



PRISM

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COA plans and evaluates

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) met in Chicago on April 12-14, 1996. COA devoted the majority of this three day meeting to the Committee's ongoing planning and evaluation. Several important areas of discussion were the reliability and validity of the accreditation process (see Brooke Sheldon's column on page 2) and the interim reporting process as a planning tool for accredited LIS programs (see Prudence Dalrymple's column on page 3). In addition to these areas, several actions taken reflect the range of the meeting.

The Committee endorsed the *Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) Code of Good Practice for Accrediting Bodies*. The Code outlines seven main tenets. "An accrediting organization:

1. Pursues its mission, goals, and objectives, and conducts its operation in a trustworthy manner.
2. Maximizes service, productivity, and effectiveness in the accreditation relationship.
3. Respects and protects institutional autonomy.
4. Maintains a broad perspective as the basis for wise decision making.
5. Focuses accreditation reviews on the development of knowledge and competence.
6. Exhibits integrity and professionalism in the conduct of its operations.
7. Has mechanisms to ensure that expertise and experience in the application of its standards, procedures, and values are present in

members of its visiting teams, commissions, and staff."

For further information about the Code of Good Practice, please contact any staff member in the Office for Accreditation.

COA established a working group of Committee members to serve as advisors to the Office for Accreditation as staff work with the new ALISE statistical report editors, Evelyn Daniel and Jerry Saye, to review the statistical data collected from accredited programs each fall. The annual statistical reporting from all accredited LIS programs to COA includes selected data from the ALISE statistical reports. ALISE has established an advisory committee to work with the new report editors, as they evaluate the current data collection in terms of both what is collected and how it is collected.

The charge for the COA working group is:
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Talk with COA in NYC

On Saturday, July 6, 1996 from 12:30 to 2:00 at the Javits Center the Committee on Accreditation will host a table talk. The tables will be located in the Special Events Room Foyer, on the lower level between the council room and the food court. Get your lunch and bring it to the table to eat while you discuss LIS program accreditation with COA. ▲

Assessing panels

Brooke E. Sheldon

Last issue I wrote about "Getting Involved" and the joy of being on an external review panel. There was some discussion of the attributes needed to be a good panel member. This time I'd like to share with you some of the work accomplished at the spring planning meeting of COA where we spent some time analyzing the new review process, and concluded that on the whole the review panels have done a good job.

To accomplish this we looked at the review panel reports of the first programs evaluated under the 1992 *Standards* to see if the panels had consistently compared them to the 1992 *Standards*. To do this we looked at three questions:

1. Is every standard used?
2. Is the evidence adequate and did the panel use it?
3. Is the conclusion of the panel supported by the evidence?

We also looked for a consultative (albeit objective) tone in the report, i.e., has the panel provided assistance in its comments? Finally, we evaluated the reports for clarity and organization.

The bottom line for COA is its comfort level in being able to make a decision based on the reports. It is one thing to have a totally objective report, but unless the findings are inextricably linked to the *Standards* there will be no credibility in the process. At the same time, we were also looking at the *Standards* themselves to see if they, as presently worded, are workable as evaluative measures. In other words, do our new *Standards* have validity in this process?

The Committee was guided through this group process by an extremely skilled and knowledgeable facilitator, Ted Manning, accreditation guru, and former president of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

In my view, it was a very useful exercise because it:

- Strengthened the Committee's ability to analyze an external review panel report;
- Provided useful information concerning the process that will be incorporated into review panel training sessions;
- Confirmed our suspicions that the new review process is working reasonably well;
- Suggested that COA may want to provide some kind of suggested format for the panel review report without in any way imposing a structure that might hamper the creativity of the panel.

This evaluative exercise along with comments received at the open meetings such as the ALISE panel on accreditation held in San Antonio in January, are all part of COA's plan to continuously evaluate and improve the accreditation process. Ultimately this plan must include revision of the 1992 *Standards*.

