

*Submission procedures.* Nominations may be made in the form of a letter and should point out the reasons the bibliography should be considered for the award. A copy of the bibliography should accompany the nomination. Send nominations to the jury chair, Carolyn Warmann, Reference Department, Carol Newman Library, Virginia Tech,

Blacksburg, VA 24061.

*Deadline.* January 1, 1989.

*Previous recipients.* The Oberly Award has been presented in the odd-numbered years since 1925. A list of recipients is available from the ACRL office. ■■

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## A two-year MLS internship program

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*The University Library Associates program at the Alfred Taubman Medical Library, University of Michigan.*

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**T**he University Library Associates program is a two-year, 48-credit hour program of study, work and skill development leading to the Master of Arts in Information and Library Studies degree. It is jointly funded by the University of Michigan Library and the School of Information and Library Studies. The program is aimed at students wishing to pursue careers in academic librarianship.

Students take courses in communication, research methodology, statistics, organizational psychology, personnel management and the organization of higher education, in addition to library science.

Each student works in a unit of the University of Michigan Library twenty hours per week for the two years of the program. The work component gives the student occasions to apply ideas encountered in the classroom to a real world situation. The program has the commitment and direct participation of the University Library administration which stipulates that work experiences be free of clerical duties and focus on the development of professional level skills.

In the second year the student works on a research project, whose goal is to teach problem solving skills that will be useful in future professional positions. During any given year eighteen associates are enrolled in the program.

### **Coordinating committee**

The associates program is coordinated by a half-time professional librarian, who works with a committee of faculty from the School of Information and Library Studies and librarians from the University Library. The committee's role is to recommend policies affecting all aspects of the program including recruitment, class and work assignments, and research projects. In the past year associates gained representation on the committee.

### **Recruitment and admissions**

Initial responsibility for recruitment is the School's. It screens applicants for academic qualifications and upon acceptance into the Masters program, the candidate's credentials are forwarded to

the University Library for final consideration. Each year approximately nine new associates are admitted.

University Library unit and department heads are eligible to submit proposals for associates to the library administration, which makes the final selection. Some positions are used for permanent staffing while others are filled through competitive proposals. The process encourages creativity. Once a pool of applicants reaches the library, supervisors review credentials and decide who will be interviewed by telephone. Reference checks are usually conducted by telephone as well. Each supervisor whose proposal has been selected is expected to recommend 2–3 candidates for the position. If two or more supervisors recommend the same applicant, appointment is made either by deferring to the supervisor with the highest priority (as determined by the University Library administration), or by allowing the applicant to choose her own appointment from those offered.

Several criteria must be met by candidates seeking admission to the associates program, beyond those required of applicants to the School of Information and Library Studies. Candidates must possess high academic qualifications and submit a resume as well as a statement of interest in the program, an example of formal writing, and evidence of commitment to a career in academic librarianship.

### **The associate at the Taubman Medical Library**

The Reference/Information Services department at the Taubman Medical Library sought to add an associate to its staff so that full-time professional librarians would have additional time to plan and develop new services, and to evaluate existing programs more thoroughly. When the associate program began the department consisted of six full-time librarians.

Taubman's first associate began her appointment in the Fall 1985 term. As a result, training coincided with the flurry of activity customary at the onset of the school year. Initiating the program in the Fall facilitated the associate's integration into the unit. Each of the two Taubman associates to date have been assigned to the Reference/Information Services Department where one important responsibility is to provide service at the reference desk two weekday evenings a week. As a result, reference desk training has been a top priority. Being successful at the reference desk requires a knowledge of the policies, services, organization, and operational responsibilities of each library department.

Initial training therefore focuses on providing the associate with an overview of departmental responsibilities and an understanding of how the work of all departments contributes to the operation of the library. To achieve this the associate

spends varying amounts of time in each of the other three library departments—circulation, interlibrary loan and technical processing.

