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THE BERKELEY SCHOOL OF INFORMATION: A MEMOIR

Michael K. Buckland

Origins

The school originated in Fall 1918 in a program of courses organized surreptitiously by Sydney Mitchell, the acting university librarian. It was a successful end-run around University President Benjamin Ide Wheeler's decision not to approve such a program. Wheeler accepted a *fait accompli* and designation as a department within the College of Letters and Science followed, then in 1926 status as a separate School of Librarianship. The story is told in Mitchell's autobiography.¹

During the leadership of Mitchell and of his successor, J. Periam Danton, 1918 through 1960, it remained a professional school of librarianship, with some teaching of bibliography and library use to undergraduates. As at other such schools, professional librarians were recruited as faculty.

Ray Swank, dean in the 1960s, had a shrewd understanding of organizations as well as of individuals. He believed that to thrive the School needed to strengthen the academic expertise of the faculty. To foster research he and Robert M. Hayes (at the new school at UCLA) created the Institute for Library Research, an organized research unit headquartered at UCLA with branches at the Berkeley and Santa Barbara campuses. Swank began to recruit faculty who had little or no library background but brought desirable academic credentials, notably M. E. ("Bill") Maron, an engineer and physicist involved in very early data base design, and W. S. ("Bill") Cooper, whose doctorate was in the logic and methodology of science and who had taught at the University of Chicago Graduate Library School. Swank also hired Patrick Wilson, an assistant professor of philosophy at UCLA, an alumnus of the School with library experience as a South Asian bibliographer. Swank believed that this diversification would in the longer term change the perspective and scope of the School itself, a prospect he viewed favorably. Years later he told to me that the other faculty in the School did not realize that this would follow and that he was careful not to tell them as they would have objected.

Marcia Bates has described the school in the late 1960s.² They were good years for the School, with this more diverse faculty, social awareness, and generous federal funding. But these developments also created tensions and disagreements. I first visited the School briefly in 1969 and gave a talk about my work at the University of Lancaster on book availability.

The Wheeler Report, 1974

The Berkeley campus maintains quality control over graduate programs by means of thorough but infrequent reviews. A review of the School by an ad hoc committee of the Graduate Council was chaired by John T. Wheeler, a professor of accounting, and completed in 1974.³ The timing coincided with financial retrenchment in universities and libraries nationwide. The committee found the School to be "a troubled institution in a troubled profession" and "under-administered, under-financed, too traditional and too aloof." Nevertheless the committee found much to praise, but saw tensions between academic goals and professional concerns as a fundamental issue. Noting advances in information technology and changing social environments, the committee urged a strategic redirection of the School to meet "the

¹ Sydney B. Mitchell. (1960). *Mitchell of California*. Berkeley: California Library Association. See also R. Brundin. (1994). Sydney Bancroft Mitchell and the establishment of the Graduate School of Librarianship. *Libraries & Culture* 29, no. 2: 166-184.

² Marcia Bates. (2004). Information science at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1960s: A memoir of student days. *Library Trends*, 52(4): 683-701. <https://hdl.handle.net/2142/1693>

³ University of California, Berkeley. (1974). *Review of the School of Librarianship of an Ad Hoc Committee of the Graduate Council*. https://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/wheeler_report_1974.pdf

challenges posed by the advent of the computer age.” Preparing librarians was well and good, but the School should pay more attention to emerging information technology and should also define its mission to be concerned with information and information services more broadly. Library science should be considered an acceptable specialty but within a broader more academically-acceptable scope. The committee was confident in its recommendation but offered little specific advice. It expected the School to adopt a new name that would include the word “information” and suggested School of Library and Information Science. The report also scolded the campus administration for inadequately supporting the School.

Patrick Wilson had become dean but wished to resign the deanship in 1975. A new dean was searched for, and I was appointed effective January 1, 1976 with a mandate to implement the Wheeler report recommendation that the School evolve from a school of librarianship to some kind of (as yet undefined) school of information. Two years later, George Maslach, Provost of Professional Schools and Colleges, told me in his usual blunt manner that if this had not been done the School would have been closed.

Information Studies

One of my first acts was to invite B. C. (“Bertie”) Brookes of University College, London, who was then visiting Ontario, to come to the School, spend a few days talking with faculty, and offer any advice he might have. He was the leading information science instructor in Britain. The primary point that he made was that a small school in a research-oriented campus ought to have at least one person at any given time probing the School’s boundaries and the questioning its assumptions. Patrick Wilson and I shared this view. A small professional needs to be always prospecting for new opportunities, probing for anomalies and false assumptions, and ready to act swiftly.

