

# PRISM

Winter, 1994  
volume 2, issue 1  
ISSN 1066-7873

published by the Office for Accreditation at the American Library Association

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## Teleconference on accreditation set

A teleconference to prepare librarians and other information professionals to implement the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* is scheduled for September 8, 1994. The teleconference is jointly funded by the H.W. Wilson Foundation and the American Library Association.

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) invites individuals from the American Library Association (ALA) and other library and information associations to participate in this interactive seminar scheduled for September 8, 1994. The broadcast will be downlinked to numerous locations throughout North America to make it accessible to a diverse group of librarians, educators and information professionals. Facilitators will be available at each designated site to field questions, promote discussion, and provide additional information and materials. Attendance at the teleconference is a first step in

becoming eligible to participate further in the accreditation process. Attendees will be invited to apply, if interested, to become members and chairs of the External Review Panels. External Review Panels review and evaluate master's programs seeking accreditation under the 1992 *Standards*.

The teleconference aims to reach a large and diverse audience of possible qualified participants so that future review panels will reflect the broadened scope of the 1992 *Standards* as well as the revised accreditation process. Registrants will be notified as to the closest downlink site and will receive printed background materials prior to the conference.

To attend the teleconference, interested individuals should send their name, address and association membership along with a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to Teleconference, Office for Accreditation, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.

Applications to attend the teleconference are due May 1, 1994. Suggestions of qualified participants are also encouraged. ▲

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## COA approves candidacy concept

At its midwinter meeting in Los Angeles on February 5-6, 1994, the Committee on Accreditation approved a candidacy period not to exceed four years for programs applying for initial accreditation. The purpose of the candidacy period is to enable programs to work toward meeting the *Standards for Accreditation* and to establish the ongoing planning

and evaluation that is required under the 1992 *Standards*. It also provides access to materials, resources and consultation during the preparation of the program presentation. An annual fee of \$2000 will be charged, in addition to an application fee of \$1000. A full description of the process may be obtained by request of the Office; it will also appear in the document entitled: *Accreditation of Master's Program in Library & Information Studies under the*

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## A climate of openness and dialogue

Herman L. Totten

The primary objective for the Committee on Accreditation (COA) under its new process and the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies* is to foster and maintain a climate of openness and dialogue between the COA and the schools whose master's programs are accredited.

On October 22-23, 1993, the Office for Accreditation conducted a very successful two-day conference directed at the first eight library and information science programs scheduled to undergo review for accreditation under the new process and the 1992 *Standards*. Eight additional library educators were invited guests for the purpose of serving as moderators for breakout groups to discuss each of the *Standards*. A follow-up to this conference was held February 4, 1994 in Los Angeles.

The deans and faculty members from the participating schools left with the recognition that a new air of openness and dialogue has begun between the COA and the schools. There are both positive and negative side effects to the ongoing change in the relationship between the graduate programs and the COA concerning the accreditation process. It is a positive change in that the process encourages and allows for more communication between the accrediting body and the schools. Negatively, the programs must prepare their Program Presentations under the 1992 *Standards* and the very unfamiliar new process. Special activities and workshops, such as those held in October and in February, as well as other methods, will con-

tinue to be conducted to help the COA, educators, and librarians and other information professionals adjust to the new process and its requirements.

The COA wants to foster communication among the programs who are undergoing reviews and are encouraging them to exchange with each other all materials developed during the Program Plan and Program Presentation stages of the accreditation process. Their exchange of these documents also facilitates openness and dialogue during the accreditation cycle.

As a final stage in communicating the new process, the COA will be sponsoring a day-long teleconference to prepare librarians and other information professional to implement the 1992 *Standards*. Funded jointly by the H.W. Wilson Foundation and the American Library Association, the conference will be held on September 8, 1994, and will be downlinked to numerous sites in the U.S. and Canada. The purpose of the teleconference will be to explain the new accreditation process under the new 1992 *Standards* and to train participants to serve as chairs and members of the External Review Panels that will review and evaluate master's programs. To advance this new climate of openness and dialogue, librarians and other information professionals who are interested in attending the program should send their name, address, and association membership along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

Teleconference  
Office for Accreditation  
American Library Association  
50 E. Huron Street  
Chicago, IL 60611

Applications should be received by May 1, 1994.

The fourth quarterly issue of *Prism*, volume 1, 1993 was not produced due to scheduling problems. We apologize for the inconvenience. *Prism* will be published quarterly in 1994.

