LAMA

EDITOR: Kathryn H. Carpenter

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Robert F. Moran Jr.

CURRENT LAMA OFFICERS: President—Joan R. Giesecke, Dean of Libraries, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0410. Acting Executive Director—Charles Wilt, Library Administration and Management Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 280-5030.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD: Mary Augusta Thomas, Chair; Kathryn H. Carpenter, Eddy Hogan, Johnnieque B. Love, Robert F. Moran Jr., Carolyn A. Snyder, Philip Tramdack, Patricia J. S. Weaver, Amy K. Weiss, Alfred Willis; *Ex-Officio:* Joan R. Giesecke.

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT (ISSN 0888-4463) is published quarterly (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall) by the American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. It is the official publication of the Library Administration and Management Association, a division of the American Library Association. Subscription price: to members of LAMA, $27.50 a year, included in membership dues; to nonmembers, U.S. $55; Canada $55; Mexico $55; and all other countries $65. Single copies, $14. Periodical-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Library Administration & Management,* 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Membership questions and address changes should be sent to LAMA, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Subscription inquiries should be sent to Subscription Dept., American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; 800-545-2433, press 5; fax: (312) 944-2641; subscriptions@ala.org.

ADVERTISING: Library Administration and Management Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; (312) 280-5030; fax: (312) 944-2641. Acceptance of an advertisement does not constitute an endorsement by LAMA.

PRODUCTION: Troy D. Linker, Kevin Heubusch; Ellie Barta-Moran, Angela Hanshaw, Kristen McKulski, and Karen Sheets, ALA Production Services.

MANUSCRIPTS: Editorial contributions, articles, letters, news, and books for review should be sent to Editor Kathryn H. Carpenter, Director of Library Services, Purdue University Calumet, P.O. Box 2590, Hammond, IN 46323-2590. Please refer to "Instructions for Authors" on page 68 of the Winter 2001 issue, or visit our Web page: www.ala.org/lama/la&m.

REPORTING LAMA NEWS: The LAMA board has assigned responsibility for reporting news to the chairs of LAMA sections and committees. Chairs or their designees should submit all news of conference activities and programs directly to Associate Editor Robert F. Moran Jr., Director of Library Services, Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408-1197, based on established guidelines. Chairs should contact the editor for guidelines, reporting forms, and deadlines for submission of news.

INDEXING AND ABSTRACTING: *Library Administration & Management* is indexed and annotated in *Current Index to Journals in Education,* a publication of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), *Library Literature,* a publication of the H. W. Wilson Company, and *Information Science ABS.*

MICROFILM COPIES: Microfilm copies of *Library Administration & Management* and its predecessor, *LAMA Newsletter,* are available from University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Library Administration & Management

Volume 15, Number 4 Fall 2001

Administrators' Update

Interview

Articles

Features

Cover design by Angela Hanshaw.

Interior design by Dianne M. Rooney.

Academic Libraries' Emergency Plans for Inclement Weather

Sulekha Kalyan, Xue-Ming Bao, and Marta M. Deyrup

During the snowy days of January 2000, a group of academic library deans and directors in New Jersey were actively exchanging e-mails. They were eager to learn about other library practices regarding opening and closing of their libraries. Their e-mail exchange on this issue inspired this project by revealing a need for a systemic survey on academic libraries' emergency plans for inclement weather.[1]

A search of the literature revealed several reports on inclement weather relating to academic libraries and their institutions.[2] These reports mostly dealt with inclement weather damages to library property and how libraries recovered from these damages. There are many books and articles on disaster response and planning for libraries.[3] The American Library Association (ALA) has prepared a comprehensive online resource on this topic: the Disaster Preparedness Clearinghouse.[4] This Web site is a selective resource for libraries of all sizes and types, developed by the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services. It contains resources, links to the disaster preparedness sites of emergency response or conservation agencies, and information on available training. The importance of having a disaster plan is well documented in the literature. However, natural disasters are typically viewed in the context of larger issues, such as materials preservation.

