From time to time questions of the "population characteristics" of academic librarians arise which find no ready answer in the literature. With faculty, including librarians, of state-supported institutions of higher education in South Dakota now concluding their second year of a collective bargaining agreement, questions and discussions of our own experiences in South Dakota invariably turned to queries about collective bargaining in academic libraries in general. Not satisfied with information in the literature, the authors began to compile data for an article on collective bargaining in academic libraries. In so doing, some interesting population characteristics of academic librarians emerged. These "social indicators" may provide some interesting inferences about the composition of academic librarianship as a whole.

Building on the assumption that the membership of the Association of College and Research Libraries is representative of academic librarianship in general, a statistically valid stratified random sample survey of ACRL members was conducted in February-March, 1981. The survey conducted was to provide data on the current status of collective bargaining in academic libraries. Using Jean Kennelly's May, 1975, survey questionnaire on collective bargaining in academic libraries¹ as a base, augmented with questions of our own, a survey instrument was prepared and administered to 700 members of ACRL. 60.4% were returned which, in and of itself, may be somewhat indicative of the interest of academic librarians in collective bargaining. Data was compiled on a general population basis but was also broken down into regional subsets. The distribution of states in each region was identical to that used in previous research.² States included in the regions were as follows:


Southeast: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia

Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Southwest: Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas


The data suggests that some 70% of ACRL members are employed as professional librarians in either a community college, four-year college, or university. (The remaining 30% included library school professors, students, public and special librarians, retired librarians, and others.) 24% of these college and university librarians are involved, or participate, in some form of collective bargaining. The heaviest concentration of academic librarians involved in collective bargaining is in the Northeast (47%), while librarians in the Southeast and Southwest failed to report any significant level of involvement in collective bargaining. The next lowest concentration was in the West, where 16% are involved in collective bargaining. 22% are involved in the Midwest.

Data relating to those in community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities, indicated that 53% had the Masters Degree in Library Science only, while 41% possessed the MLS plus at least an additional masters degree. These librarians have also been in the profession an average of 15.6 years, have held 3.1 professional positions, and have been in their present position 9.8 years. Some 80% of these librarians have either faculty status or faculty rank. The data indicates that more have faculty status (56%) than faculty rank (23%).

The findings offer some interesting information on women in academic librarianship. The data indicates that some 60% of academic librarians are women, which may not be new information. More interesting, however, is the regional distribution of women academic librarians. The largest concentrations of female academic librarians are in the Southwest (88%) and the Southeast (76%). Only in the West region are there more men than women, with women comprising 45% of the population. The Midwest is close to the West with 52% female, while the Northeast, with 60%, is close to the norm. One particularly interesting datum was found in the area of supervision. It may come as no surprise to some, but in the supervision of other professional librarians, men supervise, on the whole, twice the number of professional librarians than women. The predominance is most noted in the West, where the ratio is some 6 to 1, and least noted in the Southwest and Southeast, where the ratio is about 1.5 to 1. The ratio in the Northeast and Midwest is closer to 2 to 1.

These early findings provide some statistically reliable evidence on the composition of academic librarians as a population. Hopefully, this preliminary data will provide information which may be helpful and of interest to academic librarians and administrators. More detailed data will be reported elsewhere in the literature.

The annual salary for directors of library services in academic institutions has risen by 6.9% since 1979–80, according to an annual survey conducted by the College and University Personnel Association. This compares with an 8.7% overall rise in academic administrative salaries. The data from the survey were summarized in the March 23 Chronicle of Higher Education.

The survey also compared median salaries for positions in public and private institutions, and in 2-year colleges, 4-year colleges, and universities. Library and learning resource center directors at public institutions earn salaries roughly $8,000–$9,000 higher than those at private institutions, based on the median, while library school deans also fare better at public institutions by as much as $5,500 annually.

Salaries for directors of university libraries average $12,000–$13,000 more than college library directors, and a similar variance exists for library school deans. Library administrators at 4-year institutions clearly have the lowest median salaries of the three groups.

The median salaries of non-minority library school deans was 50% higher than that of minority deans, and male deans were paid 48.2% more than women in corresponding positions. Male learning resource center directors earned salaries 24.5% higher than females, and male library directors were higher by 32.9%. Non-minority library directors were only over minorities by 11.6%, and learning resource center director salaries were equal for minorities and non-minorities.