



**Creating Successful International Opportunities in
Library and Information Science Education:
The UWM/KWM Exchange**

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Meeting: 86. Education and Training

WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 75TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL

23-27 August 2009, Milan, Italy

<http://www.ifla.org/annual-conference/ifla75/index.htm>

Theme: "Recognition of qualifications and quality of LIS education: the Bologna process challenges in a changing world"

Abstract

Due to the increasingly global exchange of knowledge and the new social, legal, economic, and ethical systems that are developed as a result, library and information science (LIS) professionals must procure intercultural communication and negotiation skills in order to both work with an increasingly diverse population and also to be flexible and prepared to handle and contribute to the continually shifting information landscape. Such foundation may be developed during the course of the LIS degree through a series of internationalization activities. One such activity that has received sparse attention in the scholarly literature is study abroad, specifically by students in American Library Association (ALA)-accredited LIS programs. This paper will present results from interviews with nine students that have participated in University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (USA), School of Information Studies (SOIS)-sponsored study and research abroad programs regarding their experiences and opinions on study abroad in LIS education, in addition to preliminary results from a survey of all ALA-accredited LIS programs regarding available international opportunities; further, it will describe the first semester-long exchange at SOIS more in depth. Results revealed that encouraging more LIS students to participate in study and research abroad begins with the integration of international issues into the core curriculum, creating more funding opportunities, and catering to the needs of non-traditional and distance education students; further, the successful carrying out and completion of such opportunities must incorporate student needs and abilities and provide evidence of practical application to their professional careers.

Introduction

The increasingly global exchange of knowledge and information creates a host of ethical and legal issues that demands intercultural understanding, respect, communication, and compromise. As such, it is crucial that librarians and information professionals obtain an education that cultivates an understanding of such issues, as they will be on the forefront of information organization, access, and exchange. As the global sharing of information increases with the use of digital media, it is more important than ever to recognize, confront, and critically reflect upon both our similarities *and* differences so that the regulation of such a space remains fair, balanced, and inclusive; international experience in the Library and Information Science (LIS) disciplines can help students to develop an ethic of care and empathy for others as international information issues come to the fore.

Studies of the internationalization of LIS curricula have been completed and published, however, none of these works focus solely on the study abroad or international experiences of students enrolled in American Library Association (ALA)-accredited programs. As we move into a global information society, it is imperative to understand what opportunities are available and what impact such experiences have on students, the profession, and the world in order to evaluate the effectiveness of international activities of LIS programs and inform the future creation of LIS curricula. Nine participants from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (USA) study and research abroad programs (both short and long-term) responded to a qualitative questionnaire about their international experiences; in addition, a qualitative and quantitative answer-generating survey was sent to all 57 ALA-accredited LIS master's programs (nine of which have responded thus far) regarding study abroad opportunities in their programs (approved by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee IRB, protocol number 09.215). The results revealed that creating more opportunities might not be the answer; instead, more steps could be taken to educate students about the opportunities that exist, aid students in applying for and being able to financially participate in these opportunities, and aiding students that are able to participate in having a more fruitful and relevant experience.

Literature review

Little has been written about study abroad in LIS specifically; instead, authors concentrate on the internationalization of LIS curricula as a whole, discussing multiple avenues (study abroad being just one). Internationalization can be defined generally as "...the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (Knight, as quoted by Abdullahi, Kajberg, & Virkus, 2007, p. 9), which "...has proceeded along three distinct but interrelated lines: professional, cultural, and political" in LIS education specifically (Keresztesi, 1982, p. 349). Abdullahi and Kajberg (2004) state that "...times of economic and cultural globalization, international migration flows and transborder mobility of students, academics and professionals" have created "new challenges for LIS education" (Abdullahi & Kajberg, p. 345), as has the fact that international relationships strongly influence national interests (Abdullahi & Kajberg, p. 346).

