Prism: the Office for Accreditation newsletter
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Laura Dare, editor

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ALA accreditation at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALA-accredited MLIS programs</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions with ALA-accredited MLIS programs</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. states (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico) with ALA-accredited programs</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian provinces with ALA-accredited programs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALA-accredited programs offering 100% online programs</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program with candidacy status</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs with pre-candidacy status</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enrolled in ALA-accredited MLIS programs in fall 2010</td>
<td>19,978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates of ALA-accredited MLIS programs during the 2009-2010 academic year</td>
<td>7,672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† As identified by the programs
* As reported by programs to the Office for Accreditation
COA announces accreditation actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association (ALA) has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego, CA.

Initial accreditation status was granted to the following program:

- Master of Library and Information Science offered by St. Catherine University.

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2017.

Continued accreditation status was granted to the following programs:

- Master of Science in Information Science offered by the University at Albany, State University of New York;
- Master of Science in Library Science offered by Clarion University of Pennsylvania;
- Master of Science in Library and Information Science offered by Drexel University;
- Master of Science in Library and Information Science offered by Simmons College;
- Master of Library and Information Science offered by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee.

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2017.

The following institutions have programs that were visited in the spring 2011 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

- University of Denver
- University of Kentucky
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- University of Western Ontario

The following institutions have programs that will be visited in the fall 2011 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2012 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Dallas, TX.

- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Kent State University (OH)
- Queens College, City University of New York
- Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- St. John's University (NY)

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.

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From the Director: **OUTLOOK**

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

**Analysis of changes in LIS programs**

The summary report of changes in ALA-accredited programs from fall 2009 to fall 2010, http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/accreditation/Statistical%20reports/ss2009v2010.pdf, shows a decline in student enrollment (headcount) of 21. While overall full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment showed gains, minority enrollment declined by 56. A big swing in student headcount was reported by nearly 20% of programs which saw a loss of 29 or more students between 2009 and 2010.

A total of 14 faculty were added, compared to 25 in the previous year. Total program income increased by $12,093,624 compared to the $22,708,907 gain the previous year.

**Annual fee for accredited programs to increase in 2012**

A 7% annual fee increase will go into effect with the September 2012 billing. The new rate will be $922.88. This is the first increase since 2006, although the cost of doing business has risen about 3% per year. Accreditation fees cover less than 30% of the total Office for Accreditation budget.

**Programs in precandidacy status**

East Carolina University and the University of Ottawa are preparing applications for candidacy status. Representatives from both programs are scheduled to meet with the Committee on Accreditation during the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) review underway
CHEA review of ALA Office for Accreditation-Committee on Accreditation (OA-COA) processes, policies, procedures, and standards continues under the CHEA 2006 guidelines. The review includes a visit from a CHEA-appointed representative to observe and report on COA decision making. That visit will occur during the COA meeting in New Orleans this June.

The CHEA observer may be in attendance at the COA meetings to close comprehensive reviews with the universities of Denver, Kentucky, North Carolina-Greensboro, and Western Ontario, and at meetings to discuss applications for candidacy status with the universities of East Carolina and Ottawa.

The final OA-COA application for continued CHEA recognition is scheduled to be submitted August 1, 2011. The CHEA Committee on Recognition will determine whether or not to recommend recognition to the CHEA Board of Directors at its meeting in November 2011, and the CHEA Board will make the recognition decision at its meeting in January 2012.

Web survey on Standards
COA will release the second survey in its standards-review series in May. Standard II: Curriculum is the focus. LIS program personnel and external review panelists who have applied the 2008 Standards will be polled. Once the survey series is complete, a draft of the next version of the Standards will be released to the broad spectrum of stakeholders. The timeline for the Standards review is available from the Standards review comment collection website at http://www.oa.ala.org/accreditation/. If you are not contacted directly by email to participate in a web survey, you are welcome to post your comments on the Standards there.

