

Training Program for Marine and Fisheries Information Personnel from Developing Countries

In the past decade, gradual changes in thinking as a result of the Law of the Sea conferences have led many countries to establish 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones. In claiming the legal right to control resource development in the seabed and the water column above the seabed, countries have recognized their need to educate citizens in aspects of marine management and to create the information base necessary for rational program planning. Consequently, universities with a strong commitment to marine education such as the University of Rhode Island, have seen an increase in students from other countries enrolled in a wide variety of degree and non-degree marine programs.

When a university embarks upon a teaching program, development of strong library services to support that program becomes a necessity. In the 1960s, the University of Rhode Island (URI) made a definite decision to become a center of excellence in marine education. URI offers graduate degrees in Marine Affairs, Ocean Engineering, Oceanography, and Economics-Marine Resources. In fact, it is possible to have a marine-related concentration in most departments of the University.

As each new marine science course offering was created, library resources were strengthened to support it. URI's

MARY JANE BEARDSLEY
Fishery Information Service Director
International Center for Marine Resource
Development
Main Library Building
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
U.S.A.



Ms. Beardsley, Director of ICMRD's Fishery Information Service.

Claiborne Pell Marine Science Library serves the Narragansett Bay Campus of the Graduate School of Oceanography. The US National Sea Grant Document Depository is housed in Pell Library. The International Center for Marine Resource Development (ICMRD) and its Information Service were established through a grant from the US Agency for International Development (AID) to help other countries solve their marine resource development problems. This concentration of programs and information resources has drawn students and visitors from all over the world. Inevitably

Environmental protection laboratories (left) and part of the oceanography laboratories (right), University of Rhode Island.

*From a presentation made at the ninth annual IAMSLIC Conference (see p. 17).

the question is asked: "How can my country develop its own marine information resources?"

Becoming a marine information specialist is sometimes more a matter of being in the right place at the right time than of preplanning!

Whether library/information science training is an undergraduate or a graduate degree, there are few opportunities to couple that training with a science/technology major in general, much less a specialized concentration in marine studies. No school of information science anywhere in the world appears to offer the opportunity to acquire library training *and* a marine science specialty.

Most marine librarians accept the appointment, then learn 'on the job'. In a region where other marine science libraries are quite close and travel money is available, the newly appointed librarian can visit other sites and learn from personnel there. More often, marine science librarians are geographically isolated from their peers, in situations where the basic 'tools of the trade' are missing. If they have little or no background in the literature, then personal visits, letters, newsletters and conferences become major channels of obtaining information. The International Association for Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSLIC), just a decade old, is





A research/teaching vessel of the University of Rhode Island. Trainees will get out of the library and onto the water.

filling the void for marine information professionals able to attend its annual conference. To date, the conference has been held in North America, its papers are unpublished.

After much discussion with IAMS LIC members and correspondence with librarians around the world, the need for a special training program focused on marine information issues was apparent. Professors of the University of Rhode Island Libraries began planning such a program for 1984 to coincide with the October 1984 meeting of IAMS LIC at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, a 2 1/2-hour drive from the URI campus. An ICMRD certificate training program was planned to allow for maximum flexibility in curriculum design.

There were a number of decisions which were basic to program planning. Participants should have ample opportunity to review the material available in all of the URI marine collections. They should receive instruction in basic marine information resources and in the methods used to organize them. They should experience first hand the use of online database searching and the application of microcomputer technology to information services. They should obtain an overview of the problems countries face as they plan the development of their marine space. They should get out of the library and get into/on the water with the scientists. The curriculum should stay strictly on marine science applications and not duplicate topics traditionally taught in library science curriculums.

The major components of the nine-week training program are as follows:

- Information Sources in Marine Science/Fisheries
- Cataloging of Marine Science/Fisheries Information
- Managing Marine Information Centers
- Online Systems and Microcomputer Workshop
- Current Issues in the Development of Marine Resources
- Site Visits
- Internship

One of the main objectives of the program is to foster a network of marine information professionals who can become mentors for participants when they



Trainees will see other teaching facilities of the university. This is the fishing gear training room.

return home. A post-training course internship is seen as a highly desirable part of the experience. URI is willing to act as a negotiator for participants who wish to spend 2-4 weeks working in a marine science library. A number of IAMS LIC libraries have indicated an interest in being an internship site.

Participants must be prepared to pay their own living expenses and transportation during the internship.

Fees

The basic fee for the nine-week training program, including the IAMS LIC conference, is US\$3,500. The fee includes living expenses and all other fees connected with the planned portion of the program. This fee does not include airfare. Internship costs are not part of this fee. Internship costs will be calculated separately for those desiring this experience. Unfortunately, the University of Rhode Island does not have scholarship aid available for this program. Participants must find their own source of funds. Organizations which could contribute scholarship funds for this training are urged to contact us directly at the address below.

Conclusion

Obviously, no one can become an expert on marine information in nine weeks. The participants will bring valuable information about their own situation to the program. The training time has been designed to allow maximum opportunity to explore the problems we face as marine information professionals, through both formal classwork and informal discussions with others in our field.



For further information write to:

Training Program
 Marine Science/Fisheries
 Information Personnel
 ICMRD Library
 Main Library Building
 University of Rhode Island
 Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
 U.S.A.

Cable : RIMARDEC
 Telex : 6814107 NUFUND
 Telephone: 401-792-2479