

## **Role of Library Faculty in a Team Environment**

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The reorganization of Cataloging Services at the Pennsylvania State University Libraries (PSU) in 1995 altered the responsibilities of library faculty and staff in a way that was not even imagined seven years ago. The hierarchical structure was eliminated and the beginning of an organization based on shared leadership and responsibility was created. In this environment, leadership is truly and fully shared, with all team members, faculty, and staff sharing responsibility for team activities including coordination, monitoring, work prioritization, and training. This article will focus on the roles that faculty librarians serve as members of teams that include paraprofessionals. That segment of team membership and its effect on team dichotomy will be examined in detail. Specifically this will be addressed as it applies to the team structure in Cataloging Services at the PSU Libraries.

The movement to teams was part of a university-wide movement toward continuous quality improvement (a version of total quality management). Frustrations with the traditional hierarchical organization quickly led the library to explore the team structure in the hope that communication and work efficiencies would be optimized. In the mid-1990s, the technical services division at the PSU Libraries was reorganized from a hierarchical structure into a team environment. Team structures were developed in Cataloging Services in 1995, and all members of the department were engaged in discussions regarding their formation. Self-directed work teams (SDWT) were created, giving employees a high level of empowerment. An SDWT is defined as "an intact group of employees who are responsible for a whole work process."(FN1) At the library, this means everything from handling day-to-day processes to determining policy.

### **ORGANIZATION OF CATALOGING SERVICES TEAMS**

Cataloging Services is divided into five teams (special collections, music/AV, monographs, maps, catmarking) based on format, and is composed of thirty-three individuals, seven of whom are faculty librarians (see appendix A). All teams except catmarking have at least one faculty librarian assigned to them. Because cataloging teams function without a supervisor or a team leader, the staff team members have assumed responsibility and accountability for managing their own time, workloads/workflow, and self-development. They also share responsibility for management and administrative activities. Examples of these include analyzing and improving processes, implementing and assessing process improvement, establishing quality control, adjusting priorities, and monitoring and planning projects. They also participate in the management of team activities. These responsibilities include communicating with team members, preparing and distributing weekly team-meeting agendas, documenting team discussions and decisions, and serving as representatives to various groups inside and outside of Cataloging Services.(FN2)

## **JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY AND STAFF**

The teams in Cataloging Services are primarily divided by format, but within each team, staff members perform either copy or original cataloging functions. The typical position for a copy cataloger shows 45 percent of his/her time spent on copy cataloging, and an additional 40 percent on complex copy cataloging, which involves working with materials such as multivolume sets, conference publications, and books with accompanying materials. Remaining time is spent on catalog maintenance (5 percent), team activities (5 percent) and service to the libraries (5 percent). Team activities are defined as communicating with the team, preparing and distributing weekly team-meeting agendas, chairing team meetings, documenting discussions, and acting as the team spokesman. This function is rotated among team members on a monthly basis. Service to libraries often means serving on library-wide committees.

The typical original staff cataloger position shows 50 percent of her time spent on original cataloging, 25 percent on complex copy cataloging, 10 percent on team duties/administration, 5 percent on copy cataloging, and 10 percent miscellaneous, which could be serving on a reference/service desk, database maintenance, Web responsibilities, computer troubleshooting, or authority control. In order to do original cataloging, we ask that our staff possess an academic background in pertinent disciplines or field of study, that they have knowledge of a foreign language, good computer skills, and expert knowledge of descriptive cataloging standards and authority control standards. Staff must be able to apply that knowledge to the complex principles of cataloging.

The faculty in Cataloging Services submits annual work plans. These define percentages of time that will be spent in the following three areas: librarianship, research/scholarship, service/outreach. Librarians at PSU have full faculty status and work their way through the promotion and tenure process. This is evident in the format of the work plan. Librarianship is the category in which they will define their expected cataloging activities for the year, including an estimate of the number of items that they feel they will catalog, as well as any special cataloging projects that they are working on. Authority control and any collection development responsibilities also fall under this category. We ask faculty to make sure that at least 60 to 70 percent of their time is spent on activities in this category. Research/scholarship is the section of the work plan where publications and presentations are listed. Usually 20 percent of their time is spent in this area. Finally, the service/outreach section includes conference attendance and committee memberships, and 5 to 10 percent of time can be spent in this category.

