

# ***Labour in Solidarity: Librarians in unions in colleges and technical institutes***

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# Context/importance



- Most data available is for large research universities (members of CAUT)
- Union rates are declining in general but remain high (68%) in educational sector
- Librarians are the minority on every faculty bargaining team and this often disadvantages them
- Even since the Academic Librarianship: A Crisis or an Opportunity? Symposium (2011) where there was an “overwhelming response” and a “call to action,” there remains a lack of research and union engagement by librarians

# Methodology

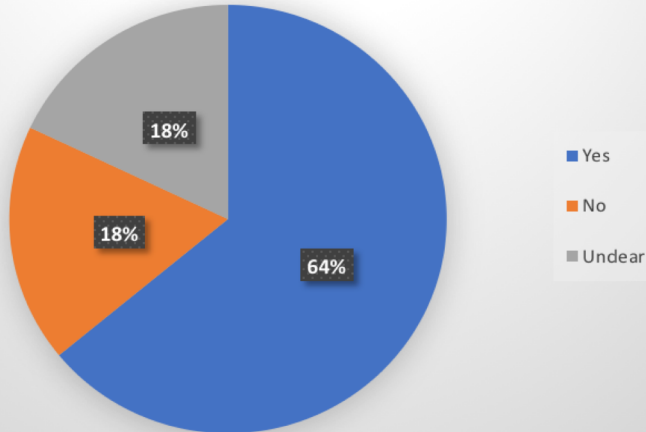


- **Environmental scan** of publicly-funded colleges, technical institutes, CEGEPs in Canada (Colleges and Institutes Canada membership list)
- Analysis of a **purposive sample** of degree-granting institutions across Canada to identify whether librarians were included in faculty unions or associations
  - **Assessment of a subset of Collective Agreements** (all publicly accessible) to identify and explore academic librarians rights and responsibilities
- Informed by Harrington & Gerolami (2011)

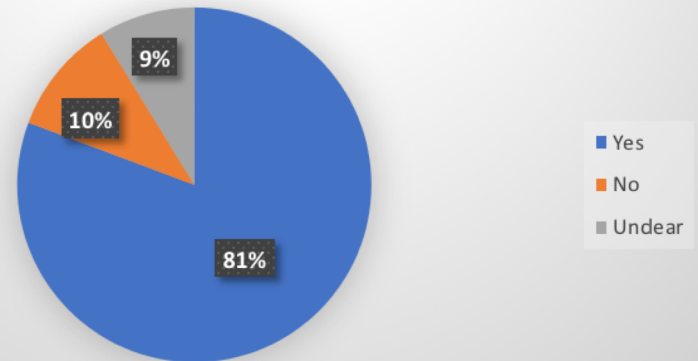
# Environmental scan

The majority of colleges and institutes in our sample have librarians and the majority of those librarians are part of the same collective agreement as faculty

Librarians at institution



Librarians part of faculty collective agreement



# Purposive sample of institutions

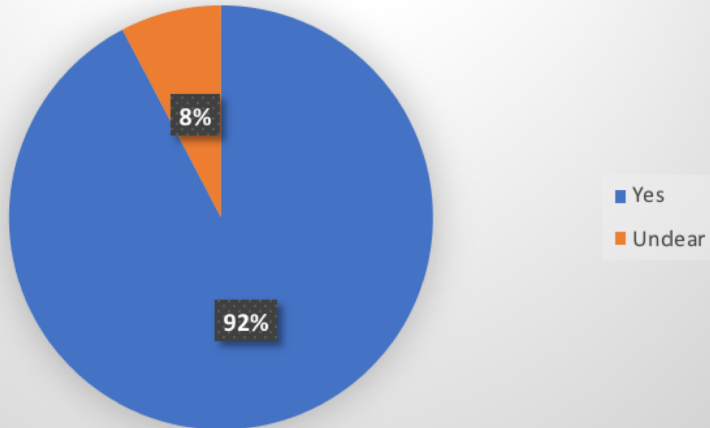


West	Central-West	Central-East	North
Camosun College (BC)	North West College (SK)	Algonquin College (ON)	Aurora College (NT)
Douglas College (BC)	Red River College of Applied Arts, Science & Technology (MB)	Fanshawe College of Applied Arts & Technology (ON)	Yukon College (YT)
Medicine Hat College (AB)	University College of the North (MB)	Polytechnique Montréal (QC)	
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (BC)			
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (AB)			