In this vein, new faculty appointments helped. Mary Culnan, recruited to strengthen the faculty in the area of corporate management, taught the first class on campus on office automation. John Ober, who researched how tasks and information technology were related, taught the campus’ first basic computer literacy class for undergraduates. Much later, the School’s early entry into data science was an excellent and much larger example.

A very good example of positioning the School in relation to other departments had to do with database management systems. Berkeley’s Computer Science division was a leader in the design of such systems. Our graduates were unlikely to ever be involved in the design or development of DBMS software, but they were very likely to use such systems. Michael Cooper developed coursework on the comparative evaluation of available DBMS and on how to choose and use them effectively. This was different and complementary to courses in Computer Science.

The Name of the School

With the widened range of interest and the appointment of faculty with little or no professional background in library service, the appropriateness of the name School of Librarianship and the practice of designating all its faculty as professors of librarianship was questioned. The name became symbolic of the broader issue of what the proper scope of the school should be. In 1975, unable to achieve agreement, the faculty resolved to defer this topic until after the appointment of the next dean, whoever and whenever that might be. When the time came there was agreement on School of Library and Information Studies which became effective in July 1976. Information *studies* was considered more inclusive than information *science*. In hindsight, the name was too long. People outside the School could often only remember the first three words: School of Library. Adopting School of Information and Library Studies would have been wiser. In 1991 the faculty of the School voted to request that the name be shortened to School of Information, but by then other serious issues had intervened.

The Scope of the School

The name of the School was amicably resolved but the scope of the School needed attention. There was, in particular, a need to minimize polarization between library science and information science,

which proved so damaging at other schools. Three successive deans (Swank, Wilson, and I) believed firmly that these were overlapping areas that could not cleanly divided and should not be treated as separate. There were also differences of opinion concerning the proper level of emphasis on social engagement. I brought no plans. I saw my role as facilitating the collective development of a strategic future.

The question of scope was resolved in faculty discussion with three moves:

1. Agreement that librarianship (viewed as an application area) was different in kind from information science (then viewed mainly as theoretical and methodological) and so should be regarded not as competing but as on a different plane and complementary. The two ought to be mutually stimulating and mutually helpful;
2. Acceptance that there was a societal need for attention to application areas beyond libraries. Research and professional education for activities outside of libraries that also involved collecting and organizing documents and data for use had been neglected; and
3. Recognition that a broader range of application areas mainly involved applying or adapting existing expertise in new contexts, so there was more than enough challenging work for all existing faculty members.

Implicit in all this was an assumption that the School's scope needed to be generalized, to be conceived more abstractly, and, in effect, made more academic.

The transition implementing the Wheeler report progressed slowly and gradually. I considered the direction and amicable process much more important than speed. Polarization within the faculty had to be avoided and we were anxious to avoid upsetting alumni. A carefully written explanation, entitled *Report to Alumni: Problems, Activities, and Aspirations*, was widely distributed in 1980.⁴ I thought that a more complete analysis was needed and used two sabbaticals to write it. A pilot analysis, *Library Services in Theory and Context* was published in 1983 and an extension to collection-based information services generally, *Information and Information Services*, in 1991.⁵ I came to view the concept of a *document*, when viewed as evidence, as a fertile and unifying approach and, as a byproduct, a paper entitled "Information as thing," became widely cited.⁶ In hindsight, we should have paid more attention to explaining the School's new scope on campus.

The School's Culture and Governance

The faculty had decided before I arrived that the considerable internal strife needed to end and I did my best to avoid conflict by trying to develop consensus outside of and prior to faculty meetings through one-on-one discussions and the generation of brief discussion papers – not position papers. I continued my past practice of arranging an annual listening session with each individual faculty member separately and created a small informal executive committee which discussed weekly whatever issues needed to be addressed.

⁴ *A Report to Alumni: Problems, Activities, and Aspirations*. University of California, Berkeley, School of Library and Information Studies, 1980. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1sx7569q>. For contemporary comments see my Looking ahead--and around. *Information Reports and Bibliographies* 7, nos 4-5 (1978): 15-18. (Proceedings of the SUNY Albany Conference on Education for Librarianship, April 1977). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3dr7j09f> and *Library Science and Information Science* (video, 1978), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/88h8f96j>.

⁵ Michael K. Buckland. (1983). *Library Services in Theory and Context*. New York, Pergamon Press. 2nd ed, 1988. <https://openlibrary.org/works/OL4283203W?edition=ia:libraryservicesi0000buck>; Michael K. Buckland. (1991). *Information and Information Systems*. New York: Greenwood Press & Praeger.

