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ACADEMIC STATUS

Dear Sir:

The ACRL was wise, in my opinion, to approve all elements of the standards for faculty status except for the educational requirement. Probably the best method of filling this gap would be to state that: "The determination of degrees to be regarded as terminal or appropriate should be vested with the library faculty, subject to the approval of the president." [Carl Hintz, "Criteria for Appointment to and Promotion in Academic Rank," *CRL* 29:346 (Sept. 1968).] Other associations do not try to set educational requirements for members of their professions employed in colleges and universities, leaving that task to individual faculties. Acceptance of this principle would also dovetail with the emphasis the standards place upon the library faculty. Finally, it could be argued that educational requirements should vary from institution to institution. A "two master's" principle would be much more appropriate for a university where most members of the teaching faculties have a Ph.D. than for a junior college where they will generally have one master's. This is a reasonable approach, although I am opposed to setting rigid educational standards for librarians at any level until the question has received much more serious and continued attention.

One of the problems of the literature on faculty status for librarians is its insularity. Most citations are to other articles in library publications, not to studies of the workings of academic faculties or of the appointment and promotion of college and university teachers in practice. Advocates of faculty status for librarians often adopt an idealized picture of professors. Their focus seems to be on the university where the Ph.D. is required in most departments and where publication is really expected. So far as I know, there have been no articles written which compare academic librarians with members of departments, such as music and architecture, where the master's degree is terminal.

Much can be written about the kinds of standards library faculties may formulate. Using the "two master's" standard is unfortunate. One of the long-standing problems in library personnel development has been the preponderance of people with subject backgrounds in the humanities and the shortage of persons with undergraduate and graduate degrees in the social, natural, and physical sciences. The "two master's" standard is likely to perpetuate or even accentuate this. Much in the literature on faculty status for librarians seems to imply that as we obtain it, we shall all become subject specialists. Since the need for administrators and those with some knowledge of computers is great, such articles may give many academic

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Ed. note: Four units did not submit slates in time for publication; these will be published in future issues. ■ ■

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