

# PRISM

Fall, 1997  
volume 5, issue 3  
ISSN 1066-7873

published by the Office for Accreditation at the American Library Association

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## COA announces accreditation actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) has announced action to continue accreditation, under the 1992 "Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies," of the following graduate programs leading to the first professional degree: Master of Library and Information Science, Department of Library and Information Science, Graduate School of Education & Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles; Master of Science in Library Science, College of Communications and Information Science, School of Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky;

Master of Library Science, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Puerto Rico; Master of Library Service, School of Communication, Information and Library Studies, Rutgers University; Master of Library Science, Division of Library and Information Science, St. John's University; Master of Library and Information Science, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, The University of Western Ontario.

Individuals wishing further information about a particular program should contact the school. ▲

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## Accreditation materials displayed at ALISE conference

Materials successfully used in the accreditation process will be on display during the 1998 ALISE Conference Thursday, January 9 and Friday, January 10 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in New Orleans. The Office for Accreditation invites LIS programs who have been reaccredited under the 1992 Standards to share pro-

gram presentations, survey instruments, structured interviews, data display techniques, and similar materials with other programs at this display. Collaboration can reduce the effort needed to create such instruments and can lead to future data sharing across programs, so we encourage you to participate. ▲

## Distance education in LIS programs

*Carla D. Hayden*

Interest in distance education formats for providing graduate programs in library and information studies has grown rapidly in recent years. The Committee on Accreditation has received program presentations and conducted accreditation activities at several programs where distance education has formed a significant part of the educational effort. At its Spring Meeting in Montreal the COA began a more formal consideration of the issues and opportunities for programs in which a significant, and possibly the whole, interaction between students and faculty is conducted in the absence of in-person communication. During informative sessions with guest speakers and lively discussions, the COA considered the implication of distance education activities for the evaluation and accreditation processes.

During the Spring Meeting, the COA determined that the 1992 ALA Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies were sufficiently focused on outcomes of instruction in a manner that can be effectively applied to different teaching modalities. The standards currently provide guidance for both program development and evaluation for a wide range of LIS programs, including those incorporating distance education techniques. The Standards seek to establish guidelines without restraining innovation, and therefore do not specify preference for any particular mode of instruction. Yet, the COA determined that there was a

need to ensure clarity in encouraging innovation. To that end, the COA has instructed a subcommittee currently examining the Standards to identify and recommend changes to improve clarity and consistency to include wording that will be seen to apply to distance education. The COA is convinced that distance education techniques offer ways to enhance LIS programs, to rethink and improve teaching techniques, and to enlarge the audience interested in and in need of formal instruction in library and information studies. Considering such programs in the light of the 1992 standards should be a means to advance LIS programs, and the COA encourages thoughtful trials and testing of new techniques and technologies. ▲



PRISM is published by the Office for Accreditation at the American Library Association  
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### Committee on Accreditation American Library Association Upcoming Meetings

*All agenda items are due in to the Office for Accreditation no later than one month prior to the Committee on Accreditation meetings. Currently scheduled meetings of COA are as follows:*

- **ALA 1998 Midwinter Meeting  
New Orleans**

Royal Sonesta Hotel, Choctaw Room  
Saturday, January 10, 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.  
Sunday, January 11, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Monday, January 12, 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

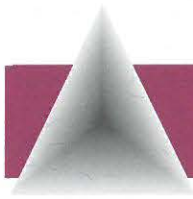
- **Open Session**

Saturday, January 11, 12:00 p.m.–12:30 p.m.

- **1998 ALISE Conference  
New Orleans**

Royal Sonesta Hotel, Gris Gris Room  
Deans, Directors, and Chairs of  
LIS Programs Meeting  
Friday, January 9, 4:15 p.m.–5:00 p.m.





## Director says farewell

*Prudence W. Dalrymple*

In the concluding weeks of my tenure as Director of the Office for Accreditation, I participated in an invitational conference to discuss "Enhancing the Usefulness of Specialized/Professional Accreditation." This conference was sponsored by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation, the successor to COPA and CORPA. A number of executive directors of accrediting bodies attended, as did many provosts and other central administrators. As you might imagine, a number of the participants were less than sanguine about specialized accreditation (ALA's accreditation is among the oldest such accreditors), but it was quite clear that the criticisms I heard over and over again never existed for ALA, have been addressed in the revision of the accreditation process, or are under scrutiny by COA itself. I felt proud of what has been accomplished, but I also felt inspired to continue to improve. The contributions of the Committee on Accreditation as well as the many, many professionals and academics who have served on external review panels as members, chairs, and off-site reviewers and the LIS programs themselves have made the ALA process a strong one. Each perspective is essential to its continued health.

By the time you read this, I will have moved out of accreditation full-time and back into academe. But I, like you, will remain a very interested participant in the process. We all recognize that library and information studies is a growing and changing field. Higher education is evolving too, and with it

definitions of excellence and ways of establishing accountability. I hope that you will continue your interest in accreditation and will encourage interested and qualified individuals to become involved as well. I have enjoyed my work with you and I look forward to continued association in new endeavors.

*Editor's note: Prudence Dalrymple is currently dean of the Dominican University (formerly Rosary College) Graduate School of Library and Information Science. ▲*

## COA recognizes new and departing members

Two new members, Lorna Peterson and Rick Forsman, joined the Committee on Accreditation this July. Peterson is an Associate Professor at the School of Information and Library Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo. Forsman is Director of the Denison Memorial Library, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Both Lorna and Rick have been appointed for four year terms. We welcome them to the Committee.

