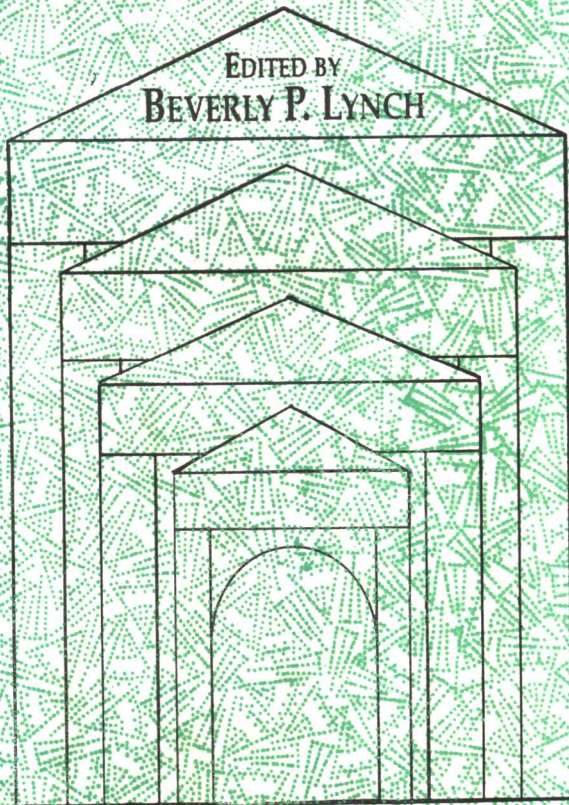# The Academic Library In Transition

Planning For The 1990s
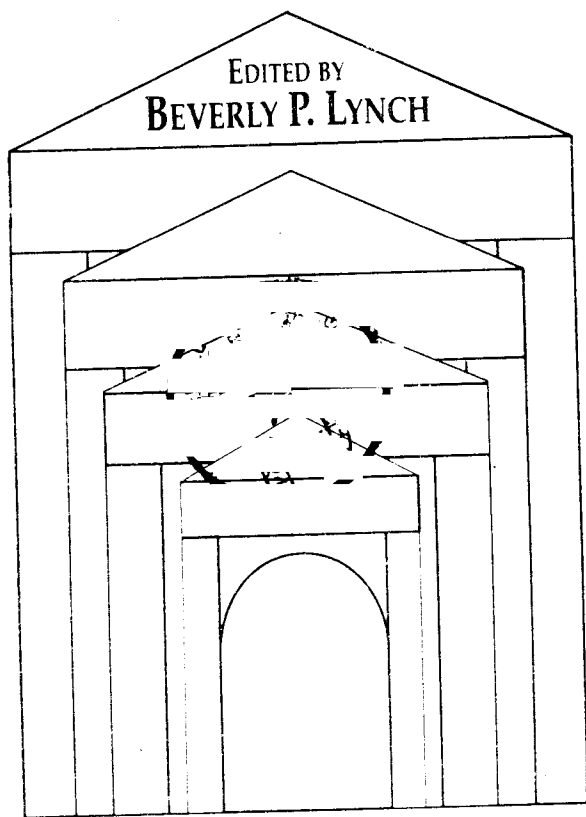
Edited By
Beverly P. Lynch

THE
ACADEMIC LIBRARY
IN TRANSITION

P L A N N I N G   F O R   T H E   1 9 9 0 S

EDITED BY
BEVERLY P. LYNCH

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Preface

The Academic Library in Transition is one outcome of strategic planning at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 1983, UIC's chancellor, Donald N. Langenberg, appointed a faculty committee to consider the future of the library into the next century. The UIC committee divided its task by appointing subcommittees on the issues identified as central to the future: facilities, collections, services, and automation. The library, in order to assist the committee, established four parallel task forces. The chairs of each library task force also served on a particular faculty subcommittee. The final report of the faculty committee reflected the interests of the committee members and the perceived needs of the library. The report was not futuristic, nor was it strategic.

The authors of *The Academic Library in Transition* were involved in these planning efforts. As they worked to influence the thinking of faculty members on the committee, the UIC librarians found that little of what they were thinking and doing could be justified in the literature of librarianship. It occurred to them that their findings might be useful to others. Hence this book.

