

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

To: Dr. Stephen Wailes
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Subj. Proposal for M.L.S. Specialization in Music Librarianship

From: George W. Whitbeck
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Telephone 7-2666

Date April 24, 1978

I am pleased to respond to the questions posed in your memorandum of the 17th. In taking your suggestion to address your most general question (number six) first, let me say that the Graduate Library School has no intention of developing any such series of specializations as you hypothesize. The university librarians serving in these areas have, to my knowledge, shown no interest in taking on the additional duty of teaching a course and there has not even been any conversation in the GLS about such possibilities. We have considered the possibility of a program in law librarianship, and a program relating to archives and manuscripts, both of which would involve substantial consultation with outside departments (the Law School, Lilly Library, the History Department, and probably others), but these programs are only in the talking stage. There will be no "plethora" of specialization proposals. The MLS - Information Specialist (Chemistry) and the proposal under discussion are the only two special programs within the MLS that have developed in eleven years of the School's existence. Your question concerning whether or not the student could obtain the same program without the specific designation of a specialization is well taken and we have sought to address this in our discussion of the program. To a great extent it is true that students could obtain the specific course work, but it is our feeling, and Dr. Fenske strongly concurs, that there is great value in giving students the recognition that they have achieved mastery of a demanding and somewhat uniquely specialized area of librarianship. There is also value, in being able to tell students that they will be able to achieve training in this specialized area using the resources of the Graduate Library School and the School of Music. There is also value to employers (and to the students that might be hired by these employers) in providing tangible recognition that the student has achieved a particular specialization, that he or she is different in that way from other recipients of the MLS Degree. "Formalization" we feel, is important in this area that I have described as being in some ways unique. "External relations" are very important. It might be noted parenthetically at this point that we, and the School of Music, look upon this specialization within our MLS program as being but a steppingstone to the creation of dual Masters program which will provide further advanced training in this field.

I have related thus far primarily to your items five and six. Let me go back now and consider your first four items in order. There is no requirement that Chemistry Information Specialist candidates take L596 "Practice Work" because it was felt at the time of the creation of this program that an internship component was not absolutely necessary for students seeking a background in this area. We are still of this opinion, and a number of reasons may be advanced in its support. Perhaps most important is that of the fact that much of the knowledge requisite for chemistry librarians is taught in regular library school courses or in chemistry courses, some of which are required in this program. This is less the case with music librarianship.

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For example, L524, "Literature of Science and Technology", dwells heavily on the literature of chemistry and related sciences. While L523, "Literature of the Humanities" contains a component on music reference books, the emphasis on music is nowhere nearly as great as is the case with chemistry in L524. Another pertinent example relates to the cataloging of material in chemistry as opposed to music. While the literature of the former can be related fairly well to the standard cataloging courses (and practice), the cataloging of materials for the field of music is an extremely difficult and complicated area which is barely touched upon in our regular curriculum.

Relating to your second question, that of the ratio of hours of practice to academic credit, the answer is that the forty hour ratio is a general standard for all L596 enrollments.

Perhaps the most important fact to make clear in regard to your point three, is the degree to which Dr. Fenske, and his staff, were involved in the planning of this program. They are most insistent on the necessity of an extensive practicum component. Concerning your fear that Dr. Fenske will be overloaded, let me point out that this is a hypothetical situation which will never arise for the simple reason that not just Dr. Fenske, but the entire professional staff of the Music Library will be supervising the practice workers. Should it occur that four people desire to take the practicum during one semester, this can be handled quite readily by assigning two students to public services and two to technical services within the Music Library, or some such other arrangement.

We feel that your implication that "educationally valuable duties" for the students could not be found is unwarranted. It is the constant endeavor of the Graduate Library School in placing students in practice work (the closest we come to an "internship" at present) situations to ensure that they are exposed to a variety of professional experience and not assigned to routines that can be handled by student assistants or clerks. This is also, and has been, the goal of Dr. Fenske and the Music Library professional staff. The cataloging of music materials, for example, is a demanding and intellectually taxing professional task which is also a "supervisable" one. Students taking L596 in this program will be doing original cataloging of music materials of all sorts under the direct supervision of the Music Library cataloger. This is thus a practical approach to theory which is eminently in line with professional education generally. The Seminar in Music Librarianship (our new L631) which is now in the process of obtaining Graduate Council approval, will carry the weight of purely theoretical considerations relating to music librarianship. Seen in this perspective, which recognizes the value of internship situations in professional education, the requirement of six hours of L596 does not seem to us, or to the music librarians, as being at all excessive. Concerning the practicum, it should also be pointed out that we have stated our intent to keep enrollment in this program small. No more than four to six students will be admitted in any year.

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Finally, let me relate to your fourth question, that concerning the electives available to the student. While we, and again Dr. Fenske, considered the possibility of specifying certain other courses that must be taken by students, we felt that it would be better to leave this element of freedom and choice to the student and his or her counsellors in the Graduate Library School and the School of Music. Whether a student took three additional courses in library science, or three in musicology, or music theory, or divided this elective opportunity would thus depend on that particular student's background and career goals. Again, it should be pointed out that the small number of students in the program coupled with the keen interest of the music librarians as well as the Graduate Library School in their success will ensure that adequate counselling is given and that undue specialization is avoided. Students admitted to this highly selective program will be coming to it with a substantial background in music but possibly with differing emphases and it is in the context of the student's whole educational experience and not just that of the masters program that the matter of electives must be viewed.

If you have further questions, by all means give us a call.

GW/W/ra

cc: Bernard M. Fry, Dean
Graduate Library School

David Fenske, Music Librarian
School of Music