



STATEMENT ON COLLEGIAL GOVERNANCE

CAPAL/ACBAP endorses professional academic librarians as equal participants in the governance structures of academic institutions and recognizes the core role of academic librarians in the teaching and the advancement of research and knowledge in the mission of educational institutions.¹ Academic librarians, as library and information science professionals and scholarly practitioners, are entitled to professional autonomy and the rights and responsibilities of academic freedom and collegial governance. For those reasons, CAPAL/ACBAP supports the participation of academic librarians at all levels of an institution's organizational structure from the library to the highest levels of institutional governance. Frequently a minority within their academic communities, it is often difficult for academic librarians to achieve equal representation within a democratic process. Therefore, CAPAL/ACBAP stresses the need to address obstacles that prevent democratic and equal representation in collegial governance and processes. Collegial governance is based on the shared belief that it is in the common interest of all to cooperate in promoting the academic mission of the university.²

¹ CAPAL fully supports *CAUT Librarians' Committee Discussion Paper on Governance and Librarians* approved by CAUT Council April 2000 and the UNESCO General Conference, Twenty-ninth Session, Paris, "VI-Rights and Freedoms of Higher Education Teaching Personnel" 1997.

² Villanova University. Faculty Congress. (2006). *Definition of Collegial Governance*. https://www1.villanova.edu/content/dam/villanova/faculty_congress/definition-of-collegial-governance.pdfv

A necessary and, indeed, an essential component of collegial governance is the establishment of forums where librarians have a voice and academic freedom to debate, advance and address professional issues in a transparent and collegial manner. Centralized and unilateral decision-making risks alienation and is counterproductive to the advancement of an organization's mission. Collegial processes not only significantly increase the professional librarian's investment and ownership of administrative initiatives but serve to promote them as well. Participatory decision-making increases morale, creativity, and contributions among professionals and is associated with effective leadership.³ In addition, the most compelling argument for strong collegial governance is the librarian's responsibility to individuals and society. Academic libraries, like the institutions that house them, are public spheres that play a critical role in safeguarding our democratic freedoms; and as such, they must be governed based on values rooted in the public good⁴ and professional ethics and principles.⁵

CAPAL/ACBAP endorses, as a cornerstone of the library's governance structure, the formation of a Library Council. In Canadian academic communities the Library Council was originally conceived as a forum for professional academic librarians and faculty to collegially discuss current issues, priorities and goals from the perspective of the institution's mission. In reality, the Library Council has been transformed into an information sharing body that no longer practices the academic process of collegial deliberations and consultations in an atmosphere that recognizes academic freedom. Therefore, CAPAL/ACBAP stresses that the Library Council should not be merely an information sharing body. Accountable to the academic senate or institutional equivalent, and with a mandate recognized in the collective agreements, the Library

³ Bryman, A. (2008). Effective leadership in higher education: A literature review. *Studies in Higher Education*, 32(6), 693-710.

⁴ See the scholarship of Henry, A. Giroux for in-depth discussion of higher education as a public good, in particular, Giroux, H.A. (2011). One more, with conviction: Defending higher education as a public good. *Qui parle*, 20(1), 117-135.

⁵ CAPAL *Academic Librarianship: A Statement of Principles* (2012); CAPAL *Statement on Governance* (2015); and *IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and Other Information Workers, 2012* <http://www.ifla.org/news/ifla-code-of-ethics-for-librarians-and-other-information-workers-full-version>

Council should be a decision-making body that determines policies and priorities for the library. The Library Council, as a means of effective collegial governance, should consider key matters impacting the work of librarians and the development of library resources and services. The Library Council will operate according to bylaws and rules of order that reflect the following:

- 1) That all professional librarians within the library as an academic unit, including those holding administrative or contractual appointments,⁶ form the voting majority of the council.
- 2) That the membership of non-librarians be considered on the basis of local circumstances but that such membership will not violate the majority role of the professional librarians as noted above.
- 3) That the role of the university librarian, or title equivalent, be clearly defined.
- 4) That the chair of the Library Council be chosen from among the professional librarians.
- 5) That, in the case of larger professional staff complements, consideration is given to the formation of an executive committee of the Library Council with the simple mandate of determining Library Council agendas and with members elected from among the professional librarians for a term of office specified in the bylaws for the Library Council.

⁶ In 2010, only 49% of all instructional faculty in the post-secondary sector in the United States were full-time. See Gerber, L. *The Rise and Decline of Faculty Governance* (2014), John Hopkins University Press. By comparison, in Canada, 66.9% of university professors are full-time and 64.5% of college and vocational instructors are full-time. Although the situation is not as dire as in the United States contract appointments are on the rise, see *2014-2014 CAUT Almanac of Post-secondary Education in Canada*, <http://www.caut.ca/docs/default-source/almanac/almanac-2014-2015.pdf?sfvrsn=4>. In the interest of not disenfranchising an increasingly growing segment of professional peers, CAPAL-ACBAP is of the position that professional insight and expertise of all librarians, regardless of rank and appointment status, is critical to the development of optimal library services and resources.