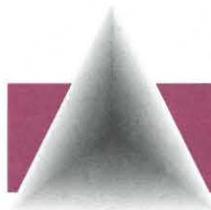


PRISM is published by the  
Office for Accreditation  
at the American Library  
Association

**Editor**  
Prudence Dalrymple  
**Production**  
Vivica Williams



printed on recycled paper  
with vegetable-based inks



## A changing climate for accreditation

*Prudence W. Dalrymple*

You are probably already aware of the changes and challenges currently facing the higher education and accreditation communities. In this column I have reported to you regularly about the threats to COPA (Council of Postsecondary Accreditation) and the emergence of two other organizations, ASPA (Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors) and CORPA (Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation). Since my last column in *Prism*, both ASPA and CORPA have achieved the critical mass both in membership and finances to assure their continuing viability. ALA/COA is a charter member of both organizations.

ASPA is a membership organization comprised of agencies such as ALA who accredit professional programs. It was founded in August, 1993 to fill the gap in information and services created by the demise of COPA. CORPA is the successor to COPA. It functions as a fee for service agency which reviews and recognizes ("accredits") all types of accrediting bodies—professional accreditors like ALA as well as regional and institutional accreditors such as the North Central Agency.

The Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association has been recognized for many years by the Secretary of Education as a reliable accrediting agency. Our current period of recognition extends through 1995, but recently, changes stemming from the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act have challenged ALA's eligibility to be recognized. The eligibility of an accrediting agency is determined by a number of factors, the most important of which is that accreditation by the agency serves as a gatekeeper for Title IV Federal funds. Since ALA's accreditation standards require that a program be located in a regionally accredited institution, it is accreditation by the regional and institutional accreditor, not the ALA's accreditation, that plays the gatekeeping role regarding student loans.

A final determination about ALA/COA's eligibility for continued recognition has not yet been made, but should we be dropped from the list, it is important to recognize that the determination about continued recognition by the Secretary is not a comment on the quality of ALA/COA's procedures, nor about the value and importance of programmatic accreditation. Rather, it is a result of both legislation and regulation stemming from the climate of opinion in Congress about postsecondary education. ALA/COA will continue to be eligible to be recognized by CORPA, and indeed, we will be applying for renewal of our recognition in 1995.

What follows describes the current situation as it applies to postsecondary education, particularly accreditation conducted by agencies recognized by the Secretary of Education. Although you may wonder why we should be concerned about these developments since they may not ultimately apply to ALA, they are illustrative of the climate in which both educators and accreditors must carry out their responsibilities. Because such a large proportion of accrediting agencies will be affected by these federal and state regulations, there is great potential for these regulations to affect the procedures used by all accreditors. It is for this reason that I believe the issues deserve our attention.

A major component of the new rules and regulations is the program integrity triad: accreditors, states, and the Department of Education. The triad emerged from concerns identified by Congress regarding fiscal responsibility across the entire spectrum of higher education, not just the "bad actors." Responsibilities are distributed among the triad in the following way:

- Accreditors are charged with assessing the quality of education and training provided by the institutions.
- States are responsible for reviewing institutions to determine if they meet criteria for licensure to participate as an institution of higher education. These reviews are aimed primarily at consumer protection.
- The Department of Education is charged with seeing that institutions are capable of administering federal funds appropriately.

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## Candidacy (cont. fr page 1)

1992 Standards: *An Overview* which is available from the Office.

The Committee was pleased to meet with Nancy Van House, Acting Dean of the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of California, Berkeley to learn more about developments at the School, and with Betty Turock, Chair of the LIS program at Rutgers University to discuss improvements in the interim reporting process.

Chair Herman Totten appointed a working group of COA to review and report on recommended changes to the interim reporting process. This will be a focal point of the spring planning and evaluation meeting of COA.

The Committee also approved in principle the *Guidelines for External Review Panel Report*. These will be incorporated with other guidelines for external review panels and will be published as part of the information and documentation packet that will be available from the Office in June.

The annual accreditation fee was reviewed and an increase from \$300 to \$500 was approved, effective September 1, 1994. This is the first increase since 1989, and helps to support the additional consultation, materials and services provided by the Office to the accredited programs as part of the revised accreditation process.

