
“Kids Who Read Succeed” and the academic librarian

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What relevance does “Kids who read succeed” have for college and university librarians?

“**I** like your theme, but I work with college students. They read well; what relevance does ‘Kids who read succeed’ have for me?”

That’s a question I’ve been asked on several occasions. And while I think the answer is obvious, it’s a fair question and, to my mind, one that is easy to answer.

College and university librarians have for too long sat on the sidelines. They have resisted the opportunity or responsibility to reach out and become more involved with young people in their community. Ask community college librarians and they’ll tell you what involvement at the community level means. I believe this attitude is changing as more college and university officials recognize the enormous stake they have in the future generation of students.

In order to help them prepare, it will be necessary for more institutions to become involved in preparing students for postsecondary education. What better opportunity for librarians to become direct participants? Acquiring information skills is a cumulative process. In an age where greater attention is being focused on helping people to become information literate, I would point out that successful reading is fundamental to achieving information literacy.

A student who is struggling to understand a textbook is not likely to warmly embrace independ-

ent reading and other library services. Term papers will be viewed as an onerous chore and the library as an obstacle to be surmounted and, as quickly as possible, forgotten.

Oh, I may be exaggerating somewhat, but there are too many students entering college who have only marginal reading and comprehension skills. Most were never introduced to the marvelous resources a school media center can offer and certainly have not achieved a state of “information literacy.”

Many notable librarians have pointed out that for the collegiate library to be successful, it must be viewed as part of the instructional program. I would say in this context it must reach out and work with the institution as it strives to achieve the school’s mission.

Today’s five-year-old who is struggling to acquire language skills will be entering college before we know it. The challenges we now face will not be quickly or easily resolved. If the library is truly to become a source of information and not a repository for books and journals, it is imperative that academic librarians be associated with their colleagues’ efforts to help kids become successful readers and successful students.

I am especially pleased that the American Library Association will be using “Kids who read succeed” or simply “Read. Succeed” as the focus

for this year's National Library Week (April 14-20) and other promotional efforts throughout the year. It's a message that is critical to communicate to all Americans. Certainly it is fundamental to the mission of all types of libraries.

Please join me in spreading the word not just during National Library Week but throughout the year. Check out the promotional ideas for academic libraries in ALA's "1991 Campaign Book," available through the ALA Graphics Catalog. They came from an academic librarian, Denise A. Forro, at the Michigan State University Libraries.

Reach out to your community and show students of all ages how library resources can help them to achieve personal success.

Show them librarians are leaders in promoting literacy. ■■

Editor's note: Many new products (posters, info literacy brochures, bookmarks, etc.) suitable for academic libraries make their debut in the ALA Graphics catalog. To request a free catalog call (800) 545-2433, press 8.

April 1 Deadline for ALA Minority Fellowship Program

April 1 is the deadline for applying for the 1991-92 American Library Association (ALA) Minority Fellowship Program. The program is designed to provide an opportunity for minority librarians to gain an understanding of association management, ALA's structure and operations, and how policy is formulated and implemented. The program is intended to improve the upward mobility of minority librarians, make ALA better known and more visible to minorities and minority librarians, and increase the number of minorities in the profession and in the ALA.

The fellow selected will spend 70 to 75 % of the time working in an ALA division or program office at ALA Headquarters in Chicago, 20 percent on an independent special project, and 5 to 10 % in overall ALA activities and association management workshops. ALA divisions and offices will be submitting proposals for possible projects.

ACRL's proposal calls for the fellow to work closely with the ACRL vice-president on recruitment activities designed to recruit talented individuals (particularly those with a science and social science background, and those from underrepresented minority groups) to academic librarianship. Specific activities include: development of networks of recruiters for the library profession in each

state; development of high quality recruitment materials (videotapes, brochures, etc.), research on interactive career guidance packages in order to offer a more positive profile of today's librarians. (Typical guidance packages portray librarians as introverts who love to read.)

To qualify, an applicant must: be a librarian or information professional (American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific/Islander, Black, or Hispanic); hold a Master's degree from a library science program accredited by the ALA or from a program that meets the ALA/AASL curriculum guidelines within a unit accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education; have a minimum of three years of professional working experience in a library or information science environment; be a member of ALA at the start of the fellowship.

The 1991-92 stipend for the ALA Minority Fellowship is \$30,000 plus medical, dental, life and disability insurance and relocation assistance to Chicago. To obtain more information about the program or to receive application materials, contact: Gail Purches, ALA Office for Library Outreach Services, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611, (800) 545-2433, x4294. The postmarked deadline for applications is April 1, 1991. ■■

Emporia State to offer MLS in Nebraska

The Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education has voted to allow Emporia State University's School of Library and Information Management (SLIM) to offer its MLS program in Lincoln. The only accredited library program in the Great Plains region, it began offering courses in 1988 at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, and in 1989 in Denver, Colorado. Students can earn an MLS by attending classes one or two weekends a month. The classes begin Friday evening and meet for 15 hours over the weekend.

SLIM will bring its 42-credit hour program to Lincoln if 45 qualified students are admitted, according to Dean Martha Hale. Interviews of candidates for the Nebraska program will begin in March, with the first classes starting this fall.

Six other states have expressed interest in SLIM's distance education program, but Hale says that program expansion depends on the development of "mediated" instruction, such as video and satellite courses. ■■