COA announces accreditation actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association (ALA) has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2009 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver. Continued accreditation status was granted to the following programs:

- University of Hawaii
- Pratt Institute
- Syracuse University

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

The candidacy status of the Master of Library and Information Science program at the College of St. Catherine was maintained. A comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2012. (Update: At its meeting on April 17-18, 2009, the COA reviewed additional evidence and rescheduled the review visit to 2010.)
The following institutions have programs that will be visited 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

The following institutions have programs that will be visited in the fall 2009 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston.

- University of Alabama
- McGill University
- North Carolina Central University
- University of South Carolina
- Wayne State University

ALA accreditation indicates that the program meets or exceeds the Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies, established by COA and adopted by ALA Council. The accreditation process involves rigorous, ongoing self-evaluation by the program and verification of evidence through an external review. 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.
Policy Change Consideration: Reduce Size of External Review Panel
The number of panelists assigned to external reviews was discussed in the meeting with deans, directors, and chairs in Denver at the 2009 ALISE Annual Conference. A poll taken at that meeting showed a majority in favor of moving from six to three panelists. COA discussed this at the ALA 2009 Midwinter Meeting and at its 2009 Spring Meeting, but did not take action. The Committee agreed to take up the matter again in its Fall Meeting, November 20-22, 2009. In the meantime, I will continue to work with programs to make the most appropriate visit arrangements.

Statistical Reporting: Summary of Changes in ALA-Accredited Programs
The summary report of changes in ALA-accredited programs from fall 2007 to fall 2008 is now available online at http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/Statistical%20reports/summarychanges.cfm. It reflects the relative calm before the late fall 2008 market trouble, showing the vast majority of programs, 42, experiencing an increase in total income.

This marks the 16th year of collaboration between the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) on collection of statistical data from programs. ALISE has contracted with the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies to develop and implement over the next three years a “database-driven environment for gathering, editing, and organizing the data and allowing for the generation of both standard and customized reports.” Danny Wallace, EBSCO Chair in Library Services at the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies and member of the ALA Committee on Accreditation 2003-2007, is the lead on the project.

Precandidate and Candidate Programs
There are four programs seeking initial ALA accreditation: the Master of Library and Information Science program at the College of St. Catherine is in candidacy status; the Library Information and Media Studies (LIMS) program at Chicago State University, the Master of Library Science program at East Carolina University, and the Master of Information Studies program at the University of Ottawa, Canada, are in precandidacy status. Programs in precandidacy status report annually on progress to reach candidacy status and are expected to be ready to enter the comprehensive review process within three years; although a one-time three-year extension may be granted (Accreditation Process Policies and Procedures, 2nd ed, I.7.3 (d)). COA responds to annual progress reports at its spring meetings.

Comment on the Standards
Collection of comment on the Standards is ongoing through the review process and from correspondence with a variety of stakeholders. COA is preparing a report to the ALA Executive

Connecting
I look forward to exchanging ideas at the upcoming ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. In the meantime, give me a call at 312-280-2434 or drop me a line at kobrien@ala.org.

Don’t miss the COA program, “ALA Accreditation: Employers Speak,” on Sunday, July 12, 4:00 – 5:30pm to hear from panelists:

- Stephen Abram, Vice President of Innovation, SirsiDynix, and past Vice President, Canadian Library Association
- Donna Dziedzic, Executive Director, Naperville Public Libraries (IL)
- Ann Martin, Educational Specialist, Henrico County Public Schools, Richmond, VA President, AASL- American Association of School Libraries
- Jennifer Younger, Director of Libraries, University of Notre Dame

The Office is offering a general reviewer training at Annual Conference on Friday, July 10 from 9:00am to noon, followed by an appeals process session from 2:00 to 3:00pm. Please get in touch with Laura Dare, 312-280-2435 or ldare@ala.org, if you are interested in attending either session.

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

Thanks
As a member of the Committee on Accreditation, I suspect I have read hundreds of reports including special reports, statistical and narrative reports, External Review Panel reports, and, of course, Program Presentations of programs undergoing comprehensive reviews. It never ceases to amaze me how much work goes into them and how much they reveal about the dedication of these programs to the field of library and information studies.

