

PRISM

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COA/SCOLE program addresses excellence and accountability

Promoting Excellence Through Accreditation: A Dialogue Between Education and Practice will be the theme of COA/SCOLE's Program on June 28, 1993, from 2-4 p.m. at the Annual Conference in New Orleans. David Penniman, President of the Council on Library Resources and Barbara Brittingham, Dean of the College of Human Science and Services and Interim Dean of University Libraries at the University of Rhode Island, will be the keynote speakers.

In a brief statement of his approach, Penniman said "Amidst calls for accountability in the university environment, as well as government and corporate environments, there is continued resistance raised by many professionals in library education to measures of performance that might shift the traditional emphases of the profession. Not only is it time to develop better measures of performance for libraries and librarians, but also for the educational process behind the profession. It is vital that the measures reflect and reinforce a new vision of the underlying purpose and goal of the profession and the communities it serves."

Barbara Brittingham currently serves as Chair of the Committee on Recognition, a key role in the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). She has an extensive background in accreditation and professional education, including teacher education. Rachael K. Anderson, Director of the Arizona Health

Sciences Library and Jana Varlejs, Associate Professor and Director of Professional Development Studies at the School of Communication, Information, and Library Studies at Rutgers University, will be respondents. Rachael Anderson was a member of the Medical Library Association's Knowledge and Skills Task Force which produced MLA's educational policy statement *Platform for Change*. Jana Varlejs has served as Chair of SCOLE and is active in both professional and educational arenas.

The Program is the first of what COA hopes will be many programs that address current issues in quality education in library and information studies. Check your conference program for location information. ▲

COA actions

At its Midwinter Meeting, the Committee on Accreditation took the following actions: Accredited the Palmer School of Library and Information Studies at Long Island University, continued accredited status of the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Oklahoma, and the Division of Library and Information Science at San Jose State University. The next scheduled evaluation visit for each of these programs will be Spring in the year 2000. ▲

FILE COPY

Upon completing my term

C. James Schmidt

A mailing dated March 23, 1993 to "Deans and Directors of LIS Programs and the Education Community" from me conveyed the final description of the revised process COA will use to evaluate programs under the 1992 Standards. A summary of this description appears elsewhere in this issue of *Prism*.

The final version of the revised process was determined at COA's spring, 1993 meetings March 12-14. The revised process will appear to some more similar to than different from the process COA previously used. To some on our Ad Hoc Advisory Panel it may appear to have ignored their best ideas. Still others have observed that the revisions we have made risk fundamentally comprising the rigor of COA's evaluations.

I hold neither view; rather I believe the revised process embraces fully the spirit of openness and collegiality so clearly articulated by the Advisory Panel, and does so with sufficient structure to assure that COA's evaluations will be developmental for programs rather than being deplored as unavoidable and costly nuisances. Further, I believe our concept of a "Program Presentation" offers wide latitude for programs to shape and focus the accreditation experience in ways that can yield the maximum benefit. Finally, I am satisfied that the revised process is not adversarial, as it may have appeared in our previous process.

COA looks forward to the first uses of this process Fall, 1994 and Spring, 1995 and to the assistance of the Advisory Panel in evaluating the feedback we receive from the first two groups of programs.

There are three major tasks remaining for COA in order for change-making to be complete. First, some documentation must be

produced and some training completed regarding the "Program Presentation." Second, a manual of procedures must be produced. Third, chairs and members of external review panels need to be selected and trained, which in turn will require that COA renew liaisons with other associations established during the Standards revision process.

While COA was completing its revision of standards and process, major changes were occurring in the accreditation industry. Thus, just as COA is completing the work of overhauling its standards and process, the accreditation field is itself experiencing major change. How library education will react to COA's changes is one question, how higher education will react to changes in accreditation is another matter. ▲

Resources

Educational policy statements:

Curriculum Folio Guidelines for the NCATE Review Process: School Library Media Specialist Basic Preparation, 1989. ISBN 7369-8. \$10. Available from ALA Publishing Services, Order Dept., 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611. Revised edition to be published Fall 1993.

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.

Guidelines for Graduate Programs in Law Librarianship, 1988. Available by contacting Martha Brown, Director of Programs, the American Association of Law Libraries, 53 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 940, Chicago, IL 60604.

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. ▲

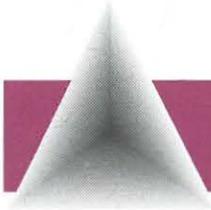


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What's next for COPA?

Prudence W. Dalrymple

On April 7, 1993 the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation voted to dissolve itself effective December 31, 1993. This action was presaged by the statement of intent to withdraw from COPA issued in February by the directors of nine regional accrediting commissions. Having attended this meeting, I would like to take this opportunity to provide further background information about this turn of events.