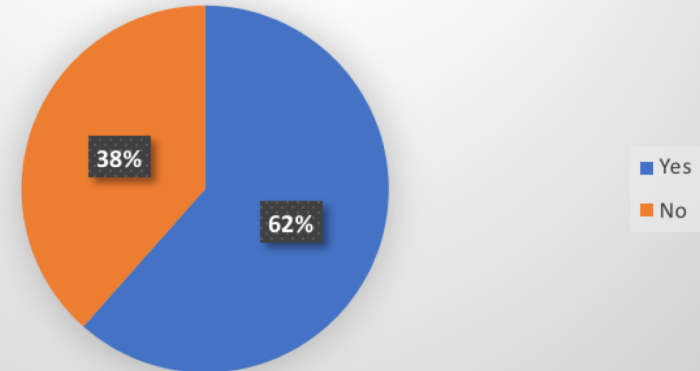
# Purposive sample

In our purposive sample of 13, of the 12 institutions with librarians, 8 include librarians in the same bargaining unit as faculty.

**Librarians at institution**



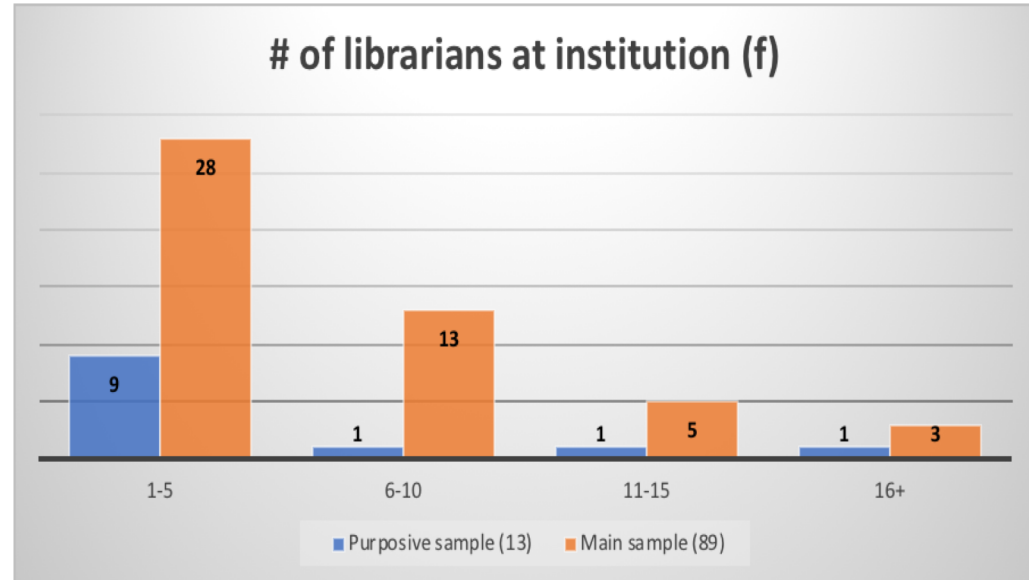
**Librarians part of faculty collective agreement**



# Purposive sample

We relied on measures of central tendency and some measures of variance to analyze our data.

- Range of 1211 - 31695 students
  - mean = 11 209; median = 8888
- Average of 5 librarians per institution
- Most libraries had less than 6 librarians



# Purposive sample of institutions

Librarians in the same  
bargaining unit as faculty

West	Central	East	North
Camosun College (BC)	North West College (SK)	Algonquin College (ON)	Aurora College (NT)
Douglas College (BC)	Red River College of Applied Arts, Science & Technology (MB)	Fanshawe College of Applied Arts & Technology (ON)	Yukon College (YT)
Medicine Hat College (AB)	University College of the North (MB)	Polytechnique Montréal (QC)	
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# Librarian & faculty combined bargaining units