In order to plan for the library of the future, the authors sought first to chart the history of the UIC Library and its environment and then to speculate about the prospects for change. Different observers will often write differing accounts of the same past. Each author uses his or her own observation and interpretations or relies upon the recollections of colleagues. Differing perspectives are retained in this book in order to offer a composite view of the same historical event.

The Academic Library in Transition was intended to ponder some of the persistent problems confronting university libraries, particularly in the areas of service programs, collection development and management issues, opportunities in technology and automation, personnel matters, and issues relating to space and facilities. The book does not confront all

of the issues before academic librarianship today but selects some as the central focus of the chapters. The emphasis throughout, however, is on the interests of and point of view from the UIC Library. The commentaries on each chapter offer an administrative point of view. The last section in the book contains the strategic plan requested by the chancellor after the faculty committee's report had been submitted. It gives an overview of plans for the future.

In presenting this book, the authors do not think that the UIC Library necessarily is the model others ought to follow, nor that it has answered all of its own questions. The University's librarians have thought long and hard about what the library is doing and why it is doing it. That is what we wish to share. We hope our colleagues may find these reflections useful as they pursue their own interests, as students or as professionals. In preparing this book our intent was to examine, systematically, UIC's specific situation so as to develop theories, hypotheses, and suggestions for further consideration. Some historical material emerges, of course. The thrust, though, is an examination of the work of a university library in the context of the environment in which it finds itself. The library was required to change as the campus changed. At the same time it was expected to adapt to changes in the fields of higher education and librarianship. How the library did—or did not adapt—is the central question of this book.

Each author has played a significant role in the library of the University of Illinois at Chicago. Each was offered an opportunity to help in the development and reshaping of a library that was designed at the outset to be an undergraduate library into a research library of the first rank. While each librarian would like to think that the library in which he or she works is unique, this book shows that UIC in many ways is typical of the university library that emerged in the United States after World War II. In analyzing it and describing it, others may find insights into their own situations.

The book is a collaborative effort on the part of many. We wish to acknowledge the support of our colleagues. Their comments and criticisms stimulated our thinking and improved our text. We are grateful to Joan Fudala who so carefully organized the preparation of the manuscripts. Finally, we wish to recognize the contributions described throughout this book of former directors of the library, namely, David K. Maxfield (1946-1955), Edward M. Heiliger (1955-1963), Frazer G. Poole (1963-1967), Louis A. Schultheiss (acting, 1967-1969), and William B. Ernst (1969-1976).

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Introduction

Beverly P. Lynch

Bridging the gap between education and practice is one of the goals of *Academic Library in Transition*. The authors have designed the book as a case study, with the expectation that hypotheses would emerge leading to systematic investigations. They have written their chapters to reflect the university library as they see it and as they perceive its history. Each chapter, while a component of a whole, is designed to stand alone, forming the base for further exploration. Taken together, the chapters describe the development and change of the library of the University of Illinois at Chicago as the campus changed from the fledgling undergraduate college into a research university of the first rank.

Library management, as written about and studied, usually emphasizes the traditional internal management functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. The textbook written by Stueart and Moran[1] is a good example. The book by John Stirling[2] is another. Stirling's book, while describing the general organization and management of university libraries in Great Britain, is designed like this one. Issues are presented in a series of case studies pertaining to acquisitions, selection of materials, nonbook materials, rare books and special collections, services, and general management problems. Each case study is placed in the context of a different university library. The authors of the cases in Stirling's book are librarians in the newer English universities: Exeter, Lancaster, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Leeds, Surrey, Sheffield, Loughborough; the chapter on resource sharing and cooperation is the only exception, being a case study of the University of London, which was founded in 1820. The British scene is quite different from that in the United States: Britain has 46 universities; the United States has more than 300 comprehensive universities and over 100 doctoral granting universities. A strong centralized governmental role in policy formulation, implementation,

and finance exists in Great Britain; in the United States governmental control is at the state level and varies considerably from state to state. Despite these differences, the discussion of operational problems of functional units in university libraries is more generalizable than one might have expected.

