

PRISM

Fall, 1998
volume 6, issue 2
ISSN 1066-7873

published by the Office for Accreditation at the American Library Association

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COA actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association 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 Science in Library Science, School of Library and Information Science at The Catholic University of America; Master of Library and Information Studies, School of Library and Information Studies at Dalhousie University; Master of Science (Library and Information Science), College of Information Science and Technology at Drexel University; Master of Science and Master of Arts, School of Information Studies at Florida State University; Master of Science in Information, School of Information at the University of Michigan; Master of Science in Library and Information Science, School of Information and Library Science at Pratt Institute.

Graduate programs leading to the first professional degree in library and information studies at the following universities will be reviewed in Fall 1998: University of Arizona; University at Buffalo, State University of New York; Simmons College; and University of North Texas. In Spring 1999, reviews of graduate programs are scheduled at the following institutions: University of Alberta; University of British Columbia; University of Maryland; University of Missouri-Columbia; University

of Pittsburgh; and University of Washington. The program leading to the degree of Master of Library and Information Science offered by University College at the University of Denver will undergo an initial accreditation review in Spring 1999.

Individuals wishing further information about a particular program should contact the school. A complete list of programs and degrees accredited by COA can be found at www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/lisdir.html.

At the 1998 Annual Conference the Committee on Accreditation approved two changes in the accreditation process to be effective Spring 1999. These changes were made to alleviate confusion arising from different practices that have been tried for the new accreditation process.

External review panel (ERP) reports will no longer include the panel's judgment regarding a program's conformity to each standard or whether the program conforms to the whole set of standards. The chair of the ERP will report these conclusions in a separate letter, addressed to the chair of COA and submitted at the same time as the final external review panel report. The report of the conclusions of the ERP regarding conformity to standards will be shared only with COA.

Rationale: Although the ERP and its report are integral parts of the accreditation process, COA is the body charged with making the final decision regarding accreditation of a program.

(continued on page 6)

Council passes library education resolution

James C. Baughman

At the recent American Library Association Annual conference held in Washington, D.C., Council voted to refer Council Document Number 54 (CD#54), "The Library Education Resolution" (hereafter Resolution), to the Committee on Accreditation and the Committee on Education (COE). The specific resolves are as follows: (1) that the Committee on Accreditation and an advisory task force be charged with revising the *Standards of Accreditation* and (2) that the *Standards* include a statement *ALA accredits masters degree programs designed to prepare students for careers in librarianship*. The voted resolution specifically mandates COA and COE to issue a report to Council at the 1999 Midwinter Meeting addressing the issues and concerns raised in the Resolution. The clear intent of the Resolution is for the COA to develop new standards for accreditation.

At its regularly scheduled fall meeting, COA will consider Council's Resolution in its entirety. COE will be invited to participate in that discussion in order to begin to prepare a report to Council by January 1999. As the COA considers the Resolution, it will do so with the full realization that there are a number of complex issues stated in the Resolution.

Prior to this June action by Council, at its May 1998 meeting held in Washington, D.C., the ALA Executive Board voted to hold a summit meeting on library and information science education before 2000. Plans are underway to hold such a conference in 1999.

The summit meeting will provide an opportunity to sort out the issues. Hopefully, the summit will supply a definition of the

field—something that has been missing heretofore. It is as plain as day to this observer, and this most recent action by Council confirms the notion, that our field has become both fractured and fragmented. There needs to be serious effort to reunify so that we can enter the next century with purpose, resolve, and confidence. Our professionalism, something that the current Standards do not emphasize, is at stake. As Robert Frost once observed: "... and reality broke in with all of its matter of factness." As both library and information science educators, we ignore the content and sentiments of CD#54 at our own peril.

In the meantime, while the relevant bodies and stakeholders come to terms with the issues, the COA will continue with the accreditation of programs in library and information science under the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation*. Ten programs will be reviewed for accreditation during the 1998-99 academic year and 10 other programs in 1999-00. The year 1999-00 also marks the time that all currently accredited programs will have been reviewed under the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation*. This should be a good time to review and update the standards.

The COA welcomes written comments and should be provided to the Chair by November 1, 1999, but no later than January 2, 1999. Please send comments to

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PRISM is published
by the Office for
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at the American
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Chicago, IL 60611
Fax: (312) 280-2433

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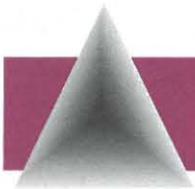
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printed on recycled paper
with vegetable-based inks



New director sets goals

Ann L. O'Neill

Hello everyone. I am very pleased to be writing my first column as director of the Office for Accreditation. During my first three months at the American Library Association, I have learned much and am very excited about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the Office, COA, ALA, and the profession.

I am still developing an agenda for my tenure as director. Among the goals I have set for myself are increasing the size and diversity of the external review panel pool, furthering communication about LIS education and accreditation issues within the LIS profession, and enhancing the visibility of COA at ALA and other LIS conferences.

One of the main activities for the next year is preparing for the library and information studies education summit. The Office and COA will be working on the summit with other ALA Offices, Divisions, and LIS organizations. I anticipate that there will be wide representation from LIS educators, LIS practitioners, and higher education administrators. We are still in the early planning stages, as I write this. I will keep you posted as information becomes available.

In closing, I would like to thank Mary Taylor for her work as acting director of the Office. Mary worked hard at two jobs, did both of them well, and kept the accreditation process on-track. Please take time to thank Mary when you next speak with or see her. Thanks also to Vivica Williams for her hard work while the Office was short staffed. Upon my arrival, Mary and Vivica quickly brought me up to speed and made my first conference much easier.

