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1991

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Opening a Window of Opportunity: The Library Staff as a Meaningful and Integrated Part of the Law School Community*

Michael J. Slinger**

Advances in information technology and changing patterns of faculty research interest have created windows of opportunity for academic law library staffs to integrate their services and activities more fully into the law school community. Professor Slinger discusses how to take advantage of these opportunities, with examples from a successful program at the Notre Dame Law School Library.

[The law library] is more than a storehouse of books, more than a study hall, more than archives. It is above all the laboratory, the workshop *par excellence* of the professors and students of the law school.

—Guy Tanguay¹

Unless the [law] librarian has an opportunity to participate fully in the educational enterprise, he will be less capable of rendering the quality of service required.

—V.F. Massman²

The best compliment a librarian can ever receive from your faculty or student body is, "Our library staff makes us a better school."

—Warren Rosmarin³

In the decade of the 1990s, law librarians appear to be in an excellent position to redefine the parameters of their responsibilities and even their

* © Michael J. Slinger, 1991. This is an edited version of a winning entry in the 1990 AALL Call for Papers Competition. The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their help with this project: Chevelle Hillman and Patricia Jardim for secretarial assistance; Carmela Kinslow, Kenneth Kinslow, and Becky Carlton for helping to obtain necessary books and articles; Cheryl Blaney Slinger and Frank Houdek for helpful advice and encouragement; and, most especially, Roger F. Jacobs, who taught me that a law library staff can become an integrated part of a law school community.

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1. Tanguay, *The Case for the Special Status of the University Law Library*, 66 LAW LIBR. J. 12, 15 (1973).

2. V. MASSMAN, *FACULTY STATUS FOR LIBRARIANS* 209 (1972).

3. Remarks by Warren Rosmarin, Graylyn Conference on Effective Teaching of Legal Research in a Technological Environment, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Nov. 2-5, 1989.

image.⁴ This is particularly true in the law school setting, where advances in technology, computerization, and global research interests are in most instances still in their formative stages.⁵ Perhaps never before have academic law librarians had such wide-open windows of opportunity to project themselves into leadership roles at their law schools.⁶

Changes in technology and growing interest in interdisciplinary research areas poise academic law librarians to take on leadership positions at their schools. Academic law library positions seem to be attracting more candidates who possess both law and library degrees.⁷ The law degree arguably has led law librarians to expect to participate more completely in the life of the law school. The presence of more law-trained librarians probably has also affected the ways in which the law faculty and student body think about the library staff, particularly concerning the librarians' status and potential to contribute to the law school's overall educational mission.⁸

The factors that have created a changing role for the academic law librarian also raise a number of important questions. Is it a good thing for law librarians to pursue the opportunity to become a more fully integrated part of the law school? If integration is a wise aspiration, how best can librarians work toward achieving this goal? What benefits might librarians gain through increased integration? What possible negative impacts might integration cause? Finally, if integration becomes the norm, what will become of those law librarians unwilling or unable to work toward integration?

The purpose of this article is to examine the opportunities and questions surrounding the integration of the law library staff into the life

4. "In the period between the bicentennial of the Revolution and the bicentennial of the Constitution, the pace of change in law librarianship has accelerated to such an extent that librarians are increasingly asking the big questions." Grossman, *Big Questions, Big Decisions Loom in Law Librarianship*, SYLLABUS, June/Sept. 1987, at 5, 5.

5. See *id.* (enumerating the new technological challenges faced by law librarians). See also Attanasio, *The Research Librarian in the Educational Mission of the Law School*, 81 LAW LIBR. J. 143, 144-45 (1989) (discussing law librarians' contributions to "increasingly interdisciplinary" legal scholarship).

6.

Librarians have been absorbing the changes of the past decade one-by-one; they have worked to develop the skills to master the changes; and at national conferences and other forums they have sought to identify trends and take advantage of the opportunities for cooperation offered by new technology. However, the time might be ripe to go beyond reacting to technology. The cumulative effect of recent changes may have reached a stage where it is now time to look at the long-range future and ask what the legal information universe should eventually look like.

Grossman, *supra* note 4.

7. This can be verified by scanning the *AALL Newsletter* placement advertisements.

8. For example, at Duke University School of Law, librarians with JDs have been given teaching responsibilities, which have resulted in faculty status.

of the law school. The article also discusses techniques which the library staff should consider implementing in working toward this goal, and examines the benefits and possible negative results that may arise from integration. Finally, a case history is presented, which recounts the efforts of law librarians at the University of Notre Dame to work toward integration within their law school community.

I. What is Meaningful Integration and Why Is It Desirable?

The concept of meaningful integration is defined as the recognition on the part of the law school community that the role played by the law librarians is integral and, indeed, indispensable to the educational mission of the law school.⁹ Meaningful integration manifests itself in institutions where the law school community recognizes that librarians are expert in a number of areas of interest to the law school community. The community, therefore, highly prizes and depends on the librarians for providing this expertise. When librarians are held in a high level of esteem, the community will be encouraged to include the librarians in roles heretofore limited almost exclusively to law professors.¹⁰ Acceptance by the community will result in the librarians enjoying increased responsibility, status, and acceptance within the law school.¹¹

The question of whether librarians should want meaningful integration at first blush seems to require a rousing, unequivocal, "Yes!" After all, doesn't everyone want to improve his or her status and be highly prized for the contributions they make to the mission of their employer? Some librarians, however, are reluctant to strive for changing their role if to do so would put them into the tenure track odyssey.¹² These librarians reason that tenure requirements would fundamentally change and even impede the character of their duties as librarians, while adding great and unwanted pressure to perform in areas, such as scholarship, in which they have no

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It takes a good librarian to build a good library, a good library pays off in cash dividends. The school with a good library can and does attract and keep a good faculty. Legal scholars will go to and stay at a school with a good library for less monetary compensation than will induce them to go or stay at a school with an inferior library. Good students are attracted to the school with a good library.

