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And Our Neighbors as Ourselves? Serving Unaffiliated Patrons in Christian Library Consortium Libraries

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ABSTRACT

While the primary responsibility of academic libraries is to support the students, staff, and faculty of the college or university that hosts them, most academic libraries offer access and services to patrons without official ties to the campus. Academic librarians often experience the tension between a professional desire to provide full access and services to all information seekers and the reality of limited time and resources. Previous studies have described services offered by academic libraries to unaffiliated patrons, but no study has focused exclusively on academic libraries whose host institutions are faith-based. This paper describes unaffiliated patron policies from Christian Library Consortium [CLC] members, which serve faith-based institutions. This paper seeks to equip libraries serving faith-based institutions to define their relationships with unaffiliated patrons by presenting a thorough review of the literature and describing the current policies and practices of CLC libraries regarding service to these patrons.

In her article "What's a Library Worth?" E. J. Roger (2007) reminds us that academic libraries are created by and sustained by our host institutions. The value of the academic library, Roger argues, is measured by the support the library lends to the success of its host system. However, the collections and services of many academic libraries are sought out by patrons who are not affiliated with the host institution. While service to this group falls outside of the primary responsibility of academic libraries, most do offer services to these patrons. Academic librarians often find themselves seeking to balance professional ideals of equal service to all information seekers with the reality of limited time and resources and the responsibility to prioritize patrons from the campus community that supports the library. The nature of the academic library's host system may influence librarians' priorities when pursuing this balance. While previous studies have described services offered by academic libraries to unaffiliated patrons, these studies either reported data from mixed cohorts of publically funded and private academic libraries or only described services of libraries at publically funded institutions. No study has focused exclusively on academic libraries whose host systems are faith-based institutions. The priorities of Christian librarians extend beyond professional obligation to library users to the embodiment of the Christian

virtue of hospitality as noted by Nelson (2019), "For librarians of faith, we want to follow the example of Christ, who invited the needy without reservation (p. 67)" and "the work of librarianship provides nearly endless opportunities to demonstrate hospitality to the communities we serve" (p. 66). This study describes policies and practices of academic libraries that belong to the Christian Library Consortium [CLC], a group comprised of libraries of Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries (Association of Christian Librarians [ACL], 2020), which may provide libraries at faith-based institutions a more relevant comparator cohort than those in previous studies. This paper seeks to equip CLC libraries and other libraries serving faith-based institutions to define their relationships with unaffiliated patrons by presenting a thorough review of the literature and describing the current policies and practices of CLC libraries regarding service to these patrons.

Literature Review

Terminology

The primary responsibility of academic libraries is to provide service to patrons affiliated with the libraries' host institution. The literature uniformly defines the affiliated patron group as persons currently enrolled in or employed by the host institution, i.e., current students, staff, and faculty. Most academic libraries also provide service to patrons outside the affiliated users group. Naming and defining this group proves to be more challenging. Weare and Stevenson (2012) found more than 40 terms applied to unaffiliated patrons "including community borrowers, external users, guest borrowers, non-affiliated users, permit patrons, secondary users, unaffiliated users, and visitors" (p. 112). While the survey they conducted found nearly all of the libraries queried employed the descriptor *community* for unaffiliated users (p. 126), they also found the participants' university and library mission statements used the term *community* ambiguously, sometimes referring to unaffiliated users of the campus and its library and sometimes to affiliated patrons in the "campus community or the learning community" (p. 127). Some terms applied to unaffiliated patrons stress their difference from affiliated users. Barsun (2003) referred to them as "outsiders," and Jansen (1992) reported usage of the term "non-legitimate clientele" (p. 10). Other designates commonly found in the literature are less charged: external, secondary, or public users. This paper employs the term *unaffiliated patrons* because it proved to be the most effective subject term in locating scholarly work on this topic.

One reason for the lack of uniformity in describing unaffiliated patrons may be the diverse constituency of the group. The literature regularly named high school students, students and faculty from other institutions of higher education, professionals conducting work-related research, independent scholars, and local residents as subgroups in the unaffiliated patron demography. Other subgroups mentioned were public school personnel and clergy (Barsun, 2003; Courtney, 2001) and corporations (Best-Nichols, 1993).

