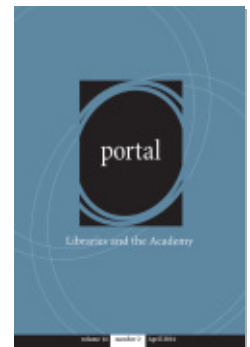# Academic/Research Librarians with Subject Doctorates: Experiences and Perceptions, 1965-2006

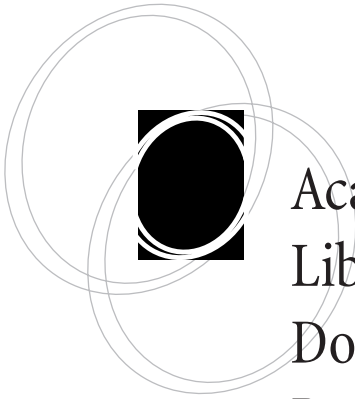Todd Gilman, Thea Lindquist

Academic/Research Librarians with Subject Doctorates: Experiences and Perceptions, 1965–2006

Todd Gilman and Thea Lindquist

abstract: The topic of academic/research librarians with subject doctorates remains largely unexplored. Based on survey data gathered from subject-doctorate holders (excluding those with doctorates in LIS) currently working in U.S. and Canadian academic/research libraries, this article extends the analysis published by the authors in the January 2008 issue of *portal: Libraries and the Academy*. While the first article featured quantitative analysis to highlight data and trends relating to these librarians over a 40-year period, focusing on their demographic profile, educational background, paths into librarianship, and range of positions, this article analyzes qualitative data to report their perceptions about their work environment and the advantages and challenges of academic librarianship as a career. Providing more information about this group of librarians and their experiences highlights the valuable skills they bring to the academic/research library environment. Moreover, it can help advanced-degree holders to determine whether a career in librarianship is right for them.

Introduction

Although librarians with advanced subject degrees have long been hired, and indeed were once preferred, by academic/research libraries, their numbers are currently dwindling. Even for subject specialist positions, few libraries in the United States now require applicants to have any formal education beyond a bachelor's degree and an ALA-accredited MLS.[1] Thus, when librarians with advanced subject degrees retire, presumably they are often replaced by librarians without graduate-level subject expertise. Anyone reading job announcements over the last several years will acknowledge that this trend predates the current economic downturn. Financial exigen-

cies have only further spurred libraries to consolidate subject areas into fewer positions or to distribute subject areas more widely among non-specialist librarians, or both. Why libraries have chosen to do so is beyond the scope of this paper. We focus, instead, on the losses that the choice entails. By presenting and interpreting data from an extensive survey of librarians holding doctorates in subject areas, we present evidence that librarians with advanced subject degrees believe that they confer considerable benefits upon their institutions. We expect that library co-workers and teaching faculty will substantially agree with the survey respondents' opinions reported here. If so, it follows that libraries should make a concerted effort to reverse the current trend.

The authors argue that librarians with advanced disciplinary backgrounds remain crucial to academic/research libraries and their users. It is true that, in most libraries, the focus of the subject specialist is moving away from collection development due to factors such as improved vendor profiling services, patron-driven selection, and shrinking collections budgets. However, as the complexity of the digital environment continues to increase, so too does the demand for highly developed research skills and subject expertise in liaison work, reference services, and library research education. In these areas of library work, a deep understanding of the shape of the discipline one serves and the ability to forge close working relationships with teaching faculty become all the more important. At the same time, technology skills and proficiency with electronic resources are no longer special skills but an essential part of the academic librarian's toolkit. Moreover, the disciplinary areas in which students need the most assistance, namely the library-intensive humanities disciplines, are exactly the areas in which doctorate holders are most plentiful, so they continue to see academic librarianship as an attractive career path. The valuable skills they bring to the table and the level of satisfaction they derive as library professionals emerge clearly from the results of our survey.

