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Don Hamerly

Dominican University, dhamerly@dom.edu

Bill Crowley

Dominican University, crowbill@dom.edu

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Sustaining Professionalism in the Fields of Library and Information Studies

Running title: **Sustaining Professionalism in LIS**

Bill Crowley, PhD

Professor

Graduate School of Library and Information Science

Dominican University

7900 West Division Street

River Forest, IL 60305

708.524.6513 v

crowbill@dom.edu

Don Hamerly, PhD

Assistant Professor and Director of the School Library Media Program

Graduate School of Library and Information Science

Dominican University

7900 West Division Street

River Forest, IL 60305

708.524.6598 v

dhamerly@dom.edu

Sustaining Professionalism In The Fields Of Library And Information Studies

Abstract

This essay analyzes the development and status of professionalism in general and in the fields associated with library and information studies (LIS) in particular. The notable American resistance to educated professionalism is explored and placed in its historic, multinational framework. Throughout, the limitations of various theoretical approaches to analyzing professionalism are addressed and more realistic methods of defining professionalism in context are offered. The field of school librarianship is examined as a domain where professionalism and appropriate LIS education are sustained to some degree in law and regulation but face challenges at the system and building level. Expressed preferences of funders and customers for LIS educational programs, as reflected in recent government reports and other studies, are explored, as well as the approaches to service that appeal to significant stakeholders within and without selected LIS fields. Recommendations are offered for equipping practitioners with the knowledge necessary to determine and strengthen the contemporary relevance of their missions, as well as for managing the perceptions of significant stakeholders while sustaining multiple LIS professionalisms.

A Case Study of Professionalism and Personnel Restructuring

During the recent past the first author was involved in an unusual exchange over the value of a master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) as a requirement for professional librarian positions. The arguments of the other party in the discussion will be discussed under the pseudonym AFE, short for "Advocate for Experience." This individual, identifying himself as a retired businessman and husband of a longtime public library worker, gave his version of how his spouse lost a paraprofessional position in a

discontinued job classification with higher than usual pay and responsibilities. AFE described the position involved as having the exact duties as a beginning professional librarian without requiring an MLS/MLIS/MSI from an ALA-accredited program. AFE added that in past years individuals who lacked the professional master's degree were appointed by the library as children's librarians, a position his spouse had once held.

According to AFE, cuts in library funding led to the decision to eliminate the highly paid paraprofessional classification. The affected staff members were either laid off or offered lesser-paying appointments. At the same time, the library created new Librarian I positions, including appointments in children's services, that required a master's degree from an ALA-accredited program. Substantial savings were still achieved by the library inasmuch as the new librarians were hired at lower salaries than those of the displaced paraprofessionals. According to AFE, the library defended its actions as being in accord with American Library Association recommendations regarding professional librarian qualifications. When he contacted ALA, the organization reasserted the value of its accredited master's degree.

Contesting Models of Professionalism

This case is particularly remarkable compared to the usual personnel reductions taken by libraries during the 2007 Great Recession and subsequent retrenchment period. AFE's unnamed library, instead of following the usual approach of eliminating professional librarian positions, (Davies 2013; Harer 2011; Oder 2009), cut elsewhere and reinforced educated competence through creating new librarian openings. Libraries making cutbacks at this time were much more likely to eliminate or deprofessionalize professional library and information positions. This negative state of affairs has been particularly evident in Canada, the United States, and United Kingdom, where jettisoning professional library and information positions in favor of utilizing

paraprofessionals, clerks, or even volunteers has been, of late, a frequent priority (Blackley 2009; Crowley 2012).

In making his arguments AFE drew a parallel with his own career in the private sector. Although lacking a Master of Business Administration degree (MBA), he claimed to have been promoted to a corporate managerial position over candidates who had earned that professional credential, an opportunity since the MBA had been listed as desirable but not required in the position posting. He concluded his email with a request that he be provided information on libraries allowing experience and training to substitute for the MLS/MLIS/MSI in professional librarian positions. This information would be used as part of a presentation to the county commission that funded the public library.

The Hard Choice of Defending Educated LIS Professionalism

It is unlikely that AFE knew that the first author had lost his first professional librarian appointment due to municipal budget reductions and had been forced to move halfway across the country for a new librarian position. Rather poignantly, while later serving as a senior library manager, he had been involved with difficult decisions on budget-driven personnel layoffs. The first author thus faced a dilemma. He could respond from empathy with the negatively affected library staff described by AFE and provide the requested information or decline and continue to defend requiring professional education for librarian positions.

In the end, the first author chose support for educated LIS professionalism over the empathy developed through his earlier job loss and later management of layoffs. His response to AFE was limited to an email of a single paragraph out of consideration for those negatively affected by the library's personnel reorganization who might later read the email.

I regret that I cannot be of assistance. Both as a practitioner and educator I have **strongly** [bold in original] emphasized the value of the master's degree from an American Library Association-accredited program. This support has only increased with the growing opportunity—since 1995—to earn such a degree via the web from many ALA-accredited programs, a development that has made professional education available to even the most remotely located. (First author, personal communication, 2011)

A Systemic Problem

Problematic for defending LIS professionalism has been the longstanding reality that “the very indefiniteness of qualification for the [librarian] professional category has resulted in a more hospitable attitude to interlopers than prevails in the more tightly organized professions” (Leigh 1950, 192). Although occasionally present in virtually every area of LIS, non-support for educated professionalism is particularly prevalent in for-profit environments (Jenkins 2005). It is a situation that has been sustained, in part, by the inability or unwillingness of LIS fields to establish in law and regulation the requirements of an appropriate education for professional positions.

The Subjective Problem of Theorizing Professionalism

In the area of library, information, knowledge, and archival professional qualifications, the decades old assertion of Herbert S. White (1991), former dean of Indiana University's School of Library and Information Science, that “we tend to agree that a master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association should be required for employment” (68) remains more aspiration than reality. It is, in part, a definitional issue that affects professionalism as a whole. The concept remains one of those imprecise ideas where a variation of U. S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's observation on obscenity—“I know it when I see it” (Gewirtz

1996, 1023)—can often be more appropriate than sociological and other theories developed through extended research and study. A recent observation in the medical literature reminds, “*professionalism is subjective* (emphasis added) and is neither easily defined, nor quantified. Definitions of professionalism are extensive and disparate and most authors list numerous and diverse attributes” (Finn, Garner, and Sawdon 2010, 814). Another difficulty with defining professionalism is possible cultural and contextual specificity, where much of life consists of situations where “local realities trump global abstractions” (Haass 2013, 19).