Service Dilemma

"Service to all and free access to information lie at the very heart of the library profession" (Tuñón et al., 2004, p. 487). However, the mission of academic libraries prioritizes service and access to resources for a particular group, namely patrons affiliated with the library's host institution, over the needs of unaffiliated users who are generally offered a lesser level of service (Muir, 2011, p. 2). While Martin (1990) rejected the idea of a "primary clientele" as a fallacy that contradicts the service ethic of librarians (p. 24), most of the literature agreed with Schneider (2001) that "students and faculty are, without a doubt, any academic library's priority" (p. 122). Even when prioritizing the needs of campus users, almost all academic libraries provided some level of service to unaffiliated patrons (Courtney, 2003). Serving both patron groups can leave academic librarians feeling "pulled in two directions" (Weber & Lawrence, 2010, p. 137) as the groups "compete for library resources" (Spencer & Dorsey, 1998, p. 290).

Even though unaffiliated patrons create an added burden for academic libraries wishing to serve them (Verhoeven et al., 1996, p. 392), the literature offers a wide variety of reasons libraries do so. Many academic libraries served unaffiliated users to foster positive relations between their host institutions and the community (Bell, 2013; Courtney, 2003; Dole & Hill, 2011; Dole & Hill, 2013; Schneider, 2001; Wilson, 2005), which some hoped would lead to financial support of the institution or the library (Dole & Hill, 2011, 2013; Johnson, 1998; Shires, 2006; Wilson, 2005) or favorably impact recruitment of new students (Courtney, 2003; Dole & Hill, 2013; Shires, 2006). Many academic libraries felt a responsibility to share their unique materials with all interested users to support the intellectual and cultural development of the community (Courtney, 2003; Dole & Hill; 2013, Shires, 2006; Wilson, 2005). Some academic libraries at publicly funded institutions felt an obligation to serve said public (Best-Nichols, 1993; Courtney, 2003; Dole & Hill, 2013; Doney, 2019; Shires, 2006; Schneider, 2001), and many taxpayers felt such service was owed to them (Bobp & Richey, 1994; Busbee et al., 2014; Courtney, 2001; Fernandez, 2013; Jansen, 1992) even by libraries of private institutions (Cohn, 1993). Without dismissing the importance of public funds, Johnson (1992) pointed out that the per citizen contribution made via taxes to an academic library paled in comparison to the amount of each student's tuition allocated for the library budget. Another form of civic obligation cited by some libraries as an onus to serve unaffiliated users was their status as federal depository libraries (Bell, 2013; Busbee et al., 2014; Courtney, 2001; Dole & Hill, 2013; Weber & Lawrence, 2010). Cutbacks and closures in school and public libraries compelled some academic libraries to cover the gap in needed resources and services for unaffiliated patrons (Bobp & Richey, 1994; Courtney, 2003; Dole & Hill, 2013; Lenker & Kocevar-Weidinger, 2010, Muir, 2011; Shires, 2006).

Services Provided

The literature focuses on four main areas of service that academic libraries provide to unaffiliated patrons: building access, borrowing, reference service, and computer access. Almost all academic libraries provided building access with in-library use of collections to unaffiliated patrons. Busbee et al. (2014) and Weare and Stevenson (2012) found that all of the libraries included in their studies allowed building access to unaffiliated patrons. Dole and Hill (2013) reported 97.6% of libraries allowed in-house use of collections (p. 13), and Courtney (2003) found that 88.9% of libraries granted unrestricted building access with an additional 11% of libraries allowing access to at least some subgroups of unaffiliated patrons (p. 4). Building access for unaffiliated patrons was occasionally limited by time of day (Busbee et al., 2014; Weare & Stevenson, 2012), age (Doney, 2019; Weare & Stevenson, 2012), or research need (Doney, 2019). It was uncommon for academic libraries to charge unaffiliated patrons to access the building, but Barsun (2003), Doney (2019), and Shires (2006) found examples of such fees.

Borrowing privileges were also offered to unaffiliated patrons by most academic libraries, though not quite as routinely as building access and with more restrictions. Courtney (2003) found that while 88.9% of libraries offered unaffiliated patrons unrestricted building access, only 18.4% described this group's borrowing privileges as unrestricted. However, 95.6% of libraries extended some form of borrowing privileges to unaffiliated patrons (p. 4). Restrictions to unaffiliated patrons' borrowing privileges included limitations on which categories of materials they were allowed to borrow. Some libraries did not allow borrowing of audiovisual materials (Busbee et al., 2014; Weare & Stevenson, 2012), and most did not facilitate borrowing via interlibrary loan (Barsun, 2003; Weare & Stevenson, 2012). It was common for unaffiliated patrons to be required either to obtain a borrowing card or to join a library friends group in order to borrow. Studies that reported data on fees agreed that fee amounts varied widely among the libraries surveyed. For example, Barsun (2003) found the fees charged for borrowing ranged from $10 to $1,200 per year. Weare and Stevenson (2012) denounced borrowing fees as a discouragement against borrowing that generates very little revenue and may alienate potential donors (p. 129). Dole and Hill (2011) confirmed that their library's $20 borrowing fee for unaffiliated patrons had discouraged borrowing, noting that when the fee was removed the number of registered unaffiliated borrowers increased tenfold (p. 146).

