

Academic and faculty status of librarians: distinctions in national root crops research institute and Ruber Research institute

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The study investigated the Academic and Faculty Status of Librarians in National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike and Librarians in Rubber Research Institute, The study investigated the extent to which librarians in NRCRI Umudike and Librarians in Rubber Research Institute in Nigeria are covered by tenure policies of their various Institutions. Furthermore, it studied the extent to which the two institutes' Librarians are represented in their faculty/departments' governance. Investigated also is the extent to which same standard being applied to librarians in Rubber Research Institute also apply to librarians in NRCRI. The study however suggested that the Librarian Registration Council in collaboration with the Nigerian Library Association (NLA) should come up with uniform standards for librarians no matter the institution where they are deployed/employed

Keywords: Academic, Librarians, Rubber Research Institute

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of faculty and academic status for librarians has been a hotly debated topic ever since its inception. There are those who believe that librarians have no business operating under the rubric of faculty, while there are those who just as fervently assert that librarians have rightly won the status and must do anything in their power to keep it. Faculty according to Oxford Advanced learners Dictionary, 8th edition, 2010, Faculty is a department or group of related departments in a college or university. the dictionary also went further to say that The Faculty are all members of a particular university or college, they are referred to as faculty members. Academic according to the dictionary is connected with education, especially studying in schools and universities. Involving a lot of reading and studying rather than practical skills. A person who teaches and/or does research at a university or college. For status, the same dictionary defined it as the social or professional position of somebody/something in relation to others. The level of importance that is given to somebody.

The Association of College and Research libraries (ACRL) argued that in order to talk about what it means to be a faculty librarian, it is helpful to have a benchmark that enables us to compare and contrast the extent to which a particular person is indeed faculty.

According to ACRL Board (June, 2007) and revised October (2011), in their argument in favour of faculty status for academic librarians maintained that the academic librarian makes unique contributions to the academic community and to education itself. These contributions include developing collections, providing bibliographic access to all library materials, and interpreting these materials to members of the college and university community. Librarians contribute to the sum of knowledge through their research into the information process another area of study, service improvement

and the advances in the field result from their participation in library and other scholarly organizations.

There is also need to ascertain whether or not the same faculty and academic status enjoyed by librarians in the college and university community are also enjoyed by librarians in other institutions that are not college and universities, like NRCRI.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

There is no doubt about the fact that librarians enjoy academic status. There's also need to compare the Academic/Faculty status of librarians in the various institutions where they work. This study is a comparative study of the Academic and Faculty status of librarians in National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike and librarians in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture also in Umudike.

The basic objectives are:

1. To investigate the extent to which librarians in NRCRI and librarians in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture are covered by tenure policies in their various institutions
2. To ascertain whether or not librarians in both institutions receive the same entitlement/allowances
3. To investigate whether or not librarians in both institutions are expected to carry out research activities/publish articles/journals
4. To compare promotion procedures in both institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hoggan (2003) explained faculty and academic status as they concern librarians. According to him, faculty status is different from academic status. Academic librarians are recognized as instructional and Research staff, but are often given the same rank, benefit, and responsibilities as faculty. If librarians do research and serve on faculty senates, they may have better relationship with other faculty on campus. The research aspect may allow librarians to better adopt to change and solve problems in a more systematic and effective way. Hoggan(2003,p.432). Faculty librarians' status can bring about increased salaries, though this has not been found consistently across institutions.

Beth Shapiro(1993) emphasized the disadvantages of faculty status. According to him, resentment among other faculty members seems to be most pronounced at universities, where the terminal degrees of the masters level librarians is not seen as appropriate by the PH.D. holding faculty. Beth Shapiro considered the effective services offered by Librarians more important than a nomenclature. The pressure to publish that often accompanies tenure track position can be an enormous source of stress and can actually limit the ways in which librarians are able to contribute directly to the university community.

