

# PRISM

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## COA grants candidacy status

At its fall meeting, the Committee on Accreditation granted candidacy status to the Masters Program in Library and Information Science at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico.

Prior to the fall meeting the Committee had received a letter with an eligibility report from Agnes Mojica, Chancellor, Inter American University of Puerto Rico. During the meeting, COA met with Dr. Fabio Restrepo representing the Inter American University LIS Program.

This is the first program to enter candidacy status under the 1992 *Standards*. Candidacy

status is a preliminary step to initial accreditation. This status may be maintained for a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years. During this time the program begins its planning process. Programs in candidacy receive all literature and mailings sent to accredited programs. Representatives of programs in candidacy are also eligible to attend all open meetings, training sessions, and workshops open to accredited programs. ▲

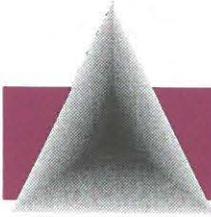
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## Fall panels complete reviews

A special thank you is extended to the following educators and practitioners who participated in the fall reviews of six library and information studies programs. The participants included the following chairs: Toni Carbo Bearman, William H. Fisher, Edward R. Johnson, Barbara Moran, Jane B. Robbins, C. James Schmidt; and the following panel members: Deborah B. Babel, Barbara M. Barstow, James A. Benson, Anne M. Buck, Joseph A. Busch, Jennifer Cargill, Keith M. Cottam, Anne P. Diffendal, Carol A. Doll, Jean Donham van Deusen, Joan Durrance, Joanne R. Euster, Thomas J. Galvin, Patricia A. Gibson, Robert J.

Grover, Trudi Bellardo Hahn, Ken Haycock, Margaret M. Kimmel, Gertrude Koh, Beverly P. Lynch, Joanne G. Marshall, Robert S. Martin, Vivienne Monty, Delia Neuman, Lorna Peterson, Sydney J. Pierce, Frank H. Spaulding, Keith Swigger, Lamar Veatch, Delmus E. Williams. We were pleased to have as an observer for one of the Canadian program reviews Ann Curry representing the Canadian Library Association.

If you are interested in serving on a panel, call the Office for Accreditation (800-545-2433 x2432) to request an application form and instructions. ▲



From the COA Chair:  
**PERSPECTIVE**

## Looking inward

Brooke E. Sheldon

Now that the new accreditation process is well underway, one would have to be singularly out in left field, perhaps even under a rock not to notice that there is emphasis on planning and evaluation in the 1992 *Standards*, and in the way they are being used to evaluate programs.

In effect, the new standards force the schools to be much more explicit in defining goals, establishing methods for achieving and evaluating continuous improvement and for working closely with their constituencies to reach agreement about what those goals should be. Most schools already have a clear understanding of these processes. What is apparently not as easy to achieve is establishing a systematic continuous process for these planning and evaluation activities.

The old-seven-year cycle was, after all, a comfortable one, offering a few years of respite before embarking on a feverish round of graduate surveys, town meetings, and so on to

enable the school to prepare the old self-study using recent data to support their assertions. In this new era, such evaluative activities or assessment should take place at appropriate but planned intervals, and there is a definite emphasis on product as well as process.

This is all well and good, but COA ought to practice what it preaches and if we are going to insist that the schools be explicit about their plan for self assessment then we can expect no less of the Committee itself. As John Berry notes in his recent editorial (*Library Journal*, October 1, 1995), the "new" accreditation process can be awarded "conditional reapproval, with the proviso that I can take another closer look very soon."

While it has not yet been formally adopted by the Committee, there are indeed opportunities for our constituencies to take a closer look. The next one will be at the ALISE meeting in San Antonio where members of the COA are working with ALISE in putting together a panel discussion on Friday morning to evaluate the new process.

In fall 1994 the Committee held a long-range planning session that addressed a number of

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### Committee on Accreditation American Library Association

## Upcoming Meetings

COA meetings are open, but the Committee reserves the right to go into executive session as necessary. All COA meetings will be in the Hyatt Regency Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas. The deadline for submitting agenda items to COA is one month prior to the meeting.