Courtney (2003) reported 98.1% of libraries provided reference services to unaffiliated patrons. Discussion of reference services in the literature generally focused on the burden created by unaffiliated patrons and whether their use of reference services was disproportionate to use by affiliated patrons. Though strongly supportive of unaffiliated patrons, Wilson (2005), speaking of their use of reference services, conceded, "They require assistance with almost everything, from looking

up a book in the OPAC to actually finding it on the shelf" (p. 40). Verhoeven et al.'s (1996) investigation into reference usage confirmed that unaffiliated patrons used more service proportionally than affiliated patrons did. Unaffiliated patrons constituted 10.3% of users but asked 23.9% of reference questions (p. 394). However, when focusing on the amount of time spent answering reference questions, Spencer and Dorsey (1998) found the service provided to unaffiliated patrons was proportionate since they constituted 35.8% of library patrons and used 34.5% of reference services' time (p. 291). Whether or not the demands of unaffiliated patrons are proportional to their numbers, usage of reference services by this group was described as a burden on library personnel. That nearly all libraries continued to offer this service to unaffiliated patrons may be explained by Kibbee's (2006) observation that "while arguments against serving unaffiliated users are made on practical grounds, support for providing reference service rests on philosophical grounds and appeals to professional values" (p. 468).

Since academic libraries were early adopters of computer-based technologies, such as CD-ROM databases in the 1980s and the internet in the 1990s, and most were open to the public, unaffiliated patrons were drawn to academic libraries for computer access (Courtney, 2001). In more recent years, unaffiliated patrons employed library computer access for a host of uses both research-related and personal. Scholarly uses of computer access included searching the library's catalog, using the internet for research, reading government documents, and querying library databases. Personal uses included checking email, using word processing or other business software, and exploring the internet for entertainment purposes. The wide variety of motivations for seeking computer access and the limited number of computers available in academic libraries frequently led to competition between unaffiliated patrons and campus patrons. Many libraries prioritized campus patrons' access by restricting unaffiliated patrons to a smaller subset of library computers or limiting the amount of time unaffiliated patrons were allowed to use them. Weare and Stevenson (2012) found that some libraries discouraged unaffiliated patrons by not providing seating at computer stations designated for them, and "one library charged a fee for computer use" (p. 128). Other barriers to unaffiliated patrons' computer access were also described. Even though most academic libraries provided on-site database access to unaffiliated patrons (Shires, 2006; Weare & Stevenson, 2012; Tuñón et al., 2004), these users were frequently unaware of the research resources available to them (Singh & Emmelhainz, 2019). Additionally, unaffiliated patrons' access to all computer-based applications was complicated by the increase in requirements for authentication. Ellern et al. (2015) described academic libraries' struggle with campus IT over requiring authentication as a "clash of principles between protecting privacy and protecting security" (p. 104). Courtney (2001) pointed out that since academic libraries have moved to digital format for many reference resources and some federal government depository items are only available online, authentication "effectively removes these resources from the public's use" (p. 478) unless provisions

are made for unaffiliated patrons to authenticate. Weber and Lawrence (2010) agreed, concluding "as more and more institutions require authentication for their primary users, accommodation must be made if guests are to continue being served" (p. 137).