Notwithstanding these complications, the authors believe with Budd (2008) that “it is incumbent upon professionals to be reflective, to examine the nature and the purpose of the profession” (122). Furthermore, the authors see considerable value in developing provisional generalities concerning professionalism through analysis of the tacit and explicit knowledge of practitioners, customers, patrons, or users in LIS and other service fields. The result can be effective guidance for LIS programs in meeting the service needs of specific communities, individuals and organizations (Crowley 2005, 99; Roberts 2012).

The term “provisional generalities” reflects the awareness that subjectivity abounds, not merely in the social sciences and humanities but in the hard sciences as well. The German theorist Max Weber (1918) stressed this point when he observed that “scientific pleading is meaningless in principle because the various value spheres of the world stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other” (1946, 147). In Weber’s context this observation encapsulated several points. The first and most obvious is the influence of subjective discernments or personal preferences in the acceptance or dismissal of research findings. The second point, less familiar to Anglophone North American readers but long known to their European counterparts, is that Weber’s university milieu often used “science” in the inclusive German meaning of

Wissenschaft, or “the systematic pursuit of knowledge, learning, and scholarship (especially as contrasted with its application)” (Oxford University Press 2013). Under this broad definition the professional concerns of any field of study, including LIS, can be viewed as worthy subjects for systematic analysis and theory development.

Notwithstanding Weber’s reminder that many problems, including those associated with professions and occupations, resist agreed-upon resolutions, the authors’ position towards LIS professionalism is that it can be defined and represents an achievable good in many environments. This is so even if various fields of LIS have undergone “internal modifications” requiring reinterpretations of the basis of their professionalism (Flexner 1915, 4).

Whether embedded in law or supported by custom, professionalism is a nebulous status whose award, diminution, or loss to a given occupation is determined by perceptions of the value to a culture, organization, or society. Sustaining professionalism has involved ongoing effort to influence or persuade others to believe that it is in their best interest to accept one’s professional self-definition. It is often a mutually conducted if sometimes unequal process, what Crowley and Ginsberg (2005) have termed “intracultural reciprocity” or “the changing, context-specific perceptions of mutual worth by participants in geographical, organizational, social, cultural, and other arenas” (53).

The progression of such influence has been defined by Benoit and Benoit (2008) “as a process in which a source (persuader) uses a message to achieve a goal by creating, changing, or reinforcing the attitudes of others (the audience)” (7). At the level of LIS practice and governance, the interaction of perceptions and the ability to influence others toward a certain end, including the end of accepting one’s professionalism, was well stated in a handout provided as part of the KANSAS Trustee Education Program, “influence is derived from the perceptions

of the person to be influenced, not from the perceptions of the person doing the influencing. The key to building your influence lies in your ability to shape the perceptions of others” (2007, 1).

Complicating the process of securing support for LIS professionalism is the reality that acquiring information and knowledge via self-service through search engines and social networking sites is now perceived by many as a preferred alternative to consulting LIS professionals or using library-provided databases (Michalko, Malpas, and Arcolio 2010). In taking a culturally pragmatic approach to addressing issues arising from this and other developments, the authors have developed, borrowed, and adapted fundamental questions about professionalism offered by American academic practitioner Bonnie A. Osif (2006) and British librarian and association executive Bob McKee (2008).

These questions are:

- What does it mean to be a profession?
- What does it mean to be a professional?
- What is the value added by LIS professionals?

The answers to these questions, explicitly and tacitly addressed throughout this essay, strongly suggest that the time has arrived for library and information studies fields, organizations, and practitioners to examine the present relevance and value of their missions. It may well be necessary for significant fields within LIS to start “marching to a different mission” (Baghdady and Maddock (2008, 61) and secure professional educations that are functionally more appropriate for determining what those missions should be. In a time of transformation, the process of preparing LIS professionals to accomplish this transformation has significant, implications for ALA-endorsed and other professional education programs.

A Matter of Theory

In addressing professionalism the authors adopt a pragmatic approach, selecting the contemporary variant known as *cultural pragmatism*. Since the central problem of this essay deals with sustaining professionalism in library and information studies, a shortened version of the definition offered by an LIS educator has been selected as a relevant basis for analysis.

Cultural Pragmatism: A philosophy that builds upon classical pragmatism and holds, as does its intellectual progenitor, that “truth” is subject to construction in ongoing processes within cultural and other human communities. Cultural pragmatists hold that the true test of any theory resides in analyzed experience. It understands that everyday truths tend to be culture specific, but it is open to the possibility of constructing larger truths that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries. Cultural pragmatists value past experience but hold that “truths” are always more or less provisional and must be continually tested in a variety of contexts (Crowley 2005, 202).

Cultural pragmatism is concerned with theory effectiveness, and European readers may find elements of this pragmatic approach familiar under other names. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (1946) observed that Max Weber shared “the pragmatic view of ideas” with both early communism’s Karl Marx and classical pragmatism’s John Dewey (65). These same researchers observed that Weber “felt that social scientists had the choice of using logically controlled and unambiguous concepts, which are thus more removed from historical reality or of using less precise concepts, which are more closely geared to the empirical world” (59). More recently, Ajit Kumar Pyati’s review of cultural pragmatism, carried out through her critical theory lens, keys in on the philosophy’s concept of “useful theories,” which she notes are “mental constructions that reflect, to some degree, ‘how things work’ in real-world contexts” (2007, 86).

In addition to the inability to embed support for LIS professionalism in law and regulation, this essay also identifies the significant contextual service realities that remain barriers to efforts to define and support LIS professionalism. As stressed by Hopper (2013), “it has become clear that neither public good will toward libraries nor libraries delivering excellent services will guarantee adequate support and funding—we need to find new ways to ensure that public [and other] libraries will survive and thrive in the future” (26). For those, such as the authors, who believe that support for educated professionalism is the bulwark for developing and sustaining quality in present and future LIS services, understanding the arguments for and against educated professionalism becomes a necessity.

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PROFESSION?

Professionalism in Historical Perspective

The authors believe in the need for *historical consciousness* in the study of traditional and emerging professional worlds. As stressed by Theodor Schieder (1978): “Historical consciousness is not restricted to retrospective contemplation, but instead draws conclusions from the past and applies them to goals that lie in the future. This line of thinking forces us to see not merely accidental links but a crucial interdependence between political action and historical consciousness (1).”

