

Library Schools' Perspective

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I stand up here tonight with apprehension, for two reasons. One, I'm a novice in area studies speaking to a number of experts with a great deal of very specialized knowledge. Although I've had a lot of exposure to international librarianship and worked and taught in several countries around the world, I do not have in any way the depth of specialized knowledge and understanding that each of you has. Therefore how can I hope to tell you anything about an area that you have spent a great deal of time and energy thinking about and working with? What I hope I can do is to put our discussion into another context - that of library education. I'm also apprehensive about speaking as an after dinner speaker. When Jim Neal called me and asked me to speak tonight, my concern was a very personal one - I'm going to Vietnam next week to teach the final master's degree course to six Vietnamese librarians who have been part of the Harvard-Yenching-Simmons Library School library education project and I was not sure how I would do it all. However, my interest in learning more about area librarianship and your needs, and Jim's persuasive request motivated me to accept. At the time I did not give any thought to the fact that it was an after dinner speech. When I did think about it, I became concerned because those people who know me well know that I can get quite passionate and intense about topics that concern and interest me. An after dinner speech is supposed to be light and entertaining and, unfortunately, that's not my style. So, I began the research that all people making speeches and presentations do, the search for that joke or entertaining quote. But the appropriate story or quote was not to be found. Knowing that Jim Neal is a storyteller par excellence, I thought maybe I could con him into telling a few opening jokes, since after all he did ask me to make this presentation. But I could not talk him into that. Then I thought maybe I could tell stories on myself, relating to my international teaching experiences, but that did not seem quite fitting, because I know that many of you have had many more interesting, enlightening, or bizarre experiences in your travel than I have. So here I am to talk in my intense, concerned style about the role of library and information science programs in the future of area librarianship.

When Jim called and asked me to speak at this conference on the future of area librarianship I realized that, in spite of my interest in international librarianship, my work with international library school students, and my teaching abroad that I had not heard or thought of the terms area librarianship or area studies in a long time. Consequently I did the usual thing and did a literature search on area studies to see what had been written lately. As I am sure you know, there has not been a great deal written on this topic that is indexed in library literature. And I'm also sure that you know that area librarianship has not been a topic of concern among library educators. However, our world of rapidly changing political boundaries and concerns for cultural diversity require that we at least examine why we are not addressing area librarianship in library schools. Before I begin to address this specific topic, I would like to bring up another concern - that is the concern for terminology. I've been around long enough to have seen the discussions of interlibrary cooperation move to resource sharing, to access versus ownership, and the study of library administration become the study of library management. The Library of Congress subject headings still use area studies, but I've also heard people talk about the term and use the term international studies. And although it may not be politically correct, I'm going to use the concept of area studies to mean the study of several social sciences, such as history,

anthropology, geography, economics, political science, and sociology in a multi-disciplinary approach, to bring about understanding of contemporary society in some specific geographic area. I'm also going to consider area studies as paying particular attention to language competence. To address my topic of the role of library and information science programs in the future of area librarianship, I would like to discuss the topics of students, faculty and area librarianship, the schools themselves, and the access to area studies collections to support courses or programs in librarianship, and to look at them in the context of the past, the present, and the future role of library and information science programs and area librarianship.

Thirty years ago, on May 20-22, 1965, the graduate library school of the University of Chicago sponsored a conference on area studies and the library. The introduction to the proceedings of this conference includes a statement that I feel is as true today as it was 30 years ago: "The building up and maintenance of these area collections needs special personnel with both language competence and area background. The traditional programs in library schools, or the language area centers, are not oriented for training students to handle such materials. These area library positions require special knowledge of bibliography, the book trade, and the physical books of the area, in addition to a thorough understanding of its language, literature, history, and culture. Thus the personnel requirements for service in area collections present needs for a special training program." The papers at this conference highlighted the problems of recruiting students into area librarianship, because of the need for language competence and the area background. There were three kinds of students identified as possible candidates for area librarianship: the American students who had gone through area studies programs and who would then take a library degree, American students who had library degrees and who would then go through area studies programs, and immigrants who had the language and area backgrounds from their home countries and who would take library degrees. Recruiting these people into the profession and then into our libraries raised questions of salary and status. If people had spent the time and money to receive master's degrees in both library science and area studies, they certainly deserved remuneration for that background knowledge and expertise. Thirty years ago there were few full-time faculty in library schools with the background that could enable them to teach specialized bibliography and materials courses for area librarianship.

