



PRISM

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COA announces accreditation actions

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The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association has announced the accreditation actions taken at the 1999 ALA Midwinter Conference under the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies*. The accreditation of these graduate programs leading to the first professional degree has been continued: Master of Science, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College; Master of Library Science, School of Information and Library Studies at University at Buffalo, State University of New York; Master of Science, School of Library and Information Sciences at The University of North Texas .

The COA voted to withdraw accreditation from the program leading to the Master of Arts, School of Information Resources and Library Science, University of Arizona. The ALA has received an appeal from the University of Arizona as provided for in the accreditation process. Under current ALA and COA policy, the

accreditation status of the program will continue until the appeal has been heard.

Graduate programs leading to the first professional degree in library and information studies at the following universities were reviewed in Spring 1999: 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 was reviewed by the External Review Panel for an initial accreditation in Spring 1999. The COA decisions will be made at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

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 <http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/lisdir.html>. ▲

Open session with the Committee on Accreditation

You are invited to attend the annual open session with the COA. This year's forum addresses *ALA Standards for Accreditation* and the processes used in implementing the *Standards*. Institutional accreditation, general and specialized, has undergone change in the last decade.

These changes will be discussed with particular emphasis on the ALA's *Standards* and processes.

Sunday, June 27 from 10:30 to 11:30 in the Belle Chase room at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside hotel. ▲

COA spring meeting

James C. Baughman

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) met in Chicago April 16-18. The spring meeting focused on planning and evaluation. The COA reviewed past plans and actions and discussed how to proceed. Some planning area topics that the COA considered are as follows:

- Content of, changes in, and boundaries of the discipline of library and information studies
- Relationship of COA to the multiple professional societies in the discipline
- Addressing educational issues through ALA
- The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognition process

CHEA is a non-governmental agency that oversees accrediting agencies, such as the COA of ALA. CHEA serves to promote academic quality through formal recognition of higher education accrediting bodies while coordinating and working to advance self-regulation through accreditation.

When seeking recognition, ALA/COA will address five CHEA standards that correspond to CHEA purposes. They are as follows:

1. Advances academic quality;
2. Demonstrates accountability;
3. Encourages purposeful change and needed improvements;
4. Employs appropriate and fair procedures in decision-making; and
5. Continually reassesses accreditation practices.

CHEA plans to minimally review each accrediting agency every ten years with an interim five-year report.

The COA authorized the creation of a Subcommittee to review and to further develop the strategic planning process with an initial report to be made at the fall COA meeting. The Subcommittee will consist of a current COA member, a past COA member, and a member-at-large.

During the Committee's review of the current processes, they discussed others and their

own concerns about the External Review Panel statements regarding a program's compliance to the *Standards*. The COA determined that such statements no longer need be given to representatives of the school or institution or to the Committee on Accreditation. The Committee believes that such a change provides all parties with the same information and will allow the panel to develop a report that focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of a program. Panel reports should lead readers to conclusions. This policy will take effect with the Fall 1999 reviews.

COA will be holding its usual open session on Sunday morning at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. The agenda will be available in the Conference program and on the ALA website. In addition, a meeting is being scheduled for Monday morning with COA and the ALISE Council of Deans. At these meetings COA will discuss the change mentioned above and seek input from the LIS community on how to implement future policy and procedure changes. The Committee hopes to enhance collegial and open communications. ▲

ALA annual conference meetings

Open session with the Committee on Accreditation

Sunday, June 27, 10:30–11:30, Belle Chase Room, Hilton New Orleans Riverside

External Review Panel seminar

Monday, June 28, 8:30–10:30, Marlborough Room, Hilton New Orleans Riverside

External Review Panel chair seminar

Monday, June 28, 10:30–11:30, Marlborough Room, Hilton New Orleans Riverside

You are welcome to attend all sessions.



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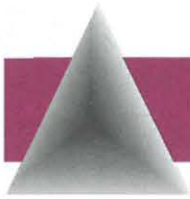
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Be an ERP volunteer

Ann L. O'Neill

In this issue of Prism we recognize the work of another group of accreditation volunteers. They are the practitioners and educators who serve on the External Review Panels (ERP) on behalf of the Committee on Accreditation. The volunteers in the ERP pool demonstrate their commitment to the profession and library and information studies education through their willingness to give time to read Program Presentations, visit and evaluate programs, and write reports about their visits.