Issues

Throughout the literature, the primary concern associated with offering service to unaffiliated patrons was the added burden that serving a second patron group placed on academic librarians who were already shouldering the stress of serving the students, staff, and faculty of their institutions with decreased budgets and reduced staff. This burden was sometimes exacerbated by unpleasant attitudes exhibited by some unaffiliated patrons (Bell, 2013; Courtney, 2001; Johnson, 1998; Tuñón et al., 2004). Service to unaffiliated users was found to have a negative impact on the experience of the libraries' primary users by creating competition for librarians' time or limiting availability of circulating items (Bobp & Richey, 1994; Courtney, 2001, 2003; Janson, 1992; Johnson, 1998). The availability of circulating items was also impinged by the higher loss rate of items loaned to unaffiliated patrons (Courtney, 2001; Jansen, 1992; Weare & Stevenson, 2012). Service to unaffiliated patrons added to the wear and tear on library facilities (Courtney, 2003; Jansen, 1992; Muir, 2011) and increased security concerns (Bell, 2013; Busbee et al., 2014; Courtney, 2003; Muir, 2011). The presence of unaffiliated patrons in academic libraries gave rise to issues common in public library settings which academic librarians may not have the experience or training to address. The issues discussed included unsupervised minors (Bell, 2013; Busbee et al., 2014; Guernsey, 1998), inappropriate use of computers (Busbee et al., 2014; Courtney, 2001; Guernsey, 1998; Weare & Stevenson, 2012), homeless patrons (Busbee et al., 2014; Muir, 2011), and gang behavior (Muir, 2011). The literature also mentioned that academic libraries serving unaffiliated patrons might cause harm to public libraries. Academic libraries offering services to the same patron group served by public libraries may discourage the public library from collection development (Bobp & Richey, 1994; Jansen, 1992). It may also erode community support for the public library as was the case when "voters in Jefferson County, Missouri defeated a proposed new public library finding that access to the local Jefferson College library was adequate for their needs" (Courtney, 2001). In spite of all of these issues, most academic libraries continued to serve unaffiliated patrons.

Method

In order to explore the relationships of libraries serving faith-based institutions with unaffiliated patrons, a document analysis project investigated CLC member libraries' access, lending, and service policies. A list of CLC member libraries was provided by the Association of Christian Librarians [ACL] (ACL, 2019). The member list included contact information for each library as well as location and the FTE of host institution. One hundred eighty-three members were listed, but one was excluded

from the study as the library's host institution had recently closed. CLC members are predominately located in the United States and Canada with 162 libraries in the United States, 17 in Canada, 2 in the Philippines, and 1 in Austria (ACL, 2019). The FTE of CLC libraries' host institutions ranges from 15 to 56,299 with a mean FTE of 1,979. The majority of CLC institutions, 102 of 182, have an FTE of 1,000 or less (ACL, 2019). Requests for library policies concerning unaffiliated patrons were emailed to the primary contact listed for each of the 182 CLC libraries (see Appendix A for the text of the request). A second email request was sent after three weeks to libraries that had not responded to the initial request (see Appendix B). The emails included a definition of unaffiliated patrons and a request to share policies relating to this patron group. Both written policies and informal descriptions of rules and practices were invited. This flexibility was offered in an effort to include information from libraries that serve this population but do not have formal policies in place. This also allowed respondents to offer further clarification of written policies or to note where practice and policy have diverged. For example, one library's written policy states a $25 fee to obtain a borrowing card, but the librarian clarified that, in practice, the fee is always waived. Each informal summary, written policy, or written policy enhanced with added explanation was reviewed, and information describing the primary areas of service discussed in the literature (building access, borrowing, reference service, and computer access) was noted and categorized. These data were then combined to describe the policies and current practices of CLC libraries regarding service to unaffiliated patrons.

Limitations

As a document analysis, this study reports the services libraries have chosen to describe in their written policies or informal summaries. This choice limits the study in its ability to articulate all of the services offered by CLC libraries to unaffiliated patrons. However, one of the goals of this paper is to shed light on areas where the participating libraries' policies are incomplete with an aim to encourage improvement to these policies. Further study of CLC libraries' relationships with unaffiliated patrons using a survey instrument may provide a more robust description of library services by directing respondents to consider areas of service they may or may not have included in their policies. The inclusion of both written policies and informal summaries may also restrict the ability of the study to describe the current state of policies as written policies may be out of date and informal summaries of practice may or may not have been thoroughly considered before submission. However, the decision to invite informal summaries did result in the inclusion of 19 libraries that otherwise would have been excluded. Since only CLC libraries were invited to participate and only 50% of CLC libraries responded to the request for participation, the policy information collected may not be generalizable to all CLC libraries or to other libraries serving faith–based institutions.