In their focus on United States, Canadian, and European LIS programs, Abdullahi, Kajberg, and Virkus (2007) explain that internationalization activities can be divided into two categories: internationalization at home (i.e. providing internationally themed and foreign

languages courses, bringing international students and faculty into the program), and cross-border education (i.e. study and research abroad, off-shore campuses). Townley, Geng, and Zhang (2003) describe the effort to internationalize an LIS curriculum by establishing a distance education graduate course in knowledge management for students from both China and the United States, citing lower costs than offshore programs, the lack of need to establish residency, the ability to ensure quality teaching, and students' first-hand exposure to international populations among the benefits to creating such a course. Berk (1987) cites offering and attending area studies courses, study abroad, international summer schools, internationally based distance learning courses, academic courses for credit, conferences, workshops, lecture series, library tours, and self-study programs as ways to internationalize LIS continuing education. Dixon and Tammaro (2003) describe the effort to create a joint Master of Information Studies degree between the University of Parma (Italy) and the University of Northumbria (United Kingdom). Virkus and Harbo (2002) cite the use of materials published abroad, publishing in international periodicals, attendance of PhD students in international summer schools, and membership in international LIS organizations as ways to internationalize LIS programs in the Baltic states. The authors state that while Baltic LIS schools have been involved in extensive cooperation with international LIS programs (especially in the Nordic countries), these efforts and programs are often ad hoc; the authors stress that a "clear strategy" (Virkus & Harbo, p. 234) and more formal agreements between schools must be established.

Literature specifically on study abroad in LIS encompasses four types. The first type is the study abroad of students outside of North America coming to the continent (rather than sending North American students to other countries): Baudoin and O'Connor (2008) describe the curriculum completed by aspiring Vietnamese librarians at Simmons College in a program begun in 1993, while Rochester (1988) focuses on the reasons for study abroad in "advanced industrialized countries" (Rochester, p. 29) such as the United States and United Kingdom by foreign students from developing countries. The second type is "how to" articles that explain how to study abroad but do not focus specifically on what makes this unique to LIS, such as Groves' (2007) and Williamson's (1988) works. And third, articles that concentrate on the study abroad of professional librarians, presumably after they have obtained their degrees; an extensive bibliography can be found on the American Library Association's website (Hickey, 2007).

Most important for purposes of this paper, however, is the lack of literature critically reflecting upon first-hand accounts of study abroad and other international experiences by students in LIS programs. The little that one can find is not scholarly in nature; instead, most works merely describe one's experience in an international program or briefly describe the class content (see for example: Ghislandi, 2004; Stork, 2008; Rice, 2007), which is the fourth type of literature one finds on study abroad in LIS. Likewise, no literature exists to help LIS students prepare for such programs, what to expect while participating, or where to find information on these endeavors. Abdullahi, Kajberg, and Virkus (2007) briefly mention study abroad, stating that "LIS schools should encourage their students to study abroad because international experience plays an important role in educating future generations of information professionals about other cultures and international students about European and North American culture for better interaction in our increasingly global age" (p. 21). The majority of the literature surrounding study abroad in LIS is lacking in reflection upon the role such international experiences play in these graduate programs, and what students contribute to the profession by participating. Further, first-hand accounts of participating students are sparse; this paper will present some of these viewpoints.

The programs at SOIS

Recognizing the importance of allowing LIS students the opportunity to gain international experience, the School of Information Studies (SOIS) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) has now offered both study and research abroad programs and trips on three continents: Africa (South Africa), Asia (Korea, Japan, and Mongolia), and Europe (Austria), with plans to expand to a fourth area, Oceania (New Zealand) and further into Asia (China). While each of the previous programs was a short-term (four weeks or less) study or research project, the program with the Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences in Hagenberg, Austria was the first to develop into a semester-long, annual exchange between the two schools.