COPA is comprised of three groups: national and regional accreditors that accredit free-standing colleges and universities, specialized accreditors (like ALA) that accredit programs leading to a professional degree or licensure, and presidents of colleges and universities. While each of these constituencies

has its own perspective, all share the common goal of educational improvement and public accountability.

COPA (or its successor) functions for accrediting bodies such as COA much as accreditation functions for LIS education. It sets minimum standards, requires self-study and peer review, and encourages accountability and integrity in accreditation practices. In addition to the recognition function, an umbrella accrediting organization such as COPA also provides an invaluable source of collegial advice and counsel.

COPA is characterized by its independent, non-governmental status. While many accreditors (ALA included) are also recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, most accreditors believe deeply in the importance of retaining private control over accreditation, rather than ceding this responsibility to the government, either state or federal.

Accreditation is voluntary, and educational institutions must invite COA to their campuses before accreditation can take place. Recognition by one or more umbrella organizations provides legitimacy to ALA's status as

(continued on page 7)

Committee on Accreditation American Library Association

Upcoming Meetings

Meetings of the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association

SUMMER

- ALA 1993 Annual Conference, Doubletree Hotel
New Orleans, Louisiana, June 26 - 28, 1993

June 26	9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
June 26	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
June 26	8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
June 27	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

- COA/SCOLE Conference Program
June 28 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

FALL

- COA Fall Meeting* - Chicago, Illinois
November 12 - 14, 1993

WINTER

- ALA 1994 Midwinter Meeting
Los Angeles, California, February 5 - 7, 1994

February 5	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
February 5	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
February 5	8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
February 6	8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
February 7	8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
February 7	2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

SPRING

- COA Spring Meeting* - Chicago, Illinois
(1994 dates to be determined)

* Closed meetings

Revised process

The process described here is intended to respond to the content and emphases of the 1992 Standards and to incorporate suggestions of the Ad Hoc Advisory Panel on the Revision of the Accreditation Process. In particular, it is designed to increase the collegiality of the process and to permit schools to use the process more effectively in dealing with local concerns and needs and to continue COA's conformity to good practices in accreditation, as reflected in the recognition provisions of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

COA will solicit comments and feedback from participants in the accreditation process throughout the first phase of implementation and will make adjustments and refinements to the process as necessary. Those familiar with the old process will note that COA has

"These new terms are not merely cosmetic changes..."

introduced some new terminology: "Program Presentation" for "Self-study" and "External Review Panel" for "site visit team." These new terms are not merely cosmetic changes, but describe more accurately the activities in the process. In addition, the Program Presentation is intended to refer both to the process the school undertakes as part of its planning and evaluation and to the materials that document the process.

The process is presented here in approximately chronological sequence. This may imply a greater rigidity than COA intends. Because of the complexities of initiating the new process, the three programs scheduled for review in Fall, 1994, will follow a slightly accelerated schedule, which will be worked out directly with each of them. COA maintains a "Schedule of Evaluation Reviews," which is published in *Prism*. It is also available at any time on request from the Office for Accreditation. The schedule provides

assurance to the public that COA reviews its accredited programs in a timely fashion, and assists both COA and the accredited programs in effective planning.

Schools may request changes in the dates of the next full evaluation to allow, for example, coordinating the COA evaluation with university program reviews, or to allow the COA evaluation to contribute more fully to planned program revisions and developments. Requests to have an earlier evaluation are most easily accommodated by COA, provided the total COA workload does not develop such high peaks as to diminish COA's ability to conduct responsible evaluations of accredited programs. Deferrals of full evaluations must be consistent with COA's obligation to the public to ensure that the accredited status of a program reflects current and accurate information.

TWO YEARS BEFORE THE TENTATIVE DATE OF REVIEW

The Director of the Office notifies the school of its scheduled review. In response, the school responds by confirming the scheduling of the review (year and spring or fall term), and noting any particular areas of emphasis or development that will be of interest to it during the review, and making preliminary suggestions of potential reviewers.

TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS BEFORE THE REVIEW

The COA appoints a Chair of the External Review Panel, using the information provided in the school's response.

