

# Counselor Librarianship at U.I.C.

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THE Chicago Undergraduate Division of the University of Illinois,<sup>1</sup> founded in 1946, now has a student body of nearly 4,000, and a faculty of about 300. The curricula consist of parts of the programs offered by the U. of I. Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Commerce and Business Administration, Engineering Sciences, Education, and Fine Arts. Since thousands of Chicago students cannot afford to go away from home, or pay the tuition rates of the private Chicago colleges, a special bi-partisan commission of the Illinois Legislature is studying the possibilities of moving the school from its temporary, rented quarters on municipally-owned Navy Pier to a suitable new campus.

Administratively, the "U.I.C." Library is part of the University of Illinois Library system, and its Librarian reports to the Director of Libraries at Urbana. The Library possesses nearly 68,000 volumes (including 6,000 reference books), subscribes to 600 periodicals, maintains 24 drawers of vertical file pamphlets, and has a full-time staff of twenty-six, including twelve professional librarians. Its quarters include a Reserve Book Station (75 seats), a Main Reading Room (673 seats), and a Fine Arts Reading Room (40 seats) which is intended as the prototype of an eventual series of perhaps eight subject divisional reading rooms.

The internal departments include *Acquisitions* (books only), *Catalog* (books and non-periodical serials), *Serials* (acquiring all

serials, fully processing periodicals, and participating in reading room activities), *Circulation*, and what is thought to be a new type of college library department, the *Department of Library Instruction and Advice-ment*.<sup>2</sup> It is with this latter unit, staffed by Counselor Librarians instead of Reference Librarians, that this paper will deal.

## FACTORS LEADING TO NEW DEPARTMENT

Four factors led to the organization of this department in 1951: general education,<sup>3</sup> library instruction,<sup>4</sup> limitations of the reference approach, and the "student personnel point of view."<sup>5</sup>

U.I.C.'s 1949 statement of *general education* objectives stressed helping the student "learn to think," and stimulating "the student's intellectual curiosity." It also went on to emphasize the personal development of each student as a citizen and as a person. Such objectives called for a more highly "student-centered" type of library service than could then be provided. *Library instruction* was basic to implementation of

<sup>2</sup> Maxfield, D. K., *A Proposal for a New Type of College Library Department* (U.I.C. Library Information Circular, No. 117, May 21, 1951).

<sup>3</sup> Harvard University, *General Education in a Free Society*. Cambridge, Mass., 1945. The *Journal of General Education* commenced publication in 1946.

<sup>4</sup> The importance of library instruction has been well expressed by Lowell A. Martin, then of the Columbia University School of Library Service, in an unpublished proposal dated January 1952: "Ability to locate needed information and to use organized libraries effectively is one of the marks of the educated man. This ability enables him to put his learning to work, whether as a leader in government or business, a citizen in his community, or simply as a mature individual in his own home. Skill in using printed and similar resources becomes increasingly important as the body of recorded knowledge expands . . . without it [the adult] can only wait for what the most convenient means of communication place before him. It is not too much to claim that competence to get at recorded knowledge as needed helps the adult to free himself from mass control and to realize his potentialities as an individual."

<sup>5</sup> Williamson, E. G., et al., *The Student Personnel Point of View*. Washington, D.C., American Council on Education, 1949. Wrenn, C. G., *Student Personnel Work in College, with Emphasis on Counseling and Group Experiences*. N.Y., Ronald, 1951.

<sup>1</sup> Locally known as "U.I.C.," an unofficial designation sponsored by the weekly student newspaper.

these objectives, in addition to all the usual college library objectives, but the U.I.C. library found that without administrative arrangements specifically designed to carry this load, its new educational obligations could not be adequately met.

The Library's conclusions about possible *limitations of the reference approach* for undergraduate students were much less clear-cut. It was suggested, however, that conventional reference work does not always place quite so much emphasis upon the library patron *as an individual person* as it does upon library materials and bibliographic techniques. The pre-occupation with fact-finding sometimes found in public libraries, and the organization for specialized research essential to university conditions, may have unduly affected librarianship at the college level. College librarians perhaps should give more careful attention to the individual needs of their undergraduate patrons. It was believed that suitable collaboration with the U.I.C. Student Counseling Bureau, the best local exponent of the *student personnel point of view*, might open up new dimensions for library service.