### **Training objectives**

The associate's training mirrors that provided to new professionals. There are four training objectives for the Taubman associate and a range of activities undertaken to teach the associate those skills:

*Objective 1.* Understand Taubman's administrative organization as well as the policies and operational procedures of the Reference/Information Services Department.

- Tour building and meet staff.
- Become familiar with Reference desk routines.
- Learn how literature searches are initiated, processed and picked up.
- Learn how interlibrary loan requests are initiated, processed and picked up.
- Become familiar with the responsibilities, organizational structure, etc., of each department.

*Objective 2.* Understand the layout, arrangement, and location of collections at Taubman and at other units of the University of Michigan Library and become familiar with primary information sources in the health sciences.

- Learn to use collection holdings information tools, e.g., card catalog, RLIN, Geac, kardex.
- Tour other health science libraries and the Graduate Library.
- Learn to use health science indexes and abstracts.
- Self-study of health science information sources.

*Objective 3.* Understand the mode of operation of the Reference/Information Services department and how the department interfaces with other departments.

- Work with members of the department at the reference desk, observing interviewing techniques and becoming familiar with the reference collection.
- Work in the Interlibrary Loan Department performing a variety of duties in order to become familiar with its responsibilities.

*Objective 4.* Become an effective, efficient database searcher, with particular skill in searching the MEDLINE database.

Complete the in-house search training program, which includes:

- Completing the BRS training workbook.
- Learning to use MeSH and completing practice exercises.
- Formulating practice searches.
- Observing reference librarians conducting search interviews.
- Conducting search interviews while a librarian observes and having search transactions and results reviewed by online services coordinator.

- Becoming fully integrated into the search service.

### **Training progress**

By the completion of the second year the associate has acquired skills equivalent to an entry level librarian with one year of professional experience. The first year of the associateship is a time for training. The emphasis is on learning, developing and refining skills. The second year, by contrast, focuses on developing into an independent member of the reference team. The associate works alone at the reference desk and conducts search interviews without another librarian being present. However, each search run by the associate is reviewed by the online services coordinator. This provides the associate with feedback on her work and an opportunity to further refine her skills. During the regular workday the schedule provides dual coverage, with one person being on duty at the reference desk and a second available to run database searches. This structure assures the associate that a reference librarian is available for consultation or assistance when needed.

Involvement in Taubman's user education program was a third priority for the associate, but because her time was so heavily committed it was not easy to assign her to a classroom instruction project. The department's program to teach all 200 second-year medical students to search MEDLINE turned out to offer the opportunity we were looking for. During the two hour hands-on part of the instructional program the associate worked alongside other reference librarians helping medical students use MeSH, formulate their searches, boot up the microcomputer, and feel comfortable running an online search.

### **The research project**

A research project is a requirement for graduation. It gives the library associate experience designing, carrying out and reporting the results of an original project. Academic credit is granted for the project, but it is completed on the associate's own time. The project, which must be library related, may be done in the library unit where the associate works or in another unit.

The range of projects undertaken by associates varied considerably. Lisa Strubbe, for example, chose as the topic for her research project the "Duplication of Periodical and Annual Titles in the University of Michigan Libraries." The project was designed and conducted under the direction of the head of the University Library's serials department. Advice and review were provided by a research committee consisting of a faculty member from the School of Information and Library Studies, the research coordinator of the University Library Associate program and the head of the serials department. Assistance in statistics and data analysis was received from the University of Michigan's

Statistical Research Laboratory. Each project must be well-defined so that it can be completed in approximately 180 hours (the equivalent of a 3 credit hour course).

Each graduating associate presented the results of their research during a special seminar held in the spring. It provided an opportunity for associates to receive comments and input before writing the final report. Each associate gained confidence from having completed a research project, and from having had the opportunity to present it in a public setting. In many respects the effort is similar to the process some academic librarians experience when they seek promotion and tenure.

