

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS AND THE FREEDOM FOR LIBRARIANS TO RESEARCH

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- ▶ Component of a larger project
 - ▶ Surveys, Interviews, and Collective Agreement Analysis
- ▶ Examining the perceptions, expectations, and possibilities for academic librarians to conduct research
 - ▶ Librarians typically conducted research
 - ▶ They often wanted to conduct more research
- ▶ Collective agreements are directly related to the ability of librarians to conduct research

BACKGROUND: THE STUDY

“Academic freedom includes the right, without restriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom to teach and discuss; freedom to carry out research and disseminate and publish the results thereof; freedom to produce and perform creative works; freedom to engage in service to the institution and the community; freedom to express one's opinion about the institution, its administration, and the system in which one works; freedom to acquire, preserve, and provide access to documentary material in all formats; and freedom to participate in professional and representative academic bodies. Academic freedom always entails freedom from institutional censorship.”

- CAUT, Policy Statement on Academic Freedom

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- ▶ A component of academic status
 - ▶ Faculty status vs. academic status
- ▶ Challenges to the academic freedom of librarians
 - ▶ CAUT investigation of McGill
 - ▶ Misunderstanding of librarians' role and needs
- ▶ Necessity of academic freedom for librarians
 - ▶ Research
 - ▶ Curating and providing access to information

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- ▶ Govern the rights and responsibilities of librarians
- ▶ Different types:
 - ▶ Faculty agreement (includes librarians)
 - ▶ Librarian-specific agreements
- ▶ Not all universities have collective agreements for librarians
 - ▶ Non-unionized associations
- ▶ What provisions for research exist for librarians?

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

- ▶ Collective agreements were obtained from 12 Canadian Universities
 - ▶ 6 U15 universities: McGill, McMaster, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, University of Saskatchewan
 - ▶ 6 non-U15 universities: Brandon University, Brock University, Concordia University, MacEwan University, University of Regina, University of Winnipeg
- ▶ Related documents were obtained in certain cases as well
 - ▶ E.g.; requirements for promotion and tenure
- ▶ All materials retrieved from relevant university or union websites

METHODS

- ▶ Collective agreements and related documents were examined for:
 - ▶ References to research as related to librarian duties
 - ▶ Expectations for research
 - ▶ Provisions for research
 - ▶ Promotion and/or tenure requirements
 - ▶ Unclear language with relation to research
 - ▶ Barriers to research and/or academic freedom

METHODS

▶ Librarian-specific:

- ▶ McGill (2015)
- ▶ McMaster (2011-2015)
- ▶ University of Alberta (to 2016)

▶ Faculty:

- ▶ Brandon University (2015-2019)
- ▶ Brock University (2014-2017)
- ▶ Concordia University (2012-2015)
- ▶ MacEwan University (2014-2017)
- ▶ University of Calgary (2013-2015)
- ▶ University of Manitoba (2013-2016)
- ▶ University of Regina (2014-2017)
- ▶ University of Saskatchewan (2014-2017)
- ▶ University of Winnipeg (2013-2016)

FINDINGS: AGREEMENT TYPE

- ▶ *Academic librarians shall be responsible for and have the right and opportunity to pursue research in library and information science and/or other relevant academic disciplines and to make scholarly contributions. Academic librarians shall endeavour to publish the results of their scholarship. (17.A.2.3)*
 - ▶ University of Manitoba Faculty Collective Agreement, 2013-2016
- ▶ *The criteria respecting librarians shall be established by the Vice Provost (Libraries and Cultural Resources) in consultation with and with the approval of a majority of the Libraries and Cultural Resources Academic Council subject to the subsequent approval of the Provost & Vice-President (Academic). (3.14.2)*
 - ▶ University of Calgary Faculty Collective Agreement, 2013-2015

FINDINGS: ATTENTION TO LIBRARIANS

- ▶ Research is required
 - ▶ Concordia University, University of Manitoba, University of Saskatchewan
- ▶ Research or equivalent is required
 - ▶ Brandon University
- ▶ Broader category under which research is included (e.g.; professional activity) is required
 - ▶ McMaster
- ▶ Research is possible/research may be conducted/research is encouraged
 - ▶ Brock University, MacEwan University, McGill, University of Alberta, University of Regina, University of Winnipeg

FINDINGS: RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ Research is required for promotion is to certain ranks*
 - ▶ Brandon University, Brock University, University of Manitoba
- ▶ Research is a right of librarians
 - ▶ University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg
- ▶ Unclear
 - ▶ University of Calgary

* - Guidelines for promotion and tenure were not examined at all universities

FINDINGS: RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

- ▶ Librarians are to have a sustained program of research
 - ▶ University of Saskatchewan
- ▶ Research leave/sabbatical available
 - ▶ Brandon University, Brock University, Concordia University, McMaster, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, University of Regina, University of Saskatchewan, University of Winnipeg
- ▶ Duties must be arranged such that they may engage in research
 - ▶ Concordia University, University of Manitoba
- ▶ Supervisory approval required
 - ▶ MacEwan(?), McMaster
- ▶ No explicit provisions
 - ▶ McGill

FINDINGS: RESEARCH PROVISIONS

- ▶ Brock University
 - ▶ 10-20% of time may be devoted to scholarly activity
- ▶ MacEwan
 - ▶ Up to 15% of time may devoted to research when “appropriate and necessary”
- ▶ McMaster
 - ▶ 25% of time devoted to professional service/activity (including research)
- ▶ University of Manitoba
 - ▶ Duties to be assigned “fairly and reasonably”
- ▶ University of Winnipeg
 - ▶ 12 research days/year and a “reasonable” amount of time may be devoted to research

FINDINGS: TIME FOR RESEARCH

- ▶ Research included as part of a broader category (e.g.; professional activity)
 - ▶ What gets prioritized?
- ▶ Research “or equivalent”
 - ▶ Undefined
- ▶ “May”
 - ▶ May also not
- ▶ “Fairly and reasonably”/“a reasonable amount of time”
 - ▶ What is reasonable?
- ▶ “Appropriate and necessary”
 - ▶ Who decides?

FINDINGS: LANGUAGE

- ▶ Supervisory approval
- ▶ Type of contract
- ▶ Terminology impacts freedom to choose research topics
 - ▶ What is 'necessary'?
 - ▶ What is 'appropriate'?
 - ▶ What is 'reasonable'?
- ▶ Role of collective agreements in assuring academic freedom
 - ▶ Contradictions in collective agreements

DISCUSSION: ACADEMIC FREEDOM

- ▶ Research is often only a possibility
- ▶ Importance of research
 - ▶ Secondary priority
 - ▶ Equivalencies
 - ▶ Value vs. formal support
- ▶ Autonomy

DISCUSSION: ABILITY TO RESEARCH

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- ▶ Updates since analysis
- ▶ Ground-floor reality at a library may not be reflective of what is indicated in the collective agreements
- ▶ Promotion and tenure guidelines are not publicly available at every institution

CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ Analysis of updated collective agreements
- ▶ Obtain promotion and tenure guidelines from all universities included
- ▶ Expand number of universities included
 - ▶ Examine according to types beyond U15 and non-U15

FUTURE STUDY





QUESTIONS?