Consequently, there were few courses available in library schools that could prepare librarians for area librarianship. The few courses that were offered were usually taught by adjunct faculty who were the librarians or bibliographers for the area collection located at the university of the library school, or at a nearby university. Access to collections of area studies materials supporting the area being studied was another issue. It is difficult to teach the selection, acquisition, cataloguing, and processing of specific materials if you do not have access to the materials which you are studying and discussing. The library school thirty years ago was pretty traditional. Students studied the usual reference, cataloging, literature, bibliography, technical services, administration, and children's librarianship courses. A few of the library schools were just beginning to teach automation courses, and the MARC format and OCLC were just beginning to be talked about. Thirty years ago many of the topics we are discussing in this conference were seen as possible solutions to the shortage of trained area librarians. Automation and technology as well were seen as ways to deal with some of the problems in area librarianship.

Today I see the problems of area librarianship as even more difficult and serious than thirty years ago. To begin with, schools of library and information science are reexamining their missions and are trying to determine the best way to educate librarians and information scientists

for the future. We are seeing and feeling this turmoil as schools close, change their focus, change their names by dropping "library," and change their relationships to their parent institutions. Study of what library and information education should be in the future is being supported by several grants at the University of Michigan and at Drexel University. The discussion on the Cristal-Ed listserv at the University of Michigan shows that there is no agreement as to what library and information science is or should be. This leaves many schools of library and information studies trying to meet the needs of two groups: the library group and the information science group. These schools must have one foot in each camp: the library camp, and the information science camp. The library camp says that there are still a lot of libraries that are collecting print materials and that the people they hire must know how to select, acquire, catalog, process, and use print materials. And they also must know how to select, acquire, catalog, process, and use electronic materials. The information science camp is providing electronic access to materials and is looking for people who are adept at handling electronic journals, databases, computer hardware, software, networks, and telecommunications. Library schools are grappling with positioning themselves to preserve their existence and their future. Now I am sure that you are aware, as I am, that it should not be an either library or information science program, but a combination of both. Print materials are not going to disappear. We will at least have a retrospective print collection for a long time. And someone needs to be able to continue to acquire, catalog, process, and use print materials as well as electronic materials. However, in terms of planning, budgeting, and providing courses in both areas, it is a difficult time for library schools. It is very expensive to offer all of the necessary courses to meet the needs both of the library group and the information science group and, at the same time, maintain class size. Library schools and their parent institutions are becoming more rigid about class size, and are canceling and removing courses from the curriculum which cannot attract sufficient numbers to make them viable economically. And, unfortunately, many of the special area bibliography courses are of interest to only a small number of students. A library school rarely has a sufficient number of students interested in a course such as Slavic bibliography, to be able to offer it on a regular basis. For example, Simmons has offered a Southeast Asia bibliography course taught by Judith Henchy of the University of Washington for the past two years for Vietnamese and Thai librarians. However, the course will probably be dropped once the Harvard-Yenching program ends. So the number of students interested in a course plays a very important defining role in what is offered in our library schools. The current students still come from the same academic disciplines as in the past. The majority of their undergraduate degrees are in the humanities, with history and English literature being predominant. However, very few of them have language courses or area backgrounds. The students are coming into librarianship because of the opportunities offered by automation. They see their future careers based in technology. Yes, there are students with international work experience and interest, but we are much more likely to deal with international students from abroad and recent immigrants than the American student with an area studies background. In addition, the students do not have strong backgrounds in the liberal arts. Their undergraduate courses are of a much more eclectic array. This, combined with the increasing interest in information science, means we are moving away from the scholar-librarian who was a knowledgeable "book person." The faculty member in the library school of today is much more likely to have an information science background. The number of faculty with library backgrounds is diminishing as people retire and the people being hired are coming not out of the traditional library backgrounds and library PhD programs, but rather from the information science side. The faculty that are being hired today have a much

stronger interest in the information science area. In fact, I recently had a junior faculty member say to me, "I'm trying to decide whether I should pursue my interest in the library side or in the information side. I've made the hard decision that if something should happen my future will lie in the information side, and so I am going to move to that side of the house." And it is often a split house with two very disparate interests. In order to offer the area studies bibliography courses, or courses of interest to area studies librarians, we would continue to use adjuncts from area studies programs; our library school faculty simply do not usually have the strong area backgrounds. We still would continue to need access to area collections in order to orient students to the types of materials to select, acquire, catalog, and process.

Where are library schools going? I suspect that there will be those that are moving very quickly to the information science side. There will be those who, in order to continue to meet the needs of their constituencies, will try to maintain a foot in each camp. There are, as we say when we talk about the New England region, many small public, academic, and school libraries that are going to be print-based and print-oriented for a time to come. However, if we do not continue to move quickly to the information science side, we see our existence diminishing over time, and this is certainly a discussion that the faculty has had. We, like other programs in academic institutions, must be able to draw and keep the students necessary to maintain our existence. Therefore, in order to interest library schools in offering courses to meet the area studies needs, we are going to have to convince library schools that there **is** a need and that it is a viable course offering. Another way that we can meet the need for area librarianship is definitely through joint degree programs. Joint degree programs actually have a lot to offer. They are certainly a sales type of thing, because in a joint degree you are allowed to use several courses from each of the degrees toward the other, which means that you do not have to take as many courses in each degree. It therefore cuts down on the cost of the degrees, and it cuts down on the time of study. We have recently started a joint history/archives program, and I am absolutely amazed at the number of people who are coming into it. The first year I think we have something like 15 students and given the cost of Simmons tuition and the commitment to close to 60 credits, the students have made a large financial and time commitment, so I think that there is a strong interest in joint degrees. For those library schools that have access to area studies programs - this seems to me a very attractive way to meet the need in the field.