Societal priorities, often embodied in custom and law, have been the traditional supports of professionalism, and success in these intertwined areas inevitably requires some sort of “political action.” Consequently, knowledge of the dynamics behind critical points in the history of professionalism, whether in the domain of contemporary history (living memory) or the more traditional history existing beyond current recollection, is essential.

Professionalism in the High and Late Middle Ages

Like the university that so often sustains the concept, professionalism is one of “many things that had no founder or fixed date of beginning but instead ‘just grew’ without definite record” (Haskins 1923, 7). In European and European-influenced societies law, medicine, and theology long constituted the privileged “learned professions” (Bauer 2001) and formed templates against which aspiring professions have measured themselves. Although essential in the European Middle Ages, theology has been severely discounted in many variants of the modern university, particularly in United States contexts.

Historically conscious researchers are likely to challenge Abbott’s (1988) claim that “the nineteenth century saw the first development of professions as we know them today” (3). This contention neglects the reality that in the Middle Ages “a very large proportion of those by whom public affairs were directed—the ecclesiastics, the statesmen, the lawyers and other professional men, the men of business who directed the households of great nobles—were for the most part university-trained students” (Rashdall 1929, 600). The university itself “was simply a particular kind of trade-gild—*an association of persons following a common occupation for the regulation of their craft and the protection of their rights against the outside world* [emphasis added]” (Rashdall 1929, 561). Given the years of dedicated study usually necessary for a university post, this view is quite understandable in both medieval and modern contexts.

The numbers and intellectual contents of professions changed over time, but their present pattern and purpose would be comprehensible to an aspiring fourteenth century professional studying at Paris or Oxford. For now it is sufficient to note that contemporary professionalism cannot escape the influence of its medieval and early modern heritage.

Nineteenth Century Professionalism

With regret, space limitations require the authors to pass over several centuries of the development of professionalism, including the details of how Peter the Great of Russia (1672-1725 AD/CE) and Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712-1786 AD/CE) established “professional programs in universities together with labor market shelters in the form of civil service positions for graduates” (Freidson 1999, 124). Nor have we room to address its spread, in part, through the founding of colleges in the wake of European colonization or to consider other aspects of the growth of professionalism in non-Western influenced contexts. Instead, analysis will be advanced through examination of representative North American and European developments in professionalism, including LIS professionalism, from the nineteenth century to the present day.

In the frontier conditions of much of nineteenth century North America “doctors commonly learned medicine by apprenticeship or by reading medical texts” (Fine 2005). The State of Illinois, for example, did not require “medical degrees from approved medical schools with established standards” until 1878 (Fine 2005). “Reading law” outside of the academic environment, whether alone or under the guidance of an experienced attorney, was for many years a standard approach to becoming an attorney. U.S. President Abraham Lincoln (1858), self-educated in the law, was of the opinion, “If you wish to be a lawyer, attach no consequence to the *place* you are in, or the *person* you are with; but get books, sit down anywhere, and go to reading for yourself. That will make a lawyer of you quicker than any other way.”

Less than five years after Lincoln’s assassination, the future president of Harvard College supported a quite different professional preparation. For Charles W. Eliot (1869) university-level instruction was clearly valuable in a multiplicity of contexts—“It cannot be said too loudly or too often, that no subject of human inquiry can be out of place in the programme of a real university. It is only necessary that every subject should be taught at the university on a higher plane than

elsewhere” (215-216). Newly aspiring professions shaped by an industrializing and scientific dynamic that multiplied their number found particular support in the emerging “land grant universities” created under America’s Morrill Federal Land Grant Act of 1862 (Rudolph 1990).

Within nineteenth century librarianship Melvil Dewey formalized professional education in the academic context with the creation of the Columbia College School of Library Economy in 1887 (Crowley 2008, 52). In 1876, more than a dozen years prior to Dewey’s school at Columbia, there appeared an English translation of significant aspects of *The Science of Library Arrangement with a View to a Common Organization among Libraries and to the Special Study of Library Science in German Universities*. This excerpt, translated from the 1874 German original by Dr. F. Rullmann, librarian of the University of Freiburg, argued for university-level education in library science. In the gender-biased language of his time, Rullmann (1876) asserted, “both theoretically and practically, the opinion is gaining ground that only a man specially trained for it can successfully fill the place of librarian” and “such a special training belongs very properly to the university course” (xxiv-xxv). Aside from the intrinsic value for librarianship of Rullmann’s work, the manner in which it was introduced to the English-speaking public is also significant. This translation appeared in *Public Libraries in the United States of America; Their History, Condition, and Management* (United States 1876), a volume whose chapters had value to nineteenth century Anglophone librarianship second only to the Dewey Decimal Classification, also made available that same year (Dewey 1876).

In the United States, cultural resistance to educated professionalism grew in tandem with expansion of professional library education. The argument that librarianship was best learned through an apprenticeship in a well-managed library continued long after Dewey’s higher education innovation (Grogan 2007; Kelley 2013). Such professional education required decades

to filter through librarianship, inasmuch as “thirty years after Dewey’s venture these traditional training agencies [libraries] were still turning out two to three times as many librarians as the library schools” (Grogan 2007, 6).

There is a noteworthy interplay between the nineteenth century efforts to professionalize librarianship through higher education and the struggles to improve the status of women whose opportunities for employment were restricted by law and custom, even in “advanced” societies. In her *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920* Dee Garrison (1979) explored the mostly female occupation of librarianship’s “drive toward professionalism and the romantic ideas of reform, democratic principles, genteel liberalism, and the missionary impulse with their [the librarians’] own frustrated desires for greater status and standing” (xiv). Nevertheless, measureable gender progress was achieved. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the close connections formed by educated female librarians and female faculty during professional library educations often lessened gender barriers within and without the library and information worlds (Valentine 2005).

The matter of gender equality represents a struggle that has been and remains ongoing. As stressed by Canadian researcher Roma M. Harris, “I don’t think it is possible to grasp what is going on in librarianship today without acknowledging the fact that, for more than 100 years, library work in North America has been woman’s work” (1993, 874).

Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Theories of Professions and Professionalisms

The seductive call for researchers and theorists to demonstrate originality over replication has resulted in categories of professionalism definitions so porous that genuine differences are virtually non-existent. At a minimum, this quest for inventiveness has led to defining professions on the basis of

- (1) traits that characterize professions (Asheim 1978, 239; Sapp 2002, xii;)
- (2) powers that professions or may not possess (Freeman 1997)
- (3) jurisdictions or areas of control professions secure or lose (Abbott 1988)
- (4) ideologies/values/images of professions (Kipping 2011)
- (5) functions of professions in bureaucratic structures (Abbott 1998)
- (6) roles of professions in supporting “the market” (Dilevko 2009; Kipping 2011; Wiik 2009)

The permeability of the definitional boundaries suggested by this list is such that the authors feel it is appropriate to discuss professions under the meta-headings of “traits” and “power.”