The chapters in this book are based on librarianship practiced in a single university. They chronicle the vision and the plan for the future of the university library of the University of Illinois at Chicago, which were shaped as much by the events outside of the library as by the people working inside the library. An inevitable weakness is that the personalities of the key players are submerged; the emphasis is more on the details of what happened. This omission is, in many respects, deliberate. The authors avoid discussing individuals and how the change might have affected them, for it is very difficult to stand aside and describe how the various participants in an action are responding when the person doing the describing is a part of the action.

HISTORY OF U.S. LIBRARIES

Arthur T. Hamlin's history of university librarianship in the United States[3] draws upon some 50 histories of academic libraries, many of them unpublished doctoral dissertations, to describe the origins and the development of the university library in the United States. He comments that the university's excellence in teaching and research usually is paralleled by the excellence in its library holdings. The building of collections to match the level and the quality of the academic programs guided the development of the collections of the library at UIC.

Hamlin also observes that great libraries in universities often came about because of the influence of the university's president and the president's interest in building an excellent library. Although it may be too early to assess overall the influence of the chancellors in building the UIC Library, the interest of one chancellor in the university library did bring about change. In the early years of the University of Illinois at Chicago the chancellors spent their time and energies building the faculty and the facilities; the library was not a high priority. It became one some ten years after the founding of the Chicago Circle campus, after the academic programs, including some 23 Ph.D. programs, were in place, strong faculty appointments had been made, and the influential members of the faculty were beginning to complain about inadequate library collections to support their research and teaching. Some of the complaints were legitimate; others were not. It should be noted that the faculty and the administration had agreed to take nearly $500,000 out of the library's book funds in the early 1970s in order to protect other

parts of the campus's budget. Supporters of the library tried at the time to tell the campus what the long-range cost of that action would be; but, as might have been expected, no one listened. Following that action and several other imprudent management decisions, the campus administration was changed. In 1976 a new chancellor, Donald H. Riddle, anu a new vice chancellor for academic affairs, Norman F. Cantor, were appointed; each identified the development of the library as his highest priority. That administrative support, coupled with strong concerns about the quality of the library among influential faculty leaders, led to the appointment of a new university librarian, who was given the mandate to build a research library to match the quality of the faculty and the academic programs.

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

The newly appointed university librarian held the rank of dean, was a member of the Dean's Council, and reported to the vice chancellor for academic affairs. Giving the university librarian the rank of dean was a new policy on the campus. It did not cause much stir, for a great deal of change was occurring in many parts of the campus. It seemed likely that the title was a contractual relationship negotiated by the new librarian at the time of appointment. The role of the university librarian prior to 1976 was unclear. While the former incumbents did report to the vice chancellor for academic affairs, the role they played in campus forums outside of the library had not been defined.

The library staff members also were unclear about their views on the role of the university librarian. Wanting more authority and control and standing on their rights as faculty, the librarians read the Statutes of the University of Illinois and then tried to force the library to abide by the statute pertaining to the academic department. Academic departments can be organized with a head of department, a permanent appointment, or a chair of department, usually a three-year appointment, which can be renewed. The library faculty found the use of an elected chair as the university librarian appealing. In their judgment, an elected chair gave them more power over their own affairs and kept the university librarian in a role of little power. With an elected chair they believed they could control the administration of the library. The library faculty paid little attention to the power of the various academic departments on campus nor did they attempt to assess whether those departments with heads had greater or lesser power than those departments with elected chairs. At the University of Illinois at Chicago it is clear that the powerful departments are those with powerful heads. They garner more

decisions affecting the campus; they determine the campus agenda on many issues.

The concern over the power of the library staff in relation to the power of the university librarian was widespread in academic libraries in the 1960s and early 1970s. Articles appeared regularly in the library literature on participative management as it pertained to the administration of libraries. Many librarians justified an expanded role for themselves in the library's administration, usually using internal issues as justification. External issues were given little recognition.

The library faculty dismissed the model of the library as a college. There were no doubt a number of reasons for this: few of the library faculty had experience or knowledge of how a college functions in terms of its governance; there was a lack of interest in giving the university librarian the rank and the power of dean.