The UWM/KWM Exchange

To give a more detailed look into this programs at SOIS, the long-term exchange was started based on a prior relationship between staff members of the International Office of the University of Applied Sciences, Upper Austria and the Enrollment Services department of UWM. The two departments wished to establish an exchange between the two schools, which started by sending a professor from SOIS to the Communication and Knowledge Media department (KWM) at the Hagenberg campus, as this department explicitly expressed an interest; further, the two departments compliment each other in their academics. The exchange continued to grow, as a professor from Austria was then sent to UWM for first a month and then six months, and students from UWM were first sent for a month and then later a full semester (from each school). The semester-long student exchange will begin its second year this fall, sending two students from SOIS to KWM and three from KWM to SOIS. The subsequent partnership between SOIS and KWM due to the prior relationship between Enrollment Services at UWM and the International Office at the Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences is keeping in line with the fact that faculty and staff connections are the most common reason for facilitating such projects, as cited by all respondents to the LIS programs survey that have formal abroad agreements (five of the nine).

A semester-long exchange was implemented in the fall of 2008, sending three students (two bachelor's and one master's) from SOIS-UWM to KWM and two students from Austria (one bachelor's from KWM and one master's from the Computer-Based Learning department) to UWM. The prolonged time period allowed students to participate more fully in university life, including taking courses, performing internships, and attending campus functions. The students that were sent to Austria from UWM were assigned two tasks, while the rest of the activities were self-structured. The first was to lead conversational English courses with two small groups of students per week. Topics were of both the participants' and the students' choosing, and included discussions on American and Austrian stereotypes, politics, healthcare, and popular culture, among others. The second task was to interview these same students about their social networking activities, both offline and online. In the process, the student researchers learned ethnographic research methods and more importantly, improved their intercultural communication skills.

The students were allowed a certain amount of freedom in structuring their own activities, as well. The master's student from UWM that traveled to Austria aided in the creation of an information ethics and media law module for a new master's program being

created at the university, prepared conference abstracts and research protocols related to this experience and her research interests, attended German language courses, and took independent study credits through her home university related to researching study abroad in LIS. One of the bachelor's students took a general education requirement course online through his home university, but more significantly, took a course not offered by his university, for which he then earned independent study credits rather than making the attempt to transfer them from Austria to UWM. This is an especially important point to consider; semesters in differing countries may not exactly match in terms of duration or beginning and start times, so students might not be able to finish the semester in said country and make it home in time to begin the following semester if they would like to obtain SOIS, creating promotional materials for the department and performing specific tasks for professors based on their technical knowledge and interests. Both students fulfilled their 15-week internship requirements during this time, and each expressed their desire to complete the internship in a different country in order to learn of another culture.

What should be noted about this particular exchange is that it was not two LIS schools exchanging students; rather, the departments complemented each other in their offerings, and the program was open to both master's and bachelor's students at each school. The student that participated in these interviews that went to Austria from UWM stated, "The school's focus corresponded to my own... While I was there I attended a class not offered by my school. It was an excellent opportunity to learn a topic few others had practice with at home." Likewise, a student that came from Austria to attend UWM did not take classes but found that UWM fit his study interests: "Since I am fascinated with American culture and the U.S. in general, it was clear for me that I wanted to apply for this program... The projects I worked upon during my internship had something to do with marketing, didactics, and flash-development, which are the main topics in my study course." For the long-term exchange, students saw prior to departure how such an experience fit into their specific studies, whereas those in the short-term programs expressed a more general interest (as described below); in other words, the higher the commitment (time, financially), the more likely a student is to carefully choose his or her experience to fit the larger degree program.

Why did students participate? What did they expect from their experience?

To give a more comprehensive picture of student experiences abroad, this paper will not only focus on participants of the KWM/UWM exchange, but will also include responses to interviews from students that were involved in other SOIS-sponsored programs. Students listed a number of motivations for participating, but the two most prevalent were as a résumé booster (to make them a more competitive, desirable, and/or well-rounded candidate) and their desire to experience a new culture/travel internationally; in other words, the students had both professional and personal motivations. In terms of professional advantages, one student stated, "This program allowed me to really stand out among my peers. It is my understanding, employers look for individuals ahead of the pack. I felt this experience allowed me to do that." Another stated, "I meant to come out of my program very well-rounded in the library science field... I believe that this program helped to expand upon that," while still another stated, "I looked forward to the chance to travel to a new country and network with other information scholars. It has helped to shape my considerations of policy and ethical issues in information in a more culturally sensitive way." Regarding personal advantages, one student expressed, "For some reason I like to push myself to get out of my comfort zone and change up my routine and this was a perfect way to do it." Other

motivations for participating in these programs, though mentioned less frequently, include: Learning how to adapt to new situations and become independent outside of one's comfort zone; being able to view the LIS profession and access to information from an international perspective; having an interest in networking and forming international collaborations; the desire to work on an international project; and interestingly, the least mentioned of all, that this program directly corresponded with one's academic studies prior to departure— this was mentioned only by those that participated in the long-term exchange, however, those that participated in the short-term programs stated they saw how it fit into their studies after completion.