In 2006, when we undertook a large-scale survey of librarians with subject doctorates working in academic/research libraries in the United States and Canada, the situation looked much different. Our aim then was to describe and evaluate the background, experiences, and perceptions of these librarians as a distinct and potentially sought-after segment of the workforce.[2] We chose to focus on librarians with doctorates as a subgroup of academic/research librarians with advanced subject degrees, believing that much of what we learned would also apply to this broader group. We also wished to do this since the topic of librarians with subject doctorates has received little attention in the literature, and even less has been heard directly from these librarians themselves. In all, 664 librarians with subject doctorates responded to the survey. Because of the sheer volume and richness of the data, this is the second of two articles incorporating different thematic emphases and analytic approaches. The first article featured quantitative analysis to highlight data and trends relating to academic librarians with subject doctorates over a 40-year period, focusing on their demographic profile, educational background, paths into librarianship, and range of positions held.[3] The current article extends our previous examination by adding analysis of qualitative data to answer a range of questions that are relevant to both employing libraries and to current and potential advanced-degree-holding librarians. What strengths do librarians with subject doctorates feel they bring to relationships with library co-workers and teaching faculty? What advantages and challenges do they encounter in the academic/research library

environment? Do they enjoy their careers as librarians? What particular skills do they bring to the job that they feel are valuable and are valued? These perceptions and others are presented in detail below.

We examine the skills that those with subject doctorates believe they offer in the academic/research library environment, as well as some challenges they encounter. We also present data on respondents' perceptions of their work environment, taking into account issues of reception by the profession at large, job satisfaction, compensation, and relationships with co-workers and teaching faculty. In order to determine the extent to which subject-based job responsibilities have influenced the experiences of both respondents and their library colleagues, we assess the connections between respondents' job satisfaction and how closely their duties are connected to subject expertise. We also look at the connections between their area of library work and how they feel their co-workers respond to them. This discussion reflects the range of views and experiences particular to this population and, in certain instances, to its subgroups by academic status (tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, or academic/professional status). Although the issues that arise might give some readers pause, we believe that an open discussion will serve to strengthen the symbiotic relationship that already exists between these librarians, academic/research libraries, and the user populations they serve.

Our methodological approach to dealing with quantitative data remains much the same as before; the data were analyzed using statistical software to evaluate response frequency, valid percentage, and cross tabulations of questions related to relevant themes. Chi-square (χ^2) results are reported to indicate where associations between variables are statistically significant.[4] In this article, however, we not only used this information to present results and conclusions about doctorate-holding academic librarians as a group but also drew conclusions from the qualitative data that respondents supplied in answering several open-ended questions. Since respondents answered these questions free-form, we categorized their responses according to themes and related sub-themes that naturally emerged within each question's context. Where respondents provided more than one answer to a question, namely those on the advantages and challenges of being an academic librarian with a subject doctorate, we categorized each answer separately. For these two questions, then, the total number of responses exceeds the total number of respondents, but results are reported by percentage of total respondents to contextualize them in a more understandable way for readers. In spite of the less defined and more labor-intensive nature of this qualitative analysis, the authors felt it important to gather respondents' answers to certain questions without restriction and in their own words. Quotations are, therefore, used throughout to illustrate quantitative results.

The data upon which this study relies are self-reported by doctorate-holding librarians. Since our goal is to report on these librarians' *perceptions* of their library work, working relationships, and work environment, these data, while subjective, provide the best measure of their experience. Further research into the perceptions of their co-workers and supervisors as well as the teaching faculty is essential to providing a fuller picture of the advantages and challenges that doctorate-holding librarians experience in the academic/research library setting. One specific suggestion for future research would be to survey senior library administrators concerning their perceptions of the value and effectiveness of subject-doctorate holders in various library positions. Their answers to

this compelling question, for example, would be instructive—When comparing candidates for a job that does not require the doctorate, should the candidate who possesses one be considered more desirable?

Results and Discussion

Advantages of Having a Doctorate

Respondents to the survey felt that they bring many advantages to their positions in academic/research libraries, at least in part because of the advanced research and subject background they developed in pursuing their doctorates. These are skills that advanced-degree holders considering librarianship could also expect to put to good use in the profession. Respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the opportunity to use their background in an academic environment without many of the perceived drawbacks of a university-level teaching position.

