once they graduate, and prepare students for jobs beyond the university where they were educated (Birnbaum, 2011). Throughout this paper, we consider how the disparate goals of administrators and educators discourage shared and peer governance for librarians and impact progress toward educational goals.

Neither administrative nor academic culture is a monolith (Bess & Dee, 2014). We recognize that many higher education administrators value and support quality education, democratic governance structures, and the wellbeing of librarians. However, their duty to advance the financial and reputational goals of universities sometimes constitutes a conflict of interest for them in educational decision making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Association of College and Research Libraries, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and the American Association of University Professors issued a joint statement in 1973 asserting that academic librarians should be granted faculty status (ACRL, 2018). This statement was reaffirmed in 2012 and remains their official position (AAUP, 2012). ACRL states that “The library exists to support the teaching, research/scholarship, and service functions of the institution. Thus, librarians should also participate in the enhancement of the institution's mission, curriculum, and governance” (ACRL, 2021a). ACRL makes this assertion for both librarians with (ACRL, 2021a) and without (ACRL, 2021b) faculty status. Despite these calls, librarians continue to face a mixture of statuses across and within higher education institutions (Leebaw, & Logsdon, 2020). They face varying degrees of power in terms of both library and university decision-making. This paper delves into some of the reasons institutions may be operating in conflict with the recommendations of esteemed library and academic professional organizations and the impact of deviating from their guidance.

The AAUP declare in their Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities that “The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process” (1966). According to this directive, it should be expert librarians who determine educational decisions such as the library resources available to students and the nature of the library instruction rather than administrative personnel. Freedman (2014) found that 54% of librarians in their sample rated faculty status very important or extremely important. However, various pressures stand in the way of librarians making educational decisions.

Regardless of their faculty status, libraries often lack the political power possessed by other academic units. Academic libraries have experienced several decades of lean staffing and budgets while the budgets of higher education institutions have ballooned (Hoffman & Godbey, 2020; Fitzgerald et al, 2023). Librarianship is a field with predominantly women educators, which can lead it to be dismissed as less valuable or deserving of participation in governance than other fields at the university (Seale & Mirza, 2020).

DISCUSSION

This section first considers the benefits for universities and libraries of shared governance for librarians. Second, it considers some reasons why, given these benefits, universities treat librarians inconsistently.

Education and Research Benefits of Peer and Shared Governance by Librarians

The educational decisions which fall within the domain of expertise of academic librarians include the selection of library resources including books and journal databases, the selection and design of discovery systems to permit students and scholars to access those resources, and the instruction of patrons in the discovery, evaluation, and use of those educational resources. As academic personnel, librarians can advance the university through their involvement in university governance. As disciplinary experts, librarians require autonomy to make personnel decisions such as appointments, reappointments, and promotions like their other faculty colleagues. The modern treatment of librarians at some institutions as support staff is a vestige of an age before the 1940s in which librarians did not have formal training in their field of expertise (Fleming-May & Douglass, 2014). The work of librarians today is not support staff work. It is neither simple nor routine. This is not an assertion that support staff work is unimportant. On the contrary, library support staff work is essential. Support staff throughout the university, including the library, should also be granted input into institutional governance relevant to their areas of work through structures like Staff Councils and Senates. They have valuable knowledge of workflows impacting education that contribute to quality education.

Collections and discovery. Academic librarians evaluate, select, and provide instructional and research materials to students, faculty, and other library patrons (Fitzgerald, 2020). Academic libraries are the hubs through which knowledge is purchased, licensed, borrowed, preserved, and disseminated among scholars and students. The selection of these educational materials should reflect the experience, training, expertise, and values of academic librarianship; the American Library Association’s (ALA) Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies specifically list training in collections development (ALA, 2019a). Assigning the responsibility for evaluating librarians who select university resources to those who share

the values of librarianship including access, privacy, diversity, intellectual freedom, and social responsibility (ALA, 2019b) allows them to evaluate their peers in terms of those values. Assigning the responsibility of evaluating librarians to administrators whose duty is to promote the image and budget of the university would result in library collections that do not align with the values of librarianship or the needs of researchers. The selection of instructional materials should not be influenced by the desires of donors or politicians to reflect their personal values.