ALA 1996 Midwinter Meeting January 19-25, 1996		January 21	8:30 am - 12:30 pm COA
January 19	4:15 pm - 5:30 pm Deans and Directors	January 21	2:00 pm - 5:30 pm COA
January 20	8:00 am - 12:45 pm COA	January 22	8:00 am - 11:30 pm COA
January 20	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm COA	January 22	2:00 pm - 4:30 pm COA

## Planning to plan

*Prudence W. Dalrymple*

As I write this column, about one third of the accredited LIS programs have had to confront the question: "How do I plan to plan?" This query is usually prompted by the requirement that programs submit a Plan for the Program Presentation one year before the scheduled review. The Plan serves several purposes, one of which is to ensure that programs begin preparing for their review in a timely manner; another is to give the Office and the Committee a more specific idea of what characteristics the school is seeking in the panel chair and panel members. In my capacity as consultant to programs, I have found that creating the plan is an important, but sometimes puzzling, step. In this column, I share with you some suggestions that have arisen from working with programs that have undertaken reaccreditation thus far. There is no required format for the plan, but based on my observations of the plans that have been submitted, I offer you these suggestions with the hope that others may find them useful.

1. The Program Plan(PP) is a good time to deal with the general tone or theme of the program presentation, i.e., will there be special areas of focus or emphasis in the Program Presentation? The PP seems to work best when the school takes a future-oriented approach, often building on any strategic planning documents, vision statements, or the like that may already be in existence or planned in the near future.

2. Consider the distribution of the labor needed to accomplish the Program Presentation. In the past, many faculties divided up into six groups, one for each standard. While this is certainly one way to approach the process, it can often work against success because it makes the *Standards* the focus of the process, rather than the program and its future. Where possible, it is advisable to work as a committee of the whole and then, once a general direction

and objectives for the program have been identified, to break into committees or task forces that can have a useful life beyond the accreditation cycle.

3. As you develop the plan, indicate whether any other external reviews such as NCATE, university review, Southern Association etc. are scheduled at or around the time of the COA review. COA encourages schools to coordinate these reviews so as to maximize the university resources dedicated to external evaluation.

4. Determine and describe plans for any data collection efforts that will be necessary for the review. For example, do you plan to conduct focus groups, structured interviews, mail or telephone surveys with your constituent groups and/or students and alumni? The ERP chair and I are happy to assist you in planning these activities, and it is important to lay them out with a timeline for design of the instrument (if not already in existence), data collection, analysis, and reporting.

5. Begin thinking about the format of the PP. Generally, focusing on the mission, goals, and objectives of the school are of paramount importance. Setting measurable objectives with benchmarks or targets to measure accomplishment is an indication of a planning and evaluation component resident within the school. There is a strong emphasis on planning and evaluation in the 1992 *Standards*, and it is important and beneficial to approach the PP as a planning and evaluation activity that is developmental for the school.

6. Once you have determined how you want to approach the PP (it is both a process and a document), you can begin to determine how the work will get done. Again, when the PP is approached as a process, taking the time now to establish the planning and evaluation mechanisms in your school (if they don't already exist) is an investment that will continue to benefit the school long after the actual review takes place.

7. Finally, you can map your plan against the *Standards* to determine the degree to which your program conforms to each standard.

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# New COA members appointed

Three new COA members were appointed by Betty Turock, ALA President, for terms which began in July 1995. Margaret J. Barr, Vice President for Student Affairs, Northwestern University, was appointed to serve a two year term as a public member. Dr. Barr holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin. James Baughman, Director, Library Media Services Programs, and Professor, Simmons College,

Graduate School of Library and Information Science, was appointed to a four year term. Dr. Baughman holds a Ph.D in Library and Information Science from Case Western University in Cleveland. Richard W. Budd, Dean, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers University, also was appointed for a four year term. Dr. Budd holds a Ph.D. in Psychology/Communication from the University of Iowa. ▲

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## Inward (cont. fr page 2)

issues including process and standards. Following the COA meetings in Chicago last summer, an early feedback session involved panel chairs, panel members, and deans. As a result of suggestions from these sessions, all of the guideline documents were revised for greater clarity, and slightly fuller detail, and the updated documents have been republished.

