WHO IS MY PROFESSOR?

Understanding the Work Life of School Library Faculty Members

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Introduction

Have you ever wondered about the people teaching the next generation of school library professionals? You probably know that they prepare course outlines, set assignments, and mark your papers. They might present at your local or state conferences, or perhaps you know them from their work on committees that promote the new AASL Standards. Maybe you have read about their work in *School Library Research* or *Knowledge Quest*. But, what else do they do as school library faculty members?

School library professors engage in research, teaching, and service and are expected to excel in all areas to be awarded tenure and promotion. Faculty members who work in the area of school libraries are a very small subset of those working in universities around the world. They are interesting because they work in universities, colleges, and schools of education and/or library and information studies, typically have professional work experience (in school libraries and as teachers), and are predominantly female.

How do they experience teaching, research, and service? How many hours a week do they teach, what conferences do they attend, where do they publish? These were some of the questions guiding this research about the work life of school library faculty members from around the world.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

According to Peter J. Bentley and Svein Kyvik, "the modern research university—with its teaching, research and service missions—stands as the pivotal institution because it produces knowledge (research), and transmits knowledge to students (teaching) and to societal stakeholders (service)" (2011, 529). In the modern research university there is still the " 'complete scholar' engaged in coherent, integrated, and self-directed work across the full range of teaching, research, service, and governance" (Plater 2008, 36). It makes sense, then, to try to understand the experiences of faculty members in the modern research university. Little research has examined the specific experiences of school library faculty members in the global context. However, we can learn from the research of others about teaching, research, and service in higher education more generally.

Orientation: Research or Teaching

In 1997 Esther Gottlieb and Bruce Keith presented the idea of research-oriented and teaching-oriented faculty members. While their article is old, the concepts are interesting. Those who were research-oriented were more likely to be male, full professors, work at large institutions (more than 10,000 students), and required to do research (95 percent). Those who were teaching-oriented were more likely to be female and work at smaller institutions (less

WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARY FACULTY MEMBERS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

than 2,500 students); only 75 percent were required to do research. Those who leaned toward research were "likely to spend one-third to two-thirds more time on research than those oriented toward teaching," teach fewer undergraduate courses, and publish more articles than those who lean toward teaching (Gottlieb and Keith 1997, 409).

More recently Karen L. Webber also found that "faculty who spend more time on teaching are less productive with their research," and full professors produce more refereed journal articles than associate and assistant professors. Interestingly, Webber found that race, marital status, and gender had no significant effect on "the production of articles, books, textbooks or presentations" (2011, 35). However, financial support for research and the institution type did have an effect on productivity; "respondents from doctoral-extensive institutions report 62 percent more refereed articles than those from master's and bachelor's institutions, and respondents from research-intensive institutions report 63 percent more refereed articles than those from non-doctoral institutions" (Webber 2011, 38–39).

Workload and Time Distribution

Bentley and Kyvik (2011) surveyed more than 7,000 full-time faculty in fourteen countries and reported on the number of hours spent engaging in academic work, including teaching, research, and service, as well as administration and other academic activities during the teaching terms (roughly two-thirds of the year) and during the non-teaching term. They found that faculty work an average of 48.4 hours per week during teaching terms and

44.7 hours per week during non-teaching terms. In non-teaching terms, faculty members spend more time on research activities, while administration, service, and other activities remain the same (2011, 435–36). Similarly, a study by Albert N. Link, Christopher A. Swann, and Barry Bozeman (2008), using data from the U.S. National Science Foundation, found that scientists and engineers working in doctoral/research universities in the U.S. work an average of 54 hours per week, with the teaching, research, grant writing, and service hours being 16.74, 19.42, 4.58, and 13.22, respectively. Another study, by Manuel Crespo and Denis Bertrand, found that faculty members in one research-intensive university in Canada self-reported they worked an average of 57 hours per week, and spent their time in the following ways: 25.1 hours teaching, 20.1 hours research, 3.3 hours administration, and 8.5 hours service (2013, 8). In 2006 Carole Bland et al. reported similar numbers in a study of allocation of faculty members' working hours in a week: 25 hours teaching, 14.9 hours research, 8.5 administration, 4.0 hours service, 1.7 hours consulting.

