

SLO#1: The Student Assesses the Philosophy, Principles, and Ethics of the Library and Information Field

Graduating from college with a bachelor's degree in History, I have become quite familiar with the inner workings of a library. However, I was only learning about libraries from a patron standpoint. I needed to learn how the professionals make the magic happen for the patrons. I needed to learn the kind of knowledge that patrons would not normally know. That's where the master's program comes in. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Masters in Library and Information Studies program introduced me to the different values, traits, and standards that govern the entire library and information field. Things that are gradually taught to you throughout your entire time in the program, which is probably why this is listed as the very first objective that all budding librarians must accomplish. In my own honest opinion, if one does not grasp the principles, ethics, and philosophy that give the LIS field its foundation and structure, then it is impossible for them to achieve any of the other learning objectives. Personally, taking this learning objective to heart is how one will make the most of their career, as well as their life, as well.

Therefore, it makes sense that my very first semester in the program is all about me creating a foundation to stand on with these initial materials. For me personally, the very first class I took in this program, LIS 600 – Foundation of Library/Information Studies, helped me to really get my feet wet into the world of libraries. This class got me acclimated with the values that libraries pride themselves on, which revolve around providing users with the best quality information services that we can provide for them. For me, one of the assignments in that class that I feel best symbolizes that is the values and practices assignment that introduced me to the American Library Association Bill of Rights. This assignment was about looking at how different issues that concern ethical and advocacy standards have an impact on how the library provides information services to its users, who are comprised of the library staff, vendors, patrons, third-party organizations, etc. Thinking back to this particular assignment, after gaining some more insight from my other classes to this point, I can see now that it is meant to provide me with a criteria that I should use for the other standards and procedures that my other classes have provided to me. Whether I am doing reference work, administrative work, collection management, etc., they all walk side-by-side on the same road that was paved by the Library Bill of Rights. All of the principles, philosophies, and ethics that govern each type of library (public, academic, museums, archives, etc.) are influenced by this assignment. To continuously realize the vision of both the information institution and the user, I will need to pay attention to critical issues and use them to make sure that these three values continue to benefit everybody.

Speaking of visions, there is a certain assignment that I keep quoting throughout my time in the program that I feel is one of the keys to realizing this objective. In LIS 650 – Library Administration/Management, I got introduced to a reading called *Raving Fans*, which talks about using both yours and the user's vision to create a service that could be a boon to the community as a whole. A service that is not only so unique that

the community doesn't have, but it provides a potential opportunity to the information field as a whole as well. What this book taught me is that I must create a personal vision that has the interests of information community at heart. After all, it is the community that the library serves that shapes and influences the philosophy, ethics, and principles that govern the field. The community is the guiding force that helps us assess and determine whether or not we are upholding these values.

One of the best ways for a student librarian to make sure that they can successfully assess the principles, ethics, and philosophy of the library is to speak with people who do that on a daily basis. In this program, I have conducted a total of three interviews with librarians who have different positions. I have spoken with a library administrator, a university archivist, and an academic assistant provost, who each work for a different university. Using their vast experiences in the field, they each gave me a unique insight into how different parts of a library operate. They gave me a glimpse into how each part of a library contributes to assessing and upholding the field's philosophy, principles, and ethics. While each of them has seemingly different roles, they all have a common objective, which is to make sure that these core values continue meet the needs of their users.

Throughout the two years that I have been in this program, I have consistently discovered that no matter what classes that I have taken, no matter how completely different they are to one another, you will always find these key principles at the heart of them. They are what all professionals who call the library and information field home follow on a daily basis. There is a reason why that will always be the case. These philosophes, principles, and ethics are the library equivalent of a compass that serves to keep you on the proper path towards the ultimate mission that all librarians serve, which is to provide information resources and services for human society. Human society is where these values come from, as well as the driving force behind evolving information technologies, marketing efforts, cataloging, archiving, and more. No matter what project you undertake as a librarian, you must continually assess whether or not you are fulfilling these core materials that make up the foundation that all residents, whether they be librarians or patrons, of the information realm stand on. If you don't always keep them in mind, then everything else that you do in your career will not see much success. As I have previously mentioned in the beginning, this first learning objective is the most important objective for library padawans like myself to learn and master. After all, it will be the ultimate reference tool for me as I undertake many aspiring projects and endeavors in the next chapter of my life that will be my library career.

Everything that I have said to this point have all served a purpose, which was to instill the philosophical, ethical, and principle values of library information into every fiber of my being. Every assignment that I have completed up to this point all have one thing in common, which is to constantly provide better quality information services to the users. The users are at the heart of these values and concerns. They are their origin. They are what keep them at the forefront of everything a librarian does. They are what guides libraries as they constantly make sure that users keep their right to be informed. For me, as long as I keep the interests of the user in my heart and thoughts, then I will

always update and maintain these philosophies, principles, and ethics with clear judgment.

Work Cited Page

Blanchard, Kenneth H., and Sheldon M. Bowles, *Raving Fans: A Revolutionary Approach To Customer Service*. New York, NY: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1993.

Artifacts

LIS 600 – Foundations of Library and Information Studies – Assignment 4 – Values and Practice of LIS

LIS 650 – Library Administration and Management – Assignment 1 – Library Administrator Interview

LIS 656 – The Academic Library – Academic Librarian Visit/Interview

LIS 658 – Archival Management – Assignment 1 – Archives Visit