Results

Of the 182 CLC libraries contacted, 50% (91 libraries) responded to the request for policies or informal summaries of practice regarding unaffiliated patrons. Most of the responding libraries, 80, are located in the United States, and 11 are located in Canada. The FTE of the responding libraries ranges from 15 to 56, 299, with 51% (46 libraries) having an FTE less than 1,000. The average FTE of respondents is 2,679 (ACL, 2019). Of the 91 respondents, 82 libraries indicate that they serve unaffiliated patrons. Of these, 19 had no written policy but provided informal summaries of their practices and 63 provided written policies. Five libraries included additional descriptions of their practices to supplement the information in their written policies. Three libraries stated that they had no such policy without offering further explanation. Six libraries indicated that they do not serve any unaffiliated patrons. Of these, three libraries serve online institutions, one is on a gated campus that does not admit unaffiliated persons, and two libraries serve only their institutions' constituents, although one of these indicated that exceptions might be considered by special arrangement.

Figure 1

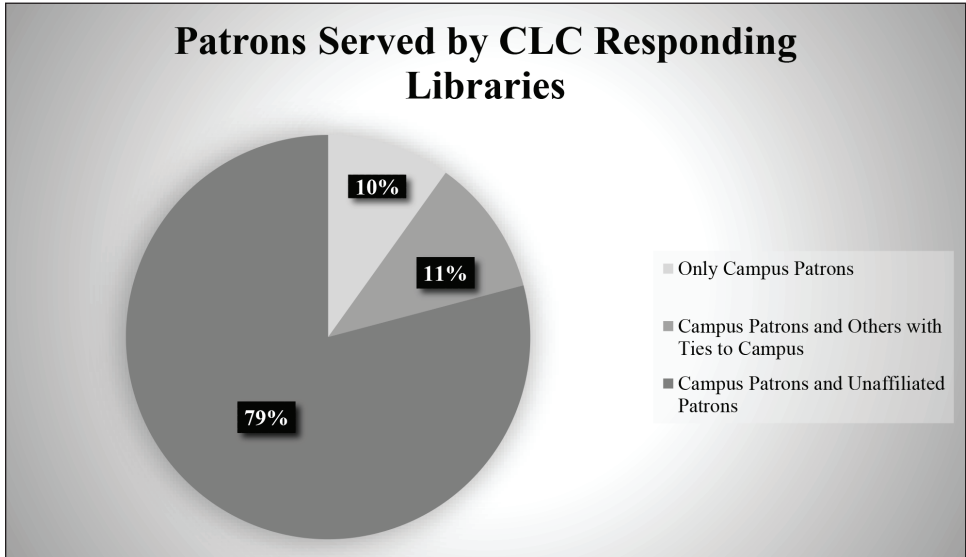*CLC Responses to Request for Unaffiliated Patrons Policies*
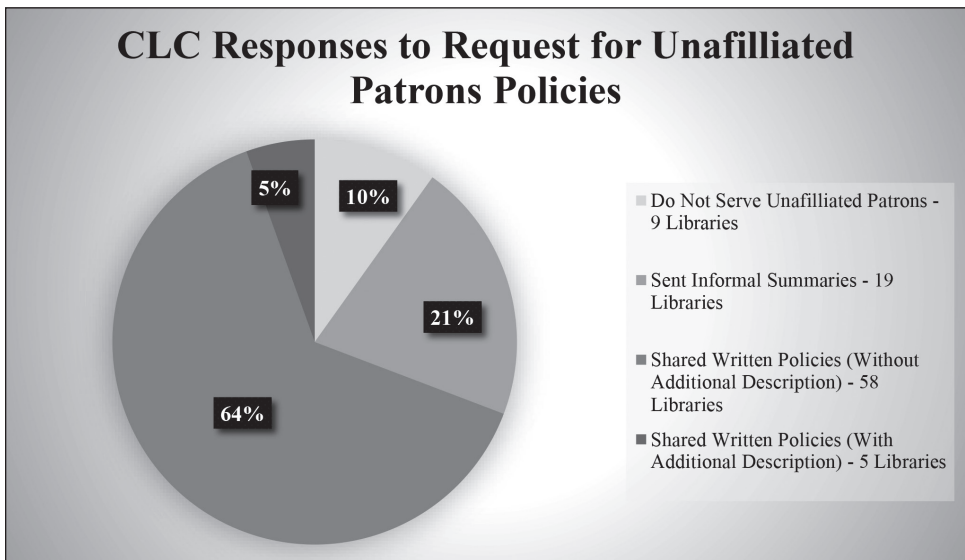
Ten libraries that serve patrons beyond their institutions' current students and employees offer services only to groups that have official attachment to their institutions. Examples include members of the institutions' sponsoring denomination, participants in formal consortial arrangements, alumni, and previous employees.

