

Julieann V. Nilson InULA Scholarship Winners' Essays

The Grants and Scholarship Committee received 13 applications for the 2011 Julieanne V. Nilson Scholarship. The quality of the applications was impressive and encouraging for the future of librarianship. The InULA Board has approved the committee's recommendation that this year's Nilson Scholars should be Brianna H. Marshall and Jennifer Ekblaw.

Brianna will join the SLIS class of 2013 and is already focused on how she can contribute to users and the profession. Her statement was well-written, clear, and revealed a passion for librarianship and a balanced perspective on the past and future of librarianship. She sees opportunities for outreach in digitizing special collections, thus, making them more accessible.

Jennifer is a seasoned SLIS student and library student assistant as well as the editor of the *Indiana Law Review* where she moved the review process to online sources. She has already developed a philosophy of user-centered service exhibiting enthusiasm and a strong commitment to the profession.

Lynda Fuller Clendenning
Chair, InULA Scholarship and Grants Committee

Brianna H. Marshall

Of the many opportunities offered by a career in the information professions, I am primarily interested in those afforded by academic librarianship: the ability to work closely with a broad variety of people within the academic community, placement on the forefront of emerging and innovative technology use, and the chance to not only assist with but also have access to plentiful research opportunities, among others. University libraries often function as the crux of the university community, bringing together students and faculty in the pursuit of quality information access, and this atmosphere of perpetual learning is very appealing to me. Within academic librarianship, I would like to work in a special collections or archives setting after having spent two semesters of my undergraduate years volunteering in the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Area Research Center. Often primary sources are found in archives and special collections, making these locations an important place for research to occur and making the roles of archivists and special collections librarians even more vital to a university's overall academic success.

As an English major, I have an appreciation for books - not only for the ideas they encapsulate, but also as a physical object. When I mention I am applying to graduate programs in library and information science, multiple librarians at my university have warned, "Don't say that you want to be a librarian because you love books." They have known many naïve, starry-eyed applicants who believe that the summation of a librarian's job description is simply to read and check books out for patrons. I have no such illusions, and I do not want to be a librarian simply because I love books. I want to be a librarian because I recognize that the books, manuscripts and other materials found in archives and special collections libraries are of innumerable value to our

society. Archivists and special collections librarians are in an important place to ensure that these materials, so valuable to the larger community, are accessible to researchers yet remain preserved and intact so that they can continue to be viewed by future generations of students and scholars. I would value being able to contribute to the academic community in this role.

As I look back on my experiences leading up to choosing academic librarianship as my future career, it is clear to me that I have always unwittingly been engaging in issues related to the field. Whether I was choosing to take a stance against censorship in my speech class, engaging in classroom debates on digital books versus print books, or discussing the ways that sites like Wikipedia are affecting student procurement of information, both ongoing and emerging issues in the field of librarianship interest me. A current challenge within the information services is the shift from print-based resources to electronic resources: traditional libraries are rapidly evolving, and those in the library profession need to be equipped to deal with this new reality. The way that new technologies are impacting special collections librarianship and archives management interests me in particular, especially the digitization efforts of physically delicate resources and digital curation. I would like to further research intersections of technology and archives that both enable more widespread access as well as preservation and appreciation of the original form.

I have a particular interest in outreach as it relates to special collections and archives. It is my experience that many of my peers, both undergraduate and graduate students, are largely unaware of the wealth of resources to be found in this area, and I plan to use my oral and written communication skills to educate other students about the library in a relatable way. One of the core necessities of successful librarianship hinges on whether students and community members are both aware of and comfortable accessing collection holdings. This seems like a very straightforward statement, but in the case of special collections settings, necessary security procedures sometimes inadvertently serve to intimidate students from discovering the resources that are available to them.