⁶ Michael K. Buckland. (1991). Information as thing. *Journal of the American Society of Information Science* 42:5 (June 1991): 351-360. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4x2561mb>

The Berkeley campus is exceptional in the development and survival of shared governance. The Academic Senate plays a far greater role in campus decision-making than occurs elsewhere. The School's faculty meetings were considered to be meetings of a subdivision of the Academic Senate, moderated by an annually elected chair, not staff meetings chaired by the Dean. I strongly supported this arrangement. Faculty meetings were open to the public except when personnel matters were discussed.

The School had a good relationship with its alumni association, which held a popular annual spring luncheon, raised money for scholarships, and organized a prestigious annual public lecture named in honor of a founding faculty member, Edith Coulter, usually at the annual meeting of the California Library Association.

Stepping Down as Dean.

At Berkeley dean appointments are administrative assignments for five years and usually renewed if the individual is willing to continue. Inevitably as the years passed, I wondered how long I should remain as dean. I was reappointed for a second five-year term but felt decreasingly comfortable preparing merit and promotion cases for colleagues the longer I knew them and the more they felt like family. I also believed that administrators tend to linger too long. A small professional school on a large campus needs constant rejuvenation, more so than larger units. Sooner or later a new person with a fresh set of ideas should take over. It felt like being on a slow-moving tram approaching but never quite reaching its destination. There seemed no obvious, willing successor among the existing faculty.

The Campus Administration

I was fortunate, as dean, to deal with campus leaders I respected, especially Michael Heyman, the Vice Chancellor who had appointed me, Doris Calloway, who, as Provost, became my supervisor, and Sanford Elberg, the long-time Dean of the Graduate Division. But Heyman became Chancellor and then left to be Secretary of the Smithsonian. Elberg stepped down already in 1978 and Calloway in 1987. Unfortunately, the School suffered difficulties and neglect under their successors.

A particular problem was the Chancellor's Office's chronic failure to appoint a regular dean after me. Successive unsuccessful searches and other delays led to a series of acting, interim, and part-time appointments. There was no regular, fulltime dean from summer 1983, when I moved to a split appointment with the Office of the President, and September 1995 when Hal Varian joined the School, a period of twelve years. Worse, during that period the Chancellor's Office would not allow the appointment of new faculty to replace those who left or retired on the grounds that this task that should be reserved for the next regular Dean. So the number of professors in the School slowly diminished.

The Office of the President and Returning to the School

In summer 1983 Bill Frazer, the university-wide Vice President for Academic Affairs, asked me for immediate help with some urgent library-related emergencies in the central administration of the nine-campus system. I did this as a part-time appointment but it dominated my time and attention and a year later I resigned the deanship after eight and half years for a full-time appointment as Assistant Vice President for Library Plans and Policies in the university-wide administration while retaining my faculty appointment in the School.

After leaving the Office of the President in 1987, I was, for the first time, only a professor, free from administrative imperatives, and able to choose my own agenda. For me the 1990s and early 2000s were good years academically. In collaboration with Ray Larson, Fredric Gey, and talented doctoral students, a long chain of design and demonstration projects explored for twenty years many aspects of catalog design, search support, and the creative use of spatial, temporal, and biographical data, with extramural funding of over \$3 million. I also derived pleasure from developing two undergraduate classes. Lewis Lancaster involved me in the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative and I particularly enjoyed historical detective work recuperating the lives and ideas of forgotten pioneers of information services. But it was not a happy period. In the early 1990s the campus administration, now led by Chancellor Chang-Lin Tien, became less supportive.

The School had not been reviewed since the Wheeler report of 1974 and a review was initiated, chaired by Professor Robert M. Oliver. The 1990 report, known as Oliver 1, echoed the Wheeler committee report in both lauding the School's potential, identifying some deficiencies, and chastising the Chancellor's Office for its neglect of the School. Again it was a time of severe campus financial retrenchment. Rumors, never for attribution, began to circulate that the School might be closed as an economy. At this time the total campus enrolment was limited. It was a zero-sum game. New initiatives needed resources from the reduction of existing programs and the campus had a deep budget crisis.

The outcome was another review and another report, known as Oliver 2, which reaffirmed the conclusions of Oliver 1, but the situation did not change. There followed a requirement that the School prepare a vision statement. Dark rumors of disestablishment continued. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the Dean of the Graduate Division, apparently anticipating closure of the School, froze student admissions in the spring of 1993 just as our offers of admission were about to be sent out. Vigorous protests by alumni and supporters of the School resulted.