Overwhelmingly, the students expressed that international experience was not essential to be successful in the LIS professions but that it was an important personal experience. One student stated, "I'm not certain it's essential – that would really depend upon an individual's ultimate goals for what they want to achieve in their field – however I would say that it's an important experience to have." Even those students that did not rule out its essential nature expressed that it was important or beneficial, for example, "I think that all librarians/archivists would benefit from seeing how other institutions are run around the world. This is a profession based on knowledge and access to it---what better way to become more knowledgeable than to undertake an experience such as this?" and "I think it is very important especially as the world becomes smaller because of the digital world."

It is clear from all of these responses that study abroad will not play a large role in the lives of LIS students unless said students value the experience personally and also see the value in it for their chosen career. If students do not see the practical application outweighing the costs of study abroad (financially, time-wise, discomforts of leaving one's home), then this will not become a priority. This is echoed in a response to the LIS programs survey by a school that does not currently offer abroad opportunities: "Virtually all of our current students are part-time evening students who have full-time jobs, families, and other obligations that preclude them from such opportunities." Other responses cited funding, language barriers, and difficulties in establishing partnerships with other schools as obstacles to encouraging students to study abroad and establishing such programs. Said one response, "Most LIS schools are relatively small units on campus, so it involves a lot of paperwork to make an agreement at the level of the LIS school. It is much easier if a school already has a relationship at the university level." Indeed, all respondents that indicated that their department arranges formal international opportunities for students (five of the nine) cited the fact that prior faculty connections facilitated easier partnerships; for schools looking to provide an international focus, hiring faculty from countries outside of North America might be the first step in providing an international perspective, with the establishment of international programs (study, research abroad) to follow.

Recommendations based on student responses

Because I wanted to present this paper from the student perspective, I will provide my recommendations for the carrying out of study and research abroad in LIS, not the creation of such programs, as students have not been traditionally involved in this aspect. In fact, while study and research abroad programs are often created based on previous faculty partnerships and faculty interests, perhaps it would be a wise decision in the future to incorporate the wishes and needs of the students, either by having a student liaison become heavily involved in curricula planning or conducting student surveys; this is especially important as students,

as cited above, participate in these programs for both professional and personal motivations, so it might be beneficial to tailor programs to their needs. The recommendations I will give are divided into four sections: Advertise, Realize, Organize, and Recognize.

Advertise

LIS has traditionally attracted a high number of “non-traditional” students, for example, those that are choosing librarianship as a second career (51% in response to a survey conducted by *Library Journal* (Maatta, 2007)). Further, a number of LIS programs in North America offer distance education courses, with 14 offering the entire Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) online (American Library Association, 2009). For this reason, it is crucial that the non-traditional demographic of students is reached in order to be the most inclusive as possible; if we are to truly promote distance education as a means of acquiring the degree, new alternatives to advertising such opportunities need to be utilized. A participant in a short-term research trip stated, “As I was an online student, participating in the program allowed me to meet and work with fellow students that I may not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet. It was exciting to be able to work with people who had similar professional and educational goals as me.” Participating in such an experience bridges the gap between classmates learning on the screen and classmates learning in person.

SOIS is one of the programs mentioned above that offers the MLIS completely online; for this reason, the distance learning online course system (D2L) is used heavily to promote the programs at SOIS. For the second year, an information session has been held regarding the semester-long exchange to Austria, which included previous participants sharing their experiences and photos, students interested in participating to ask questions, and the telecommunication of one of the administrators of the program from Austria. This session was recorded and both streamed live for distance students to participate (through chat) and archived for students to watch later. It is no longer enough to just place posters around the department advertising these opportunities, as so many LIS students may never walk these halls. Other forms of advertising to non-traditional students are the use of the program’s listserv, posts to the department website, or making announcements in classes (either onsite or distance).

