

## Post-MLS Educational Requirements for Academic Librarians

*In a survey of job listings contained in two library periodicals, the educational requirements for college and university librarians were evaluated for the period 1970 through 1979. It was discovered that the requirements for nondirector personnel and university director personnel rose until 1976 and have since declined. It was also determined that there exist educational differences between director and nondirector positions and between college and university positions. The results of this survey are presented, and tests were performed to determine the statistical significance of the data.*

BY SOME ESTIMATES, upwards of 75 percent of academic librarians have obtained some type of faculty rank or faculty status.<sup>1</sup> As a corresponding problem, academic librarians have had to make some difficult decisions concerning the educational requirements their institutions will set with respect to employment and tenure. Although in 1975 the ACRL Board of Directors set the basic educational requirement of academic librarians as the MLS, rarely does a job listing come out in which one cannot find educational requirements for employment being set at levels above this guideline.<sup>2</sup>

Historically there have been several debates as to whether it would be appropriate for librarians also to have graduate degrees in other academic disciplines, most notable among these being the 1973 study by W. A. Moffett and the 1976 study by Rush G. Miller.<sup>3,4</sup> More recently, the Minimum Qualifications for Librarians Task Force of ALA recommended that research be commissioned to analyze the educational credentials necessary for librarianship.<sup>5</sup>

This paper will not enter the debate as to the desirability of additional graduate study

beyond the MLS, but rather will seek to document the trends in educational requirements for academic librarians as shown through the actual job listings for positions during the decade of the 1970s. In addition, this study will consider the differences in educational requirements for director and nondirector positions, and the educational differences between college and university positions.

### METHOD

Job listings in the library periodicals *Library Journal (LJ)*, volumes 95-104, and *College & Research Libraries News (C&RL News)*, volumes 31-40, were surveyed for the years 1970 through 1979. All job listings for college and university libraries constituted source data. The most basic data breakdown included whether the position was in a college or university setting and whether it was a director or nondirector position. The number of entries analyzed in the ten-year period for both periodicals totaled 5,269. The following rules were implemented to standardize entries:

1. Duplicate job listings for the same position within each journal were purged from the sample; interjournal duplication was not deleted.

2. The categories of educational requirement were: no additional education beyond the MLS (no additional); second master's,

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both preferred and required (2d master's); and doctorate, both preferred and required (Ph.D.).

3. Listings that stated "additional graduate education" were entered as second master's.

4. The data entry for a college or for a university was taken directly from the institutional name.

5. In the context of this study the job title "director" implies the chief administrative officer of an academic library. Job listings for administrative officers of departments or parts of a larger library unit were not entered as directors.

6. There were no distinctions made among disciplines within each category. For instance, the requirement for a second master's degree in the natural sciences was given the same data value as the requirement for a second master's degree in the humanities.

#### BASIC CONFIGURATION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

When this study was initiated, it was assumed that the educational requirements for academic librarians would show greater levels from year to year, with the last year surveyed showing the most stringent requirements. However, the data yielded some surprising information (see tables 1 and 2). In the two higher educational categories, the percentages general-

ly increased from 1970 through 1976, peaking in 1974-76, and then generally declined for the remaining years. The results for nondirector listings in colleges and universities and for university director positions reflect this overall decline since 1976. For instance, the percentage of jobs for university nondirector positions that at least preferred a second master's degree fell from approximately 35 percent in the 1974-76 time period to 32.5 percent in the last three years of the decade. The only exception to this pattern was in the area of college director positions, which showed a continued increase in educational requirements throughout the surveyed period. The data would also indicate, although the actual percentage will vary a good deal from year to year, that openings for nondirector positions have requested more than the MLS degree approximately 25 percent of the time, and that the job listings for director positions have asked for more than the MLS approximately 45 percent during the 1970s. Further elaboration of the data is given in appendix A.

