

# PRISM

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Laura Dare, editor

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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 2009 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Continued accreditation status was granted to the following programs:

- University of Iowa
- University of South Florida
- University of Tennessee

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2016.

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

- The Catholic University of America

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2016.

Continued conditional accreditation was granted to the following program:

- University at Buffalo, SUNY

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2012.

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

The following institutions have programs that will be visited in the spring 2010 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2010 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

- University of Michigan
- University of Rhode Island
- Southern Connecticut State University
- Texas Woman's University
- University of Toronto

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](http://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](http://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**

The outlook for a more productive year ahead brightened as the Committee on Accreditation (COA) presented its response to the Final Report of the Presidential Task Force on Library Education to the ALA Executive Board at the 2009 Annual Conference in Chicago. Only one question was posed by a member of the Board at that meeting: What happens next with the Core Competences of Librarianship, adopted by the ALA Council in January 2009? COA responded that it is taking under consideration the Task Force recommendation to incorporate the competences into the standards document. As the response document states, "The COA believes that the question as to whether these particular Core Competences and Core Values should have a special place in the *Standards* is one that should be addressed by the broader community of stakeholders through our opinion solicitation process."

Regarding the solicitation process, the *Standards Review* blog (<http://www.oa.ala.org/accreditation/>) remains an important hub for comment and reflection for all stakeholders in LIS accreditation and a way for the Office for Accreditation and COA to be better informed about the implications of proposed changes to the *Standards*. The Committee will discuss additional comment collection approaches, such as web surveying, at its fall meeting in Chicago on November 20-22, 2009.

### **COA welcomes five new members**

The 2009-2010 Committee on Accreditation (COA) welcomes five new members:

- Brian Andrew, Attorney, representing the public interest\*
- James Benson, Vice Provost, Dean of Information Resources and Libraries, St. John's University
- Ken Haycock, Director, School of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University
- Dan O'Connor, Associate Professor, Library and Information Science, School of Communication and Information, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- Joyce C. Wright, Associate Professor of Library Administration, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Wright replaces departing COA member Richard AmRhein, and will serve the remainder of his term.

\* The COA has two public-at-large members, each appointed for a two-year term. Public-at-large members cannot be librarians or information professionals. They have all the rights and privileges of any other member of COA, including full voting rights, and provide direct public involvement and oversight of ALA accreditation.

Fall COA meetings are a time for focusing on planning. As we move into the last year of the current strategic plan, we will be reflecting on accomplishments and goals as well as snags to determine what the next plan needs to include. The COA chair has been invited to participate in the ALA 2015 planning process.

Orientation for new COA members is conducted the day before COA convenes for its fall meeting. Orientation has proven critical to understanding the ethical and operational context in which the Committee operates as an accreditor. The *Code of Good Practice* ([http://www.aspa-usa.org/principles\\_aspa.asp](http://www.aspa-usa.org/principles_aspa.asp)), promulgated by the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), as well as the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) *Recognition Policies and Procedures* ([http://www.chea.org/recognition/CHEA\\_Recognition\\_Policy\\_and\\_Procedures.pdf](http://www.chea.org/recognition/CHEA_Recognition_Policy_and_Procedures.pdf)) guide the Office and COA. Good accreditation practice protects the privacy of individuals, programs of study, and institutions. These practices assure that information will flow freely between programs and the Committee via its secretariat, the Office for Accreditation.

#### **Comprehensive review for continued CHEA recognition of ALA COA**

COA kicks off next fall with an eligibility review, and then a visit in 2011 if eligibility is affirmed, followed by a CHEA Board of Directors decision in January 2012 on whether to continue recognition. The CHEA Board will expect the Chair of the COA as well as the Director of the Office for Accreditation to meet with them at that January 2012 meeting to close the comprehensive review.

#### **Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) fall meeting**

Newly appointed Chair of COA for the 2009-2010 term, Vicki Gregory, Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida, attended the 2009 fall ASPA conference in St. Louis with me this fall. Library and information studies was well represented with a session on Web 2.0 Technology: Collaboration Across Time Zones moderated by ASPA Board of Directors member Tom Leonhardt and presented by librarians from Washington University in St. Louis. Jean Preer, Professor, School of Library and Information Science – Indianapolis participated on a panel at the conference regarding how external review panelists prepare for visits.

#### **Process, policies, and procedures adjustments**

Each fall the Office presents to COA proposed adjustments to process, policies, and procedures developed from written and verbal evaluations, mainly from programs in the review cycle. Any adjustments approved by COA at the fall meeting will be posted on the Office for Accreditation reports and publications page at <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/prp/prismreports.cfm> and communicated to heads of programs directly by email.

#### **Four programs seeking initial accreditation**

Four programs continue 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, the Master of Information Studies at the University of Ottawa, and the Master of Library and Information Science at St. Catherine University. The external review panel visit to St. Catherine University is scheduled for fall of 2010, with the COA accreditation decision to be made at the 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting. The other programs listed are reporting on their progress toward candidacy status and if accepted into that status will have a visit date scheduled by COA.

