Academic librarians versus tenure-track faculty at St. Jerome

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During the data analysis, several themes emerged from the findings, such as the distinctive differences between librarian and tenure-track faculty roles, the composition of the librarians' third space, the librarians' perceived role with respect to the blended professional model, and the obstacles to professional development and librarian success at St. Jerome. These themes are all tied together by the core theory produced from this study. Specifically, the functional aspects of the librarians' role places structural limitations on their influence; the perceptual and socially constructed limitations further enhance these issues by restricting the blended professional effectiveness and operational third space, which creates both artificial and actual obstacles to professional development. Simply put, the academic librarians at St. Jerome are in fact blended professionals that operate in a unique third space within higher education. However, real or manufactured limitations confine that blended role and third space.

To start, the comparison of the actual role of the academic librarians versus that of the tenure-track faculty at St. Jerome is required. This chapter will reaffirm the differences that emerged during the interviews between the tenure-track faculty and academic librarian role at St. Jerome. The discussion will turn to the consideration of the academic librarian as blended professional. Finally, the causes and validities of professional obstacles will be examined.

5.1   Role comparison: academic librarians versus tenure-track faculty

As asserted earlier, the roles between tenure-track faculty and academic librarians historically have been distinct. Gradually, the responsibilities of the librarians increased and began to resemble the activities of the tenure-track faculty in terms of research requirements, instructional duties, and provision of services. However, at St. Jerome, these core tasks of research, instruction, and service remain distinct between the two factions.

It was postulated earlier in this work that the roles of academic librarians and tenure-track faculty at St. Jerome are inherently different in the substance of their activities. Nothing in the findings refuted this assumption. In fact, this assertion was more firmly verified.

While academic librarians engaged in activities that mimicked tenure-track duties, the librarian workload might be best labeled as "tenure-track lite." Understanding of this realization might best be related through the words of Sofia.

*I know a lot of tenure-track faculty very closely and that makes me want to say
that it's nothing at all like it. I deliberately chose not to take that path so I tend to
emphasize the distinctions. In terms of responsibilities, duties, burdens, workload…
this is much less high stakes, right? There is no point in my job where I feel like it's
"x" or perish.*

In short, the pressures and the burdens of the librarians at St. Jerome at present are less severe than an individual faculty member pursuing tenure. In order to establish librarians as blended professionals and gain a better understanding of the third space that they occupy, a brief comparison to the tenure-track faculty role is required.

5.1.1   Research

The librarians feel that their administration is strongly encouraging that they create high-level research projects that replicate those produced by the tenure-track faculty. The librarians were skeptical of their ability to accomplish this aim.

> Irene: The research expectations that [the administration] might have…we're never going to have anything like that. I mean, we may have research expectations and it seems like the administration is pushing us that way but it's going to take a lot of years before the research that we do is anything like the same caliber of research that the tenure-track faculty have to do.

This is in part due to the disciplinary area that the librarians are focusing on, specifically library literature. When asked the question "What kinds of research do you do?" only two of the librarians responded saying that they did disciplinary research. The rest of the librarians' research related in some form to the libraries, such as technology used in instruction, library sustainability, and other pragmatic projects that furthered discussion on processes within the library.

However, library-oriented research did not garner respect even from the librarians themselves. As Valeria somewhat lightheartedly commented: "Don't get me going. Library literature being its own joke. I didn't say that on tape. But oh my gosh." Valeria later described the literature as "abysmal." I interpreted this perspective to relate to the lack of a difficulty gaining acceptance into library publications mentioned earlier in chapter "Historical Roles." An added problem stems from the supposed emphasis on quantity as opposed to quality. As Julia notes:

*It doesn't seem to me that the type of literature that you're publishing matters
very much. From what I've seen, it seems that I think we all think that library lit is
garbage…but crank it out, but people do all sorts of things like book reviews and
things like that, I wouldn't necessarily…and I don't think that other tenure-track
faculty would get promoted for doing book reviews.*

This type of commentary illustrates the difficulty that the librarians have in defining what is valuable research and what is merely symbolic productivity. As well, these

types of mentalities feed into the systemic devaluing of the librarians' own contributions to the literature.

