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ABSTRACT

The planning program described here focuses on the value of the planning process itself, and emphasizes that planning done by groups offers greater flexibility, creativity, and information than can be provided by a single individual. At the same time, the program stresses the importance of the planning activity as a central library function. The proposed organizational structure and managerial approaches integrate the input of the several groups with the efforts of individual administrators to develop a productive planning process. This process includes: the formal organization (the library director, the planning-budgeting officer, and unit heads); the seven steps of a planning program; and staff involvement through a senior planning board, a planning task force and program advisory groups. The steps of the planning program are: (1) Formulation of objectives that can be used to guide future library operations, (2) Assessment of requirements for change, (3) Development of unit plans and alternative courses of action, (4) Determination of required resources for proposed courses of action, (5) Evaluation and recommendation of proposed courses of action, (6) The installation and monitoring of programs and (7) Review and updating of plans.
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Notes from the Director, University Library
Management Studies Office

With the publication of this issue, the Management Studies Office of the Association of Research Libraries inaugurates a series of Occasional Papers concerning management problems facing research libraries today. Each issue will be devoted to a single topic presented as a paper, a summary, or a bibliographic review. The series will provide guides to important research and publications in the management field, annual summaries of trends in various management areas, and information on current developments (including workability and success of innovations). Future issues will discuss the uses of committees, the budgeting process, unionization of library staff, and management development approaches.

The Occasional Papers will provide an outlet for distributing information obtained by the Management Studies Office in its role as a clearinghouse for information on library management and related issues, and hopefully they will stimulate an exchange of ideas useful in the improvement of library management. Your reactions to each number in the series will be of great value to the office as a guide in presenting and evaluating management topics through a publication program.

Two copies of each occasional paper will be distributed initially to all ARL members. Additional copies will be supplied by the office at \$1.00 each. Payment with the order is requested to avoid the cost of invoicing.

Duane Webster

PLANNING AIDS FOR THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

by Duane Webster

Introduction

Successful operation of a large complex university library organization calls for increasing administrative attention to development of an effective planning program. Library directors are well aware of the importance of such a program, but there is continuing difficulty in adapting planning techniques to the library organization. Changes on university campuses during the last ten years have demonstrated, however, that short-term solutions in place of planning cannot adequately solve various operational problems, particularly in crisis situations that call for prompt managerial decisions. A long range planning program may not eliminate the need for quick and decisive action in solving day-to-day problems, but it does provide a consistent logic and backdrop for such actions.

Three rather common situations illustrate the need for a comprehensive long-range planning program in university libraries:

Library A: The university is faced with a large deficit, and the library director is instructed to reduce book purchases by half, to eliminate fifteen staff positions, and to lower the overall budget by seven percent. This retrenchment forces awkward choices upon the

library in determining the priority to be accorded various programs and services.

Library B: The director retires without a suitable replacement. The middle and upper management levels of the library are composed mainly of senior staff members nearing retirement; yet the one or two younger potential staff managers are not ready for a top post. A replacement from outside the university is also difficult to find. How did the library arrive at this point? What must be done to avoid a recurrence of this problem?

Library C: A heavy investment -- probably exceeding a million dollars -- was made in an automation program. The results are disappointing. The circulation system is more expensive to operate than the old manual system, and the acquisitions program had to be modified because it was not flexible enough to handle the recent growth in book purchases. The basic question is: Should the automation program continue?

This paper suggests a planning approach that library directors can use to meet such managerial problems instead of waiting for a crisis that forces the library to take drastic and sometimes poorly conceived steps on short notice. This program can be started without making major organizational changes, obtaining expensive new staff skills, or committing additional financial resources.

Briefly stated, the suggested planning program includes:

- . The library director as the key figure in a successful planning program contributes leadership and advice while promoting and overseeing the entire process.
- . The planning framework suggests seven appropriate steps in a planning program.
- . The senior planning board acts as a senior staff advisory group to the overall planning program.
- . The administrators of individual units perform basic planning for their areas of responsibility and contribute to overall planning efforts.
- . The program advisory groups represent one approach that department heads may use to accomplish the details of unit planning.
- . The planning task force develops alternate courses of action for the overall library, utilizing unit plans and their own detailed investigations in recommended areas.
- . The planning-budget officer coordinates the planning program and supplies technical advice to participants.