A total of 524 people responded to the question about the advantages of a doctorate in an academic/research library position. Because some respondents chose to provide more than one answer, each was categorized separately, resulting in a total of 769 answers. The four most commonly identified advantages, mentioned by at least 10 percent of respondents, are presented below in descending order of popularity.

1. Credibility with the teaching faculty

   This was also expressed as enjoying a collegial relationship with teaching faculty. Many respondents reported that the degree increased their confidence level in the academic environment, particularly in working with teaching faculty. In addition to mentioning enjoying credibility with or receiving respect from the teaching faculty, some respondents stated that their degree increased their authority with other campus stakeholders, including students, library and campus administrators, as well as other deans and directors (in cases where the respondent was a dean or director). This advantage was identified by 36.1 percent (189) of the total respondents to this question. Competence in one's job is clearly the primary criterion for earning the collegial respect of the teaching faculty. Beyond competence, however, the subject doctorate itself appears to be important as well, according to the answers of 63.2 percent (187) of respondents who addressed a separate question on this topic (305).[5] Given the current emphasis in the academic/research library world on improving relations with teaching faculty, the authors believe that these findings should encourage libraries to continue hiring advanced-degree holders, especially into positions in which faculty relations are important.

2. Subject expertise

   This was also expressed as a deep understanding of the scholarship, research methods, trends, and information resources in their subject area and as knowledge of their disciplinary field. Many respondents reported that subject expertise allowed them to better understand and communicate with disciplinary users and palpably enhanced their library work, especially in the areas of materials selection, instruction, reference, and liaison work. A further advantage that respondents mentioned repeatedly in relation to subject expertise was language skills developed in the

course of advanced study, as might be expected given the preponderance of re-
spondents from fields such as history, area studies, and foreign languages.[6] This

advantage was identi-
fied by 34.5 percent of
total respondents to
this question (179).

3. Ability to relate to
academic users
This was also ex-
pressed as being able

> **Many respondents reported that subject expertise allowed them to better understand and communicate with disciplinary users and palpably enhanced their library work.**

to understand the goals of "advanced users," namely graduate students, teaching
faculty, and other researchers, many times by virtue of shared experiences, or
expressed as a broad understanding of the academic environment and how it
operates. This advantage was identified by 26.7 percent of total respondents to
this question (140).

4. In-depth understanding of the research process
This was also expressed as personal experience with a comprehensive approach
to scholarly research and as a close understanding of the research and writing
process, scholarly communication, and the process of earning a terminal degree.
This advantage was identified by 26.3 percent of total respondents to this ques-
tion (138).

Many of the top advantages that respondents identified predictably involve both
skills acquired in the process of earning an advanced degree and a connection to academic
users, especially faculty, on the basis of shared experiences. Respondents often indicated,
for instance, that they felt they could communicate with academic users more effectively
than they otherwise would have because of a shared level of subject expertise and that
this expertise and their research skills, taken together, helped them to be effective as
librarians. They clearly took pride in the feeling that advanced research and subject skills,
as well as enhanced communication with disciplinary users, allowed them to provide a
higher level of library service than they would have without the degree.

Where perceived advantages are concerned, no meaningful differentiation emerged
among respondents in the tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track faculty, and academic/
professional status groups, with one notable exception; 32.4 percent of tenure-track
faculty stated that in-depth understanding of the research process was an advantage
as compared to only 23.6 percent of academic/professional status and 17.5 percent of
non-tenure-track faculty respondents. Tenure-track faculty librarians are more likely
to derive a dual benefit—meeting tenure requirements and aiding users—from this
particular advantage. Many tenure-track respondents, including the one who made the
following statement, specifically mentioned that earning their doctorate better prepared
them to negotiate a "publish or perish" environment:

> I think it would be harder to meet the challenge of publishing for tenure if I had not had
> the soul-crushing experience of having my dissertation torn apart (and the triumph of
> putting it back together and having it accepted for publication as a book). ...[Tenure]
> seems very doable.