The modern scholarly publishing landscape is complex and requires transformation to meet the needs of scholars and society (Weiland, 2023). Decisions about which information resource vendors to do business with and which business models to acquire materials through require expertise in librarianship, commitment to the values of librarianship, and freedom to make informed decisions (within budget). Transformation of the scholarly communications landscape requires expert research and transmission of information between institutions, that is, scholarly communication, which in turn requires academic freedom for librarians. Library decisions between funding open access initiatives or toll access business models affect education and research not just at a local university, but worldwide (Budd, 2018). The financial sustainability of the global scholarly literature ecosystem is a matter of importance to librarians and administrators alike.

The cheapest library resources are not always credible or organized. The cheapest resource subscriptions do not always align with sustainable information access practices (Budd, 2018). It is dangerous to judge decisions about educational resource acquisition solely by resource cost to a university. This ignores non-monetary values like accessibility, educational merit, and social responsibility. Database selection is not as simple as selecting the databases with the lowest cost per use. Databases must serve every department on campus and enhance the relationship between the library and each department to encourage information literacy for students in every major. Databases must employ inclusive metadata to permit patrons from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines to navigate their contents. The flashiest databases and websites are not always inclusive, easy to navigate, or ethical with patron data. Decisions about which resources to select and how to design library discovery systems must be judged by personnel whose responsibility is to adhere to the professional principles of librarianship, not by administrators whose responsibility is to advance their institution.

When selecting and negotiating contracts with information vendors, librarians must consider the value of the resources to their patrons in both the short and long term. A subscription to a large, for-profit database may provide the largest short-term value to researchers at their institution, but it also perpetuates inequities in information access for researchers in institutions with fewer resources, in developing countries, and among researchers who are not affiliated with an institution. Such subscriptions lock even well-resourced universities into unsustainable models, leading to cancellations of library agreements with for-profit publishers (SPARC, 2024). Information acquisition models that provide open access publishing agreements to scholars at the libraries' institution provide access to information worldwide that can benefit the development of scholarly knowledge, educate new experts globally, and lead to wider practical impacts of scholarly research (Suber, 2012). Similarly, decisions between spending library collection budgets on purchasing eBooks or books versus supporting the creation or adaptation of open educational resources has global impact on education which reaches beyond a local institution.

Academic librarians today rarely select books and eBooks on a title-by-title basis. Most books and eBooks purchased by academic libraries are purchased through approval plans based on the university's focus areas and needs or as part of large eBook packages (Pickett, Tabacaru, & Harrell, 2014). Librarian governance of book purchasing mostly involves adjustment to these purchasing plans. Some title-by-title purchasing is done for non-English language materials and archival documents.

As faculty know, faculty expertise is as important in the selection of educational methods as in the selection of educational content (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). In libraries, this means that the librarians who design the discovery pathways students and scholars use to access educational resources are as important to learning as the librarians who select the databases and resources the library will provide. Therefore, peer governance is important for both instructional librarians and librarians who work behind the scenes to design discovery pathways.

Collection purchasing decisions are not always made by librarians. Faculty often have input into collection purchases. Sometimes librarians choose to set up patron driven acquisition programs in which collection

purchases are made by patrons who discover a resource they need and the item is automatically purchased for the library (Goedeken & Lawson, 2015). This is not out of line with academic freedom for librarians if the choice to set up this method of purchasing is made by librarians and periodically analyzed for ongoing value by librarians. Similarly, teams of students or other patrons may be formed to address specific collection needs such as creating a collection to support a specific learning outcome these individuals are uniquely qualified to address. However, again, these decisions must be overseen by librarians to ensure that collection decisions align with the values of librarianship.