Ways we can connect in person
I’ll be at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans from Thursday evening, June 23, until Monday noon, June 27. To arrange a meeting in advance, contact me at kobrien@ala.org or 312-280-2434. In New Orleans, contact me at the Embassy Suites New Orleans - Convention Center, 504-525-1993. I’ll be at the External Review Panel Training on Friday, June 24, from 1:00 to 4:30, and at the COA program on Student Learning Outcomes on Monday, June 27, from 10:30am until noon.
By Vicki L. Gregory, Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation, and Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida

Programmatic student learning outcomes

The concept of student learning outcomes (SLOs) has been around since the 1980s, but it was not until the mid-1990s that SLOs began to be tied to accountability. The higher education literature now sees the assessment of student learning, student development, and program outcomes as essential to the health and vitality of academic programs. The purpose of implementing student outcomes assessment is to advance student learning through improved curricula and instruction. Accreditation agencies such as ALA have assessment standards that require the connection of student performance to a program’s stated mission, goals, and objectives. In addition to their use in program accountability, programmatic SLOs also allow students to understand what to expect of the program and of themselves. SLOs are therefore just as useful for the student participant as they are for programmatic review, evaluation, and improvement. The ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA) expects to see the use of programmatic SLOs by each ALA-accredited program.

The key elements of an outcomes-based assessment plan include:

1. Developing outcomes for the program;
2. Choosing a method for collecting data to measure these outcomes;
3. Analyzing the data collected;
4. Making decisions about programmatic changes based on the outcomes data;
5. Closing the assessment loop by connecting the changes made to long-term objectives;
6. Integrating the assessment work into broader program review and planning.

Outcomes assessment should be faculty-driven (and supported) and should reflect current standards in the field. Faculty should review and approve the vision, mission, and program objectives on a regular basis to be sure that they remain central to the programmatic SLOs. Likewise, faculty must agree upon SLOs that reflect the program objectives, mission, and vision. Getting faculty to agree on the outcomes may be the most difficult step, but it is a critical one. Faculty should also establish and support a policy for systematic assessment of the SLOs. The faculty must implement the assessment process in a fair, consistent, and thoughtful manner.

In the past, student evaluations of individual courses were regarded as a form of summative evaluation – the final and likely only input from students, and only at the individual course level. The emphasis on SLOs at the programmatic level turns individual course evaluations into formative evaluations. They are only pieces of a much larger picture. The programmatic assessment of SLOs becomes the summative evaluation. The crucial matter is how effective the program is in reaching the goals of the SLOs. Individual courses contribute to the programmatic
goals, but programmatic goals may not necessarily be achieved despite the excellence of many individual courses.

In turn, the emphasis on programmatic effectiveness downplays or eases the pressure on individual instructors with regard to the course-level evaluations. Accountability to the institution and the profession for the effectiveness of the program and to the graduates in their preparation for a professional field are the concerns of the programmatic SLOs goals. Evaluation of individual instruction on a course level is an “internal” concern. That is, the school or department should be responsible for the quality of individual courses and instruction. The school reports and is accountable for the overarching goals of program effectiveness in meeting SLOs goals. Boards of education and institutional administrations that “micro-manage” it down to the individual course level have misplaced the accountability.

Helpful sources from the higher education literature:

The ALA Committee on Accreditation is presenting a program at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans on the subject of programmatic SLOs. See a detailed description of this program in the News and Announcements section of this newsletter on p. 9. Dr. James Carey, Professor Emeritus at the University of South Florida, will be the main presenter. COA members Dr. David Werner and Dr. Ling Hwey Jeng will provide information about what is required of ALA-accredited programs with regard to SLOs. Be sure to attend this program on Monday, June 27 at 10:30am, at the Embassy Suites New Orleans - Convention Center, Jean Lafitte 1. I hope to see you all there!

