



PRISM

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New accreditation process to be unveiled

The new process that will be used to evaluate and accredit graduate LIS programs will be publicly presented at an open meeting Saturday evening 8-10:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency in Denver. The Advisory Panel received the draft proposal developed by COA at its fall meeting and will meet to discuss it on Saturday morning. COA will receive the Panel's response and make a presentation at the Open Meeting that evening.

The presentation at the open meeting represents a major step forward for COA and caps a year of work by the Committee, the Advisory Panel and staff. When Council approved the *1992 Standards* at Midwinter 1992, COA initiated its plans to review and revise the accreditation process. Spurred by commentary and action by both library educators and practi-

tioners, COA plunged into a major overhaul of the process. A first step was to engage Dr. Thurston (Ted) Manning, former president of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation to serve as a consultant to COA. The next step was appointing an Advisory Panel that met in a retreat setting near Chicago in July. The first draft of an accreditation process was presented at an Open Forum at ALA's Annual Conference in San Francisco in June, and the Advisory Panel responded to this model and developed several of their own. COA further discussed these approaches before arriving at the draft distributed to the LIS educational community for discussion and comment in early December. As soon as the process is finalized, work will begin on the documents and other materials used in accreditation. ▲

COA declares moratorium

An era came to a close in October 1992 when the last three scheduled site visits for review of graduate library programs were completed. Results of those accreditation reviews will be made available after the Midwinter meeting in Denver. No site visits will be conducted during the moratorium period January 1993 through June 1994. Accreditation of programs in library and information studies will begin in July 1994 using the *1992 Standards*.

During the eighteen month moratorium new manuals and procedures will be written and distributed to educators and interested information professionals (see accompanying story). Changes in the process are expected to be substantial, but will remain focused on two major roles of accreditation: quality assurance and educational improvement. Guidelines for schools to use when preparing for accredita-

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Investing in the future

C. James Schmidt

Given the approval in January, 1992 by ALA's Council of the revised *Standards for Accreditation*, COA completed one phase of major work and entered another—the review and revision of the accreditation process. It would be nice if real life were so neat, with an orderly passage from one phase to another. In fact, COA had expected that if the revised *Standards* were approved the process would have to be reviewed and revised and had set a subcommittee to work to organize a process. So it is that we are in the process of revising process!

A few words about COA's work plan for the revision of process. We began with the appointment of an advisory panel with whom we spent a weekend retreat in July, 1992. The retreat produced two complete models for the accreditation process in addition to the model that COA had developed at its Spring, 1992 meeting. At this time COA has distributed a description of a model of a revised process for comment. At the 1993 Midwinter Conference, COA will discuss the comments it receives, modify the model and use our open meeting on Saturday evening, January 23 to solicit further input. It is necessary that we reach closure about the process no later than the end of March in order to permit the preparation of supporting documents which will be used by the first group of programs scheduled for reaccreditation under the revised *Standards* in the Fall, 1994.

The Office for Accreditation is actively seeking funding to permit the preparation of the supporting documents and to conduct training

sessions for deans/directors/faculty of programs. We hope to conduct the first such session in Summer, 1993 with selected faculty from the first group of programs scheduled for reaccreditation.

The completion of the revision of *Standards* and of process will conclude an undertaking begun in 1989. Four years is a long gestation period; I don't know of a species which has one as long. I also don't know whether such a length has any qualitative corollaries. From my perspective as a member of COA during these four years, there is no doubt about the amount of work committee members have invested in these changes. The profession and the academy will be well served in the future by this investment. ▲

Resources

Check this space each issue for listings of resource documents that are relevant to accreditation and LIS education. We welcome suggestions from you, too.

Educational policy statements:

- *Platform for Change*, 1992. Educational policy document from the Medical Library Association. Available free by contacting the Medical Library Association, 6 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 300, Chicago, IL 60602.
- *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies* 1992. A single copy is free with the enclosure of \$1 or the equivalent in stamps (to cover postage). Multiple copies: 2-10 copies are 75¢ each, 11-25 copies are 70¢ each, 26 copies and over are 65¢ each. Mail requests to Office for Accreditation, American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.
- *Graduate Library Education Programs*, October 1992. A single copy is free with the enclosure of a self-addressed, stamped #10 size envelope. Multiple copies: 2-50 copies \$5.00, 51-100 copies \$7.50, over 100 copies \$10.00. (Prices are for bulk orders, not individual lists.) Mail requests to Office for Accreditation, American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. ▲



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Why Prism?

Prudence W. Dalrymple

The name for this newsletter wasn't chosen by accident. Prisms are known for their ability to take light and separate it into component colors. Prisms are useful for analyzing and reflecting light. Like them, the accreditation process can be a useful vehicle through which educators and LIS professionals can analyze and reflect on the ways students prepare to work in the library and information professions of the future. Accreditation involves self-reflection on the part of schools; the external review that takes place can be an opportunity for reviewers and faculties to analyze their educational programs in a variety of ways.

And just as the prism serves to identify and focus a beam of light, making it easier to see the entire spectrum of colors it contains, the accreditation process can focus attention on the variety of components that constitute graduate programs in library and information studies.

