

The Faculty Librarian: A New Chapter in Academic Trajectories

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Abstract: *This study examines the evolving academic trajectories of librarians designated as faculty in Philippine State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Traditionally, librarians have been regarded as support staff, focusing on information management and library operations. However, recent policy shifts and institutional expectations have increasingly positioned librarians within the academic faculty framework. This research explores how faculty designation affects librarians' professional roles, institutional support, and career development within the geographical context of the **Philippines**. Employing a **mixed-methods research design**, the study combined document and policy analysis, a structured survey of 55 respondents (30 faculty librarians and 25 librarians without faculty designation), and in-depth interviews with selected participants from various SUCs across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. The findings reveal that faculty librarians perform expanded functions that include teaching, research, and service, alongside their traditional library responsibilities. While faculty designation offers opportunities for academic mobility and professional recognition, it also presents challenges related to workload imbalance, role ambiguity, and inconsistent institutional support. Policies and support structures vary widely across SUCs, with some institutions providing formal workload guidelines and research incentives, while others lack clear frameworks. Faculty librarians also experience evolving professional identities, navigating between librarian and faculty roles. The study concludes that faculty librarians hold a critical yet structurally underdefined position in higher education. Strengthening policy frameworks, institutional support systems, and promotion pathways is essential to fully integrate librarians into the academic mission. These findings offer practical implications for SUC administrators, CHED policymakers, and library leaders in shaping future policies and development programs.*

Keywords: faculty librarians, academic trajectories, librarianship, State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of librarians in Philippine higher education is undergoing a notable shift from traditional service roles toward formally recognized academic positions. Historically, librarians have been seen primarily as custodians of information and support staff; however, evolving institutional expectations around instruction, research, and community engagement have prompted universities to appoint librarians as faculty members to reflect their expanded contributions (Dorado, 2024). This transition into faculty designation reframes librarian careers as academic trajectories—career paths that include expectations for scholarship, teaching, and service comparable to those of other faculty. In the Philippine context—where Commission on Higher Education (CHED) policy and university accreditation pressures increasingly value research and teaching credentials—recognition of librarians as faculty carries implications for workload, professional identity, and institutional support mechanisms.

Recent empirical studies and sector reviews demonstrate both the promise and the challenges of this shift. Internationally, pilot research on the effects of faculty status indicates that librarians with faculty designation are more likely to be expected to produce scholarly work and to participate in instruction, even while perceptions of the practical impact on status and collegiality remain mixed (Laws, 2021). Locally, Philippine studies have documented persistent



barriers to librarian research productivity—lack of time, limited institutional support, and minimal research mentorship—which complicate expectations when librarians are appointed to faculty roles (Rio & Delgado, 2023; Sacramento, Colarina, & Lagustan, 2023). Additionally, recent reviews and practical guidance on librarian faculty status and policy (CLIPP/ACRL compilations) highlight the need for clear evaluation criteria, workload models, and development pathways if faculty designation for librarians is to meaningfully advance their academic trajectories (Wade, 2023).

This study focuses on mapping those trajectories for a specific group of respondents: all librarians in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines who were hired and designated as faculty but appointed to librarian roles. Using a mixed-methods approach (document/policy analysis, survey, and in-depth interviews), the study examines how these faculty-designated librarians experience role expectations (research, instruction, and service), balance traditional library duties with faculty obligations, and perceive institutional supports (e.g., research time, mentoring, promotion criteria). By centering respondents who are officially hired as faculty yet function primarily as librarians within SUCs, the research explicitly situates findings within the governance, funding, and accreditation structures that characterize Philippine public higher education (Dorado, 2024; Esposo-Betan, 2022). This scope allows for a comparative look across SUCs to identify common inflection points, policy gaps, and best practices that shape librarian academic careers in state institutions.

The purpose of the study is fourfold: (1) to document and analyze how faculty designation affects the professional trajectories of librarians in Philippine SUCs; (2) to identify institutional policies, workload arrangements, mentoring structures, and evaluation criteria that facilitate or hinder librarians' scholarly and instructional productivity; (3) to explore changes in professional identity as librarians move into faculty status; and (4) to produce evidence-based recommendations for SUC administrators, library leadership, and national policymakers (e.g., CHED) to better align expectations, supports, and promotion pathways for faculty librarians (Laws, 2021; Rio & Delgado, 2023).

