

Letters

More on the faculty status debate

To the Editor:

Brava to Beth Shapiro ("The myths surrounding faculty status for librarians," November 1993) for having the courage to speak out against faculty status for librarians, which is a snare and a delusion. If librarians want to be faculty, they should get Ph.D.s and teach and do original research and publish scholarly articles: that's what faculty do. I've never been able to understand the craving for faculty status. In any club where the Ph.D. is the minimum requirement for full membership, most librarians will always be second-class members—if taken seriously at all. (I am assuming that Harvard is still not unique in requiring doctorates of most of its tenured faculty.)

Why not spend some of this energy helping to establish librarianship as a "profession"—with its own separate integrity and validity? At my university I don't see doctors, lawyers, or clergy affecting to be faculty; they are secure within their own professions. Librarianship will never gain the respect it deserves (but still lacks) while so many otherwise intelligent people distort the value of our considerable contribution to the missions of our institutions with claims of being faculty.—*Malcolm C. Hamilton, university personnel librarian, Harvard University*

To the Editor:

Beth Shapiro attempts to identify "the myths surrounding faculty status for librarians." Sharing our opinions can be an endless process, but I disagree wholeheartedly with her opinion that "the work we do is fundamentally different from that of the teaching faculty." My own experience in both school and academic libraries is that the role and educational objectives of the teacher and the librarian are very close—if not the same. And while research may not be "essential" for some academic librarians, it is for many others. Isn't this true in all disciplines? And, since when has ACRL or any other group of librarians focused "exclusively on developing a research agenda"?

The other myths destroyed by Shapiro are largely straw men, in my view, having little to do with the essential role librarians have in the educational process. When she says "academic

libraries exist to *support* the educational and research mission of the university," she is not describing my experience in five libraries. Rather, these libraries were more central to the mission of the universities than any single academic department. Thanks for listening.—*Don Lanier, health sciences librarian, University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford*

BI or research?

To the Editor:

In response to Steve McKinzie's article, "Bibliographic instruction or research: What's in a name?" (June 1993), some seek new truth or correction of old error in the laboratory, in social observation, or in introspection: this is (one kind of) research. If documents result, others may seek truth or error correction by analysis of them: this is (another kind of) research too. Since the second (kind of) research is necessarily based on documents it is best called "documentary research." Since the first (kind of) research may not arise from contact with a document, but does necessarily seek the truth about the state of affairs of some (ontic or ontological) region or aspect of the world, it is best distinguished from documentary research by being called "worldly research."

What is taught in library-based "bibliographic instruction" (BI) can only be documentary research. Still, BI teaches access to and utilization of both primary and secondary documents: the dichotomies primary/secondary (which applies *only* to documents, not to the research that underlies them) and worldly/documentary do not map on to each other, so that BI does not, in teaching documentation, teach the actual process of the underlying research, especially in regard to worldly research.

BI should teach not merely "how to use the library," but rather how to do any kind of documentation, whether worldly (secondary) or documentary (primary and secondary). It should teach not only documentation in any narrow sense but that as an element of the whole bibliographical region. But it should not even attempt to teach worldly research (because it in principle *cannot*), unless librarians can teach philosophy itself as well as philosophical bibliography, chemistry as well as chemical bibli-

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The graphic designs we used worked very well for brochures, bookmarks, and buttons, but were not effective for communicating our message on posters. The messages "Don't eat or drink in the library" and "Don't make noise in the library" appeared in small print at the bottom of the posters. The small print was intended to provoke interest and encourage the viewer to take a closer look. One reason that people were not drawn to read the small print may have been because of the height at which many posters had to be hung.

Recommendations

The group recommends the following actions to others who want to institute a similar campaign in their library:

- 1) Have a code of conduct in place before you begin the campaign. Both patrons and employees must know what is expected of them.
- 2) Closely examine the kinds of problems most common in your library and where they occur.
- 3) Devise a plan to sell your campaign. Calculate your costs and explore free sources of assistance. Check to see if a class can help.
- 4) Time the campaign so that things are in place at the beginning of the fall semester.
- 5) Be prepared to rethink your position on food, drink, and noise issues. Achieving group consensus requires some compromise.
- 6) Gain administrative and staff commitment to the campaign. Signs alone won't change behavior. ■

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of the IU Department of Afro-American Studies. For more information call (812) 855-8547.

Although the aforementioned African American Studies collections are each housed in three different locations on the IU Bloomington campus, fundraising efforts are underway to build a new facility which could accommodate all three archives. About \$2.5 million in private donations must be raised to match state funding for the new building which will be named the Neal Marshall Black Culture Center. The new center is named after the first African American alumnus of IU, Marcellus Neal, 1895, and the first African American alumna of IU, Frances Marshall, 1919. To make a donation to the Neal Marshall Center, write to the IU Foundation, P.O. Box 500, Showalter House, Bloomington, IN 47402, or call (812) 855-8311. ■

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heightened awareness of the importance of preparation for a censorship challenge. The whole process took one and a half months, but it seemed to drag out longer, perhaps prolonged by a sense of insecurity or not knowing what to expect next.

Censorship incidents can take a tremendous toll on a community, as evidenced in Cumberland County, North Carolina, where the presence of *Daddy's Roommate* and *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Alyson, 1989) on library shelves has delayed the construction of five library branches.² As academic librarians we hadn't been lulled into complacency, but nonetheless were surprised when it happened to us. The groundwork of the past (the library's "Collection Policy Statement," and the affirmation of the concept of intellectual freedom) proved to be invaluable. Six months after we received the initial letter of complaint, we are in the midst of revising and updating our collection development statement. This experience will make us examine more closely the section on censorship and intellectual freedom, so routinely included in collection development policies, but never really expected to be used.

Notes

¹Mary Jo Godwin, "Conservative Groups Continue Their Fight to Ban *Daddy's Roommate*," *American Libraries* 23 (December 1992): 968.

²Michael J. Sadowski, "Book Controversy Delays New Branches," *School Library Journal* 39 (May 1993): 12. ■

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ography, medieval French philology as well as medieval French philological bibliography. Why should a university bother to hire faculty in medieval French philology, or in chemistry, or in philosophy, if its librarians can teach and perform worldly research in these and all other subjects (as McKinzie seems to claim)?

What librarians teach is (best called) BI, or (a bit less well called) documentation, or (even less well called) library skills. But to teach research *simpliciter*, of both kinds and in all subjects—such a suggestion is on the face of it unaware both of what such researchers *do* and of the meaning of the words with which we describe them and their products.—*J. M. Perreault, head of special collections, the University of Alabama in Huntsville* ■