I look forward to working with and for all of you in the coming years. Please do not hesitate to contact the Office staff or me. ▲

Accreditation process schedule

24 months prior:

- Office for Accreditation (OA) notifies school of scheduled review.
- School/Institution invites COA to conduct a review.

12 months prior:

- School submits planning document for Program Presentation.
- Plan reviewed by OA Director and External Review Panel (ERP) chair with program's chief academic officer (CAO).

4 months prior:

- Draft Program Presentation due.
- Reviewed by OA Director and ERP chair with CAO.

6 weeks prior:

- Final Program Presentation submitted to ERP and OA.

Panel conducts review

3 weeks after:

- Draft ERP report submitted to Program and OA.

4 weeks after:

- Program submits correction of facts in panel report to panel chair and OA.

5 weeks after:

- Panel chair sends final report to COA, program and panel members.

6 weeks after:

- Program response to panel report due (optional).

Prior to next regularly scheduled COA meeting (ALA Midwinter or Annual Conference):

- OA sends Program Presentation, ERP report, and program's response (if any) to COA.

COA meeting:

- COA meets with ERP chair and program CAO.
- COA makes accreditation decision.

10 days after conference:

- COA decision sent to program CAO and institution CAO.
- Six-week appeal period begins from date program receives decision.

End of appeal period:

- Accreditation decisions announced via press release.
- Copy of decision document sent to ERP.

For details, see the accreditation process Guidelines available at www.ala.org/accreditation.html.

COA membership changes

Four members of the Committee on Accreditation completed their terms at close of the ALA 1998 Annual Conference. Carla Hayden, director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, served one year as a member and three years as chair. Lotsee Patterson, associate professor in the LIS program at the University of Oklahoma, served four years. Edward Quattrocchi, a trader with the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, served two years as a public member. Brooke Sheldon, professor in the LIS program at the University of Texas at Austin, served one year as chair and three years as a member. Brooke, Carla, Ed and Lotsee were recognized by COA for the leader-

ship and service they exemplified during their terms.

The new appointments to COA are Beverly Lynch, professor in the LIS program at UCLA; Stephen Matthews, librarian and media coordinator at the Foxcroft School; Jane Robbins, professor and dean of the LIS program at Florida State University; and Caroline Stern, assistant professor in the Department of Languages and Literature at Ferris State University. Beverly, Stephen, and Jane have four year appointments. As a public member, Caroline has been appointed for a two year term. These newest members will join their colleagues at the fall meeting in November. ▲

Resources

The latest addition to the Office for Accreditation homepage (www.ala.org/accreditation.html) on the American Library Association Web site is a comprehensive list of master's programs in library and information studies formerly or currently accredited by the Committee on Accreditation (www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/schools.html).

Other resources available at the same site include:

- A directory to all currently accredited LIS programs indexed by state/province and by institutions (www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/lidir.html).
- The Committee of Accreditation member roster (www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/roster.html).
- A guideline to selecting a program (www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/lidir.html).
- Text of the Standards and Guidelines (www.ala.org/ala.org/oa/stanindx.html).
- Information on External Review Panels including an application form (www.ala.org/ala.org/oa/resource.html).
- A bibliography of educational policy statements with links to appropriate Web sites (www.ala.org/ala.org/oa/educpol.html).

Sample Program Presentations and other materials will be displayed during the ALISE

annual meeting in January at the Doubletree hotel in Philadelphia. ▲

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:

- **Fall Meeting**
Chicago
November 13-15, 1998
- **ALA 1999 Midwinter Meeting**
Philadelphia
January 30-February 1, 1999
- **Spring Meeting**
Chicago
April 16-18, 1999
- **ALA Annual Conference**
New Orleans
June 26-28, 1999

Visit at conferences

Two sessions are planned for ALISE and ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia during January, 1999 at the Doubletree hotel.

- The Office for Accreditation is meeting with program deans, directors and chairs at the ALISE conference on Friday, January 29, 1999.

- The Committee on Accreditation will host an open session during the ALA Midwinter meeting on Saturday, January 30, 1999 from 12:00 to 12:30. Anyone is welcome to meet with COA to share your ideas and discuss issues. ▲

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COA actions (continued from page 1)

In the past, recommendations from ERP's have been (are) understood to be the accrediting decision, when in fact, they are only recommendations to COA, and one part of the information used in the final decision. With only COA seeing the ERP's conclusions about conformity to the standards, it will remove the appearance that the ERP makes the accreditation decision.

Additionally, this change means that the exit interview can focus on the strengths and weaknesses of a program in relation to each standard and to the standards as a whole. COA also believes that schools will be able to respond more appropriately and factually to the ERP report without having to react to "pass/fail" recommendations that may or may not represent the final decision of COA.

The practice of submitting a document containing "collegial advice" from the panel to the program will be discontinued. These comments, when they relate to the *Standards*, should be incorporated into the report of the external review panel.

Rationale: The practice of providing collegial advice has varied greatly under the new process. COA believes that if advice is important enough to be put into a written document, it should be included in the ERP report, if the advice relates to one or more of the *Standards*.

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for November 13-15, 1998 in Chicago. Statistical reports from all ALA accredited programs and biennial narrative reports from half of the programs will be reviewed at this meeting. ▲



Published by the ALA
Office for Accreditation
volume 6, issue 1

First Class Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1925
Chicago, Illinois