

Report of the Advisory Committee to the Vice-Chancellor on Faculty and Departmental Libraries

Khoo Siew Mun*

Abstrak: Suatu Jawatankuasa Penasihat kepada Naib Canselor berkenaan Perpustakaan-Perpustakaan Fakulti dan Jabatan telah dilantik pada 15 Ogos 1989 untuk mengenal pasti keadaan-keadaan dan membuat cadangan serta perakuan kepada Naib Canselor. Objektif utama Jawatankuasa ini dibentuk ialah untuk mengkaji aspek-aspek berkaitan penubuhan, pentadbiran dan perkhidmatan, kewangan, koleksi, kakitangan dan peraturan Perpustakaan-Perpustakaan tersebut. Hasil kajian itu diharapkan dapat membantu memperbaiki dan mengatasi masalah yang dihadapi oleh Perpustakaan berkenaan.

Abstract: The Advisory Committee to the Vice-Chancellor on Faculty and Departmental Libraries was appointed by the Vice Chancellor on 15 August 1989 to study and make recommendations regarding the establishment and use of faculty and departmental libraries. The main objective of the Committee was to study aspects related to the establishment, administration and services, finance, collections, staff, rules and regulations of these libraries. It is hoped that the results of the study will be used to improve and overcome problems faced by faculty and departmental libraries.

Terms of Reference

The Advisory Committee to the Vice-Chancellor on Faculty and Departmental Libraries was appointed by the Vice-Chancellor on 15 August 1989 to study and make recommendations to him regarding the establishment and use of faculty and departmental libraries. The terms of reference of the Committee were as follows:

Mengenalpasti keadaan di perpustakaan-perpustakaan di jabatan serta fakulti dan membuat cadangan serta perakuan kepada Tuan Naib Canselor.

Perkara-perkara yang harus dipertimbangkan oleh Jawatankuasa adalah:

1. Sistem penggunaan
2. Kehilangan buku
3. Lewat kembali
4. Keadaan menyimpan buku
5. Pertumbuhan
6. Sifat pengguna
7. Kerosakan buku
8. dan lain-lain yang mempengaruhi keadaan librari.

Membership

The following were appointed to the Committee:

Puan Khoo Siew Mun - Chairman
Prof. Madya Dr. K. Arichandran
Prof. Madya Dr. Chia Swee Ping
Prof. Dr. Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells
Prof. Madya Dr. Leong Yin Ching
Prof. Madya Puan Mehrun Siraj
Prof. Madya Dr. R. Rajoo
Prof. Madya Dr. Wan Abdul Kadir b. Wan Yusoff
Prof. Madya Dr. Wang Chee Woon
Prof. Madya Ting Hoon Chin
(w.e.f. 29 November 1989 to replace Prof. Madya Dr. Wang Chee Woon who was on sabbatical leave from 16 September 1989 till 15 June 1990.)
Sivakumar Nambiar - Deputy Registrar
(Chancellory)

Meetings

The Vice-Chancellor chaired the inaugural meeting on 25 August 1989.

The Committee met seven times between 30 August 1989 and 28 May 1990.

* Chief Librarian, University of Malaya

Documents

The Committee received and utilised the following documents: (a) Original questionnaires submitted by 30 departmental libraries; (b) Computer analysis for all 30 libraries; (c) Computer analysis on specific libraries (according to individual responsibility); (d) Code Book on questionnaires; (e) Work schedules; (f) Analysis format.

Work Schedule

The Study took nine months: August 1989 to May 1990. The report was submitted to the Vice-Chancellor on 5 March 1991. Copies were made available to departments on 19 March 1991. Heads of Departments and Committee members of Library Committee who wish to be given a copy of the report should write to the Library.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were to obtain basic information on all key features of each departmental library in order to allow relevant recommendations to be made. The following features were noted:

- (i) **Background information:** including the status of the library; history and establishment; its primary objectives and functions and physical endowments (size, capacity, furniture), and opening hours.
- (ii) **Administrative policies and practices,** whether they exist; and in a formalised or informal nature; lines of responsibility and methods for monitoring that library policies were implemented and adhered to.
- (iii) **Financial aspects:** being sources of funds, responsibility for allocations; utilisation for acquiring library materials; records and accountability.
- (iv) **Library collection:** by type and volume; selection and acquisition practices; and sources of collection development.
- (v) **Technical processing:** the classification, cataloguing, inventorying and processing of library materials; and their information retrieval via abstracting and indexing.
- (vi) **Staff:** by type, grade, and quality; salaries paid; and accountability.

(vii) **Services:** by type, current and planned; especially in relation to improved technology.

(viii) **Rules & regulations:** their existence; implementation and monitoring; penalties effected for their infringement by different types of library user.

(ix) **Library users:** by type and privileges enjoyed; and library perception of their level of satisfaction with library services.

(x) **Problems:** libraries were asked to rank their problems including shortage of funds, personnel, physical infrastructures, book losses; among others.

Methodology

A survey and personal observation methodology was adopted. The survey instrument, a Questionnaire, involved 65 questions and 260 variables. The Questionnaire was administered to all university departments, totalling 42 in number. These yielded information on the features studied, and cross-checked information supplied. Computer analyses of all variables were made using the SPSS package to facilitate the study and to minimise errors in computation. An overall analysis of the 30 responding libraries and analyses for each individual library were generated. Personal visits made by members of the team to all the libraries provided individual library profiles. This enabled problems being encountered to be highlighted and recommendations to be made.

