

THE ROLE OF ADMINISTRATOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARIES

Emily M. Marohombsar

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the moving spirits called the new Lanao del Sur Library Association. I gather there are some fifteen libraries that compose the association. The existence of this association speaks well of the growing importance and development of libraries in this region. This is a good sign—good for our people, for our province and for our country.

The topic assigned to me is “The Role of Administrator in the Development of Libraries.” I am glad you have included this among the topics for discussion during this seminar because administrators play a major role in library development.

The task of library development is not just the job of librarians. It is a task that requires and involves the concerted effort and cooperation of the faculty, students, heads of academic units, librarians, school administrators, and sometimes even the community. Of course, the school administrator's role is of vital importance because upon him depends many things, such as the allocation of funds, the appointment of personnel, and the formulation of policies.

There are several ways by which administrators can most effectively contribute to the development of libraries.

- (1) **The administrator should recognize the importance and function of the library in the academic community.** It is important that an administrator does not lose track of the functions of the school and the relation of the library to the school, from which the objectives and significance of the library stem should be clearly shown.

Unfortunately, libraries are often the most neglected units and librarians are often regarded as somewhat lower creatures than the faculty, lower even than the administrators. If the administrator chooses to entertain this kind of thinking, there is little we can do, given the nature of this calling, which is often behind the scene and anonymous. Nonetheless, administrators must realize that the library is an active and not a passive element in the academic process. As a matter of fact, the library is the heart of any academic establishment.

Nowadays, the modern library is sometimes referred to as a center of learning because it embraces almost all forms of communications media, with the appropriate equipment. It is therefore important for the administrator to understand fully the importance and functions of the library in the educational setup in order to direct the library in such a way as to secure its greatest educational effectiveness.

(2) The administrator must see to it that the library receives adequate financial support.

Adequate financial support is based on the maintenance of any program of library development and service that is to be significantly effective. Very often, however, we hear librarians raise the following complains that:

- a. administrators give the library a rather small portion of the school budget;
- b. the library receives very little for attending seminars or other training programs;
- c. library facilities tend to lag behind those of other department within the school; and
- d. the budget for acquisition of books is constantly being slashed.

Is this because the librarian is not the complaining type? I think this is not the whole reason. Rather, many times the librarian is fully occupied serving the needs of the library's clientele and forgets the importance of lobbying and public relations. Sometimes, also, librarians forget the importance of developing or introducing new programs. I still think that the best way to gain the attention and budget of the institution is not to challenge the administrator but rather to develop programs by which you can show him your attempts to assist him and the school as a whole.

But of course, the librarian's job becomes easier if the administrator is cognizant of the role played by the library in the academic program.

(3) The administrator must see to it that the library is managed by a well qualified and competent staff.

A library to be effective should be staffed with a competent personnel—competent through training in professional and subject fields. This staff should be sufficient in number, in order to organize and administer the resources of the library at an effective teaching or resources level, as offered to the stripped-down administrative level at which libraries are usually forced to operate.

Proper library staffing can only be possible if

(a) there is adequate financial support;

(b) there is a positive relation between the amounts which are spent for staff and materials. The ideal is 50-60% for personnel and 30-40% for books, periodicals and binding, and 10% for supplies and other purposes. The formula under any case will vary from library to library, since the local conditions affect it directly. It is important, however, for both the school and library administrator to be cognizant of proper distribution of the funds. They should realize that when new funds are added for the purchase of library materials, increase of personnel may be necessary if the materials are to be properly organized and serviced;

(c) There is a scheme for recruitment and ranking. This means that position should be well identified and the necessary qualification well defined.

(d) The library is given a free hand in choosing its personnel. Very often administrators not only interfere but dictate the recruitment of library personnel. If there is such a thing as command responsibility, then the library administrators should be allowed to recruit and screen their personnel, subject of course to the final review of the school administrator.

(4) The administrator must not however exercise control in the procurement of books. Some administrators put so much control in the procurement of books that the librarian will have a very limited amount of funds for requisition and purchase orders. This control is necessary, of course, for financial management and accounting. But the adminis-

trator should see to it that it is never used to restrict, inhibit, or retard the purchase of books and other materials by the librarian. Every librarian should be given the responsibility of making out his orders in the library after consulting with the faculty and heads of academic unit.

(5) The administrator should adopt a workable policy or plan of library procurement which will answer the effective, functional operation of the library and all its special units. As has been made abundantly clear through recent university library surveys, this phase of school administration is constantly in need of specification and classification.

The flow of authority from the administrator to the library, the responsibility for the preparation of the budget, the selection of library personnel, the administration of departmental and school libraries and the formulation of a well-conceived, comprehensive, long-term program of library development for the university as a whole, these and like considerations are basic to effective administration but have frequently been left largely to chance. Whatever policy exists has been usually allowed to grow according to individual interest or has been determined on a basis other than that of sound administrative principles. In order that the unfavorable conditions which naturally follow from such a situation as this may be obviated, it is fundamental that a policy be evolved and followed which will result in a well-organized, and expertly directed library.

In closing let me thank you for inviting me to speak in this seminar. It was a great pleasure being with you today.