It is further critical to aid students in obtaining funding, or offer funding opportunities through the department. The airfare and housing of the Austria exchange and the short-term South Africa research trips were funded; the short-term for-credit study abroad trips were not. A recent Internet search revealed that very few external funding opportunities exist for students in LIS specifically to travel, study, intern, or perform research overseas; among these are the Harold Lancour Scholarship for Foreign Study through Beta Phi Mu and the Rovelstad Scholarship in International Librarianship through the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). Between the obligations that many of these non-traditional students hold, it might not be possible for them to spend the time searching for funding on their own or it might not be a priority, discouraging them from participating in such opportunities. Advertising such funding opportunities and perhaps even creating more will aid students in applying for these experiences, bringing more attention to the department’s commitment to international education if said students are selected. Indeed, all of the respondents of the survey of LIS programs that had formal study abroad agreements (five of the nine that responded) indicated that they provided funding, either through their department or the larger university.

Realize

When selecting students for an exchange program, it is essential that students' skills and needs are realized before departure. Of course, as mentioned elsewhere, these students are master's and upper level bachelor's students, so a certain amount of independence and ability to face challenges is expected of them; however, it is unreasonable to allow students to perform research without said researchers being familiar with the students' skills and abilities. One student expressed, when asked what they would change about their program, stated, "Better planning and communication, which I think is starting to happen ... When we got there some people ... hadn't even looked at the CV's we were asked to submit. It was frustrating!" Allowing students with inadequate preparation to perform research tasks is problematic in two ways: the first regards the integrity of the data, and the second is the potential for harm; these are described below under "Organize."

Especially with master's level students, who might have a more focused idea of what they hope to accomplish or gain from their experience as related to their future career, it is important to aid students in tailoring their experience, especially on longer-term programs. As noted above, U.S. and foreign university semesters often do not match up chronologically; one way that this was remedied on the semester-long exchange to Austria was to allow students to sit in on courses at the host university while obtaining independent study credits through their home university. Allowing students to gain credit for practical experience is especially pertinent to a professional degree. Further, encouraging more students to participate could also be aided by explaining the exact research project ahead of time, so that students are able to see how such research or study would further their skills in the workplace; for many students, going abroad during the course of the MLIS is just not feasible based only on a desire to travel or work internationally, but must have some direct application to their career if they are to see it as worthwhile.

Organize

Study and research abroad programs must be well organized prior to the students' arrival, in two ways. The first is to aid students in attending events and sites pertinent to their degree program or interests, as well as interacting with students on campus in similar programs. Students in short-term programs of a month or less especially are put into a more intense study or research situation of which they might know little prior to departure, leaving little chance to plan one's own time. One student involved in a three-week South African research program stated that they "...would have liked to have had a chance to interact more with the information studies/library students on campus," while another student in the same research program stated, "...if more opportunities were provided, I think it would be important to have planned items, i.e., sit in on courses, visit the local libraries and speak with their librarians, formal/informal discussions with students/professors about what they view as issues and the future of our profession, etc." In this sense, it is important to give students a well-rounded experience while in the host country; do not only give them a research project, but aid in creating other opportunities that would be beneficial to their careers. Of course, again, at a master's level it is assumed that students have a high level of independence, but faculty should use their connections and knowledge of these regions to at least provide suggestions and contact information to guide the students to tailor the experience to their own needs. Site visits and meeting with other students is especially important in a mostly practical field such as LIS; hands-on experience and seeing how one's work in the field

relates to the real world can have a greater impact in the professional lives of students and therefore profession as a whole.