Bade, *Quo Vadimus?*, 2 J. LEGAL EDUC. 41, 51 (1949).

10. Examples might include invitations to participate in student academic competitions, formal teaching roles, and voting privileges at faculty meetings.

11. See, for example, the effect on the Notre Dame Law Library, *infra* page .

12. See, e.g., Brennan, *Do We Really Want to be "Professionals"?*, 21 AALL NEWSL. 93 (1989) (questioning whether law librarians should be concerned about scholarship, law degrees, and professional dress, and cautioning that librarians should be careful about having their professionalism judged by the standards of law school academia).

interest. In a nutshell, this argument is stated, "We are doing what we like to do right now, so who needs additional headaches?" Some academic librarians may be reluctant to attempt to work toward integration because the political situation at their institutions appears to be hostile to any increased role for librarians, and others (probably a small group) are either too frightened or too set in their ways to make the required efforts toward a more integrated role. All these concerns merit a considered response.

Integration does not necessarily have to lead to the tenure track, although in some cases that may be a possible and desired result. Librarianship is a dynamic, constantly changing profession; changes that lead to positive results should be embraced rather than feared. In this age of rapidly changing technology and sophisticated interdisciplinary research, law schools will need librarians who are able to expand their roles. Librarians must be prepared to pave the way so their faculty and students can compete successfully with students and faculty at other schools who will be ready to exploit these advances for their own benefit. Increases in status, reputation, and other benefits that can arise from an increasingly integrated role can, and often do, accrue in varying degrees. In other words, without necessitating that the librarians' final goal require anything close to tenure obligations, many gains made through integration will yield excellent results for all concerned.

Librarians who believe they face resistance to expanding their role or status can best deal with these apprehensions by planning to take actions that have the potential to create supporters from within the law school community. An excellent way to build support is to develop new services which are so well received by patrons that they work to elevate the image of librarians in the eyes of the persons in power. Librarians must realize that only in the rarest of instances will they be given enhanced status and other benefits strictly from altruism. The staff should plan to earn power and improve the esteem in which they are held by taking affirmative actions designed to demonstrate their value and indispensability to the law school.¹³

Perhaps the arguments in favor of integration will convince librarians not to shy away from taking an increasingly dynamic role. Embracing opportunities that present themselves may improve librarians' status and sense of accomplishment and foster a rebirth in enthusiasm for their jobs. Those who refuse to meet the needs of the law school and do not provide the level of support to faculty that is available at other schools run the risk of being replaced sooner or later.

13. Advice on how librarians can work toward earning power and improving the esteem in which they are held by the law school community is offered later in this article.

II. Factors in Opposition to a More Integrated Role for Librarians

Without question, a number of historical barriers stand in the way of academic law librarians seeking a more integrated role. A reading of the literature makes it clear that law librarians were not part of the equation during the early days of legal education.¹⁴ Law school libraries had rudimentary collections, and their care and support was not much thought about. When law librarians finally appeared on the scene, many tended to be hired for their willingness to accept low wages, rather than for their competency.¹⁵ From those times to the present, law librarians have struggled to find their niche in legal education. Despite considerable progress at many schools, the struggle continues.¹⁶

In a 1976 panel discussion, Stanley Irvine pointed out that at least some of the problems faced by law librarians in determining their place in the law school community were caused by their own confusion:

What am I? What is a librarian? What do I do? How do I relate?

I think that those of us who are law librarians have a special consideration in this area because we are part of the legal process. Many of us are lawyers ourselves, but sometimes we are not exactly sure where we fit, it is very difficult for us to tell the managing partner of a law firm or the dean of a law school how we ought to fit.¹⁷

In addition to this confusion, librarians often must deal with an elitism that places law professors at the top of the pecking order and denigrates the contributions of others, including librarians.¹⁸ It would not be

14. See, e.g., Bade, *supra* note 9, at 41 (detailing the struggles of law librarians to find acceptance in law schools: "Almost forty years after the Association [AALS] came into being, twenty-three schools voted against having even a part-time librarian.").

15.

One is left with a feeling that our deans and faculties have considered the requirement for a library as purely technical, and that anyone who knows the alphabet and can count at least to three hundred is qualified to be a law librarian. Anything will do provided it is cheap.

Id. at 44.

16. A very recent example that illustrates this point is provided by the Association of American Law Schools' "McCarthy Report," which included recommendations that law library directors need not have faculty status and that librarians need not be included on inspection teams. AALS REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERSHIP OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS 34, 35 (1989) (comment to Bylaw § 6-10).

17. *The Condition of the Law Librarian in 1976*, 69 LAW LIBR. J. 626, 633 (1976) (comments of Stanley G. Irvine).

