CORPA continues ALA recognition

The Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation (CORPA) voted recently to continue recognition of ALA's status as the accrediting agency for library and information studies. Recognition has been granted for a five year period. This is the maximum period granted by CORPA, the organization that succeeded the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), which continues private, voluntary recognition for both specialized and institutional accreditation.

Carla Hayden, Chair of ALA's Committee on Accreditation and Pru Dalrymple, Director of the Office for Accreditation, made an oral presentation to the CORPA Committee on Recognition on February 18, 1995 in Washington, D.C. Their presentation amplified points presented in the self study document submitted last October, and addressed issues raised by the reader consultant who reviewed and analyzed the petition. Two members of the Committee on Recognition led the discussion and question and answer period.

Recognition, like accreditation, ensures that recognized agencies comply with standards of good accrediting practice such as committee appointments, reliability and validity of accreditation decisions, conduct of site visits, and such policy issues as confidentiality, conflict of interest, and due process.

The next scheduled review for ALA will occur in the year 2000. 

COA actions taken

At its Midwinter meeting in Philadelphia, the Committee on Accreditation took the following actions: The COA continued accreditation of the Master of Arts at the School of Library Science at the University of Arizona. The COA scheduled the next comprehensive review of the program for dates to be determined during Fall, 1998. The COA continued accreditation of the Master of Library and Information Science at the School of Library and Information Science at Louisiana State University. The COA scheduled the next comprehensive review of the program for dates to be determined during Fall, 2001. The accreditation decisions are contained in a two page document that is available from each school. The decision documents contain more specific information about each program.

Elizabeth Futas memorialized

All of us remember with fondness and respect Liz's candor, her humor, and her energy. The library and information studies community had a forceful and articulate spokesperson in Liz. As director of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Liz gave generously of her time and her intelligence to ALA and LIS edu-
COA meets in Philadelphia

Carla Hayden

The Committee on Accreditation meetings at Midwinter were substantive and wide-ranging. COA completed the accreditation process for two schools, evaluating the process even as we conducted it. The Committee considered strategic issues, met with our Teleconference Advisory Board, made plans for the spring and Annual Conference meetings and activities preparatory to them. I would characterize the COA Midwinter meetings as high energy, exciting, and deliberative.

The process is off to a good start. The first two schools completed their comprehensive reviews in a meeting with each program's dean, external review panel chair and COA. The Committee deliberations included information gained from these meetings and the materials received earlier which included the program presentations, external review panel reports, and school responses. COA is pleased with the new process and will meet in the spring to continue planning and evaluating in preparation for the six programs which will be reviewed at Annual Conference.

The Committee is involved with evaluation at many levels. In the short term we are evaluating the accreditation process itself as we complete the first two schools and prepare for the spring schools.

Longer range evaluation includes the 1992 Standards and the accompanying documents. The documents will be reviewed and revised as we gain more experience with implementing the process. The Committee reserves part of the agenda at each meeting for strategic planning.

COA is not alone in our evaluations of the accreditation process. At Midwinter COA met with our Teleconference Advisory Board. This group's input will help COA as we consider ways to take the teleconference experience and develop future panel training possibilities. The group also discussed areas of future communications.

Two weeks after Midwinter, Pru Dalrymple and I participated in the CORPA review of our accreditation wherein we seek recognition as an accrediting agency (see news item on p. 1). Issues came up at our hearing which were helpful and will be incorporated in the COA evaluation activities.

COA is excited to note that education is included as a priority area in ALA Goal 2000. "ALA will have redefined library information education and provided five years of training for professionals to update their skills for the new information age."

We look forward to continuing the momentum of the Midwinter meeting as we move through the spring and Annual Conference meetings. As always, we welcome feedback from all participants and observers.

