

HEA II-A Funding in Doubt. At this writing it is unclear how House-Senate conferees will decide on FY 1984 funding for the Higher Education Act Title II-A college library program. The House-passed funding bill, HR 3913, continues current funding of \$1.9 million, but the Senate-passed version zeroes out the program completely. Meanwhile a temporary continuing resolution provides funding at the lower of the House or Senate levels until November 10 or until HR 3913 becomes law. Both chambers continue current levels for the HEA II-C research library program (\$6 million) and the II-B library training and research and demonstration program (\$880,000).

In its report (S. Rept. 98-247), the Senate Appropriations Committee explained that funding was eliminated because of the lack of any needs-based standards for making awards.

Congress will indeed be considering needs-based criteria for HEA II-A and other possible changes during the upcoming reauthorization process for the Higher Education Act. Education subcommittee staffers are already working on HEA extension, with hearings on Title II library programs likely early next year. In the meantime, it is extremely important to maintain appropriations. Once funding for a federal program has been eliminated it is very difficult to restore it, even if the program is revised.

In the light of the Senate action, the ALA Washington Office (110 Maryland Ave., N.E., #54, Washington, DC 20002; (202) 547-4440) once again urges academic librarians to comment on the need for adequate funding (\$10,000 per college is authorized) or the need for changes in the program. Many thanks to those who have already done so.

GAO Criticizes Standards Process. The General Accounting Office has concluded that the Office of Personnel Management failed to demonstrate that the current minimum qualifications for federal librarians are inappropriate. Although not exceeding its authority in drafting revised standards, OPM failed to address librarians' criticisms concerning the reduced entry grade level and lowered minimum qualifications, according to GAO. GAO also recommended that OPM determine whether federal librarians hired with less than a two-year MLS and those without the MLS perform successfully. Copies of the August 12 ten-page report, Classification and Qualification Standards for the GS-1410 Library-Information Service Series (GAO/GGD-83-97), are available from the Publications Office, GAO, Washington, DC 20548.

Responses differed sharply. Five Members of Congress (Reps. Schroeder, D-CO; Oakar, D-OH; Ferraro, D-NY; Ford, D-MI; and Albosta, D-MI), reacting immediately to the report, wrote to OPM Director Donald Devine to urge withdrawal of the proposed standards until the credibility of OPM's standards development process is established. In a detailed 20-page response to several congressional committees, OPM's Devine saw the GAO report as "supportive of OPM's standard's development methods generally and as applied in the study of the library occupations particularly."