Both legitimate qualitative and quantitative projects produced by librarians are cycled through St. Jerome's Institutional Review Board. However, the librarians denigrated the output time and again as "not real research."

> Laura: It's not a real research thing. And [the Data Services Research Consultant] is helping us and maybe she can turn some switches on statistics and make it more…really what you're going to come out with is some sort of impression from this particular snapshot.
> Researcher: The librarians tend to use the terminology "we done good."
> Laura: Yes, yes. And that the kind of thing that I have [quote hands] published; more or less reports of projects that I did that turned out well. Yeah, things like that.

A "we done good" paper or presentation in the parlance of academic librarians is the equivalent of a report in other disciplines. The project generally did not require qualitative or quantitative analyses. It is often an experiment that involved applying conditions to a particular unit and reporting on the results. It generally will just feature a literature review, a summation of the steps in the process, and then end with considerations for future applications of a similar project.

The project Laura is listing above actually was more sophisticated than a "we done good" report. Laura and her coauthor analyzed the receptiveness of library users to instruction at the reference desk through a sophisticated survey approved by St. Jerome's Instructional Review Board. Even so, Laura and other librarians pursuing similar projects often lowered the perceptive quality of the project through their own interpretations. The librarians just did not appreciate the level of erudition required to complete some of their work.

It is possible—and likely, given the interview responses—for this perspective to stem from a lack of formal understanding of the substantive research process. As Valeria stated: "I can wing it. I can partner with people who know how to do it, but [I don't]." Another librarian noted that her article that featured 2 years of data collection might have been accepted in a "better journal," but it would have required more qualitative methods that she did not know how to complete, in large part due to the scholastic preparation that the librarians receive in library school.

The quality of research fundamentals covered in library school was seen as a pitfall for many of the librarians. In the librarians' eyes, this contributed to poorer literature output.

> Lucy: But I know a lot of librarians and I know to a degree that some of the library scholarship is or can be pretty sad and that people do it just because they have to and it's not always good quality. Because we don't get really exposure in our programs to that. Our programs, at least in my day because it's been awhile since I graduated, were way more vocational.
> Researcher: Yeah, there's not the quantitative or qualitative research courses.
> Lucy: Right. We took a research methods class but for goodness sakes it didn't teach us anything. I mean, I think that all I really had to do in that class was fake apply for a grant…like write a grant proposal and fake apply for a grant. We did not learn methods. Like we learned that there was difference between qualitative and quantitative but we didn't learn how to do it, you know?

The library science degree is a practical program designed to prepare librarians to work in the field (American Library Association, 2008). Theory, especially research methodology, is not emphasized in library school curriculum (American Library Association, 2008). This spoke to the level of methodological understanding that the librarians gained during their library school programs.

> Valeria: Even if I had all the time in the world to publish…[if] I had one of those jobs where I picked-and-choose where to go [publish], the MLS didn't give me the means to analyze the data in ways I need to in order to conduct a really methodologically sound study. I don't feel like I have that background.

For librarians, the term "research" predominantly refers to the acquisition and exploration of materials needed to complete a formal project. The American Library Association Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies states:

> *The curriculum of library and information studies encompasses information*
> *and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition,*
> *organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis,*
> *interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management.*
>   *American Library Association (2008)*

Note that the word "production" or an equivalent is missing from that description. For accreditation purposes, the American Library Association emphasizes the "knowledge of" research as opposed to the ability to produce. Melania affirms: "We aren't trained in research methodology in library school. Maybe we will in the future but right now the curriculum is very resource oriented, which is not good for academics librarians." Research for tenure-track individuals includes both the knowledge and resource acquisition portion of the endeavor, as well as the composition of the completed project. At St. Jerome, research for tenure-track faculty is defined as:

> *Scholarly achievement is demonstrated by original publications and peer-reviewed*
> *contributions to the advancement of the discipline/field of study or the integration*
> *of the discipline with other fields; by original research, artistic work, software and*
> *media, exhibitions, and performance; and by the application of discipline- or field-*
> *based knowledge to the practice of a profession.*

Here is a fundamental difference in philosophy for the two roles. Academic librarians find; tenure-track faculty produce.

