

PRISM

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COA announces accreditation actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association (ALA) has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim.

Continued accreditation status was granted to the following program:

- Master of Information Sciences offered by the University of Puerto Rico.

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2015.

Continued accreditation status and release from conditional status was granted to the following programs:

- Master of Library and Information Science offered by Dominican University,
- Master of Library Science offered by Emporia State University.

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2015.

Continued conditional accreditation was granted to the following program:

- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2011.

The following institutions have programs that will be reviewed in the fall 2008 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver.

- University of Hawaii
- Pratt Institute
- College of St. Catherine (seeking initial accreditation)
- Syracuse University

The following institutions have programs that will be reviewed in the spring 2009 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

- University of Buffalo, SUNY
- Catholic University of America
- University of Iowa
- University of South Florida
- University of Tennessee

ALA accreditation indicates that the program has undergone a self-evaluation process, has been externally reviewed and meets the Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies, established by COA and adopted by ALA Council. COA evaluates each program for conformity to the Standards, which address mission, goals and objectives; curriculum; faculty; students; administration and financial support; and physical resources and facilities. The Standards can be found at www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/index.cfm.

A complete list of programs and degrees accredited by ALA can be found at www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/directory/index.cfm. Individuals who would like more information about a particular program should contact the program.

The ALA COA is a leading force in accreditation, having evaluated educational programs to prepare librarians since 1924. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognizes ALA COA as the authority for assessing the quality of education offered by graduate programs in the field of library and information studies.

By Karen L. O'Brien, Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

A New Committee on Accreditation

The 2008-2009 Committee on Accreditation (COA) welcomes four new members: Richard AmRhein, Dean of Library Services, Valparaiso University; John Philip Mulvaney, Library Director, Northern State University; Lynne Howarth, Professor, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto; and David Werner, Chancellor Emeritus, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

Initial Accreditation

The Committee will make nine comprehensive review decisions this year, including one to initially accredit the Master of Library and Information Science program at the College of St. Catherine (MN). A decision to initially accredit would bring the College back into fold after a 50-year hiatus—having been ALA accredited from 1929 to 1959. This would be the second initial accreditation decision in two years. The Master of Library and Information Science program at Valdosta State University (GA) was initially accredited in 2007.

Three programs are currently in the pipeline for initial accreditation: the Master of Library, Information and Media Studies at Chicago State University, the Master of Library Science at East Carolina University, and the Master of Information Studies at the University of Ottawa. The Office for Accreditation website now has a page of resources for programs seeking initial accreditation.

Standards Review

A focal point for COA activity has to do with its charge as an ALA committee “to develop and formulate standards of education for library and information studies” (ALA Handbook of Organization 2007-2008, p 12). In the course of their regular quarterly meetings and especially in the fall, COA considers comments and inquiries from constituents on the Standards. This fall, for instance, the committee will discuss an inquiry received regarding research expectations of full-time faculty classified by a program as “clinical.” Standard III.5 requires “For each full-time faculty member the qualifications include a sustained record of accomplishment in research or other appropriate scholarship.”

Fall meetings are also a time for COA to focus on planning. As they move into the last two years of their current strategic plan, they will reflect on accomplishments and shortfalls and begin discussing what the next plan needs to include. One of those areas will be the next comprehensive review of the 2008 Standards scheduled to begin in 2012.

By Richard E. Rubin, Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation, and Director, School of Library and Information Science, Kent State University

The Bigger Picture

Just a short time ago, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the body that recognizes accrediting agencies, issued an important report, *U.S. Accreditation and the Future of Quality Assurance*. The report, which is a general discussion of accreditation, is also a reminder that the accreditation of programs in library and information studies and the Committee on Accreditation operate within a much broader context: the accreditation of higher education institutions and programs. I thought it might be enlightening to identify briefly some of the trends that CHEA believes are affecting the broader aspects of accreditation in higher education.

Issue 1: The extent to which a program meets societal needs, not just the needs of institutions. More attention is being paid to such questions as: Are programs functioning in the public interest as well as in the interest of the academic institution? Is the program attracting a diverse student body to serve the diverse needs of its population? Is there a substantive social return on investment? Are student graduation rates optimal?

Issue 2: The decline in public credibility. Higher education has in general been considered a public good. Yet citizens no longer exempt these institutions from examination and criticism. The public is no longer willing to assume that accreditation is a guarantee of quality. Hence, policy makers may be more inclined to regulate higher education rather than to rely on voluntary bodies such as accrediting agencies. Our institutions and programs must be more transparent to those who provide the funding.

Issue 3: Fiscal pressures. While the cost of higher education continues to rise, the funding does not keep pace. Professional programs such as LIS programs are likely to require more and more money, and hence will become more and more expensive to our students. Accreditation processes must continue to focus, at least in part, on the fiscal ability to maintain quality while also maintaining accessibility. In such an environment, “results” will be emphasized.