## **TEAM ASSESSMENT SURVEY**

In late 1999 an assessment of the teams' structures was undertaken in technical services. This was a lengthy process in collaboration with our university's Human Resources Development Center. The assessment included surveys, multiple meetings, training, and facilitation sessions. The end result was an identification of issues of concern regarding the functioning of the teams, and a tool that we called the Management System for Performance to guide our departments through performance, rewards and recognition, and the annual evaluation process. One issue that emerged as problematical, in the sense that it remained undefined after the assessment survey was completed, was the relationship/role of the faculty librarian to the other members of the

teams in Cataloging Services. Despite the analysis of the teams' structures and the conclusions that were made via the survey results, this issue remained untouched and unresolved.

### **ROLES OF FACULTY VERSUS STAFF**

To this end, the Assistant Dean for Technical and Access Services met with team members to try to define the "roles" of the faculty versus staff as members of the team. It was felt that documentation of the roles would answer lingering questions and codify the working relationships. She first met individually with faculty to define activities and what they thought their role was vis-à-vis the other team members. Then she met with the teams, minus the faculty, to see how they responded to the same list of activities. Finally, meetings were called of the entire team (faculty and staff) for open discussions based on their responses. Very little disagreement took place at those meetings. Statements were tweaked, ideas were shared, and consensus was easily reached.

Charts were designed that listed a set of sixteen activities in which the teams are involved. Alongside the activity is a statement regarding the role of staff and faculty. Copies of the charts for each of the teams are in appendix B. There are some key activities that should be highlighted.

Generally, faculty librarians serve as resource persons on the teams. They do not function as supervisors, but are there when their expertise and knowledge of cataloging are required. Many of the activities on the chart indicate that the activity is shared between faculty and staff members, across all four teams. These activities are: interviewing/hiring, leave approval, workflow/workload decisions, writing documentation, participating in team meetings, cataloging, and determining team policy. All four teams agreed that involvement with national-level activities should be the role of the faculty resource person, however, one team did add that staff could attend national conferences. Other activities indicated an agreement between teams, with slight variations. For example, when asked about liaison roles with outside departments and faculty, two teams indicated that this was a shared role, with one team further stating that team members will ask the faculty member to take the lead when necessary, and another team indicating that the activity is shared-with the staff doing most of this work, however.

The assessment survey results also indicated that a process was needed to monitor performance and quality issues on the SDWT. Although this was addressed via the Management System for Performance, it was an opportune time to discuss it again in relation to this exercise. What role does the faculty member play in monitoring performance? Team members wanted this documented and discussed. Each team worked out a method for monitoring the quality of its work. Very specific plans were made regarding when and how the monitoring of quality in cataloging would take place. At PSU, faculty and staff alike review the performance and work quality of each other. For example, the music/AV cataloging team decided that copy cataloging would be reviewed every fall for both staff and faculty. Each team member will catalog the same title, using a sampling of five titles. The team will meet to review each other's work. For original cataloging, the faculty member will do original cataloging on a book with copy cataloging available. The team will then review his work.

The surveys also indicated that it was necessary to assign responsibility for handling disciplinary/interpersonal conflicts. In this area, the teams unanimously agreed that this should not be the role of the faculty resource person, but should be the role of the Head of Cataloging Services or the Assistant to the Head of Cataloging Services.

Regarding performance evaluations, it was agreed that faculty would have input into the team evaluation. However, final written input and the annual rating would be the responsibility of the department head and assistant to the department head.

### **LITERATURE SEARCH**

A review of the literature describing the role of library faculty in a team environment revealed few articles. Herbsman and Yontz indicate that the role of librarians on teams has emerged to be one who "coordinates team activities."(FN3) Team librarians serve as "consultants for the paraprofessionals, answering questions and helping solve problems."(FN4) They further state that librarians serve as "resource persons" for the paraprofessional catalogers.(FN5) Jaramillo talks about higher education and team performance indicating that faculty do not easily assume "responsibility for the performance of others" and that the nature of higher education does not allow faculty to assume that responsibility due to research and teaching requirements.(FN6) He states that faculty are more apt to do individual research than monitor members of a team. Branton comments that usually a librarian team member is "given primary responsibility of monitoring, not supervising, the subordinate team members,"(FN7) thus echoing Herbsman/Yontz in regards to the librarian-resource relationship among team members. Branton also indicates that team librarians monitor assignments, workload, and priorities.(FN8) The librarian in this scenario is deciding priorities and providing training as necessary. Although not focused on libraries, Biddiscombe does cite that in a "converged service environment," librarians play an important role as trainers and are often called upon to offer their expertise and to get involved in new developments and initiatives.(FN9) Eskoz refers to professional librarian catalogers as "resource persons," indicating that they are often involved in the training of staff and are consulted when special problems arise.(FN10) She states that librarians believe that they don't supervise; instead they "coordinate" and "work together."(FN11)