Two members of the Committee on Accreditation, Ruth Person and Judith Field, completed their terms in July. Person is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Angelo State University. Field is a Senior Lecturer in the Library and Information Science Program at Wayne State University. Both Ruth and Judy have served on the Committee on Accreditation since 1993. We thank them for the contributions they have made during their terms. ▲

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# LIS accreditation in Canada

Karen Adams

*The following excerpts are taken from a presentation by Karen Adams, executive director of the Canadian Library Association, to the Committee on Accreditation at the 1997 Spring Meeting. It is captured here for all of us, especially external review panels, to provide valuable insight into Canadian higher education and the context in which the Canadian programs are offered.*

My presentation derives from conversations with the deans of the Canadian library schools. I will follow the broad headings in the standards themselves as an organizing principle.

## 1. Mission, goals and objectives.

In general, Canadian schools are responsive to the planning imperative which underlines the 1992 standards. This is familiar work because of the financial strains placed on universities in the 1990s, and is likely to be pervasive in the institution being reviewed. At the same time, Canadian universities are placing higher value on excellence in research and teaching over the how-to, more practical focus that used to be tolerated in the professional schools. This creates a situation where, in spite of planning for survival within the parent institution, the school may not be well understood by the practitioners in the area. There is a push-pull between the practical needs of the practitioner and the university's emphasis on excellence in research and teaching.

## 2. Curriculum

The major difference in Canadian curriculum offerings is likely to be the absence of much material related to school librarianship. Provincial jurisdiction over the K-12 system means that standards for teachers are different in each province. The fact that there are ten provinces and two northern territories in Canada but only five provinces that are home to a library school has contributed to faculties of education in each province taking over education for teacher-librarianship. What can be a bread and butter program for a school in the USA will probably be non-existent here.

## 3. Faculty

Regarding faculty, I am told that some External Review Panel members have been concerned about the standard which prefers that faculty hold advanced degrees from a variety of academic institutions. Many Canadian faculty members have taken their masters in Canada at one of the seven schools—and then gone on to one of the three PhD granting organizations among the seven. Obviously, the variety of institutions is limited unless one leaves the country. This difficulty is compounded by Canadian immigration laws that require the hiring of Canadian citizens first, with clearance required to hire from outside the country.

Publication and research also have special constraints in the Canadian scene. Until 1992, there were two peer-reviewed journals in the field of library and information science. In 1992, the Canadian Library Association ceased publication of the CLJ, and it was merged with the Journal of the Canadian Association of Information Science to form the Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science. Opportunities for journal publication in Canada are limited to this one refereed quarterly journal of about 90 pages an issue. Making the decision to publish in a USA-based journal means that the article cannot be too Canadian or it will not be of interest, which poses a problem for those concerned with matters particularly Canadian. Similarly, there is only one publisher of library science monographs in Canada, the CLA. However, a best-seller for us is about 300 copies, and we cannot subsidize publishing from other Association activities. Again, this means that Canadian faculty members have limited opportunities for publishing. Given these constraints, when you see an impressive track record in Canada, it is truly impressive.

The major source of research funding for Canadian faculty is the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, a federal agency. It, too, is undergoing cutbacks, and even when research grants are available from

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## LIS accreditation in Canada *(continued from page 4)*

SSHRC, they do not fund any indirect costs of research or of the institution's overhead costs. Although the data indicate that Canada and the USA have traditionally spent about the same proportion of their GDP on research, Canada's share has begun to decline, and this is affecting Canadian scholarship.

### 4. Students

The most consistent complaint about the

accreditation standards as they currently exist is the perceived need for statistics about the multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual student body. Canada's constitution includes a Charter of Rights and Freedoms which is based on the concept of human rights and focuses on equality, language rights, and the protection of the multicultural heritage of Canadians. Since the Charter came into force

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## LIS accreditation in Canada (continued from page 5)

in 1982, court decisions have dictated that institutions may not ask the individual to provide information about race and physical ability. Such data can be provided voluntarily to the national federal agency Statistics Canada, but the agency is prohibited from making information about the individual public. This means that there can be no data about the multicultural breakdown of a class in Canada except the report of the naked eye observing visible minorities, a highly flawed process. It is important that the External Review Panel understand that statistics about the multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual student body simply cannot be collected in Canada.

Canadian students appear less likely to be part time. One library school director indicated that 95% of his students were full time. This is caused by geography, with people moving to the cities where the schools are located to attend full time.

### 6. Administration and Financial Support

Here I was asked to take note that, especially in the smaller Canadian schools, the overall cutbacks in funding have led to administrative

mergers in which one unit outside the school acts as administrative support to both the school and several other units. It is hoped that the focus can be maintained on whether or not there is adequate financial support to achieve the program's goal rather than placing undue emphasis on where the record keeping takes place. The External Review Panel must be encouraged to remember always that the purpose is to accredit the program, not the administrative entity. It is also important to note that Canadian schools operate on resources tied to a quota of students. If they took in more students, they would not receive any increase in resources or faculty.

I want to thank the Committee on Accreditation and the staff of the Office for Accreditation for the opportunity to raise these matters that happen only in Canada. Overall, the accreditation process works well, and the COA has in recent years certainly been sensitive to the need for Canadian participation on the external review panels. ▲



Published by the ALA  
Office for Accreditation  
volume 5, issue 3

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