The Academic Planning Board

To cope with the severe campus budget crisis a high-level Academic Planning Board combining both administrators and academic senate leaders had been created. Eventually the School became an item on the Board's agenda and a meeting was scheduled to resolve the School's destiny. Faculty and students gathered outside California Hall holding placards with slogans such as "Don't say No to the future." There must have been more support for the School than we realized because in order to avert a negative outcome at the Academic Planning Board meeting, top campus leaders secretly contrived for the School's fate to be diverted from the Board and assigned to a new, separate ad hoc committee. An Information Planning Group was created in 1993, charged to define the ideal strategy for Berkeley to become a world-leader in the field of information. It was to be chaired by Judson King, who had recently been made responsible for all professional schools and colleges. The Group was told to be forward-looking and not to concern itself with the currently existing campus situation. One consequence of this was that neither the Wheeler report of 1974 nor the moves made by the School to be "and information studies" were discussed. There was a widespread assumption on campus that the existing school was still a "library school" that trained librarians. This outdated, narrow view is reflected in Judson King's later reminiscences.⁷

A Campaign

The School's small faculty had had little participation in campus-wide Senate committees other than the Library Committee. The Chancellor's Office's weak response to the Oliver 1 report induced some of us to become more involved in campus policy-making by joining campus committees. This proved useful in increasing awareness and understanding of the School and its situation. I served on the Graduate Council and then on the Committee on Educational Policy.

The Acting Dean, Nancy Van House, was in a constrained and difficult situation. The School's alumni association, being independent and skillfully led by Mary-Jo Levy and others, became actively and very effectively involved. The Chancellor's Office began to receive unexpectedly extensive protests from, especially, local government and public sector agencies.

With its relative isolation on campus, few outside the School were familiar with it or knew that the School had, in fact, acquired new life. The School eventually created a *Fact Book* which assembled and presented impressive information about the School. Copies were delivered to each member of each committee involved in review of the School. Particularly impressive was that the amount of extramural funding per professor had become one of the very highest on campus. It was also pointed out that since

⁷ King, Judson. (2013). *A Career in Chemical Engineering and University Administration, 1963 – 2013*. Berkeley: University of California, Regional Oral History Office, pp 405-409, 421.
<https://digicoll.lib.berkeley.edu/record/218774>

the remaining faculty were now all tenured economic savings from closure would be very small. Public opinion supported the School.

The Information Planning Group

Shortly before the membership of the Group was announced, Peter Lyman, then the University Librarian at the University of Southern California, visited Berkeley to give a talk. I offered to drive him to Oakland airport afterwards. As we drove south along Telegraph Avenue he confided that he had been asked to be a member of the Group. I concluded immediately that the school would survive because if closure were intended the Chancellor's Office would not have appointed any well-informed, independent-minded members from off-campus like him. His appointment indicated to me that the Chancellor's Office intended a positive, constructive outcome.

The Information Planning Group had good members, including three faculty members from the School (Charlotte Nolan, Nancy Van House, and myself) and a doctoral student nearing completion.

The deans of the College of Engineering and of the School of Business Administration advised the Group that there was no need for a department concerned with information and that, if any need were to arise, their schools could provide whatever was necessary. The Group immediately rejected this self-interested advice.

The charge to the Group was problematic in an important way. Because a visionary plan was sought, the Group was explicitly charged to disregard what currently existed on campus. So although everyone was aware of the existing school, its history, its recent progress, and its potential were not well-known and were not discussed. The Wheeler report of twenty years earlier was never mentioned, let alone the thought that the Group's report could be an unwitting repetition of it. And it would have been highly counterproductive to have drawn attention to it because, politically, it was very important for the Group's recommendations to be believed to be original and to constitute a new start. Those of us from the School felt that the other members of the Group needed to reach the right conclusions on their own, which, fortunately, they did.⁸ It would have been very unwise to have revealed that the Group's recommendations echoed the Wheeler report and largely coincided with what the School had been trying to achieve but had been hindered by the Chancellor's Office's prolonged failure to find a regular dean or to permit faculty replacement. That would have undermined support for the Group's recommendations for investment in this area.

Implementation was also outside the charge to the Group. The emphasis was on Berkeley's destiny to be a world leader in a field believed to be new and emerging. Very little attention was paid to peer schools of information elsewhere, except that the University of Michigan was identified as a good model. There a genuinely conservative school of librarianship had been radically "re-chartered" as a School of Information, drawing, in part, on recommendations made by two external advisors, Edward Holley and myself. Ironically, the outdated campus perception of the Berkeley school may have helped because it made the transition at Michigan an easy model to follow. What the Group recommended was, in effect, to follow Michigan's example and this found widespread support.

The Transition

When the Information Planning Group report was distributed to leading Academic Senate committees for review, a transmittal slip signed by Vice Chancellor John Heilbron added a new element. It stated that if the Group's recommendations were approved, implementation would be by disestablishing the existing school and establishing a new one. The Information Planning Group had not addressed how its recommendations should be implemented, beyond affirming that an independent professional school was the proper format. The Group had recommended a new *program*. It did not recommend a new *school*, though that would obviously be one way to implement a new program.