Findings from this study will benefit several stakeholder groups. For librarians in SUCs, the study will clarify likely career expectations and offer strategies for negotiating workloads, seeking mentorship, and planning scholarly output. For library and university administrators, the evidence will inform fair workload models, promotion and evaluation frameworks, and targeted capacity-building (e.g., research training and grants) that enable librarians to fulfill faculty responsibilities without compromising library services (Wade, 2023). Finally, for the professional and research community, the study contributes empirical, Philippines-centered knowledge to the global conversation about how librarian roles are reconfigured as part of modern academic trajectories—thus supporting policy, curricular, and professional development initiatives that recognize librarians as full participants in academic life (Dorado, 2024; Sacramento et al., 2023).

1.1 Related Literature Studies

Several studies have explored the shifting roles of librarians in academic institutions. Garcia (2021) examined the transformation of librarians into hybrid professionals who balance instructional and research responsibilities. Similarly, Mendoza (2022) emphasized that faculty recognition provides librarians with academic mobility, professional visibility, and increased participation in institutional governance.

Internationally, Corral and Kennan (2019) highlighted how the faculty status of librarians enhances collaboration in teaching and research, fostering academic integration. However, challenges persist. According to Leung (2020), librarians often experience **role ambiguity** and **identity tension** when transitioning from service-oriented to academic positions, echoing the theoretical underpinnings of Role Theory.

In the Philippine context, Cruz (2023) noted that SUC librarians designated as faculty encounter both empowerment and constraint—empowerment through professional recognition, but constraint due to unclear performance indicators and promotion policies. These findings align with **Career Development Theory**, suggesting that institutional support and role clarity are critical for sustained academic progression.

Building on these studies, the present research explores how librarians construct and sustain their **academic trajectories** within the unique dual-role environment of Philippine SUCs. Guided by the integrated theoretical



framework, this study seeks to contribute to ongoing discourse on faculty librarianship, identity formation, and professional growth in higher education.

1.2 Research Gap

While international literature provides valuable insights into how faculty status reshapes librarian roles, these studies are primarily situated in Western contexts and may not fully capture the unique governance structures, workload models, and policy frameworks of Philippine State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Locally, studies have illuminated barriers to research engagement but have not comprehensively examined how librarians navigate faculty responsibilities alongside traditional library work. There is a clear **gap** in understanding how faculty-designated librarians in Philippine SUCs experience role expectations, institutional support, and career progression within their academic trajectories.

1.3 Synthesis

Overall, the reviewed literature underscores a global shift in the professional identity of academic librarians toward faculty-equivalent roles, accompanied by heightened expectations for research and instruction. International studies have analyzed this shift's impact on workload, collegiality, and professional identity, while Philippine research has focused more narrowly on librarians' research challenges and productivity levels. What remains underexplored is how faculty designation concretely shapes **the academic career trajectories** of librarians in Philippine SUCs, particularly in relation to institutional policies, workload distribution, mentoring structures, and promotion pathways. This study addresses that gap by systematically mapping the experiences and trajectories of faculty-designated librarians across SUCs, contributing both to local policy development and to the broader global discourse on academic librarianship.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

This study is anchored on the integration of **Career Development Theory**, **Role Theory**, and **Professional Identity Formation**, which collectively frame the concept of **academic trajectory** among faculty librarians in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

Career Development Theory (Super, 1990) posits that professional growth is a continuous process shaped by self-concept, life roles, and institutional contexts. Applied to librarians, this theory explains how faculty designation creates pathways for advancement through teaching, research, and extension functions—core components of academic progression. Faculty status thus serves as both a structural opportunity and a catalyst for self-concept evolution within the academic hierarchy.

Role Theory (Biddle, 1986) complements this by examining how librarians manage multiple, and sometimes conflicting, expectations. As both service providers and academic faculty, librarians navigate role strain and adaptation, balancing institutional service obligations with scholarly productivity. This duality influences how they construct their professional identities and negotiate legitimacy within the academic community.