Serving on the COA is both gratifying and stress-producing. Although there is camaraderie and informality before and after COA meetings, when the doors of the committee room close and deliberations begin, the implications of serving on the COA quickly become apparent. Each member knows that his or her deliberations affect the lives of faculty, staff, students, programs, the profession as a whole, and the communities served by them.

As I complete my term as Chair and member of the COA, I would like to express my gratitude. I am grateful for so many programs that are striving to provide the best education they can in a
rapidly changing educational and informational environment. These programs must meet not only the ALA standards for accreditation, but the expectations of their own academic institutions, those of their geographic region, and of the profession as a whole. I am similarly grateful to all those practitioners and faculty who care enough about the accreditation process to participate in it and for their attempts to maintain and improve it. I am most grateful to the COA committee members and staff who spend countless hours fulfilling a mission that is often thankless. Of course, in the final analysis, the true beneficiaries of all this hard work are the citizens that our profession serves. We can all be grateful for that.

News and Announcements

External Review Panel training at 2009 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago
Current and potential External Review Panel (ERP) pool members are invited to attend a basic training on the role and responsibility of the ERP in the ALA accreditation process. Attending training is a prerequisite to participating in a comprehensive review.

Attendees will learn about the review process, the relationship of the ERP to the Committee on Accreditation (COA), and the Standards for Accreditation. Standard IV: Students will be the special focus at this session.

Friday, July 10, 2009, 9:00am – 12:00pm, location to be determined. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org, and include “ERP Training” in the subject line.

New External Review Panelists sought
The Office for Accreditation seeks experienced library and information professionals to participate in the accreditation process as External Review Panelists. We are particularly in need of librarians and educators with specializations and experience in the following areas:

- Public librarianship
- School library media
- Archives and records management
- Information science
- Information technology
- LIS graduate program administration
- Service to diverse populations
- French language skills
- Spanish language skills

If you are interested and meet the minimum qualifications, please complete the External Review Panel Member Information Form (available at http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERP_information_form_temp.cfm) and plan to attend the training session at ALA Annual
Conference. See the above blurb for date and time. For more information, contact Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

**ALA Accreditation Appeal Process Training at 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago**
Experienced External Review Panelists (two or more on-site visits) are invited to attend training on the accreditation appeal process and policy. People who complete this training will be eligible to serve on an Appeal Review Committee.

Friday, July 10, 2:00pm-3:00pm, location to be determined. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org, and include “ERP Appeal Process Training” in the subject line.

**Committee on Accreditation program at the 2009 ALA Annual Conference:**
**ALA Accreditation - Employers Speak**
Date: Sunday, July 12, 2009
Time: 4:00pm – 5:30pm
Location: To be determined

Participate in an open forum with a panel made up of representatives from public, academic, school, and special libraries. The discussion will focus on how library and information studies accreditation affects the personnel choices and hiring policies of employers in the field. Moderated by the Committee on Accreditation

Confirmed panelists included:
- Jennifer Younger, Director of Libraries, University of Notre Dame
- Ann Martin, Educational Specialist, Henrico County Public Schools, Richmond, VA; President, American Association of School Libraries (AASL)
- Donna Dziedzic, Executive Director, Naperville Public Libraries (IL)
- Stephen Abram, Vice President of Innovation, SirsiDynix, and past Vice President, Canadian Library Association

**NCATE/AASL Program Reviewer training at 2009 ALA Annual Conference**
Training for program reviewers at the ALA 2009 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago is scheduled for Friday, July 10, 2009, 1:00pm – 4:30pm, location to be announced.

New and experienced reviewers are invited to this session featuring Margie Crutchfield, Associate Vice President for Program Reviews at NCATE. Reviewers will learn about the NCATE process, Standards review, and appropriate assessments. Attendees will study a sample report and participate in a review exercise. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

**New resources for ERP Chairs**
The Resources for External Review Panelists page of the Office for Accreditation website has some new tools available for ERP Chairs. These documents were developed by the Office and June Lester, experienced ERP Chair, to aid in planning and preparing for the site visit. Several of the documents are designed to facilitate communication with the program.
Documents include:

- Assignment timeline for the ERP report
- Evidence-gathering worksheet
- Exit briefing guide
- Site visit logistics-planning worksheet
- Site visit schedule template
- Standards assignment chart

The Resources for External Review Panelists page can be directly accessed from the Office for Accreditation home page, www.ala.org/accreditation.