Publications

In the area of library and information science/studies (LIS), a study by Debora Shaw and Liwen Vaughan examined the lifetime publication and citation patterns of ninety LIS faculty in the U.S. (thirty at each rank: assistant, associate, and full professor) who "produced 2,086 papers, chapters, articles, and books. The number of publications ranged from 0 (for three assistant professors and two associate professors) to 114 (for one professor)" (2008, 53). Overall, the annual publication rate was 0.7 for assistant professors, 0.9

for associate professors, and 1.3 for full professors (Shaw and Vaughan 2008).

A study by Concepcion S. Wilson et al. examined 2,235 journal articles published around the world (though half were published in Australia) between 1967 and 2008, and compared the list to 382 LIS faculty teaching in Australia for at least two years between 1959 and 2008. Fourteen LIS academics accounted for over one-quarter (634) of the total number of journal articles, with school library faculty members L. Anne Clyde and Ross Todd separately publishing a total of 141 articles (2012).

Service

Faculty service "has emerged, paradoxically, as necessary for the institutional welfare *and* as unacknowledged in faculty work lives" (Neumann and Terosky 2007, 284). Anna Neumann and Aimee LaPointe Terosky suggested looking at service from both a content perspective (the types of activities that professors carry out in their service roles) and from a context perspective (how professors make sense of their service activities as they carry these out). In their study of recently tenured professors, Neumann and Terosky found that service increased after tenure. This service included "work for the discipline or profession (e.g., recruiting and mentoring into the field, editorial and peer review, leadership of professional and disciplinary associations, tenure/promotion reviews for other universities), or outreach and public service (e.g., community service, advisory services to national or community agencies)" (2007, 290).

Janet Lawrence, Molly Ott, and Alli Bell noted that "faculty who

reported they and their institutions valued institutional service highly spent more time on these activities." These researchers also highlighted the reality of faculty life is that "time given to research and teaching diminished time to [devote to] service" (2012, 345).

Methodology

This research used a snowball sampling technique to find school library faculty members working in universities around the world and who read and write in English. Twenty participants agreed to either be interviewed or, if an interview was impossible to schedule, to provide written responses to the interview questions. The participants also provided a copy of a current curriculum vitae so that the researcher could gather information about participants' education, work experiences, publications, and presentations. The interview data were analyzed by looking for common themes and trends that emerged across questions and throughout the comments (Bogdan and Biklen 1992; Miles and Huberman 1998).

Findings and Discussion

Basic Background Information about the Participants

Participants in this study came from eight countries (United States, Canada, Brazil, Croatia, Nigeria, Australia, Malaysia, and Japan) and six continents (North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia). There is representation from all ranks: lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, and emerita faculty members. Eighteen of the participants were women, and two were men. Sixteen of the twenty faculty members have completed a

PhD or EdD, and three are currently enrolled in a PhD or EdD program. Nine participants have a PhD in the area of library and/or information science/studies, and fifteen have a Master of Library and/or Information Science/Studies (MLS or MLIS) degree. The five participants without an MLS or MLIS degree have Master's degrees in education (three participants), computer science (one), and Internet studies (one).

The participants in this study work in a variety of units, departments, schools, colleges, and faculties. Nine faculty members work in schools, colleges, or faculties of education; three work in colleges of communication and information; three work in online schools of library and/or information science/studies; one works in a school of arts; one on a science faculty; one on a faculty of arts and education; one on a faculty of humanities and social sciences; and one on a computer science faculty.

Workload and Time Distribution

During the interviews, participants were asked if there was a percentage-of-time expectation for research, teaching, and service. Some participants said yes and indicated the expectation for distribution of time; others estimated their workload, and still others indicated their personal impressions.

In terms of research expectations, participants confirmed that research was important at all of their institutions, and the percentage of time expected to be spent on research varied from 25 to 60 percent with the average being 40 percent.