ERP members begin their work six weeks before a scheduled review, when they receive the Program Presentation from the school. They read the entire presentation looking for areas requiring further investigation. Often the chair will have a member of the panel be the lead person on a particular section of the presentation. Panel members work together before the visit to develop questions for particular groups, determine documentation to be reviewed, and interview some students, faculty, and alumni.

Although it may be exciting to be asked to go to Hawaii or Puerto Rico for a site visit, ERP members rarely have the time to enjoy such locales. ERP site visits are working trips, starting Saturday evening and ending Tuesday afternoon. During this time the panel meets with faculty, students, alumni, employers, and university administrators in order to more completely understand and evaluate the program, and document for COA the strengths and weaknesses of the program. What little free time the panel members might have is spent working on their report and confirming

that their questions have been answered.

Within days of the visit, if not during it, panel members complete their report about the visit, indicating strengths and weaknesses of the program.

This sounds like a lot of work—and it is—but there are at least two benefits for those who choose this kind of volunteer service. One is the knowledge that you are helping improve the quality of library and information studies education by close evaluation of a program's ability to meet its mission, goals, and objectives and compliance to the standards.

Another benefit of the experience is as an important part of your professional development. To help in your professional development the Office provides training for ERP volunteers at the ALA Annual Conference (the next training session will be in New Orleans this June) and on request at state, regional, or specialized meetings.

Currently, there are over 300 volunteers in the ERP pool. However, we need to increase the broadly defined diversity in the pool, including ethnic, geographic, specialization, and type of library/institution. If you, or someone you know, is interested in volunteering for the ERP pool please fill out the form found in this issue. The form is also available on the web at <www.ala.org/alaorg/oa/resources.html>. If you have questions or would like to have a training session as part of a meeting, please contact Mary Taylor or me. I look forward to adding many more names to our ERP volunteer pool. ▲

How to get involved

Contribute to assuring quality education in library and information studies. People with an understanding of and appreciation for the peer review process are needed to participate as chairs or panel members in the process for library and information studies programs at the Master's level. Please consider 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
- ALA membership is not required.

If you or a colleague meet the above criteria, please provide the External Review Panel Member Information requested on the form (see p. 5). All external review panel applicants receive the newsletter *PRISM*. This newsletter reports the activities of the Committee on Accreditation and the Office for Accreditation, accreditation within the professions generally, and accreditation for the library and information studies programs specifically.

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

Dates: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____
Dates: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____
Dates: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____
Dates: _____ Title: _____ Employer: _____

Check all that apply: Adjunct faculty Dean Faculty Practitioner

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

Language(s) proficiency: French: speak read only
Spanish: speak read only

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

COA pioneers in non-visit accreditation process

Brooke E. Sheldon

In the fall of 1997, the Committee on Accreditation conducted its first continuing accreditation process in which members of the evaluation team did not visit the campus. We believe that this was a pioneering experiment among professional associations and higher education accrediting agencies.

The non-visit evaluation was conducted at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. The decision to experiment with a non-visit was made by COA in response to a proposal submitted by Illinois, which stated in

“We recognize the panel’s need to supplement review of written evidence with interviews and observation...”

part, “We recognize the panel’s need to supplement review of written evidence with interviews and observation. We have ideas on how to employ electronic mail, asynchronous and synchronous electronic forums, telephone and conference calls and video conferencing to allow panel members to communicate with the range of individuals who normally would be met onsite. We feel that these tools may in fact offer the panel opportunities to communicate with a wider range of individuals and to develop a more complete picture of our program than was possible when meeting select-

ed individuals who happened to be onsite during the three to four days over which site visits have been scheduled in the past. While panel members would not be able to observe classroom based courses, they could participate as guests in synchronous electronic class discussions . . . they could also interview by phone or electronic mail selected students enrolled in various courses as well as all the faculty involved in our teaching program.”