⁸ The Information Planning Group report is available at <https://www.ischool.berkeley.edu/about/history/1993proposal>

Projecting a new program brilliantly pioneering an important new field by recycling the assets of an older troubled program was compellingly attractive. Those who knew the situation better and would have preferred get on with the existing school's hindered modernization reluctantly saw acquiescence as the only way to continue to have a school of information.

With widespread approval the next step was an action item submitted by the University President to the Regents' Committee on Educational Policy, which held a five-minute meeting early on May 19, 1995 to recommend formal approval by the Regents later the same day. Judson King, who had chaired the Information Planning Group and who left the campus around this time to work at the Office of the President later reminisced with some justification. "I really regard that as one of the accomplishments during my career that I am proudest of. ... [T]o steer that through to success was pleasing to me."⁹

What the Regents Did

The heading of the Regents' May 19 action item was explicit: "Establishment of the School of Information Management and Disestablishment of the School of Library and Information Studies." However, the rest of the item was less clear. Approval by the University-wide Academic Senate had been conditioned upon the explicit assumption that this was a reorganization of the existing School and the brief explanation supplied by the President and forwarded to the Regents spoke of a "reconstituted School" and noted an understanding "that the new School is, to a large extent, a continuation of the old School with a new name and a charge to change direction."

The Regents have a process for establishing a new school and they also have a process for disestablishing a school, which had been used to close Berkeley's School of Criminology in 1976. But, despite the action item's heading, the Regents enacted neither establishment nor disestablishment. Instead, what the President recommended and what the Regents approved simply amended Regents Standing Order 110.1, section 14(a), which lists professional schools. Using the standard convention of highlighting new text and striking through text to be deleted, the Regents amended the existing entry thus:

~~School of Library and Information Studies~~, at Berkeley,
School of Information Management and Systems School of Library and Information Studies,
with a curriculum leading to the degree of Master of Library and Information Studies.

This simple change of name was exactly identical in form to the change in name from School of Librarianship to School of Library and Information Studies in 1976.

The existing school could have been phased out, while, separately, in parallel, a new school was established, but that was not done. There never were two parallel schools. There was only ever one single school and, as in 1976, the adoption of a new name and a broader mission had negligible administrative impact beyond the need for new stationery, signs, and business cards bearing the new name.

Actually disestablishing an existing school and actually establishing a separate new school would have involved enormous labor, many changes, extensive consultation, and been hugely time-consuming. Disestablishing a school involves termination of existing staff, dealing with issues arising from tenure, job security, and union contracts, disposal of equipment, and justifying a different use of the school's endowment. None of this was done. Establishing a new school would include designing an organizational structure, developing position descriptions, advertising, interviewing, and hiring new faculty and administrative staff, acquiring equipment and technical support, and much more. There was no sign of any of this being done. All of the above was made unnecessary and was avoided by simply renaming the School. To have done otherwise would have been foolish, especially given that the proposed program had the same basic scope as before.

Nevertheless the Berkeley Chancellor's Office recruited a "Founding Dean."

⁹ King, p 409.

1995

On July 1, 1995 the School of Library and Information Studies became the School of Information Management and Systems. New stationery and business cards were printed. Otherwise, there was complete continuity as the faculty, staff, and students waited for Hal Varian, who had been appointed as the Founding Dean, to join them in September.

Externally the establishment of a new professional school and the appointment of a Founding Dean appeared a triumph of effective academic planning, while internally there was smooth and total continuity. In this way the Chancellor's Office pursued two incompatible policies simultaneously. But doing so depended on deception and obfuscations that have remained unacknowledged and there were painful consequences. The situation was made more difficult by the lack of openness. The Chancellor's Office did not disclose what the Regents' had actually done and it was not in anyone's interest to address the situation honestly and openly, so the myth of a new school persisted. As a practical matter, the school had moved from danger of closure to being a top campus priority under a new banner. Questioning official statements could undermine that progress.

So far as I know, the continuity of employment of the administrative and support staff, the continued use of South Hall, the preserved status of the Library and Information Studies degrees within the new school, and the status of the endowment were never questioned. The Chancellor's Office's compromised approach put many people in a difficult situation, not least the Founding Dean, who joined the School on September 9 and was immediately and unavoidably engaged in reforming the existing operation. There was much to be done, especially to resume student admissions to the PhD and the Master of Library and Information Studies degree programs and to bring the faculty up to full complement. But there was not really any founding to be done.