Institution	Bargaining Unit
Algonquin College (ON)	Ontario Provincial Service Employees' Union (OPSEU)
Aurora College (NT)	Union of Northern Workers (UNW)
Douglas College (BC)	Douglas College Faculty Association
Fanshawe College (ON)	Ontario Provincial Service Employees' Union (OPSEU)
NAIT (AB)	Northern Alberta Institute of Technology Academic Staff Association
NVIT (BC)	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Employees' Association
University College of the North (MB)	Manitoba Government and General Employees Union
Yukon College (YK)	Public Service Alliance of Canada

# What we found - responsibilities of labour



	Teaching	Research	Professional practice	Service	Professional Development	Code of Ethics	Academic Freedom
Algonquin	y		y		y		y
Aurora	y				y		
Douglas	y			y	y		
Fanshawe	y		y		y		y
NAIT	y				y		
NVIT	y	y		y	y		
UC North	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Yukon	y	y		y	y	y	y

# What we found (salary, hours)



- Hours of work: 35-40 hours per week (mean 35.9; median 35.75)
- Starting salary ranges from \$44,950 - \$87,263 (mean \$61,849)
  - Compare Harrington & Gerolami's mean of \$54,642

Salary range	Frequency
<\$55,000	2
\$55,001-\$60,000	1
\$61,001-\$65,000	3
>\$65,001	2

# What we found - responsibilities of labour (teaching)



- Yukon College's Article 25.10 Workload for Instructors gives **examples of instructional work**, including instruction preparation, delivery, marking, exam invigilation, office hours; curriculum development and maintenance (p. 30).
- At NAIT, Article 53 covers Instructional Design and Delivery for faculty: "This responsibility includes **latitude to teach, discuss, gather and disseminate knowledge and understanding** based on the academic staff member's expertise in their discipline." (p. 37)
- In OPSEU agreement (Algonquin & Fanshawe), librarians are identified as "members of an academic community who share with faculty colleagues in the **responsibility of imparting life-long learning skills** to students" (p. 130).

# What we found - responsibilities of labour (librarians)



- Minor provisions: working conditions (e.g. hours), salary, vacation
- Example of librarian-specific responsibilities from UCN:

## 78:05 Responsibilities of the Librarian

- (a) The librarian's professional obligations and responsibilities to UCN shall encompass: the development and provision of his/her professional knowledge and services; contributions to librarianship and/or scholarship; service to the University College, the academic community, the Aboriginal community, the northern community and the community-at-large. The librarian shall have the right to apply for UCN support and/or research/study leave.
- (b) The librarian shall carry out these responsibilities in a fair, ethical and professional manner and endeavour to ensure that the Library's resources and services are accessible. The librarian shall foster a free exchange of ideas and shall not impose or permit censorship.

# Trends in our sample's collective agreements



- Differ from Harrington & Gerolami's findings:
  - No mention of academic freedom in half
  - Autonomy and librarian-specific workload rarely addressed
  - Much smaller mean, median numbers for librarians
- Inclusion of teaching and professional development in all
- The extent of language around the responsibilities of labour varies widely between collective agreements

# Librarian union activism/social justice



- We need to acknowledge that union and labour activism historically has discriminated against racial or marginalized groups (Moreno, 2006; AFL-CIO, 2017).
- Union activism is linked to social justice in LIS literature (Barriage, 2016; Kandiuk, 2014; Wheeler et al, 2014)
- In our sample, 4 institutions addressed activism or social justice in their Collective Agreement:
  - Aurora College: Social Justice Fund
  - UCN: Responsibility of service to Aboriginal community & northern community
  - NVIT: Right to favour hiring Aboriginal staff & teaching Aboriginal curriculum
  - Yukon College: Code of Ethics that “honours diversity”

# Moving forward



- Continue to explore librarians' relationships and positions in unions in all institutions in Canada
- Explore the position of librarians in non-degree granting institutions
- Examine the visibility and voices of librarians during labour disputes
- Explore opportunities or recommendations to embed social justice issues into our collective agreement documents



## Discussion/questions



- Are you part of a faculty agreement? How active are you?
- Do you have a contract close to expiration? Have you been through a strike?
- Have you/are you part of the bargaining team?
- What bargaining issues are of importance to you?

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