library systems, and such places as the Folger
and the Newberry.

The proposal has generated some interest on
the part of Congress and it now becomes a
matter of proposing statutory language that
makes the right institutions eligible. Definitions
have to be written with some eye to political
realities and plain old good will. For instance,
there are no ARL libraries in Montana, New
Mexico, Arkansas, and Mississippi, which will
dampen the interest of Senators Mansfield,
Montoya, McClellan, and Stennis—all key
members of the Senate appropriations com-
mitee. So perhaps eligibility has to include,
let us say, the biggest academic library in any
state or the largest public library. The diffi-
culty is to avoid sounding elitist or pedantic
while making the intent of the legislation per-
fectly clear.

In the coming months representatives of
ACRL will be working with the ALA Wash-
ington Office and ARL to come up with word-
ing that meets the needs of research libraries.

One thing is important to remember. No-
body gets a dime just for being eligible. But
if more libraries are eligible, more people are
out there lobbying for money for this program.
The real need is to design a program that will
actually get funded and do some good for
the scholarships, authors, and students who use
our research libraries.

Letters

The editors have received the following
letter supporting the ACRL Board of Di-
rectors policy statement on the M.L.S. de-
gree:

Dear Editor:

I fully endorse the decision of the ACRL
Board of Directors to declare the master's de-
gree in library science the appropriate terminal
degree for professional librarians. Additional
degrees in other subject matters may enhance
the librarian's value in specialized fields, but
unless we want to become bibliographic assist-
ants to authorities in other fields we must as-
sert our independence and strive for excellence
in our own area. We should be proud to be
generalists because we form the information
link between the various disciplines and our
task is to bring them together. We help the in-
formation seeker to formulate the questions to
be answered and either supply the necessary
information or show the paths to it regardless
of the form in which the information may be
recorded. We also facilitate contact between
the information seekers and those knowledgable
in that field for discussion and answers.

Often directional and routine and superficial
reference questions would lead to deeper re-
search and better understanding if they were
handled by competent reference librarians in-
stead of nonprofessional assistants. Academic
libraries have never recognized limitations or
classifications as finite and therefore have al-
ways paid attention to the needs for individual
instruction. The drive of librarians for full fac-
culty status should be based on the importance
of librarians to academic development toward
excellence at our institution and on the impor-
tance of our contribution to the intellectual de-
velopment of each individual in our academic
community who cares to take advantage of our
services. Librarians have a unique opportunity
to emphasize the interrelationship of the vari-
ous disciplines and to act as catalysts for iden-
tification with our academic institutions, and
thus become indispensable governance partici-
pants.

Sincerely,
Leo R. Rift
College Librarian
Ithaca College
Ithaca, New York

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