The Traits and Powers of Professions and Professionals

Traits

American states and Canadian provinces were raising educational standards for medicine and various other professions in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries.

Nevertheless, the publication of Abraham Flexner’s 1910 *Medical Education in the United States and Canada Bulletin Number Four (The Flexner Report)* stimulated both the closing of inferior schools and shaming others into improvement (Hiatt and Stockton 2003, 39). This trailblazing multinational effort involved extensive research and produced findings that emphasized the need to reform medical educations too often characterized by rampant commercialization, physician incompetence, lack of resources, and disregard of the public interest (Pritchett 1910, x). In an analysis that still resonates a century later, *The Flexner Report* also addressed the pluses and minuses of tying a professional preparation to the university.

The introduction to *The Flexner Report* was written by Henry S. Pritchett, a former president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology serving as president of the Carnegie

Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. In one of those “telling tales out of school” instances, Pritchett clearly felt obligated to share his concerns regarding how universities react to the identification of substantial defects in how they deliver professional education. President Pritchett, holder of a German university doctorate from the University of Munich (MIT Libraries 2013), emphasized how higher education information sharing was “colored by local hopes, ambitions, and points of view” (1910, ix) and underscored the reality that public perceptions of professions and universities are invariably in the process of subjective manipulation.

In *Is Social Work a Profession* (1915) and, most particularly, *Universities: American, English, German* (1930, 172-173), Flexner repeatedly asserts “profession” as a malleable concept that can and does change over time.

One has, of course, no right to be arbitrary, notional, or unhistorical. The nature of a profession has undergone a readily traceable development, and the number of professions has not remained stationary. Occupations that were once non-professional have evolved into full professional status. These changes will continue to go on. *The definition that we may formulate to-day will therefore need recasting from time to time* (emphasis added), and internal modifications will occur in many of the activities that we shall mention. (1915, 4)

In 1930 Flexner was more explicit in theorizing about professionalism and librarianship. In his opinion, higher education was better served by filling librarian positions with refugees from “overcrowded” academic fields where graduates were having trouble finding work (Flexner 1930, 172n-173n). In this assertion he echoed the view of Carnegie Corporation of New York President Frederick P. Keppel (1929), who argued “the way should be made easy for able men with scholarly tastes and training in letters to shift from the overcrowded field of English teaching, or preparation therefor, to librarianship, where their intellectual qualifications and their

sex combine to offer a bright professional future” (13). The essay authors hardly need to note the tacit and explicit sexism contained in the assertion, no matter how accurate it might have been in describing the perceptions of many at the time.

Over a century of discussions of the traits ascribed to professions and professionalism has often proved to be of little practical worth. More contemporary understandings, as described by Julia Evetts (2011), an English sociologist, symbolically cut the Gordian knot of complex definition by asserting “it is generally the case, however, that definitional precision is now regarded more as a time-wasting diversion in that it did nothing to assist understanding of the power of particular occupational groups (such as law and medicine, historically) or of the contemporary appeal of the discourse of professionalism in all occupations” (3).

In the area of LIS, the authors are fully in accord with the further claim of Evetts (2011) that “for most researchers, professions are regarded as essentially the knowledge-based category of service occupations which usually follow a period of tertiary education and vocational training and experience” (5). Given the broad spectrum of professions for which LIS educates, accepting this definition provides the authors with intellectual fulcrum necessary to move the discussion forward and out of the mass of minutiae.

Professional Powers and Limitations

It is to be recalled that whether embedded in law or supported by custom, professionalism is a nebulous status whose award, diminution, or loss is determined by perceptions of the value to a culture or society of a given occupation (Crowley and Ginsberg 2003). Such perceptions are not static realities but are active and changing processes for which individual and cultural support needs to be repeatedly cultivated. It is an ongoing endeavor involving influencing others to

accept one's professional self-definition either formally (law or regulation) or informally (custom or practice).

The lack of support for many of America's twenty-first century school library professionals before, during, and after the 2007 Great Recession demonstrates the inability of numerous school librarians, who possess the legal status of professionals through certification or licensure, to influence the perceptions of principals, school superintendents, and school boards of trustees in ways that support their professionalism, preserve their employment, and maintain their ability to meet student and teacher needs. In consequence, it will become necessary in this essay to examine, in the P-12 educational context, the nature of being a professional school librarian.

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PROFESSIONAL?

Professionalism and the Realities of School Librarianship

School librarians share with their academic and corporate counterparts fundamental problems in recognition. Their achievements are largely indirect and are obscured by the successes of their customers or users. Nevertheless, among LIS professionals, school librarians in some cases enjoy the greatest security by law and regulation but in many more cases suffer the casualties of a shifting education landscape. In 2010 Gilmore-See (based on information provided by Nancy Everhart in a 2002 *School Library Journal* article, "Filling the Void") reported that only 17 states in the U.S. required degreed, credentialed professional librarians for schools. All but 2 of the 17 states required librarians only for schools over a specified student population, or for schools at specified levels, essentially assuring that many elementary schools and smaller secondary schools go without a professional librarian (7-18). Only 2 states, Wisconsin and Hawaii, required a full-time librarian on every campus according to Gilmore-See.

The professional school librarian’s problem with appropriate recognition is further complicated by overlapping definitions of how such professionalism is defined. At the U.S. national level, distinction between professional school librarians and other professionals in the position of school librarian is not evident in the occasional Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the U. S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which considers as “paid professionals” all the following:

- “library media center staff who were state-certified classroom teachers”
- “library media center staff who are state-certified library media specialists”
- “library media center staff who had a master's degree in a library-related major”

As a definitional issue, the distinction among professionals and others is further blurred by the overlap of the three groups listed above and by what the NCES considers a “library-related major”—“degrees in librarianship, library science, information science, educational media, instructional design, or instructional technology” (USDOE, Table 3). The degrees listed represent at least three related but distinct professional communities, each with its own constitution, codes, and associations. The challenge in using the NCES statistics for surveying the landscape of professional school librarianship is evident in Sue Kimmel’s summary of the 2011-2012 SASS for the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), “While we are told that 67% of school libraries are staffed with a school librarian who has state certification, the survey doesn’t address the variety of certification requirements among states” (2013, 2).