### **Coursework**

Library associates complete 48 hours of coursework, 12 beyond the standard masters program. In preparation for work on the research project associates take a research methodology course. Among the required courses for the second year are: Management of Academic and Research Libraries, and Technology-Based Information Systems in Organizations. During the second year associates have the opportunity to select from a wide range of electives and it is at this time that an associate can enroll in the courses required for the concentration in health sciences librarianship or another area of specialization.

### **Advantages to the library of having an associate**

Associates are eager to learn new things, excited about the profession, and interested in testing what they have learned in graduate school in the real world of the library. An associate can share that enthusiasm with existing staff, and provide a stimulus for thinking about new programs and services, new roles to consider, etc. With the associate functioning as a half-time professional, by the beginning of the second year, working at the reference desk and running database searches, some full-time reference librarians were released from routine duties to work on special projects. The associate also served as a springboard for a closer working relationship with faculty from the School of Information and Library Studies, by providing an opportunity for individuals to work together to plan the curriculum, review work proposals, and select the most able students. The final validation of the success of the program has been helping the graduate find the most challenging job and this too has been a joint effort between librarians and library school faculty.

### **Advantages of being an associate**

For the associate assigned to Taubman, work at the reference desk offers many opportunities to apply what is learned in the classroom to the real world. For example, the associate has ample op-

portunity to use on a daily basis knowledge gained from the study of medical bibliography, and other subject bibliography courses. By participating in the library's planning process the associate is able to apply theoretical concepts learned in courses such as the Seminar in Academic Library Administration or Problems in Research Library Management.

Other advantages of the program include a tuition waiver, a stipend, and some fringe benefits consistent with those of other university staff members. Upon graduation, library associates receive a Master of Arts in Information and Library Studies and a certificate from the University Library Associates program.

Graduates have several distinct advantages during the job search, including personal contacts with University Library staff, who know the associate's abilities and can provide letters of reference and advice in tailoring a resume to the requirements of the health sciences library marketplace.

Associates belong to two peer groups; one consists of professional colleagues working in the unit to which the associate is assigned and the other includes the eighteen associates appointed during a given academic year. Together these colleagues serve to help the associate develop her own professional character. The associate must demonstrate office etiquette, fit into an established group and work for positive group dynamics by taking turns as teacher, learner and volunteer. As a beginning professional she must learn to achieve a balance between independence and teamwork, while learning about the division of expertise within a department. The associate develops a professional demeanor by observing the professional attitudes of her colleagues, by sharing in weekly department meetings, by training users in one-on-one sessions, and by participating in social interactions with department members.

Associates with appointments in other units form the other peer group that is important to the student's professional development. Associates tend to be highly motivated students with varied backgrounds, library experience and interests. Associates are encouraged to enroll in many of the same classes, thereby facilitating peer group dynamics and communication. Second year associates frequently serve as mentors to first year students.

### **Uniqueness of the program from the library's point of view**

Many internships take place after the completion of the MLS. The associateship stresses training, tutelage and close monitoring and supervision during the graduate school years, when ideas and behavior patterns are being developed. During the two years the associate was at Taubman we sought to instill in her a commitment to quality and consistency in performance. Such attitude development

cannot easily occur in a field experience which may last one term or less. Furthermore, many field experiences focus on the development of only one skill because of the limited amount of time.

Alternatively some field experiences may provide the student with a broad overview of an entire library's operations. The associateship sets well-defined goals and each supervisor is expected to report regularly on progress on those goals. This practice prevents the associate's experience from becoming too diffuse. As a result, an important characteristic of the program is teaching the student to set meaningful goals and to plan her time so that all goals can be achieved in the time available.

### **Uniqueness of the program from the associate's point of view**

The opportunity to pursue work-related topics as starting points for school papers and other as-

### **No waiting now for second-time NEH challenge grants**

The National Endowment for the Humanities has changed the rules for an institution wishing to apply for its second challenge grant; it no longer needs to wait two years between the successful completion of the first challenge and application for the second. Up until now, grant recipients had been required to complete their fund raising activities (usually a five-year process) and then wait an additional two years before re-applying. This change reflects the recent competition in the program, which suggests that institutions might enhance their fund raising abilities by beginning their second challenge campaign as soon as the first ends.