18. For example, Bailey and Dee, in 1974, related the following response as a representative comment to the question, "Do you have faculty status and do you have or are you working toward tenure?"

When I was employed, I received the official rank of Assistant Professor. However, our present Dean does not believe in the faculty status of the Law Librarian, hence I have never been invited to attend faculty meetings, etc. My dean by his conduct evidences his regard of the law librarian as a glorified clerk.

Bailey & Dee, *Law School Libraries: Survey Relating to Autonomy and Faculty Status*, 67 LAW LIBR. J. 3, 19 (1974).

surprising to find that this attitude severely inhibits the motivation of librarians to undertake initiatives.

Academic law librarians in many institutions must also deal with an image of passivity,¹⁹ which is reinforced whenever librarians sit back and wait for patrons to decide how they can be helped, rather than initiate methods that could fill unspoken needs.²⁰

Insufficient resources are another serious impediment to academic law librarians seeking to assume a more integrated role. If the staff is not large enough to take on additional challenges, it will be difficult to take the steps necessary to further inculcate librarians into the life of the law school. Wise librarians operate under the credo that they will not bite off more than they can chew. However, even in situations where the library is understaffed, it may be possible to restructure services in ways that enhance the staff's reputation. In this way a chain reaction may be initiated: a more satisfied law school community can lead to more community support for increased staffing, which in turn will encourage more librarian efforts in the future.

Finally, librarians must unleash the vision, courage, and "can-do" spirit necessary to discover where their talents can best fit into the needs of the law school, and then go forward with solutions designed to meet those needs. To build the proper attitude for success, librarians must keep in mind that by meeting the law school's needs, they also increase the positive reputation of the law library staff.

Can integration efforts succeed even if a library staff is confronted by obstacles? The answer, quite often, is yes. In most institutions, even a small window of opportunity can allow law librarians to integrate themselves into their law schools. Librarians owe it to themselves and to the community they serve to exploit those opportunities.

III. The Law Librarian's Role in the Law School's Educational Mission

The law library staff is well on its way to meaningful integration if the following questions can be answered in the affirmative:

1. Is the law library seen as an active, dynamic, forward-looking place, staffed by innovators and problem-solvers, rather than by passive receptors who appear to be limited by a lack of imagination?

19. "The severe little lady who tells her patrons to keep their voices low must be replaced by a dynamic, knowledgeable person dedicated to a career of unlocking the wealth of information stored in books for those who seek it." *The Law Librarian—What Manner of Creature*, 56 LAW LIBR. J. 8, 11 (1963) (remarks of Earl Borgeson).

20. Notre Dame's law librarians initiated a process to interview each law faculty member individually. They discovered that although faculty members were eager to be helped, most did not know what services librarians could provide for them.

2. Do the law library and its staff have a reputation for meeting important needs that no other segment of the law school community can or will meet?
3. Is the library staff perceived as striving constantly to determine the needs of their constituents through active communication and dialogue?
4. Are the librarians seen as actively interested in the educational mission of the law school, functioning as true partners who possess and contribute talents that the law school could not do without?
5. Does the law school community believe that its law librarians are among the very best in their field, worth keeping happy through good treatment and benefits, and worthy of counteroffers should other schools try to lure them away?

If the library staff does not presently have the reputation suggested by affirmative responses to these questions, they should consider what steps could be taken to convince the law school community to see them in this light.

IV. Contributing to the Law School While Achieving Meaningful Integration

For many businesses, the key to success is as often tied to the customers' perception of the competency and accessibility of the staff as it is to the quality of the proffered product.²¹ A successful business meets needs that its customers do not have the time or expertise to satisfy on their own: the more unique or difficult the need, the more valuable are those who can satisfy it. This holds true in law schools as well: the librarians' rate of success is a direct result of the esteem in which they are held by the rest of the law school community.²² Librarians can affect the community's perception of their contributions if they take steps to ensure that they are seen as an effective, vibrant part of the community. This can be accomplished by staking out those law school needs that translate well to library services and the librarians' talents. The desired objective is for the

21. The most popular Italian restaurant in South Bend, Indiana, is not considered to have the best food, yet it consistently turns away business because of its friendly and efficient service. Similarly, WESTLAW and LEXIS both have devoted considerable resources to the development of highly competent and frequently available telephone reference departments, which undoubtedly add to their patrons' perceptions of the usefulness of the databases.

22. "Somewhere along the line the library is not valuable enough, *has not made itself valuable enough*, to the law school and university communities to elicit the kind and amount of support it needs and wants from these groups." Gwynn, *Marketing the Law School Library*, 71 LAW LIBR. J. 234, 234 (1978).

staff to develop prominent and unique roles that enhance their value to the law school's educational mission.

Projecting an image of competency cannot be accomplished overnight. It is demonstrated through the quality of day-to-day library services performed in a positive, helpful manner. Similarly, staking out unique areas of law school interest requires more than a hale and hearty "let's do it." If librarians are to carve out important areas in which to contribute, they must (1) identify services that the community will truly recognize as valuable, and (2) develop the expertise to do an excellent job in the new area without adversely affecting other duties.

