

Final Arrangements for  
Library Books on Reserve Shelf

November 17, 1933

Memorandum  
To: Mr. Leigh  
From: Mrs. Leslie  
October 27, 1938

I have the copies of the E.P.C. memorandum concerning books for the Reserve Shelf and of your memorandum to Mary Harriman noting the action of the Executive Committee. The Records Office has also supplied, as you suggested, a list of classes having groups of ten or more students.

A study of this list (there are 28 groups of 10 or more students) reveals the fact that it is not necessarily the size of the group which determines the demand for books on reserve. Some of the largest groups have few, if any, books on reserve; and in any case, it is the kind of assignment, the length of the assignment, and the length of time given for the assignment which determine the demand.

As I look back on the beginning of each year, it seems to me that each autumn there has arisen the same apparent difficulty with regard to books on reserve; this has certainly been true the last three years with the very large groups for which books have been placed on reserve. Of the various reasons for this difficulty, these seem chiefly responsible:

1. There are new students who are unaccustomed to planning their work.
2. The Library does not receive in advance, notices of material which is to be needed on reserve; very often the Library is not notified of material to be placed on reserve until after the assignment has been given out in class, thereby involving considerable delay, if books have to be recalled.
3. The week-ending habit in the autumn reduces the available study periods for many students and means a "peak" use of reserve books on the day before the class is to be held.

The Library tries, not altogether successfully, but continually, to cope with these difficulties. As to new students, it seems to me that this year, because of the personal introduction to the Library given each student during registration week, the students adjusted themselves more easily than before.

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To: Mr. Leigh  
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As to securing advance information concerning books to go on reserve, that is not always easy to get. Frequently the work is not planned until the class meets. Sometimes members of the faculty simply forget to tell us. When we find that the forgetfulness is constant on the part of any one individual, we try to remind that person, and to explain the need for advance information. Perhaps we fall down badly here, for we know that the members of the faculty are busy, and we'd like to avoid the impression of nagging.

As to the week-ending, we permit students to sign up as much as a week in advance for any book on reserve, thus insuring that they may have what they want when they can use it, if they plan accordingly.

The E.P.C. suggestion that the Library advertise for duplicates to be loaned by members of the community seemed a good one on first reading. But an examination of the larger groups and a second thought on the matter makes one question the wisdom of further burdening the college bulletin boards. I have talked with Mr. Newcomb, who has the largest group using books on reserve and he agrees that it probably would not be useful. The faculty are already generous in loaning their personal copies; we borrow freely from them and also from the town library when the demand is apparent in time. The books needed are not often owned by students.

And, in addition, if we did advertise frequently, the advertisements would probably not be read. We now post notices for missing books; apparently they are rarely noticed, for the missing books do not often appear promptly.

Would it not be well to go into the matter further?



Bennington College  
November 17, 1938

Memorandum

To: Mrs. Leslie

From: Mr. Leigh

Re: Books for Reserve Shelf

Referring to your note of October 27th regarding the E.P.C. proposal for books on the reserve shelf, I am assuming that your memorandum to me and to them indicates that our proposal was being carried out before they made it largely, and that nothing else needs to be done.

I would like to make one suggestion: that is, that the Library advertise among the faculty for duplicates by putting lists in the Faculty Lounge. I think many of us have books which we would be glad to lend but do not know that they would be needed. I do not believe that we would object to such notices accumulating in the Faculty Lounge for that purpose; do you?

RDL

cc: Executive Committee Minutes