The other 72 libraries offer at least some services to patrons without any kind of affiliation with the host institution. Seventeen libraries state the priority of campus patrons in their policies or descriptions of service.

Figure 2

Patrons Served by Responding CLC Libraries

The most used term for unaffiliated patrons is *community* patron (or user/member/borrower), found in 37 responses. The term *guests* is also used frequently (15 responses). Other terms used are *visitors*, *outside* patrons, *external* users, *public* patrons, *courtesy* patrons, *special* users, and *walk-ins*.

The four main considerations for unaffiliated policies noted in the literature – building access, borrowing, reference service, and computer access – were not all found in all of the policies and informal summaries of CLC libraries. Descriptions of building access for unaffiliated patrons were included in 35 responses, borrowing was mentioned in all 82 responses, reference service was included in only 9 responses, and computer access was mentioned in 48 responses.

Figure 3

Areas of Service to Unaffiliated Patrons Described in CLC Responses
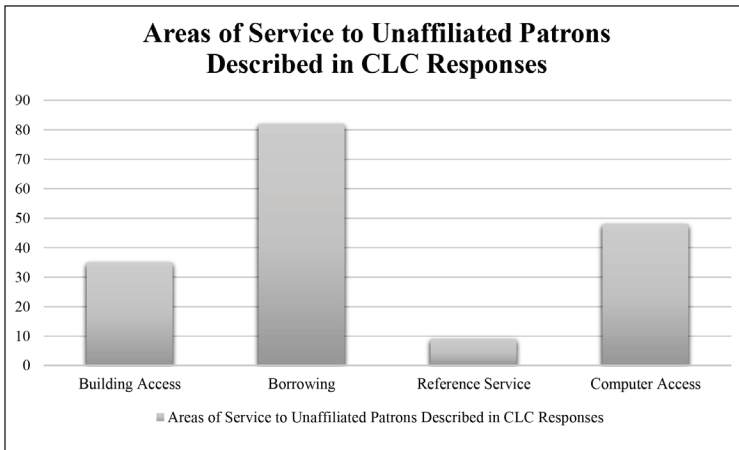
Discussion

Building Access

While most libraries allow unaffiliated patrons access to their facilities and in-house use of library collections, this permission tends to be implied rather than directly stated. Only 35 responses included specific mention of building access. Unaffiliated patrons' use of library facilities is largely unrestricted. Only three libraries require unaffiliated patrons to sign in when entering their facilities, and one library requires identification to be shown to a security guard. Three libraries restrict usage during certain time periods: one requires identification to enter the building between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., one does not allow unaffiliated patrons in the facility after 6 p.m., and one prohibits unaffiliated users' access during extended hours for midterm and final exams. Five libraries indicate that unaffiliated patrons cannot use group study rooms. One library has a 24/7 study area that is not accessible to unaffiliated patrons, and another mentions these patrons cannot reserve conference rooms. Three libraries require unaffiliated patrons to obtain borrowing cards in order to access their buildings. The fees for these cards are $0, $100, and $120 per year, depending on the library. While this requirement indirectly charges unaffiliated patrons for building access and in-house use of collections, one library charges a building access fee of $45 per year that does not include borrowing privileges. Unaffiliated patrons may use this library without charge by obtaining a day pass; three such passes are allowed per visitor per year.

Borrowing

Although policies and descriptions of service to unaffiliated patrons may or may not include specific mention of building access, reference service, and computer use, all libraries that described unaffiliated patron service included information on borrowing. In fact, of the 82 libraries that offer some level of service to persons outside their campus communities, 29 libraries shared policies or descriptions that only defined borrowing privileges. Five of these circulation policies included specific mention of building access, but none included information about unaffiliated patrons' access to either reference service or computer use. Three libraries that allow unaffiliated patrons access to their facilities and on-site use of their collections offer no borrowing privileges to anyone outside their institutions' current students and employees. Eleven libraries allow borrowing for certain groups of patrons with some affiliation to the institution – examples include alumni, members of consortial agreement groups, ministers and others with denominational affiliation to the host institution – but do not extend borrowing privileges to members of the general public.

Fees for borrowing are mentioned by 71 libraries. One policy mentions an annual fee without specifying its amount. Of the remaining 70 libraries, fees charged range from $0 to $120 per year. The average fee is $21.40. The median fee is $10. The most common fee is $0 per year, charged by 27 libraries. The next most frequent fees are $10 and $25 per year, charged by 10 libraries each.