It should be noted, however, that students in both the long and short-term programs appreciated the independence and freedom they had during their projects/stays. A student that participated in one of the short-term research programs stated, "It was very independent. [We] were given the freedom to accomplish our objectives in whatever manner we saw fit. This allowed us to complete the project sooner than expected," while other students enjoyed the "creative freedom" and "freedom while working on the projects." Based on these assertions, perhaps the best solution to the creation and carrying out of study abroad programs involves a sort of "hands-off" guidance; clear communication lines should be established between the students and program supervisors, but students should be encouraged to find their own solutions to the problems and projects they encounter. Indeed, this is a fundamental part of growing within the study abroad experience: as one student stated, "Having the chance to [be removed from home] for such an extended period of time forced a positive reaction from me, in that, having to do and try different things (without alternatives) made me comfortable around these instances over time."

The second way in which organization is important is defining the research project prior to the students' arrival and informing them of their tasks so that they may adequately prepare themselves when in their home environment, making them more comfortable and efficient when they arrive. A student on one of the research trips stated, "...some work we did felt extremely forced ... I would just hope that future programs have a *clearly* defined purpose," while another student stated, "...the other SOIS student and I had no clue what we were going to work on while we were over there." It is essential that the project on which the students will be working be clearly defined ahead of time, as it is in the best interest of the students *and* the research project itself to adequately prepare the students. If the students are confused or unable to carry out a research project based on their skills, this might cause undue stress and therefore harm, which is an ethical concern; further, if students are not well-informed of the methodology being used or the scope and purpose of the research project, then this disrupts the integrity of the research results. A program could perhaps require a student to have taken a research methods course prior to departure, or the school could provide an abbreviated workshop. Such issues can be resolved or at least lessened through constant and open-ended communication with the project leader at the host university; such communication is absolutely necessary if each school is to truly demonstrate its commitment to such exchanges.

Recognize

Arranging a formal meeting with returning students to have a debriefing is an essential part of the study abroad experience. This could be done in either a group or individual setting, or both. Such an act is crucial for two reasons. One, it allows students to voice their concerns about the program, what they liked or did not like, and so on, so that administrators may alter the program to better fit the needs of future participants. Second, it allows students to critically reflect upon their experience in a verbal forum, allowing a dialogue between students to build upon one another in realizing their experience(s). When the program participants were asked if they had used this experience specifically in their current employment and academic lives, all indicated that they could not think of a particular instance; while this is not abnormal as many are still early in their careers, perhaps a time of

reflection and discussion after the program would help them to realize the importance of the experience, how they can use it in their lives, and what it can bring to the profession as a whole. It could also help them to discover the theories behind such library practices, making critical observations and assumptions so as to contribute to the general LIS discourse.

Further, it is important to establish contacts between past, current, and future participants. One student stated, "I think that the best aid for preparing for an internship/semester abroad are contact persons at the university abroad, and people from home, who did the same program." These past participants can provide connections in the host country, offer advice regarding the area, university, and/or program, and also, as stated above, help to begin a dialogue about one's experience and how it fits into each participant's academic and professional careers and the discipline as a whole.

What more can be done

When I began this project, I had the assumption that creating more programs would automatically increase student participation in international activities. After interviewing the students and examining the initial data coming in from the survey of LIS programs, I am finding that this is not the case. As noted above, most of the students indicated that international experience is not necessary to be successful in the discipline, but it is an important personal experience; perhaps in order to encourage more students to participate, more education into the practical nature of the experience would be helpful. This could be done, for example, through panel presentations from past participants explaining the effects it has had on their careers, or from library professionals regarding specific international skills they may desire in their hires and describe why such experience sets such students apart from others in the hiring process.

In addition to all of the ways to encourage and guide students in participating in study abroad, as mentioned above, another student had the interesting idea to create a "...shared list of international opportunities that are made available through MLIS programs." This would be especially valuable, as it would allow students to make an easy comparison between programs in terms of the tasks involved, duration, and costs. Another opportunity that might be addressed, though not explicitly stated by the students, would be the flexibility in allowing students to take foreign language courses during completion of the MLIS. Language barriers were not an issue in these particular exchanges and research abroad programs; in Austria enough of the courses were offered in English, and the students that came to UWM had an adequate level of English proficiency. Sending students to programs that offer a significant number of courses in English, however, might severely limit the scope of possibilities; one of the respondents to the LIS programs survey echoed this, stating, "Most...schools have courses in languages other than English, so there is limited interest from the majority of students." Allowing for room in the student's curriculum for language courses, whether or not they choose to use these for study abroad purposes, could also bring a benefit to the profession, as it would give aspiring professionals the empathy of learning a new language, which will help in aiding international clientele; further, gaining an understanding of diverse language structures can aid in a more acute awareness of the organization of information and retrieval practices.