Main Findings and Conclusions

- (i) **Diversity of departmental library situations.** The departmental system encompasses a couple of well-established and well-endowed libraries; a fair number of smaller but fairly efficiently managed collections; and a very significant number of weakly conceptualised, poorly-funded, ill-equipped and less well-managed library units.
- (ii) **Role and responsibility.** The University Authorities; the departmental libraries and the Main University Library System each has its own role and responsibility, with the departmental libraries needing to initiate action.
- (iii) **Retaining departmental libraries.** On balance there are benefits to retaining the departmental library system. This should run parallel to, and

be fully independent of, the Main University Library System, to support academic activities of faculty. However, remedial action is necessary to tackle current problems which threaten the general effectiveness of these departmental libraries.

(iv) Measures necessary. Insufficient attention has been paid by departmental libraries to various important areas of library administration, including the following.

- (i) Conceptualizing objectives, functions, and roles of the libraries.
- (ii) Defining parameters for collection-building and development.
- (iii) Adopting and implementing practices for technical processing of the collection for the purpose of recording and use.
- (iv) Specifying and adopting financial procedures, practices and lines of accountability.
- (v) Specifying, adopting, monitoring and enforcing rules and regulations over use of library facilities and collections.
- (vi) Ensuring availability of opportunities for staff training.

(v) Problems faced. Insufficient funding is the biggest problem faced. Book loans and misuse of library facilities are also serious problems encountered. Shortages of adequate number of trained staff; inadequate space and lack of library policies and accountability also contribute to making departmental libraries less effective in meeting the needs of their clientele.

(vi) Closed access to collection. Specialist items located in departmental libraries (maps, audiovisual materials, etc.) are generally only available to departmental staff and students.

(vii) Lack of evaluation. Practically no evaluative studies have been carried out on library services, though many of these libraries have long been established.

(viii) Responsibility of the departmental libraries. Independence of the departmental libraries implicitly means that these libraries must assume total responsibility for the effective administration of their library units including accounting for finance; book stocks, staff recruitment, training and enforcing library rules and regulations.

(ix) Advisory role of Main University Library System. The Main Library System may be approached for advice in all professional matters and all assistance within the constraints faced by the Main University Library System itself.

(x) Reorganisation of departmental libraries. Noting the general unsatisfactory state of library administration in most departmental libraries, but given their overall perceived usefulness to university library development, reorganisation is generally indicated.

(xi) Responsibility of University Authorities. The University however should assist in every way possible. Measures should include making available more funding, space and posts to those departmental libraries that are properly rationalized and managed.

Key Recommendations

- (i) The current system of departmental libraries should be retained.
- (ii) This system should run parallel with and be independent of the Main University Library System.
- (iii) With their independence the departmental libraries must also recognise their responsibilities.
- (iv) Each departmental library must be fully accountable for its library administration: including conceptualization and planning; finance; collections; staff recruitment and training; administering, monitoring and enforcing library rules and regulations; and spearheading its own problem-solving processes.
- (v) To this end, each departmental library must take the following measures as a first step towards better organisation:
 - (a) **Policy, objective and function.** Conceptualize a clearly-defined policy and state the objective, role and function of the library.
 - (b) **Parameters for collection-building.** Delineate the parameters for collection-building in quantitative or descriptive terms.
 - (c) **Technical processing.** Draw up guidelines for, and immediately adopt procedures for technical processing of materials to aid the recording, locating and lending processes.

- (d) **Library rules and regulations.** Draw up rules and regulations for general control over use of library facilities.
- (e) **Reporting and accountability.** Draw up procedures for staff reporting; reporting of library use or misuse; and specify lines of accountability. Annual reports of library operations are to be submitted to the Dean/Director.
- (f) **Monitoring and enforcement.** Determine methods for monitoring and implementing enforcement of library rules and procedures.
- (g) **Staff training.** Plan for staff in-service and professional training.
- (vi) The University authorities must strive to give every moral, financial and administrative support and assistance to departmental libraries in overcoming problems. Better funding, sufficient space, furniture and equipment, and increasing staff numbers and expertise must be given.
- (vii) The Main University Library System should be available to give professional advice and assistance when so requested.
- (viii) Departmental libraries must immediately work towards informing the university community of their collections; and give access to their collections to the wider university community.

Acknowledgments

The Committee would wish to record their gratitude to the Director, Computer Centre; Deans, Heads of Departments and other staff of the departments who took time and trouble to respond to the Questionnaire, facilitated visits to their libraries by Committee members and permitted their staff to assist in one way or another with the study and the preparation of the *Report*. Work connected with the printing of all drafts of the Questionnaire and the *Report* was undertaken by staff of the Main Library.

UPDATE ON LIBRARY COMPUTERIZATION

- | | |
|------------|--|
| March 1991 | <p>Site preparation of the Computer Room, internal cabling works in the Main Library and all the branch libraries were completed.</p> <p>The VMS operating system was installed in the VAX 6410, followed shortly later with the installation of the ATLAS library software.</p> <p>A total of 98,120 bibliographic records in MARC format were successfully downloaded into a test database by mid-March 1991.</p> <p>One terminal each was set up in the Cataloguing Division and the Automation Division to test the cataloguing and Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) modules. All testing went on smoothly.</p> |
| May 1991 | <p>Additional power points for the Main Library and the branch libraries were installed. Work started on laying the underground telephone cable link to the branch libraries.</p> |
| June 1991 | <p>Terminals were set-up in all the Divisions in the Main Library. Eighteen OPAC terminals were also made available on all floors of the Library building.</p> <p>The cataloguing and the OPAC modules were the first modules to be implemented on-line. For the first time, the University of Malaya Library integrated system, ILMU, was introduced to the users. Users were able to have access to about 110,000 bibliographic records on-line through the OPAC module.</p> |