Another way to meet the need would be through summer school courses or institutes. The library schools certainly could offer courses in the special subject areas, perhaps attracting enrollment as continuing education courses, therefore making them viable for master's degree people as well as for people out in the profession. Another way is that library schools could cooperate. That means that some could specialize in certain area studies and make that course available to the students at other library schools. Now, certainly you could do that by moving the students physically for a period of time from one school to another, accepting the credits for that particular course. But, technology and developments in the area of technology are offering a lot of opportunities for us. Library schools are just beginning to move into the areas of distance education, but the opportunities certainly are there. Library schools, because most of them are very regional, are looking at this as a way to expand their geographic area of coverage to recruit students, and this also could be a way to meet the needs for some of the area studies courses. Ways that I could envision are, for example, through interactive video or interactive television, where you have a faculty member in one location, students in a variety of library schools around the country who could interact with that faculty member, giving students the opportunity to speak, talk, work with that person. That type of education does raise the issue of collections

because the collections are not always available in the different locations - but I'm sure that if we wanted to work at this to make it work we could come up with some way to do it. Another way is simply to have a course offered in one location, have it videotaped, use as some of the educational institutions are already doing - by offering video classes or putting the course up on one of the satellites, such as Mind University. The University of Arizona offers its library degree via video using the Mind University Satellite. This certainly is a way this specialized type of knowledge may be able to be shared and to make it viable. Another way is through the use of Internet email courses. Syracuse University has just recently started an information science program where the majority of the work is done over the Internet through email. The students must go to campus, I believe for a week each semester, to orient themselves to the courses and the faculty and the program, and then the remainder of the program is being conducted over the Internet and through email. We do shake our head, raise our eyebrows. Yes, those of us that believe that there is an exchange of knowledge, an interchange, a learning experience between the faculty member and the student, wonder about this as an educational methodology. Certainly you wonder if the exchange of information between the students, the socialization of the interaction between the students is being lost, and yet this is the way that a number of the library programs are experimenting with moving, and it may be a way that we will have to consider, if we cannot meet the needs and the courses for area studies and area librarians in other ways. What about the students for these programs of the future? If the students coming into library schools continue to see the library and information science profession as one growing in the use of automation and technology, will they have the language backgrounds, the area studies backgrounds? Will they see the career possibilities? Will the salaries affect their decisions? What about the status? These are all issues that we will have to think about as we look at recruiting students. They are not however, different, than any of the other recruitment issues that we are dealing with for librarians. These are a number of the areas that continue to come up.

I think, like the students, the faculty will continue to be based in the information science areas. That means that we probably, just as we have done historically, will in fact have to depend on you as adjunct faculty to teach these courses and to, in fact, perhaps make the overtures to the library schools, make the recommendations as to what should be taught as part of these courses. The full-time faculty, the faculty of our library schools of today do not have this knowledge and background, this expertise. I look at myself very honestly, and as I thought back on this area I realized that when I went to the library school at the University of Pittsburgh, area studies was a big topic, it was a growing area, it had a lot of interest. And I realized that in spite of my involvement in an international arena over all of my years in library education, area studies and area librarianship had slipped from the picture. And it does mean that you are going to have to work to educate the library schools and the library school faculty to your role and the importance of your programs. That, perhaps, as we look to the future, may be one of the action agenda items that you are really going to have to work on. You are going to have to have someone in the library schools who talks about this as a career possibility, who encourages students to think about it, who as the students express interest in international work, international librarianship, expertise in areas, point out that this is a career path for them. I will admit that as the students come to me and talk about job possibilities, this is an area that was not at the forefront of my mind. It was something that did not stay there to make me think to offer it to students as a possibility. This conference certainly has brought it to the forefront and certainly will help me to look at the possibilities of how we can encourage students to study in these areas and to look at the career possibilities. But I am only one person in a large array of library school faculties, so it

does set up an agenda item for you. Therefore, I think that we need to look very strongly at the recruitment issues. We need to look at the marketing and public relations issues as we meet and speak with library schools, with library school faculty, with other librarians, with students, with college students in area studies course, and, as people mentioned this afternoon, even with high school students interested in an international arena - to encourage them as possibilities. Thank you, and I hope that this has elicited some ideas and that we can have a discussion of some of these possibilities or even suggestions as to what you think library schools should do. Thank you.