Prior to the appointment of the university librarian, the library faculty had elected an Executive Committee with an elected chair. The university librarian was an ex-officio member of the committee. The committee's business consisted of a question-and-answer session, with the committee asking the university librarian questions and the university librarian deciding how to answer the questions or whether to answer them at all. The environment was a hostile one, not a collegial one. It was an arrangement that poorly served the development of faculty governance and worked against the need to build a solid and powerful base for the library on campus. In 1976 the library was perceived as being torn by internal tensions and without mechanisms that would lead to the building of internal consensus on programmatic priorities and initiatives. The campus administration agreed with the new university librarian that the executive committee structure needed to change and that the university librarian had to take control and exert the leadership necessary to build an outstanding research library. Fortunately, the library faculty responded to the university librarian's recommendations and redesigned its committee structure with the university librarian as chair of the Executive Committee. The campus administration did not have to interfere or to assist the university librarian in making the necessary changes.

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The Statutes of the University of Illinois contain a separate statute on the university library, which, until its revision in 1987, reflected the organization of the library as it was in the 1940s and 1950s. It emphasized the need for the university librarian to consult with the administrative officers of colleges and departments on the establishment of

departmental libraries and the appointment of librarians to head those units. It also required the university librarian to seek the advice of the Senate Library Committee on the allocation of the library's book funds. The statute did not acknowledge any role for the library faculty in the governance of the library nor did it offer guidance as to other applicable statutes.

The university librarian proceeded to organize the library as a college without separate departments. While the term "department" was still used in the library to identify units such as the Circulation Department, the designation was not the one meant in the statutes; the statutory use clearly refers to an academic department as a separately administered campus unit. Since the departmental label was not that of the statutory definition, some confusion did persist within the library. For the most part, however, the library faculty accommodated to the definition of the library as a college. There were two colleges on the campus organized in the same way, so the library was not unique in its organization.

The Executive Committee

The library's faculty elected an Executive Committee, chaired by the university librarian, following the collegiate model of the campus; all college executive committees are chaired by a dean. The 1987 revision of the university's statutes provides for a role of the library faculty in the governance of the library under the same provisions as govern a college. That was the model the new university librarian chose to follow. It was codified in the 1987 revision of the university's statute on the library.

Appointments to the Library Faculty

The newly appointed university librarian placed initial emphasis on the recruitment and appointment of library faculty and on the development of a solid core of support staff. How that was done and the philosophy and policies underlying personnel selection are described in Chapter 8, written by Edith D. Balbach. New library appointments at the department level and new administrative appointments were key to the change in the governance of the library's faculty and to the building of consensus in the library on matters of policy and priorities. By 1979 new heads were in place in cataloging, circulation, reference, and personnel, and a collections development department was being formed. All appointments were external ones, bringing new attitudes, new knowledge, and wide ranging experiences from other research libraries.

The matter of appointments to the library faculty is a critical issue of overlap between administrative and faculty governance structures.

Although the process has been in place for over ten years, tensions still exist particularly when new department heads are recruited from other institutions in which department heads control the search and the appointment of their own librarians. The appointments process at UIC gives the faculty and the library's administration a central role; the department head figures less prominently. The process centers on two key committees: the Search and Screen Committee appointed by the university librarian and the Appointments Committee elected by the library's faculty. Should the appointment be one with tenure, the library's Promotion and Tenure Committee plays a central role.

The appointed Search and Screen Committee serves for six months or a year, depending on the number of searches going on during the year and the number of applications requiring review. The advertisement for the job is prepared by the library's personnel office with advice and consent of the department head and sometimes the next level administrator. The ads are prepared and all applications and nominations sent to the library's personnel office. The Search and Screen Committee meets with the department head in order to gain an understanding of what the head believes the unit's needs to be and to learn as much about the department as it can. The committee usually has an understanding from the library's administration about the number of candidates it should put forward for consideration. The committee sometimes will ask to meet with the university librarian to discuss problems emerging during the search: a small pool, no qualified applicants, or applicants whose experience appears to be outside the experience being sought. Generally, though, the committee proceeds independently and forwards the names of those candidates it believes warrant further consideration to the university librarian. At that point the university librarian determines who will be interviewed. As the process has become standardized in the library, the people forwarded by the committee are those who are interviewed. Should the committee and the university librarian disagree, there is consultation to clarify areas of disagreement. Sometimes the committee is asked to look again at the pool. Sometimes the search is extended or started again.