In order to demonstrate the compatibility between the two periodicals a Pearson *r* test was conducted on the mean percentages of *LJ* on *C&RL News* for each type and are listed in the last column of appendix A. This test shows that the groups with the largest sample sizes, that is, the nondirector positions, tend to demonstrate the highest degree of correlation; whereas the director

TABLE 1  
CONFIGURATION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, NONDIRECTORS\*

	University			Mean (%)
	1970 to 1973 (%)	1974 to 1976 (%)	1977 to 1979 (%)	
Ph.D.	1.4	2.8	1.7	1.9
2d master's	20.5	32.1	30.8	27.0
No additional	78.1	65.1	67.5	71.1
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	1,172	1,437	1,375	
	College			Mean (%)
	1970 to 1973 (%)	1974 to 1976 (%)	1977 to 1979 (%)	
Ph.D.	2.7	1.2	4.7	2.8
2d master's	16.1	30.4	19.4	21.4
No additional	81.2	68.4	75.9	75.8
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	335	222	190	

\*In mean percentage, adjusted for rounding error.

TABLE 2  
CONFIGURATION OF EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS, DIRECTORS\*

	University			Mean (%)
	1970 to 1973 (%)	1974 to 1976 (%)	1977 to 1979 (%)	
Ph.D.	35.8	43.1	42.0	39.8
2d master's	9.1	17.4	12.7	12.7
No additional	55.1	39.5	45.3	47.5
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	63	138	116	

  

	College			Mean (%)
	1970 to 1973 (%)	1974 to 1976 (%)	1977 to 1979 (%)	
Ph.D.	19.1	19.9	21.0	19.9
2d master's	4.8	15.3	33.0	16.4
No additional	76.1	64.8	46.0	63.7
Total percentage	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N =	87	74	60	

\*In mean percentage, adjusted for rounding error.

positions, where smaller shifts in data will have a greater impact, show a lesser degree of correlation between the two periodicals.

#### DEGREE OF INTERCATEGORY SHIFT

When it was discovered that the educational requirements for each type tended to change a good deal from year to year, a nonparametric test was set up to determine if this shift was statistically significant or merely due to chance (see table 3). The information derived from this test tends to confirm that the above results are statistically significant; the requirements for all classes of personnel have shown a significant variation over the decade of the 1970s.

#### COMPARISON OF DIRECTOR AND NONDIRECTOR POSITIONS

As one could expect, the results in tables 1 and 2 also demonstrate a large difference between the educational requirements for director positions and for nondirector positions. This difference is most apparent when considering the comparison between university directors and university non-directors; the overall mean average of jobs requesting no additional education beyond the MLS for director positions is 47.5 percent, whereas the same average for non-director university positions is 71.1 percent. The results of the chi-square test, given in table 4, confirm the dramatic difference between these two types of positions. Director positions on both the college and university

TABLE 3  
CHRONOLOGICAL INTERCATEGORY SHIFT TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE

Type	Chi-Square
Nondirector	
University	115.977
College	47.386
Director	
University	14.681
College	27.578

Degrees of freedom = 9.

$H_0: P / \geq / P_{0.05} / = 16.919.$

$H_0: P / \geq / P_{0.01} / = 21.666.$

TABLE 4  
VARIATION BETWEEN DIRECTOR AND NONDIRECTOR JOBS TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE

Type	Chi-Square
University	979.500
College	69.756

Degrees of freedom = 2.

$H_0: P / \geq / P_{0.05} / = 5.991.$

$H_0: P / \geq / P_{0.01} / = 9.210.$

levels show a statistically significant higher level of educational requirements over non-director positions.

Although there have not been any previous general surveys of job listings for academic librarians, there have been several papers devoted specifically to the requirements for directors. Hence it was appropriate to compare the data derived from this study, by using the overall mean of the

combined valued of the Ph.D. category, with these previous studies (see table 5). The research by Jerry L. Parsons and William L. Cohn reviewed the obtained educational levels of Association of Research Libraries (ARL) directors.<sup>6,7</sup> The study by Paul Metz also surveyed actual educational obtainment, but employed a nationwide sample of library directors.<sup>8</sup> The work of Herbert S. White and Karen Momenee surveyed job listings for directors during the period June 1976 through December 1976.<sup>9</sup>

The results indicate a close relation between the data from the Parsons, Cohn, and Metz studies and the data from this study. There is a high degree of difference between this study and the White and Momenee study; however, the period surveyed by White and Momenee not only represented a small sample, but also happened to be taken during a year in which the educational requirements in all categories were unusually high.