The next deadline in the program is May 1, 1989. Applications for second-time awards will continue to be given lower priority than applications for first awards, and all highly meritorious applications for a first challenge grant will be selected for awards before any applications for a second grant are considered for selection. Recipients of second-time awards are required to raise from non-federal donors four times the amount of federal funds offered. First-time grantees must match each dollar from NEH with three dollars in donations from non-federal donors.

This year's second-time awards were announced in December 1987, and they included Haverford College, Pennsylvania (endowed chair in comparative literature and related library acquisitions); Knox College, Illinois (library renovation and acquisitions endowment); and Penobscot Museum, Maine (endowment of new positions of librarian and education assistant, construction and fund-raising costs).



signments gives the associate an edge over other students because the associate's ideas are based on experience and practice. When compared to library science graduate students who may work only a few hours a week at the reference desk the associate has a deeper sense of commitment to her position and a clearer sense of her role and responsibilities, and she gains greater independence than do other graduate student assistants.

During the second year, the associate runs database searches as a regular member of the reference department with librarian consultants available as needed. In short, the two-year library associates program serves as a student internship and a first professional job by providing practical training and skill development that will facilitate the individual's adjustment to her first professional position.

Other aspects of the program set it apart from standard internships. The length of the program, two academic years, is somewhat unusual among library school courses of study. The research project, either basic or applied, is a distinctive feature which would not be feasible in a masters program of shorter duration.

The coursework has been tailored to the academic library environment, but it leaves room for specialization, if desired. The oversight of the program by a committee of university librarians and library school faculty reflects the desire of these two groups to work together to make the program strong. The addition of a library associate to the committee is evidence of the group's commitment to responding to the changing needs of students and the profession. Finally, the library associate is the only member of the staff to belong to a union, the Union of Graduate Student Teaching and Research Assistants.

### **Relationship to University Library Residency Program**

The University Library Residency program is a two-year post-library school program in academic research librarianship, which is designed to provide instruction and training, much in the way a medical internship or legal clerkship seeks to sharpen and enhance the skills of its trainees. Residents are given an opportunity, through special project work and attendance at instructional seminars, to develop the analytical and quantitative

skills needed for success in research librarianship.<sup>1</sup> There is an effort to develop a synergism between associates and residents, particularly when they are working in the same unit. Taubman has had two successive residents during this time period and each has served as a good role model for the associate.

Residents and associates are each in a two year program for which no commitment to provide a permanent position exists. As a result job hunting and resume writing are two frequently discussed topics. Because of the differences between associates and residents there has been no competition between them, rather the reverse is true, with the key being a helping relationship. For the associate, the resident has been another, special category of colleague to work with, learn from and share with.

### **Conclusion**

Having an associate at the Taubman Medical Library has added a new dimension to the assignments of reference librarians. They now find themselves functioning as trainers and mentors in addition to their routine duties. There have been several advantages to the department in having an associate, including a fresh perspective and new ideas, excitement about the profession, a closer relationship with the School of Information and Library Studies, and an additional staff person to share in providing reference and online search services. From the associate's perspective the advantages include experience in designing and conducting a research project, the achievement of the equivalent of one year's professional level experience and acquiring a sense of self-esteem and confidence in her abilities and skills. Overall we believe the University Library Associates program has had a positive impact on all involved.

Currently the program is being refined during a time of introspection for the profession. Some of the issues under consideration include such topics as what is the best training for library professionals and what are the distinctions between professional and nonprofessional duties. ■ ■

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<sup>1</sup>Richard M. Dougherty, et al., "A Nexus of Education and Practice: The Residency Program at the University of Michigan Library," *Library Journal* 111 (February 15, 1986): 118-30.