Faculty

The Founding Dean had apparently been promised a free hand in selecting an initial faculty, as would be expected with a new School. But there were already eight faculty in the renamed school who were tenured and had no known interest in going anywhere else. They had not applied to be in a new school and they had not been appointed to one. They, like the rest of the school, simply continued. Since professorial titles ordinarily reflect the name of the department, their titles were simply changed from Professor of Library and Information Studies to Professor of Information Management and Systems.

There was no mechanism to select an initial "founding" faculty for a new School precisely because the Regents had not established a new school, but merely amended the existing school's name. Nevertheless, attempts were made. Late in January 1996 Carol Christ, who has succeeded John Heilbron as Vice Chancellor, proposed to the Chair of the Academic Senate that a faculty for the new School should be constituted and proposed a list that included most but not all of the tenured faculty. This proposal was immediately rejected and apparently abandoned.

One of the faculty members excluded from the list agreed to be reclassified into an administrative appointment and took retirement not long after. Another was simply told by the Vice Chancellor that there was no place for them in the Founding Dean's new school. However, there was no precedent for expelling a tenured professor from an existing department without cause. The Vice Chancellor claimed that the University's personnel policies did not explicitly preclude removing a tenured professor from a department so long as the individual remained employed somewhere, anywhere, on the same campus, not necessarily in any academic department. The aggrieved faculty member appealed to the Academic Senate's influential Privilege and Tenure Committee and, encouraged by colleagues, retained an attorney.

I prepared a brief memo carefully explaining that the Vice Chancellor's position, if accepted, would establish a precedent for removing tenured faculty from their departments without cause any time the Chancellor's Office changed the name or the emphasis of a department. I took it to Bruce Bolt, the Chair of the Academic Senate, and explained it carefully. He passed it to the Vice Chair, Harry Scheiber, a professor of law who appears to have understood the situation very clearly.

The Privilege and Tenure Committee of the Academic Senate made a preliminary determination in favor of the faculty member on the grounds that no new school had in fact been established, only, at most, a reorganization.

Meanwhile, Regents' Counsel, defending the Chancellor's Office's position, prepared a brief enumerating the many official statements that a new school had been established, but this proved a weak defense against a well-prepared case which spelled out what had in fact been done – and not done. The Chancellor's Office promptly sought and funded a settlement under which the faculty member would retain a professorial appointment in the School, but not paid from the School's budget, and also an appointment in another department.

The Academic Senate then persuaded the University to adopt regulations carefully designed to prevent the expulsion of tenured faculty from their department without cause.

Subsequent Developments

The Chancellor's Office's imperative to have both the publicity benefits of a new school and the practical convenience of a continuing one generated a lot of stress and unpleasantness.

The alumni association was particularly eager to contribute advice, but the logic of a new school meant that there were no alumni since no students had graduated since 1995. The relationship between the School and the association quickly deteriorated. Eventually the association was induced to dissolve itself in exchange for an unfulfilled expectation that the School would provide support for continued alumni functions.

The faculty was gradually replenished with new appointments, starting in 1996.

The faculty considered the accreditation of the MLIS degree. After thoughtful discussion, the consensus was that while accreditation was not strictly necessary, it was important for students planning to work in libraries. Accordingly the Dean wrote to the American Library Association's Committee on Accreditation, noting the continued existence of the MLIS degree, affirming the School's continuing interest in accreditation and stating categorically that the change at the School was no more than a change of name. The response was astonishing, tactless, and foolish. Because of a regulation unknown to us, the suspension of admissions to the degree in 1993 was deemed to have automatically erased the school's accreditation. No matter that the degree, its curriculum, the instructors and infrastructure were unchanged and that only the School's name had changed, the School would have to start from the beginning the long, onerous, and expensive process of seeking accreditation. The Dean responded that the campus administration had lost confidence in the accreditation of small professional schools. The reality was that the School had other very pressing matters to attend to and it was agreed to defer the matter and to revisit it in five years. During those five years applicants interested in mainstream library careers had to be advised to go an ALA-accredited program elsewhere or change their career plans. After five years there was insufficient student interest and re-accreditation was not discussed. Meanwhile the evolving composition of the faculty decreasingly matched the needs of an ALA-accredited degree program. Sadly, the erroneous belief persisted nationwide that the School had deliberately chosen to snub librarians.

Hal Varian's term as dean ended in 2003 and the Chancellor's Office conducted two unsatisfactory and unsuccessful dean searches. The faculty of the School then wisely took the initiative to propose two internal candidates, both more suitable than any of the external candidates that the botched searches had found. AnnaLee Saxenian was appointed in 2004 and served for fifteen years with great effectiveness. Under her leadership, the School became a campus leader in data science, launched an exceptionally successful Master of Information and Data Science degree, and developed a healthy sense of community.