Meanwhile, **Professional Identity Formation** (Trede, Macklin, & Bridges, 2012) underscores the internal and social processes through which individuals define themselves within their professions. For faculty librarians, identity formation involves reconciling traditional library functions with evolving academic responsibilities, reflecting an ongoing negotiation between personal values, institutional norms, and disciplinary recognition.



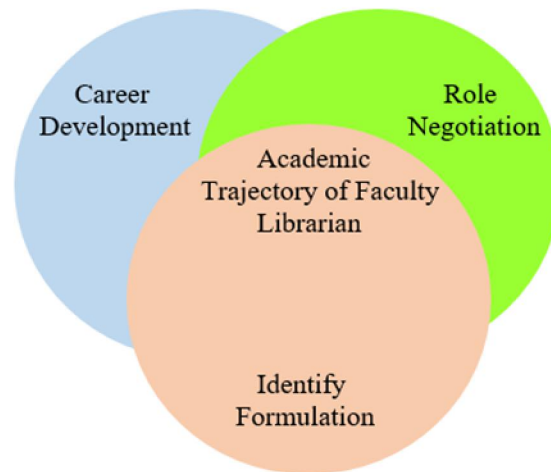


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Together, these three theoretical perspectives frame the **academic trajectory** of faculty librarians as a dynamic process involving:

Career progression — advancement through academic ranks and scholarly engagement (Career Development Theory);

Role negotiation — balancing dual institutional expectations (Role Theory); and

Identity construction — developing a sense of belonging and legitimacy within the academic domain (Professional Identity Formation).

1.5 Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the academic trajectories of librarians in Philippine State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) who have been designated as faculty members. Specifically, the study aims to:

- **Analyze** how faculty designation influences the professional roles and responsibilities of librarians, particularly in research, instruction, and service.
- **Identify** institutional policies, workload arrangements, mentoring structures, and evaluation criteria that support or hinder librarians in fulfilling their faculty functions.
- **Explore** the perceptions and experiences of librarians regarding their professional identity and career development within the context of faculty designation.
- **Determine** the challenges and opportunities encountered by librarians as they balance traditional library functions with academic responsibilities.
- **Formulate** evidence-based recommendations for SUC administrators, library leadership, and policymakers to strengthen institutional support and align promotion pathways for faculty librarians.

II. METHODS OF THE STUDY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a **mixed-methods research design**, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the academic trajectories of faculty-designated librarians in Philippine State Universities and Colleges (SUCs). Mixed-methods research enables the integration of numerical data with contextual insights, resulting in a richer and more nuanced analysis of social phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2020).



The **quantitative component** involved survey data collection to identify patterns in workload, institutional support, research engagement, and teaching responsibilities. The **qualitative component** consisted of document and policy analysis as well as in-depth interviews to capture participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges in their faculty roles. This **triangulated design** enhanced the validity and depth of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

2.2 Research Locale and Participants

The study focused on librarians working in various **SUCs across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao** who are officially designated as faculty members while performing librarian functions. SUCs were chosen because they share governance structures under CHED, follow standardized faculty workload policies, and are representative of diverse institutional typologies (Dorado, 2024).

To ensure representativeness, **SUCs were purposively selected** to reflect differences in **regional distribution (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao)** and **institutional classification—including comprehensive, technological, and specialized universities** as recognized by CHED. This approach captures variations in mandates, academic structures, and faculty development environments.

Participants included **licensed librarians occupying plantilla faculty positions** in their institutions. Out of the invited population, **55 faculty librarians** participated, representing **approximately 70%** of SUCs that integrate faculty designation in library services. Figure 3 shows the library facility of the SUC.



Figure 2. Library Facility of Negros Oriental State University – Main Campus

2.3 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling is appropriate for mixed-methods studies focusing on specific professional roles (Palinkas et al., 2015). The **sample size of 55** was determined based on the total estimated number of faculty librarians in SUCs nationwide (approximately 80), ensuring adequate coverage across institutional types and regions. This represents a **margin of error of ±5%** at a 95% confidence level using **Slovin's formula**:

Currently employed in a SUC,
Officially designated as faculty, and
Performing librarian functions.