Instruction. Academic librarians teach information literacy skills to students and faculty (Logsdon & Leebaw, 2021). These information discovery and evaluation skills underlie learning across disciplines. This instruction should reflect the experience, training, values, and pedagogical content knowledge of librarianship. The AAUP in conjunction with the American Council on Education and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges state that faculty have primary responsibility for subject matter and methods of instruction (AAUP, 1966). As for other faculty, the teaching of information literacy is most appropriately evaluated by information literacy teachers rather than administrators. Information literate individuals understand that expertise in one content area (such as administration) does not confer expertise in other areas (such as library instruction) (ACRL, 2015). Notably, the AAUP (2024) asserts that “Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject,” and while some individuals may or may not agree that librarians are faculty, they are certainly teachers. Courts have upheld this right for teaching assistants as well as university faculty (Rabban, 2024). Protecting the academic freedom of librarians to teach protects administrators from accountability for teaching that does not align with the viewpoints of donors and politicians who seek to control what is taught. It distributes the responsibility for providing intellectual diversity across an array of experts rather than placing the responsibility in the hands of a few decision makers.

Academic librarians teach undergraduates basic information evaluation skills. They advise faculty members on information decisions such as which journals to publish in, which journals to serve as reviewers or editors for, which publisher to choose for book publication, and how to negotiate copyright agreements (Fitzgerald & Eustis, 2023). These choices need to be guided by experts in scholarly publishing options rather than administrators pursuing prestige and profit for a university. Librarians can guide faculty toward publications and publishers with business models that support learning and inclusiveness rather than profit and exclusion.

Administrators often measure teaching through student evaluations, despite the litany of research showing that student evaluations of teaching are not effective as teaching assessment (Boring, Ottoboni, & Stark, 2016; Hornstein 2017). As with other faculty teaching, there is no guarantee that students will enjoy library instruction. The effort of a thorough search and questioning one’s information literacy skills are not easy or comfortable. However, librarians cannot be accountable to student enjoyment. Librarians must be accountable to the principles of information literacy and student needs. Library instruction must be evaluated by peers or by measuring learning outcomes.

Student entertainment is a means to an end in libraries and universities, not an end in itself. It is important to make students feel welcome and engaged in the libraries, but the mission of academic libraries remains educating students and providing resources and guidance for research, not amusing students. If libraries lose their focus by trying to entertain students, they will lose their relevance to higher education institutions. When librarians step outside the boundaries of our expertise in resource provision and evaluation into the domain of student affairs, we lose our authority and become amateurs.

Shared institutional governance. Governance of academic libraries comes not just from within the library, but from institutional governance as well. Academic libraries should be governed through participatory processes to serve their “inhabitants” (Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2008): those who work in them and use them. Librarians need input not only into the decision making of the libraries, but also into the decision making of their university. They bring specialized knowledge of the ways the library affects research and learning. Extending the responsibility for university governance to librarians aids the university as well as the library. Expansion of those responsible for academic governance distributes the workload of governance over a larger population and increases their power. Evidence shows that faculty at institutions where librarians participate in shared governance appreciate the help from librarians in shared governance (Weng & Murray, 2020).

Governance decisions which require library input include the formation of new academic programs which require library resources such as databases, books, and subject specialized librarians. Student learning outcomes for general education are incomplete unless they include some consideration of information literacy such as the capacity to evaluate sources for reliability. University budgetary and technology decisions must consider library needs. University assessment cannot accurately reflect university services to students without the inclusion of library services. Therefore, including the perspectives of librarians in university decision making can help guide effective decision making on these and other topics. Academic personnel contributing to these decision-making processes must be able to vote without fear of consequences from administrators who may disagree with decisions made in the interest of teaching and learning rather than student recruitment or retention. Faculty members need autonomy and academic freedom (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2011).

Librarians and other faculty can benefit from increased interaction and collaboration. Librarians can better understand faculty needs when they form relationships with them through shared governance work. Faculty can better understand what libraries have to offer when they have more interaction with librarians. Weng and Murrery (2020) found that frequent interactions between librarians and faculty were related to closer relationships between faculty and librarians. When faculty view librarians as peers, librarians have more opportunity to influence faculty publishing decisions and to promote publishing through sustainable models which result in affordable access to scholarly literature.

Governance of university units is a joint responsibility of the educators and the administrators in every unit. In libraries where librarians do not have rights to shared governance, they are generally considered staff and therefore are led by a director, rather than a dean. This means they do not have a seat in the Dean's Council, which diminishes their opportunities to affect change at the institutional level.