AT LEAST TWELVE MONTHS BEFORE THE REVIEW

The school must send to the Director of the Office for Accreditation a plan for the Program Presentation process. The plan need not be elaborate or detailed, but should

(a) outline the organization of the process (e.g., committee structure, faculty and staff assignments, writing assignments to develop the documents that describe process the school is undertaking);

(b) describe clearly those special areas (if any) that the school wishes to emphasize, and make any related requests for particular areas

(continued on page 5)

of expertise on the External Review Panel;

(c) incorporate a schedule for document completion that provides for a complete draft document three or four months before the review date and a final document at least one month before the review date. At this time the school will also be asked to provide at least three sets of specific dates for a visit of at least two days duration of the External Review Panel. The Director of the Office for Accreditation, in consultation with the Panel Chair, reviews the plan and provides comments and suggestions to the school to assist the school in following a fruitful and effective process and makes any scheduling adjustments.

DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE PROGRAM PRESENTATION

The Director of the Office for Accreditation serves as the school's primary consultant on COA concerns and requirements. The school should keep the Director of the Office for Accreditation informed of the progress of its preparation. The Director of the Office for Accreditation will respond to questions from the school, and will make suggestions as appropriate in the light of the information provided by the school. In arriving at suggestions the Director of the Office for Accreditation will consult with the Chair of the Panel as appropriate.

TWELVE MONTHS BEFORE THE REVIEW

The COA, acting through the Director of the Office for Accreditation and in consultation with the Chair of the External Review Panel, will suggest to the school the names of potential External Review Panel members selected from a group that includes persons nominated by the school, its parent institution, members of the profession, and others.

"...the special needs and emphases of the program may not require all members to visit the school."

The composition of the External Review Panel will reflect the emphasis in the school's

plan for the Program Presentation and its requests for areas of special expertise. While all members of the Panel will participate in the evaluation, the special needs and emphases of the program may not require all members to visit the school. The school will be invited to comment on the composition of the Panel, and in particular to consider any questions of conflict of interest among proposed Panel members. After receiving the school's comments the COA, acting through the Director of the Office for Accreditation, will appoint an External Review Panel which includes representation from practitioners and appropriate specializations within library and information studies. The experiences and specializations of Panel members will reflect the emphases and needs of the program. As a part of appointing the External Review Panel, the Director of the Office for Accreditation will select one set of dates for the visit to the school. Both the school and Panel members will regard these dates as firm. NOTE: The process as described here assumes that the External Review Panel will make a visit to the school. This corresponds to the norm in current accreditation practice. Throughout its discussions of the new process COA and its advisory group sought to design a process that would be flexible enough to allow for either a site visit or a validated equivalent. Schools that wish to explore alternatives to the site visit should propose them for consideration by the COA. Any departures from the norm of the site visit will require a negotiated agreement between COA and the school.

AT LEAST FOUR MONTHS BEFORE THE REVIEW

The school will send to the Office and the Chair of the Panel a complete draft of the Program Presentation. The Director of the Office for Accreditation will consult with the Chair, and provide to the school comments and suggestions intended to assist in making sure that the final Program Presentation will serve effectively in assisting the Panel to arrive at a fair evaluation of the program. The school is free to use the Director's suggestions as it sees fit.

AT LEAST ONE MONTH BEFORE THE REVIEW

The school will send to the Director of the Office for Accreditation and to each member of the Panel the final and complete Program Presentation. The Chair of the Panel will develop a plan for the visit of the External Review Panel, and will consult with the school on logistics and schedule of the visit. The Chair will notify the Panel members of assignments and obligations during the visit and report preparation.

DURING THE REVIEW

The External Review Panel will meet with faculty members, students, school and university administrative officers. It will seek to confirm that the written information in the Program Presentation is accurate, complete and fair. It will seek to supplement the Program Presentation with information obtained through interviews and observations to ensure that the accreditation decision is sound and well grounded in fact. It will also seek to develop collegial suggestions and advice that will assist the school in its further development.

APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH AFTER THE REVIEW

The Chair of the Panel will send to the members of the Panel, the Office and the school a draft of the Panel's written report. The school will be asked to respond to the Director of the Office for Accreditation in writing to perceived errors of fact in the draft.

APPROXIMATELY SIX WEEKS AFTER THE REVIEW (AND AT LEAST ONE MONTH BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING OF THE COA)

The Chair of the Panel will send to the school and to the Director of the Office for Accreditation the final written report of the Panel. The Director of the Office for Accreditation will send to each member of the Panel a copy of the final report. The school will have an opportunity to respond in writing to the final written report, noting any errors of fact not corrected, and commenting on the conclusions of the Panel. This response should be sent to the Director of the Office for Accreditation, who will distribute copies to the members of the Panel and, along with the final re-

port of the Panel, to members of the COA. The report of the External Review Panel is co-owned by COA and the school. The school is encouraged to release the Panel report in its entirety. If the school releases excerpts COA may elect to make the entire report available on request.

"The school is encouraged to release the Panel report in its entirety."