Another long-range planning and evaluation session is scheduled for spring 1996. The Committee devotes the majority of its meeting in the spring to planning and self assessment. It has also been suggested that an opportunity be provided annually for an open forum (or panel discussion with audience participation) so that members of the LIS education community, and the profession at large, can comment on issues of importance to COA. The substance of these forums should form the agendas for the spring evaluation meetings.

COA has also developed a timetable for future standards revisions so that there will no

longer be a hiatus of 20 years before the standards are revised. This timetable would initiate the revision process in 1996, with standards approval occurring in 2000 and the first reviews in 2002. Berry talks about the costs of accreditation in his editorial; one thing that the new process has potential for achieving is not only lower costs, but a diffusion of planning and evaluation expenses so that the every-seven-years mammoth effort to attain information is amortized into the annual operating expenses of the school. Similarly, an orderly ongoing process for revising standards will replace one-time allocations with sustained support in helping with continuous review and improvement.

The process of accreditation has many critics; it will always be that way. It is however a process in which a fair number of the profession can participate not only in serving on COA but also by volunteering and taking the training to participate in external review panels. If you are interested in this and want more information about volunteer and training opportunities, contact the Office for Accreditation (800-545-2433 x2432). ▲

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## Schedule of evaluation reviews

### SPRING 1996

Clarion  
Rhode Island  
S. Connecticut  
Texas Woman's  
Toronto

### FALL 1996

Missouri  
N.C. Greensboro  
Wis. - Milwaukee

### SPRING 1997

Calif. - U.C.L.A.  
Kentucky  
Puerto Rico  
Rutgers  
St. John's  
W. Ontario

### FALL 1997

Illinois  
Kent State  
N.Y. - Albany  
Queens  
Rosary  
Syracuse

### SPRING 1998

Catholic  
Dalhousie  
Drexel  
Florida State  
Michigan  
Pratt

### FALL 1998

Arizona  
N.Y. - Buffalo  
North Texas  
Simmons  
Washington

### SPRING 1999

Alberta  
Brit. Columbia  
Maryland  
Pittsburgh

### FALL 1999

Emporia  
Indiana  
Montreal  
N.C. Chapel Hill  
Texas - Austin  
Wis. - Madison

### SPRING 2000

Long Island  
Oklahoma  
San Jose

### FALL 2001

Louisiana

### SPRING 2002

Clark Atlanta  
Iowa  
So. Florida  
So. Mississippi  
Tenn. - Knoxville

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## CHEA proposal

Twenty five college and university presidents met in Chicago in September to propose a new organization, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Currently recognition is carried out by the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation. A call for comment and reactions has been issued with a call for nominations for the Board of Directors. Copies of the draft proposal were distributed and discussed at the fall COA meeting. ALA, other accreditors, and the Association for Specialized and Professional Accreditors, will comment during the month of December. If ratified, the new organization will be formed during 1996. ▲

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## Planning (cont. fr page 3)

As more and more programs gain experience with the revised accreditation process, others can take advantage of prior experience through collegial consultation and sharing. At the ALISE conference in San Antonio, Program Presentations will be on display so that you may contact your colleagues for additional insights. ▲

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## COA nominations

The recent call for nominations to serve on the Committee on Accreditation resulted in twenty six nominations. COA was pleased with the quantity and quality of nominations. The Committee is reviewing the nominations and will forward a proposed roster to Mary Somerville, ALA President-elect, who will make the final appointments for terms beginning after the ALA Annual Meeting in New York next summer. ▲

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## LIS directory

A new directory of accredited library and information studies programs will be available in January. The directory replaces the biannual list of accredited programs, the *Graduate Programs in Library and Information Studies: Descriptive Information* and the *Guidelines for Choosing a Master's Program in Library and Information Studies*.

This publication is a cooperative venture between the ALA Office for Accreditation and Office for Library Personnel Resources. For further information, contact Mary Taylor, 800-545-2433 x2436 or [mary.taylor@ala.org](mailto:mary.taylor@ala.org). ▲



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