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2010 Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development

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2010 Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development

Submitted by Cory Craig, Chair, Awards Committee, Chemistry Division

The SLA Chemistry Division (DCHE) was pleased to award the 2010 Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development to Ye Li at the 2010 SLA Annual Conference. Ms. Li is the Chemistry Librarian at the Shapiro Science Library at the University of Michigan. She obtained her master's degree in Library Science and her Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Iowa in 2009.

award certificate to support her attendance at the 2010 SLA Annual Conference at the DCHE Annual Business Meeting/Breakfast in New Orleans, LA on Tuesday June 15th. The Sparks Award is named to honor Marion E. Sparks, a pioneering and influential chemistry librarian who worked at the University of Illinois from 1913 through 1929. ❖

DCHE presented Ms. Li with a \$1500 check and

Statement of Purpose

Submitted by Ye Li

Winner of the 2010 Marion E. Sparks Award for Professional Development

Two months ago, I fortunately became the new Chemistry Librarian at the University of Michigan. With the excitement of my first step in my dream career path fading to the background, I am currently overwhelmed by the thousands of details in my daily work. My passion about librarianship, years of education, and my research experience in Chemistry may have helped me standing out among candidates for the job but they are all just a starting point of my career now. Holding on to both my short-term and long-term goals keeps me from reaching for what is beyond my grasp but also reminds me of the "big picture" which can be easily blurred by the aspects of day-to-day work.

My short-term goal is to become a competent chemistry librarian who can bridge the chemistry community and the world of chemistry information virtually and physically.

To my surprise, the key to achieving this goal is not how much I know but how to apply what I know. For example, I have a chemistry information literacy curriculum in mind but my first challenge is to find an opportunity to teach: I want 30 minutes to help an undergraduate student at the reference desk to learn how to study literature but his/her assignment is due in 10 minutes. I plan to devote my time and effort mostly into chemistry information literacy but more than 60% of my first two months are spent on issues with vendors and publishers. Gaining all the skills and tacit knowledge requested in my job takes daily practice and

constant learning from my own failures, from my colleagues and through the librarians' network, such as various listserv groups. From the librarians' network, I can learn tips on using resources and negotiating with vendors, insight on how new technology or economy development can influence libraries, and strategies on how to promote information literacy. The altruism flowing through the librarians' network encourages me to learn and to contribute to our profession.

In the meantime, as a chemist, I am also learning from the chemistry community about the latest breakthroughs and new trends in teaching and research. Staying up-to-date and relevant with chemistry empowers me to communicate in depth with my user community. Advances in chemistry usually mean new opportunities for librarians and information specialists to serve our users better or to collaborate with them in research. Cheminformatics and data curation are two representative areas for collaboration. I just started a collaborative project with a research group about chemistry information retrieval through graphical recognition. Last but not least, researchers with experience and reputation in scholarly communication often times can help me solve issues with publishers.

My long-term goal is to become an exceptional chemistry librarian who can bridge chemistry learners and researchers all around the world to boost the development of chemistry and related scientific fields. This is the "big picture."