Issue 4: Changing patterns of student attendance. Students are increasingly attending more than one institution before completing their degrees. Accrediting agencies need to examine issues such as transfer credits and program flexibility.

Issue 5: Changing modes of instruction. Institutions of higher education are increasingly experimenting with new methods of delivery for instruction. Online programs are growing, and it is critical that accrediting agencies ensure that quality and standards are maintained while these new methods are implemented.

Issue 6: *Demographics*. The pool of available students will become increasingly diverse. Programs will need to recognize not just major ethnic and racial groups, but subgroups. Accrediting bodies will need to increase their attention to the ability of programs to attract, retain, and be responsive to a diverse clientele.

Issue 7: *Globalization*: Programs in higher education are increasingly expanding into other nations and recruiting on an international basis. Accrediting bodies must ensure that high quality facilities and services at all locations are maintained. In addition, accrediting agencies need to assess how well the needs of international students attending programs in the U.S. are met.

This list is just a sample of the larger forces that shape accreditation. As we consider the role of the COA and our Standards, it is also essential that we understand the forces that influence accreditation as a whole.

Council for Higher Education Accreditation. *U.S. Accreditation and the Future of Quality Assurance*, prepared by Peter T. Ewell. Washington, DC: CHEA, 2008.
Available for order at www.chea.org/store/index.asp.

News and Announcements

New Office for Accreditation website

As part of the redesign of ALA's website, the Office for Accreditation URLs have changed and many of our resources have been enhanced. Please use the search field on the ALA home page, www.ala.org, to find the Office for Accreditation home page, the Directory of ALA-Accredited Programs, Resources for LIS Program Administrators (formerly Resources for Programs), and Resources for External Review Panelists. Please update your bookmarks.

2008-2009 ALA Directory of Accredited LIS Master's Programs available online in October

The 2008-2009 edition of the ALA Directory of Accredited Library and Information Studies will be available online October 31, 2008, as a searchable database and as a PDF, at <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/directory/index.cfm>. The searchable directory is updated throughout the year, and programs are able to make their own changes as the need arises. The PDF version is updated annually, and contains the current data as of the October publication date.

External Review Panel Chair training at 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting

Experienced External Review Panelists (two or more on-site visits) are invited to attend training for ERP Chairs at the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver. The session will be held on Friday, January 23, 2009, 2:00 p.m. - 4:00pm. The location is TBD. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

Committee on Accreditation open meeting at the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting
Plan to attend the COA open meeting on Sunday, January 25, 2009, 4:00pm-5:00pm, at the Hyatt Regency CCC in Denver. This is your opportunity to meet members of COA, hear their plans, and ask them questions.

Meeting with LIS Deans at ALISE

The annual meeting with Office for Accreditation staff and LIS Deans, Directors and Chairs will be held on Friday, January 23, 2009, 11:00am-12:00pm, at the Grand Hyatt Denver.

NCATE/AASL Program Reviewer training at 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting

Training for program reviewers and program report writers at the ALA 2009 Midwinter Meeting (Denver, CO) is scheduled for Friday, January 23, 2009, 9:00am – 11:00am. The location is TBD. RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

Reminder to LIS programs

Biennial Narrative, Annual Progress, and Annual Statistical Reports are due December 1, 2008. The COA will review the reports at its Spring 2009 meeting. Consult AP3 (Accreditation Process, Policies and Procedures) and the online Required Reporting for Accreditation for guidelines and instructions.

Office for Accreditation staff changes

In September 2008, Kerri Van Horn joined us as Program Officer. Previously, Kerri was the senior administrative assistant in ALA's Communications and Member Relations department, where one of her principle duties was editing the ALA Handbook of Organization. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Northeastern Illinois University and plans to begin an MLIS program in the fall of 2009. Welcome, Kerri!

Laura Dare has been promoted from Program Officer to Assistant Director.

External Review Panelists Acknowledged

External review panelists contribute a substantial amount of their time and energy to the accreditation process to assure quality in LIS education. We extend our appreciation to the following panelists who served during the spring 2008 academic term.