Problems Facing Planners

There are numerous difficulties in carrying out a complete program of library planning within a university. The first and biggest hurdle is the apparent lack of planning at the university level. How can the library carry out a program if its parent ignores the value of planning? Other problems encountered by library planners include:

- . university plans that are out of date or unavailable to the library;
- . university plans that seem to be more public relations efforts than policy documents;
- . university planning programs which do not assume library involvement or which do not consider the library implications of university decisions;
- . lack of specialized planning skills in the library and in the university;
- . limited funds available for experimentation or development of planning programs;
- . negative library staff reaction because planning is considered a meaningless exercise or is not understood;
- . union opposition to planning that could strengthen administrative prerogatives; and

. frustration with the requirements for retrenchment of services and resources.

The growing complexity of universities challenges any planning effort. Despite many problems, however, library planning can be formulated in terms of an overall, long-term program for action, aimed at anticipating problems and directing the use of resources within the context of a designed course. Crises can be met within a strategy instead of resolving issues on the spur of the moment when the emergency arises.

Benefits of Planning Process

Effective management is characterized by the ability to plan ahead to meet emerging problems and take advantage of special opportunities. The ability of present administrators to project plans some distance into the future is an important factor in a successful library operation. Even though a model textbook program cannot always be established, library directors can make a beginning.

Management authorities Ackoff (1971) and Steiner (1970) stress that a number of secondary results accruing during the course of planning can often be as important as the final plan. First of all, a planning program forces those concerned with management to probe and understand the real meaning of their work and it focuses the efforts of the organization on fundamental problems and objectives.

Furthermore, it facilitates a more rational consideration of alternative courses of action. Thus, opportunities and problems can be considered systematically without the pressure that is generated when immediate operational problems occur requiring decisions that tend to be divorced from their long-range consequences.

Secondly, a planning program offers the opportunity to raise questions that would make library problems more responsive to the needs of users. Such a review would encourage systematic and continuing study by the staff of issues that are the heart of good library service. Although in other situations such questions are often addressed by individual administrators, the managerial approach suggested by the planning program permits the application of a wider range of skills and opens the way for a better and more comprehensive response to specific questions.

Thirdly, a planning program presents an opportunity for productive staff involvement by directing the committee work of staff members toward the examination of critical planning questions and in this way makes possible the conduct of a planning program without the addition of a large planning staff. This participation also promotes staff understanding of the functions of program planning and allows individual staff members to contribute their own technical expertise. Furthermore, staff members who have participated in the process of setting objectives and priorities are able to undertake their various duties with a clearer understanding of library

goals and the programs initiated for attaining them. Staff cooperation in solving mutually recognized problems increases the capacity for joint action and promotes improved results.

These several benefits result when a vigorous and comprehensive planning program is adopted. The success of this type of planning as a tool for effective management in other enterprises suggests the need for further application in libraries.

The Planning Organization

It is evident that improved planning programs are overdue, and a start in that direction is badly needed. What can be done under these conditions? What guidelines can be suggested? How can the suggested benefits be secured?

Current management practices suggest several concrete courses of action that library administrators may take to immediately improve their present planning programs and to guide longer-range planning activities. The planning program suggested herein has a three-fold purpose: (1) to secure the involvement and commitment of library staff; (2) to facilitate a productive and continuing planning program; and (3) to integrate the planning responsibilities into the library administrator's regular work pattern.

The library director has the principal responsibility in any planning program. He sets the program in motion, decides on the

course of action that will relate the library's resources to the instructional and research programs of the university, and leads the staff in the process of identifying and carrying out program objectives. Promoting and overseeing a planning program is in many cases the most important responsibility of a library administrator.

The leadership and advice of the library director are critical at all stages in the successful development of the following suggestions. For example, one of his first and more important acts is to assign the planning review and evaluation function within the proposed program to the senior executive advisory group, which, in some cases, may be the director's cabinet consisting of associate and assistant directors. Ideally, however, this assignment should be handled by the cabinet plus other senior officers, including heads of the medical and law libraries. If no senior advisory group exists within the library, one can be established with program and planning review as a major responsibility.