The librarians at St. Jerome are working within an environment where the constituents often have as much or greater education in terms of the complete definition of "research." The mission and substance of their education makes it highly challenging for the librarians to succeed in the equivalent production of research or gaining a collaborative foothold. They are the buttresses to the research process, not the foundation, walls, or the towering pillars that form the cathedral of academe at St. Jerome. This restricted role in the research process creates a constructed limitation on the extent of their influence and third space within the academy.

5.1.2 Instruction

As a whole, the instruction that librarians perform also falls short of that completed by their tenure-track counterparts. It is important to note that librarians view instruction on multiple planes of individual and group teaching. To the former, "in-person or online reference assistance often incorporates teaching" (Detmering & Sproles, 2012, p. 546). This may include individual interactions, either at the reference desk or in scheduled appointments. Librarians "teach" whenever they attempt to help an individual find information. When a patron visits a reference desk, or a group of students are receiving classroom instruction, and even remotely via email or instant messenger, librarians are performing some form of instruction.

The main difference between a transaction that occurs at a reference desk and the reference consultation is that the latter is scheduled and the former occurs randomly during a scheduled desk shift. The premise of both is the same though. "In the reference interview, the librarian's goals are to determine the most efficient and productive way, the nature, quantity, and level of information the user requires, and what information format is most appropriate for or preferred by the user" (Bopp & Smith, 1995, p. 36). The process therefore is similar to what occurs during the preparation for classroom instruction. The librarian must identify the appropriate resources for the patron. The interaction between the librarian and the individual will illuminate the level of sophistication required to complete the task.

Sometimes the librarians trip themselves up at this stage. Many times, I have observed librarians sometimes overeagerly provide information to the patron. For instance, if a patron is looking for printed books on a topic, the librarian will also show the individual databases, journals, research guides, and other superfluous information. This is referred to as data smog (Shenk, 1997) and often overcomplicates the transaction. As an observer, I could see the eyes of the patron glaze over while the librarian continued on in their presentation.

Regardless, the purpose of the individual instruction is to prepare the patron to perform research on their own. Catherine uses the fishing analogy: "The primary role [of an academic librarian that] I see is teaching people how to fish. I don't want to give them the fish. You [the learner] have to take this over. And you have to be comfortable with doing it your way." In theory, it is easy to find information for a student. If a student comes to the reference desk asking for information on Chaucer, the librarian could print out copies of relevant articles and send the student on their way. However, it is more effective and mutually beneficial to give details about the steps involved in the process and empower the student to succeed on their own. This is not a dissimilar mission from group instruction. The preparation is just different.

With group instruction, in general, the educational preparation that the librarians received in library school was somewhat incomplete in the provision of pedagogical skills. Some of the librarians did not have much faith in their instructional abilities and pinpointed teaching as a weakness in their professional roles.

M: What type of instruction do you do?
T: It's funny you should ask because I've been thinking that I really need…I really need somebody to assess me because I really don't think it's particularly good. I don't have a lot of confidence in my teaching ability.

Lucy claims: "Librarians historically…I don't know about now…but I know, historically we're not taught to teach like faculty. We're not taught to teach." Research, or at least the librarian-oriented view of research, was at least addressed in library school. Nowhere in the curriculum requirements of an ALA-accredited school will a reader notice the requirement that schools are to offer instructional assistance or practice. Most of the librarians began teaching with little or no formal background in instruction.