Librarians as Faculty Members

The fact that librarians are faculty members has shaped much of the role of the university librarian as dean. The campus community finds it easier to respond to the librarian as dean than it might were there no faculty in the library. The issues of internal library governance may be more complicated than in the colleges; the library must be as sensitive to its user community as it is to its faculty, and the library staff is comprised of a large support staff group and many student workers in

addition to the faculty. By and large it is the faculty component that has given the library a legitimacy in the regular aspects of campus governance. The library faculty internalize the academic values common to the university and are drawn closely into the campus activities.

Comparative studies of the faculty status of librarians could help academic librarians understand why one library appears to play a more powerful role on the campus than another. It might help academic librarianship begin to investigate issues of power. The university library controls one of the largest academic budgets on the campus, yet other units, with smaller budgets, may be more powerful. That alone should offer some hypotheses to test. Why some university librarians are perceived to wield more campus power than others may be related to budget, to status, to role, to the academic values they hold. Such studies would be considerably more interesting than those seeking to find out who has faculty status and what perquisites come with it.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES

A university library is an integral part of the university. While the profession may choose to link all libraries together as a system of organizations operating in ways dependent on one another, the library in a university cannot be too far apart from what the campus is doing. In some ways that was the difficulty for the UIC Library in the first decade of its existence. The campus and university rhetoric was that the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle was to be a four-year undergraduate campus, offering bachelor degrees to thousands of commuting students who were unable for one reason or another to live away from home to go to college. The original understanding was that no campus housing would be built; it was to be solely a commuter school. The library operated within that design framework. It really was not given the funds to do much more; but within just a few years, without the Illinois Board of Higher Education or others, it seems, watching, doctoral and master's degree programs were in place. The goal of many of the strong department heads was to build the best research faculty possible and to find the best graduate students to teach. Grants and contracts began to flow to the campus, and the goal of being a Research I University was articulated. The library could not stand apart from that goal. It had to be on the same trajectory as the campus. The university librarian's goal—to have the library be a member of the Association of Research Libraries—matched the campus administration's goal of becoming a Research I University. Neither goal was supported very much from outside. Within the campus, however, it was clearly and forcefully articulated and supported. Both goals were achieved by 1988.

Librarians elsewhere in the state and higher education planners in Illinois were not supportive. Many efforts were made to thwart the UIC goal of research library status, some overt and some covert. A systematic investigation into external forces striving to keep the library of the University of Illinois at Chicago a good library supporting instruction and not a research library of the first rank would be an interesting study. In some respects such a study might make a cynic out of an idealist. It would, however, help explain some of the hostile actions within Illinois and the efforts applied to hamper the development of the UIC Library's automation plans.

The goal of the Illinois State Library, which was embraced by the public libraries, the library systems, and many other types of libraries in the state, was to develop the multi-type library system in Illinois. That goal did not figure prominently in the efforts underway in the library of the University of Illinois at Chicago. The library's attention was centered on the development of the library; staff, collections, services, and facilities all needed attention. There was no time left to assist in the development of statewide plans. The statewide plans assumed that all basic library development had occurred in Illinois and that what remained was to put into place the resources sharing dream long held by state planners. That the UIC Library was in the very early stages of its development was discounted. That it would emerge as a major research library, acknowledged for its excellent staff, collections, and services, was not anticipated. That it might become a force in statewide library planning was dismissed as being of little or no consequence.

The university librarian at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, by contrast, worked smoothly and swiftly to embrace the State Library's plans and to tell the state what the University of Illinois would do within that framework. The library of the University of Illinois at Chicago was not a party to those discussions nor to the agreements forged, nor did the university librarian in Urbana control the programmatic development in Chicago. The flagship campus in Urbana had its difficulty with the new campus in Chicago going its own way to meet its own campus needs and demands. Prior to the founding of the Chicago Circle campus, the library of the undergraduate division at Navy Pier was a department of the Urbana Library. Autonomy and independence came with the development of Chicago Circle. That the Urbana Library no longer spoke for the one in Chicago was not easily accommodated.