Cornell University and the University of New England have posted their inclement weather related policies on the Internet.[5] These state how students, faculty, and staff are informed of class and work cancellation and delay. The current study attempts to enrich the literature on this topic by presenting the results of a nationwide survey on academic library practices of closings or delayed openings due to events such as snow or heavy rain, extreme temperatures, and power outages. It also addresses the effects these events have on staffing, pay compensation, and work schedules. The study attempts to suggest common guidelines for the academic library community.

Method

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument employed in this study was pilot-tested by a group of ten librarians and administrators. Their responses resulted in several instrument revisions to improve the clarity of the questions. The instrument attempts to elicit answers to the following questions:

Sulekha Kalyan, Xue-Ming Bao, and **Marta M. Deyrup** each serve as Assistant Professor/Librarian at the University Libraries, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey.

1. Does your institution have an emergency closing plan for inclement weather?
2. If yes, what contingencies does your emergency closing plan include?
3. Is your library considered an essential service under the institution's guidelines?
4. Who makes the decision for library emergency closings in case of inclement weather?
5. How do you inform your library employees when the library will not open?
6. What services does your library provide in case of inclement weather?

7a. How are professional staff assigned to report to work compensated?

7b. How are paraprofessional staff assigned to report to work compensated?

8. Is your professional staff unionized?
9. Is your paraprofessional staff unionized?
10. How is your institution funded?
11. What is the total enrollment of your institution?
12. How many of your students are commuters?
13. In which state is your institution located?

Data Collection

The survey recipients were chosen from 1,469 regionally-accredited United States universities listed in the University of Texas Austin Web Central (www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state) as of February 1, 2000. The list is organized geographically by state and institutions are arranged in alphabetic order by name. Every third institution on the list was selected, resulting in 489 institutions for inclusion in the study.[6]

The authors looked for e-mail addresses of library deans or directors from the selected sample institutions and found 385 (78.7 percent) e-mail addresses. They then e-mailed these library deans or directors a cover letter, inviting them to participate in an online survey during the months of March and April 2000.[7] One hundred and fifty completed surveys were received—30.7 percent of the total sample (489) and 39 percent of the sample with e-mail addresses (385). Library deans or directors who did not have e-mail addresses listed on their Web sites were not contacted through regular mail.[8]

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was employed to anaylze the data. Frequency tabulations were applied to obtain descriptive measures of the responses. The authors limited the survey projection to the academic library deans or directors who were interested in the problem of academic libraries' emergency plans for inclement weather rather than the entire population of U.S. universities.[9]

Results

Characteristics of Responding Institutions

Of the 150 responding institutions, 98 institutions were privately funded and 52 were publicly funded. One hundred institutions indicated enrollment as being less than 5,000. Half of the institutions estimated that fewer than half their students were commuters. The geographical areas of the responding institutions can be divided into four regions: west with fifty-five institutions, east with forty-six, south with thirty-six, and north with thirteen (see table 1).

Availability and Contingency of Emergency Closing Plans

A majority of institutions had an emergency plan. Of these, 108 institutions' plans included contingencies for heavy snow, 83 for natural disasters, 66 for storms, 36 for heavy rain, and 21 for extreme temperature (see table 2). Across the nation, the most likely contingency for emergency closings was heavy snow. The second and third most likely were natural disasters and storms. A lower percentage of the responding institutions included heavy rain and extreme temperature as a part of their contingency plan. Some respondents also wrote that other contingencies that might cause the library to close were power outages, water main breaks, chemical leaks or spills, and bomb threats.

What services does your library provide in case of inclement weather?