> Valeria: I do very little instruction now. I try to make it really active giving them exercises encouraging them to participate. Encouraging them to even look at an online tutorial so that we're at least beginning from the same place (or at least theoretically we are). I don't know what you call my approach. I don't have any educational background.

While she does not teach many of the formal classes, Valeria's position requires significant presentations to faculty and staff. The researcher observed her presentations, and they are very professional and successful in achieving the dissemination of information. Yet Valeria and many of her colleagues developed their skills through practical on-the-job learning. Librarians predominantly entered into the profession without a formal base in instructional methods, and learned pragmatically in the field. As Irene states: "It's all been the way I think it should be done based upon my own experiences."

The reliance upon instructional techniques developed through experiential means is systemic within the libraries at St. Jerome. Abilities may be gained at the initiative of the individual seeking them. Lucy asserts: "Everything we've learned is through external means of…you know, workshops, professional development opportunities." Training and assessment at St. Jerome seemingly is not provided by managers or administration. Laura related: "I don't like the lack of feedback…the lack of critical constructive evaluation. Constructive criticism would be helpful." This atmosphere does not appear likely to change in the near future. Irene mentioned that a proposal for instructional training, feedback, and assessment was suggested by one of the librarians. It was vetoed by the library administrator, with time restrictions being viewed as the main contributing factor.

In my own experience, I also did not receive much training or feedback with respect to instruction. As part of my professional responsibilities, I frequently taught library classes in a variety of settings. While as a student, I had formal classes in college teaching and previously had instructed semester-long for-credit college courses, I too learned to teach library classes through experience and without formal feedback. In fact, in all of the courses that I ever taught in the libraries, a supervisor only sat in on one instruction session, and that was nearly 4 years after I began instructing library courses. Given the feedback from the librarians, I understood that this was similar to their experiences as well. There was no training or assessment.

All of this is not to say that members of the tenure-track faculty necessarily ever have had formal pedagogical training. Many of them also are thrown into the fire, so to speak. One librarian had such an experience in her nonlibrary school graduate program.

Irene: I can remember when I started my [second master's] degree …I had a teaching assistantship. And I was floored. I was 22 years old and they said "Okay, you're going to do two lab sections of such and such. Here's your syllabus and book." And there were a bunch of us doing the same lab sections but there was no guidance whatsoever on what we were supposed to do.

In some respects, this "trial by fire" is better than no experience at all. One of my degrees is a master's in history. In that program, all of the lower-level undergraduate courses and recitations were taught by full-time PhD students with assistantships. Master's students and doctoral students without full-time status or an assistantship gained no pedagogical experience at all. If I took a postgraduation job teaching history or social studies in a state that did not require additional educational training or certification, I would have had a difficult time learning the craft on the job. This is essentially what librarians experience once they enter the field.

Therefore, realistically, unless a faculty member, academic librarian, or any other professional in the instruction field had a student teaching internship or some variant form of teaching apprenticeship, their instruction is learned through observation and personal trial and error. However, where the instructional roles between tenure-track faculty and libraries additionally diverge is in the nature of the actual classes taught.

Consider the method of instructional style and delivery. In terms of delivery methodology, the librarians unanimously favored interactive instruction as opposed to lecture. Sofia stated: "The idea of lecturing horrifies me." She was not speaking in terms of fear, but rather thought that standing and speaking for 3 h without discussion was abhorrently boring. As a result, Sofia and the rest of the librarians incorporated interactive instruction. One of the driving factors in utilizing this manner of instruction was that interactive instruction breeds collaboration.

Researcher: Do you feel the students learn the library material better from the interactive?
Melania: Yeah.
Researcher: Why is that?
Melania: Because people learn by doing. I just did a [instruction-based project]…and the theory that I related it to was Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. So students…people are social in nature, so you learn in a social context and you learn when you have a problem to solve. They get something out of [it] because the problems are directly based on something that they're working on so scaffolding from one another as they're working…as they're partnered in groups. So one person might have better research skills than another so they learn collectively that way.

