

DEGREES OF CHANGE: IS THERE ROOM FOR THE FOREIGN LIS DEGREE IN TODAY'S ACADEMIC LIBRARY?



Presenters: Amber T. Burtis, Health Sciences Librarian; Megan Lotts, Fine Arts Librarian; Melissa A. Hubbard, Rare Book Librarian Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Morris Library

ABSTRACT:

The American Library Association (ALA) accredited Masters in Library Science (MLS) has long been considered the standard terminal degree for most academic librarians. However, there are many relevant degrees offered in foreign countries that are not evaluated by the American Library Association. At Southern Illinois University Carbondale, a task force was formed to investigate whether the library faculty should revise their Operating Paper to allow for foreign library science degrees. Members of the task force researched the nature and quality of foreign library and information science education. They also investigated how other academic libraries handle this question by compiling data on the degree requirements listed in position advertisements for academic libraries posted between October 1 and November 5, 2008. The data suggests that many academic libraries allow individuals with non-ALA accredited library science degrees to apply for professional positions.

This presentation examines the results of the task force's investigation.

The poster contains visual elements that will engage the viewer with the

topic and encourage questions about the implications of this research.

RESULTS OF THE TASK FORCE'S INVESTIGATION:

The task force recommended that Morris Library Faculty amend their Operating Paper to allow for the consideration of non-ALA accredited library science degrees. The recommendation was based on the following criteria:

- 1. Research that found that, although many foreign LIS programs are at an undergraduate level, there are still a number of graduate programs. The requirement for a master's level degree would eliminate any need to consider undergraduate degrees.
- 2. Research that found a minimal cost for an outside evaluation of a foreign degree.
- 3. Collection of data from 136 job ads for academic librarians posted on the ALA Joblist and Chronicle of Higher Education websites between October 1 and November 5 that found 60% of ARL libraries allowed equivalent degrees.

In May 2009, the Morris Library Faculty voted to amend their Operating Paper to allow for the consideration of non-ALA accredited library science degrees.

LIS EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD In China, there are approximately 50 deand/or information management. Less than 20 of are an additional 21 graduate programs in library and inthose 50 departments focus primarily on library science, enrolling about 1,000 graduate students in librar science each year. 20 In Japan, 296 colleges and universi versity and Old Dominion.³ and 22 of those offer graduate degree Latin America and the Caribbean Four of the 8 member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Bangladesh, Sri Lanka). Beginning in 1903, India was one currently offering LIS programs in Latin America and the Caribbean. The countries with the most programs were Brazil with 40, Argentina with 15 and Mexico that 17 master's programs do exist in the region. In regards to curriculum, archival science is taught as a completely separate subject degree. 18 The focus of LIS education in the region tends to from that of library science, and there has been a recent shift in cataloging, information services). Countries in the In Australia, 10 universities provide LIS edubroader information studies curriculum. The University of the cation. Five of those universities offer programs at West Indies in Jamaica provides the English language I both undergraduate and graduate levels, 4 offer gradueducation for 10 different countries in the region ate programs, and 1 offers only an undergraduate program. tral, southern and eastern Africa. Counties in the region with no Library technician programs are also available from vocathe region with no evidence of LIS education evidence of LIS education include Angola, Burkina Faso, Bu include Haiti, Nicaragua, Guyana and rundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea technic of New Zealand, Te Wananga o Raukawa, Victoria Ur In the Gulf States, 7 universities in 4 countries Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, versity of Wellington and The University of Auckland). Two of provide LIS education (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oatar Mozambique, Rwanda, São Tomé and Principe these institutions offer certificates and bachelor degree proand Oman). Education is primarily on the undergraduat grams only, while the other 2 offer master's and doctorate level programs.³⁸ Countries in the region with no evidence of LIS education inlcude East Timor, Kiribati, degree.⁸ Three of those 4 graduate programs enroll a total of approximately 100 master's level students (i.e., King Abdulaziz Uni-Six of the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (SEAN) offer Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Tonga and versity in Saudi Arabia, Sultan Qaboos University in Oman and LIS education (i.e., Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines Tuvalu, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Kuwait University). The master's degree at Kuwait University, the Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam). In Singapore, the only only practitioner-oriented program, is taught in English and is based professional LIS program is a MSc in Information Studies on the ALA-accredited master's degree. There are more than 70 LIS from the Nanyang Technological University. Established in departments in Iran offering degrees through the doctoral level. 1993, students in the program study part-time and must com-Five universities in Iraq (University of Baghdad, Baghdad Tech plete 6 core courses, 2 electives and a dissertation. 13 In Thailand, cal Institute, University of Mosul, Mosul Technical Institute 16 universities have LIS education, with 9 offering master's and the University of Basrah) have LIS programs, ranging programs.14 Recent changes in LIS curricula have included from the associate's to the doctoral level. 11 Countries in the inclusion of knowledge management and information the region with no evidence of LIS education insystems subjects in Malaysia and and Singapore and clude Jordan, Syria and Yemen. 12 digital information and new media in Thailand and Vietnam. 15 Countries in the region with no evidence of LIS education include Brunei, Cambodia, Myanmar and Laos. 16

EQUIVALENT DEGREES IN POSITION ADVERETISEMENTS

Between October 1 and November 5, 2008, 136 position advertisements for academic librarians were posted on the American Library Association Joblist and the Chronicle of Higher Education website. We analyzed each advertisement based on the following criteria: whether the position was at a university, college, or community college, whether the position was at an ARL institution, and whether individuals with non-accredited masters degrees in information and library studies could apply. Some institutions posted more than one position advertisement during this time, and we found that some institutions had different degree requirements for different positions. The data represented here accounts for all 136 advertisements, which were posted by 100 different institutions. We found that 42% of the total positions advertised, and 60% of those at ARL libraries, were available to applicants with non-ALA accredited degrees.

JOB AD ANALYSIS