Responsibilities of the Senior Planning Board

The senior planning board is responsible primarily for formulating recommendations on library programs and overall courses of action and for review of the entire planning program in the library. The board could initiate its program by reviewing the literature on planning suggested at the end of this paper, but should probably not

undertake an intensive investigation of any specific topic. After this, introduction of a comprehensive planning framework that provides a guide for various groups and individual administrators within the library should be considered. Although various frameworks might be used (such as those discussed by R.E. Kemper -- 1970), the following elements seem of prime importance: (1) formulation of objectives that can be used to guide future operations; (2) assessment of required changes within the library, such as a reduced budget or the need for improved services; (3) development of unit programs and alternate courses of action in a variety of circumstances; (4) determination of resources required for alternative action; (5) evaluation of proposed courses of action for both short- and long-term priorities; (6) installation and monitoring of programs; and (7) a review and updating of plans as part of the overall planning program.

Once a workable framework is established, it is important that the director, along with the senior planning board that has been involved in working out the various steps of a long-term and comprehensive plan, commits the library philosophically and operationally to one specific managerial approach. The suggested approach integrates the work of line administrators with carefully defined staff groups in an overall planning program.

Achieving a sound planning process is a long-term and in some respects a continuous event that should follow a framework. The

problem at this point is that these frameworks are frequently viewed as so comprehensive and inclusive that it is difficult to know where or how to start. As a solution to this dilemma, the senior planning board can first focus on the formulation of objectives. Securing a group review of overall library goals in both a long-term and short-term sense results in greater exchange of individual perspectives.

The individual perspectives exchanged in such a group review not only broaden the overall library goals, but lead to a consensus for a draft of general library objectives that would work logically and with the least revision toward the accomplishment of the entire program.

Along with its statement of objectives, the senior planning board should examine closely the means required to accomplish changes that might be necessary to achieve the projected program of services and resources (the second step in the planning program). As mentioned above, such changes may be prompted by a reduced budget, or they may reflect the need to improve services and to expand library resources to meet the growing information requirements of the university. Advice and knowledge on how to proceed with changes in library programs can come from a variety of sources such as the board's meeting with faculty members, administrative officers, and students both individually and in groups, as well as from managerial and program analysis conducted by the library staff itself. The result of this assessment should be staff agreement on opportunities for improvement and

needed changes in the broad areas of service and resource programs, finance and governance.

After objectives have been formulated and required changes assessed, a process that may take from eight to ten weeks, a statement should be prepared by the library director and distributed to the entire staff for review and comment. This statement, by including the objectives and the related requirements for change, should be a model for the preparation and statement of unit goals and plans throughout the library organization. The document should also describe the planning framework and present a schedule for moving through the different phases. It will thus provide a succinct guide for the planning program at every level of the organization.

Responsibilities of Organizational Units

Upon completion of the first two steps, formulation of objectives and assessment of required changes, the proposed procedure calls for the assignment of specific planning responsibilities to each unit of the library, including sections, departments and divisions. (Step 3) Once established this planning activity would be an annual assignment with the major library departments coordinating plans of the subordinate units. Not only is each unit able to supply information, perspectives, and skills to the planning program, but the unit head and his staff also live with the decisions made.

The administrator of each unit should first identify and describe the strengths and possible weaknesses in his unit and report to the planning group any specific problems. This reporting process should aim at an objective summary of unit operations and is distinctly different from traditional management reports that tend to emphasize unit strengths exclusively. Secondly, the unit administrator should prepare performance goals for the duration of the current year, defining precisely what the unit expects to accomplish within that time period. This step should lead to the writing of an annual report at the end of the year which would summarize the progress made toward the previous year's goals. Again, this approach to the preparation of annual reports may differ from usual library reporting practices.

Assigning planning responsibility to individual administrators makes good sense. It not only promotes accountability, but invites those who are best informed to contribute their judgments to the design and development of critical library programs. The unit supervisor, particularly department heads, faced with additional reporting and planning responsibilities may want to give work assignments either to individuals or to groups organized within the unit for planning purposes. These groups may be called "program advisory groups" and they would report directly to the unit administrator.