Research and academic freedom. Like other faculty, librarians need peer governance to ensure the free exchange of ideas in their field. Librarians must be free to publish on issues in their profession without fear of repercussions from administrators who might disagree with them. The AAUP (2024) asserts, "Teachers are entitled to full freedom in research and in the publication of the results." There is a rich and rapidly growing body of literature published by librarian authors (Wiberley, Blecic, De Groote, & Shultz, 2023). Sometimes, this literature is critical of administrative decisions.

Peer governance can help librarians feel more empowered to research and write freely without fear of punishment or retaliation from administration. Both faculty and non-faculty librarians in academic institutions report lack of protections around academic freedom (Leebaw & Logsdon, 2020). Even where librarians theoretically have the same status as other faculty, they are not given the same treatment and thus protection of their academic freedom. It can be argued that librarians are even more in need of academic freedom protection than faculty who teach for-credit courses, since these faculty's syllabi are generally distributed only to students enrolled in their classes, while the online research guides librarians produce are publicly accessible by anyone worldwide, in alignment with the library's mission to provide public education.

It is particularly important in institutions where librarians are evaluated based on their research output that they are empowered to determine what level of scholarly activity is sufficient rather than authorizing administrators to set a minimum quantity of research on behalf of librarians. The pressure on administrators to climb national ranking lists could lead to unreasonable expectations for outputs. Administrators might also neglect to allow enough time for librarians to participate in research (Bess & Dee, 2014).

Recruitment and retention of librarians. The AAUP (1966) states "scholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues." This holds true for academic librarians as well as other faculty. It is important that librarians rather than university administrators are responsible for defining librarianship because administrators, such as human resources personnel, are not experts in librarianship. This can lead library personnel to be categorized inappropriately by these divisions. For instance, in 2020, Human Resources personnel reported 35,085 full time equivalent librarians, library technicians, curators, and archivists at US degree granting institutions, but in the same year, the same institutions' libraries reported 28,065 librarians and 21,967 library support staff (NCES, 2023). This demonstrates that administrators without library science expertise do not define librarianship in the same way librarians do. Roles that require expertise in librarianship may be miscategorized as staff by administrators who do not understand the modern

profession of librarianship, resulting in lower salaries and benefits for individuals doing this work. These miscategorizations can lead to turnover. Unnecessary personnel turnover is undesirable from both the librarian and administrative perspectives, especially regarding issues of workload and the financial costs of recruiting and training new personnel. As in other fields on campus, experts in librarianship should hold the power to decide what work falls within their professional field and what work falls outside it.

Granting librarians a voice in shared governance would facilitate recruitment in libraries. There are many doctorate holders looking for academic positions who could be of great value to libraries and the universities they serve. The culture of academic capitalism is producing a great many educated people that academia is currently excluding from scholarly work (Malloy, Young, & Berdahl, 2021). These scholars expect peer governance and tenure track opportunities. Job stability is appealing to experts with a wide variety of training relevant to libraries. The recruitment of additional scholars to academic libraries via the benefits of shared governance could enhance the scholarly output of libraries, their diversity, and their educational services.

Oftentimes librarians are not given the same resources, time, or autonomy that other faculty are given, which leads to dissatisfaction among librarians. “The lack of understanding about the academic librarian’s professional role and responsibilities can be disempowering to library faculty in a number of ways” (Fleming-May & Douglass, 2014). By implementing peer governance, librarians are given a voice and recognition that they may not have already. It also strengthens the relationship and understanding between librarians and other faculty, leading to better retention and recruitment.

Threats to Shared and Peer Governance by Librarians

Despite the importance of expert autonomy in the selection of library resources, systems, personnel, and policies, librarians continue to face a patchwork of inclusion in university governance. This can be the result of a lack of power to combat administrative or political control, a lack of understanding between faculty and librarians about their shared missions, or fear from librarians about additional burdens that might come with shared governance. The inconsistency of status for librarians perpetuates the confusion among academics about the role of librarians (Fleming-May & Douglass, 2014).

