Committee Reports

2010/2011 Awards & Recognition Annual Report

Submitted by: Chris Brady

Members

Chris Brady, chair (U.S. Dept. of Justice Libraries)
Jessica Ireland, vice-chair (Radford University)
Jennifer Arnold, member (Central Piedmont Community College)
Leigh Ann DePope, member (Salisbury University)
René Erlandson, member (University of Nebraska at Omaha)
Yumin Jiang, member (University of Colorado Law School)
Lisa Kurt, member (University of Nevada)
Mary Grenci, member (University of Oregon)
Betty Landesman, member (National Institutes of Health)
Beth Weston, member (Bethesda, Md.)
Christine Freeman-Radcliff, Mexican Student Grant Liaison (Texas A&M University at Kingsville)
Christine Stamison, Board Liaison (Swets)

Continuing Activities

A&R is currently in the process of ordering plaques and awards from Brandon's Awards in Knoxville.

Completed Activities

The 2011 slate of NASIG award winners is complete. NASIG-selected awards were selected by the committee in February. AMBAC selected the candidate for the

Mexican Student Grant at the end of March. Travel and accommodation arrangements for the award winners attending the conference in St Louis have been set.

Budget

The A&R committee is in the midst of its budgetary cycle, as most of its annual outlays occur immediately before and immediately after the annual conference. As of May 2011, it appears that our projected expenses are in line with the budget request for 2011.

Statistical Information

A&R received the following number of applications for the 2011 awards cycle:

- Student Grant: 7 applications (4 awards granted)
- Schwartz Scholarship: 7 applications (2 scholarships granted)
- Serials Specialist Awards: 9 applications (2 awards granted)
- Horizon Award: 2 applications (1 award granted)
- Rose Robischon Scholarship: 3 applications (1 award granted)
- John Merriman Award (NASIG): 2 applications (1 award granted)
- Marcia Tuttle International Award: no applications in 2011
- Mexican Student Award Grant: selection managed by AMBAC

Questions for Board

1. In reference to the Statistical Information section of this report, we have noticed the total number of applications for the last two years is down. Starting with the 2009/2010 award application cycle, the deadline for award applications was moved from mid-February to mid-January in order to accommodate the Merriman award. As the date for the UKSG conference is generally in early April, the due date for applications really cannot be later for this award (thus allowing for time for processing and evaluating applications, selecting and approving the award winner, and allowing time for him or her to make arrangements to travel to the UK).

However, we have noticed that overall applications dropped when the deadline has been in mid-January. Apparently, January is a difficult month for soliciting award applications. It is very soon after the winter break for most schools; indeed, some institutions with a short winter term for all practical purposes have a much longer break. In addition, the ALA midwinter meeting is also in January.

After two years of working with the mid-January deadline, A&R committee members were asked this spring to consider if an alternate schedule might work starting in 2012. We would continue to take Merriman applications at mid-January, but would move the deadline for the other NASIG awards to mid-February. After discussion, current committee members agreed this would not cause a hardship in evaluating the Merriman awards at a separate time than our other award categories.

2. We also note an issue this year regarding how to define "student" for a couple of our awards. For perhaps the first time, there was a question about whether a student of a non-MLS graduate program in library and information science met the enrollment requirement of the student awards (i.e. Student Grant, Fritz Schwartz Scholarship). Currently, the student must be enrolled (or entering) an "ALA-accredited graduate library program (or Mexican equivalent)." Since the ALA

accredits only master's-level professional/terminal programs (leading to the MLS degree or similar designations, such as MLIS, MSIS, MSLIS, etc.), the current definition excludes not only undergraduate degrees, but post-graduate degrees such as the Ph.D. in library/information science, and post-MLS specialist degrees.

3. A related question arose specifically with the Schwartz scholarship. At present, the candidate "must be entering an ALA-accredited graduate library program (or Mexican equivalent) or must have completed no more than twelve hours of academic requirements towards the graduate degree at the time of enrollment." This year, we found this definition vague and problematic. For instance, does the "twelve hours of academic requirements" mean semester hours or quarter hours?   And one applicant this year came from a program that required 12 "course credits" in total rather than semester hours or quarter hours. While 36 semester hours of credit is the most common requirement for completion of the MLS (for those programs on a semester schedule), we are noticing certain programs with higher requirements of 39 or 40 semester hours. Thus, some students are taking increased course loads earlier in their MLS career to finish the degree within the standard four semesters.

Recommendations to Board

1. We recommend to the Board that the deadlines for the Merriman award and the remainder of the NASIG-selected awards (i.e., all other awards except the Mexican Student Grant) be on different dates for the 2012 award year. The Merriman award deadline must remain in mid-January at the latest to allow enough time for application processing, evaluation, and selection by mid-to late-February. This will allow the NASIG Merriman winner about 4-6 weeks to make arrangements to travel to the UKSG conference in early April.

The deadline for all other NASIG-selected awards should be in mid-February.   Students and professionals are back into a routine after the winter break and ALA

Midwinter meeting by this time, and we believe that this is a better time for potential applicants to file their award submissions.

2. While there was some discussion between A&R and the Board this year, midway through the awards cycle may not have been the right time to take up the issue of student program qualifications. However, we recommend to the board that we seriously consider expanding the eligibility of the Student Grant and Schwartz Scholarship to include post-MLS academic programs in library and information science. Students in such programs (post-master's specialist and doctoral) will also be among the future leaders of the field. Details would need to be researched and worked out; for example, would the post-MLS program need to be at an school that already had an ALA-accredited MLS program, or not?

3. We recommend to the Board that the description for educational qualification should be changed. Rather than quantifying in a single number for the cutoff (i.e. the current "12 credit hours" which in itself is vague), we propose the following phrasing:

"Applicants for the Fritz Schwartz Scholarship should have completed no more than one-third (rounded up) of the coursework credits required for their particular MLS degree program."

Submitted on: May 6, 2011