The Student Counseling Bureau consists of a core of nine full-time clinical psychologists who have post-graduate training in the student personnel field, and a staff of twelve or more part-time counselors selected from the teaching faculties. These latter individuals are developed for counseling roles by means of carefully planned in-service training sessions<sup>6</sup> continually in progress in the Bureau, and they routinely refer to the clinical counselors all student cases which are beyond their ability to handle. The Bureau's testing section gives a wide variety of objective psychological tests which are utilized by all counselors.

The Student Counseling Bureau's work

<sup>6</sup> Gilbert, W. M., "Training Faculty Counselors at the University of Illinois" (In: Williamson, E. G., ed., *Trends in Student Personnel Work*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1949, p. 301-309). (Gilbert's article deals with the program on the Urbana campus, from which the U.I.C. program has partially evolved.)

covers not only the areas of educational planning and vocational guidance, but social-emotional-personal problems, reading efficiency and study skills. The counselors, whether professional or locally-trained, help students to clarify, redefine and specify their needs; to gain needed insights, information and self-understanding; as well as to develop suitably objective attitudes toward themselves, their fellows, and their difficulties. In addition to personal interviews,<sup>7</sup> group discussion techniques are often used. With channels of communication set up with all U.I.C. departments, the Counseling Bureau also carries on an extensive program of referral of students for specialized help of various kinds.

#### RECRUITMENT AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Setting up of the new department began with an increase of the salary level and a special recruitment program. Appointed were three, and later four, seasoned librarians who considered librarianship to be a positive educational force, and who were believed to have: enthusiastic interest in young people and their personal development, deep knowledge of books and other library materials, important reference and library instruction experience, special qualifications for classroom teaching and group discussion leadership, in addition to mature, out-going, friendly personalities. Because it was important that these individuals be acceptable to the Bureau as potential faculty counselors, senior Bureau members assisted in the interviewing process. An expert clerk-typist was also selected for the Department, and several part-time student assistants were provided.

The new professional staff members received the faculty titles of Instructor or Assistant Professor of Library Science in accordance with regular University of Illinois policy,<sup>8</sup> since they were to perform class-

<sup>7</sup> Erickson, C. E., *The Counseling Interview*. N.Y., Prentice-Hall, 1950.

<sup>8</sup> Downs, R. B., "Academic Status for University

room teaching as part of library instruction. Their library titles of "Counselor Librarian" were earned by participation in the in-service training program of the Bureau, and they fully qualified as part-time faculty counselors by the end of their first year of service, although their training still continues.

The in-service program is the cornerstone upon which counselor librarianship is built and must be properly discussed. It is first necessary, however, to indicate in more detail what constitutes counseling, lest some readers say: "We have *always* had 'counselor librarians' at *our* library." Counseling is a process, usually involving personal interviews, concerned primarily with attitudes—attitudes which motivate thinking and learning and make them possible. Successful counseling leads to changes within the counsellee that enable him to be more self-responsible, to make *for himself* wise decisions regarding his own life, and to extricate *himself* from any immediate difficulties. Counseling is not mere advice-giving, guidance, or imparting of information, although the effective development of all these elements is often completely essential to its success. At its best, it is apt to be a collaborative activity, since the counselor attempts to place much more personal responsibility for the making of decisions directly upon the counsellee than a teacher or adviser is likely to do.<sup>9</sup>

Although the word is often used loosely by the layman, "counseling" is not a particularly easy process, nor can it be carried on by just anyone. It represents a highly technical professional specialty in the area of personnel work within the larger field of applied psychology. It draws upon all the

scientific knowledge of the past 100 years about how individual persons and groups of people differ, and about how their minds and emotions work under varying circumstances. Counseling involves, moreover, the selective and expert use of a large number of specialized tools and techniques that have been developed and tested through long years of laboratory experiment and clinical experience.