The role that the faculty at PSU plays is similar to what the literature describes, with key differences. Certainly Herbsman/Yontz and Jaramillo describe similar, though not exact, experiences. It must be stressed that members of the faculty at PSU are resource persons who truly work side by side with the staff with a focus on shared management. Although the faculty serves as consultants for the team, they do not coordinate team activities or determine priorities. Workflow and workload are determined by all of the team members with faculty input, not faculty decision making. The faculty do not monitor assignments; rather assignments are determined by the team as a whole. Faculty do not serve as trainers of the team members. In most teams, training is a shared responsibility with faculty focusing more on concept training rather than nitty gritty cataloging procedures and rules. The staff writes most procedural and training documents. Thus, similar to the literature, faculty at PSU serve as resource persons who answer questions and help solve problems. They are also involved in research activities.

However, in contrast to the literature, they do not coordinate team activities, monitor the work of team members, supervise, prioritize work, or take prime responsibility for training.

## **ROLES OF FACULTY**

The roles of the faculty librarians fall into five major categories: consultant/advisor, facilitator, coach, collaborator, and supporter/encourager.

The faculty librarians very much serve the role of consultants/advisors in the way they answer questions, help solve problems, and apply their level of knowledge of format-based cataloging procedures and national level activities to the team. As resource persons, they are often called upon to offer their expertise on sticky cataloging issues.

They also serve as facilitators in the way that they allow staff to grow and expand skill sets by stepping back and allowing them to define processes and determine policies. The faculty librarians are not making the decisions, but rather are working in unison with their teammates to resolve issues and determine procedures. These expanded skills have allowed us to reclassify many of the positions in Cataloging Services to appropriately reflect the high level of cataloging that they are achieving.

Sullivan uses the term "coach" to describe the relationship of librarians/faculty to staff. She speaks of a "committed partnership" between librarian and staff.(FN12) This description is very appropriate to our teams. In our self-directed environment, team members are coached by one another to take responsibility for the quality of the team's work.

Librarians work collaboratively with team members to review work, but not necessarily monitor work assignments, workload, or priorities. The team is responsible for monitoring itself in terms of assignments and workload/workflow. This is a shared responsibility between faculty and staff. This collaborative relationship allows for a sharing of power and lessens status differences.

Faculty librarians provide a supporting and encouraging environment for the team. There is a mutual understanding of the work as both staff and faculty alike contribute at the same level. The staff performs original cataloging, just as the faculty does. They each understand the expertise of one another, and this provides for a very supportive environment where team members can serve as advocates for each other.

## **CONCLUSION**

The relationship of faculty and staff at PSU is an arrangement that challenges the traditional roles and general expectations of staff (copy cataloging) versus faculty (original cataloging), and also challenges team norms (i.e., determining priorities, serving as advocates). This building of "hybrid teams," faculty and staff working in unison, is a relationship that we plan to continue to exploit to its fullest potential as it is a mutually beneficial arrangement.(FN13) Faculty librarians and staff are equal partners on the teams. This type of relationship provides many benefits to

staff librarians. For example, they are able to learn more about cataloging rules and structure, assume greater responsibility, be more creative (original cataloging), foster cooperation and respect for one another, grow in their cataloging knowledge, exercise greater independent judgment, and create challenging environments for themselves. Positions have been upgraded to reflect the self-directed responsibilities of the team. There are also many benefits to faculty. The relationship allows them the opportunity for greater national exposure because they are encouraged to contribute to national literature, procedures, and standards; to attend professional associations' activities and national committees; and to pursue research and the writing of quality publications. Although no firm baseline data against which to measure the outcome and productivity of the team organization are available, there is a strong belief that our students, academic faculty, and other library users benefit from the efficiencies of this organization, such as good communication, collaboration, and a strong sense of responsibility and quality awareness.