COA also approved a motion to solicit formal endorsement of the *Standards* and process by the other LIS associations. The LIS associations are being invited to contribute to the support of the accreditation teleconference on a per capita basis. ▲

## American Library Association

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## Seminar held on outcomes assessment

On October 22-23, 1993, representatives of the first eight programs to be reviewed under the 1992 *Standards* joined several invited guests in Chicago to learn how outcomes assessment can be incorporated in the accreditation process. After welcoming remarks from Peggy Sullivan, Executive Director of ALA, attendees heard Trudy Banta, a nationally recognized expert in student learning outcomes, give the keynote presentation. Dr. Banta observed that LIS programs, unlike many graduate level programs, have done well in articulating measurable learning objectives for students, and emphasized the importance and value of including these in the accreditation process. She also encouraged programs to engage in continuous planning, analysis and feedback using the data collected through student assessments.

Ted Manning, COA consultant, discussed the 1992 *Standards* from a planning perspective. He commented that whereas the *Standards* must be read carefully, they cannot always be taken literally. Rather, they

serve as indicators, rather than as prescriptive directives.

The Chair of COA, Herman Totten, and the Director of the Office for Accreditation, Pru Dalrymple, presented specific information about the preparation of Program Presentations and the way in which the COA has evolved in its approach to the accreditation process.

Throughout the conference, participants met in small groups to talk over the ideas that were presented, share written materials-in-progress and recount their approach to the changes in the accreditation process.

Brooke Sheldon, Dean at the University of Texas-Austin, served as facilitator and Douglas Zweizig, Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is the evaluator for the project.

A summary of the major ideas presented at the conference will be included as part of published resource materials which will be available at the conclusion of the project. The October meeting and a follow-up held at the ALA Midwinter meeting in Los Angeles were made possible through a sub-contract with the University of Wisconsin-Madison using funding from the U.S. Department of Education. ▲

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## COA joins CORPA

The Committee on Accreditation has voted to join the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA), the successor organization to the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). The Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation has a more restricted scope than COPA's and is modeled on a fee-for-service, not a membership, basis. CORPA has been designed to represent a diversity of perspectives both in its governance structure and its peer review recognition process. The various perspectives are institutional and specialized accrediting agencies (such as ALA and North Central, respectively), presidentially-based associations such as the American Council on Education, the general public and other supporters of accreditation.

The Commission itself consists of a seven-member Board made up of three persons representing the public interest and four persons reflecting the perspec-

tives of specialized accreditation, regional accreditation, national accreditation, and presidential organizations. (These perspectives are similar to those in COPA.)

The Commission appoints the Committee on Recognition which carries out the regulatory function of CORPA. Although the analogy is not perfect, the Committee on Recognition can be compared in function to ALA's Committee on Accreditation. The Committee on Recognition sets criteria for recognition, and reviews and takes action on applications for initial and continued recognition of accrediting bodies. The Committee on Recognition has eleven members, three of which represent the public interest; the remaining eight are appointed by the Board from nominations made by each of the four perspectives.

CORPA held its first meeting in January, 1994 and is scheduled to meet again on

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## Latin America LIS educators meet

Library and information science educators from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the U.S. met in San Juan, Puerto Rico at the University of Puerto Rico on November 14 and 15 to discuss areas of mutual interest and to explore the potential for distance education for the region. The meeting, titled, "Encounter of Latin American Educators of Library and Information Science," was organized by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science of the University of Puerto Rico and the College of Library and Information Science of the University of South Carolina. It was sponsored by the Organization of American States, which provided travel funds for Latin American participants, and the Puerto Rico Foundation, which supported local arrangements. Representatives from the following countries attended: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Spain, United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Pru Dalrymple, Director of the Office for Accreditation, attended the conference to represent the American Library Association and the Committee on Accreditation. As part of her presentation, she distributed materials defining the role and value of voluntary, specialized accreditation as it is practiced in the United States, and described ALA's accreditation process under the 1992 *Standards*.