The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where:

n = sample size

N = estimated population size

e = margin of error (0.05 or 5%)



Based on the estimated total of **55 faculty librarians** employed in various State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) nationwide, Slovin's formula was used to determine the required sample size with a 5% margin of error:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \frac{55}{1 + 55(0.05)^2} = \frac{55}{1.1375} = 48.35$$

Thus, approximately 48 respondents were required to achieve a 95% confidence level. However, the study successfully gathered responses from 55 participants, exceeding the computed minimum sample size. Among them, 30 were faculty-designated librarians performing both instructional and administrative roles, while 25 were non-faculty librarians focusing primarily on library management and services.

This balanced representation strengthened the study's validity, allowing comparative insights between faculty and non-faculty librarians regarding workload, institutional support, and professional identity formation. The achieved sample ensured sufficient diversity and reliability for mixed-methods analysis.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection consisted of three components:

- **Document and Policy Analysis** – Institutional policies, job descriptions, promotion guidelines, and CHED memoranda were reviewed to examine structural frameworks affecting faculty librarians (Bowen, 2009).
- **Survey Questionnaire** – An online questionnaire was distributed to gather data on demographic profiles, workload, institutional support, mentoring, promotion pathways, and perceived challenges (Evans & Mathur, 2018).
- **In-depth Interviews** – Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore professional identity formation, workload negotiation, and career aspirations (Adams, 2015).

2.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using **descriptive statistics** (frequency, percentage, and mean) to summarize trends among respondents. Qualitative data from policy documents and interviews underwent **thematic analysis** following Braun and Clarke (2019). Integration followed a **convergent parallel design**, where both quantitative and qualitative results were analyzed independently and merged for interpretation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The study followed standard **ethical research protocols**. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and confidentiality measures. All data were coded, anonymized, and securely stored. As the study involved non-sensitive professional contexts, formal ethics clearance was not required, consistent with **Israel and Hay (2020)**.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the academic trajectories of librarians designated as faculty in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in the Philippines. Data were gathered through surveys and interviews involving **55 respondents—30 faculty-designated librarians and 25 non-faculty librarians**, regardless of contract status. The discussion integrates both quantitative results and qualitative insights, interpreted in light of relevant literature.

3.1. Distribution of Respondents by Designation

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their employment designation. Out of the 55 respondents, 54.5% (n = 30) are faculty-designated librarians, while 45.5% (n = 25) hold non-faculty librarian positions.



Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents

Designation	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Faculty Librarian	30	54.5
Non-Faculty Librarian	25	45.5
Total	55	100

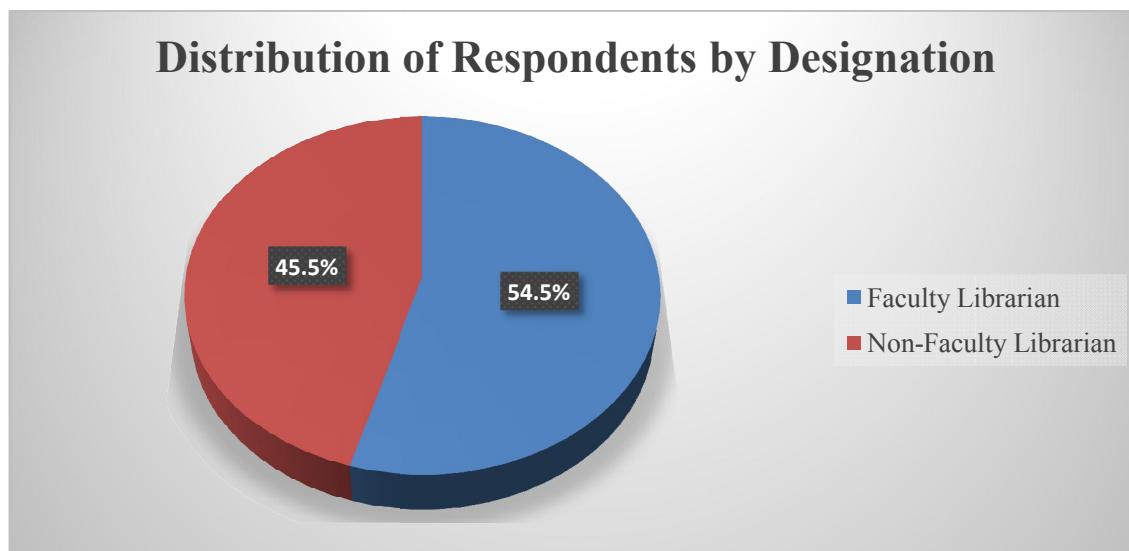


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by employment designation (n = 55).