Administrative objections. Tenure, academic freedom, and peer governance are closely related topics. Tenure and peer governance are tools to protect academic freedom. Some opponents of tenure for librarians such as McKinzie (2010) argue that job security has a negative effect on libraries. He argues that librarians need “a fear of dismissal and the restraints of micromanagement.” His argument is that administrators can isolate faculty members who are uncollegial to protect the rest of the department, but not librarians. He provides no evidence that administrators can effectively do this to faculty, especially considering the growing importance of team research (Larivière, Gingras, Sugimoto, & Tsou, 2015). While contingent employment may be appealing to library directors looking for control, there is no evidence that it is better for learning or research. Lack of tenure protection is no guarantee that a library’s personnel will be collegial or “cherish a collective ethos,” as McKinzie waxes idealistically. In contrast to McKinzie’s assertions, Kennedy and Garewal (2020) found that librarian autonomy to determine their job performance criteria correlated positively with morale and intention to stay in their job, both desirable outcomes from the administrative and librarian perspectives.

Administrators must view the university through the lens of capitalism. They must make decisions to support their budgets. The current understaffing and underfunding of academic libraries (Hoffman & Godbey, 2020) is likely based on the premise that libraries do not directly bring in tuition revenue as other academic departments do. Libraries cannot report retention or graduation statistics the way other academic units do. Libraries are a place for self-directed learning, rather than direct billing of credit-hours to students. Administrators see libraries as units that cost the university money rather than units that save the university several times what is spent on them. Attending or working at a university would be prohibitively expensive if patrons had to pay for every article, book, or film they used while enrolled or employed. If the library is viewed through its value to education, knowledge production, and network building, it has a much higher value than if it is judged by its value in tuition dollars. Universities need academic personnel who can view libraries in terms of education and knowledge production rather than short-term capitalist perspectives of commodity and accumulation. Petter (2012) points out the importance of having checks and balances from librarians on a University Librarian or Library Dean for the health of an institution. Of course, even increased equity between librarians and administration cannot wholly

prevent higher status university personnel like administrators from exerting influence over lower status university personnel like librarians (Rudy, 1977).

Understaffing in academic libraries is both the result of a lack of power in university decision making and an engine for perpetuating their lack of power. University resources are distributed based on the perceived power held by each unit (Volk, et al, 2001). Because librarians have little influence, they are not granted resources. Because there are fewer librarians than their workload demands, academic librarians struggle to find time to participate in university or library governance. In institutions with limited resources, it is difficult to find the money to employ and compensate sufficient librarians to run a library and participate in university governance. However, without sufficient library staffing and input, a university will not be able to offer affordable learning and research materials and library instruction to its students and faculty. While investments in the library can be challenging to argue for, they ultimately benefit the long term holistic financial health of the university.

Fragmentation between university units. Peer governance is the right of experts who can only be effectively evaluated by those who share their disciplinary expertise. However, faculty and students have trouble differentiating between expert librarians and library support staff and generally do not understand the work of libraries (Walter, 2008). Baily and Becher (2022) point out that it has sometimes been claimed that faculty work and librarian work are too different for librarians to be categorized as faculty. The argument is unjustifiable given the diversity of academic production. If the daily work of a veterinary diagnostician and a scholar of medieval literature can both be categorized as expert academic work, then surely the work of a library liaison to the veterinary school who teaches the same students as the veterinary diagnostician and a Medieval manuscript cataloger who analyzes the same documents as the literary scholar can also be categorized as academic production. These disciplinary rifts between faculty in different fields are not a recent development. They have existed since the beginning of higher education when the primary fields of study were law, medicine, and theology (Clark, 2011). Clark calls for the linkages between divergent academic cultures to be understood and promoted. The links between librarian work and the work of other faculty are strong. They are sometimes stronger than the links between the expert specialty work of one librarian and another. Academic work that requires expert training and review is scholarly work, regardless of the form it takes. Such work requires accountability to expert peers rather than administrative evaluation.

College faculty and librarian faculty may not consider their instruction to be the same (Austin & Bhandol, 2013). For example, not every librarian takes part in the instruction of students in classrooms. Academic librarians who work with electronic resources or metadata may not see themselves as instructors in the same way that public services librarians do, however, their work shapes learning on campus and it is important to remember that not all faculty have teaching responsibilities either. In addition, many of the people who do a great deal of teaching are not faculty, but graduate students (Applegate, 2019). Therefore, doing the work of teaching clearly does not equate to the right to contribute to university governance. Librarians perform professional services for a university. Professional work is by no means outside of the definition of faculty. Many faculty, in addition to librarians, provide professional services to the university. For example, faculty provide health and veterinary services.