A salient positive theme emerged clearly from the open-ended answers to the advantages question, as well as in final comments solicited at the end of the survey—namely, that academic/research library positions offered respondents "the best of both worlds" or the opportunity to work as scholar-librarians. Many respondents enjoyed the fact that librarianship offers the opportunity to broaden their intellectual horizons and to continue to engage in teaching, research, and publication without the intense pressure to publish that teaching faculty experience. Another major advantage of librarianship is the variety of positions and academic statuses that professionals can choose from based on individual interests. The words of the following respondents illustrate why a career in librarianship was the right choice for them and echo the statements of most other respondents:

> I taught at the university level for quite a while, published, etc., and I loved what I did. But now I think I [have] all the good parts of that life and have left behind the bad. Actually, I think I have the best position ever; I can still work with students, teach, research, publish, and be active in academic life but my horizons (intellectual, professional, and geographic) are much broader than they were when I was a subject academic. My friends in the tenure-track/tenured academic life envy me.

> [Librarianship] is the ideal job to have in an academic setting. I'm able to indulge in a broader range of interests than if I had continued on a faculty track but without any pressure to produce for tenure.

Clearly, there are many advantages of a career in academic/research librarianship for survey respondents. We believe the advantages for the employing libraries—past, present, and future—should also be readily apparent.

Challenges of Having a Doctorate

In addition to the advantages, survey respondents were asked to identify what they see as the greatest challenges of being an academic librarian with a subject doctorate. A total of 507 people answered this question. Because some respondents provided more than one answer, each was categorized separately resulting in a total of 673 answers. The four most commonly identified challenges, each mentioned by 10 percent or more of respondents, are listed below in descending order of frequency. It is noteworthy that some of these challenges directly contradict benefits perceived by the same or other respondents—a fact indicating that some librarians have mixed experiences or that some (though a distinct minority) are displeased with either their particular institution or academic libraries in general, or both.

1. Library colleagues' perceptions
   This was also expressed as the need to convince other librarians that the respondent should not be regarded as either over- or under-qualified (the latter presumably for lacking the MLS) and the perception among colleagues that the respondent is a failed academic. This challenge was identified by 32.3 percent of total respondents to this question (164). Some respondents' comments, such as the following, express the feeling that library colleagues do not appreciate

the experience and credentials they bring to the workplace: "[I am regarded] as a junior librarian rather than as someone with more than a dozen years of experience in teaching, research, and service, now become a librarian as well as a scholar"; "Colleagues who assess my credentials and experience unfavorably generally…have no idea how relevant the rigorous training I have had benefits me in my work as a librarian."

2. Tension between being both a librarian and a researcher
   This was also expressed as the need for time for research and writing, doing justice to or balancing library (professional) work and subject-specific (academic) work, and keeping up in both LIS and the subject area in which the doctorate was earned. This challenge was identified by 19.7 percent of total respondents to this question (100). While upholding professional responsibilities and writing for publication can certainly be difficult, many subject-doctorate-holding librarians find a way to succeed at it: 67.5 percent (410) of 608 respondents to a question on publishing have done so since becoming a librarian as compared to 32.5 percent (198) who have not.[7] Of those who expanded on their areas of publication (414), 51 percent (211) publish most in LIS; 42.7 percent (177) in the subject area in which they earned their doctorate; and 6.3 percent (26) in another subject area. Together these figures indicate that respondents have found time to produce a good deal of subject-specific as well as library science works and that advanced-degree holders considering librarianship can hope to do the same if they become library professionals.

3. Undervaluing subject expertise
   Respondents felt this from colleagues both inside the library and on campus. This challenge was identified by 14 percent of total respondents to this question (71). Some respondents' comments, such as the following, express the feeling that colleagues do not believe that their subject expertise improves their performance as librarians: "My co-workers see my doctoral degree as a personal quest and do not…view me any differently than any other reference librarian."

4. Compensation
   This was also expressed as disappointment that the doctorate did not translate into an advantage in salary and as a belief that the degree does not help when it comes time for promotion. This challenge was identified by 11.2 percent of total respondents to this question (57). It should be noted, however, that 71.7 percent (435) of respondents to a specific question about their level of satisfaction with compensation and benefits for the skills and knowledge that they believe their doctorate contributes to their current library work—such as subject expertise, languages, understanding of the research process, teaching experience, and familiarity with scholarly communication—reported that they are substantially satisfied.[8] While another 28.3 percent (172) were less satisfied,[9] the fact that almost three-quarters of respondents are satisfied in this area is actually quite encouraging.