The in-service training program, though capsulized, is thus not a simple or hasty proposition. It begins with reading and group discussion covering such areas as: the student personnel point of view; human nature and needs—especially undergraduate human nature and needs—in specific individual and group situations; the developmental approach to student problems; problem identification and problem solving; similarities and differences between teaching, counseling and advisement; varieties of techniques in individual counseling and advisement interviews; group guidance and group discussion leadership; reading efficiency and study skills; counseling and guidance records, their use, and their interpretation; the kinds, uses, and limitations of tests and test results; technical information sources; referral procedures; referral agencies; and follow-up methods. Next come observation interviews, mock counseling situations staged with other counselors and, finally, supervised experience in handling a small part of the regular caseload of the Student Counseling Bureau. Tape recording devices are used to insure that maximum learning value is received from group discussion of completed interviews. Further reading is, of course, continually required.

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AND ADVISEMENT

Concurrently with commencement of in-service training, the Counselor Librarians set about organizing the new department under the direction of a Chief Counselor

Librarians—a New Approach," *College and Research Libraries* 7: 6-9, 26, Jan. 1946.

<sup>9</sup> Blum, M. L. and Balinsky, Benjamin, *Counseling and Psychology: Vocational Psychology and its Relation to Educational and Personal Counseling*. N.Y., Prentice-Hall, 1951. Brayfield, A. H., ed., *Readings in Modern Methods of Counseling*. N.Y., Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950. Hahn, M. E. and MacLean, M. S., *General Clinical Counseling in Educational Institutions*. N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1950. Tyler, L. E., *The Work of the Counselor*. N.Y., Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953. Williamson, E. G., *How to Counsel Students*. N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1939.

Librarian, also in training. Within six weeks very full operation was under way, and the pace has been steadily accelerating ever since. As the Department's name was intended to imply, student instruction in the use of the library is perhaps the major function, at least for several months each year. The Department's other work includes operation of the Advisory Information Desk, counseling, liaison activities, and "house-keeping."

*Advisory Information Desk* activities include reference work, readers' advisory services, and assistance toward educational, vocational and social-emotional-personal counseling, as well as the library instruction questions and conferences described in a later paragraph.

*Reference work* is second only to library instruction in the total volume of the Department's activity, and some 4,989 "search" and "information" reference questions were recorded in 1952/53. It is believed, however, that the answering of reference inquiries and provision of assistance toward the solution of bibliographical problems is now being done in a manner more commensurate with student personnel philosophy and methods. Thanks to the in-service training program, greater interviewing finesse is possible, while the approaches tried with confused students are more gradual, and the amounts of time spent with each student are, on the average, larger than in the past. More effective effort is also being made to encourage students to, and show them how to, think through their reference problems and formulate their questions more suitably before going off on long, involved searches.

*Assistance toward counseling* plays a small part statistically, but is distinctly time-consuming, so that it is no insignificant aspect of the program. Sometimes it may include elementary "bibliotherapy" with special counselees referred to the Library

by the Counseling Bureau. More frequently, it consists in helping students who apply directly to the Library for information and assistance from the available book, periodical and pamphlet literature in: general and applied psychology; self-understanding and personal adjustment; reading techniques and study methods; educational planning, including choice of curricula, colleges or professional schools; occupations, vocational guidance and the market for college-trained personnel. *Readers' advisory services* beyond such help are not lacking at the Advisory Information Desk, but cannot be carried on at U.I.C. to the extent which the general education program obviously requires, until more Counselor Librarian staff is available.

The Advisory Information Desk is U.I.C.'s successor to its former Reference Desk. This change of name, however, does not imply that reference work and other conventional library activities have been curtailed. By making reference service, readers' advisory assistance and library instruction part of the broader areas of general education, applied psychology, student personnel work and reading and study skills, the significance of the usual library services has probably been enhanced.

At this renamed desk the student can expect to find a skilled librarian, an effective teacher, and an efficient counselor, so that he may more readily define his problems—educational, personal or bibliographical—and begin to deal with them more effectively. When the inquirer is met as a unique individual, rather than as a mere consumer of bibliographical materials and techniques, his question may involve unexpected discoveries: a faulty reading or study habit, perhaps, or some unfortunate emotional block. Information relating, for instance, to educational planning and career choice frequently has but theoretical significance except in the light of the differing

interests, goals, problems, backgrounds and abilities of each individual student. By knowing when to send students to the Counseling Bureau or other agency, and by becoming part of the U.I.C.'s referral program, the Library believes that it has significantly extended its student usefulness.<sup>10</sup>

*Library instruction* began on a smaller scale before 1951, and has been greatly expanded by the Counselor Librarians, who sometimes have teaching help from other professional library staff members. With support of the English Department and the Associate Dean of the U.I.C. College of Liberal Arts, library knowledge and library skills are now part of the freshman rhetoric requirements. Since all U. of I. students—regardless of college—must take Rhetoric 101 and 102, association of library instruction with these two courses insures complete coverage of each freshman class. There were 80 to 90 sections (20 to 25 students each) of rhetoric each semester in 1952/53, so that the library instruction program was equivalent to 7.4 full-time rhetoric sections, or almost equal to the workload of two full-time rhetoric instructors.