Around 2020 the campus created an anomalous Division of Computing, Data Science and Society, with the School of Information as a reluctant component. Organizationally it was poorly designed and the head of the Division was inappropriately named Dean of the School. In 2023 this division became a college without the School of Information which was allowed to return to its prior status as an autonomous professional school as all prior campus planning had determined to be best.

Teaching

I had arrived at Berkeley with no teaching experience and eased into teaching with a team-taught summer session class on information policy, and then a section of the required course on library management in the Fall. I had, in my enthusiasm, managed to persuade the faculty that the management course required for the master's degree should be taught in the students' first quarter. It was a mistake and unpopular. The importance of general management skills in any professional career is not generally appreciated until after graduation when the realities of life as a professional within an organization become clearer.

While dean, I maintained a light teaching load and evolved a range of courses centered on my professional background in bibliography, cataloging, management, and library services.

Patrick Wilson worried about ways in which the School might be vulnerable in hard times and was anxious to ensure that the school was perceived as an asset to the campus. Since the university library was not considered a teaching department Wilson took over a library initiative to offer instruction in library use and, having hired the forceful Fay Blake, charged her to develop it. With small class sizes and highly motivated part-time instructors, all of whom had experience in library reference work, LIS 1: *Bibliography 1: Methods of Library Use* was a huge success, peaking around 1980 with sixteen simultaneous sections. Unfortunately, it became unsustainably expensive and was eventually phased out as budgets shrank.

Our emphasis on outreach to alumni and employers coupled with minimal undergraduate offerings had led to isolation in a campus community that had little basis for knowing what we did. To the extent that we were known, an outdated image prevailed, with little awareness of the changes since the Wheeler Report. One way for a graduate school to become known was to offer elective classes for the twenty thousand undergraduate students, but our few offerings – on library use, children's literature, and the history of book – did little to modernize our image. Around 1990 an undergraduate minor was planned. It was not implemented but I started teaching one component of it in 1993: LIS 101 *Information Systems*. It was an introduction to the School's scope, as I saw it, but intended to stimulate interest rather than to cover a set syllabus. I stressed topics such as privacy, media bias, and database use. The students responded well, but enrolment was very small. The difficulty was that all potential students were necessarily majoring in other colleges, which all had rules severely restricting what classes taught outside the major's college could count towards a degree, unless it clearly fitted one of the narrowly defined breadth requirements in science, humanities, or social sciences, which mine did not.

I speculated about a larger program that was simply just plain interesting. What if a university president had an epiphany that we were becoming an "information society" and wanted a department of information focused on just that, a "liberal arts" program exploring the best that could be thought or said on the topic, without offering professional training. Could it be done? I concluded that it could be and that any existing school of information incapable of mounting such a program was intellectually deficient. The only reason not to develop such a program was that there was a better strategy: to embed professional programs within such a liberal arts framework.¹⁰ Airing these views at an international conference in 1996 led to a productive, enduring collaboration with Niels W. Lund, who was at that time establishing a program in documentation studies at Tromsø University in Norway. He and I organized the initial annual conferences in South Hall of an informal group calling itself the Document Academy, which is still active internationally two decades later with annual conferences and an open access journal.

¹⁰ M. K. Buckland. (1996). The "liberal arts" of Library and Information Science and the research university environment. In: *CoLIS2: Second International Conference on Conceptions of Library and Information Science: Integration in Perspective, 1996. Proceedings*. Ed: P. Ingwersen, N. O. Pors. Copenhagen: Royal School of Librarianship, pp. 75-84.
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6z23b38n>

In 1991 an American Cultures Requirement became mandatory at Berkeley. To graduate every undergraduate had to complete a class which could be on any topic but had to engage analytically and comparatively with the experiences of any three of the five ethnic groups into which the nation was deemed to be divided. All departments were given an unfunded mandate to offer classes that satisfied this requirement, so I developed and taught an upper-division class entitled LIS 142 *Access to American Cultural Heritages*. The course was largely concerned with how governments and other institutions have vested interests in how one sees oneself. This ranged over such topics as bias in subject indexes, museum politics, media bias, identity politics, history textbook controversies, language policies, and much more. There was also a heavy emphasis on learning how to find out. Instead of a term paper each student had to prepare a study guide suitable for somebody else to learn rapidly about the chosen topic which was always about some specific aspect of some particular ethnic group. Weaker students quickly dropped the class when told that they would have to actually use the library and do some writing, leaving an ample supply of excellent students. My preparation required a huge amount of reading around many different literatures, including cultural anthropology, ethnic studies, the politics of ethnicity, memory institutions, heritage industries, and more. It is a sensitive area in which an older, white European-American male could easily get into trouble, but that did not happen. The coaching and discussion provided by the American Cultures Center during a summer fellowship in 1994 was one of my best experiences at Berkeley and I was blessed with some excellent teaching assistant help. Many students were clearly affected by what they learned. It was the closest I ever got to education in the purest sense. But it was very time-consuming and, as designed, it did not scale.