A possible procedure for directing the planning work of the program advisory groups would be to formulate a plan of action within

the guidelines already set down by the director. As a hypothetical case, the unit plan could be prepared to take care of three sets of contingencies. First, the plan of action for the year ahead could be made within the same budget which is currently available. One of the key issues that this activity would emphasize is the effect of inflation on present use of student assistants and the purchase of new books. The second plan of action could assume an extraordinary twenty percent increase in the budget. This would encourage an exchange of new ideas on the development of library programs, ideas which ordinarily would not be forthcoming due to budget limitations. A third plan of action could be prepared assuming a twenty percent reduction in the budget. This contingency requires an examination of the impact on priorities and overall library objectives of such a drastic reduction.

Responsibilities of Planning Task Force

The fourth step in the suggested planning program in the university library is the creation of a planning task force to investigate and develop alternate courses of action for the library as a whole and to determine resources required for proposed programs. The task force's membership should be relatively small -- five or six -- and roughly representative of the various levels of the organization. A member of the senior advisory board would be appointed chairman of the task force with the responsibility to report back to

the board. The task force should work out the actual details of the planning activity for the library as a whole within the previously established framework. To do this, the planning task force will gather data, perform investigations, review and integrate library unit plans, and prepare projections of future requirements.

The planning task force will be faced with several fundamental questions as they proceed with the process of evaluating alternative courses of action. For example:

(1) How well is the library doing? An assessment should be made of how successfully present library services and resources meet established objectives of the groups served, the needs of individual users, and the staff needs for professional growth and achievement. Such an understanding will contribute to the development of a new program.

(2) What are the capabilities and deficiencies of the library? Not only should the distinctive or unique skills and strengths be recognized, but an honest appraisal should be made of its weaknesses and shortcomings. The process of preparing specialized programs and solving existing problems should be guided by the strengths of a particular university library as identified in this appraisal.

(3) What opportunities exist for improving library programs? To answer this question, the task force could make an investigation into the nature of the university environment and its relationship

to the various library unit programs. It would be important to learn what possible changes might be needed by the university in library services and what developments may be expected in the technology of information over a long-term period, possibly five to ten years. It is also important to ascertain the image of the library within the university community and to determine how to achieve possible changes, if needed.

(4) What changes in programs should the library consider? The answer to this question should be based upon the goals of the library over a long period, possibly ten years or more, with all proposed benefits expected from the achievement of such goals to be clearly outlined. One of the important areas to be examined is the present and future requirements and expectations of groups served by the library programs.

Upon completion of these activities assigned to the planning task force, the library has achieved the five initial steps in the suggested planning framework. The results in the form of alternative courses of action are given by the planning task force to the senior planning board for review. The board evaluates and then suggested programs for appropriate action by the library director. The library director and the administrative staff can then move ahead with the installation and monitoring of programs. (Step 6) The senior planning board will convene at suitable periods, probably annually, to review plans and to form a task force to meet the updating requirements as part of the final step in the planning program.

Responsibilities of Planning-Budgeting Officer

The immediate and long-range steps already enumerated can be undertaken in most libraries without major organizational or structural change. However, the establishment of a new kind of position, that of a planning-budgeting officer would require a change in both personnel and budget. This officer would serve as coordinator of the planning program and as the director's staff assistant, responsible for applying management techniques to improve library service. The planning officer can act as manager of the various group efforts in the long-range planning program thus helping to avoid some of the pitfalls of committee work. He would see that schedules and commitments are met, that information is properly exchanged, and that obstacles are overcome. He would work directly with each administrator and each group, providing technical assistance in developing the best possible strategy for the planning program.

At this time, several university libraries are utilizing the services of a planning-budgeting officer in meeting the problems of operating large research libraries. In some cases, for example, the position was established because university administrators requested budgeting approaches and procedures that were unfamiliar to the library administrators. In other instances, libraries created the position in order to attract specialized skills to library management. Because of the comparative newness of such a position, the responsibilities and duties of these officers vary greatly.

At a recent informal meeting of five library staff members who hold this kind of position, several practices were reported. (Notes of the meeting are available from the ARL Management Studies Office.) One of these practices is the use of an administrative assistant as a budgeting officer who deals directly with his university counterpart. Another practice is the recruiting of persons with non-library training, but with business or public administration degrees and experience, into the top administrative staff where they focus on the budgeting process and apply quantitative solutions to problems in library operations.

At this meeting it was also noted that operational duties assigned to this position often did not permit the officer to carry out his primary planning assignment. Added responsibilities, such as fiscal control, shipping and receiving, facility maintenance, and supplies and equipment, are probably initially useful in justifying the position, but they are time-consuming tasks that prevent in most cases the planning-budgeting officer from carrying out his primary duties.

The Columbia study recommends the addition of this type of position to the library administrative structure but defines the responsibilities in considerably different terms. One of the strengths of this definition is the exclusion of direct, line operating responsibilities. It emphasizes that the planning-budgeting officer introduces to the planning program quantitative tools and

specialized skills that contribute to decisions that are a primary responsibility of the chief administrator. The responsibilities assigned to the planning-budgeting officer include coordinating the library planning program and participating in university planning as the representative of the university library. He contributes to the library planning efforts by developing and maintaining basic data required for planning; by preparing planning guides and schedules for use by all library units; and by counseling library unit heads engaged in planning. The officer, furthermore, formulates and monitors the budgets through which the plans are controlled. He coordinates the preparation of budget requests according to university directives and guidelines; provides library procedures needed to prepare budget requests; integrates budget requests prepared by units into the total library budget; advises the library director in preparing and submitting budget requests for the libraries; and reviews budget progress and individual unit performances.

The attached job description, prepared by the ARL Management Studies Office, defines the proposed position more precisely in terms of mission, scope of responsibilities, objectives, duties and desirable qualifications. It should be emphasized that this is a major administrative position within the library and represents a significant commitment of library resources to the improvement of library management.

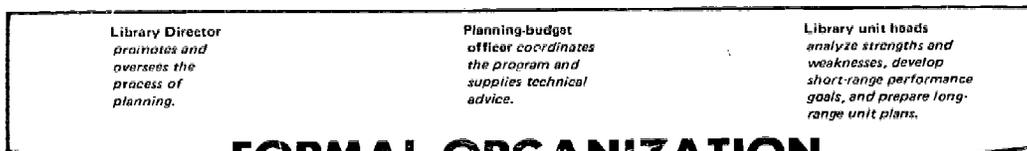
Conclusion

The planning program described here focuses on the value of the planning process itself, and emphasizes that planning done by groups offers greater flexibility, creativity, and information than can be provided by a single individual. At the same time, the program stresses the importance of the planning activity as a central library function.

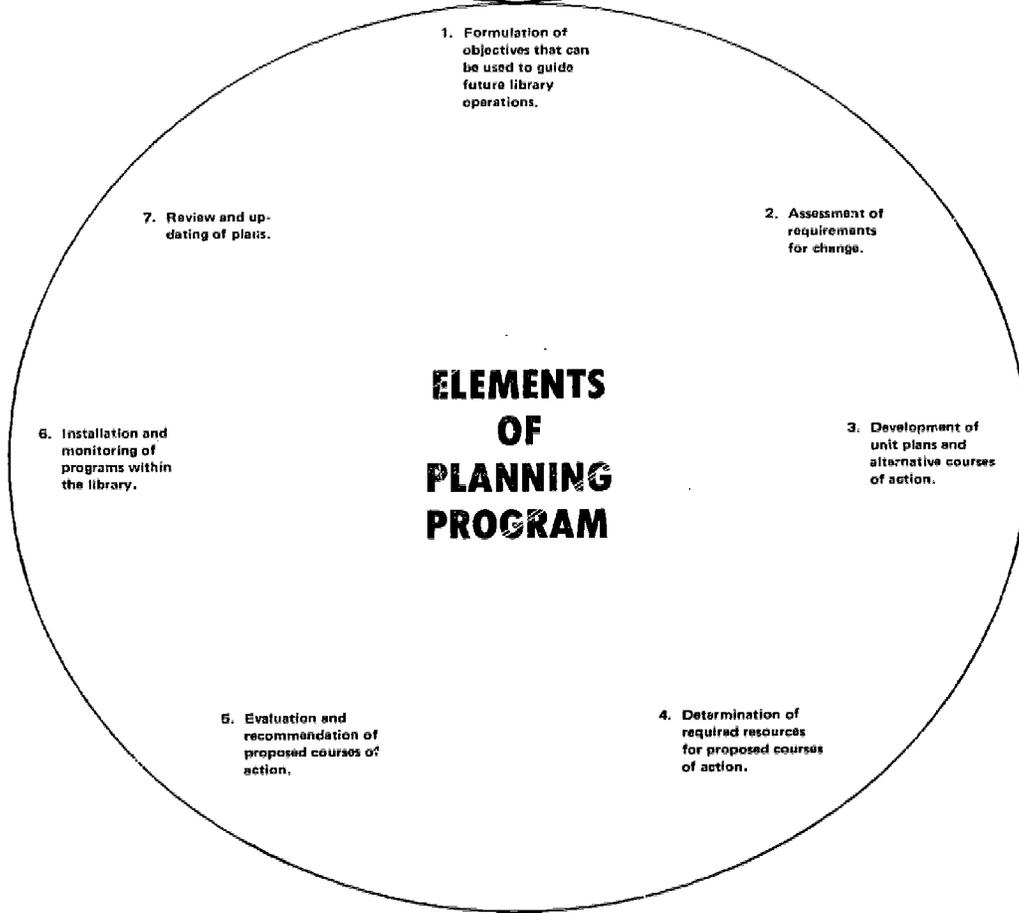
The proposed organizational structure and managerial approaches integrate the input of the several groups with the efforts of individual administrators to develop a productive planning process. This process includes: the formal organization (the library director, the planning-budgeting officer, and unit heads); the seven steps of a planning program; and staff involvement through a senior planning board, a planning task force and program advisory groups.