ALA SCOLE changes name

Margaret Myers

The ALA Standing Committee on Library Education (SCOLE) recommended a revised statement of responsibilities and name change to the ALA Committee on Organization at the 1995 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia. The proposed revisions were adopted by the ALA Council at its meeting, February 8, 1995. The committee is now called Committee on Education, because the term "library education" has become outmoded with the increasing emphasis on "library and information studies." The Committee on Education also reflects the broad scope of the committee's charge, which addresses continuing education and training of support staff, as well as the master's level. The committee hopes to take a more proactive stance in recommending policy issues related to the various levels of education and training. It will continue to work with other education-related committees within the association through the Education Assembly, formerly the Library Education Assembly.
Emphasize planning and evaluation

Prudence W. Dalrymple

In order to assist schools in thinking through the outcomes oriented emphasis of the Standards, the Office for Accreditation recently distributed to deans and directors its new publication Outcomes Assessment for Library and Information Studies Resource Manual. Supported with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the manual describes the process of determining outcomes-oriented objectives and illustrates the Plan-Do-Test-Change model in the context of LIS education.

The 1992 Standards emphasize continuous planning and evaluation. Each standard requires that the program demonstrate how it sets objectives within the context of its own mission and goals. They also require that the school measure its progress toward achieving those objectives; that is, a school must show the outcomes of the planning process. Finally, the standards require that these results be used to improve the educational program offered by the school.

While many LIS programs have already been engaged in this kind of planning and evaluation, either at their own initiative or prompted by their central administrations, many other programs are just beginning. Still others have begun to recognize the important benefits of the Standards on this matter. COA accreditation decisions are now written far less prescriptively than under the 1972 Standards, but they place greater emphasis on the school’s responsibility for determining the ways in which the school will go about complying with the Standards. The accreditation decision specifies areas in which it expects the school to set objectives that will enable it to improve in the specific area(s) and demonstrate the outcomes that it has achieved. Both the school and COA can use the ongoing monitoring process already in place (the biennial narrative report) as the mechanism for demonstrating compliance.

This process also affects how COA goes about its business. For the last three years, COA has continually reviewed the interim reporting mechanisms in order to streamline the process for LIS schools, but also to orient COA members to ways in which the ongoing monitoring of programs can serve the programs by highlighting achievements to central administrators as well as providing incentive for improvement. An important benefit to COA members is the opportunity to review and discuss developments at schools across North America. Through the biennial narrative reports, COA members gain a clearer picture of the overall state of LIS education, which assists them in seeing an individual program in a larger context. While the ongoing monitoring process required of schools gains in importance, it becomes ultimately more flexible and relevant to the schools. Schools also build a solid foundation of planning and evaluation that will facilitate preparing for subsequent accreditation reviews.

Standards are machine-readable

Full text of the 1992 Standards and accompanying modules are available on disk. These materials include:
- Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies
- An Overview
- Guidelines for the Program Presentation
- Guidelines for the External Review Panel
- Guidelines for Appeals

A simple search tool is provided on the disk for your convenience in locating items of interest.

This is made available through the generous efforts of Dr. Charles Rubenstein, School of Information and Library Science at Pratt Institute. Our thanks go to Dr. Rubenstein who has agreed to add the Outcomes Assessment module in the near future.

For copies of the disk, please contact the Office for Accreditation.
Materials distributed

At the Midwinter meeting of the deans and directors of library and information studies programs with the director of the Office for Accreditation, a variety of issues were discussed. A brief video about accreditation was shown and the following materials were distributed.

- Our Changing World: ALA's 1992 Standards for Accreditation. This ten-minute video provides an overview of the ALA 1992 Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies and the process established to implement the standards.
- Outcomes Assessment for Library and Information Studies Resource Manual. This is the fifth module of materials developed to assist in the implementation of the new accreditation process.
- Educational policy statements:
  - Guidelines for Graduate Programs in Law and Information Organizations, AALL
  - Preparation of School Library Media Specialists, AASL
  - Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries, ALSC
  - Platform for Change, MLA
  - Graduate Education Position Statement, SLA
- Young Adults Deserve the Best, YASD

Additional copies of the educational policy statements are available from the source organizations.

- The Master's Degree for Library and Information Professionals and Guidelines for Choosing a Master's Program in Library and Information Studies. Additional copies of these two items are available from the Office for Library Personnel Resources.