Library as an Essential Service

Almost half of the responding institutions indicated that their libraries were considered an essential service to their institutions. The number of institutions where commuters comprised greater than half the student population and where commuters comprised less than half the student population were almost identical: 74 vs. 76. Of the latter, 42 of 76 institutions considered the library as an essential service as opposed to 37 of 74 of the former. Student enrollment did not affect whether the library was considered as an essential service or not. In the enrollment categories less than 5,000 and between 5,000 and 10,000, almost half the institutions (55 of 100 and 14 of 28) considered their libraries an essential service. There is no pattern as to whether high enrollment institutions considered the library an essential service or not. In the enrollment categories of 10,001 to 15,000 and more than 20,000, only one-third of the institutions (three of ten and two of six) considered their libraries an essential service (see table 3).

Decision Making for Library Emergency Closings

An institution's president was most likely to make the decision for library emergency closings (see table 4). The provost and library dean or director also were involved in this decision-making. Both publicly and privately funded institutions followed similar decision-making patterns. Some institutions had a vice-president for academic affairs, administration, or business make decisions for library emergency closing. One respondent wrote that the most challenging times to decide whether to close the library were evenings and weekends, since the university's administrative office was closed during those times.

Methods of Informing Employees

Local radio or TV broadcasts were the most popular method of informing the employees of library closings (see table 5). Activating a phone call plan was the second most popular method. Seventhree institutions indicated that employees could call an emergency number, and fifty institutions reported that employees could make their own decisions as to whether to go to work.

Services Provided during Inclement Weather

About half of publicly funded institutions reported that they would close the library totally because of inclement weather as opposed to one-third of privately funded institutions. The majority

Table 1. Institutional Characteristics (N=150)

	N	%
How is your institution funded? (Q10)		
Privately funded	98	65.3
Publicly funded	52	34.7
What is the total enrollment of your institution (Q11)		
Under 5,000	100	66.7
5,000-10,000	28	18.7
10,001-15,000	10	6.7
15,001-20,000	6	4.0
Above 20,001	6	4.0
How many of your students are commuters (Q12)		
< half the students	76	50.7
> half the students	74	49.3
Geographical areas of the institutions (Based on Q13)		
West	55	36.7
East	46	30.7
South	36	24.0
North	13	8.7

Table 2. Availability and Contingency of Emergency Closing Plan (Questions 1 and 2) (N=150)

	West		East		South		North		All Regions	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Have an emergency plan?	46	30.7	40	26.7	24	16.0	11	7.3	121	80.7
Plan includes heavy snow?	42	28.0	38	25.3	17	11.3	11	7.3	108	72.0
Plan includes natural disaster?	33	22.0	26	17.3	16	10.7	8	5.3	83	55.3
Plan includes storm?	24	16.0	21	14.0	15	10.0	6	4.0	66	44.0
Plan includes heavy rain?	13	8.7	12	8.0	8	5.3	3	2.0	36	24.0
Plan includes extreme temperature?	11	7.3	2	1.3	3	2.0	5	3.3	21	14.0

Table 3. Is Your Library Considered as an Essential Service (Question 3) (N=150)

	Publicly Funded		Privately Funded		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	24	16.0	55	36.7	79	52.7
No	16	10.7	30	20.0	46	30.7
Not sure	7	4.7	9	6.0	16	10.7
No response	5	3.3	4	2.7	9	6.0
Total	52	34.7	98	65.3	150	100.0

	Commuters > Half		Commuters < Half		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	37	24.7	42	28.0	79	52.7
No	24	16.0	22	14.7	46	30.7
Not sure	7	4.7	9	6.0	16	10.7
No response	6	4.0	3	2.0	9	6.0
Total	74	49.3	76	50.7	150	100.0

	< 5,000		5,000–10,000		10,001–15,000		15,001–20,000		> 20,001		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	55	36.7	14	9.3	3	2.0	5	3.3	2	1.3	79	52.7
No	29	19.3	9	6.0	5	3.3	–	–	3	2.0	46	30.7
Not sure	10	6.7	4	2.7	2	1.3	–	–	–	–	16	10.7
No response	6	4.0	1	0.7	–	–	1	0.7	1	0.7	9	6.0
Total	100	66.7	28	18.7	10	6.7	6	4.0	6	4.0	150	100.0