Notwithstanding the feelings reported above about library colleagues' perceptions, 76.2 percent (458) of respondents to a question about how their colleagues view the

subject doctorate in the work environment said colleagues view it favorably, with 11.8 percent (71) choosing extremely favorably, 34.3 percent (206) very favorably, and 30.1 percent (181) somewhat favorably. In addition, 16.6 percent (100) of respondents said that the doctorate is viewed neutrally (that is, neither positively nor negatively). Only 5.8 percent (35) said that the doctorate is viewed not very favorably and 1.3 percent (8) not at all favorably. Perhaps the discrepancy can be understood, in part, by understanding that respondents' colleagues may convey mixed feelings, as expressed by the following respondent: "[Library colleagues are] glad I have the degree and attendant experience but wish I had a bit more traditional LIS enculturation." What is more, open-ended responses indicate that many respondents, indeed, feel valued by co-workers for their performance, though this is not necessarily identified as a direct outcome of earning the doctorate. These comments seem to indicate, more than anything, the differing perspectives among respondents and their colleagues. The former want recognition for what they offer as the result of their huge investment in effort and expense; and the latter, many of whom do not share this experience, do not necessarily directly identify an advantage in performance with what one has learned in the process of earning a terminal degree.

An additional explanation may lie with the function that respondents perform in the library. Cross-tabulation reveals a very strong relationship between respondents' perceptions of library co-workers' views of the subject doctorate and the doctorate holder's area of work ($\chi^2 = 119.376$, with 75 df, p = 0.001). Of the seven top areas of work—reference (113), administration (111), collections (105), rare books/special collections (60), cataloging (34), instruction (32), and archives (23)—the top choice for respondents working in administration, rare books/special collections, instruction, and archives was that their co-workers viewed their doctorate "very favorably." In administration, the percentage selecting "very favorably" is highest with 48.6 percent (54), followed by archives with 39.1 percent (9), and rare books/special collections with 38.3 percent (23). Administration is also the highest in the "extremely favorably" category with 17.1 percent. When combined percentages of "very favorably" and "extremely favorably" are considered to determine the most positive responses by area of work, administration rises to 65.7 percent, rare books/special collections to 48.3 percent, reference to 45.1 percent, instruction to 43.7 percent, archives to 43.4 percent, and collections to 39 percent, indicating that these might be good potential areas for those with doctorates to consider. Similarly, open-ended comments show that many respondents feel their colleagues value their language skills, subject background, and ability to answer challenging reference and research questions using specialized or complex research tools.

> **Cross-tabulation reveals a very strong relationship between respondents' perceptions of library co-workers' views of the subject doctorate and the doctorate holder's area of work.**

It seems instructive that such a high proportion of those working in administration, rare books/special collections, reference, instruction, archives, and collections—mainly public service areas—feel that co-workers view their doctorate very favorably or extremely favorably, while the proportion of those working in cataloging who feel

that their doctorate is viewed in this way is noticeably lower (29.4 percent). Some of this positive reaction might be explained by the fact that the former group comprises those whose subject knowledge tends to be more visible to library co-workers. For catalogers the problem could well be that they think that their subject expertise is undervalued by co-workers who believe the MLS is more important in cataloging than an advanced subject degree, even when they bring advanced skills like an expert understanding of historical contexts and bibliography to their work.

Still, the fact that some of the challenges discussed here concern discrepancies over the perceived value of the subject doctorate in the context of the library profession suggests that librarians with subject doctorates and two important colleague groups—library co-workers and campus colleagues—need to work toward a better mutual understanding, even if these librarians' relationships with teaching faculty seem generally positive. At least some of the problems seem tied to the perception of doctorate holders as "failed academics"

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who became librarians out of necessity rather than choice and who show little enthusiasm for their current profession. However, fewer and fewer doctorate-holding librarians fit this stereotype. Our research has shown that librarians who earned their doctorates after 1998 and, therefore, were younger (aged 29–41) most likely did so for personal interest / fulfillment; and baby-boomer librarians who earned their doctorate before 1979 most likely did so because they wanted a teaching position at a college / university.[10] But even among those librarians who initially earned a doctorate to teach, the data presented below show that most are quite satisfied with their careers in librarianship and, thus, are far from the stereotype of the "failed academic."