I anticipate in my role as a librarian or archivist to act equally as an advocate, educator, and liaison between students and the resources that libraries have to offer; they are far too valuable to risk potential scholars stumbling upon them by accident (or worse, never stumbling upon them at all). I found my university's Area Research Center in what I deem a lucky accident, and it has altered the entire course of my education, providing the inspiration and means to complete my undergraduate research project as well as shaping my plans for a future career. Indeed, the many resources within a university library have the potential to positively affect students' courses of study and spur them on to greater levels of scholarship. Fundamental to this is facilitating ease of access to these resources, as well as ensuring that incoming groups of students receive, at the very least, basic knowledge about what resources are available. This requires incredible persistence on the part of librarians, but a sweet reward will be reaped: a thriving academic community, with the library as its backbone.

Jennifer Ekblaw

When I applied to the School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University-Indianapolis near the end of 2007, my statement of purpose was built on the theme of patron-centered service; specifically, responding to patrons' needs and desires was the ultimate priority. After three years as a student in law and library school, the last year and a half also spent working at the Circulation and Reference desks of the Ruth Lilly Law Library, I realize reactive service alone is not sufficient. Libraries cannot afford to wait for patrons to request what they want; we must be observant of rising technologies and identify where our services can be improved to facilitate information access and make our patrons' lives easier. Ultimately, these improvements will create value and make libraries indispensable to their patrons.

Tailoring the provision of information services to comport with the realities of users' everyday living has become a central tenant for me as an information professional, whether it is in the library or in other capacities I serve. At the law library, my favorite part of my job is when I can help someone find something they were having difficulty locating. For most individuals, time is a precious commodity; giving people more time to do other things is one of the greatest gifts one can give or receive. Working in an academic law library, I also have the ability to help my student patrons by offering reassurance and putting their minds at ease. I have truly enjoyed serving as an informal mentor to incoming students who visit the library during their first semester, brimming with questions and concerns. When a library serves a special population, I think it is essential to take the characteristics of that population into account. Law students engage in a high-stress environment where they are statistically at a higher risk for depression and alcohol abuse; consequently, providing a friendly and encouraging atmosphere is one way we can support our patrons, even if it falls beyond the threshold of traditional library service.

As the Senior Executive Editor of the *Indiana Law Review*, it is my responsibility to compile all of the resources cited in the articles accepted for publication into source pulls. My predecessor performed this task by printing out all of the articles, cases, and Web sites cited and organizing them in binders located in the law review office. Because many of the sources were available online, many of the editors, myself included, did not use the printed source pull in the office, but instead duplicated the Senior Executive Editor's efforts and located the sources online. One annoying feature of this task was the necessity of juggling numerous open Internet windows.

When I became the Senior Executive Editor, I wanted to create an online presence where all of the sources would be available to my editors at any time or location via Internet access. By providing access to the sources online, there would be no need for the editors to search for sources, and by offering them all in one place, an editor would only need to have two windows open at any time. Fortunately, I was able to create electronic source pulls on our law review TWEN page provided by Westlaw, and I am pleased to say this resource offering has been a success. Although making patrons' lives easier is a goal I strive for, I acknowledge there are limits. In the quest of this goal, librarians should not perform tasks for patrons when it would be more appropriate to take advantage of a teachable moment and educate the patron. Librarians want to be indispensable to their patrons, but this should not occur by maintaining patron ignorance.

Upon graduation in August, I hope to serve as a law librarian, preferably in an academic law library. I enjoy the variety found in academic employment, not only in the job responsibilities,

but also in the wide array of legal topics one may be asked to research. My long-term career goal is to become an academic law library director. The problem-solving nature of policy making is appealing, and my legal training has taught me much about balancing competing interests and working with others to determine the most equitable result.

During my time in library school, I have often heard that it is an exciting time to be entering the field of librarianship. I wholeheartedly agree. It is a time of great transition, where we strive to embrace the new, while maintaining the essentials from the past. As a young professional, I am grateful for organizations such as InULA, which help all librarians find that balance by providing educational opportunities and a forum for discussion about what the future of libraries should look like. Working together, we can advance the goals of the profession and improve the experiences of the patrons we serve.