It is said that the three key ingredients in opening a successful restaurant are location, location, location.²³ Similarly, three key ingredients that affect the law school community's perception of its library staff are attitude, attitude, attitude. The library staff should add another indispensable ingredient to the recipe of success—careful planning. Attitude and planning are the key elements in boosting the library's reputation, and will work most effectively if the library staff will take the following steps.

A. *Sell Library Services*

If librarians are to shed their passive reputation, they cannot sit back and wait for the community to recognize the staff's potential brilliance.²⁴ Librarians must develop effective marketing techniques to convince their community of the library staff's indispensable value. Selling our own value has been a difficult, and even distasteful, undertaking for some librarians.²⁵ Not to do so, however, will almost certainly *not* lead toward the goal of integration.²⁶

23. This popular axiom has been claimed by numerous professions, but its originator has been lost to history. However, it was interesting to note that a NEXIS search revealed that the following businesses have claimed it: restaurants, realtors, cement producers, theaters, airlines, video stores, and even basketball recruiters.

24. "[S]elling yourself as professionals doesn't mean just walking in and saying, 'Here I am, a professional law librarian. I am fully equipped and ready to go.' It means competence and it means working harder as part of the example you set." *The Condition of the Law Librarian in 1976*, *supra* note 17, at 640 (remarks of Stanley G. Irvine).

25. Stanley Irvine made this point clearly and succinctly: "I think librarians have done the lousiest job in the world of selling themselves. . . ." *Id.* at 635.

26.

If we are going to pussycat around about our function and our value, then we are going to find that people will think we are expendable. What we have to do is to sell our employers on the fact that we are not expendable, that the kind of services we provide are the kind of services that very few other people can duplicate.

Id. (remarks of Stanley Irvine).

How should librarians successfully market themselves? One can proceed from the assumption that most people want to be helped to do things as easily and effectively as possible, even when they do not ask for help directly. If the willingness to be helped is present, three things must be done to maximize the librarian's effectiveness: (1) let people know what the library staff is willing to do to help them; (2) convince the patrons that the staff will do an outstanding job in providing services; and (3) always project an attitude that shows the staff is enthusiastic about providing services and welcomes the opportunity to be of assistance. If patrons have a good idea of what assistance to expect, and if librarians have convinced patrons that they truly want to be of service, patrons will surely be less hesitant to seek help. On the other hand, when library services are not well defined, many patrons will be reluctant to ask for help, believing they may be stepping over the boundary of what the staff is willing to do, afraid of appearing too pushy, or concerned about how little they know about library service. To avoid this unfortunate (and all-too-common) patron reticence, the library staff must develop ways to educate the community regarding the services available, through the use of library guides, newsletters, bulletin boards (electronic as well as traditional), posters, class presentations and announcements, open houses and orientations, memos, questionnaires, and interviews (which include questions designed to provide built-in opportunities for describing services). The library staff should also take advantage of opportunities for informal discussions with patrons by slipping information about library services into the conversation, where appropriate.

Which techniques will be most effective is in large part a characteristic of the uniqueness and idiosyncracies of a particular law school. In most schools, a variety of techniques will need to be tried before a successful combination is discovered. The staff should be prepared to retain those that seem to work best and discard the rest.

B. Understand Patron Needs

If a marketing plan is to be successful, the staff must have a thorough understanding of its audience's needs, then plan how best to respond to those needs. Law librarians should have an ear tuned to the development of new services in other libraries and be able to suggest many potentially useful services in their own school. Each law school has its own unique character and needs, however, and the best way to ensure that those needs are being met is to maintain an ongoing dialogue with patrons. The reason for this approach was articulated by M. Beth Gwynn in a 1978 *Law Library Journal* article:

A marketing oriented law school library . . . concentrates its energies and resources on satisfying the research and information needs of its

present users and those it wants to attract. Its objective is not based on a predetermined notion of what particular library product or service is needed or is "best" for its users. The library is committed to finding out from its users what their information and research needs are and then tailoring its products and services to meet those needs.²⁷

Techniques that might be used to solicit patron input to help determine the needs and interests of the law school community include interviews and surveys, open houses and forums, question-and-answer columns in a newsletter, and suggestion boxes. The staff should also take advantage of opportunities presented by informal conversations with patrons. The best suggestions and interchanges will likely come from conversations where the patrons feel comfortable; therefore, the entire library staff should keep dialogues with patrons nondefensive, free-flowing, and candid. The "proper attitude" can be difficult to project consistently; the staff may sometimes feel harried because of day-to-day work demands; some patrons may be rude or abrupt. Staff members must realize, however, that the library is committed to a policy of encouraging dialogue with its patrons, and that goodwill toward the library can be severely damaged if even a single staff member appears to be unreceptive. To encourage the staff to develop the desired attitudes, it may be useful to engage in some communication skills or sensitivity training. Some institutions have experts on campus to assist in making this training useful.

When listening to patrons' comments, the most important things are to appear interested, respectful, and nondefensive, and to make certain that within a reasonable time an appropriate staff member offers a response to every question. The staff should not be obligated to do anything that is not in the best interest of the library. If the "active listening" program is to be successful, however, patrons must be confident that their requests or suggestions will be considered seriously. If this can be accomplished, the staff will find many patrons willing to provide feedback to help the library uncover important patron needs and concerns. In addition, an atmosphere of goodwill and a sense of shared purpose will be created, which will go a long way towards helping the staff become more integrated into the law school community.

