USDE sponsors seminar on outcomes assessment and accreditation

A two-day seminar on outcomes assessment and accreditation targeted at the first eight programs to be evaluated under the 1992 Standards for Accreditation will be held on October 22 – 23, 1993 in Chicago. During the workshop, participants will learn to incorporate the use of outcomes assessment for planning and evaluation into their Program Presentations developed for the Committee on Accreditation. Trudy W. Banta, Vice Chancellor for Planning and Institutional Improvement, Indiana University-Purdue University in Indianapolis, and a nationally known expert on evaluating educational outcomes, will be the primary speaker. Brooke Sheldon, Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Texas at Austin and Thurston (Ted) Manning, a consultant on accreditation and outcomes assessment who has advised the Committee on Accreditation since 1992, will facilitate the workshop. Douglas L. Zweizig of the University of Wisconsin School of Library and Information Studies will serve as the evaluator for the project.

The goals of the project are to increase the likelihood that LIS educators will use ALA's accreditation as an opportunity to engage in educational planning and evaluation techniques and to introduce current techniques of outcomes analysis to measure the results of professional graduate education.

The seminar is being supported by the U.S. Department of Education through a subcontract from the University of Wisconsin's “Evaluating Library Programs and Services” project. Twenty-four participants will be invited to attend. In return for their attendance at the seminar, participants will be expected to make their Program Presentations available to other LIS programs, and to provide ongoing assistance and support to their peers in subsequent cycles of evaluation and accreditation. The results of the seminar will be disseminated through published articles and presentations, and by establishing a set of resource materials that will be made available to LIS educators.

Database project initiated

Beginning with the 1992 interim reports submitted to COA, data will be input into a relational database to be maintained by staff in the Office. Fingerman & Associates is working with OA staff to design a process for data input using off-the-shelf software (Paradox) that will facilitate statistical data analysis in a variety of ways. Because data for a number of years will be input, simple trend analysis will also be possible on a number of variables. Simple, but useful computations such as faculty/student ratios will now be available. Office Director Pru Dalrymple and COA member Fred Roper have

(continued on page 3)
Full circle

Herman L. Totten

Three years ago I completed my term as Chair of the Committee on Accreditation. During that period I initiated the appointment of the chairs and members of two sub-committees, respectively. The Standards Review Subcommittee was charged with the responsibility to review the 1972 Standards and to make a recommendation as to whether they should be revised. This action was approved. Pursuant to this recommendation a Standards Revision Subcommittee was appointed and charged with the responsibility to revise the 1972 Standards. The completion of the standards revision took place after my departure from COA. With the advice of the Ad Hoc Advisory Panel on the Revision of the Accreditation Process, COA completely revised the accreditation process in 1993. What evolved is the formulation of a new process based upon the 1992 Standards.

Why was such action undertaken? The established program of the Office of Accreditation must perform a continuous series of actions to attain a state of excellence. This ultimate goal is achievable as long as careful attention is given to academic and non-academic environments and trends that affect education in the fields of library and information studies, directly and indirectly. A concomitant responsibility is recognition of the effect that education in the fields of library and information studies has upon these designated environments and trends.

These efforts have given credence to the fact that COA serves as a catalyst in promoting the importance of these professions. I am pleased to serve again as Chair of COA and to have the opportunity to complete this cycle, which had its inception during my previous chairmanship. Shepherding the first three programs through this new process, based upon the 1992 Standards, will be the culmination of my endeavor as the COA chair.

If there is to be any degree of success, the following objectives must be achieved:

1. Increase the collegiality of the process.
2. Permit schools to use the process more effectively in dealing with local concerns and needs.
3. Continue COA’s conformity to good practices in accreditation, as reflected in the recognition provisions of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and its successor.

Other changes introduced under the new standards include the use of new terminology: “Program Presentation” for “Self-Study” and “External Review Panel” for “site visit team.” These terms clarify the activities in the Process and their relationship to work of the schools that are engaging in a self-study.

COA recognized the importance of a communication network and will solicit and welcome reactions from institutions engaged in the first phase of implementing the new process. Reactions received will be invaluable in assessing the results of the studies; they may be used to alter or to reinforce the newly established concepts.