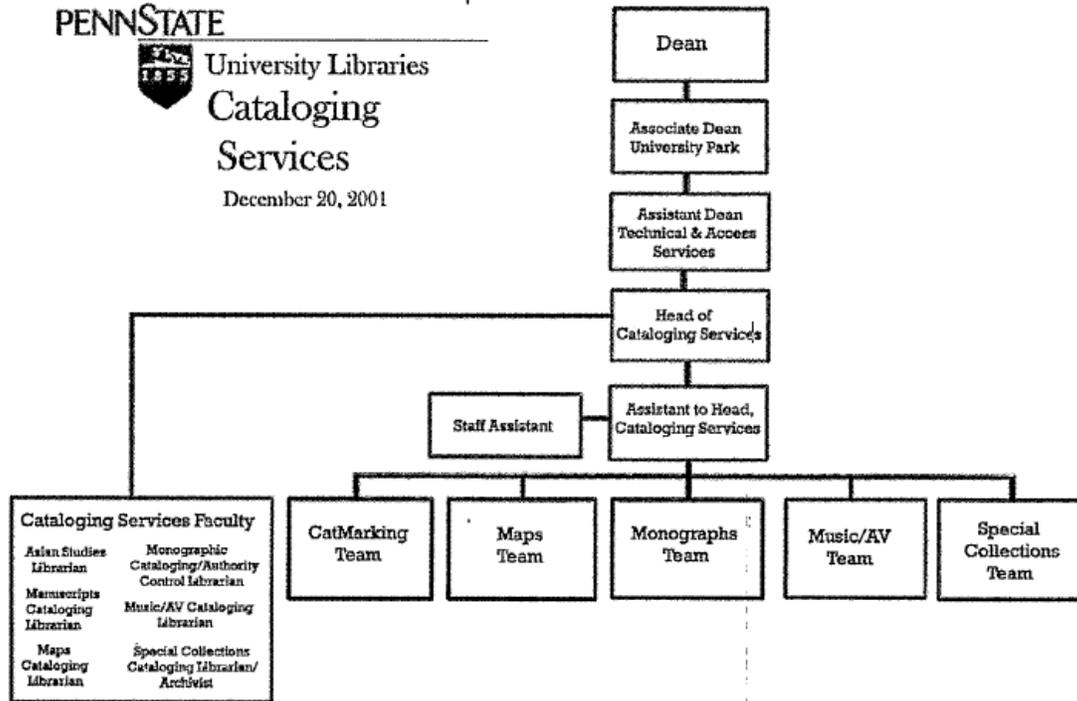
### **ADDED MATERIAL**

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### **FOOTNOTES**

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3. Yael Herbsman and Elaine Yontz, "Sharing Managerial Responsibilities through Subject Teams in Monograph Cataloging," *Technical Services Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1992): 25.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. George R. Jaramillo, "Utilization of Teams in an Academic Library Environment," *Colorado Libraries* 22, no. 4 (winter 1996): 19.
7. Ann Branton, "Teams, Units, and Paradigms: Building Bridges with Building Blocks," *Mississippi Libraries* 57, no. 4 (winter 1993): 97.
8. Ibid., 98.
9. Richard Biddiscombe, *Managing the New Learning Agenda in a Converged Service Environment*. Accessed Oct. 15, 2001, [www.iatul.org/conference/chanpap/biddisco.html](http://www.iatul.org/conference/chanpap/biddisco.html).
10. Patricia A. Eskoz, "The Catalog Librarian-Change or Status Quo? Results of a Survey of Academic Libraries," *Library Resources & Technical Services* 34, no. 3 (July 1990): 387.
11. Ibid.
12. Maureen Sullivan, "A New Leadership Paradigm: Empowering Library Staff and Improving Performance," *Journal of Library Administration* 14, no. 2 (1991): 74.
13. Biddiscombe, *Managing the New Learning Agenda in a Converged Service Environment*.

## APPENDIX A. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR CATALOGING SERVICES



## APPENDIX B. ROLE OF TEAM MEMBERS/FACULTY RESOURCE

### Music/AV Team

Activity	Role
Involvement with national-level activities	Role of faculty resource person.
Training	Team members and faculty train new staff; faculty train in new concepts.
Mentoring	Role of faculty resource person.
Interviewing/hiring	Team and faculty share this role.
Discipline/interpersonal conflicts	Handled by department head and assistant to the head if team with faculty cannot successfully address at first level.
Leave approval	Team and faculty share this information.
Workflow/workload	Team and faculty share this role.
Writing documentation	Faculty resource feeds into the documentation written by the team.
Team meetings	Team and faculty share in the contribution of agenda items and discussion. Team members serve as facilitators and minute-takers.
Liaison with outside departments and faculty	Team and faculty share this role. Team will ask faculty to lead when necessary.
Cataloging	Team and faculty share this role.

Determining team policy	Team and faculty share this role.
Determining department-wide policy	Role of the cataloging faculty group, in consultation with the team, when necessary.
Monitoring quality and performance	On an annual basis, in late fall, copy cataloging is reviewed. Each team member will catalog the same title, using a sampling of five titles, including all formats. They will meet and review each other's work. Original cataloging is reviewed on an ongoing basis by the faculty resource person. The faculty member will do original cataloging on a title with copy. The team will review his work.
Advocate for the team	Role of faculty resource person.
Team annual review	Faculty provide input into the team annual review. The department head and assistant to the head provide the evaluation and rating.