Despite some differences, librarians and other faculty have many commonalities. Like other faculty, librarians often have little formal background in teaching (Westbrock, & Fabian, 2010). Like other faculty, librarians often teach in informal contexts beyond the classroom. Other faculty may refer to this as “advising” or “mentoring”, while librarians tend to refer to it as “reference” or “consultations.” Like other faculty, librarians struggle to assess the lasting impact of their instruction. They struggle with student assessments of teaching that gauge enjoyment rather than growth in understanding.

The diversity of librarian expertise can sometimes confuse people into thinking that everyone who works in a library is a librarian. An academic librarian need not be a person with a degree in library science. It may be a person whose training and experience are relevant to the role of academic librarianship who is hired by a committee of academic librarians based on their evaluation of the individual’s expertise for librarianship. For example, a business librarian may hold an MBA, a copyright librarian may hold a JD, and a systems librarian may hold a master’s degree in computer science (Ferguson, 2016). Many academic librarians hold PhDs in the academic field they serve. However, this diversity among librarians does not mean that a person who is responsible for marketing, human resources, finance, or fundraising in an academic library is a librarian and

qualified to make decisions about collections, discovery, or instruction. Only personnel who are responsible for advancing the learning and research missions of a library are librarians. Personnel whose responsibilities and experience lie in marketing or accounting are separate kinds of experts whose professional goals often represent a conflict of interest with the goals of librarians.

Political influence. Recent opposition to faculty autonomy in university teaching includes pressure to forbid racial (Reilly, 2022), gender (Flaherty, 2022), and controversial (Gloeckner, 2022) topics. This pressure comes from a variety of political perspectives (Shullenberger, 2021). This pressure can readily affect library instructors as much as other faculty. Libraries are often hosts for university visitors. Speakers without reliable relevant credentials are sometimes invited to campus in the name of hearing both sides of an issue as if their rhetoric has equal weight to speakers who have rigorous training in the topic in question. Speakers who do not meet the standards of rigor in their area of interest should not be invited to campus. Peer governance requires that educational opportunities are selected in alignment with the standards of their discipline. Creating connections through peer governance between faculty and librarians can help combat disinformation and the dissemination of fake news among students and speakers at the institution (Alwan et al., 2021).

Recent opposition to faculty autonomy in university decision-making also includes pressure to conform to the will of donors. Faculty have been denied tenure for objecting to donor influence in university decision making. For instance, there was a recent controversy over a professor who called for investigations of a public administration program that seemed to be lowering standards to keep football players enrolled (Flaherty, 2022). In a competitive market for university funding, when a program without academic merit is funded, programs with academic merit suffer. Efforts to bolster the university's image can compromise intellectual content (Weineck, 2022).

As leaders in the fight against disinformation, librarians need academic freedom to protect their expert decisions. However, librarians report a lack of academic freedom protections (Leebaw, & Logsdon, 2020). Librarians need the freedom to design and deliver instruction, select collections and speakers, and contribute to university decisions without fear of negative consequences from politicians, board members, or administrators without expertise in library science. This freedom comes from being evaluated by their peers with shared expertise and values. There is no academic freedom without peer governance.

Affective and emotional barriers among librarians. Some academic librarians fear that to earn rights to shared governance they will need to frequently produce peer-reviewed articles. They don't always realize the wide variety of faculty with shared governance rights who already exist. There are many faculty who are teaching focused rather than research focused. Like most librarians, many other faculty hold terminal master's degrees rather than doctoral degrees. Inclusion in shared and peer governance does not necessitate any level of creative output. Creative scholarly output can come in a variety of forms representing the wide variety of disciplines served by the library. One's departmental peers define expectations for scholarly creation, not the classification of "faculty" or inclusion in shared governance. A teaching focused faculty member is as much a faculty member as a research focused faculty member and requires the same academic freedom and peer governance (Schleck, 2022).

Some librarians may not enjoy or wish to participate in decision making about library policies, university policies, or the profession of librarianship. Some other faculty also do not enjoy their service duties to their colleges, institutions, and disciplines due to feelings that it takes away time that could be spent on teaching or research (Neumann & Terosky 2007). However, these tasks are necessary for the good of higher education and scholarly knowledge. Those who do not wish to contribute should not deny their colleagues the opportunity to contribute to the protection and advancement of education and research.