Participants discussed the current status of library education at their individual schools and in their home countries, reporting on enrollment, faculty, professional literature, use of information technology, and specific problems and needs of their programs. Faculty and staff of the University of South Carolina presented an overview of their current distance education programs within the state by closed circuit and out-of-state via satellite broadcast. The potential opportunities and problems for developing some type of cooperative distance education program for Latin America and the Caribbean region were discussed by the group. The meeting concluded with the adoption of specific plans for continuing work in a variety of areas. ▲

### Committee on Accreditation American Library Association

## Upcoming Meetings

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

#### SPRING

- COA Spring Meeting\* – Chicago, Illinois  
April 15-17, 1994

#### SUMMER

- ALA 1994 Annual Conference,  
Miami Beach, Florida, June 25 - 27, 1994
  - June 25, 1994 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
  - June 25, 1994\* 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
  - June 25, 1994 8:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
  - June 26, 1994 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
  - June 26, 1994 2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
  - June 27, 1994 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- COA/SCOLE Conference Program  
June 27, 1994 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

#### FALL

- COA Fall Meeting\* – Chicago, Illinois  
(1994 dates to be determined)

*\*Closed meetings*

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## 1994 SCOLE/COA program planned

Today's society demands that professional education programs be accountable to their publics--society, employers, students. University administrators demand conformity to academic norms of research and publication, as well as demonstrable links to the central mission of the institutions of higher education. How does education for LIS professionals not only survive but thrive amidst these often conflicting demands?

Speakers at the second annual program co-sponsored by SCOLE and COA will address these issues and engage the audience in a dialogue from various perspectives. The program is scheduled from 2-4 p.m. Monday, June 27, 1994, at ALA's Annual Meeting in Miami Beach.▲

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## CORPA (cont. fr page 5)

August 21, 1994. It is presently headquartered in Washington, D.C.

Recognition by an outside agency such as CORPA provides credibility to the American Library Association as the body authorized to conduct reviews and site visits of graduate programs in library and information studies. The criteria for recognition (the "standards") guide the policies and procedures used by COA. The recognition review is useful in giving ALA and COA constructive guidance and counsel about how to improve its accrediting procedures and serves as an incentive to COA to stay accountable for its decisions. For example, the appointment of two public members to serve on COA is a CORPA requirement, as is the requirements to have an appeals procedure and a student complaint policy. ALA is due to apply for renewal of recognition by CORPA in 1995. ▲

## Climate (cont. fr page 3)

stronger review process with greater integrity than each could conduct alone.

Accreditors will retain their traditional responsibility for reviewing the quality of education and training, but now, accreditors must establish standards and review the following additional factors: program length as related to tuition and fees, program length in terms of credit and clock hours, default rate on student loans, student complaints, and compliance with Title IV program responsibilities.

The states must now review institutions if the Secretary of Education reviews these institutions and discovers that there exists a situation that is defined as a "trigger." Examples of triggers are: 25% cohort default rate on student loans, legal suit or action, a late audit report, failure to meet financial responsibility standards, and/or an identifiable pattern of student complaints. States are being asked to establish SPREs (State Programmatic Review Entities) to carry out these reviews. States will also be responsible for developing standards in the following areas: financial and administrative capacity, cost of education compared to expected remuneration, fair and equitable refund policies, completion/graduation rates, placement in relevant occupations, pass rates on licensure exams. Clearly there will be different standards for different types of programs, and a major emphasis will be on pre-baccalaureate, vocational education. Still to be discussed are the required record-keeping, and what the quantifiable review standards will be.

Although many may contend that the legislation that resulted from the re-authorization of the Higher Education Act is misguided, the new responsibilities are written into the law and there is not much that can be done about them at this time. As part of regionally accredited institutions, LIS programs may well be required to respond to requests for these data beyond the requirements of COA. The final version of the negotiated rules will go into effect May 1, 1994, the culmination of a process that spanned two administrations and has generated more comment and revision than any in recent memory. ▲

# Schedule of evaluation reviews revised June, 1993

SPRING 1994	FALL 1994	SPRING 1995	FALL 1995
MORATORIUM	Arizona Louisiana Tennessee	Clark-Atlanta Iowa Pratt South Florida Southern Mississippi	Alabama Hawaii McGill NC-Central South Carolina Wayne State
SPRING 1996	FALL 1996	SPRING 1997	FALL 1997
Clarion Rhode Island Rutgers Southern Connecticut Texas Woman's Toronto	Florida State MO-Columbia NC-Greensboro Rosary Syracuse WI-Milwaukee	CA-Berkeley CA-Los Angeles Illinois Kentucky Puerto Rico St. John's Western Ontario	Dalhousie  Kent State NY-Albany Queens
SPRING 1998	FALL 1998	SPRING 1999	FALL 1999
Catholic Drexel Michigan	NY-Buffalo North Texas Simmons Washington	Alberta British Columbia Maryland Pittsburgh	Emporia Indiana Montreal NC-Chapel Hill Texas at Austin WI-Madison




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