### **Monograph Team**

Activity	Role
Involvement with national-level activities	Role of faculty resource person.
Training	Training and revision of original catalogers is a shared responsibility faculty and team. A cross-team training group is responsible for copy cataloging training.
Mentoring	Team and faculty share this role.
Interviewing/hiring	Team and faculty share this role.
Discipline/interpersonal conflicts	Handled by department head and assistant to the head.
Leave approval	For annual leave, team and faculty send e-mail to team address. For extended leave, referred to assistant to the head. Sick-leave is reported to the staff assistant.
Workflow/workload	Team and faculty share this role, although faculty plays more of a consultative role.
Writing documentation	Team and faculty share this role.
Team meetings	Team and faculty attend. Faculty suggests agenda items on occasion. Team facilitates and takes minutes.
Liaison with outside departments and faculty	Team and faculty share this role, but team does most of this work.
Cataloging	Team and faculty share this role.
Determining team policy	Team and faculty share this role.
Determining department-wide policy	Role of the cataloging faculty group, in consultation with the team, when necessary.
Monitoring quality and performance	Original cataloging is reviewed annually in the

fall. Each original cataloger works on a set number of books (i.e., six). These are placed on a shelf and by the team and faculty. Copy cataloging is reviewed annually in the fall. Copy cataloging will be broken into smaller groups. Team members will review each other, and include the faculty member in the discussion of findings.

Team and faculty share this role.

Faculty provide input into the team annual review. The department head and assistant to the head provide the evaluation and rating.

Advocate for the team  
Team annual review

## Maps Team

Activity  
Involvement with national-level activities  
Training  
  
Mentoring  
  
Interviewing/hiring  
Discipline/interpersonal conflicts  
  
Leave approval  
Workflow/workload  
  
Writing documentation  
Team meetings  
  
Liaison with outside departments and faculty  
Cataloging  
Determining team policy  
Determining department-wide policy  
  
Monitoring quality and performance  
  
Advocate for the team

## Role

Role of faculty resource person.

Team members train new staff; team and faculty train in new concepts.

Role of faculty resource as it relates to cataloging issues; team and faculty share as it relates to local practices.

Team and faculty share this role.

Handled by department head and assistant to the head if team with faculty cannot successfully address at first level.

Team and faculty inform one another.

Team and faculty share project workflow and responsibility.

Team and faculty share this role.

Team meetings are open. Team and faculty share in the contribution of agenda items, discussion, calling of meetings, and writing of the minutes.

Team and faculty share this role.

Team and faculty share this role.

Team and faculty share this role.

Role of the cataloging faculty group, in consultation with the team, when necessary.

On an annual basis (before end of calendar year), both original and copy cataloging are reviewed.

Original cataloging is monitored for two weeks, after which point work is reviewed by the team and faculty. Copy cataloging is reviewed by choosing a set number of records to review.

Copy cataloging review is by the team.

Team and faculty share this role.

Team annual review Faculty provides input into the team annual review. The department head and assistant to the head provide the evaluation and rating.

## Special Collections Team

Activity	Role
Involvement with national-level activities	Role of faculty resource person. Team members can attend national activities.
Training	Team members train new staff; team and faculty train in new concepts.
Mentoring	Integral role for faculty resource, but not limited to faculty.
Interviewing/hiring	Team and faculty share this role.
Discipline/interpersonal conflicts	Try to resolve at team/faculty level first. If choose to go beyond that, is handled by head and assistant to the head.
Leave approval	Team and faculty inform one another.
Workflow/workload	Handled by the team with input from faculty resource.
Writing documentation	Team and faculty share this role.
Team meetings	Team and faculty share in the contribution of agenda items and in the taking of minutes. Team members do the facilitating.
Liaison with outside departments and faculty	Team and faculty share this role.
Cataloging	Team and faculty share this role.
Determining team policy	Team and faculty share this role.
Determining department-wide policy	Role of the cataloging faculty group, in consultation with the team.
Monitoring quality and performance	Each team member, including the faculty resource person, submits work to each team member on an annual basis (five items in total). This is spread out over the year, and includes original and copy cataloging. This provides learning opportunities. All team members receive daily feedback from Special Collections staff as all of their work is checked on an ongoing basis.
Advocate for the team	Shared role of the department head, faculty, and/or team depending on venue.
Team annual review	Faculty provides input into the team annual review. The department head and assistant to the head provide the evaluation and rating.