Library instruction begins in orientation week on a voluntary basis with brief welcoming talks followed by tours of the library. Appropriate films are sometimes shown. Chief stress is placed upon physical arrangements, circulation procedures, advisory information services, and the encouragement of favorable attitudes toward the Library as an integral part of college life. In Rhetoric 101, a single class period is devoted to the Library, and librarians take full responsibility for that day's activity in each of the many sections. In classrooms full of live-wire students a question and answer approach is used, but formal lecturing is employed, whenever appropriate. The

<sup>10</sup> Scott, W. H. O., "Counselor Librarianship," *Illinois Library Association Record* 7: 3-8, Sept. 1953.

ground covered includes reading and the world of books and journals, parts of books, the card catalog, and the *Readers' Guide*.

In Rhetoric 102, three class periods are devoted to matters of efficient library utilization, previous to a term paper assignment. Using discussion and/or lecture techniques, the library instructors discuss additional periodicals and periodical indexes; stress the variety, usefulness, form characteristics and subject inter-relationships of selected standard reference books; and illustrate with personalized examples many of the steps to be taken in handling various types of library materials in quantity and in sequence for a "library search." In line with the general education objectives, considerable attention is given to bibliographical thought processes.

The Counselor Librarians have revised the Library's 50-page library instruction textbook,<sup>11</sup> which is "required reading" for both Rhetoric 101 and 102, and sold through the local University Bookstore. This booklet is intended to embody the student personnel and general education viewpoints, and to be of permanent reference value to all U.I.C. students. The textbook and classroom aspects of the program are driven home by carefully-prepared "laboratory" exercises requiring bibliographical thinking and manipulation in the reading room. These mimeographed problem sheets are graded exactly like any other written work in rhetoric. Wear and tear on individual books, and copying of each other's papers by the students, is minimized by the preparation of several versions of each exercise. Beat-up "library instruction" copies of key reference titles are temporarily substituted for the Library's working volumes.

In addition to the classroom group advisement in library resources and skills,

<sup>11</sup> Illinois. University. Chicago Undergraduate Division. Library. *U.I.C. Undergraduate Library Handbook and Library Instruction Textbook*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1952. (U.I.C. Library Information Circular, No. 126.)

individual guidance in these matters is constantly available at the Advisory Information Desk. Not only were 2,193 "library instruction questions," counted separately from "reference questions," answered in 1952/53, but some 1,289 voluntary "library instruction conferences" were held with individual students. These interview sessions dealt with difficulties experienced in connection with normal library use or in connection with the instructional exercises, and frequently involved preliminary planning and follow-up assistance related to individual projects—including term papers. The student counseling viewpoints and techniques inculcated by in-service training thus were put to good use, since these conferences sometimes proved to be fruitful sources for assistance toward educational, personal or vocational counseling, and on occasion lead to referrals to various members of the faculty, the Counseling Bureau, or elsewhere.

To keep their *counseling* proficiency sharp, all Counselor Librarians are scheduled for a small amount of participation each week in the general faculty counseling program. Not infrequently, one of these librarians will suggest to a student given preliminary assistance in the reading room, that he come at a specified time to see him in the quarters of the Bureau, where conditions are more conducive to conversation and full utilization of counseling tools. The *liaison activities* involve many things in the field of public relations, and various personal contacts with members of U.I.C. curricular departments, student organizations, and co-curricular services. "*House-keeping*" includes much time-consuming book selection, and maintenance of the special pamphlet files which—in all student personnel fields—are probably outstanding in the Chicago area.

Some of the contributions of the new library department are difficult to measure.