In listing Hawaii and Wisconsin as the only states in the U.S. that mandate a school librarian in all schools, Gilmore-See apparently had not known that in 2004 Hawaii passed the Reinventing Education Act, which gave principals more control over campus expenditures. The act also removed from the education code the requirement that each school maintain a full-time

librarian (Wong 2014). What resulted was limited and unequal access to libraries for Hawaiian school children, even for those where campus-based libraries once served both the school and the public (Moseley 2013).

Hawaii's move to student-based budgeting, or a weighted student formula for expenditures, and the resulting deprofessionalization of school libraries there, rings familiar to the authors, who have observed the devastating effects that student-based budgeting has had in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) libraries. In 2014 fewer than half the 600 public schools had librarians, some of them part time only, and many librarians with ALA-accredited masters' degrees in library science had been reassigned to classrooms (See Williams 2014).

Ultimately, however, the result of these actions in Hawaii and Chicago (and elsewhere) stimulated advocacy campaigns to reverse the trend. Hawaiian legislators in March 2014 introduced House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 237: "Requesting The Department Of Education To Report On The Status Of School Librarian Positions And Requesting The Board Of Education To Adopt A Weighted Student Formula That Reserves Funding For At Least One School Librarian Position At Each Public School." At the time of this writing the bill had moved to committee and was awaiting a vote in the next legislative session. In Chicago, a small group of CPS librarians formed the Chi School Librarians task force to challenge the actions of CPS, including the assertion by CPS CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett that the reason CPS schools had so few librarians was that there were too few qualified librarians to hire: "It's not that we don't want to have librarians in libraries, but the pool is diminished" (Joravsky 2014). The response from a number of fronts was, if you are short of librarians, look in your classrooms.

In the post-Great Recession period beginning in June 2009 school libraries faced retrenchment, but by 2011 the number of school librarians nationally had increased from 2007

levels (according to NCES SASS reports) by 7.5%, from 81,920 in 2007-2008 to 88,520 in 2011-2012. Since the NCES conducts SASS reports every three to five years only, there is no data for the intervening years. The second author, in analyzing employment data available through the Illinois State Board of Education, noted a slight increase (0.2%) in the numbers of school librarians in Illinois from 2007 to 2009 followed by a dramatic decrease (16%) in 2010. By 2011 the numbers were back up 12% to 2002 levels but below the peak, pre-recession levels of 2004-2006. As the second author noted in 2012 (Second author 58-60), the state of school librarianship is middling, with a pervasive perception of irreversible decline contrary to evidence of an elusive rebound.

A Critical Juncture

Recent publications reveal the school librarian profession at a turning point. In the September/October 2014 issue of *Knowledge Quest*, the bimonthly publication of the AASL, Kristin Fontichiaro and Buffy Hamilton reveal what they call the “dirty little secret” of school librarians: *the vision of professional school librarianship that the AASL has represented in its standards, and that school librarian preparation programs have held up as the model for school librarianship, has not prevailed in schools* (57). Fontichiaro and Hamilton suggest some countervailing questions to redirect a failed “tacit code of conduct” that school librarians “don’t dare violate” (58), expectations that include modeling mastery teaching, promoting flexible scheduling, and assuring that all lessons are inquiry based and resources driven, among others.

At present, school librarians hold only minimal esteem among most school boards of trustees and school administrators. Replicating the advocacy model of the 2002 White House Conference on School Libraries—bringing together advocates from among school administrators, library researchers, and grant funders to tout the cumulative correlational

research on school libraries and student achievement—has had no measurable effect on the professional standing of school librarians. The disruptions of post-Web technologies, a national education policy focused on high-stakes testing and local accountability, and fiscal reductions seem to have relegated school libraries to their pre-1965 state, before the introduction of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Title II funding, as the “stepchild of the library profession...regarded by some school administrators as an appendage to the educational process rather than an integral part...” (Sutherland 1970, 192).

One indicator that the school library profession seeks to reassert itself is the white paper “Causality: School Libraries and Student Success (CLASS),” the result of an AASL national research forum in April 2014 that sought to articulate “a national research agenda to investigate causal phenomena in school library instruction, resources, and services” (AASL 3).

Ostensibly, the purpose of CLASS is to acknowledge and affirm five decades of research on school libraries while directing new research methodologies that “rule out plausible alternative explanations [to the correlation between school libraries and student achievement] in a credible way” (AASL 9). While focusing the profession’s attention on reviewing existing research, proposing new methodologies, and nurturing a community of scholars is undeniably a necessary and healthy enterprise, one must ask if more research, after more than two decades of “state” studies, will do anything to change the status of school librarians in the eyes of decision makers for whom, “political decision making is ‘irrational’—or not based wholly on objective information” (US and LOC 1986, 175). To expect that additional research will tip political will in favor of school libraries denies what Ori and Rom Brafman call “the sway of irrational behaviors” (Brafman and Brafman 2008, 7). In terms of the 1986 *Research Policies for the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, “social science findings which do not coincide with the

prevailing values and views of politicians in power may fall by the wayside and not be used, at least in the short term” (US and LOC, 200).

If the school library profession views recent deprofessionalization as irrational behavior on the part of decision makers given the overwhelming evidence to counter it, then CLASS should strategize ways for the profession to insert itself into the decision-making processes that affect it so profoundly, to help decision makers see the historical and continuing benefits for their own priorities of professionally-managed school library programs, and to counter the constructs that have demeaned school libraries. A necessary area for causal research is to demonstrate school libraries as indispensable for fully realizing the educational goals of the day; in the words of David Lankes (in his 2012 blog post “Beyond the Bullet Points: It is Time to Stop Trying to Save Libraries), “*to talk about* how reading, researching, and accessing the Internet can help our communities unleash their potential.” (Italics added.)

History and Authority

The challenges to school library professionalism, specifically, apart from the challenges to library professionalism, generally, lie in its subordination to the educational system in which it exists and its historical derivation from public library children’s services. Wiegand (2007) described school librarians’ lack of “authority” to define their own discourse, their lacking an historical consciousness and occupying a negotiated space “between the shifting canons of children's and young adult literature as determined by authoritative public librarians and the changing curriculum as determined by educational administrators,” which has “tended to diminish their stature both with educational administrators to whom they reported and with professional colleagues sharing their service imperatives” (60). The movement to professionalize school librarians in the U. S. began with the 20th century, coinciding with the rise of the

progressive education movement and competing for status with “progressive theorists, professors of education, and administrators [who] paid scant attention to school libraries as an integral part of a modern school” (Drury and Masters 1998, 19).