C. Assume New Responsibilities

A person's perceived or actual value to an institution is tied to the belief that the person can do something important for his or her colleagues

27. Gwynn, *supra* note 22, at 236. See also *Law School Libraries*, 58 LAW LIBR. J. 387, 401 (1965) ("Being responsive to the suggestions of library users often improves the service in some way not thought of by the staff or which at first glance seems an unnecessary innovation.") (remarks of Viola Bird).

and constituents better than anyone else. Just as the contracts teacher is respected at the law school for his or her mastery over that subject, librarians should be respected for, among other things, their unique ability to obtain research or teaching materials and other information needed by the members of the community. Although everyone has an assigned role to play, technological innovations and other unanticipated demands create gray areas in which the law school desperately needs someone to assume responsibility.

Law librarians must ask whether they can reasonably fill some of these emerging law school needs. One recent example is the development of the use of computer-assisted legal research (CALR) at the law school. When CALR appeared on the scene, it represented a completely new technology. At virtually every law school, librarians stepped in to assume responsibility for the mastery, care, and development of CALR. Nowhere was it preordained that librarians would become the law school CALR experts, but librarians showed a willingness to step into the breach and an enthusiasm for the product. Over time, they demonstrated their competency with this new technology to the entire law school community. Had librarians balked at assuming responsibility for CALR, the law schools would have turned elsewhere. Had law professors assumed this responsibility, or had a new group of CALR gurus been hired or developed by the law school, librarians would have lost a great opportunity to enhance their status and usefulness to the law school. If librarians' aggressive approach worked with CALR, there is strong reason to believe that a similar strategy will be successful in other areas.

Although one of the best ways to work toward further integration within the law school is to assume responsibilities important to the community, law librarians should not attempt to assume every task that no one else wants to do. Such an approach is tantamount to volunteering for overwork and failure; librarians should assume only those responsibilities that they can reasonably expect to accomplish. Accordingly, the staff should take charge of new tasks only where the staff resources, potential expertise, and time to do the job correctly are available. If the library staff lacks one or more of the needed ingredients for success, the library director must either convince the law school to provide the necessary resources or be prepared to argue strongly that the library should not take on the job. If influential segments of the community are pressing the library staff to take on a new responsibility without providing the necessary resources, the director must forcefully place the library's opposition on record. Then, if the staff is forced to undertake the job and fails, the director's well-stated objections should act as a measure of protection against any negative fallout against the library.

In deciding whether to assume new responsibilities, the library staff should always keep in mind that nothing can undo an excellent reputation faster than a current failure. This is particularly true if the failure occurs after the staff has affirmatively stated that it is willing to undertake a service that is important to the law school community.

To succeed when providing new services, the law library staff should attempt to stake out areas that are not only important to the community, but are reasonably related to librarians' interests and aptitudes. In undertaking new responsibilities, the staff must be careful to insure that their chief responsibilities are not neglected. If the librarians have the potential to do more, however, it is in everyone's best interest to investigate these new opportunities.

Which areas are ripe for law librarian involvement? One is exploring methods that add to librarians' teaching function. New teaching opportunities can include offering informal research refreshers to interested students, preparing sessions tailored to the needs and interests of the law reviews, offering guest presentations on research topics in substantive classes, and offering formal courses in legal research. Teaching is a particularly good integrating tool, because it is understood to be one of the fundamental missions of the law school and enhances the reputations of those who teach.²⁸

Librarians can also enhance their value by enlarging outreach services for patrons: initiating a photocopying service for faculty, preparing bibliographies, or supplementing patron research as experts in the use of research tools or as information gatherers. Initiating useful new services offers librarians a golden opportunity to further enhance their positive reputation within the law school.

Some librarians have enhanced their value by determining and meeting law school needs in the applications of new technology: computers, audiovisual services, CD and interactive disk technology, and telefacsimile applications.²⁹ Law librarians are also at the forefront in bringing automated systems into the library. If the value of these activities is readily apparent to individual patrons (for example, in developing an effective

28. "I believe [teaching] adds stature to the role of the law librarian, and the professional status of the staff. Further, establishing a rapport with students who too often have a negative stereotype of 'librarians.'" Bailey & Dee, *supra* note 18, at 20 (comment of survey respondent). Of course, not all law librarians agree that teaching, particularly teaching in "for credit" courses, is a proper exercise of the law librarian's time. "A law librarian is *not* a teaching professor and I don't think much of attempting to put a substantial foot in each camp." *Id.* at 21 (comment of survey respondent).

29. See, e.g., *How Law Libraries Are Coping with the Technological Revolution*, Wis. LAW., Jan. 1989, at 29 (S. Blair Kauffman describes effects of technology on the University of Wisconsin Law Library; Steven Barkan discusses its effects on Marquette University Law Library).

online catalog), the efforts and expertise of the law librarian will be appreciated. When the importance of the activities is not as readily apparent (such as a serial check-in system), however, the library staff should educate the patrons about how the new system will enhance the efficiency of library services.

V. Anticipating Future Needs

If a library is to be successful over a long period of time, serious efforts must be undertaken to anticipate future library needs and direction. Many authorities believe that effective planning is among the most important services the law library staff can provide.³⁰ Many articles and books provide guidance on both long- and short-range planning techniques.³¹ Planning not only is important in preparing for future library directions, but also illustrates the library staff's commitment to the continuing success of the law school.