#### COMPARISON OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE JOB LISTINGS

The last question considered is the degree of statistically significant difference between the educational requirements for university librarians and college librarians. Again a nonparametric test was used against the data to make this determination. The results of this test are given in table 6. For both director and nondirector positions there was a significant difference between the requirements for college librarians and for university librarians. The results in table 2 demonstrate this variation by showing a much higher level of educational requirements for university director positions as opposed to college director positions.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF DIRECTOR PH.D. REQUIREMENTS WITH PREVIOUS STUDIES

Study	Having or at Least Preferring Ph.D. by Percentage
Parsons	37.0
Cohn	31.0
Metz	21.0
White and Momenee	49.1
This study	29.9

TABLE 6  
VARIATION BETWEEN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY JOBS  
TEST OF SIGNIFICANCE

Type	Chi-Square
Nondirector	36.689
Director	32.936

Degrees of freedom = 2.

$H_0: P / \geq P_{0.05} / = 5.991.$

$H_0: P / \geq P_{0.01} / = 9.210.$

#### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the trends in educational requirements for academic librarians. By way of the tabular data presented, it was determined that the post-MLS requirements for both non-director categories and for university director positions rose steadily until 1976, and have declined since then. It was also determined that this rise and decline was statistically significant and not due to chance. It was further found that the post-MLS educational requirements for director positions are significantly higher than the requirements for nondirector positions, and that these post-MLS requirements for director positions are generally compatible with previous research in this area. Last, it was determined that the educational requirements for university positions as a class are more stringent than for college positions, and that these differences are also statistically significant.

This study does not attempt to determine the causation of the patterns that have been established. However, if it is true, as many academic librarians believe, that the educational requirements for employment and tenure are becoming increasingly tougher, then it is incumbent upon the profession to delineate adequately the growth and makeup of these requirements. This study represents merely the first step in a process of research on a topic that will inevitably affect every academic librarian.

#### REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX A

## COMPARISON OF TYPES OF POSITIONS BY YEAR, USING MEANS OF COLLAPSED CATEGORIES

Type of positions	1970 (%)	1971 (%)	1972 (%)	1973 (%)	1974 (%)	1975 (%)	1976 (%)	1977 (%)	1978 (%)	1979 (%)	Mean (%)	Standard Deviation	Pearson
													$r$ (LJ on C&RL News)
Nondirector University At least 2d master's preferred	9.4	25.5	22.4	30.0	31.7	36.5	36.4	35.6	30.8	31.0	28.92		
Nondirector University No additional	90.6	74.5	77.6	70.0	68.3	63.5	63.6	64.4	69.2	69.0	71.08	3.88	0.8038
Nondirector College At least 2d master's preferred	7.8	23.0	24.1	20.4	22.4	33.4	39.0	19.0	18.6	34.6	24.23		
Nondirector College No additional	92.2	77.0	75.9	79.6	77.6	66.6	61.0	81.0	81.4	65.4	75.77	4.47	0.7675
Director University At least 2d master's preferred	46.6	62.3	21.1	48.7	55.9	69.2	56.0	48.8	62.5	52.5	52.36		
Director University No Additional	53.4	37.7	78.9	51.3	44.1	30.8	44.0	51.2	37.5	47.5	47.64	6.77	0.5517
Director College At least 2d master's preferred	23.8	18.1	33.3	20.2	28.6	32.1	44.9	31.0	52.1	78.9	36.30		
Director College No additional	76.2	81.9	66.7	79.8	71.4	67.9	55.1	69.0	47.9	21.1	63.70	9.25	0.6036