Hosburgh in his own view on Academic Status maintained that one of the fundamental qualities of librarians' academic status is that it is usually based on the teaching faculty model. Yet there are those who believe that librarians should not be held to the same guidelines that are seen in this model: teaching, research and service, rather, clinical model (McGowan and Dow, 1995) was advocated for academic librarians. According to him, Clinical model was drawn from the medical profession and centers around the idea that teaching, research and service activities focus on the patient.

Ekoja and Oji(1999) in their study on the extent of academic status of librarians, found out that the librarians engage in :publication and research activities; training and development; teaching and related activities; membership of learned societies and academic board; and community service. According to him they also enjoy equality with their teaching colleagues. The librarians enjoy membership of convocation and could vote or be voted for.

Chukwu (1998) identified the challenges facing the academic librarians to include the following: lack of recognition, unfavorable government legislation, disparity in academic benefits and unusually heavy work load among others.

According to a Report of the Committee on promotion of Academic Librarians in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture as quoted by Ugah Akobundu, D. in The Journal of The Nigerian Library Association, Vol. 45, No. 1 June, 2012, there is no discrimination in the assessment criteria of both categories of academic staff.

Evaluation of Academic Status of Librarians (Typologies of Librarians Status)

There are various schemes for evaluating what type of status a given academic librarian might have, but one that is particularly useful has been laid out by Bolin(2008), he examined typologies of librarian status across American land Grant Universities, these being state universities that share the three prolonged mission: teaching, research and service. The following types of data were gathered proactively from the libraries' websites:

1. Employment group(faculty or staff)
2. Title of library administrator (dean, director, etc).
3. Rank system (professional ranks, parallel ranks, librarian, others)
4. Tenure eligibility
5. Representation on faculty senate

According to Bolin(2008,p.223), the status typology frequencies were: professional 42%, other ranks with tenure 28%, other ranks without tenure 10% and non-faculty 20%. The rationale for this typology is that professorial rank is an obvious category, because it is the universal faculty teaching model.

Teaching, Research, Service

One of the fundamental qualities of librarian faculty status is that it is usually based on the teaching faculty model. Yet, there are those who believe that librarians should not be held to the tenure and promotion guidelines that are seen in this model, namely: teaching, Research and Service.

ACRL conducted a survey in 1999 of academic libraries which included a series of questions designed to determine the extent to which institutions offer faculty status to academic librarians which was subsequently summarized by Shannon Carr, director of Research and special Initiatives(2001). The area in which librarians most often responded that they are not on equal footing with their teaching counterparts was salary scale, benefits, and appointment period. As Carr points out, "Tenure and peer review were also areas where a significant number of librarians indicated they are not on equal footing with academic faculty, with 35.5% indicating they were not covered by the same tenure policies as other faculty and 35.2% indicating they were not promoted through the ranks on the basis of professional proficiency and effectiveness via a peer review with standards consistent with other faculty.

Librarian Faculty Status and the Institution

Through comparison of the conditions of faculty status given to librarians at the different types of institutions, certain patterns were brought to light. Librarians at institutions granting Bachelor of Arts degrees reported the most inequality in the area of salary. Additionally, librarians at institutions granting Bachelor of Arts degrees were less likely than librarians at other types of institutions.

Wikipedia published a guide to the professional status of academic librarians in the United States(and other places)

Love it or you hate it, faculty status, the tenure track, and variations of these designations are facts of life for a majority of academic librarians. As such, peer review in one form or another are among the most relied-upon validations of librarians work when up for review. One form of this is the external peer review that is sometimes soliciting external reviewers, it's usually important that the request be directed toward librarians with similar status.

In September, 2007, ACRL constituted a committee that carried out a survey of the academic Law Librarian Tenure and Employment Status. About 175 law schools are listed with primary designations: tenure-track, continuing appointment, and employees at will.

ACRL Guidelines for Appointment, and Tenure of Academic Librarians.