Planning for future needs provides yet another indication that the library staff is an active participant in the law school, and further reduces the negative stereotype of the library as an entity that will play only a passive role in future law school developments.

VI. Communicating Library Goals to Patrons, Administration, and Library Staff

People are more likely to respond in positive ways when they understand why they are being asked to do something. Most individuals want to feel that they are part of the enterprise, that their role is important and appreciated, that what they are being asked to do will be an important contribution, and that they will benefit from the action undertaken. Whenever possible, the reasons for the library's actions should be explained to interested parties within the law school community: this boosts morale and helps the library accomplish its mission.³²

The law school administration must have a clear indication of the library's goals and its methods of reaching objectives. Patrons should

30. See, e.g., Falknor, *The Function of the Law School Librarian*, 30 LAW LIBR. J. 13, 14 (1937) ("Forecasting future needs and building against them constitute, together, I would expect, the greatest single service that the librarian can render to the faculty.").

31. See generally, e.g., J. SUTHERLAND, *TOWARDS A STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DECISION TECHNOLOGY* (1989); D. RIGGS, *STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR LIBRARY MANAGERS* (1984); Marke, *Planning Law Library as Legal Information Center*, N.Y.L.J., June 16, 1987, at 4; Marke, *What's New in Law Library Planning?*, N.Y.L.J., Apr. 19, 1988, at 4.

32. In many instances, it is premature for librarians to talk about goals and services, for example, where the library is not yet certain whether it will have the funding to begin a new service.

understand how specific library policies fit into an overall scheme to make the library more effective in meeting patron needs. Amazingly, in some libraries, the persons who make it all work—the library staff—are not kept informed of library goals. This neglect can lead to many problems, for a staff member who does not understand the library's goals cannot be relied upon to act in ways that support those goals, and the library's reputation breaks down each time a patron believes he or she has been dealt with in a less than satisfactory manner. As Gwynn noted: "Integrated marketing means that *all* of the library staff, not just the director or just the reader services staff, recognize that the actions they take have a profound effect on the library's ability to create, retain and satisfy its users."³³ Since success is tied to marketing efforts designed to enhance patron views of the library staff, the potential benefits from this approach are substantial.

The law library staff must understand how the library's goals fit into the law school's educational mission and why their jobs, attitudes, and day-to-day contact with patrons are critical factors in the overall success or failure of those goals. Staff members also must believe that their work is an important and appreciated contribution to the overall success of the law library and law school. They must feel that students and faculty are united with the library staff in a common educational purpose, and should be dissuaded from the notion that "we" (the library staff) are locked in a struggle against "them" (students and faculty). If staff members can be convinced of their value and place within the law school community, their positive attitude will be evident to the rest of the community; if the community feels good about the staff's efforts, they will be more inclined to embrace the staff as true partners in the law school enterprise.

VII. Benefits of Integration

The ultimate goal of integration is to maximize the value of the law library staff to the law school. Other benefits, including self-interest, can be key factors in a staff's desire to strive for a more integrated role.³⁴ "Self-interest" may have an undesirable connotation for law librarians; after all, as essentially a service profession, should not librarianship be exempt from self-serving aspirations?³⁵ Without question, law librarianship

33. Gwynn, *supra* note 22, at 240.

34. Although the term self-interest is often used negatively, at least one dictionary defines self-interest simply as "a concern for one's own advantage and material well being." WEBSTER'S THIRD NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, UNABRIDGED 2060 (1986).

35. "Too often the librarian takes the position that anything that has to do with money, marketing, the economy, everything that the world of business seems so concerned about, has a somewhat contemptible quality." Ciporen, *[The Publisher's Letter:] Marketing and the Library Commitment*, LIBR. J., Dec. 1989, at 4, 4.

is foremost and fundamentally a profession dedicated to assisting others. However, it is naive to believe that academic law librarians want to work in an environment where their efforts are not appreciated, or where the work does not provide meaningful challenges and permit them to satisfy their potential as professionals. Like nearly every other person in the world who works, law librarians want to reap tangible rewards for their efforts.³⁶ The law library staff's integration efforts can help create an environment that makes these rewards possible.

Although a myriad of good things may accrue to law librarians who successfully work toward a more integrated role, four achievable benefits stand out as making the effort worthwhile: (1) a positive, stimulating work environment; (2) increased respect within the law school; (3) a climate in which new opportunities can be developed; (4) credibility and a "can-do" reputation, which makes it possible to obtain increased resources for the library and its staff. Attaining these four benefits indicates that the library staff is seen as an integral player in the law school's mission and will likely lead to additional benefits.

For example, it is likely that the library staff will be able to attract and retain highly productive and creative persons if the work environment is interesting, challenging, and radiates a sense of appreciation, imagination, and team play. The positive effect of creating this kind of work environment was discussed by Roger F. Jacobs during a 1987 interview:

I think I have tried to encourage the professional librarians on my staff to develop their talents. I hope that in developing those talents their sense of self-worth and job satisfaction shine through. It is actually very practical from the institution's point of view, because if the people like the work and like what they are doing, you find out that they are generally more productive than people who chafe every minute on the job.³⁷

All human beings want to be respected for their contributions. In addition to psychological rewards, such as community praise and self-satisfaction, true respect and appreciation for the law librarian's

36. Persons in the real world need tangible things to live. While law librarians are motivated by a desire to provide services to others, they are certainly not exempt from these real world considerations. Those concerned about law librarians' self-interest should consider the truth of the Jewish saying, "If I am not for myself, who is for me?" Hillel, *quoted in* C. TAYLOR, *SAYINGS OF THE JEWISH FATHERS* 23 (2d ed. 1969).