Interactive instruction provides the librarians with a means through which to encourage the students to pay attention and care. If the instruction is relevant to their homework or an ongoing or future project, they are more apt to pay attention to the entirety of the lesson (Brophy, 2008).

Unfortunately, interactive instruction often requires a commitment of time and the librarians frequently were not afforded a great deal of instruction time due to their manner of instruction. The overwhelming style in which the academic

librarians teach at St. Jerome is in the form of the *one-shot*. "The one-shot library instruction session has long been a mainstay for many information literacy programs. Identifying realistic learning goals, integrating active learning techniques, and conducting meaningful assessment for a single lesson" (Watson et al., 2013, p. 381). One-shot instruction is formulaic. If the class is longer (and the students have access to computers, such as in one of the library instruction rooms), it consists of a four-step process. Specifically:

1. Introduction
2. Overview of resources
3. Interactive searching
4. Questions and conclusion

If the librarian has an abbreviated time or computers are not readily available, then step 3 from the above process is skipped. Step 2 may also vary in terms of complexity when librarians deliver a one-shot. Some of the classes in which the librarians speak, specifically those taught to incoming freshmen or students new to St. Jerome, require very basic resources. These often include more generic databases such as Academic Search Complete or Proquest Research Library.

Unfortunately, the one-shot hampers the librarians in a couple ways. In his 4-stage learning cycles model, Kolb (1984, p. 38) stated that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." Kolb (1984) asserted that the four stages consisted of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The one-shots benefit the concrete experience aspect of learning because that stage emphasizes "doing." However, in the short amount of time, there is not necessarily enough opportunity for the students to progress through deep and thoughtful considerations. The major problem with this reality is that not all students learn in the same manner. Therefore, the active learner might gain a great deal from the interactive lessons designed by the librarian, but the reflective learner might find little or no value in that methodology.

I observed eight individual one-shot instructions performed by eight librarians. There were many positive aspects of the instruction sessions that validated the academic librarians' expertise on library resources. The librarians observed are adept at "gaining the buy in" from the students. They present the relevant resources that students in the respective classes might utilize. Mere mention of the cost of some of the database resources, especially when emphasizing the place that the students' tuition might play in their purchase, often grabs and keeps the attention of the classroom. They also explain the role of the librarian and encourage questions, visits to the library, and follow-up consultations.

It is very impressive to see the librarians work specifically within their subject. They "speak the language," which gives them instant legitimacy. For example, a student asked one librarian a question about a very specific disciplinary database. I had never even heard of the resource and probably could not even spell it, yet the librarian promptly and accurately responded to the student's question.

Several aspects of the one-shot role, though, reiterated the librarians' guest speaker status. For instance, librarians teach across several departments and sometimes

instruct a class that is not within their specialized field. One librarian stated during her presentation that "I don't know what you guys do in [your discipline]" and "I have no idea what that [disciplinary term] means." It seems fine to enter an instructional situation without a complete grasp of the entirety of the disciplinary field. However, projecting that fact hinders the likelihood that a specialized student would contact the librarian and again demonstrates the ancillary nature of the librarian within the classroom.

The librarians did not engage in any grading or assessment for these classes, so when matters concerning the application of resources to projects arose the librarians conceded control of the classroom back to the professor. For example, when questions pertaining to the assignment come up, such as "Is this a resource that I can use for my paper?" the librarian always deferred the question to the professor. She responded to one student with "Ask your professor. I am not grading your paper." After providing a similar response to two more students, comparable questions were then directed to the professor and not the library instructor.

In another instance, the librarian was not present when questions of substance were fielded. The second half of the class consisted of research done by the students with minimal supervision. The librarian, in fact, left the room for the majority of this time, and the professor alone answered questions from the students. Most of these questions appeared to be pertaining to the assignment, such as with the structure of the upcoming written project. Students' actions in the librarian's absence, unfortunately, defined her role in the class.