In the meantime, it's not too late to sign up for two hours of training to be an external review panel member either in Boston at SLA, Saturday June 8 or in New York at ALA, Friday, July 5. Contact Mary Taylor, Office for Accreditation, 800-545-2433 x2436 for details. ▲

Spring panels complete reviews

Thanks are extended to the following external review panel members who participated in the peer reviews of five library and information studies programs during the spring. The chairs of the panels who deserve a special thanks include: Marianne Cooper, Rick Forsman, Herman Totten, Danny Wallace, and Anne Woodsworth. The panel participants who generously contribute their efforts to the review process include: Bert Boyce, Robert Braude, Patricia Smith Butcher, Charles Conaway, Bryan Corbett, Evelyn Daniel, Donna Dziedzic, Kathleen Eisenbeis, Patricia Feehan, Shirley Fitzgibbons, Edward Garten, Vicki Gregory, Stephanie Haas, Janet Swan

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Biennial reports record program achievements

Prudence W. Dalrymple

To reduce the reporting burden on its accredited programs, COA moved from an annual to biennial reporting schedule in 1992. The instructions for biennial reporting will be sent shortly to those programs (approximately half) that are scheduled to report. Now that we have approximately two years of experience with programs reaccredited under the 1992 *Standards*, it is a good time to review the effectiveness of the biennial reporting.

Unlike accreditation decisions under the 1972 *Standards*, current decisions are diagnostic rather than prescriptive. Where programs are found not to comply with a standard, the area of non-compliance is indicated and programs are requested to develop a plan to achieve compliance. The former practice of issuing a series of specific recommendations has been eliminated.

How does this work? Faculties who have started to work on Program Presentations soon realize that the 1992 *Standards* require substantial evidence of planning and evaluation activities. While not every activity need be completed nor every objective attained at the time of reaccreditation, an indication of expected progress is necessary. This timeline frequently extends beyond the time of the accreditation review. The biennial reporting process then serves to demonstrate the program's accountability for achieving its goals and objectives. The wise dean and faculty can use the biennial report in several ways.

1. to guide the development of the program and to advance goals and objectives,
2. to establish a track record of planning and evaluation that can be cited in future reaccreditation reviews,

3. to create a planning process that will build incrementally toward the Program Presentation in anticipation of the next reaccreditation review.

The program assumes a proactive stance in reporting progress, rather than a reactive response to COA recommendations. The biennial report also emerges from the faculty as a whole under the direction of the dean or director, rather than becoming an administrative exercise.

The COA has continued to examine the biennial reporting procedures in light of the new accreditation standards and process. Wherever possible, the biennial process has been structured to reflect the accreditation process as a whole. That is, it emphasizes dialogue between parties, and it is flexible and open. COA continues to welcome suggestions for improvement as it engages in its own planning and evaluation activities.

Another important feature of the planning and evaluation process is how the results of evaluation are used to effect change in the program. This aspect of planning and evaluation under the 1992 *Standards* will be the subject of a future column. ▲

COA reviews CHEA proposal

At its spring meeting the COA reviewed the Presidents' Work Group's proposed Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CHEA is the latest in a series of attempts to design an organization that could fill the void caused by the collapse of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) in 1993. A referendum on the formation of the Council proposal has been distributed to the CEO's of all institutions of higher education in the U.S. A simple majority is needed for approval; the results will be announced in May.

CHEA differs from COPA in that accrediting agencies are not eligible for membership, but

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How to get involved

Are you an educator and/or practitioner with an understanding of and appreciation for the peer review process? Then you are needed to participate as an external review panel member in the process for library and information studies programs at the Master's level. If you meet the following criteria:

- five years experience in the profession or in higher education or three years employment in an information-related field
- demonstrated interpersonal and team participation skills
- flexibility in scheduling and a willingness to commit up to four consecutive days during the academic year
- demonstrated analytical skills
- demonstrated logical, clear report-writing ability
- ability to communicate effectively with a broad-range of constituencies regardless of

culture, gender, ethnicity or race, including administrators, staff, students, and the public

- appreciation and understanding of the context of higher education

then you qualify. Please complete the following form. Note that ALA membership is not required.

All external review panel applicants receive the quarterly newsletter *Prism*. This newsletter reports the activities of the COA and the Office for Accreditation, accreditation within the professions generally, and within the library and information studies programs specifically.

For additional copies of the form, you may photocopy this one or contact the Office for Accreditation (800-545-2433 x2432).

The ALISE classification guide is provided for your convenience in completing the areas of specialty section of the form.