With this new approach based upon the 1992 Standards, the Office for Accreditation has reached another significant guidepost in its service to the schools of library and information studies. Whatever direction it takes and whatever success it achieves depends upon mutually cooperative efforts by all involved parties to advance a knowledge of and understanding for these professions. These are our new mandates.

Resources

Three members of the ACRL Bibliographic Instruction Section have assembled a Sample Bibliographic Instruction Course Syllabus packet containing a course outline, assignments, and a core bibliography. Library schools in the United States and Canada offering BI courses are listed as well as experienced BI instructors. Contact the LOEX Clearinghouse, University Library, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, or email Esther Grassian, Reference/Instruction Librarian, College Library, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1450, e-mail: ECZ5ESC@MVS.OAC.UCLA.EDU.
From the Director: OUTLOOK

More changes in accreditation

Prudence W. Dalrymple

The world of accreditation continues in flux. In mid-August, a new national organization representing specialized accreditors was established. The Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) will promote quality and integrity in specialized and professional accreditation in higher education. ASPA will represent its interests in higher education forums, sponsor professional development activities, and monitor events related to recognition of accrediting organizations. As the organization develops, ALA will be approached to make a firm commitment to joining ASPA.

At the same time, a successor to the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is being proposed. The successor organization will focus on recognition; that is, the oversight of accrediting groups such as ALA's COA. Recognition helps establish credibility with university administrators who invite COA to evaluate their programs.

Meanwhile, the six regional accrediting bodies have joined with seven higher education groups to form the National Policy Board on Higher Education Institutional Accreditation which will represent their interests in Washington.

According to an August 11 article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, "...the termination of COPA and the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act have really provided the impetus for all of us...to take a new look at what we do, why we do it, and how we might do it better." As the representative of ALA at the founding of ASPA, I felt encouraged by the strength and intelligence of this group, and I also remain hopeful that the recognition structure proposed to succeed COPA will be viable for all segments of the accreditation community. COA and ALA have already "taken a new look" and we will continue to ensure that we meet or exceed the highest standards of accreditation practices. ▲

Database (cont. fr. page 1)

been meeting regularly with the ALISE statistics committee to discuss conversion of data into machine readable form with the aim of greater coordination and submission of data. COA member Diane Mittermeyer is working with Fred Roper to advise the COA on statistical data collection. Questions and suggestions should be directed to Fred, Diane, or the Office. The status of the project will be reported at the Midwinter meeting. ▲

Committee on Accreditation
American Library Association

Upcoming Meetings
Meetings of the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association

FALL
• COA Fall Meeting* – Chicago, Illinois
  November 12 – 14, 1993

WINTER
• ALA 1994 Midwinter Meeting – Los Angeles, California, February 5 – 7, 1994
  February 4  3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
  (Deans/Directors meeting)
  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.

SPRING
• COA Spring Meeting* – Chicago, Illinois
  (1994 dates to be determined)

SUMMER
• ALA 1994 Annual Conference - Miami Beach, Florida
  June 25 – 27, 1994 (meeting time slots to be determined)
  *Closed meetings
New accreditation documents in preparation

The Committee on Accreditation declared the policies and guidelines that were in effect under the 1972 Standards null and void at its meetings at the Annual Conference at New Orleans in June. To continue its operations during the moratorium and transition to the 1992 Standards, COA approved a minimal set of policies dealing with conflicts of interest, initial accreditation, quorum for business and accreditation actions, appeals, complaints, and confidentiality. These policies, together with those governing the interim reporting process, comprise the working documents for the Committee.

The documentation for the new process will be streamlined and formatted in an attractive design. The size of the manual will be trimmed down considerably, and an index will be provided. The Accreditation Manual which constitutes the due process contract between a school and the Committee on Accreditation will be completed in time for programs to sign off on it prior to evaluation in 1994.

COA documentation will be made available to the public as soon as the revisions are complete. Watch Prism for further information.

American Library Association
Committee on Accreditation

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Review panel chairs oriented; site visitors thanked

Members of the Advisory Panel were invited to participate in an orientation session to prepare potential chairs of the external review panels used in the first round of evaluation visits. At its Spring planning meeting, COA determined that the optimal strategy for naming Chairs of External Review Panels was to select from the Advisory Panel and retiring COA members. These individuals are drawn from a broad base of both LIS educators and professionals, and have expertise in a number of specialty areas. They are also most familiar with the new accreditation process. The appointment of the Chair is made by COA with the agreement of the program.