Table 1

Average CLC Borrowing Fees for Unaffiliated Patrons

Average CLC Borrowing Fees for Unaffiliated Patrons		
Mean	Median	Mode
$21.40	$10.00	$0

Limitations on unaffiliated patrons' borrowing are described by many libraries. Nine libraries include age limits for applying for borrowing privileges: one library requires borrowers to be at least 16 years old, seven require borrowers to be at least 18 years old, and one requires borrowers to be at least 21 years old. Six libraries limit borrowing privileges to persons living within certain geographical areas defined either by naming local counties or by specifying maximum distance of the borrower's residence from the library. Many libraries provided borrowing information only for unaffiliated patrons, but some shared borrowing information broad enough to allow for comparisons between loan rules for unaffiliated borrowers and those for undergraduate students. Where such comparisons are possible, it is found that 22 libraries limit unaffiliated patrons' borrowing to fewer items at a time than undergraduates are allowed, five libraries give shorter loan terms, four allow fewer

renewals, and two do not allow unaffiliated patrons to place holds. One library charges overdue fines to unaffiliated patrons but not to undergraduate students. Another library charges higher overdue fines to unaffiliated patrons and does not extend them the grace period that is offered to undergraduates. Ten libraries suspend borrowing privileges for unaffiliated patrons whose accounts have unpaid fines but reinstate privileges once the fines are paid. One library closes unaffiliated patron accounts if three items are overdue, and another closes accounts if any item is overdue by more than three weeks. Five libraries emphasize the priority of their campus patrons and mention that any materials checked out to unaffiliated patrons may be recalled by campus users. Exclusion of certain types of materials from unaffiliated patrons' borrowing privileges is common. Twenty-seven libraries do not lend course reserve materials to unaffiliated patrons. Twelve do not lend any audiovisual or other media materials, and one library that allows DVD borrowing will not lend DVDs worth more than $80 to unaffiliated patrons. Seven libraries specify collections of equipment that cannot be borrowed, including technology (laptops, headphones, etc.), bicycles, and puppets. Five libraries mention that curriculum cannot be borrowed, and one library each will not lend new books or material in the juvenile collection.

Interlibrary loan was mentioned by 43 libraries with 38 libraries stating interlibrary lending is not available for unaffiliated patrons. Of the five libraries that facilitate interlibrary loan for these patrons, four charge fees for this service ranging from $3 to $10 per item.

Reference Service

Of the primary types of service provided to unaffiliated patrons, reference service is mentioned least often in the policies and service descriptions offered by CLC libraries. It is possible that libraries assume unaffiliated patrons will ask for reference assistance when they need it and do not feel it necessary to state explicitly that they are allowed to do so. Only nine libraries specifically mention that reference service is available to unaffiliated patrons. Two describe the availability of this service as "limited" with priority given to campus patrons, and another mentions priority of service to campus patrons without characterizing reference help to unaffiliated patrons as limited. Only two libraries mention the availability of virtual reference service to unaffiliated patrons.

Computer Access

After information on borrowing privileges, computer access is the area of service most frequently mentioned by library policies. Forty-eight libraries mentioned some aspect of unaffiliated patrons' computer use. Two libraries reserve the use of their computers solely for campus patrons, but one of these mentions that unaffiliated patrons are welcome to access the library's Wi-Fi using their own devices. Ten

libraries designate specific computers for unaffiliated patrons' use: two libraries offer two terminals for unaffiliated patrons, one library has only one such terminal, and other libraries describe the available computers as "limited" without specifying a number. Ten libraries limit the amount of time unaffiliated patrons are allowed to use library computers: three mention a time limit but do not specify its length, three allow two hours per day, two allow one hour per day, and two allow 30 minutes per day, though one of these mentions that the 30-minute limit might only be imposed during times of high demand. In addition to computer availability and time limits, unaffiliated patrons may also have to navigate authentication processes in order to access digital resources and the internet. Nineteen libraries mention that some form of authentication is required to sign on to library computers: 11 libraries have temporary logins that can be either checked out or requested from library staff, seven require a librarian or staff member to sign in for the unaffiliated patron, and one allows unaffiliated patrons to sign in for themselves using any Google account. Computer access for unaffiliated patrons does not necessarily equate to access to all of the library's digital resources. Of the 35 libraries that describe unaffiliated patrons' access to databases and electronic resources, 29 affirm that unaffiliated patrons have access to databases while on campus. Six libraries do not allow unaffiliated patrons any database access, but one of these does allow access to ebooks. No libraries provide remote access to databases or other electronic resources.