AT A REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE COA

The Chair of the Panel and a representative of the school will meet together with the COA to review the Panel report and the school's response. The meeting will seek to identify any issues on which the Panel and school disagree, and to provide any information needed by the COA in its deliberations as supplementary to the written Program Presentation, Panel report and school response. The COA will consider the information before it and make its accreditation decision. The COA's decision will be sent to the chief executive officer of the accredited program and to the parent institution.

"The COA's decision is diagnostic, not prescriptive."

THE COA'S DECISION IS PUBLIC, AND NO MODIFICATIONS TO IT MAY BE MADE BY ANYONE EXCEPT COA. COA encourages broad distribution of the accreditation decision by the school. The COA decision will contain the following elements:

Name of school including the institution of which it is a part.

Accredited status of program(s), including notation of probation if probation has been imposed, and the date(s) on which accredited status was granted.

ALA-accredited programs offered by the school Under the 1992 Standards more than

Process (cont. fr. page 6)

one degree program may be accredited (e.g., information management, archives management, library science). Other degrees offered by the school will be listed with the notation that ALA accredits only first professional degrees in library and information studies, neither post-master's nor doctoral degrees.

Location(s) at which accredited programs are offered to show explicitly programs offered at a distance from the campus.

Reports required: The COA's decision is diagnostic, not prescriptive. Therefore, where the COA has recognized issues bearing on compliance with the Standards, it will not specify steps to be taken, but it will require regular reports in which the school describes what actions it is taking to achieve compliance.

Schedule for this and the next full evaluation: A statement in the form, "The most recent full evaluation of the program(s) of the School of (NAME) occurred in (Spring/Fall) of 19xx; the next full evaluation is currently scheduled for (Spring/Fall) of 19yy." With the agreement of the school, COA may make public information beyond that included in its decision.

The Program Presentation Prepared by the School has three goals: (1) to document how the accredited program(s) meet(s) the 1992 Standards; (2) to describe how the school is planning to have the accredited program(s) continue to meet the 1992 Standards; (3) to serve as an ongoing planning tool for the school.

The COA and the Director of the Office for Accreditation are preparing resource materials that will guide schools in preparing for the COA evaluation review, and in preparing the Program Presentation. ▲

COPA (cont. fr. page 3)

an accreditor and lends credibility to our accreditation reviews.

The COPA Board plans to appoint a special committee to design a successor structure. Two other plans for successor organizations are being developed; one has been initiated by specialized accreditors, and the other by regional and national accreditors. While the character of each of these proposals will be influenced by its major constituency, I believe that each proposal will attempt to include participants from the broader accrediting community.

What does all of this mean to ALA? ALA/COA's recognition by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) extends through 1997; we had been scheduled to apply for renewal of COPA recognition in January 1995. While our USDE recognition appears secure for the short-term, the status of accreditation in the federal arena is in flux. Under new regulations it is likely that agencies such as ALA will fall outside the purview of USDE. It is critical therefore for ALA/COA to continue to be recognized by an independent group. COA will monitor very closely the developments in the COPA arena so that we can be prepared to move quickly as soon as a clear structure emerges.

Should COPA's proposed successor organization fail to meet the needs of specialized accreditation and our constituents, specialized accreditors are well-positioned to implement a new organization to continue the recognition and professional development functions previously provided by COPA. The Office for Accreditation has hosted one meeting of Chicago-area specialized accreditors and will host two additional meetings in May and June. I also plan to attend a two-day retreat in August to represent ALA/COA and will keep you informed as events develop. ▲

Schedule of evaluation reviews

FALL 1992

Oklahoma
Long Island
San Jose

SPRING 1993

MORATORIUM

FALL 1993

MORATORIUM

SPRING 1994

MORATORIUM

FALL 1994

Arizona
Louisiana
Tennessee

SPRING 1995

Clark-Atlanta
Iowa
Pratt
South Florida
Southern
Mississippi

FALL 1995

Alabama
Hawaii
McGill
North Carolina
Central
South Carolina

SPRING 1996

Clarion
Rhode Island
Rutgers
Southern Connecticut
Texas Woman's
Toronto

FALL 1996

Florida State
MO-Columbia
NC-Greensboro
Rosary
Syracuse
WI-Milwaukee

SPRING 1997

CA-Berkeley
CA-Los Angeles
Kentucky
Puerto Rico
St. John's
Western Ontario

FALL 1997

Dalhousie
Illinois
Kent State
NY-Albany
Queens

SPRING 1998

Catholic
Drexel
Michigan

FALL 1998

NY-Buffalo
North Texas
Simmons
Washington

SPRING 1999

British Columbia
Maryland
Pittsburgh

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