Table 4. Decision-Making for Library Emergency Closing (Question 4) (N=150)

	Publicly Funded		Privately Funded		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Institution's president	21	14.0	32	21.3	53	35.3
Institution's provost	8	5.3	23	15.3	31	20.7
Library dean/director	11	7.3	26	17.3	37	24.7
No response	12	8.0	17	11.3	29	19.3
Total	52	34.7	98	65.3	150	100.0

Table 5. Methods of Informing the Employees (Question 5) (N=150)

	N	%
Activate a phone call plan	89	59.3
Employees tune into local radio or TV	101	67.3
Employees call an emergency number	73	48.7
Employees make their own decisions	50	33.3
Employees receive an e-mail announcement	24	16.0

of institutions viewed the library as an essential service. The number of institutions in both categories was nearly identical, but institutions that do not view the library as an essential service were more likely to close the library totally. Institutions in which commuters comprised more than half the student population were more likely to close the library totally. Institutions where commuters comprised less than half the student population also were more likely to open with reduced hours and limited staff or with circulation service only. Across all categories of enrollment size, the percentages of combined institutions that would open with circulation service only or open with reduced hours or staff were higher than the institutions that would close the library totally in cases of inclement weather (see table 6).

Compensation for the Library Staff

Both professional and paraprofessional staff were likely to receive regular pay in cases where they had to work during inclement weather while others had been sent home or did not come in. Both professionals and paraprofessionals received compensatory time (comp time). Paraprofessional staff was more likely to receive overtime pay than professional staff. Paraprofessional staff was more likely to have more of a choice whether to receive either overtime pay or comp time than professional staff (see table 7).

Table 6. Services Provided in Case of Inclement Weather (Question 6) (N=150)

	Publicly Funded		Privately Funded		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Close the library totally	23	15.3	36	24.0	59	39.3
Open circulation service only	3	2.0	11	7.3	14	9.3
Open w/reduced hours/limited staff	14	9.3	39	26.0	53	35.3
No response	12	8.0	12	8.0	24	16.0
Total	52	34.7	98	63.3	150	100.0

	Library as an Essential Service		Library as an Essential Service		Not Sure		No Response		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Close the library totally	25	16.7	26	17.3	6	4.0	2	1.3	59	39.3
Open circulation service only	8	5.3	5	3.3	1	0.7	–	–	14	9.3
Open w/reduced hours/limited staff	35	23.3	12	8.0	4	2.7	2	1.3	53	35.3
No response	11	7.3	3	2.0	5	3.3	5	3.3	24	16.0
Total	79	52.7	46	30.7	16	10.7	9	6.0	150	100.0

	Commuters > Half		Commuters < Half		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Close the library totally	39	26.0	20	13.3	59	39.3
Open circulation service only	4	2.7	10	6.7	14	9.3
Open w/reduced hours/limited staff	19	12.7	34	22.7	53	35.3
No response	12	8.0	12	8.0	24	16.0
Total	74	49.3	76	50.7	150	100.0

	< 5,000		5,000–10,000		10,001–15,000		15,001–20,000		> 20,001		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Close the library totally	38	25.3	11	7.3	7	4.7	1	0.7	2	1.3	59	39.3
Open circulation service only	12	8.0	2	1.3	–	–	–	–	–	–	14	9.3
Open w/reduced hours/limited staff	36	24.0	10	6.7	–	–	3	2.0	4	2.7	53	35.3
No response	14	9.3	5	3.3	3	2.0	2	1.3	–	–	24	16.0
Total	100	66.7	28	18.7	10	6.7	6	4.0	6	4.0	150	100.0

Availability of a Union

Seventeen institutions had professional staff unions and nineteen had paraprofessional staff unions. Publicly funded institutions were more likely to have unions than privately funded institutions. For example, professional staff at ten publicly funded institutions were unionized as opposed to those at three privately funded institutions. Paraprofessional staff at thirteen publicly funded institutions were unionized as opposed to those at six privately funded institutions (see table 8).