Chairs

- Edward Erazo, Broward Community College (FL)
- June Lester, University of Oklahoma
- Phil Mulvaney, Northern State University (SD)
- Thomas L. Wilding, University of Arizona

Panelists

- George Abbott, Syracuse University (NY)
- Richard AmRhein, Valparaiso University (IN)
- Diane L. Barlow, University of Maryland
- Daniel Barron, Appalachian State University (NC)
- Barbara M. Barstow, Cuyahoga County Public Library (OH)
- Mary E. Brown, Southern Connecticut State University
- Joan Giesecke, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Adán Griego, Stanford University Libraries (CA)
- Dorothy Elizabeth Haynes, University of Southern Mississippi
- Corinne Hill, Denton Public Library (TX)
- Susana A. Hinojosa, University of California at Berkeley
- Barbara F. Immroth, University of Texas at Austin
- Jeff Kosokoff, Ex Libris, USA
- Lynne McKechnie, Western Ontario University
- Lotsee Patterson, University of Oklahoma
- Lorna Peterson, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- C. James Schmidt, San Jose State University (CA)
- Annabel K. Stephens, University of Alabama
- Keith Ann Stiverson, Chicago-Kent College of Law Library (IL)
- Jana Varlejs, Rutgers University (NJ)

NCATE/AASL Recognition News

Training for program reviewers and program report writers at the ALA 2009 Midwinter Meeting in Denver, CO, is scheduled for Friday, January 23, 2009, 9:00am - 11:00am, location to be announced. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

Spring 2008 AASL recognition decisions

The following programs, housed within NCATE-accredited education units, were nationally recognized as meeting the ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation.

- McDaniel College (MD) Education Department, School Library Media program
- University of Central Arkansas College of Education, Library Media and Information Technologies Advanced program
- University of Central Missouri College of Education, Library Media Specialist program
- University of Central Oklahoma College of Education and Professional Studies, Instructional Media program

Programs under review in fall 2008

- Northern Illinois University Professional Education, Library Information Specialist program
- Sam Houston State University (TX) College of Education, School Librarian program
- The Catholic University of America (DC) Department of Education, School Library Media program
- University of Nebraska at Omaha College of Education, School Library Media program

Thanks to the following program reviewers who served during the spring 2008 semester:

- Judy T. Bivens
- Naomi Caldwell
- Audrey P. Church
- Gail K. Dickinson
- Lesley Farmer
- Mary Ann Fitzgerald
- Dorothy Elizabeth Haynes
- Johan Koren
- Linda L. Lillard
- Elizabeth Marcoux
- Andrea L. Miller
- Barbara Jo Ray

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The Role of Mission, Goals, and Objectives for Program Reviewers

Richard Rubin, Member, ALA Committee on Accreditation and Director, Kent State University, School of Library and Information Science

Understanding and assessing the mission, goals and objectives of a particular program are critical activities in any program review. It is vital that External Review Panelists place in proper perspective the role of the ALA Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies (1992) and the program's stated mission, goals and objectives (MGO) when examining the program presentation. The standards and MGOs have two distinct but closely related functions.

First, the standards are the lens through which one views the program. All aspects of the program presentation are viewed through this lens. Consequently, while reading sections of the program presentation, the panelist should be able to identify specifically which standards are being addressed. As issues arise during reading the program presentation, the specific standard under which the issue falls should be noted. It is very helpful to the Committee on Accreditation when the ERP report notes issues to be addressed by the program and identifies which particular standard or standards are implicated.

Second, the mission, goals and objectives identified in the program presentation establish the perspective or point-of-view from which the ERP views the program. There are many types of programs that can comport with the COA standards. The MGOs help the program under review, the program reviewers and the Committee understand what the program is about: what it emphasizes and how it approaches the field. The MGOs help panelists and the Committee concentrate on the focal and unique aspects of the particular program. The more that is known about the perspective of the program, the greater the ability of the ERP and Committee to apply the standards in an appropriate and effective manner.

Panelists should keep in mind that there are tremendous variations in programs and their emphases. It is not the role of reviewers to impose their own perspective on the roles of programs—that is the responsibility of the program itself. However, the program presentation should be clear on the program’s MGOs. The reviewer should be able to determine from the program presentation what the program’s MGOs are and how the program accomplishes or meets those MGOs, including the educational outcomes achieved or expected. In addition, the reviewer should also be able to determine how the program’s MGOs are integrated into the MGOs of the academic institution as a whole. This important role of the MGOs in program assessment is the reason why the COA places such importance on systematic and ongoing planning processes.

One way for both the program and the program reviewer to evaluate a program’s planning activities is to address four questions:

1. What types of planning is the program doing? (Broad-based, curricular, programmatic)
2. How is planning accomplished? (Retreats, meetings, informal, surveys, systematic data collection and analysis)
3. How often is planning conducted?
4. Who is involved in the planning processes? (Internal and external constituencies)

Finally, the reviewer must examine how the program assesses the MGOs. Among the questions to be addressed are the following:

1. How does the program know it is doing the job?
2. What outcomes does the program expect?
3. What techniques does the program use and what data does it collect to support program assessment?

Program reviewers have a solid foundation on which to base their assessments: the ALA Standards. This foundation should be bolstered by clearly stated MGOs in the program presentation. By viewing the program through the lens of the Standards and the perspective of the MGOs, program reviewers have the critical tools to evaluate subsequent sections of the program presentation and the program in its entirety.