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From the COA Chair: **PERSPECTIVE**

**By Vicki L. Gregory, Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation, and Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida**

It is with more than a little trepidation, and a great deal of respect, that I take over the Chair of the Committee on Accreditation from Rick Rubin, whose spectacular job in that capacity for the last two years will be all but impossible to emulate. It is a big commitment of time, and all of the Committee members who have served under his leadership during his tenure are grateful for his assiduousness and all of that just plain hard work.

Looking ahead, I am sure that many of you are concerned with the report of the ALA Presidential Task Force on Library Education, so it might be helpful to review the process that COA uses for the revision of the *Standards for Accreditation*. The *Standards* are revised on a 5-year planning cycle. The process involves not only the COA but also the many constituents that are concerned with the LIS accreditation process. We are in the second year of the current planning cycle and are already in the process of soliciting comments on the need for changes or revisions to the *Standards*.

The comments posted on the Standards Review blog, <http://www.oa.ala.org/accreditation/>, created for the airing of responses to the Presidential Task Force's report and collecting comments on the *Standards*, are simply one source of information. All communications with COA, of whatever type, are a part of this process, just as are the items of concern that arise each year out of accreditation reviews, site visits, and ongoing reporting. As the Committee develops and refines tentative suggestions for the next set of *Standards*, open meetings will be held at ALA conferences and other venues so that as many constituents as possible will have a chance to respond, to network, to pose questions, and to make suggestions.

Although much of the work of COA must naturally be confidential, the revision of the *Standards* is a very open process. We hope over the next several years to involve in some manner all constituents and take all suggestions into serious consideration. With that goal in mind, I am looking forward to attending the fall meeting in St. Louis of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors with Karen O'Brien so as to obtain a better feel for the professional accreditation processes outside the LIS environment and, most importantly, working with all of you in my new capacity of Chair of COA. While the old curse about living in exciting times has

more than a little relevance regarding today's current difficult economic situation, the challenges presented will surely help to motivate COA to ensure the brighter days I see ahead for library and information science education.

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## **Spotlight on Process and Policy: Sample Documents**

**By Laura Dare, Assistant Director, ALA Office for Accreditation**

This issue features a new column focusing on an aspect of accreditation process and policy. Realizing that many *Prism* readers are not able to regularly attend trainings or meetings at conferences, we hope that this column will be a useful source of information for programs and External Review Panelists (ERPs). Please send questions or ideas for future columns to me at [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org).

The Office for Accreditation (OA) is often asked for sample review-related documents. Programs want to see other Program Presentations and ERPs want to see ERP Reports from other reviews.

Following the COA meeting where the accreditation decision is made, we contact the recently reviewed programs for permission to share their Program Presentations. We display sample copies in the ALA office at the convention center at ALA Annual Conferences and Midwinter Meetings and at the ALISE annual conference, and have made available sample Program Presentations at <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforprogramadministrators/onlinepp.cfm>. Programs are also welcome to visit us at ALA headquarters in Chicago to peruse a wide selection of Program Presentations.

While these documents may be helpful as a source of ideas for formatting, etc., programs are advised to focus on Section II, Guidelines for the Program Presentation in *Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures (AP3)*, available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/index.cfm>.

ERPs sometimes ask for sample reports to guide them. There are ERP reports (along with the corresponding Program Presentation) from several reviews that are publicly available on the Sample Program Presentations page at <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforprogramadministrators/onlinepp.cfm>. ERP reports are included with the Program Presentations for San Jose State University, University of Hawaii, and University of Illinois. As with the Program Presentations, each ERP report is unique to the program being reviewed, and the inclusion of a link to the report does not imply any endorsement or preference for the content or formatting.

Section III.7 of *AP3* has information about the content and formatting of the ERP Report, and the office website has an annotated report example, available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/erpportexample.cfm>.

#### *The Standards for Accreditation*

([http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/standards\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/standards_2008.pdf)) and *AP3*, along with the OA staff, are the best and most authoritative resources for preparing accreditation documents and conducting reviews. The OA website (<http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/index.cfm>) has a wealth of information for programs and reviewers. Please do not hesitate to contact us regarding any accreditation-related issues.

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## News and Announcements

### **Electronic communications from the Office for Accreditation**

The Office for Accreditation is moving toward sending much of the review-related correspondence electronically instead of mailing paper copies. This will result in faster communication, save mailing costs, and allow for easier tracking by all. We are still refining the process, identifying those items that can be emailed and those for which hard copies are more appropriate. We hope that programs and panelists find it useful. We welcome your feedback.

### **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:

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

Find out more about what's involved in serving on an External Review Panel at [http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERP\\_service\\_info.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERP_service_info.cfm). 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>

form.cfm) and plan to attend the training session in June at the 2010 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

If you know someone who might be interested in serving as an External Review Panelist, please encourage them to apply or send his/her name and email address to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org).

### **Survey of External Review Panelists**

What do you think is the ideal panel size? Could an external review panel function as effectively with fewer members? The Committee on Accreditation is reviewing the policy of having six onsite ERPs for each comprehensive review. We have heard from many of the programs on this issue, and will soon survey those in the ERP pool. Watch your email for an announcement regarding this brief survey.