That is not to say that the experience of earning a terminal degree does not present librarians and their employing institutions with challenges as well as advantages. The tendency to work alone—the predominant model in humanities research, for instance—does not necessarily translate well to the collaborative environment of the library. Also, while meritocracy is deeply embedded in the culture of academic depart-

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ments, some doctorate-holding librarians feel uncomfortable promoting themselves and their work, fearing this will be viewed as grandstanding, and find it challenging to accept the hierarchical reporting structure of libraries.[11] Making library colleagues aware of their achievements and working well within a hierarchical supervisory structure, however, are critical skills if these librarians are to function effectively in the

work setting. They must become aware of the cultural differences between academic departments and the library, even though both are a part of the university, and take the necessary steps to succeed.

In the end, it is important to note that respondents were much more unified in their perceptions of the advantages than the challenges of holding a subject doctorate, as indicated by the percentage of total respondents to each question and the number of advantages and challenges selected by 10 percent or more. Four advantages—as opposed to only one challenge—were identified by over 20 percent of respondents to the corresponding question. These results should encourage academic/research libraries, as well as advanced-degree holders considering a career in librarianship, that the unique and valuable skills these librarians contribute in the academic/research library setting are more concrete and less situation-specific than any issues that may arise. Assuming that academic/research librarians at hiring institutions find that these results square with their own perceptions, they should continue to recruit doctorate holders for positions in which these skills would benefit the institution.

Job Satisfaction

Because overall job satisfaction strongly influences attitudes toward one's profession, survey respondents were asked to indicate how much they enjoy being an academic librarian. Fully 53.6 percent (317) of respondents to this question said that they like being a librarian "very much," and another 30.8 percent (182) said they like being a librarian "extremely," whereas only 13.7 percent (81) said "somewhat," 1.5 percent (9) said "not much," and .3 percent (2) said "not at all." In all, 84.4 percent of respondents answered positively, suggesting that librarianship is an excellent career option for doctorate holders[12] and well matched to their interests and abilities.
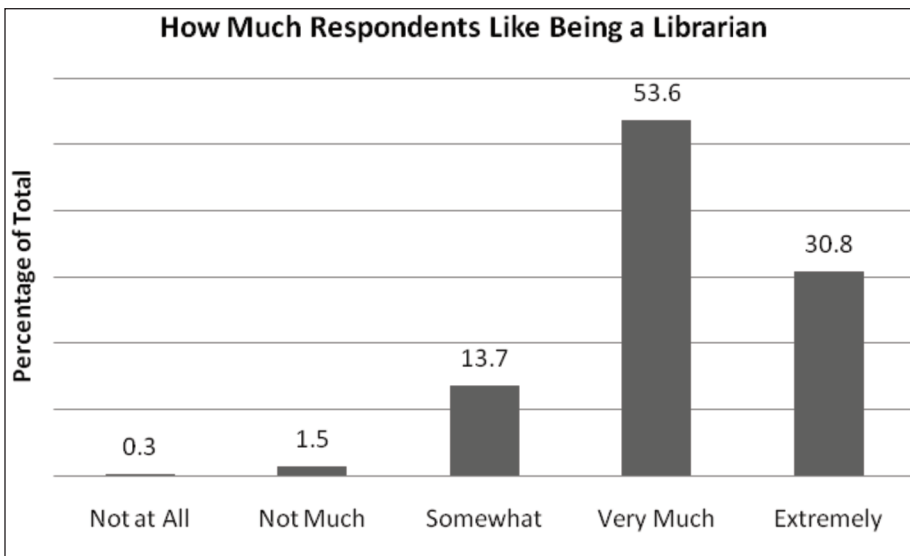
This assumption is strongly supported by the statistical relationship that exists between how much respondents enjoy being a librarian and how closely their duties conform to their area of subject knowledge (χ^2 = 12.060, with 4 df, p = 0.017). Although similar percentages of those whose work is closely connected to the subject doctorate (53.2 percent) and those whose work is not (55.5 percent) said they like being a librarian "very much," the percentage who chose "extremely" was noticeably higher among those whose work is connected to their doctorate: 32.8 percent (39) as compared to 24.4 percent (29) of those whose work is not. And, while both groups said they like being a librarian only "somewhat" as their third most common response, the percentage was higher (17.6 percent versus 12.8 percent) for the group whose work is not connected to the doctorate. Thus, the second and third highest percentage of respondents in both groups indicate that a larger percentage of those whose work is connected to the subject doctorate feel more strongly that they like being a librarian than those whose work is not connected to the subject doctorate. In this context it is noteworthy that the number of respondents whose work is not connected to the subject doctorate is much smaller than the number of respondents whose work is connected (119 versus 470). This disparity suggests that many respondents chose librarianship as a career hoping to make use of the skills and knowledge they obtained through earning their subject doctorate, that their skills and knowledge were the reason they were hired by their employing institutions, or both. It is encouraging that not only are doctorate holders more satisfied in positions in which their duties conform closely to their subject expertise but also that these positions are the types in which they tend to be valued by library colleagues—for example, reference, collections, and rare books/special collections.