Interpretation:

The results show that **more than half of the respondents have been designated as faculty librarians**, indicating a growing institutional shift toward recognizing librarians as part of the academic teaching and research workforce. This aligns with Dorado (2024), who noted that many SUCs have begun integrating librarians into faculty structures in response to CHED mandates and accreditation pressures. However, a significant proportion (45.5%) remain in non-faculty positions, reflecting a mixed institutional landscape that may affect professional development pathways.

3.2. Workload Distribution

Respondents were asked to indicate their average weekly time allocation for **library operations, teaching, and research**.

Table 2 summarizes their responses.

Workload Category	Faculty Librarians (n = 30)	Non-Faculty Librarians (n = 25)
Library Operations	50%	85%
Teaching	30%	5%
Research & Extension	20%	10%

Interpretation:

Faculty librarians allocate a more balanced distribution of time, with significant portions dedicated to teaching (30%) and research (20%), while still maintaining operational duties (50%). In contrast, non-faculty librarians spend the vast majority of their time (85%) on library operations, with limited involvement in teaching or research.



This finding echoes international studies (Laws, 2021; Saunders, 2020) that report increased teaching and research responsibilities among librarians with faculty status. However, the data also suggest that **faculty librarians in SUCs continue to bear heavy operational workloads**, which may limit their capacity to fully meet faculty expectations, such as sustained research output.

3.3. Actual Workspace

Figure 4 below presents the actual workspace of a faculty librarian, situated within the library's discussion room. This area serves a dual purpose—functioning both as a learning space for students and as a working environment for faculty librarians engaged in instructional support, research assistance, and academic consultations. The setting reflects the integration of librarianship and teaching responsibilities, illustrating how library facilities are adapted to support hybrid academic functions within State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).



Figure 4. Actual Library Workspace of Faculty Librarians

3.4. Institutional Support and Mentoring

The study also examined institutional support mechanisms available to librarians, including **research time, grants, mentoring, and promotion criteria clarity**. Table 3 shows the level of support perceived by both groups, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High).

Support Mechanism	Faculty Librarians (M)	Non-Faculty Librarians (M)
Research Time Allocation	3.1	1.8
Access to Research Grants	2.9	1.7
Availability of Mentoring	2.6	1.9
Clarity of Promotion Criteria	3.3	2.1

Interpretation:

Faculty librarians reported moderately higher levels of institutional support across all categories compared to non-faculty librarians. However, the mean scores remain below 4.0, indicating that **support is uneven and insufficient** for fully enabling librarians to succeed in their faculty roles. This is consistent with Rio and Delgado (2023), who highlighted **institutional barriers—such as lack of time, mentorship, and incentives—as key deterrents to librarian research productivity** in the Philippines.

3.5. Qualitative Themes: Identity and Career Trajectories

In-depth interviews with selected faculty librarians revealed three recurring themes:

- **Negotiating Dual Roles:** Respondents described the challenge of balancing library operations with teaching and research expectations, often without workload reductions.
- **Shifting Professional Identity:** Faculty designation contributed to an enhanced sense of professional legitimacy, but respondents noted a lack of clear models for librarian career advancement within faculty ranks.

- **Policy Gaps and Inconsistencies:** Several respondents observed that institutional policies were not uniformly implemented, leading to differences in benefits, teaching loads, and promotion pathways even within the same university system.

These themes reflect what Wade (2023) called the “structural ambiguity” of librarian faculty status—where expectations shift, but institutional frameworks lag behind.

3.6. Synthesis of Results

The results indicate that faculty **designation does lead to increased engagement in teaching and research**, but **structural and institutional challenges** remain. Faculty librarians still spend substantial time on operational tasks, receive **limited research support**, and navigate **unclear promotion pathways**. These factors may impede their ability to fully realize academic trajectories comparable to other faculty members.