Table 7. Compensation for Staff (Questions 7a and 7b) (N=150)

	Professional Staff		Paraprofessional Staff	
	N	%	N	%
Regular pay	77	51.3	69	46.0
Overtime pay	1	0.7	7	4.7
Compensatory time (comp time)	36	24.0	28	18.7
Either overtime or comp time	5	3.3	11	7.3
No response	31	20.7	35	23.3
Total	150	100.0	150	100.0

Table 8. Availability of Staff Union (Questions 8 and 9) (N=150)

	Publicly Funded		Privately Funded		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional staff	10	6.7	3	2.0	13	8.7
Paraprofessional staff	13	8.7	6	4.0	19	12.7

Discussion

An analysis of the survey revealed that there was commonality among institutions on several issues: (1) the majority

of responding libraries had emergency closing plans, although these often differed from one institution to another; (2) the most commonly cited contingency for emergency closing was snow or ice storms, followed by hurricane or tornado, and in a few cases chemical leakage, bomb threats, fire, or utility failures; and (3) in most instances, decisions regarding library closings were closely linked to those of the institution. Such decisions were usually made by the institution's top executives, such as the president or provost. Library deans or directors might also play a role in this decision-making process.

The survey also showed that libraries were more likely to be kept open in two types of situations. The first was when the library was viewed as an essential service. The second was when the student population was predominantly residential. Whether the library was viewed as an essential service was not affected by whether an institution was publicly or privately funded or by the enrollment sizes. Rather, institutions in which commuters comprised less than half the student population were more likely to consider the library an essential service. Consequently, these libraries were more likely to be open and remain open during inclement weather. The reason may be that most of students at these institutions live close by and the library was convenient for them to go to even in inclement weather.

Some universities kept their libraries open with reduced services even in severe weather. This was accomplished with the help of student assistants or assigned personnel who lived close to the institution. Library staff relied on a number of information sources to find out whether or not they should report to work. Tuning to local radio and TV and telephoning were still the most common means of communication. When library staff members had to work during inclement weather, they were mostly compensated with regular pay and many of them were able to claim compensatory time. Paraprofessional staff was more likely to receive overtime pay than professional staff. Unionization of paraprofessional and professional staff did not affect whether a library would open or not during the inclement weather.

Unionization of paraprofessional and professional staff did not affect whether a library would open or not during the inclement weather.

Conclusion

Inclement weather conditions caused by snow, rain, and tornados are unavoidable and can disrupt the normal functioning of the library. Based on the findings of the survey, academic libraries may want to consider the following guidelines in preparing emergency closing plans for inclement weather:

1. Incorporate the library's emergency closing plan into the institution's overall emergency plan.
2. Establish responsibility for the decision-making process in case of emergency closing.
3. Define contingencies for inclement weather closing according to the geographical location of an institution.
4. Try to keep the library open as much as possible if a large number of students reside on campus.
5. Rely on local radio, TV, and telephone chains to inform employees of the status of the institution and the library.
6. Designate library staff who live close to campus and student assistants who live on campus to keep the library open with limited services.
7. Compensate library staff and student assistants who have to work during inclement weather with overtime pay or minimally with compensatory time.

Further case studies are needed to learn how individual institutions and libraries administer emergency closings during inclement weather. Additional research can address questions such as: (1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of keeping the library open or closed during inclement weather? and (2) What are the optimal situations in which libraries can stay open to serve students without jeopardizing the safety of students and library staff?

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to acknowledge the assistance of Arthur W. Häfner, Professor and Dean of Seton Hall University Libraries, for his critical review and helpful comments on our

draft and his initial suggestion of the idea to do the study. Also, we would like to thank Lucy Manto, Carol Kieslor, Karen Vanghan, Qiana Howkins, and Angela Katsoulasnames for their assistance in locating the e-mail addresses of the selected samples, sending e-mail cover letters, and inputting data into a statistical database.