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**Spotlight on process and policy**

By Laura Dare, Assistant Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

**The Committee on Accreditation: What goes on behind those closed doors?**

In each issue we focus on an aspect of process or policy of ALA accreditation. This issue’s column provides an overview of the work that the Committee on Accreditation does to fulfill its charge. If you have an idea for a future column, please send it to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.
The Committee on Accreditation (COA) meets for two to two-and-a-half days each quarter. Summer and winter meetings are held at ALA national conferences. The COA travels to ALA headquarters in Chicago for the spring and fall meetings. Accreditation decisions are usually made during the summer and winter meetings. Because of the confidential nature of accreditation (to ensure candid reporting), COA meetings are closed. Requests to meet with the COA are accepted if received 30 days in advance of a scheduled meeting. One month before every meeting, the Office for Accreditation sends each COA member a package with meeting materials.

So, what actually happens during a typical COA meeting? After the Chair calls the meeting to order, the minutes for the prior meeting are approved, and the Director of the Office for Accreditation provides an update on the budget and other administrative matters. Members declare any conflicts of interest with the programs being discussed at the meeting. If a member has a conflict, s/he leaves the room during any discussion, meeting, or vote concerning that program.

Accreditation decisions are what most people associate with the COA. These decisions follow a standardized process. First, COA members discuss areas in the Program Presentation and External Review Panel report in need of clarification or more information. Next, the COA meets with the program CEO and the Chair of the External Review Panel to close the review process. During this meeting, the program has the opportunity to apprise the COA of developments since the site visit and to clarify areas noted in the Program Presentation or External Review Panel report. The COA asks questions based on their preparatory discussion.

Throughout the process, the focus is on the program’s compliance with the Standards for Accreditation. Only after carefully considered, standard-by-standard deliberation does the committee take a vote. Accreditation decisions require a two-thirds affirmative vote to pass. Part of the process is the writing of a Decision Document, in letter form to the program. In addition to the accreditation decision and date of the next comprehensive review, the letter may note areas of concern to be addressed relative to the Standards and provides a schedule for future reports. The minimum start-to-finish time for one accreditation decision is about 2.5 hours. More complicated decisions take much longer.

The COA fall and spring meetings focus on strategic planning, review and revision of the Standards and the Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures (AP3) manual, and development of COA programs held at ALA conferences. At the spring meeting, the COA reviews and responds to reports from every accredited program as well as programs with pre-candidacy or candidacy status. Each program must submit a detailed annual statistical report. Accredited programs submit narrative reports every other year that describe how they are continuing to meet the Standards and provide updates on changes. Programs with conditional, candidacy, or pre-candidacy status are required to submit progress reports annually.
At any meeting, COA may need to review and respond to special reports, meet with program representatives (by request of either COA or the program), and consider applications from programs for precandidacy or candidacy. Other COA responsibilities include approval of External Review Panelists and Chairs for specific reviews and oversight of reviewer training.

COA meetings are long and intense, and members report that they spend 20 or more hours in preparation for each meeting. But the COA’s work to develop standards and execute the accreditation process means that students, employers, ALA members, and the public can be assured that ALA-accredited programs are continually striving to offer the highest quality education in library and information studies.

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**Standard I: Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

*Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies, 2008*

In light of the focus on Standard I in COA Chair Vicki Gregory’s column on student learning outcomes (SLOs) in this issue of *Prism* and at the upcoming Annual Conference sessions (the COA program on SLOs and the ERP training), we thought it would be helpful to print the complete text of this standard. We encourage you to take a few moments to read Standard I. The complete *Standards* document, including the Introduction and Afterword, can be accessed at [http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/index.cfm).

**Standard I: Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

I.1 A school's mission and program goals are pursued, and its program objectives achieved, through implementation of an ongoing, broad-based, systematic planning process that involves the constituency that a program seeks to serve. Consistent with the values of the parent institution and the culture and mission of the school, program goals and objectives foster quality education.

