

The Rationale for Continuing Appointment for Librarians/Archivists at the University of Georgia

DEFINITION

The definition of continuing appointment is held in this proposed model to apply to all members of the University of Georgia (UGA) Libraries faculty appointed with a Librarian or Archivist rank who are eligible to apply (i.e., Librarian III; Librarian IV; Archivist III; Archivist IV). It applies equally to librarians/archivists who report to or are part of the administrative structures in the UGA Libraries and the UGA Law Library.

Continuing appointment is a serious commitment by an institution to an individual and is reciprocated by an equally serious commitment on the part of the individual. Based on performance and potential, it is granted to librarians/archivists who are expected to continue to contribute to UGA, whose performance is of consistently high quality, and who evidence an active interest in the profession.

Under its provisions the University may terminate the employment of a librarian/archivist having continuing appointment prior to retirement upon proof of misconduct, neglect of duty, financial exigency of the University, or other existing rules and regulations that apply to all tenured faculty and Classified Staff. If discontinuance or reduction in a segment of the University's research or educational program, or library reorganization due to changing patterns of library service or technological advances results in the elimination of a position held by a librarian/archivist with continuing appointment, or if a position held by a librarian/archivist with continuing appointment changes to such a degree that the incumbent can no longer fulfill its requirements, every effort will be made to reassign the librarian/archivist to another position within the system.

I. From the point of view of the Libraries and the University, continuing appointment:

- a. is consistent with academic status in this University community and is in accord with the policies of the Board of Regents of the University System, in which library professionals are defined as faculty by virtue of being part of the Corps of Instruction;
- b. helps attract and retain highly qualified librarian/archivists;
- c. parallels similar agreements in other Libraries within the Association of

Research Libraries; and

d. follows the recommendations of the national professional associations, the Association of College and Research Libraries and the American Library Association.

II. From the point of view of the librarian/archivist, continuing appointment:

a. is a safeguard against capricious or arbitrary dismissal;

b. provides a degree of economic security for those to whom it is granted;

c. makes clear the terms of employment at UGA for the new librarian/archivist;

d. is an added protection of academic freedom; and

e. insures that the burden of proof of bona fide reason for dismissal lies with the institution.

UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

Certain basic assumptions underlie continuing appointment and the criteria by which it is granted. These assumptions must be kept in mind when reading or applying the criteria:

A. The common good. By defining high standards in the criteria for promotion and continuing appointment, UGA librarians/archivists seek to uphold the common good, i.e., to develop excellent library resources for the UGA community, to attract and hold highly qualified librarians/archivists, to reinforce professional attitudes, and to encourage achievement on the part of the individual librarian/archivist.

B. Mutual commitment. Unlike promotion in rank, which rewards an increasing level of personal achievement and competence, continuing appointment recognizes the actual and potential worth of the individual to the University Libraries as well as proven merit and achievement over a period of years. The University offers a long-term financial commitment and its support of academic freedom. In return the librarian/archivist continues a commitment to the careers of librarianship and archives management which will give the University quality support for its teaching and research activities. It is a serious commitment for both parties.

C. Fairness. The goal is to establish a system that is equitable in its requirements, that adequately recognizes the difference in individual positions and contributions, and that preserves unity among librarians/archivists as a

discrete professional group within this academic community.

Like rank, continuing appointment adheres to the individual and not to the position held.

Essential to attracting and retaining highly qualified librarians/archivists is the concept that continuing appointment will not be restricted by a quota system.

D. Parallel of academic status and continuing appointment to faculty status and tenure. The ranking structure for librarian/archivists, with periodic review, peer evaluation, and continuing appointment, is designed to parallel the faculty structure for promotion and tenure. The standard faculty criteria of teaching, research, and service are adapted to reflect the special characteristics of librarianship and archival management, and have for years formed the criteria for promotion in the Libraries: professional performance; continuing education, research, or publication; and service to the profession, the library, and the larger University community. In the proposed model, neither promotion nor continuing appointment would be granted simply by virtue of seniority; rather, each is based on demonstrated merit and achievement as determined by peer and supervisory/administrative review.

E. Professional performance and attitude. In the evaluation process by the Libraries Faculty Committee on Promotion, the quality of professional performance and competence in carrying out the goals and responsibilities of the Libraries is the consideration of greatest importance.

As defined by the American Library Association (ALA), professional performance is that which proceeds from a special background and education and includes identifying library needs; analyzing problems; setting goals; formulating original and creative solutions; integrating theory into practice; and planning, organizing, communicating and administering successful programs of service to users of the Libraries' materials and services. Integral parts of professional performance are professional attitude, a sense of professional responsibility, and the exercise of professional judgment.

F. Professional standards. Continuing appointment is a symbol of professional achievement, an acknowledgement of professional productivity. No single definition of professional productivity suitably applies to all fields, either pure or applied. No definition is universally applicable. At best, professional productivity may be defined as those contributions which are regarded by peers as central and important to the profession. The goals and

norms of the particular profession, rather than standards artificially created or imposed by some external agent, must prevail in determining what is professionally productive and useful.

G. Administrative support. As criteria are more rigorously implemented and an increasingly able staff is developed, Libraries and University of Georgia administrations must provide the kind of support that encourages maximum growth and development; that makes it possible for professionals to do professional work; that allows time and money, insofar as possible, for continuing education, service, and research; and that provides for training in effective supervisory techniques.

H. A continuing process. Mutual and simultaneous adjustments will have to be made by librarians/archivists, supervisors and administrators. The three groups are vitally interdependent. Librarians/archivists must assess and value their obligations to their profession; supervisors must reflect by their excellence the important effect they have on the careers of the staff; and administrators, both library and University, must support the librarians/archivists financially and professionally and insure that the process of change is given time to mature and move forward as smoothly as possible on all fronts.