Categories:

1. Librarians with faculty status and tenure
2. Librarians with faculty status but no tenure
3. Librarians without faculty status
4. Librarians without faculty status but with status similar to tenure

LIBRARIANS WITH FACULTY STATUS AND TENURE

- American University, Washington, DC
- Appalachian State University, Boone, NC
- Auburn University, Auburn, AL
- Augusta State University Augusta, GA
- Austin Peay State University, Clarkville, TN
- Binghamton University, State University of New York
- Boise State University
- Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH etc.

LIBRARIANS WITH FACULTY STATUS BUT WITHOUT TENURE

- Ashland University Library, Ashland University, OH
- Baptist Bible College Library
- Baton Rouge Community, Baton Rouge, LA
- The Catholic University of of America Washington, DC
- Elon University, Elon, NC etc

UNIVERSITIES WHERE LIBRARIANS ARE NOT ENJOYING FACULTY STATUS

Arora University
 Cornell University
 Gallandell University Library
 The George Washington University-the Gelman Library
 Harvard University
 Texas Christian University etc. And others too numerous to mention
 With this survey provided by the ACRL, it is now evident that Librarians in different institutions are not enjoying same status.

METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive survey method which employed questionnaire as an instrument for data collection. Population for this study consisted of all librarians in National Root Crops Research Institute Umudike and Librarians in Rubber Research Institute. There are total of six(6) academic librarians in NRCRI and eight(8) academic librarians in Rubber Research Institute, the two put together is equal to 14 librarians. 14 copies of questionnaires were administered to all the librarians under consideration, and all of them responded to the questionnaire. The retrieved copies of questionnaires were analyzed using mean and analyzed data were presented in tables.

FINDINGS

Research Question 1: Are you covered by tenure policy of your institution?

Table 1. A Response on coverage of librarians by tenure policies of their Institutions.

Designation	Yrs in Serv.	Age of retirement	Yes	No	Total no that ticked Yes		Total no that ticked No		Percentage %	Institution
					NRCRI	MOUAU	NRCRI	MOUAU		
Serial Librarian	10-15	65		<input type="checkbox"/>	2				50%	MOUAU
Librarian	5-10	65	<input type="checkbox"/>				2	2	50%	MOUAU
Circulation Librarian	1-5	65	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						MOUAU
ICT Librarian	15-20	65		<input type="checkbox"/>						MOUAU
Librarian I	1-5	65		<input type="checkbox"/>						NRCRI
			2	4			4		100%	
Total					2+4 = 6					

Percentage that ticked Yes and NO

$$2/6 \times 100/1 = 33.33\%$$

$$4/6 \times 100/1 = 66.67\%$$

Table 1 shows that tenure policy in NRCRI is quite different from tenure policy in MOUAU. This was attributed to different environments in which the two institutes exist. MOUAU exist purely in a university environment while NRCRI exist in agricultural environment. Therefore what obtains in NRCRI is not obtainable in MOUAU in terms of tenure policy.

Research Question 1: Do you think you receive the same entitlement/allowances as other academic staff.**Table 2.** Responses on entitlement/allowances

Designation	Yrs in Serv.	Age of retirement	Yes	No	Total no that ticked		Total no that ticked No		Percentage %	Institution
					Yes	No	NRCRI	MOUUAU		
Librarian	10-15	65	<input type="checkbox"/>		1		2		50%	NRCRI
Librarian	5-10	65	<input type="checkbox"/>			3			50%	MOUUAU
Librarian	1-5	-	<input type="checkbox"/>							MOUUAU
Librarian	15-20	-	<input type="checkbox"/>							MOUUAU
Librarian	15-20	65		<input type="checkbox"/>						NRCRI
Librarian	1-5	65		<input type="checkbox"/>						NRCRI
			4	2	1	3			100%	
Total					4+2 = 6					

Percentage $2/6 \times 100/1 = 33.33\%$
 $4/6 \times 100/1 = 66.67\%$

Result from table II reveals that there is a significant difference between librarians in NRCRI and MOUUAU who receive the same entitlement/allowance as other academic staff.