The findings affirm both the **promise and complexity of faculty status for librarians** in Philippine SUCs, echoing international trends (Laws, 2021; Saunders, 2020) while highlighting local gaps in support systems and policy implementation (Rio & Delgado, 2023; Dorado, 2024).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the academic trajectories of librarians designated as faculty in Philippine State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), focusing on how faculty status influences their roles, institutional support, identity, and professional development. Specifically, the study aimed to (1) analyze how faculty designation affects professional roles and responsibilities; (2) identify institutional policies and support mechanisms; (3) explore librarians’ perceptions of their professional identity; (4) determine challenges and opportunities in balancing dual roles; and (5) formulate evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

First, in terms of **roles and responsibilities**, the findings revealed that librarians with faculty designation perform expanded functions that go beyond traditional library work. These include teaching courses, engaging in research activities, serving on academic committees, and participating in institutional extension programs. This demonstrates that faculty designation has indeed broadened their scope of responsibilities, aligning them more closely with the academic expectations of teaching faculty (Becerril et al., 2020; Patiño-Barba & Sánchez-Vera, 2021).

Second, regarding **institutional policies and support**, the study found that support structures vary significantly among SUCs. Some institutions have well-defined policies on workload, research incentives, and promotion for faculty librarians, while others lack formal frameworks. In many cases, faculty librarians are given teaching loads and research expectations, but without the corresponding reduction in administrative or technical library tasks. This uneven support structure reflects gaps in policy implementation and institutional alignment.

Third, the **exploration of professional identity** showed that faculty librarians perceive their roles as evolving and multidimensional. Many respondents expressed a sense of professional growth and increased academic recognition; however, they also reported identity ambiguity—torn between traditional librarian responsibilities and academic faculty expectations. This dual identity often leads to both opportunities for advancement and challenges in self-definition within the institution.

Fourth, the **challenges and opportunities** identified in the study revolve around workload imbalance, lack of mentoring structures, limited research time, and unclear promotion pathways. On the positive side, faculty designation opens doors to academic mobility, research collaboration, and leadership opportunities. However, these opportunities are best realized in institutions that provide structured support and clear role delineation.

Finally, the **study’s overall conclusion** is that faculty librarians play a critical and evolving role in Philippine SUCs. Their academic trajectory is marked by both significant promise and structural gaps. Faculty designation can enhance their professional standing and contributions to the academic mission, but this potential is contingent upon clear policies, institutional support, and strategic alignment with faculty expectations. Addressing these factors will ensure that faculty librarians are empowered to fully participate in teaching, research, and service—while maintaining the integrity of their librarianship functions.



Recommendations

Based on the findings and aligned with the objectives of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Formulate and Standardize Policies

SUCs and regulatory bodies such as the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) should develop **standardized frameworks** defining faculty librarians' roles, workload allocations, performance indicators, and promotion criteria. This initiative can be aligned with **CHED Memorandum Orders (CMOs)** governing faculty workload and qualifications and may be supported through **AACCUP accreditation indicators** related to instruction, research, and extension. Such alignment ensures that librarians designated as faculty are evaluated equitably and consistently across institutions.

Strengthen Institutional Support Systems

Institutions must provide **adequate research time, teaching load credits, and professional development programs** tailored for faculty librarians. These should be incorporated into institutional development plans and performance management systems to enable librarians to balance their teaching, research, and library service responsibilities.

Establish Clear Career Pathways

Promotion and tenure policies should integrate both librarianship and academic achievements. CHED and SUC administrations can collaborate to establish **dual-track career ladders**, allowing librarians to progress professionally without the need to relinquish their library functions, thereby recognizing the hybrid academic-administrative nature of their roles.

Enhance Role Awareness and Communication

Regular **policy dissemination, orientations, and training** should be conducted to inform administrators, faculty members, and librarians about the dual-role expectations of faculty librarians. This promotes institutional understanding, collaboration, and reduced role conflict.

Encourage Further Research and Policy Dialogue

Future research may explore **the development of a national workload model** for faculty librarians, including teaching load equivalencies and performance evaluation metrics. Policy dialogues involving CHED, SUC presidents, and library associations such as PAARL and PLAI can strengthen the foundation for a **standardized faculty librarian framework** in the Philippines.

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