37. REFLECTIONS ON LAW LIBRARIANSHIP 122-23 (M. Garson ed. 1988) (AALL Publication Series No. 29). Consider also the following idea: "There is a need for creative innovation, i.e., the work of librarians should be designed to allow for greater satisfaction with the job itself. In sum, motivation of librarians should be provided through the job itself." Wahba, *Motivation, Performance and Job Satisfaction of Librarians*, 71 *LAW LIBR. J.* 270, 278 (1978).

contributions will also garner tangible rewards, such as increased rank and salary, job security, and inclusion in the full life of the law school.³⁸

By demonstrating that it is an important and active participant in the life and mission of the law school, the library staff will build credibility and demonstrate to law school administrators that the librarians' ideas are sound and worthy of serious consideration. When the librarians want to try something new or involve themselves in nontraditional activities, the built-up credit and goodwill should favorably influence the administration's decision on permitting the staff to go forward.

In law schools, as in virtually every educational unit, administrators have limited resources for their programs. Within the law school, many interested parties clamor for a piece of the pie, and administrators must make judgments as to how these finite resources are to be divided.³⁹ In most cases, who gets what share is based on a perception of what is most important to the good functioning and betterment of the school. If the library is to receive a substantial portion of the available resources, it must be prepared to make a convincing argument that its support is in the best overall interests of the law school. This kind of persuasive argument is extremely difficult to carry forward unless the library has already established a reputation for vitality and excellence that marks it as a substantial contributor to the law school's success. If members of the law school community consider the library and its staff to be major contributors, they will support the library's aims, particularly if the services that they expect from the library appear to be threatened. Thus, administrators must take the library's needs seriously and should help the library receive its share of the resource pie.

VIII. Possible Negative Impacts of Integration

As John William Ward noted, "Today the man who is the real risk-taker is anonymous and nonheroic. He is the one trying to make institutions work."⁴⁰ Even well-designed plans can sometimes go awry and

38. "Questions of status and questions of job security are ultimately very closely related, because the law librarian who is considered a valuable professional is far less expendable than one who is viewed as a glorified loose-leaf filer or some strange kind of secretary." *The Condition of the Law Librarian in 1976*, *supra* note 17, at 630 (remarks of Stanley Irvine).

39.

In schools where this [low-cost] conception applies to the program of the school as a whole and not only to the library, it is, of course, evident that the library is necessarily in competition with other perfectly legitimate needs. What is not so generally recognized is the fact that this competition is likely to exist in all schools, for the higher their standards, the greater are their needs for library service.

Roalfe, *The Law School Library—Facts and Fancies*, 11 J. LEGAL EDUC. 346, 353 (1959).

40. Quoted in SIMPSON'S CONTEMPORARY QUOTATIONS 243 (1988).

result in undesirable consequences. For example, where powerful members of the community offer substantial opposition to librarians' assuming any increased role, integration efforts may be difficult to get off the ground. When faced with this type of opposition, librarians still may be able to take affirmative steps, however modest, to demonstrate how important their work is or can be to the law school community. In this way, converts may be made who will eventually become a power base sympathetic to the library's goals. If opposition to increasing the library's role continues in spite of the librarians' best efforts, the school will probably find itself in the position of losing some of its best and brightest staff members to institutions that offer a more hospitable climate for the contributions of librarians.

If the staff does not face strong opposition to its efforts, realistic planning and solid staff cooperation should begin. The staff should not initiate services or assume responsibilities without the necessary resources, however. If it does, the staff could find itself in a position where it is overworked and put upon, morale suffers, and the entire program may be in jeopardy. It is the library director's responsibility to assess what the staff is capable of handling successfully, and when necessary, to turn down the community's request for specific projects. For example, a library director may be under pressure to have the staff function as the law school's computer experts; if the staff is not capable of this, the director must explain why, understanding that a tremendous amount of good can be quickly undermined if the library takes on tasks that it does poorly.⁴¹ Word-of-mouth can be a two-edged sword: just as positive words can enhance a staff's reputation, negative words can damage it. Of course, an increase in duties and workload is not always a bad thing, especially if the new work is appreciated by the staff as interesting, challenging, and in line with building a positive working atmosphere that will allow persons to work toward professional fulfillment.⁴²

Another problem arises if one or more members of the staff are not in sympathy with the library's integration goal. Working around a recalcitrant staff person is difficult in the best of circumstances; generating new services and building a sense of purpose throughout the staff usually are *not* the best of circumstances. If the library has such a staff person, the administrators will have to do what they can to lessen any negative impact on the rest of the staff and the law school community. How this is best

41. "Such selling [of a library's services] may even do more harm than good if faculty and students are told that the library is there to serve them, then find the library unresponsive to their suggestions and preferences." Gwynn, *supra* note 22, at 237.