Teaching was central to the work of all participants with percentage of time expected for teaching being as

high as 80 percent and as low as 30 percent. The average expectation for teaching was 44 percent.

Service

Service expectations varied as well from a low of 5 percent to a high of 33 percent with the average being about 20 percent. These findings were similar to other research (Bentley and Kyvik 2012; Jonker and Hicks 2014; Link, Swann, and Bozeman 2008).

Teaching Load

Participants were asked questions about their teaching experiences, including number of courses taught per year, summer teaching expectations, proportions between online and face-to-face teaching with graduate and undergraduate students. The faculty members were also asked about class sizes, number of students taught per year, and supervision of doctoral students and Master's degree students.

The teaching load of school library faculty varies greatly. Some faculty members teach two classes per term for a total of four classes per calendar year, while some teach up to nine classes per calendar year. Not surprisingly, universities with higher research expectations have lower teaching loads. None of the research reviewed has explored extra-session teaching as part of faculty workload, but five participants in this study indicated they regularly taught in the summer session.

The majority of faculty members (sixteen) teach at least some of their classes online with eleven teaching only online.

All faculty members teach graduate students, and nine of the twenty teach undergraduate students as well.

Class size varies from five to over 150. The more interesting number is how many students each faculty member teaches in an average year; this varies from ten to 300 students.

Fourteen faculty members currently supervise or serve on supervisory committees for doctoral students. Eight currently supervise Master's thesis students. Additional responsibilities include final projects such as capstone papers, portfolios, and research papers for non-thesis Master's students. This task can be a huge additional burden, with some faculty members reporting being responsible for more than one hundred final projects.

Supervision of practicums (practice teaching, field experience, etc.) is also considered part of the teaching load for faculty members. Some faculty have negotiated this supervision to be a part of their teaching load. (The practicum is a class.) Others organize placements for students, and still others do this supervision in addition to assigned teaching. Some hire adjunct instructors to visit practicum sites, while others' students have unsupervised practicum experiences.

Several of the faculty members are the only full-time instructor in school librarianship so they are solely responsible for curriculum review and supporting adjunct instructors who teach in the program.

Almost all faculty members reported being involved in curriculum design and review on an ongoing basis: new courses, AASL reviews, ALA and Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation accredita-

tion, etc. These efforts added to the workload of many school library faculty members. The research done by Bentley and Kyvik (2011), by Link, Swann, and Bozeman (2008), and by Bland et al. (2006) with faculty members self-reporting time spent on these tasks is very interesting. Further follow-up research with participants in this study will include asking them to record the number of hours spent per week on teaching (including supervision of students, and curriculum design and review), research (including grant writing), service, and administration (including program management and adjunct instructor supervision). It is clear that teaching is a very demanding part of the life of the school library faculty member.

Research

Research is an essential part of the work that faculty members do. To better understand research experiences and expectations, faculty members were asked to discuss the research expectations of their unit and of the larger university. Thirteen of the twenty faculty members work in research-intensive institutions. Almost all of the school library faculty members indicated that research was an expectation of their position.

There was no difference noticed by country or continent in terms of research productivity—all those at research-intensive universities were publishing and presenting at a high level. One participant (a full professor) at a teaching-intensive university was a highly prolific writer but also had a lesser teaching load typical of most at research-intensive universities. In the case of that respondent, the teaching load is

reduced because of leadership and other administrative responsibilities.

Publications

One participant told the interviewer that there is an "expectation to contribute to knowledge by publishing in journals within the country and outside the country in the chosen field of specialization." Another participant indicated that the key considerations for research are "sustained productivity, impact, permanence, peer-reviewed publications, and citations." Research expectations vary; some faculty members report that expectations are very clear, while others describe them as "mushy." For example, one participant noted that the rule of thumb is "ten for tenure." That is, ten peer-reviewed articles before going up for tenure. Several participants indicated that there is an expectation of two peer-reviewed publications per year at their university. Others reported that no specific numbers were articulated at their institutions, but they also stated that research leading to peer-reviewed publications is the expectation.