Finally, nerves apparently affected the delivery of one librarian. Several times during the presentation, the librarian apologizes, saying that she is running out of time, causing the talk to be stunted, rushed, and awkward on occasion. In total, the librarians demonstrated their acumen concerning useful resources applicable to student study. Slight flaws in their deliveries might be addressed through simple coaching. In doing so, the academic librarians might better bridge the gap between "guest lecturer" and collaborative individual.

At present though there is also no real connection between the librarian and the students during the one-shots. In an article, Chambliss (2014) advocated that professors take the time to learn their students' names for the following reason:

> *Any person's name is emotionally loaded to that person, and has the power to pull him or her into whatever is going on. But more than that, calling a student by name opens the door to a more personal connection, inviting the student to see the professor (and professors generally) as a human being, maybe a role model or even a kind of friend.*
>
> *Chambliss (2014)*

Chambliss is clearly speaking to his colleagues in the professoriate, but the value of knowing the names is clear. It provides a bridge-building connection that is unavailable to the guest speaker. The librarian's role in the one-shot classroom is of an auxiliary individual, present only to supplement the instruction provided by the main librarian.

In some cases, librarians do have a more substantial role, such as when librarians are *embedded*. An embedded librarian is a librarian that either co-teaches a course with a faculty member or has a role that extends for a series of classes, or in some cases, the entirety of the semester (Kvenild & Calkins, 2011). The activities of the embedded librarian are more substantive, such as grading or assessing assignments semester (Kvenild & Calkins, 2011). For example, when the librarian is embedded in the course, the librarian has a better understanding of the needs of the faculty member for whom they are instructing. As Valeria states: "I think…that in those more enhanced relationships you get a better feeling for what the professor wants and is trying to achieve in terms of objectives, learning outcomes, and so on." The situation also provides the opportunity to develop more in-depth student–librarian relationships.

> Valeria: You get to development a better relationship with students. And as a consequence you build trust so they feel like they can come talk to you in a way that they might not consult their instructor. They know that you don't give them a grade. And when they're struggling a lot of times I felt like they would be more open with me than they would a professor.

It does, however, require the cooperation of the faculty member, and this was an issue confronting many of the academic librarians at St. Jerome. Faculty did not provide many embedded opportunities at this point for the librarians. As Bridget stated: "I think the liaison role provides access but I don't think that it necessarily provides inclusion." Thus, during the course of this project, none of the interviewed librarians participated in embedded classroom instruction, so unfortunately I was unable to observe the nuances in this altered version of instruction and its potential effects on the librarians' blended professional identity.

5.1.3   Service

Service for the librarians entails many activities as well as the mindset of the librarian. Briefly to the latter, some of the librarians considered the foundation of the role as service-based due to the ambiguity of the description of service activities. Service for librarians could involve everything from helping a student at a reference desk to buying books for the collection to attending conferences. These activities comprise a significant portion of the daily activities of the librarians and therefore represent the foundation of the role of the academic librarians at St. Jerome.

To start, similar to tenure-track faculty, the librarians of St. Jerome serve on a variety of committees. By virtue of being academic librarians at St. Jerome, the librarians interviewed were members of Librarians' Council, which is a committee that meets monthly to discuss matters such as library governance, professional reviews, and research leave considerations. Participation in Librarians' Council is high and voluntary, mainly because it is one of the only avenues where librarians at St. Jerome can manage the governance of their position.

There is a faculty senate at St. Jerome; however, the academic librarians have no representation in it. The Vice-Chair of the Librarians' Council attends the Faculty Senate meetings but only for the sake of gaining information. Neither the Vice-Chair

nor the librarians themselves have any feedback, and this immediately creates a distinction between them and the tenure-track faculty at St. Jerome.