Certain trends, however, seem to be apparent in the response of the student body *post hoc*. Circulation of books of all kinds has increased far out of proportion to the acquisition rate, and even increased in certain recent years when U.I.C. enrollment was dropping. Rising use of library materials in the reading rooms has necessitated employment of more shelving assistants. The number of "elementary" reference questions has gone down in the past four years. Students with library self-confidence and ability to "think bibliographically" increasingly seem to be exhausting routine sources on their own before seeking help. The total number of reference questions, however, increased markedly in 1952/53.<sup>12</sup>

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There are six items of unfinished departmental business:

- (1) The present four counselor librarians work under pressure because of heavy volume. More professional and clerical help should be provided as soon as feasible.
- (2) The large amounts of personal attention implied in counseling and assistance toward counseling not only require more floor space, but floor space specifically adapted to such activities. The Department's quarters were originally laid out for a reference program, and various makeshift arrangements in the present reading room are inconvenient. Any future building plans must suitably consider the new type of library service program.
- (3) Useful—though experimental—record forms are currently being used for certain aspects of library counseling interviews. An improved system of case history records comparable to—but appropriately different from—those kept by the Student Counseling Bureau must be developed.
- (4) Testing programs should be devised, with the collaboration of the Bureau,

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<sup>12</sup> See the Library's various *Annual Reports*.

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so that both library knowledge and library skills—before as well as after library instruction—can be more effectively studied in relation to the general institutional program and in relation to all library activities.

- (5) It is intended that, when the projected series of divisional reading rooms at last comes into being, advanced library instruction will be considered for certain subject fields. The present Fine Arts Librarian, however, has opportunities even now to discuss fine arts library materials and bibliographic techniques at occasional sessions of architecture and art classes.
- (6) When graduate curricula are finally added to the U.I.C., suitable expansions of the present Department of Library Instruction and Advisement can be readily made. Specialized reference librarians, research bibliographers, etc., can be added without difficulty, and without disorganizing the undergraduate program. (It should be emphasized that the current research and development needs of the present U.I.C. faculty are in no way being slighted.)

## CONCLUSION

In 1952, a well-known library author stated that the college librarian can "also be a valued member of the guidance and counseling staff" of the institution to which he belongs. This authority, however, did not go on to outline any specific arrange-

ments whereby a college library could participate effectively in a fully developed counseling and advisement program.<sup>13</sup> The U.I.C.'s Department of Library Instruction and Advisement, set up in 1951, provides definite machinery whereby librarians become recognized members of the local counseling staff. Since many other institutions, including high schools, junior colleges, four-year colleges, and universities have similar student personnel programs, Counselor Librarianship of the U.I.C. type possibly could be considered elsewhere. Public librarians, special librarians, library associations, and library schools also could consider using selected viewpoints and experience from the fields of counseling, personnel work, and applied psychology. Reader-service programs of all kinds might benefit significantly from such "cross fertilization."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter XV entitled *The Library: An Opportunity* in: Johnson, B. L., *General Education in Action* (Washington, D.C., American Council on Education, 1952) p. 328-341. A shortened version appears in *College and Research Libraries* 13: 126-130, April 1952. (It is perhaps unfortunate that Johnson aimed this article specifically at the junior college library, since the principles he outlines are important for any academic library.)

<sup>\*</sup> For a more detailed treatment of the U.I.C. program with extensive discussion of counseling procedures, see Mr. Maxfield's *Counselor Librarianship: A New Departure*, which is *Occasional Paper, No. 38 (March 1954)* of the University of Illinois Library School. Free copies are available to those who write to Urbana, Illinois.

## Seventh Edition Supplement

ALA has announced the publication of *Guide to Reference Books: 7th Edition Supplement 1950-1952*, by Constance M. Winchell and Olive A. Johnson. (Chicago, ALA, 1954. 140p.)

This supplement describes approximately 1000 useful reference works in all fields, published between 1950 and June 1953. It includes, in addition, a few earlier titles omitted from the 7th edition. The *Supplement* brings up-to-date the indispensable *Guide to Reference Books*, a basic work for scholars, reference workers, and library school students. While this work is proudly issued by ALA, it might be said to add to the bicentennial laurels of Columbia University.

Miss Winchell's semi-annual series on "Selected Reference Books" appears regularly in the January and July issues of *C&RL*.