The review was conducted by a team made up of Jane Robbins, dean, SIS, Florida State University, panel chair; Daniel Barron, professor, CLIS, University of South Carolina; Martin Dillon, executive director, OCLC Institute; Joan C. Durrance, professor, SI, University of Michigan; Carol C. Kuhlthau, Associate Professor, CILS, Rutgers; and Nancy K. Roderer, Director, Cushing/Whitney Medical Library, Yale University.

In the spring of 1998, a subcommittee of COA conducted an evaluation of the process. Members of the faculty, the External Review Panel, the Dean and Associate Dean were contacted individually. Students were also contacted via a general email questionnaire. All were asked to respond to a series of questions related to their perception of the experience.

For the most part (with two exceptions) faculty felt very much involved in the accreditation review process. As one noted, “I really would not want to be more involved in the review process—very time consuming.” Most faculty members felt that the experiment was worthwhile, and that “ALA should try it again

as an alternative mode of review appropriate for well established schools." As one faculty member expressed it, "Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this soon to be widely accepted alternate visit." A bonus for one instructor was having the materials (documentation) available online. "It made the process more open and meant I could use the materials in my teaching." (the administration course)

According to Dean Leigh Estabrook and Associate Dean Linda Smith "a key factor was the availability of a server that allowed the school to set up a separate team email group, and the ability to put our presentation in web form. We were aided by university resources that could be linked. Since most of our own internal school information already existed in electronic form, it was easily linked to the program presentation."

They also noted the savings in travel and housing as "a valuable option for smaller schools." Because interviews did not depend on people being on campus, it was viewed as an efficient use of faculty and staff time.

"It would be a punitive process for schools without extensive technical and support infrastructures"

The Dean noted "it is important to schools intending to request this option to anticipate the kind of evidence that a team will need. This may seem obvious but any school has to supplement the information in the program presentation and it must be done quickly . . . we are a very online school, so the format and process was comfortable for us. It would be a

punitive process for schools without extensive technical and support infrastructures."

The process had mixed reviews from the External Review Panel. While some found the process effective and were very satisfied with the amount and timeliness of materials provided, and also felt actively involved, a fre-

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this soon to be widely accepted alternate visit."

quent complaint was that the knowledge gained was secondary, not primary, and the panel was not able to interact effectively. "I learned something about online collaborative work in this experiment . . . namely, it is not an efficient or satisfying way to work." One panel member said, "it does not save as much time as one would suppose. Consider my task of interviewing students . . . it would have been a breeze onsite assuming school was in session. In distance mode it took two or three weeks."

We did not receive any student feedback from Illinois. It perhaps would have been better to contact a sample of students individually.

Finally, we return to the vital question to which we asked everyone to respond. Should COA try it again? And the responses may be best summed up by one of the External Panel members who said, "COA should decide after the team looks at the initial program document" and he added "I love the exchange in a more traditional visit (even at dinner a lot of information is exchanged) yet I think as we become more and more users of telecommunications, we need not move people as much as ideas and information." ▲

Spring panels review seven programs

The following External Review Panel members participated in the review of seven programs during Spring 1999. Special recognition for their hard work on behalf of our profession is extended to Elizabeth Aversa, Barbara Barstow, Bert Boyce, Anne Buck, Joseph Busch, Daniel Callison, Charles Conaway, Brian Corbett, Linda Crowe, Ann Diffendal, Martin Dillon, Carol Doll, Donna Dziedzic, Adele Fasick (chair), Shirley Fitzgibbons, Joan Grant, Jose-Marie Griffiths (chair), Stephanie Haas, Barbara Herrin, Marjorie Hlava, Robert Holley,

Christine Jacobs, Joan Kaplowitz, Kathy Latrobe, John Leide, Thomas Leonhardt (chair), Robert S. Martin, Diane Mittermeyer, Pat Molholt, Carl Orgren (chair), Sylvia Piggott, Marion Reid (chair), John Richardson, Fred Roper (chair), James Schmidt, Diane Schwartz, Donna Shannon, James Turner, Philip Turner (chair), Raymond von Dran.

Sydney Jones and Claudette Cloutier observed review visits for the Canadian Library Association. ▲



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