42. See *supra* note 37 and accompanying text.

accomplished depends, of course, on the individual circumstances involved. It may be possible to convince the reluctant staff member to participate positively in the program, although human nature dictates that this outcome would be the exception rather than the norm. Other options include assigning the gadfly to duties where he or she can do the least amount of harm, or firing the person.

Despite the staff's best efforts, there will be times where the best-laid plans simply don't work. This results in disappointment for the staff and sometimes a lessened confidence or respect for the librarians from the law school community. The chances of failure will be smaller, however, if the staff operates under the principles of careful planning, listens to the needs and desires of its community, and proceeds in committed and thoughtful ways. In any event, librarians should keep in mind that if they don't make the effort to strive toward integration, they will undoubtedly have to settle for the status quo, or worse, have some benefits taken away. The law school community will also suffer if the staff doesn't try to increase its contributions; simply put, librarians have a great deal to add to the law school's educational mission. Therefore, it is far better to proceed in good faith toward integration even without a guarantee of success. Even if integration efforts fail, in most cases, the staff will have opportunities to try again in the future.

IX. The Notre Dame Experience

The previous suggestions as to how a library staff can work toward integration have formed the cornerstone of a successful integration program at the University of Notre Dame School of Law.⁴³ For a long time, most members of the law school community did not consider Notre Dame Law Library and its staff to be major factors in the life of the law school. Certainly, the law school community recognized that it needed a library; however, because the library staff offered few services, it was considered more as a caretaker than as a vital organization. Librarians participated very little in the life of the law school, sometimes by choice and sometimes because of limited opportunities and invitations.⁴⁴

Beginning in 1985, with a change in library administration, law library staff members began to emphasize their desire to participate more fully in the life of the law school. To work toward this goal, the staff developed a

43. For discussion of a plan at the Salmon P. Chase College of Law to identify the law library as a key element of the law school community, see Gwynn, *supra* note 22.

44. Law librarians once had voting privileges within the law school, but that right was taken away through a law faculty vote.

variety of library services designed to make the library as useful as possible to its primary patrons, the law students and faculty.⁴⁵ Accompanying these new services were efforts to make the community aware of and comfortable with the services, via informal discussions, memoranda, library guides, one-on-one discussions with faculty members, surveys and questionnaires, group presentations, and signage. The availability of these new services also was spread by patrons' word-of-mouth. As a result, over a period of four years, nearly every service offered by the library saw an increase in patron usage of well over one hundred percent.

The library staff also began to identify areas of importance to the law school that were in line with the staff's interests and aptitudes. In addition to taking on WESTLAW and LEXIS teaching and management, the staff eventually assumed sole responsibility for audiovisual services, telefax transmissions, and the student computer lab. Although meeting these responsibilities was not always easy, the library benefitted from positive reactions, which have often placed the staff in the forefront of the community's consciousness. Delivering highly desirable library services and assuming responsibility in areas important to the law school clearly elevated the reputation of the staff and contributed greatly to an acknowledgement of the library's position as a major participant in meeting the educational mission of the law school.

Many tangible benefits have accrued to the law library and its staff as a result of these efforts: (1) the library has increased in staff size (from four to eight professional librarians and from four to thirteen support staff); (2) librarians now serve as members of law school committees; (3) librarians are invited to participate as judges or advisors in all law student academic competitions; (4) librarians have been granted the right as faculty members to offer directed readings and independent studies to law students for academic credit; and (5) librarians had full voting privileges at all law school faculty meetings restored, by a vote of the law faculty.

The road to integration for the Notre Dame Law Library staff was not always easy, but it was interesting, challenging, productive, and satisfying. Integration unlocked the law librarians' potential as major innovators and contributors to the law school's mission, and created a working bond

45. Among these services were direct research support, courier service to the university library, twenty-four hour library access, reserving study carrels for researchers, providing photocopies of library material to faculty, a faculty book allowance for purchasing office material, and a serious attempt to provide through acquisition or borrowing material needed to satisfy current faculty research needs. The librarians also worked hard to improve the effectiveness of their role as teachers of the required first-year course, Introduction to Legal Research. For information concerning the efforts and successes in teaching the course, see Slinger, *Legal Research Instruction at Notre Dame*, INTEGRATED LEGAL RESEARCH, Winter & Spring 1990, at 8.

between the library staff and the rest of the law school community. Integration also provided an enhanced window of opportunity for librarians' contributions in the future. Perhaps most importantly, integration demonstrated that law librarians can play a large part in shaping their own role within the law school community. If it works at Notre Dame, it can work at many other law schools.

X. Conclusion

Virtually every academic law library will benefit from taking steps to achieve a more integrated place within their law school community. To be successful, law librarians should assess how they can become more useful in meeting the needs of the law school community, then carefully and realistically plan how to accomplish those services. Librarians should also pay close attention to marketing techniques designed both to publicize their services and to enhance the library staff's reputation for excellence. Over time, these efforts should yield a closer and more integral relationship with the rest of the law school community.

In the decades to come, law schools will face many challenges, and librarians will find ample opportunities to help meet those challenges. By making the most of these opportunities, law librarians will be adapting their roles in ways that enhance their image and increase their usefulness to the law school community. Today's librarians must plan to contribute to future events or run the risk of being replaced by others who are willing to meet the law school's needs.