Reception by the Library Profession

Because a doctorate is not a standard qualification for academic librarian positions, respondents' answers when asked to gauge the extent to which they feel the profession of librarianship welcomes those with subject doctorates were enlightening. A considerable 84.6 percent (499) view the profession as "welcoming"—40.7 percent (240) as "somewhat welcoming," 37.8 percent (223) as "very much welcoming," and 6.1 percent (36) as "extremely welcoming." Conversely, only 15.4 percent (91) felt less welcomed by the profession—12.4 percent (73) said "not very welcoming," and 3 percent (18) said "not at all welcoming." Still, since nearly 98 percent of respondents enjoy being a librarian either "somewhat," "very much," or "extremely," one wonders about the discrepancy. It could be related, for instance, to the notion that working in libraries is generally preferable to working in academic departments when it comes to feeling appreciated and secure, with the result that some doctorate holders enjoy their work despite mixed feelings about their reception by the profession. Further research is needed on the relationship between job satisfaction and factors such as how welcoming the library profession is versus how welcoming the college teaching profession is in order to shed more light on this matter.

Conclusion

Based on an extensive survey of North American academic librarians with subject doctorates, librarians with advanced disciplinary backgrounds clearly offer a wide range of skills and experiences of immense value to academic/research libraries and their users. These skills and experiences emerged clearly from survey responses and include subject expertise, in-depth knowledge of the research and writing process, practical understanding of graduate education and university-level teaching, and a connection to the faculty born of common experience. Yet, despite the many assets these librarians offer, the trend away from requiring advanced subject degrees for many positions means that the numbers of advanced-degree-holding librarians will continue to decline unless libraries make a concerted effort to reverse this trend. We urge institutions to make this effort because it is one that will bring lasting benefits to their students and faculty.

The results should further offer encouragement to advanced-degree holders considering academic library careers. The skills and experiences they bring are well suited to the academic library environment and will, in all likelihood, enhance their effectiveness and job satisfaction as librarians. Additionally, they will find that the variety of positions and academic statuses that library professionals can choose from offer them much more flexibility to shape their careers based on their interests and preferences.

While librarians with subject doctorates indeed encounter challenges particular to their situation, such as the lingering sentiment among some library colleagues that they are "failed academics" and the difficulty of balancing the roles of librarian and researcher, the overwhelming majority enjoy their jobs immensely. As a group, they would not rather be doing something else, as some might think. For the most part, they feel adequately compensated and welcomed in the library world.

Moreover, they regard academic/research library positions as offering them many of the benefits of an academic position without the drawbacks. Many respondents are grateful that they have the opportunity to work as scholar-librarians and continue to engage in teaching, research, and publication without the intense "publish or perish" experience that teaching faculty undergo. The feeling that librarianship offers the best of both worlds pervaded their responses, fittingly illustrated by the following respondent's concluding comment:

> I got a PhD to teach, but over the past 23 years I've been a librarian and wouldn't trade it for the world. …Librarianship allows me to work in academia, write the occasional article, [and] participate with faculty in teaching students, all without pressure to publish. Who could ask for more?