Research Question 3. Are you expected to carryout research activities/publish articles/journals**Table 3.** Responses on research activities/publish articles/Journals

Designation	Yrs in Serv.	Age of retirement	Yes	No	Total no that ticked		Total no that ticked No		Percentage %	Institution
					Yes	No	NRCRI	MOUUAU		
Librarian	-	65	<input type="checkbox"/>		3		-		50%	MOUUAU
Librarian	1-5	65	<input type="checkbox"/>			3	-		50%	NRCRI
Librarian	15-20	65	<input type="checkbox"/>							NRCRI
ICT	15-20	65	<input type="checkbox"/>							NRCRI
Circulation Lib.	1-5	65	<input type="checkbox"/>							MOUUAU
Serial Librarian	10-15	65	<input type="checkbox"/>							MOUUAU
Total			6	0	3+3 = 6				100%	

Percentage = $6/6 \times 100/1 = 100\%$
 $0/6 \times 100/1 = 0\%$

Table III shows that both Librarians in NRCRI and MOUUAU are expected to carry out research activities/publish articles/journals. This means that there is no significant difference between librarians in NRCRI and MOUUAU who are expected to carry out research activities/publish articles/journals. Going by the result, percentage of librarians that ticked yes is equal to 100% and for librarians that ticked No 0%.

Research Question 4. Do you undergo same promotion procedures with fellow Academic staff in other faculties/departments?**Table 4.** Responses of librarians on promotion procedures with other Academic staff.

Designation	Yrs in Serv.	Age of retirement	Yes	No	Total no that ticked		Total no that ticked No		Percentage %	Institution
					Yes	No	NRCRI	MOUUAU		
Serial Librarian	10-15	65	<input type="checkbox"/>				2		50%	NRCRI
Librarian	5-10	65	<input type="checkbox"/>				-		50%	MOUUAU

Table 4. continuation

Circulation Librarian	1-5	65	<input type="checkbox"/>		1			MOUUAU
ICT Librarian	15-20	65	<input type="checkbox"/>			3		MOUUAU
Librarian I	15-20	65		<input type="checkbox"/>				NRCRI
Librarian I	1-5	65		<input type="checkbox"/>				NRCRI
Total			4	2	1	3	-	100%

$$\text{Percentage} = 4/6 \times 100/1 = 66.7\%$$

$$2/6 \times 100/1 = 33.33\%$$

Results from the table 4 showed a significant difference between librarians in MOUUAU and NRCRI who undergo same promotion procedure with staff in other faculties/departments. This shows that librarians in NRCRI do not even undergo same promotion procedures as other academic staff. Therefore, going by the percentage of librarians who ticked Yes and No, Yes = 66.7% and No 33.3%. This means there is significant difference between the two.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample population of the study consisted of fourteen (14) librarians from the two selected Institutions all in Umudike, Umuahia Abia State. All librarians in these two Institutions were included in the study. Fourteen (14) questionnaires were administered to librarians in the selected Institutions, but only six (6) were completed and returned.

CONCLUSION

This is a comparative study of the academic and faculty status of librarians in National Root Crops Research Institute, Umudike and librarians in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, also in Umudike. In view of the fore-going therefore it is now evident that the academic and faculty status of librarians in NRCRI and MOUUAU are different, though in some cases, librarians in both institutions share the same academic and faculty status. The reason for disparity in the academic and faculty status of librarians in both institutes is owing to the different environments in which both institutions exist.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on my findings, I therefore recommend that The Library Registration Council (LRCN) in collaboration with The Nigerian Library Association should come up with a uniform standard for all librarians no matter where they work, and also make sure that this standard is approved by the government and incorporated into the condition of service of the federal republic of Nigeria. Librarians should also be ready to fulfill all that are required of them as academic staff. They should be up and doing in the publication of journals, articles and books as their academic counterparts in other faculties/departments. Up-grading of qualification is also very important, this way they can compete with other academic colleagues in terms of promotion.

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