I.2 Program objectives are stated in terms of student learning outcomes to be achieved and reflect

1.2.1 the essential character of the field of library and information studies; that is, recordable information and knowledge, and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use, encompassing information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management

1.2.2 the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field

1.2.3 appropriate principles of specialization identified in applicable policy statements and documents of relevant professional organizations
I.2.4 the value of teaching and service to the advancement of the field
I.2.5 the importance of research to the advancement of the field's knowledge base
I.2.6 the importance of contributions of library and information studies to other fields of knowledge
I.2.7 the importance of contributions of other fields of knowledge to library and information studies
I.2.8 the role of library and information services in a diverse global society, including the role of serving the needs of underserved groups
I.2.9 the role of library and information services in a rapidly changing technological society
I.2.10 the needs of the constituencies that a program seeks to serve.

I.3 Within the context of these Standards each program is judged on the degree to which it attains its objectives. In accord with the mission of the school, clearly defined, publicly stated, and regularly reviewed program goals and objectives form the essential frame of reference for meaningful external and internal evaluation. The evaluation of program goals and objectives involves those served: students, faculty, employers, alumni, and other constituents.

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News and announcements

**Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Linking Learning, Assessment, and Program Improvement**
COA program at ALA 2011 Annual Conference in New Orleans
Monday, June 27, 10:30am-12noon
Embassy Suites New Orleans - Convention Center, Jean Lafitte 1

The term accountability is heard frequently in contemporary discussions of social issues. Within education much of the current accountability debate is centered on public K-12 education, but the accountability spotlight has focused more sharply in the past decade on higher education as well. Regional accrediting agencies, professional societies, and state boards of regents have shifted part of the assessment of institutions and professional schools away from checklist-style quantitative audits, toward a continuous-improvement accountability process known as outcomes assessment. This process is now widely applied for evaluating whether an academic program is taking seriously its responsibility for what students learn.
The discussion during this session will illustrate how a continuous-improvement model can be implemented in a master’s degree program to meet a mandate for programmatic outcomes assessment.

Participants in this session will learn:

- An operational definition of outcomes assessment,
- The purposes for outcomes assessment in master’s degree program accreditation,
- The elements required for successful outcomes assessments, and
- Strategies for implementing an outcomes assessment process.

Participants will receive a summary handout of the content presented in the session along with a list of selected resources for learning more about outcomes assessment and applying the process to meet program accreditation requirements. Dr. James Carey, Professor Emeritus at the University of South Florida, will be the main presenter. COA members Dr. David Werner and Dr. Ling Hwey Jeng will provide information about what is required of ALA-accredited programs with regard to SLOs.

**Updated Directory of ALA-Accredited Programs**

The 2011 edition of the Directory of ALA-Accredited Programs in pdf format is now available. Updates include the addition of areas of concentration for each program (as identified by the program) and listings updated to reflect accreditation decisions made at recent COA meetings. The Directory in pdf format – as well as the searchable online directory, the Google map of accredited programs, the alphabetical list, and the historical list – can be found at http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/directory/index.cfm.

**External Review Panel training at 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans**

Date: Friday, June 24, 2011
Time: 1:00pm – 4:30pm
Location: Embassy Suites New Orleans - Convention Center, Jean Lafitte 1

New and experienced External Review Panelist (ERP) pool members are invited and encouraged to attend a training session on the role of ERP members in the ALA accreditation process. Participants will learn about the comprehensive review process, hear from experienced panelists, and work in a group to analyze a sample Program Presentation.

This session will focus on Standard 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives of the 2008 ALA Standards for Accreditation. Participation in training is a prerequisite for serving on a review panel.

Program heads who want to learn more about the accreditation process, the site visit and the role of the ERP in the review are welcome to attend as observers. If you’re interested in attending, please RSVP and indicate that you’d like to observe the session.

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:

- 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. 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 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

If you know someone who might be interested in serving as an External Review Panelist, please encourage him/her to apply, or send a recommendation to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org.
AASL/NCATE program review training at 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans

Date: Friday, June 24, 2011
Time: 8:00am-12noon
Location: Embassy Suites New Orleans - Convention Center, Jean Lafitte 4

New and experienced reviewers are encouraged to attend this session facilitated by Audrey Church, Chair of the NCATE Coordinating Committee, and Elizabeth Vilky, Accreditation Associate for Program Review at NCATE. Participants will learn about the NCATE process, the ALA/AASL standards for school librarian preparation, writing and reviewing reports, and appropriate assessments. Attendees will study a sample report and participate in a review exercise. Program report writers are also encouraged to attend.