The good news is that the advantages for employing institutions seem to far outweigh the challenges in terms of what these librarians can offer academic user groups and contribute to the educational mission of the institution. These librarians tend to thrive and be most valued in positions that have some connection to their disciplinary background. Libraries and their users also benefit from a variety of perspectives, including that of advanced disciplinary study and research. The survey results should strongly encourage academic/research libraries that the benefits of advanced-degree-holding librarians are more concrete and less situation-specific than any issues that may arise. Assuming

that the leaders of academic/research libraries agree that this is the case, they should continue to aggressively recruit doctorate holders and other advanced-degree holders for positions in which their unique and valuable skills will benefit the institution. All indications point to a very receptive audience.

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Notes

1. For example, an online search of the ALA Joblist conducted May 26, 2010, revealed that 90 percent of subject-specialist librarian and curator job announcements, including, but not limited to, those for positions at Duke University, George Mason University, Amherst College, Coe College, Oberlin College, and Wartburg College, do not list an advanced subject degree among the required qualifications, although 40 percent of these announcements require an ALA-accredited MLS *or* an advanced subject degree.

2. At the time, librarians with advanced subject degrees appeared to be in growing demand, as academic and research libraries—particularly large and research-intensive institutions—had stepped up efforts to attract those with advanced subject and language expertise to the profession. They anticipated a severe shortage of these librarians as the baby-boom generation retired and a limited number of new librarians with subject expertise entered the profession. (see Kyung-Sun Kim et al., "Recruiting a Diverse Workforce for Academic/Research Librarianship: Career Decisions of Subject Specialists and Librarians of Color," *College & Research Libraries* 68, 6 [2007]: 533–53). These trends were worrisome enough that the Institute of Museum and Library Services funded a three-year research project focusing on research, recruitment, and education of subject specialists for academic/research libraries. (see University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Library and Information Studies and University of Maryland College of Information Studies, Subject Specialists for Academic and Research Libraries: Research, Recruitment, and Education, http://slisWeb.lis.wisc.edu/~imls/ [accessed July 14, 2010]). The anticipated shortage also encouraged initiatives like the Council on Library and Information Resources' Postdoctoral Fellowship in Scholarly Information Resources, New York University and Long Island University's Dual Degree Program for Scholar-Librarians and the Association of College and Research Libraries' Western European Studies Section Recruitment to the Profession Committee.

3. Thea Lindquist and Todd Gilman, "Academic/Research Librarians with Subject Doctorates: Data and Trends 1965–2006," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 8, 1 (January 2008): 31–52. The survey is included online as an appendix to the article.

4. Ibid., 34–5.

5. Including four who said that research and publishing count just as much.

6. Lindquist and Gilman, 41.

7. The bulk of the 410 respondents who have published—71 percent (291)—have published articles only; 2.9 percent (12) have published books only; and 26.1 percent (107) have published both articles and books.

8. 40.7 percent (247) of respondents to this question feel that they are "somewhat adequately" compensated; 26.9 percent (163) of respondents feel that they are "very well" compensated; and another 4.1 percent (25) feel that they are "extremely well" compensated.

9. 18.6 percent (113) said "not much," and 9.7 percent (59) said they are "not at all" adequately compensated for these skills.

10.   Lindquist and Gilman, 38.

11.   For a recent discussion of academics' aversion to self-promotion, see Gary A. Olson, "It Is Who You Know and Who Knows You," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 19, 2010, http://chronicle.com/article/It-Is-Who-You-KnowWho/63560/ (accessed July 16, 2010).

12.   For discussion about subject-doctorate holders becoming librarians, see the following opinion pieces by Todd Gilman: "Putting Your Ph.D. to Work in the Library," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 8, 2004, http://chronicle.com/article/Putting-Your-PhD-to-Work-/44559/ (accessed July 16, 2010); "Covering the Bases," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 9, 2004, http://chronicle.com/article/Covering-the-Bases/44706/ (accessed July 16, 2010); and "A Matter of Degrees," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 18, 2005, http://chronicle.com/article/A-Matter-of-Degrees/44967/ (accessed July 16, 2010).