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Law Librarianship Training at the University of Washington

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The law librarianship program at the University of Washington is built on the premise that the quality of special librarianship is enhanced by subject knowledge in the specialty, and candidates for the Master of Law Librarianship degree must be lawyers. This is not the place at which we shall set out the reasoning of those who originated that rule of selectivity or the defense of those who continue it.¹ It should be obvious that neither the originators nor the present administrators subscribe to the theory that all professional law librarians must be lawyers. Neither do they believe that those whose dedication to the profession, love of learning or search for advancement spur them to the acquisition of two degrees, must acquire those degrees in any particular order.

The *Announcement* of the School of Librarianship says that applicants for admission to the program must hold the Bachelor of Laws degree from an accredited American Law School. In some future edition that statement will be changed, in the interest of accuracy and actual practice, to Anglo-American Law School.

¹ The curriculum was established in 1940. Some information about its origin appears in our "Law Librarianship Course at the University of Washington," 5 *Journ. Legal Ed.* 537 (1953).

More important, it should be pointed out that while Anglo-American lawyers only are eligible as candidates for the Master of Law Librarianship *degree*, the *program* is available in whole or in part to others. Those whose educational and experience background provides the Faculty with some assurance of ability to absorb the content of the specialized courses and to keep up with their graduate lawyer classmates are allowed to treat the law librarianship courses as electives in the general librarianship program. In the past, students with partial legal training and law library experience or exceptional scholastic records have been completely identified with the special curriculum, electing all of the specialized courses, but earning the general degree.

Even those who are completely lacking in legal training may elect one or more of the specialties (Law Library Administration or the Acquisitions course, for instance), but this is a privilege which is extended only to students of proved ability and is not recommended for any who do not want to run to keep up. For the student who is interested in law librarianship but who has no legal training, a more useful solution (although not an easier one) would

seem to us to be suggested by the *Announcement* statement that "Students who have a strong subject interest or who are preparing for special fields may elect up to 10 credits of graduate work in a subject field." Assuming legal aptitude, there is no procedural obstacle preventing a librarianship student at the University of Washington from electing one of the beginning courses in the Law School.

Applicants for admission to the law librarianship program must be accepted by the School of Librarianship, and by the Graduate School, of which it is a part. The high standards for admission to those schools come as a shock to some who have acquired a feeling of scholastic distinction along with their LL.B. diplomas. It is disturbing to discover that having squeaked through Law School, one is not automatically eligible to apply for the shorter sprint through Library School, or to learn that undergraduate grade averages which qualified one for law school may not be sufficient to satisfy the Graduate School requirements. These requirements are not rigid, but flexibility has its limits, and probationary admission has been granted sparingly in the past. Those who request special consideration must be prepared to document proof of unusual promise for a future in law librarianship and to back up the documentation with commendable scholastic performance.

The Master of Law Librarianship degree program comprises 46 quarter credit hours, and for the full-time

student requires four quarters for completion. Unlike the Master of Librarianship program, it does not provide for completion by attendance at Summer sessions only, for only one of the specialties normally is offered during the Summer. Of the 46 hours required, 23 are basic studies in the general librarianship program, and 3 or more are electives. Required courses include *Libraries, Librarians and Society* (Objectives, trends and problems of library service, 4 hours), *Evaluation of Library Materials* (Book selection and reference, with emphasis on the humanities and social sciences, 7 hours), *Organization of Library Materials* (Cataloging and classification, 10 hours) and *Government Publications* (U.S. and foreign documents, 2 hours).

Students who have no library experience usually undertake four weeks of professionally supervised field work in a carefully selected law library where the staff is equipped and willing to provide an educational experience; for the experienced student, additional course work is recommended instead of field work. Elective courses which are available for law librarianship students include *The History of the Book*, *The Library and Audio-Visual Materials*, occasionally offered courses in Information Retrieval or special Law Cataloging seminars, and in the College of Business Administration, *Human Relations and Industry*.

Sixteen hours of the required program are the specialized courses taught in the Law School. The num-

ber of students, as yet never more than four, allows conference or round-table rather than lecture procedures, and much of the work is of a laboratory nature. A descriptive summary follows:

Advanced Legal Bibliography, 2 hours: Each student must complete an up-to-date edition of a research manual designed for the double purpose of guiding first-year law students to the Law Library's resources at brief-writing time, and of steering the Law Library's patrons to the best and sometimes little-used sources for solution of specific inquiry. A third and incidental purpose is fulfilled when the student uses parts of his manual (or parts of the composite result of the class' work) as lecture notes for Legal Bibliography. This may be when he becomes a school law librarian, or it may happen sooner, if he is invited (and most students are) to participate with the Law Library staff, the following quarter, in legal research group instruction for law students.

Selection and Processing of Law Library Materials, 4 hours: Each student is assigned a specific law library (sometimes, by invitation, an actual law library, but usually a well-defined imaginary one) and a stated sum of money (always imaginary, and never enough) with which to build or improve its collection. Here is acquired familiarity with the A.A.L.S. Standards and recommended sources for law book selection, budgeting and staying within budgets, order procedures and purchasing sources. The latter part of the course

involves work in the Law Library's acquisitions department, because it is difficult to follow an imaginary book order to completion, especially if one uses imaginary money.

Law Library Administration, 5 hours: The principles of administration are alike for all kinds of libraries, and might be absorbed in the general course in Library Organization and Administration. That course, however, necessarily emphasizes the organization of large public and academic libraries, where most beginners find positions. Beginners in large libraries should understand the principles of finance and know statistical sources, but never are expected to prepare budget requests and justifications. Not so with beginning law librarians, so the students in this course do prepare budget requests (again, usually, the well-defined imaginary library). They study the inter-library loan code and the value of inter-library cooperation; they may investigate exchange procedures, binding preparation as well as specifications, study and recommend records systems or circulation controls, plan remodelling and consequent collection-shifting and weeding, study the relationship of the catalog division to circulation, reference and acquisitions, or analyze costs and methods in special services. Except for the preparation of a budget request, assignments among students are not uniform. They vary according to the individual's job-expectations or his previous experience.

Legal Research and Reference, 5 hours: This is the only specialized

course offered regularly during the Summer Quarter. In recent years it has required completion of one or more individual research projects, selected primarily for their educational value to the student but secondarily for possible value to a particular law library or to law librarianship in general. Examples of past assignments are preparation of annotated bibliographies for use in book selection, recommendation of a

serials control system for an active collection of 65,000 volumes, evaluation of sources of information about law books, preparation of instructions for subject indexing, short of full cataloging, state legislative studies, up-dating the Price instructions for *Noting-up British Statutes and Cases*, and completion of staff procedure manuals for various parts of a law library organization.