ALISE classification guide

01 Information Science/Information Services	25 machine, machine-machine)	52 Audio-Visual
02 Library Science/Library Services	26 Management or Administration	53 Maps
03 Information Systems/Information Resources Management	27 Marketing; Planning; Public Relations	54 Serials
04 Cognitive Processes	28 Networking or Cooperation	55 Government Publications
05 Communications Technologies (including telecommunications)	29 Collection Development	56 Archives
06 Artificial Intelligence/Expert Systems	30 Preservation of Materials	57 Records Management; Corporate Records
07 Foundations of Library and Information Science/Core	31 Intellectual Freedom and Censorship	58 Rare Materials
08 Historical, Societal, Philos. Treatment of Library & Information Science	32 Storytelling	59 Audience: Children
09 Education for Library and Information Specialties	33 Bibliotherapy	60 Audience: Young Adults
09.1 Distance Education	34 Reference or Information Services	61 Audience: General Adult Population
10 International and Comparative Library and Information Science	35 Information and Referral/Community Information	62 Audience: Aged
11 Classification	36 Computer Programming	63.1 Audience: Handicapped and Institutionalized
12 Descriptive Cataloging	37 Database Design or Management	63.2 Audience: Ethnic Groups; Cultural History
13 Subject Cataloging	38 Automation and Computerization	63.3 Audience: Professional and Scholarly Groups
14 Technical Services	39 Online Searching/Computerized Information Retrieval	64 Academic Libraries
15 Indexing and Abstracting	40 Bibliographic Instruction/User Education	65 Public Libraries
16 Technical Writing	41 Bibliography	66 School Media Centers/Libraries
17 Publishing; Book Arts	42 Instructional Technology/Design; Media Production	67 Law Libraries or Information Centers
18 Research Methods; Statistics	43 Information Policy; Economics of Information	68 Arts or Music Libraries or Information Centers
19 Bibliometrics	44 Science and Technology	69 Medical Libraries or Information Centers
20 Not used	45 Social Science	70 Other Subject-specialized Libraries or Information Centers
21 Facilities Planning	46 Humanities	71 Corporate Libraries or Information Centers
22 Reprography	47 Business/Economics	72 Governmental Libraries or Information Centers
23 Information Systems: Analysis, Design or Evaluation	48 Medicine	73 Information Industry (for profit)▲
24 Communication (human, human-	49 Law	
	50 Music	
	51 Art	
	52 Area Studies	

External review panel member information

Name: _____ Circle one: Mr. Ms. Dr.

Preferred Mailing Address:

Office phone: _____
Home phone: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____
SS#: _____

Current position title: _____ Employer: _____

Experience:

Years: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____
Years: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____
Years: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____
Years: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____

Check all that apply: Adjunct faculty Dean Faculty Practitioner

Education: Degree: ____ Year: ____ Institution: _____ Field: _____

Other Relevant Training or Experience (with accreditation or with higher education):

Areas of Specialty:

Using the ALISE Classification Guide (see page 4), please list no more than **three primary** and **three secondary**:

Primary: _____ Secondary: _____

I give my permission for this information to be shared with master's programs in library and information studies:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this completed form with your most current vita to:

Office for Accreditation
American Library Association
50 East Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611
fax: 312-280-2433

Coordinating program reviews

Jane B. Robbins

Among the most prevalent laments of LIS faculty, staff, and administrators is that there is a seemingly endless onslaught of assessment groups each wanting to bring its expertise to bear on our efforts; they want to aid us in assuring our various stakeholders that we do indeed know what we are doing and what we hope to be accomplishing. For too many of us it is not unusual to have periods of three or more years when each year contains a due date for an assessor's review document. In addition to the specialized accreditors, COA and frequently NCATE, our university may conduct a review of our unit or one or more of our degree programs; or, the state may review all programs in our field throughout the state. While each review has unique requirements, their similarities predominate. Although some of us might prefer to deal with each reviewing group separately, I think it is safe to assert that most would wish to coordinate one or more of these reviews.

Over the past several months I have had the opportunity to chair a coordinated South Carolina Higher Education Commission and COA program review for the University of South Carolina's College of Library and Information Science. It may be that the highly positive experience that all the participants agreed was achieved is attributable to some of the characteristics of the situation; i.e., only one university in the state offers LIS education. The college's programs: Masters, Certificate of Graduate Study, and Specialist, are closely interrelated in terms of faculty and curricular offerings; and, all the parties were anxious to achieve positive results. However, I do not believe that this was a unique experience and do believe that others could achieve similar results.