Almost all of the participants (eighteen) reported that conference attendance is also an expectation. School library faculty are encouraged to present peer-reviewed papers at national and international conferences. Some participants also mentioned that presenting at local conferences is important for connecting with the school library community.

Examination of the participants' current curriculum vitae demonstrated that seventeen of the twenty contributed a total of 108 peer-reviewed articles in journals in the last five years. The school library faculty in this study had research
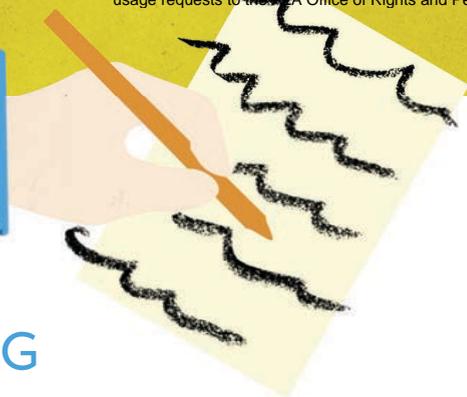
WHEN THINKING ABOUT APPLYING FOR FACULTY POSITIONS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND OUT DETAILS ABOUT AN INSTITUTION'S TEACHING AND RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS AND TO FIND THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR CAREER DESIRES.

published in conference proceedings (53 times); presented papers at international, national, and local conferences (81 times); and wrote or edited 18 books, 55 book chapters, and 29 articles for professional journals. Two of the participants are retired, and three are in the early years of their career. Six faculty members in this study were very productive (with more than three peer-reviewed media and/or books per year); three faculty members had two peer-reviewed media per year; six had an average of one per year; five others had limited or no research productivity. This compares with other research done about faculty productivity such as Bland et al. (2006) and Shaw and Vaughan (2008).

Service

All faculty members discussed aspects of their service commitments as part of their academic responsibilities. Some participants felt that service was very important, while others noted that service was given merely "lip service" at their institutions. Five participants indicated that the faculty/college really values service, and good citizenship is essential to the institution. All participants reported that they provide service at the unit level, and thirteen indicated that they provide service at the university level. Community service included serving on committees or as officers for local, provincial, and/or state school library organizations. Participants also served on national-level associations such as the American Association of School Librarians, Young Adult Library Services Association, and the American Library Association. Many faculty members indicated that they are also involved in state and national conferences as presenters and organizers. At the international level, participants are involved in the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, the International Association for School Librarianship, and the International Board on Books for Young People. Faculty members also reported that they serve on editorial boards for several different journals.

Implications and Conclusions

This study contributes to research about the experiences of faculty members at the university level. It presents the realities of teaching, research, and service for twenty school library faculty members working on six continents. Further research is needed in this area. A follow-up study on research productivity in a few years would be useful to see if there are changes over time and as faculty members proceed through the academic ranks. Gathering self-reported time data for workload would be interesting to compare to previous research. It would also be interesting to find out more about

how faculty members feel about their research productivity as compared to others in their unit. It would also be useful to interview another twenty faculty members to gather more data in all areas and to interview a random sample.

This study provides information for those interested in a faculty position in the area of school libraries. Participants worked in either research-oriented (thirteen) or teaching-oriented (seven) positions; research and service expectations varied based on teaching workload. Those in research-intensive institutions had higher research expectations, and those faculty members had higher research productivity than those in teaching-intensive institutions

(with one exception). There were no real differences in terms of faculty research productivity by country; the most important factor was if the institution was research-intensive. For doctoral students in the area of school libraries interested in faculty positions, there are a variety of academic positions with different teaching and research expectations. When thinking about applying for faculty positions, it is important to find out details about an institution's teaching and research expectations and to find the right fit for you, your family, and your career desires.

This research provides information to potential and current school library faculty that is helpful for making career decisions, e.g., entry

to the profession, career progression, research productivity, and mentorship. The author also hopes that school librarians will better understand the work life of their professors.

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