Conclusions

Most CLC libraries offer at least some service to unaffiliated patrons. While some limit this accommodation to specific groups such as alumni, emeriti, local ministers, or members of formal consortial groups, the majority extend service to patrons with no official ties to their host institution. The literature frequently mentions the burden experienced by academic librarians who must balance service to both campus users and unaffiliated patrons. Lenker and Kocevar-Weidinger (2010) describe this pressure as a negotiation between competing goods: access to the academic library for unaffiliated users, priority for campus patrons, and fairness to library personnel providing service. They contend that a well-articulated library policy supports all three groups by extending access for unaffiliated patrons whenever practical, preventing that access from disrupting services to campus patrons, and offering clear guidance to the library personnel charged with offering service to both patron groups (p. 423). Any library that serves unaffiliated patrons would benefit from having such a policy to define, balance, and clarify that service. Since few of the written policies or informal summaries provided by CLC libraries included descriptions of all four of the areas of service to unaffiliated patrons identified in the literature, respondents may find it beneficial to revise or expand their policies to define adequately their service to unaffiliated patrons in order to support unaffiliated patrons, campus constituents, and library personnel as effectively as possible.

CLC libraries and other libraries serving faith-based institutions may find that the discussion above offers useful comparisons for evaluating specific aspects of their service policies for unaffiliated patrons. The discussion indicates that most CLC libraries allow building access and borrowing privileges and that building access is usually allowed without a fee. While borrowing fees reported by CLC libraries did not range as widely as in some groups presented in the literature, there is a considerable variety in CLC borrowing fees. Libraries may find the presented CLC data to be helpful in evaluating their current fee structures.

The three libraries that report having no unaffiliated patron policy and the 19 libraries that have no written policy may find the comparator information from other CLC libraries to be a useful starting point for drafting policies. The 29 libraries that have defined borrowing privileges for unaffiliated patrons without describing policy for other services may wish to consider expanding their policies. Even libraries with more extensive policies may benefit from reviewing them to ensure they address all four of the major areas of service to unaffiliated patrons identified in the literature: building access, borrowing, reference service, and computer access. ☥

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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APPENDIX A

Dear [CLC Contact],

I am conducting a document analysis study of Christian Library Consortium (CLC) member libraries' policies for unaffiliated patrons. Unaffiliated patrons are library users who are not faculty (current or emeriti), staff, or students (current or alumni) of your library's institution. Libraries may refer to this group of patrons as guest patrons, community patrons, unaffiliated patrons, or with other similar language. I am inviting you to participate in this study by sharing your library's policy for these patrons. If you have a written policy, please share it. If your practices or rules for unaffiliated patrons are not compiled in a written policy, I would still greatly appreciate a description including: how access to library materials and resources differs for this group, rules that apply only to this group, and any fees charged to these patrons for materials access or use.

I am conducting this research to explore commonalities and differences in unaffiliated patron policies at Christian institutions. There is no known risk in participating in this study. All identifying information about you, your library, and institution will be removed from your policy or description of your rules and practices before the information is analyzed and the results of the study are published.

If you choose to participate in this project, please send your unaffiliated patron policy to jsweeney@pointloma.edu within two weeks (by February 6th). Policies or descriptions of practices can be sent as attachments in pdf or MicroSoft Word format, shared as GoogleDocs, or included in the body of an email. If someone else in your library is a better point of contact for this information, please feel free to forward this request to them.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact me any time. My contact information is given below.

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study. I genuinely appreciate your time.

All the best,
Julie Sweeney, MLIS
Instructional Services Librarian
Ryan Library, Point Loma Nazarene University
3900 Lomaland Drive
San Diego, CA 92106 USA
619.849.2472
jsweeney@pointloma.edu

APPENDIX B

Dear [CLC Contact],

I am still collecting data for my research study on CLC libraries' policies for unaffiliated patrons. More information about the study is included in my original email included below. I hope you will consider participating in this study by sharing your library's policy with me. Please send your policy on or before Wednesday, February 26.

Please let me know if you have any questions about this study.

All the best,
Julie Sweeney, MLIS
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Ryan Library, Point Loma Nazarene University
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