Accreditation should provide insight and analysis to all parts of professional education, in all the diversity of a spectrum.

As part of our effort to move the process of accreditation forward and into alignment with

current practices in other specialized and regional accrediting agencies, *Prism* will feature articles, commentary and resources about topics such as quality in education, outcomes assessment, strategic planning, specialization in library and information studies (LIS) education, distance education, and faculty productivity. If you have an idea for an article, if you come across an interesting article or book that you have found helpful and relevant to quality in education, or if you have questions or concerns you would like addressed, please do let me know. We also welcome letters to the editor, commentary, and suggestions. We hope not to be dull.

As I near the end of my first year as Director of the Office for Accreditation, I'd like to repeat that it is my intent to foster greater understanding of accreditation through communication, and to encourage greater participation by the many outstanding educators and practitioners whose expertise is essential to equitable and effective peer review. With the support and encouragement of the Committee on Accreditation, I believe we have taken some positive and important steps forward, but the road ahead is still a long one. I look forward to continuing the journey with you, and hope to see many of you at ALISE and ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Denver. ▲

Committee on Accreditation American Library Association

Upcoming Meetings

Meetings of the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association are as follows:

WINTER

- ALA 1993 Midwinter Meeting
Denver, Colorado, January 23 – 25, 1993
Hyatt Regency, Denver
January 23 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
January 23 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
January 24* 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
January 25* 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
January 25 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- COA Accreditation Process Revision
Advisory Panel
January 23, 1993 8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

SPRING

- COA Spring Meeting – Chicago, Illinois
March 12 – 14, 1993

SUMMER

- ALA 1993 Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana, June 26 – 28, 1993
June 26 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
June 26 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.
June 27 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
June 28 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

FALL

- Fall Meeting* – Chicago, Illinois
November 5 – 7, 1993

*Closed meetings

Moratorium (cont. fr. page 1)

tion will be completed by April 15, 1993 to allow sufficient time for faculties to engage in program review, goal setting, and self analysis. Further details on how the Committee will assist the first few programs to undergo review will be available in late spring, 1993.

Both educators and library and information professionals who are interested in participating in the new accreditation process should contact the Office for Accreditation and stay informed by reading *Prism*, the quarterly newsletter published by ALA's Office for Accreditation. ▲

New look for "Accredited List"

The Graduate Library Education Programs October 1992 issue is now available. The "Accredited List," as it is usually known, has a new look! The list has been redesigned to provide a more attractive appearance.

A free copy of the list is available by sending a stamped, self-addressed #10 envelope to: "Accredited List," American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Multiple copies require that a check, payable to ALA/COA to cover postage and handling be sent for the following amounts: 2-50 copies \$5.00; 51 - 100 copies \$7.50; over 100 copies \$10.00. ▲

American Library Association

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Advisory Panel Reviews Accreditation Process

The Committee on Accreditation has appointed an Ad Hoc Advisory Panel charged with advising COA on the new process that will be used to review master's programs in library and information studies accredited under the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* adopted last year by ALA's Council.

COA Chair Jim Schmidt stated that COA wanted to be sure that COA's thinking was consistent with the views held by educators in the field. "We are pleased to gather a group of individuals with common interests and look forward to continued dialogue in the months ahead."

Advisory Panel members are active in a number of LIS professional associations. In addition to ALA, there are members of the Special Libraries Association, Medical Library Association, Canadian Library Association, Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) and American Society for Information Science and the Society of American Archivists. Appointments were made in consultation with these associations, most of whom participated in the review and revision of the *Standards*.

The Advisory Panel's initial meeting in July resulted in a number of innovative proposals which were considered by the Committee on Accreditation at its meeting in Chicago, October 30 - November 1, and at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver. The Advisory Panel will also meet at Midwinter on Saturday, January 23 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. An open meeting for all those interested in education for library and information studies and accreditation will be held Saturday, January 23, 1993 from 8 - 10 p.m. ▲

(see opposite for Advisory Panel member list)

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ALISE and COA share data

COA implemented its decision to coordinate with the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) in collecting data from accredited master's programs this fall. Following guidelines from the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), COA collects only the data that are necessary to assure continued accredited status. A report prepared last winter by COA members Shirley Aaron, Roger Clark, Freddye Hill, and Jim Schmidt, asked schools to submit selected data elements in the faculty, students, and budget areas. COA also worked closely with Tim Sineath, Editor of the *ALISE Statistics* to work out details. Half the programs were asked to report on progress toward meeting any outstanding COA recommendations in addition to submitting the ALISE information. The remaining schools will report on recommendations next year.

This move streamlined program reviews during the Fall COA meeting, enabling the work to be accomplished in three days rather than four. School response to this procedure was also very positive, despite the earlier deadlines necessitated by the change. The move from annual COA reports to interim reports using ALISE data is the first step toward designing a new accreditation process for LIS education. It also signals a closer communication between the ALISE office staff and the staff at the Office for Accreditation. A working group comprised of COA members Anne Woodsworth and Fred Roper are analyzing the effect of the first year of implementation and will report recommendations for changes and improvements at the spring COA meeting in March. Comments about interim reports can be directed to the working group, COA Chair Jim Schmidt, or the Office. ▲



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