What Virginia Matthews called in 1998 the “never-ending, still-critical crusade for school libraries” (75) in the United States began late in the 19th century with John Cotton Dana’s pursuit of a joint conference of the American Library Association (ALA) and the National Education Association (NEA) to develop public library service to schools. The professionalization of school librarians progressed slowly through the early years of the 20th century against the resistance of some educators and library leaders, including Melvil Dewey, as well as bickering between public librarians and school librarians. Working through the byzantine succession of ALA committees, boards, sections, and divisions ultimately resulted in the establishment of the AASL as a section of ALA in 1944 and a division of ALA in 1951 (Pond, 1998).

Libraries in general suffered from American anti-intellectualism in the early 1950s, but the educational inequities revealed by the School Desegregation Act of 1954, the release in 1955 of the book *Why Johnny Can’t Read*, and an energized library agenda headed by public librarians and friendly legislators inspired the Library Services Act of 1956 and the development of National Library Week (NLW), a nationwide campaign focused on the promotion of libraries and literacy. The 1958 launch of Sputnik resulted in the National Defense Education Act (NDEA), which “included unstated implications for school libraries” and required school librarians to fight “state by state, school district by school district, and often building by building” for NDEA money to be allocated to school libraries (Matthews 1998, 77-79).

1960 was a pivotal year for school libraries with the publication of the *Standards for School Library Programs*, the first updated standards since the 1945 *School Libraries for Today*

and Tomorrow, and the result of “one of the most coordinated and intensive efforts ever undertaken by the National Book Committee and NLW working in concert on every phase with the leadership of AASL” (Matthews 1998, 81). The AASL began an effort to promote the new standards with a \$100,000 grant from the Council on Library Resources/Ford Foundation. A 1961 article titled “Is Your Child a Victim of the Library Gap?” in a supplement to the Sunday paper, *This Week*, resulted in an unsolicited \$1,130,000 grant and the realization of the Knapp School Library Demonstration Project. Under the executive directorship of Peggy Sullivan, the development of school libraries at eight demonstration sites was captured in print, filmstrip, and motion picture, which were widely and freely distributed. During the same time, the International Paper Company promoted reading and school libraries through an advertising campaign in *Reader’s Digest* and *Time* that offered parents coupons for kits that helped them become school library advocates for their children. The U. S. Commissioner of Education Francis E. Keppel led the development of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which included provisions explicitly for school library resources (Title II). And the Knapp Foundation gave an additional \$1,500,000 to the ALA and AASL for a library manpower project (Matthews, 82-87).

The DeWitt Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund invested \$40 million over ten years (1988-1998) to revitalize elementary and secondary school libraries nationwide. The participating “Library Power” schools yielded conflicting data: the schools that participated demonstrated generally that school reform efforts targeted to libraries could improve collections, help refurbish facilities, increase student traffic, inspire greater instructional collaboration, and expand the professional skills of librarians in those schools. On the other hand, Library Power schools varied in their capacities and readiness to embrace the methods proposed in the reform effort due to a

number of factors, including societal challenges facing their students and competition from mandated state and federal assessments.

Since the completion of the Library Power project, schools have faced increased standards and accountability under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the introduction and increasing resistance to the Common Core State Standards, introduced in 2009. School librarians have had to deal with their compromised status as attention is paid to “core” curricular concerns, school report cards, and the disruptions of the Common Core.

Strategies and Aspirations

In the United States funding is one of the more tangible indicators of support for professionalism. School librarians may secure such funding and bolster and sustain their professional status in schools if they adopt the following strategies, each of which may be actualized through a marketing approach to service:

1. Promote the need for a professional librarian on every campus.
2. Reflect what decision makers value (Second author 2012, 60).

Efforts at the federal level to secure such funding and the support for professionalism it embodies stalled in committee with the SKILLS (Strengthening Kids' Interest in Learning and Libraries) Acts of 2007, 2009, 2011 (Senate), and 2012 (House). The SKILLS Act was reintroduced in both houses in 2013 and at the time of this writing was still in committees in both houses for review. In the United Kingdom the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Libraries has recommended that the Department for Education ensure that definitive figures showing the number or proportion of schools that have school libraries and a school librarian become part of the annual data submission from schools (Library APPG 2014, 10). Asking that data on numbers of school librarians be publicly available is a first step in an incremental

campaign toward asking for allocation of funds to ensure a school librarian at every school. Such incremental, sustained efforts at helping lawmakers understand the need for every child to have access to a school library and certified school librarian are critical for sustaining school library professionalism.

States are seeing similar campaigns. HCR 237 in Hawaii is one example of a concerted effort to reinstate best practice in the only state that had required a credentialed school librarian on every campus. The effort of the Chi School Librarians generated some media attention and got them a meeting with the CEO of the CPS Board of Education. In September 2014 the New York Commissioner of Education John B. King directed the New York City Schools to comply with a law requiring certified librarians for secondary schools based on student enrollment, the violation of which over several years inspired appeals from school librarians through the United Federation of Teachers. King denied the most recent appeal, stating that the union could not represent students in collective bargaining, but he nevertheless directed the schools to comply with the law (Decker 2014). The long-awaited decision was likely influenced by a massive, collaborative advocacy effort in which the New York Library Association partnered with the Alliance for a Quality Education, Make the Road New York, New Yorkers for Great Public Schools, and Urban Librarians Unite (ULU) to organize a parents' "read in" at the New York Department of Education (which sponsored the City's request for a waiver of compliance), to craft an opposition statement addressed directly to King, and to mount petition drives (Peterson 2013). Christian Zabriskie, Queens public librarian and ULU founder, organized one of the petition drives through MoveOn.org. Zabriskie conducts regular "guerilla" library advocacy through ULU, the success of which he attributes to "strategy, intent, and creative design to weave advocacy narratives that tell a story and make people want to make a difference"

(Schedule 2014). One of Zabriskie's strategies includes writing for *The Huffington Post*, an online publication with broad public appeal.

Often new school library advocacy efforts cite the effectiveness of the "Spokane Moms," who drew national media attention to the plight of school libraries, helping them secure funding for school libraries in the State of Washington (Whelan 2008). Utah increased spending on school libraries thanks to the work of a member of the Parents Advocating Libraries in Schools (PALS) steering committee and a former school district administrator, who submitted a budget request to the Public Education Appropriations Subcommittee for a line item for school library resources and intend to do the same for school library staffing. The two "library cheerleaders," like many school library advocates, acted because they believe that school librarians are not vocal enough themselves in raising the awareness of decision makers about the essential need for school libraries (Barack 2014).