The coordinated review entailed three key agreements: (1) The Higher Education Commission agreed to accept the COA Program Presentation document as the State's

document and to request only demonstrably necessary additional information. For this review data for a longer period of time regarding enrollments and degrees awarded for all three programs was required. (2) The COA agreed to include as a participant observer on the external review panel, the state's designee. (3) The COA was willing to allow the chair of the panel to serve as the state's consultant. It might be that a member of the panel other than the chair could serve in the consultant capacity. During the on-site review, there were no more than three occasions when the state's designee (the Commission's Coordinator for Academic Programs) asked the chair/consultant questions specific to only the state's needs; each was asked in private at convenient times. The chair/consultant and the state's designee also conferred by phone two or three times prior to the site visit and then for about two hours before the first meeting with the full on-site COA panel and for about an hour after the site review concluded.

The state's designee was fully informed of all the activities of the panel and received copies of the drafts and final version of the panel's report as well as of the accreditation decision. In addition, the chair/consultant prepared a separate report for the state after the COA work was completed. Approximately half of that report was made up of material from the panel's report and the remaining half was information required by the state. The consultant's report also included material of a rather instructive nature about the field of library and information studies for the audience of lay members who hear the state's assessment presentation. It is important to note that this additional work by the consultant did not require further involvement by the college.

I do not know how many LIS schools have been able to coordinate internal university reviews with their COA reviews, but this was possible when I was at the University of

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Reviews (cont. fr. page 6)

Wisconsin-Madison. We had the Graduate School review our doctoral program in the same year we did our COA review; the faculty members of the Graduate School review committee found our COA document (this was in about 1985 so it was under the previous COA process) to be most informative. They stated that it greatly aided them in understanding the context of the doctoral program and thus in preparing their report to the Graduate School.

I commend the idea of cooperative reviews to any of you who wish to give one a try; certainly my experience as well as the reports of

those with whom I have been involved in the cooperative review process agree that a great deal of unnecessary effort is displaced and there are virtually no identifiable drawbacks. I do hope that I can coordinate a three-way review of FSU's SLIS in the near future in which the state, the university and the COA cooperate in a meta-review. It would be interesting while it was in process and delightful (for a number of years) when it was over. A simple call got the coordinated reviews about which I have reported started . . . so, pick up the phone!

Jane Robbins is Dean at the Florida State University School of Library and Information Studies. ▲

Panels (cont. fr. page 2)

Hill, Marjorie Hlava, Christine Jacobs, Joan Kaplowitz, Thomas Leonhardt, Bertrum MacDonald, Pat Molholt, Marion Reid, Nancy Roderer, Lorraine Summers, Mary Elizabeth Wendt, Thomas Wilding, Savan Wilson.

Carolynne Presser, representing the Canadian Library Association, was an observer to the Canadian program being reviewed.

If you are interested in serving on a panel and have not submitted an information form, please see pages 4 and 5 of this *Prism*. ▲

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
Hawaii
Montreal
Texas-Austin
Wis.-Madison

SPRING 2000

Long Island
Oklahoma
San Jose

FALL 2001

Louisiana

SPRING 2002

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

FALL 2002

Alabama
McGill
N.C. Central
S. Carolina
Wayne State

COA plans (cont. fr. page 1)

"To assure the appropriate statistics are available to meet COA needs and to capture the data needed to provide a picture of the ALA accredited library and information studies programs. To review current collection instruments to determine any need for change in what is being collected, how it is being collected (are appropriate

questions being asked) and how well the data meets COA purposes. To provide advice to the Office for Accreditation and to recommend changes to ALISE."

ALISE will initiate some cosmetic changes for 1995/96 and will conduct a section by section review starting with the students section in 1996/97. ▲

CHEA (cont. fr. page 3)

they will provide input into the organization through advisory councils. The scope of CHEA is restricted to degree-granting programs, rather than all of postsecondary education; COPA included all postsecondary education. It is expected that CHEA will also conduct a recognition function similar to that carried out by CORPA. The future of CORPA is unknown at this time.

Other functions performed by COPA, such as research and professional development, have been undertaken by the Association for

Specialized and Professional Accreditation (ASPA) and by the regional accreditors individually. CHEA may conduct some research and intends to act as an advocate for quality assurance in higher education.

CHEA will be financed by the participating institutions and through sustaining fees paid by the accrediting agencies. ALA would pay \$2,000 in sustaining fees, plus \$25 per accredited program (U.S. only). CHEA has recommended that the per program fee be passed through to the institutions.

COA expects to recommend participation in CHEA. Further details will be announced if the structure is ratified. ▲



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