References and Notes

1. New Jersey Library Directors, electronic discussion list, correspondence between Jan. 28 and 31, 2000, nj_libdir@email.rutgers.edu.
2. "Ice Storms in the Northeast Delay College Openings," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 44 (Jan. 23, 1998): A8; "Major Flood at Colorado State University Damages Half a Million Volumes but Opens the Door for an Enhanced Digital Future," *Information Intelligence, Online Libraries, and Microcomputers* 15 (Sept. 1997): 1–4; "University of Miami Weathers the Storm," *Infoworld* 15 (Oct. 11, 1993): 62; Mairin Brennan, "Storm Hits Colorado State University Hard," *Chemical & Engineering News* 75 (Aug. 4, 1997): 12; Diane B. Lunde, "What Do You Do with 426,500 Wet Books?" *Library Journal* (Dec. 1999): 6–7; Sara Marley, "University High and Dry after Flood Recovery," *Business Insurance* 27 (June 7, 1993): 11–12; Barbara Myles, "The Impact of a Library Flood on Computer Operations," *Computers in Libraries* 20 (Jan. 2000): 44–49.
3. "The University of Miami Learns the Importance of an Enterprise-Wide Plan in the Wake of Hurricane Andres," *I/S Analyzer Case Studies* 35 (Nov. 1996): 7–11; Nelly Balloffet, *Library Disaster Handbook: Planning, Recovery, Resources* (Highland, N.Y.: Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, 1992); Hernando González and William C. Adams, "Case Study: A Life-Saving Public-Private Partnership—Amoco and Florida International University's Hurricane Preparedness Program," *Public Relations Quarterly* (winter 1997–98): 28–34; Miriam B. Kahn, *Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries* (Chicago: ALA, 1998); John Morris, *The Library Disaster Preparedness Handbook* (Chicago: ALA, 1986); Julie A. Page, "When Disaster Strikes: First Steps in Disaster Preparedness," *The Serials Librarian*, 35 (1999): 347–61.
4. American Library Association, Disaster Preparedness Clearinghouse. Accessed Aug. 16, 2000, www.ala.org/alcts/publications/disaster.html.
5. Cornell University, Cornell University Policy Library—Policy 2.5 Inclement Weather. Accessed Aug. 16, 2000, www.univco.cornell.edu/policy/IW.html; University of New England, University of New England Class & Work Cancellation/Delay Policy. Accessed Aug. 16, 2000, http://devel.une.edu/info/snow.html.
6. Arthur W. Häfner, *Descriptive Statistical Techniques for Librarians*, 2d ed. (Chicago: ALA, 1998), 244–45. Häfner states, "The technique is popular and effective and is used frequently by librarians. . . . Beginning from any place in the sampling frame, select every *k*-th item. . . . If selection is begun toward the bottom of the population and the bottom is reached before the sample is complete, then selection continues from the top of the sample and goes on until all sample items are identified."
7. Seton Hall University Libraries, *Survey 2000:* Academic Library Emergency Plans for Inclement Weather. Accessed Aug. 16, 2000, http://library.shu.edu/weather-survey.htm.
8. Häfner, *Descriptive Statistical Techniques for Librarians*, 239. Häfner states: "As a general rule, if a librarian's sample includes one hundred elements, the survey findings usually will yield reasonable results about the target population."
9. Floyd J. Fowler Jr., *Survey Research Methods* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1993), 40–41. Fowler remarks that a 5 percent to 20 percent response rate is low but he states: "There is no agreed-upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate. . . . One generalization that seems to hold up for most mail surveys . . . is that people who have a particular interest in the subject matter or the research itself are more likely to return mail questionnaires . . . This means that mail surveys with low response rates may be biased significantly in ways that are related directly to the purposes of the research."