Selection of members of the External Review Panels will be negotiated between COA and the program. Not all Review Panel members will visit the program. Some may be asked to review particular aspects of the program depending on the focus areas identified by the program and the COA.

After the first round of evaluations, feedback about the process will be solicited and adjustments and refinements to the accreditation process will be considered.

As it moves into a new phase of accreditation, COA would like to acknowledge publicly the contribution of the individuals who participated in the last round of site visits under the old process and the 1972 Standards. Each person contributed generously of his or her time and expertise in performing a valuable and important service to LIS education. Site visitors in 1992 were: Camila Alire, Trudi Bellardo, Charles Bunge, Charles Conaway, Marianne Cooper, Edwin Cortez, Keith Cottam, Robert Croneberger, Evelyn Daniel, Bruce Daniels, Gwynneth Evans, Claire England, Adele Fasick, Rick Forsman, Sue Frankie, Richard Halsey, Joanne Harrar, Dottie Hiebing, Irene Hoadley, Margaret Kimmel, Carolyn Markuson, Vivienne Monty, John Olsgaard, Ruth Person, Ann Prentice, Marion Reid, Joann Rogers, Bernard Schlessigner, James Schmidt, Timothy Sineath, Frank Spaulding, Peggy Sullivan, William Summers, Tamara Frost Trujillo, Philip Turner, Darlene Weingand, Anne Woodsworth.

Liaison with LIS associations urged

At its summer meeting COA requested that a strategic plan be developed for continued liaison with other associations in the library and information science field. The request grew in part from COA continuing commitment to the ideas expressed in Accreditation: A Way Ahead, a 1986 Department of Education report exploring the feasibility of a federated accreditation process. During the development of the Standards, members of other associations played an important role, a direction which was continued in the Advisory Panel on the Revision of the Accreditation Process.

This year, COA and the Office have put together presentations about the accreditation process and its effectiveness in promoting high quality preparation for the information professions. COA member Frank Spaulding and OA Director Prudence Dalrymple described the latest thinking about accreditation at the annual meeting of the Special Libraries Association in Cincinnati. The initial meeting of the Library and Information Studies Education Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association, convened by Bertram MacDonald of Dalhousie University at the CLA annual conference, had as its speaker Prudence Dalrymple, Director of the Office.

In upcoming meetings, former COA Chair C. James Schmidt and Jane Robbins, former chair of the Standards Revision Subcommittee will be panelists in a session at the Society of American Archivists meeting in New Orleans in September. The third panelist will be Robert S. Martin of Louisiana State University and Advisory Panel member Frank Burke of the University of Maryland will moderate. At the American Society for Information Science meeting in

(continued on page 6)
NLM appoints education panel

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) is finalizing appointments to a planning panel on education and training of health science librarians. The purpose of the panel is to analyze the possible programs and activities of the NLM, of individuals, of professional associations, and of other institutions that might be undertaken over the next ten years in order to assure that our society benefits from the skills of health science librarians. The panel is chaired by Thomas Detre, Senior Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh.

A steering committee met in early June to define categories of membership on the panel and to articulate salient issues. COA member Fred Roper attended the steering committee meeting. The panel will meet three times during 1993-94 and will deliver a report at the conclusion of its deliberations.

The charge for the panel grows out of the 1986 NLM Long Range Plan which recognized the importance of developing a cadre of highly trained health sciences librarians and other information professionals to adapt modern information technologies to the needs of the biomedical community. This requirement is also a major underpinning of the Presidential Initiative in High Performance Computing and Communications which is concerned with the training needs of individuals capable of creating and utilizing emerging computing and networking technologies in the national interest. ▲

Liaison (cont. fr. page 5)

Columbus in October, COA member Carol Kuhlthau and Advisory Panel members Toni Carbo Bearman (University of Pittsburgh) and Ann Prentice (University of Maryland) will participate in a panel discussion moderated by Michael Koenig of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science. ▲