

**From:** Elizabeth McKenzie  
**Sent:** Monday, November 08, 2010 3:36 PM  
**To:** Don Polden; Ed Butterfoss  
**Cc:** Stretch, Charlotte (Becky)  
**Subject:** Comments on ABA Standard 603

Dean Don Polden, chair,  
Cc: Becky Stretch ABA office  
Prof. Ed Butterfoss Chair, Library Subcommittee; Standards Review Committee

RE: Standard 603 (c) and (d)

Dear Prof. Butterfoss and Dean Polden:

I am writing as an individual on the matter of the proposed changes in ABA Standard 603. The Standard 603 (c) currently requires law library directors to have both a law degree and a library degree. I would suggest that the committee add, "except in exceptional circumstances" to that subsection. I certainly know colleagues who lack either degree and yet are exceptionally qualified. And yet, I would not suggest that it would make a good standard to remove the requirement of both degrees as a general rule.

In too many libraries where there is a "library director" who is a substantive law faculty member, the library is actually run in every sense by a true library director who is uncompensated, and un-recognized. This person is invariably female. I wish this sort of chauvinism had gone away with the 1950's, and I wish that it were not so attached to my profession. The situation is not ideal for either the individual who is taken advantage of, nor for the law school, nor the librarians who are in the situation.

I am willing to make a statement about this situation at the University of Iowa, and now at State University of Buffalo. In the past, it has been common at other schools. I am certain that the individuals involved in the situations have accepted the positions of "Associate Director," or "Executive Director" or whatever title was offered to run the library in the absence of actual directorship and real monetary compensation and tenure, because of personal reasons, usually being trapped by geographic and marital necessity.

It would seem to be counter-intuitive to reduce the requirements for managing law libraries as the libraries become more and more complex, not less. The job is more technologically demanding, as well as more substantively complex than it was when I began my work as a librarian in 1985. I am glad every day for both of my degrees, yet feel the need to continually get more training and to read constantly and attend conferences. Licensing of databases is in a state of flux, the balance of our formats is being re-negotiated daily, and the problem of preservation of materials is a moving target. We do not know when or if we will shift our collections entirely into digital formats, and so we plan uneasily for an unknown future, while trying to provide stellar services and increase our patrons' "information literacy." How can you say that this job would benefit from fewer qualifications, or somebody not "plugged in" to the librarianship network and continuing education providers?

For the same reasons that Standard 603(d) is important, not for the individual, but for the good of the law school, it is important for the person running the library and making decisions day-to-day, to have real faculty status and security of position – that is, tenure. The school benefits when there is a strong and independent decision-maker in the library, who is also truly integrated with the faculty as a whole. The library decision-maker needs to be part of the faculty decision-making so that when changes are considered, the impact on the library and its budget impact can be considered, raised and discussed as part of the process. For instance, when a faculty considers creating a center or a new concentration, it would be important to know if there will be large effects in the library, causing impacts on the law school budget that need to be planned around.

It is not the same level of information sharing for Professor X to come toddling down to the library after the faculty meeting and share notes with the Associate Director who really makes decisions and knows how the library runs. And it is not the same level of protection of the decision-maker for the Associate Director, who does not have any faculty status or security of position to be left making difficult decisions about the library collection, or personnel decisions, or any of the other types of decisions that could call wrath on the head of the decision-maker, and yet call for intellectual courage. Whether it calls for standing up to other departments in the university who want to pressure the law library for budget or access to databases, or standing up to individuals who complain about purchases, lack of purchases, or decisions of other types, library directors must take firm stands. They protect their staff by doing so, and they protect their deans, and their budgets by doing so. It is a vital function, and should not be compromised.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth McKenzie  
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