> Maria: I think we're isolated from a whole lot of things because to one sense not having a faculty status excludes us from the faculty senate. And having colleagues at other universities where they are faculty…I've seen the difference that it makes for those librarians on their curriculum committees, on the budget committees…you know, fairly significant committees to the point where one colleague I know, he's chair of the faculty senate budget committee.
> Researcher: That helps.
> Maria: That helps. Another one was chair for 2 or 3 years…I forget…of the curriculum committee for the whole university through the faculty senate. I don't know. Having worked at two institutions where you did have senate status and faculty status I can see where that does help. Whereas here we're in that limbo between the teaching faculty who get all the glory and wonder and classified staff. We're in this limbo of afterthought or "Oh yeah, those guys. We should ask them." But it's already too late or down the road and they haven't included.

Due to their classification, the experience of the librarians at St. Jerome is not universal among librarians at other institutions, particularly those where the librarians have full faculty status, tenure-track positions, or both. However, this likely is a trend across several types of institutions due to the perceived rank of the librarians in comparison to the other faculty.

In addition to Librarians' Council, the librarians also serve on a variety of committees known as "taskforces" that supposedly help administrators make educated decisions regarding planning for development initiatives. These committees are not well-liked because the work contributed by the groups is often not implemented.

> Bridget: I am occasionally asked to serve on library committees. They are not the committees of my personal interest, so I find some of them frustrating because they're not something that I'm interested in and on occasion I'm concerned that we're doing a lot of busywork because on more than one committee we've done a lot of work, we've submitted the report, and the report was either rejected outright or completely ignored.

This type of empty activity undermines the librarians' contributions and enhances the discord between the librarians and the library administrators.

> Lucy: I'm not sure also that there's a lot of intent around what's being done and why. Like planning and why projects are happening and what projects are happening. And I hate when they start projects and they either don't finish them or finish a report and never implement anything. I mean, there's a lot of busywork it seems that doesn't accomplish a lot of things.

Part of the contributing factor to this issue is that major decisions at St. Jerome take a significant amount of time to develop and come to fruition in a public institution (Cotton, Bailey, Warren, & Bissell, 2009; Siegfried & Getz, 1995). Bureaucratic approval processes retard expedient progress and change in that type of environment.

For example, I served on a committee that researched types of learning commons. I was the only nonlibrarian on that particular committee. We spent a year researching existing commons, interviewing administrators, traveling to other libraries, and compiling a comprehensive report. Formal implementation of any of the recommendations from that

group would not be initiated for approximately 3 years after the committee first organized. I coauthored a book chapter related to that group's work that was proposed, peer-reviewed, edited, formatted, and published in less time than it took to apply any of the suggestions in that initial report! Therefore, a lot of the committee service that the librarians participate in seems less that productive or rewarding.

The other issue involves top-down communication from library administration at St. Jerome. As Maria's feedback indicates, the librarians already feel disconnected from the decision-making processes at St. Jerome due to the exclusion from Faculty Senate. Poor communication from the library administration was cited by many of the librarians and contributes to the perception that committee work is "busywork." Improved communication might address some of these concerns and improve overall morale (Crick, 2014; Saxena, 2010).

Now there are many members of the academic community, including wage staff and classified staff, right up through full professors and administrators that must participate in organizational activities such as committees that often times seem repetitive or insignificant. There are different levels of expected governance though. As a classified staff member, realistically I did not expect to have much input or feedback, or find recognition outside of my immediate unit. On the other hand, faculty, which the librarians were categorized as at St. Jerome, should have a prospect of some governance. The issue for the librarians at St. Jerome is that they do not have individual membership (and the corresponding voice) in the Faculty Senate, whose decisions may considerably impact the activities of the libraries and its academic librarians. In addition, the librarians feel that the library administration does a poor job of communicating during the decision-making process. This creates obstacles to the success of the librarians, which will be discussed later in chapter "Obstacles to Professional Success."

In terms of a holistic understanding of the concept though, service provides the foundation of the librarian role. Juxtaposed with the traditional tenure-track model with research being the significant foundational base of activities of that category of the faculty, the altered perspective of the librarian identity modified the external and internal understanding of the role for the interviewed librarians. Adele states: "I would say [tenure-track model] is kind of flipped on its head, which in some ways is why we don't get the same kind of respect." For other librarians, the term "service" equated to "support."