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**External Review Panelists Acknowledged**

External review panelists contribute substantial 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 fall 2008 academic term.

**Chairs**
- James A. Benson, St. John’s University (NY)
- Fiona Black, Dalhousie University (NS)
- H. Frank Cervone, Chicago State University
- Mary Elizabeth Wendt, New York Public Library (Retired)

**Panelists**
- Hermina G.B. Anghelescu, Wayne State University
- Rachel Applegate, Indiana University
- Daniel Callison, Indiana University
- John R. Cronin, Winthrop Public Library (MA)
- C. Olivia Frost, University of Michigan
- Steven W. Hagstrom, Tarrant County Junior College (TX)
- Lisa Hinchliffe, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Judith Lin Hunt, Montclair State University (NJ)
- Gertrude S. Koh, Dominican University (IL)
- John E. Leide, McGill University (QC)
- Linda L. Lillard, Clarion University (PA)
- James M. Matarazzo, Simmons College (MA)
- Vivienne Monty, York University (ON)
- Zary Mostashari, Marymount University (VA)
- C. Allen Nichols, Wadsworth Public Library (OH)
- Jennifer Paustenbaugh, Oklahoma State University
AASL/NCATE Recognition News

Program reviewer training
Training for program reviewers at the ALA 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago is scheduled for Friday, July 10, 2009, 1:00pm – 4:30pm, location to be announced. New and experienced reviewers are invited to this session featuring Margie Crutchfield, Associate Vice President for Program Reviews at NCATE. Reviewers will learn about the NCATE process, Standards review, and appropriate assessments. Attendees will study a sample report and participate in a review exercise. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.

Fall 2008 AASL recognition decisions
The following programs, which are part of NCATE-accredited education units, were nationally recognized as meeting the ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation.

- 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
Best of *Prism*: from *Prism*, Spring 2005

Consider Serving as a Public Member  
by Lorna Peterson, University at Buffalo

Best practices in accreditation require the appointment of public members to serve on accreditation boards. These board members represent the concerns and interests of the community who use the services a profession provides. They advocate for the interests of those who seek the services of a profession (the patron of a library, the patient of a clinic, the client of a lawyer, etc.) and are the outsiders on the board completely unfamiliar with the profession’s alphabet soup of acronyms. They are unbiased regarding programs. And they are unfamiliar with the politics of the association and the profession.

Although the requirements may vary from board to board, generally, a public member cannot be an employee, a member of the governing board, or consultant to an institution or program that either is accredited by the board or has applied for accreditation. A public member cannot be a member of any association or organization related to or associated with the accrediting board, or a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of any of the individuals described above.

As a member of ALA’s Committee on Accreditation from 1997-2001, I appreciated the time and attention our public members gave to our review of LIS programs and deliberations. I served with a commodities broker, history professor, English instructor, and an arts administrator—their outside viewpoint kept us honest.

How could I thank our public members for reading the program presentations, the biennial narratives, the special reports, and the statistical reports of our 62 programs? How could I thank them for attending four meetings a year when it didn’t matter what city we were in because you saw none of it anyway?

I decided the best way to show gratitude was to become a public member and asked then OA Director Ann O’Neill to submit my name to the Chicago-area accreditors. The National Accrediting Agency for the Clinical Laboratory Sciences accepted my application, their board approved my appointment, and from 2001 to 2005, I have served on their board as one of two public members. I faced an array of acronyms, a profession with an identity crisis, and a board of hard-working, conscientious, intelligent, good humored individuals. I felt right at home.

This service was professionally and personally rewarding. The quality of education for those who draw our blood, test our tissues and fluids, read and analyze our test results and more was the task at hand. And to be involved in accreditation from this vantage point is truly an honor. I hope that you will consider participating in accreditation as a public member.