The reluctance of many school librarians to adopt marketing and advocacy approaches means that small advances must be celebrated. In school library programs that base pre-service librarian preparation on the current AASL guidelines, including *Empowering Learners: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*, advocacy as news and as good practice is embedded in much of the curriculum. In the *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Preparation of School Librarians (2010)* the term "advocacy" appears as one of the twenty standard elements that comprise acceptable librarian preparation. The professional school librarian is expected to identify stakeholders and develop a plan to advocate for school library and information programs, resources, and services. School librarians hit their advocacy target if they design and lead professional development opportunities that articulate the impact of the school library program's resources, services, and programming on student academic achievement. In practice,

advocacy means coalitions of stakeholders speaking up for librarians and the issue of student achievement, or librarians adopting talking points to address the issue of student achievement and the relevance of librarianship to achieving other goals of funders. But what do librarians talk about locally, situationally, to promote themselves and their value to the learning communities they serve?

Reflect Values

Influence researcher Robert Cialdini uses the term “social validation” to describe the tendency decision makers have to value what others like them are doing (Haycock 2011). A recent enterprise called Project Connect, developed by the Follett Corporation, aims to enhance the social validation of professional school librarians by capitalizing on existing partnerships between nationally recognized school district superintendents and school librarians who are “leading students and teachers through the digital educational transformation” (Project Connect). Reporting on the launch of Project Connect at the 2013 national conference of the AASL Rebecca Miller, editor for *School Library Journal*, wrote, “It all boils down to delivering on school success, according to [Mooresville, North Carolina superintendent Mark] Edwards and [Lincoln, Nebraska superintendent Steve] Joel, who...reinforced the value that librarians can bring as instructional and building leaders. Moreover, both pointed to librarians as crucial toward meeting their own critical goals as administrators” (Miller 2013). The plan for Project Connect is to maintain a team of superintendents and librarians and employ case studies, white papers, best practice videos, panel discussions, and documentary video to tell their stories at association meetings of educational partners in technology (ISTE) and curriculum development/school leadership (ASCD) in an effort to raise awareness of the vital role librarians play in the digital revolution happening in schools.

A 2014 report from the Alliance for Excellent Education titled “Leading In and Beyond the Library” presents through research and case studies a vision for how the implementation of digital learning is changing the potential of school librarians and libraries. As a Charleston, South Carolina librarian is quoted in the report, “Schools where programs are the best are the ones where the administrators and school librarians have the best connection and school librarians are part of the leadership teams. The programs that are the least successful are the ones in which the school librarians will not talk to administrators. If you’re not a quasi-administrator, how can you be the heart of the school?” (Wolf, Jones and Gilbert, 14). The Texas Library Association (TLA) has been promoting relationships between school librarians and their campus and district leaders through the Strong Libraries, Strong Scores conference for school administrators within the TLA annual conference. School librarians thrive or fail in the supercharged educational environment that has never been stable and lately has challenged education leaders with fiscal failures, new digital devices, and radical new curricular standards, all at once. As a school librarian, an attractive but ultimately damning option is to keep one’s head down and hope it all passes. The professional thing to do, of course, is to rally resources and relationships and help school leaders make sense of the mess.

III. WHAT IS THE PERCEIVED VALUE ADDED BY LIS PROFESSIONALS?

Professionalism Under the Microscope

It is often the case that the rationale for providing library and information service is no longer perceived as the “public good” but is expressed in terms of the benefit such service provides to an individual. As a recent text on library marketing advised for crafting the library message, “all the text you write needs to appeal to the potential customer or attendee. Don’t write what you

want to say, instead, write what they want to know. Always write with “WIIFM” in mind, to answer the attendees’ unspoken question, What’s In It For Me? (Dempsey 2009, 176).”

The WIIFM question also applies to customer/user/student discernment of the value of LIS professionalism. Writing as the Chief Executive of Great Britain’s Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) early in the Great Recession, Bob McKee (2008) asked,

What is the value added by library and information professionals to the public library service? This question is at the heart of the current debate about the future of public library provision—and *it clearly has implications for the future of professionalism in all library and information services* (italics added). (6)

At the level of the individual customer, user, patron, faculty member, student, businesswoman, attorney, or physician, the question “What is the value added by library and information professionals to the public library service?” can be refined to a more inclusive “What is in it for me that a LIS service provider is professionally educated?” It is possible to answer this question through short reviews of the status of library and information services in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Canada

In November 2012, the Canadian Library Association issued the *National Statistical and Values Profile of Canadian Libraries: Report to CLA [Canadian Library Association] Executive Council (November 30, 2012)* This document is a final report of a project “prompted in part by apprehension about how well the library community could speak to the value of libraries in the face of cuts to Library and Archives Canada, federal government libraries, and school libraries in

various provincial jurisdictions, as well as in the face of burgeoning Internet-based sources of both free and pay-per-view information” (Schrader and Brundin 2012, 1). Perhaps the central component of this Canadian report was its emphasis on promoting the “value proposition” of libraries of all types, defining “value proposition” as “an actionable, credible, succinct, and compelling promise to intended recipients of specific benefits, promises that recipients can visualize and get excited about” (Schrader and Brundin 2012, 8).

This lack of perception that LIS services can advance the objectives of current or potential stakeholders was and is present in the contexts of the United Kingdom and United States.

United Kingdom

It should be noted that McKee’s (2008) question regarding the perceived value (value proposition) of LIS professionals was raised at a time when his organization, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), was receiving information that “cuts in professional staff” at local public libraries were “disproportionately large when compared with overall staff reductions” (6) in the Great Recession of 2007. Later statistics provided by Davies (2013), published by the UK public employees union UNISON Local Government, reported that full time equivalent “UK library staff” had been reduced from 25,769 in 2007-08 to 21,780 in 2011-12 with staff numbers “likely to drop sharply again this year [2013]” (16).

If Davies’s 2013 figures indicate a similar emphasis on making LIS professionals redundant (layoffs), the result is hardly a sign of positive valuation for their work. Indeed, the grandiosely titled *Future Libraries: Change, Options, and How to Get There: Learning from the Future Libraries Programme Phase I* (Local Government Group and Museums Libraries & Archives 2011), a publication praising “rationalisation” through library mergers, outsourcing,

and volunteers (13), made it quite clear that public libraries had not met the needs of local political establishments.

We need to make our libraries work for the local priorities that local democratically elected politicians have identified in consultation with residents. Political leaders need to be involved from the outset in the process to define need, understand what the community wants from its library service and to balance this with economic and legal constraints on the level of change required. (16).