> Laura: I am definitely a support role to the tenured faculty and helping them and their students. Now I do see that I have a role in helping the tenured faculty with research because I know things that they don't know and I can help them. I have in the past been on grants with…PhDs and stuff and I know that there's a role that we can serve but I really do see it as a support role and not on the same level.

Because service is a foundation of the librarian role, the ability to create a distinction between collaborator and service provider is difficult, which results in issues relating to respect and minimizes opportunities for librarian–faculty collective ventures. This "support" ideology had implications, particularly concerning gender, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

While transdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary work can appear in instructional literature and best practice materials may bridge disciplinary gaps, the main body of research focuses on department-specific articles, books, and other forms of academic productivity. This actuality promotes difference and siloing among the university departments. This is not to say that tenure-track does not perform service and outreach, but the goal of tenure-track research promotes an inner-facing perspective.

Service, on the other hand, is outreach-based. The goal of the librarian is to help whomever, whenever, and wherever. Ideally, the librarian is working with department-specific people in the liaison role purposely, since the librarians are trained to "speak the language." However, the nature of the role promotes the instruction of all manner of patronage, from freshmen 101 students all the way up to tenured faculty and department chairs.

The librarian will help a patron regardless of the topic. Questions come to the reference desk from all manners of patronage. The problem is either solved therein, or the patron is referred to the appropriate party. This ideology predicates an interdisciplinary approach and role. The mindset emphasizes the blended professional model and validates the inclusion of librarians in conversations regarding the model's application.

5.2 Conclusion

Demonstrated in Table 5.1, the academic librarians' role at St. Jerome does not compare equally with the tenure-track faculty due to the differences in research, instruction, and service obligations.

These are legitimate, functional separations that define who and what the librarians are at this particular institution. Reading this, you might suggest that the comparison of tenure-track and nontenured librarians is not a fair comparison because the expectations inherently would be dissimilar. Why not compare the librarians to contract instructional faculty or adjunct faculty? Remember though, the comparison is based upon the components of both roles requiring research, instruction, and service. Those other forms of faculty generally only retain one of those responsibilities. One would expect that the teaching duties of an instructional faculty would exceed those of

Table 5.1 A brief summation of the roles of the academic librarians when compared to tenure-track faculty at St. Jerome

Activity	Tenure-track faculty	Academic librarians
Research	Discipline-focused; required; core to function; substantive research projects	Library research; not "publish or perish"; "we done good" reports
Instruction	Semester-long courses; integral role	"One-shots"; auxiliary presence
Service	Tertiary; may not contribute to tenure	Seminal for role

librarians because that is all that they are contracted to perform. Instructional faculty normally are not contracted to perform research or service to the extent that librarians are though.

Also, the comparison here is to formulate the specifications for the type of activity conducted by the librarians for the sake of understanding perceptions of role. While the findings place the librarians on a lower vertical standing than the tenure-track faculty in terms of role function, I believe that in the relative, professional identity would be outranked by most of the faculty at this particular institution regardless of specified function. In the total context of the hierarchy of academe, the contract and adjunct faculty often retain a higher social standing than the librarians—at least at a large, doctoral granting institution such as St. Jerome—because those faculty positions require terminal degrees. As I will discuss during the legitimacies section of the following chapter, the letters after one's name retain significant weight in this type of community.

All of this creates layers in the consideration of the librarians at St. Jerome. These strata will vary at different institutions, depending upon librarian rank, performance expectations, and so on. However, I believe that challenges to a librarian's role as a blended professional will exist regardless of the examined location, and the perceptions of these defined limitations of the librarians' role create socially constructed obstacles that further limit the effectiveness of their role as blended professionals. Findings related to the blended professional model are where the conversation now turns.

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