The longer I taught, the more I felt that what the students learned was less important than that they become interested and engaged in whatever the topic was. Since my classes were rarely a prerequisite for anything else, that was acceptable. Certainly my teaching evaluations improved.

One of the very best experiences as a professor is helping a doctoral student shape a doctoral dissertation proposal. Similarly, engaging with visiting scholars can be very productive, as I found especially with Niels Lund and with Luciana Corts Mendes.

Deans Swank, Wilson, and I encouraged an emphasis on design in professional education. In the spring semester of 1991 Clifford Lynch, an architect of the innovative MELVYL online library catalog and the multi-campus telecommunications network built to support it, and I collaborated in a design seminar for doctoral students scheduled on Friday afternoons. The seminar went well and at the students' suggestion we simply continued into the summer for a while and then resumed in the following Fall and Spring semesters. The pool of doctoral students was soon exhausted and the seminar became more of a colloquium series. We favored speakers and topics that interested the two of us, included reports on our own work, and retained the Friday afternoon time slot. Anyone interested was welcome to participate, whether or not part of the campus community. This generated goodwill towards the School and we have simply continued — for thirty-two years as of this writing.

Research

After leaving the Lancaster Library Research Unit in 1972 I continued to write up some aspects of research done there, but administrative responsibilities in library administration at Purdue, as Berkeley Dean, and then in the university's central administration involved many interesting but difficult problems, so for the next sixteen years there was little time or energy for other new research.

The Wheeler report mandate to broaden our scope had raised conceptual and terminological challenges. If you work to organize and make accessible materials other than library collections what do you call the items collected? Museum objects and natural history specimens were cases in point. This, I found, had been addressed in Europe decades earlier by simply widening use of the term *document* to non-bibliographical forms of evidence. The iconic case is Suzanne Briet's reference in 1951 to a captured antelope as a "document" if it was made an object of study. Sabbatical leaves in 1980 and 1988-89 were devoted to theorizing the scope of the School's field.

My direct engagement in from 1983 to 1987 in the rapid, intensive transformation of the university's library services raised many complex challenges of urgent practical importance and deep professional interest. These led to numerous discussion papers, published articles, and a widely translated synthesis *Redesigning Library Services* (1992).

Becoming, for the first time, only a professor in 1988 allowed a research agenda driven by my own personal interests with three related components.

1. A by-product of completing *Information and Information Systems* (1991) was a paper, "Information as Thing," a continuing concern with the materiality of information, and a sustained collaboration with Niels Lund, Ron Day and others theorizing "document" and documentation.
2. Learning that my ideas about documents had been anticipated, then largely forgotten, in continental Europe early in the twentieth century led to deep immersion that largely forgotten world. I felt like an archaeologist unearthing traces of a lost civilization with a duty to correct the historical record. My training in history, experience as a librarian, and Berkeley's wonderful libraries helped me to recover the lives and ideas of forgotten pioneers, notably the French librarian Suzanne Briet (1894-1989), the Belgian bibliographer Paul Otlet (1868-1944), and, after some fifteen years intermittent detective work, a detailed biography of Emanuel Goldberg (1881-1970), who had developed a search engine in Germany in the late 1920s.¹¹
3. Innovation at the Office of the President, notably MELVYL the innovative online library catalog, had been constrained by the political need for consensus on priorities. However, when simply a professor I no longer needed permission to develop prototypes of further innovations in search support. Instead I lacked the technical competence, but collaboration with Ray Larson, the availability of talented doctoral students, and engagement with the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative made feasible a long series of extramurally funded studies over the next twenty years.

Each of these lines of inquiry brought pleasure and satisfaction.

In December 2003 I realized that it was forty years since I had started employment in the field in 1963 and that suddenly seemed long enough. By the end of the month I was formally retired as an emeritus professor. Nevertheless I continued to teach courses that had already been scheduled for me, to be Co-Director of the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative, to co-chair the long-running Friday Afternoon Seminar, and to work on topics that interested me.

Being a professor is a privilege that is more fully appreciated if one comes to it as a second career, as I did. Berkeley treats emeritus professors well. It is a status that provides time as well as opportunity. I have been fortunate.

Berkeley, January 9, 2024.

¹¹ Michael K. Buckland. (2006). *Emanuel Goldberg and his Knowledge Machine: Information, Invention, and Political Forces*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited,