

A REPORT OF THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION OF THE RESEARCH
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM OF THE WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

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The 1951 legislature allotted \$1,800 a year to the Legislative Reference Library for research fellowships. While the statutes did not spell out how this program was to be operated, it was understood that the intention was to employ graduate students of the university on a half-time basis at various times during the year to carry out specific research tasks. This lack of specific statutory limitations on the program resulted in the essential flexibility which is required because of the fluctuations in the availability of personnel and the element of unpredictability in the jobs to be done.

The program contemplated that a student would receive \$100 per month remuneration for working half-time, almost 100 hours, during the month. During the first year two approaches to employment were used. On one hand a graduate student was employed for the full nine months on a single project. On the other hand seven people were employed for one or more months on short specific projects resulting from urgent requests for help or as the result of a known need for a compilation. Of the persons employed, two were law students, three were public finance and economic majors and three were political science students.

In virtually every instance the employees put in well above the required number of hours. This indicated that the second objective of the program, to stimulate interest in research in operating government, was effective to some degree.

The first year resulted in a full blown study on claims against the state, a voluminous summary of the laws relating to human rights, a study of the presidential primary election, a directory of the advisory committees in the state, an historical analysis of the devices used to finance capital structures in the state government, an analysis of the exemptions under various sales tax laws, a comparative study of state-local fiscal relations and an analysis of the Supreme Court Justices and Circuit Court Judges in Wisconsin. Two of these reports were done at the express request of administrative departments, one at the request of the legislative council and the remainder as part of the over-all program of reporting carried out by the Legislative Reference Library.

We are convinced that the quality of most of the reports prepared far exceeds what a staff member would have been able to do in the comparable period of time because this technique permits a singleness of purpose and concentration of effort which the regular employee cannot sustain.

Forty years ago Dr. McCarthy was able to attract people to do somewhat similar tasks without compensation. We are sure that in several cases the remuneration was the least of the considerations which impelled the students to accept the assignments with us. If we can provide for the state the kind of help provided during the regime of Dr. McCarthy and reactivate the program he started in stimulating the close working relationship between the university and the state in research, we are certain the program will be worthwhile.