These affective and emotional barriers among academic librarians are partially the result of the neoliberal society we work in, in which people are accustomed to being judged by their profitability to their employer rather than their adherence to their principles (Eisenhower & Smith, 2009). The influence of corporate values in academia and the pressure to view students as customers influence academic librarians to see themselves as employees rather than experts. Academic autonomy in defining academic quality allows for a reorientation toward education, service, social responsibility, and inclusion rather than the pursuit of grants, donations, and selective journal citations for the sake of money and prestige (Rhoades, 2005).

Those who fear peer evaluation forget that the alternative to peer evaluation is not no evaluation. The choice academics make is between evaluation by peers who share their disciplinary values and evaluation by administrators whose duties require them to take budget, recruitment and donor marketing, and ranking considerations as guiding values. Hoffman (2020) points out the importance of helping librarians understand the purpose and value of participating in shared governance. Librarians could also be served by structured learning in how to participate in governance, as librarian training does not include this. Librarians that begin their careers in institutions where they are excluded from shared governance may have difficulty adjusting to institutions where they are included.

Peer governance is not always pleasant. Like other faculty, there will always be strong disagreements between librarians about the best decisions for the library. Library departments compete for funding and personnel lines (Applegate, 2019). Public services staff may want the library space optimized for student interaction. Technical services staff may want the library space optimized for behind-the-scenes work. Librarians with different experiences and training may focus more on undergraduate needs or graduate student and faculty needs. These are all valuable and vital perspectives that are needed to create a strong library that serves all university needs.

CONCLUSION

To support the education and research missions of universities and uphold academic principles, librarians should be included in faculty Senate and faculty Senate committees. Library governance should be participatory rather than top-down. The principles stated by the AAC&U, AAUP, and ACRL (ACRL, 2018) for librarian inclusion in shared governance remain relevant despite the challenges of implementing them. The question of whether librarians should have peer governance over their own work impacts learning across campuses. Librarian governance structures impact faculty research resources. Inclusion of librarian voices in decision making could combat some of the understaffing and underfunding libraries have faced over the past several decades. A library cannot be considered fully staffed until librarians have time to do their jobs and participate in shared governance. Faculty affiliated with colleges other than the library whose role in shared governance face threats may learn from the experiences of academic libraries where shared governance has long been in limbo. The strengthening of shared governance in universities supports the knowledge creation and transmission goals of higher education.

Librarians need the protection of academic freedom to make library related decisions independent of political and financial influence. It is this independence from political and financial influence that permits them to make teaching and research decisions that benefit learners and the body of scholarly knowledge rather than funders, administrators, or politicians. This kind of independence comes from job stability and accountability to one's scholarly peers. Tenure is a powerful tool to achieve this kind of independence (Coker, vanDuinkerken, & Bales, 2010). However, nominal tenure, without the power of shared governance, is meaningless.

Librarians do not accept donations of materials that don't align with their missions. They don't accept donations of money that come with stipulations that are out of alignment with their missions. It is important that libraries also do not accept administrative influence that does not align with their missions.

Universities can offer onboarding workshops to librarians and other faculty to learn about the processes of shared governance. This will increase their effectiveness and confidence in participating in governance decisions. It is also an opportunity for collaboration across disciplinary silos for scholars to meet and form connections. It can address some of the anxiety librarians and other faculty feel about engaging in governance decisions. It demonstrates that the university values the expertise of its scholars.

Graduate programs can offer coursework or training on the administration of higher education to future faculty in all disciplines. Just as graduate students benefit from training in their disciplinary content and research methods, they can also benefit from an understanding of the departmental and institutional service expectations they will experience.

Future next steps for research on this topic could include a survey of ACRL members about their experiences with shared governance and the value they see in academic freedom, peer and shared governance, and tenure for librarians. It could also be valuable to conduct focus groups or a Delphi study about the benefits and drawbacks

of peer governance and tenure for librarians. It would be useful to have an accurate picture of how many institutions have governance rights for librarians and include librarians in their faculty Senates.

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