Fundamentally, planning is making a choice among alternate courses of action. To avoid a crisis that has to be solved by crash methods in the absence of prior thought, it is wise to develop as soon as possible a planning process that can involve the entire staff in investigation and evaluation. The development of a planning program such as the one outlined herein can be started immediately. A planning program that achieves quickly a degree of improvement even though simple in concept, is better than an elaborate plan, that stays on the drawing board and is never acted upon.

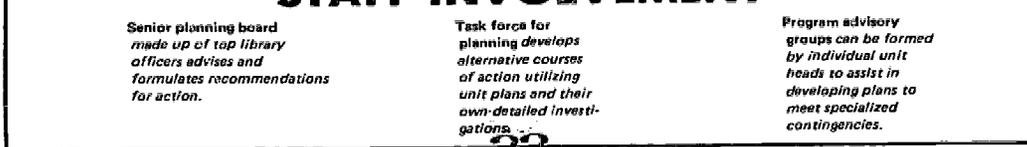
A LIBRARY PLANNING PROCESS



FORMAL ORGANIZATION



STAFF INVOLVEMENT



Appendix II

A Suggested Job Description for University Library
Planning-Budgeting Officer

Mission

To analyze, anticipate and respond to future environments through the operation of a comprehensive planning program. The planning process is directed toward an investigation of fundamental problems and opportunities facing the library and helps prepare the library for eventualities by drawing upon the current and potential strengths of the library.

Major Activities

- (1) Coordinates the work of groups and individuals contributing to the planning program.
- (2) Provides a channel of information to these groups and to the library administration concerning progress of the planning program.
- (3) Acts as technical advisor for the planning program by introducing management techniques and directly assisting the library officers involved in the planning program throughout the organization.
- (4) Supplies data required in planning and budgeting processes, including statistical projections and data analyses.
- (5) Supplies unit administrators with institutional guidelines for budget formulation and interprets these university guidelines in the context of library operations.

(6) Acts as library liaison to the planning program of the university securing additional information for the construction of library program plans and communicating to the university administration the progress of library plans.

(7) Develops and applies management techniques to the library planning and budgeting process. These may include program budgeting, cost-benefit analysis, and model building.

(8) Prepares and monitors library budget. This activity does not include a responsibility for the formulation of policy in this area. The officer applies established policies by reviewing the budgeting program relative to unit performances, preparing and submitting budget requests, and integrating budget requests submitted by the individual units.

(9) Coordinates the preparation of overall library policies and maintains policy manuals.

(10) Participates in regional and national cooperative programs to improve library planning.

Working Relationships

The planning-budgeting officer is accountable directly to the library director. The professional staff level of this position would be assistant to the library director for planning. Minimal direct authority is suggested for this office since it is a staff oriented activity. With the budget and control responsibility vested in the position, however, the influence of the office will be considerable.