Given the attitudes of the faculty on the Chicago campus, there was no way the university librarian in Chicago could give in to what Urbana and Springfield wanted, which was a single research collection for the whole university in Urbana, not in Chicago. Urbana preferred that students and faculty in Chicago rely upon the great Illinois collections 120 miles south. Of course, the students and faculty in Chicago made

heavy use of the Urbana collections. Those collections, however, were no substitute for the continuous and sustained development of the university library in Chicago. The guiding principle for the Chicago campus was the observation made by Hamlin: the university's excellence in teaching and research usually is paralleled by the excellence in its library holdings.

The plan for a single research library collection, in Urbana, connected to Chicago electronically and with a daily delivery service, did not take into account the important collections in other universities in Chicago and the independent research library collections, also in the city. Students and faculty made heavy use of those collections too, such heavy use in fact, that Northwestern University had to curtail the hours it would be open to outside users, the University of Chicago charged heavy fees to users who were not a part of the University of Chicago community, and the specialized research libraries required a description of the research problem requiring use of their collections. What may have appeared to be a rational and reasonable program of library development for the University of Illinois, when discussed in Urbana or in Springfield, made no sense at all when discussed in Chicago. The task for the university library in Chicago was to continue to build the UIC Library into a research library to match what the faculty was building in terms of academic and research programs, with little or no support from outside the campus. The point here is that the university library was supporting directly the programmatic development of the campus. The library gained its strength and its power because the faculty and the administration appreciated what the library was doing and supported its efforts. Had the library given in to what Urbana or Springfield had in mind for it, the conflict on campus probably would have resulted in a change in the library's administration. The difficulty was that a lot of different players had a game plan in mind for the library. Few of these game plans matched. Few people outside of the campus supported the building of a research library, to support the emerging research university, which was the UIC goal from the beginning.

In the mid-1970s Dwight Ladd[4] observed that groups outside the university, each with its own interests and agenda, would seek ways to become involved in the internal governance of particular institutions. The library development within the State of Illinois offers a good case study of the influence of external groups on internal policy matters. By adopting LCS as the circulation system for all public universities in Illinois, for instance, individual libraries in Illinois no longer control policies and procedures pertaining to the circulation of materials in their libraries. Circulation periods, borrowing privileges, to whom the library will lend its materials and under what conditions are no longer determined by the individual institutions but are subject to review,

discussion, and decision by external committees and policy councils. Few librarians worry about the control of internal affairs by bodies external to the organization. Their interest is getting the information to the person who needs it in a timely fashion. There are other examples within librarianship of libraries giving up some autonomy for a common good or a greater benefit. These examples offer opportunities for systematic studies of libraries as organizations. In the study of organizations, issues of autonomy, structure, and power are major variables investigated so as to further our understanding of how organizations behave.

Few institutions of higher education would easily give away control of their internal operating policies. The precedent is intriguing. Further developments in Illinois in which external bodies gain control over the internal affairs of colleges and universities will be interesting as the study of the development and change of higher education continues.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

To understand some of the differences in how university libraries develop, one must know the academic environment in general and the specific organizational environment in particular. It is not easy to understand the development of a particular university library without knowing the university of which it is a part. Most of the thrust of this book, aimed as it is at the change in a university library over time, is on internal matters. While many external events impacted on the library, those events are not explored in much depth nor do they loom large in the discussions.

American librarianship generally assumes that the objectives of libraries are the same regardless of type of library and regardless of the environment in which the library is placed. Much of the philosophy of the field has its base in the role of the individual librarian, the autonomous professional, responding to a patron's information need. Much of the work of the librarian is taught in the framework of an individual professional acting alone. The act of selecting a book for the collection, ordering that book, cataloging that book, circulating that book, and responding to a particular request for information, is an individual act and is taught in the context of an individual task. Library education has concentrated on such activities and assumes they are broadly applicable regardless of the environment or the location in which they are practiced.

The authors of the various chapters in this book place the practice of librarianship within an organizational context. They are aware of the group dynamics and teamwork required for systematic library development. The underlying assumption throughout is that the environment