Special focus will be on the newly approved 2010 Standards and their application in the review process. Reviewers who have not been trained on using the new standards are strongly encouraged to attend.

Please RSVP to Laura Dare, ldare@ala.org, and include “AASL/NCATE training” in the subject line.

Prospective 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.

2010 ALA/AASL Standards approved by NCATE


All programs submitting program reports in Fall 2012 will be required to use the 2010 standards. Programs submitting prior to Fall 2012 may use the 2010 standards or the 2003 ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation, available at http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/ala-aasl_slms2003.pdf.

The 2010 standards consist of five standards, each with four elements. The five standards are Teaching for Learning, Literacy and Reading, Information and Knowledge, Advocacy and Leadership, and Program Management and Administration. Each standard is followed by a rubric for use by reviewers and a research piece with references to support that standard.
The Office for Accreditation wishes to thank present and past members of the NCATE Coordinating Committee for their tremendous effort to create a set of standards to guide education for school librarianship in the 21st-century.

**COA Appointments**
The 2011-12 appointments to COA are Ken Haycock (Chair), Brian Andrew (for a second two-year term as a public-at-large-member), Anthony Bernier, and Mary Stansbury. Bernier and Stansbury are appointed to four-year terms, which will run through Annual Conference 2015. The first meeting for those members will be in fall 2011. Members whose terms are expiring at the conclusion of the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans are Vicki Gregory (Chair) and Joe Janes. The Office for Accreditation thanks them for their dedicated service and commitment to quality LIS education.

**CHEA Comprehensive Review Underway**
The Office for Accreditation-Committee on Accreditation (OA-COA) was granted eligibility on February 7, 2011, to enter the comprehensive review process for reaffirmation of recognition by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), http://www.chea.org/. A CHEA-appointed visitor will observe the COA decision-making process during the ALA Annual Conference on June 25 and 26, 2011, and will submit a written report. OA-COA will submit final documentation on August 1, 2011, to show compliance with CHEA standards, and will appear before the CHEA Committee on Recognition on November 22, 2011, to discuss it. The CHEA Board of Directors will consider the recommendation of the Committee on Recognition and then make a determination on recognition at its meeting in January 2012. CHEA has stated that it will provide public notice through its publications that ALA has requested recognition review.

**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 2010 academic term.

**Chairs**
- Elizabeth Aversa, University of Alabama
- Stephen Bajjaly, Wayne State University
- Joan Giesecke, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Jennifer Paustenbaugh, Oklahoma State University
- Mary Stansbury, University of Denver
- Tyler Walters, Georgia Institute of Technology

**Panelists**
The following programs, which are part of NCATE-accredited education units, received AASL National Recognition or National Recognition with Conditions during the spring 2010 semester. National Recognition is awarded to education programs in school librarianship that have been reviewed and approved by AASL’s program reviewers using the ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation.
• Northeastern State University (OK), Library Media and Information Technology
• Nova Southeastern University (FL), Educational Media
• William Paterson University (NJ), School Library Media Specialist

Fall 2010 reviewers
We extend our appreciation to the following program reviewers and auditors who served during the fall 2010 semester:

• Susan M. Allen
• Mary Anne Berry
• Judy T. Bivens
• Gayle Bogel
• Audrey P. Church
• Patsy Couts
• Gail Dickinson
• Carol A. Doll
• Lesley Farmer
• Mary Ann Fitzgerald
• Dorothy Elizabeth Haynes
• Diane Kester
• Ramona N. Kerby
• Linda L. Lillard
• Elizabeth Marcoux
• Cheryl A. McCarthy
• Rebecca Pasco
• Babara Jo Ray
• Linda J. Underwood
• Savan Wilson