The office is expected to cooperate with the senior planning board and the task force and respond to their needs and requirements for completing the planning program. Relationships among key administrative officers which will cut across formal organizational lines, are critical in this position because of the cooperation and teamwork required for group planning. The expertise of the planning officer must be recognized by the top library administration so that he can successfully contribute to the overall management of the library.

Criteria of Performance

In addition to the successful completion of the major duties described earlier, several criteria should be established to evaluate the success of this position in accomplishing library objectives:

- (1) Success of planning groups in achieving consensus on objectives and in developing useful plans.
- (2) Existence of a comprehensive and continuing planning program.
- (3) Availability of data required in the planning-budgeting process.
- (4) Creation of short and long-range plans, which define library objectives, establish priorities and develop strategies for achieving desired results.
- (5) Improvement of library performance by the application of management techniques.

Qualifications for the Position

As a major executive within the library and as a member of the top management team, the planning-budgeting officer requires a variety of credentials:

- (1) A professional degree -- ideally, a library degree combined with a business degree.
- (2) Exposure to, or experience with, contemporary management techniques. If long-range planning is to be carried out successfully, a high degree of technical competence is needed.
- (3) Proven analytical and problem-solving skills.
- (4) Ability to work effectively with library administrators.
- (5) Personal qualities of confidence, flexibility, resilience, and courage.

Appendix III

Selected Planning Materials

Several publications are suggested here for use in the development of a comprehensive planning program. Since there is an overabundance of business literature on planning this listing is highly selective. Two titles are strongly recommended: The Ackoff book, which is a good overview of the planning process for use by library directors, and the Steiner book, which is a comprehensive source of information for planning groups and the planning-budgeting officer. Materials covering library planning programs, on the other hand, are very limited. Kemper reviews this situation in "Library Planning: The Challenge of Change."

Ackoff, Russell, L. A Concept of Corporate Planning. New York: Wiley and Sons. 1970.

This book describes in a clear, concise, and understandable fashion what planning is all about. Do not be misled by the inclusion of the word "corporate" in the title or by the examples presented mainly from the business area, because it is intended for the top executive in all organizations. This is the book to be read if a busy administrator has time for only one. Ackoff describes current planning practices, and suggests an improved planning approach that incorporates recent research in behavior and management.

Casasco, Juan A. Planning Techniques for University Management.
Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education. 1970.

The application of computer techniques to university planning is emphasized in this report. A descriptive survey of twenty-one projects is presented within the context of a framework for university planning. The need for planning in the university is reiterated and a useful definition of comprehensive planning for universities is provided.

Hamburg, Morris. A Systems Analysis of the Library and Information Science Statistical Data System: The Research Investigation.
Interim Report. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School of Finance and Business. 1970.

The final report of this research on library statistical data is scheduled for spring 1972. The work here is a pioneer effort aimed at improving library planning and decision making. Although quantitatively oriented, there is a great deal in the report that library planners can use without the addition of new skills in the library. Particularly useful in this respect are the sections on library objectives and performance measures.

Kemper, Robert E. "Library Planning: The Challenge of Change."
In Advances in Librarianship, Volume 1, edited by M.E. Voigt.
New York: Academic Press. 1970.

Kemper reviews the available planning literature and relates it to library administration. One of his principal emphases is the development of effective planning structures in libraries. His "total planning framework," on page 216, can be compared profitably with the planning process presented in this paper.

Mason, T.R. "Program Planning for Research Libraries." In Association of Research Libraries, Minutes of the Seventy-Third Meeting, January 26, 1969. Washington, D.C. 1969.

Mason's presentation at a membership meeting in 1969 attempts to relate the concepts of PPBS to the university environment. A particularly useful part of the paper deals with a proposed program planning structure for the university research library, although he points out that, "As yet, no one has really devised a satisfactory program budgeting system for a university." (Page 16)

Steiner, G.A. Top Management Planning. New York: MacMillan, 1969.

This is a comprehensive treatment of planning concepts, techniques, and problems by a major authority in the field. A statement of special interest to libraries is that "chief executives of all but the smallest companies need staff help in doing this planning." (Page 89) There is a useful section on major quantitative and behavioral techniques and how they apply to the planning process.

END