Copies of the Outcomes Assessment Manual, the video, and other items were mailed to those deans and directors unable to attend the meeting. For additional copies of the video and Outcomes Assessment Manual, please contact the Office for Accreditation.

Thanks go to ERP members

A major part of the accreditation process involves the review and analysis of the schools program presentations by members of the External Review Panel (ERP). The chair and several members of the panel usually visit the schools where they meet with faculty members, students, school and university administrative officers, alumni and employers. Through interviews and observations, the panel member's goal is to ensure that the accreditation decision is sound and well grounded in fact. In consultation with each other, the panel members write the external review report which is sent to the school. The school has the option of submitting a response to the panel report.

The program presentation, external review report and school's response are the cornerstone documents used by the COA to reach the accreditation decision. The panel chair meets with the dean or director and COA to review the panel report and school's response.

Great thanks are extended to each of the following panel members who contributed generous amounts of time and expertise to the important tasks of the two most recent external review panels: Camile Alire, Richard Budd (chair), Daniel Callison, Evelyn Daniel (chair), Donald Davis, Edward Johnson, Carol Kuhlthau, June Lester, Joseph Mika, Carl Orgren, Charles Rubenstein.

Futas (cont. fr. page 1)

She died on Monday, February 6, of an apparent heart attack during a session of the ALA Council at the Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia. We miss her.

ALA established a memorial fund for Liz. Donations may be sent to: Elizabeth Futas Memorial Fund, c/o American Library Association, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611.
COA joins QA international group

At its Midwinter meeting, the Committee on Accreditation voted to join the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education. The Center is based at the Center for Higher Education, One Dupont Circle, in Washington. Members include a variety of institutional and specialized accrediting agencies, higher education associations, and international groups concerned with quality assurance issues.

Recent meetings of the Center members have resulted in agreements among the three North American nations—Canada, the U.S., and Mexico—aimed at promoting cooperative professional accreditation. The goal is to facilitate the mobility of professionals and the export of educational programs, while monitoring the quality of educational offerings. For example, the U.S. cannot at this time provide an accurate count or list of locations of its exported products in higher education. There are no common, recognized standards against which exported programs can be measured, and there are numerous problems associated with assessing the credentials of graduates of foreign programs.

At a recent meeting in Washington, staff from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative described the role accreditors can play in facilitating the export of professional expertise and educational programs to nations throughout the world. Librarians have a stake in these issues as national educational systems look to the U.S. not only for reciprocity for individual credentials but also for assistance in assessing both libraries and LIS education in the global marketplace.

Membership in the Center affirms ALA’s position as the nexus for quality assurance in library and information studies. It also provides free consultation on matters dealing with international education, as well as the opportunity to network with other professionals who are interested in globalization of the professions and of professional education.

Video available

Our Changing World: ALA’s 1992 Standards for Accreditation provides a ten minute overview of the 1992 Standards for Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies and the process established to implement the Standards.

The new Standards and process serve faculty, students, administrators, and employers. The common principles of diversity, flexibility, peer review, and open communication are emphasized.

ALA is in the forefront of accreditation today. View this tape to learn why.

Copies of this video are available for loan through the Information Center, 800-545-2433 x2153. The Office for Accreditation has a limited supply of the video. To request your copy, please call 800-545-2433 x2432. Both offices are located at ALA, 50 E. Huron, Chicago, IL 60611.

Outlook (cont. fr page 3)

Many schools already engage in a variety of useful review and evaluation activities that can be incorporated into activities required by the Standards. At its spring meeting, COA will finalize the plans for a gathering of participants in the first round of accreditation reviews to analyze and evaluate their experience. COA also anticipates that through cooperative ventures with ALISE, mechanisms will be available for sharing results of assessment approaches now underway in LIS programs so that other programs may share such experience in the future.

Additional copies of the manual are available through the Office for Accreditation. The manual is distributed with the Accreditation packet which now consists of five modules plus the 1992 Standards that describe the accreditation process administered by the Committee on Accreditation.
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