When the paymasters of a nation's public libraries "need to make" their libraries "work for local priorities" it is clear that they see little or no value for their objectives in the work of LIS professionals and other staff.

United States

In the same year that the Tory-Liberal coalition government of the United Kingdom issued a report demanding that public libraries pursue the priorities of elected officials, the International City/County Management Association (2011) released *Maximize the Potential of Your Public Library*, a report that asserted

A public library must be aware of the local government's strategic and development plans and work to assist in accomplishing those plans. Likewise, local government leaders need to recognize the potential of the public library to support their priorities. This requires a joint assessment of what capabilities it has to contribute to community priorities and how to make the most of those capabilities (4).

The almost visceral nature of the cutbacks inflicted over the years on American academic, public, and school libraries (American Library Association 2013; Crowley 2012)

strongly suggest that a number of universities, schools, and local governments have not perceived LIS professionals and the libraries in which they serve to be particularly useful partners in pursuing organizational, educational, or community ends.

A Negative Marketing Analysis

The recommendations of Canadian researchers specifically addressing past failures to convey library “value proposition,” the straightforward demand by representatives of British local governments that political leaders should “make” libraries work for local priorities, and the only slightly less forceful call for the same library responsiveness by U.S.-based senior government managers, form a compelling mosaic of library irrelevance and nonresponsive librarian professionalism. They strongly suggest that libraries fall short in being perceived by significant stakeholders as institutions dedicated to solving community problems or advancing organizational priorities. If libraries, information centers, knowledge management centers, and archives are not conveying their value propositions because of the inability their professional staff, presumably holders of an MLS/MLIS/MSI or equivalent degree, to understand the critical value of marketing and advocacy as the lynchpins of their service programs, a logical place to look for the possible reasons why is in the ALA-accredited programs that certified their LIS professional status in the first place.

Educating LIS Professionals

Determination of the commitment to education in effective marketing and advocacy by ALA-accredited programs represents a complicated endeavor. As of 2013, the authors could not identify a master’s degree program accredited by the American Library Association that required an entire course devoted to marketing, including the specialized form of marketing known as

advocacy. Elective courses did exist, as does the likelihood that class sessions devoted to marketing and advocacy might be part of a core/required course.

An Agenda for Consideration

In the contemporary multinational LIS environment the authors have not been surprised to find that many issues regarding LIS services and LIS educated professionalism cross international boundaries. Conveying value propositions is a central, if not the central, concept in marketing. Unfortunately, as noted by Canadian researchers Schrader and Brundin (2012), “value propositions for academic, school, special, and public libraries in Canada reveal a broad diversity of benefits—individual outcomes and societal impacts—that are not easily summarized or categorized, and assuredly not quantifiable (8).” In identifying the “challenging aspects” of conveying the value proposition of LIS services, Schrader and Brundin (2012) further concluded that in the LIS service milieu, “among the most challenging aspects of library value messaging are that”:

- Many profoundly important benefits to individuals and society occur over a much longer period of time than the one-year budget cycle or short-term program offerings, for example, summer reading programs;
- Learning, however acquired, is elusive, just as information is elusive, and few people ever think about the meaning of either or about the value of library resources;
- Recent research points to a perception that the library is not making a critical and essential contribution to the issues facing communities today; and,
- Though supportive of libraries, people are generally unaware of library funding challenges in any of the sectors with which they have direct interaction or personal

knowledge (8).

Taken as a whole, the preceding bulleted points form a cohesive listing of the problems to be “solved” to establish and maintain positive public and funder perceptions of the value of educated LIS professionals and effective libraries, information/knowledge centers, and archives. As such, they also form the basis of a semester-long course in LIS marketing and advocacy.

Future Action in LIS Graduate Programs

It is highly unlikely that the American Library Association will reverse decades of movement away from a required curriculum and start prescribing courses for the graduate programs it accredits. Any movement in accredited programs towards required education in marketing and advocacy will have to be generated within the programs themselves.

Comforting rhetoric aside, the overall general perception of funders and customers in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States is that LIS programs and the educated professionals who so often direct them are far from essential (Schrader and Brundin 2012). Where libraries, information centers, and knowledge management centers are valued it is often the case that libraries themselves have been marketed but the professionally educated librarians have not made the case for their own worth. As an often-invisible professional resource (Henriques 2006), LIS professionals are generally not seen or, if seen, are not viewed as being particularly valuable to community or organizational life. The implications of this negative perspective are clearly problematic for the survival of the professionally educated. Subjectivity often trumps objectivity. In the words of public library CEO Valerie J. Gross, in the valuation and support of LIS programs “perception is everything” (2009, 24).

ALA-accredited programs will soon need to address the “missing” value propositions for the human “products” of their curricula. Bluntly stated, there is a synergism between professional education and professional practice where the value of a professional degree is directly related to its worth in securing professional employment. If the value of the LIS professional degree cannot be demonstrated through effective value propositions, the stability of LIS programs will inevitably be tested. Students must leave such programs with an understanding of the marketing process, and it is well to keep in mind the observation of Paul Henriques in 2006, just prior to the Great Recession of 2007, that “proper marketing of the MLS degree begins with properly marketing ourselves as professionals. While the nature of the typical librarian may be reserved and quiet, getting out of our shells and speaking up more will indeed help further our careers (81).” For the professional educated in effective marketing, breaking out of her or his shell may come rather easily.

Both authors believe that the lead sources of professional LIS education, often ALA-accredited programs, can be and ought to be an effective and fundamental part of the necessary effort to raise the visibility of the LIS professional and program value propositions. However, the authors differ in the preferred method for changing the curriculum to support this necessary transformation. Rather than fashioning new and required marketing/advocacy courses, the second author would prefer creating shorter marketing modules and adding them to existing courses. He believes that this approach will be more acceptable to LIS faculty and that past and ongoing efforts to familiarize students with relevant technologies by requiring their use in all courses can serve as a viable example. The first author, however, is less sanguine about such a strategy. He believes that marketing, including advocacy, is best taught in a full course by those with a commitment, either existing or achievable, to its value. Any topic, he notes, including the

topic of marketing, can easily be slighted in a multi-issue course. In consequence, the first author would prefer that every ALA-accredited program require a full semester of a marketing/advocacy course as a requirement for award of the MLS/MLIS/MSI degree.

Obviously, both approaches have the potential to better equip LIS graduates with the necessary marketing skills. Properly directed, marketing has the potential to enhance public, user, and funder appreciation of both LIS services and the LIS professionals who design and deliver them in the identification and solution of crucial community or organizational problems.

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