### **External Review Panel Chair training at 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston**

Date: Friday, January 15, 2010

Time: 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Location: To be determined

External Review Panelists who have participated in two or more on-site visits are invited to attend training for ERP Chairs. The session will prepare attendees to lead an external review of MLIS programs seeking accreditation. The session will include a panel discussion, featuring experienced ERP Chairs and Office for Accreditation staff, and small-group planning work.

Please RSVP to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org), and include “ERP Chair Training” in the subject line.

### **Committee on Accreditation program at the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting: The Role of Commentary in the Standards Review Process**

Date: Sunday, January 17, 2010

Time: 4:00pm – 5:00pm

Location: To be determined

Join COA members as they lead a discussion of the issues found in the responses to the Final Report of the Presidential Task Force on Library Education and in the commentary on the *Standards*. Learn about the *Standards* review timeline and how commentary is applied to the development and formulation of the ALA *Standards for Accreditation*.

### **Standards Review blog**

As part of its charge to develop and formulate standards of education for library and information studies, the COA reviews the *Standards for Accreditation* on an ongoing basis. Part of this five-year review process entails gathering comments from stakeholders. The COA continues to solicit comment via the Standards Review blog,

<http://www.oa.ala.org/accreditation/>. We encourage you to read previously posted comments and contribute your own.

**NCATE/AASL program review training at the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting**

Date: Friday, January 15, 2010

Time: 9:00am – 11:00am

Location: To be determined

New and experienced program reviewers and report compilers are invited to this session to learn about the NCATE program review process, the *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation*, report preparation, and appropriate assessments. Two report writers from recently recognized programs will present their approaches to compiling the report. An experienced reviewer will present her approach to using the Standards to analyze the report and assessments.

New reviewers can find out more about the AASL/NCATE program review process at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrarymed/informationprogram.cfm>.

Please RSVP to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org), and include “NCATE Program Review Training” in the subject line.

**NCATE/AASL: Update on the proposed revised ALA/AASL Standards for School Library Media Specialist Preparation at the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting**

Date: Friday, January 15, 2010

Time: 11:00am – 12:00pm

Location: To be determined (to be in same location as NCATE/AASL Program Reviewer training)

Plan to attend this open session to learn about the proposed revised *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation*. Participants will hear about feedback received from NCATE’s Specialty Area Studies Board on the draft revised standards, and will have the opportunity to comment.



## 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 spring 2009 academic term.

### Chairs

- George Abbott, Syracuse University (Retired)
- Alvan Bregman, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Jean Donham, University of Northern Iowa
- Joanne Gard Marshall, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Terry L. Weech, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### Panelists

- Rick J. Block, Columbia University Libraries
- William Buchanan, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
- Ana Maria Cobos, Saddleback College Library
- Gail Dickinson, Old Dominion University
- Carol Doll, Old Dominion University
- Judith Field, Wayne State University
- Rick B. Forsman, University of Colorado Denver
- Gabriel Gomez, Chicago State University
- Adan Griego, Stanford University Libraries
- Frances Groen, McGill University
- Dorothy E. Haynes, University of Southern Mississippi
- Joan Howland, University of Minnesota Law School
- Marilyn Irwin, Indiana University
- Margaret Maes, Legal Information Preservation Alliance
- Dale McNeill, Queens Library
- Anne C. Moore, University of South Dakota
- Ann L. O'Neill, Emporia State University
- Toby Pearlstein, Bain & Company (Retired)
- Edna Reid, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
- Josephine Sche, Southern Connecticut State University
- Stuart A. Sutton, University of Washington
- Herman Totten, University of North Texas
- Carol Truett, Appalachian State University
- Tyler O. Walters, Georgia Institute of Technology
- Susan Weaver, Kent State University



## AASL/NCATE Recognition News

### Spring 2009 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*.

- Fairfield University (CT), School Library Media program
- Mansfield University (PA), School Library and Information Technologies program
- McDaniel College (MD), School Library Media program
- New Jersey City University, School Library Media Specialist with Master's Degree in Educational Technology
- Rowan University (NJ), Master of Arts in School and Public Librarianship
- University of Memphis (TN), School Library Information Specialist
- Trevecca Nazarene University (TN), Master of Library and Information Science
- University of Central Oklahoma, Instructional Media Education
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro, School Library Media
- Western Kentucky University, Master of Science in Library Media Education

Thanks to the following program reviewers who served during the spring 2009 semester:

- Susan M. Allen
- Mary Anne Berry
- Judy T. Bivens
- Audrey P. Church
- Gayles Evans
- Lesley Farmer
- Carrie Gardner
- Dorothy Elizabeth Haynes
- Diane Kester
- Johan Koren
- Linda L. Lillard
- Eloise M. Long
- Elizabeth Marcoux
- Andrea L. Miller
- Babara Jo Ray
- Donna Steffan
- Linda J. Underwood
- Jan M. Yates