Study abroad opportunities for LIS students are available, and more can always be created; what might be more useful is to educate students about the importance of

international issues and how they affect librarians every day no matter in what type of library or which geographical location one is employed. One student suggested "...building a cultural perspective into an LIS program's central or core courses would increase awareness and spur an interest in potential study abroad opportunities," while another stated, "...opportunities such as mine should have some sort of priority in the mission and/or goals of each organization." Indeed, the *American Library Association Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* emphasizes international education to an extent: A program's *Mission, Goals, and Objectives* must aid students in understanding "the role of library and information services in a diverse global society, including the role of serving the needs of underserved groups" (ALA, 2008, p. 6) and the curriculum must "[respond] to the needs of a rapidly changing technological and global society" (p. 7). If more students are truly going to participate in study and research abroad opportunities, LIS programs must build an appreciation for international issues into their curricula, supported and encouraged by the American Library Association through requiring a commitment to the internationalization of each respective program during the accreditation process.

Conclusion

Creating more study abroad opportunities might be the easy answer to encouraging more students to participate in international experiences, but this is likely not the case. LIS programs and organizations must first demonstrate the importance of international issues to the profession through teaching these issues in the core curricula and requiring this as part of the accreditation process. Further, this commitment may be demonstrated through the creation of more funding opportunities for experience abroad and also opportunities that cater to the needs of the large non-traditional graduate student base of the degree, such as short-term programs. Reaching out to the distance education base is also crucial if the LIS community is to encourage and support this type of learning experience; study abroad is one way to bridge the gap between distance and on-campus students, forming a greater bond between aspiring professionals. International issues, however, need to first be more widely incorporated into LIS programs and their importance connected to professional employment.

Instilling an awareness of international issues in aspiring librarians is crucial to the future of the profession as it helps library professionals to know how to contribute to the legal, economic, and social landscape of information, especially as this information is increasingly shared digitally and thus globally. Gaining an understanding of not only international issues but also multicultural populations ensures that professionals will more likely approach information creation, organization, access, and distribution with an ethic of care, one that attempts to provide equitable access to all that seek it, which is a core value of librarianship. As the Internet and increasing immigration, among other factors, cause librarians to face a more diverse population, mission statements, core curricula, and accreditation standards must demonstrate a commitment to aiding their students in gaining the skills necessary to learn how to function and remain flexible in this changing landscape.

While providing study and research abroad opportunities is only one of the ways that this may be gone about, it is certainly one of the most powerful. As one student stated, "Personally, having traveled internationally before, I knew that participating... would alter my perception of a region I was very unfamiliar with. I knew it would allow me to temporarily immerse myself in another culture and gain a better perspective from which to view the world." Some MLIS programs are obviously trying to expand the worldview of

students by bringing international students and faculty to campus, conducting cross-cultural distance education courses, and more, as indicated in the literature. However, while this does add an international component to one's studies, this is still being done within the comfort of one's own country, program, or home. Participating in a study abroad or other international experience might be the most powerful way of recognizing one's own biases and then learning the processes of compromise and negotiation; once one is in the minority, he or she can more effectively begin to understand that his or her way might not be the best or only way. Such critical reflection is especially important as library and information professionals encounter an increasingly diverse patron or client base, both in person and online. Such an experience will also help those from different cultures and backgrounds to see one another's similarities; in a superficial sense, it will aid in the standardization of library services, the creation of international laws, and so on, but in a deeper sense, to aid in a general awareness of the access to information and library services as a fundamentally "human rights" issue, regardless of socioeconomic status or cultural background.

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