

# PRISM

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## Professional education task forces established

Four ad hoc task forces have been created by the ALA Executive Board to address professional education in Library and Information Studies and to follow up on the first Congress on Professional Education.

**Task Force 1: Core Values** is to clarify the core values (credo) of the profession. The Task Force will develop a statement in consultation with ALA units and partner associations. A draft of the statement will be available for comment at the ALA 2000 Midwinter Meeting in San Antonio. Donald Sager, publisher, Highsmith, Inc. is the Task Force 1 chair.

**Task Force 2: Core Competencies & Generalist of the Future** is to develop a statement identifying the core competencies for the profession and describing the competencies of the generalist of the future. Drawing on the work of both ALA units and partner associa-

tions, a draft statement will be available for comment at the ALA 2000 Annual Conference. Sharon Hogan, university librarian, University of Illinois at Chicago, is the Task Force 2 chair.

**Task Force 3: External Accreditation & Scope of Accreditation** is to explore the possibility of an independent board for accreditation and to determine whether ALA is accrediting programs for librarians only or also for other information professionals, including specializations. Susan K. Martin, university librarian, Georgetown University, is the chair of Task Force 3.

**Task Force 4: Library Personnel – Roles and Education** will encourage stratification of trained personnel. The Task Force will examine the variety of roles within libraries, clarify roles of personnel who work in libraries, and

*(continued on page 5)*

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## Fall 99 panels are appreciated

The Committee on Accreditation and the Office for Accreditation thank the following External Review Panel pool members who participated in the fall 1998 reviews: Richard AmRhein, Gail Avery, Marcia Bates, Nicholas Belkin, Jennifer Cargill, Elfreda Chatman, John Richard Cronin, Carol Doll, Joan Durrance, Barbara Ford, Paula Galbraith, Melody Hainsworth, Margaret Kimmel, Carol Markuson, Philip

Mulvaney, Lorna Rees-Potter, Annabel K. Stephens, Isabel Stirling, Janet Swan-Hill, Daniel Van Gesen, Linda Lucas Walling, Clarence Walters, Mary Elizabeth Wendt, Delmus Williams, Robert Williams

A special thank you is extended to the panel chairs: Toni Carbo, June Lester, Ed O'Neill, Ann Prentice and Danny Wallace. ▲

## Accreditation and distance learning

Beverly P. Lynch

The August 6, 1999 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reports on the “first-ever accreditation of a “virtual” institution, Jones International University.<sup>1</sup> The decision has brought to the attention of many educators questions relating to measures of quality in online education.<sup>2</sup> Most virtual programs operate as extensions of traditional colleges or universities, rather than, as Jones International, as accredited, degree-granting institutions. Accreditation officials say that the decision should be interpreted for what it is: “Jones International meets the same standards for accreditation as does any other institution accredited by North Central—that’s what it means, and that’s what happened.”<sup>3</sup>

The Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association has had questions from members of the profession about the accreditation of distance learning programs. The 1992 *Standards*<sup>4</sup> include specific statements relating to distance learning. The Introduction states that “The requirements of these Standards apply regardless of forms or locations of delivery of a program.”<sup>5</sup> Standard II Curriculum notes that “The curriculum, regardless of forms or locations of delivery selected by the school, conforms to the requirements of these Standards.”<sup>6</sup>

The Committee has observed the growth in distance learning programs in Library and Information Studies. All of the distance learning programs reviewed so far by COA, are part of already accredited programs. Since accreditation is an on-going process of review, the COA, through the annual reports sent by

programs to COA as well as through the systematic self-review and external reviews undertaken periodically, assesses regularly the programmatic changes and new developments as they occur.

The decision to accredit Jones International has led to vigorous debate over accrediting online programs. That debate will continue in all discussions of accreditation. In Library and Information Studies, distance learning programs have delivered education of high quality to many students who would not have been able to acquire their education any other way. The ability to use information technology, particularly the Internet, extends these programs in new ways. The 1992 *Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library & Information Studies* have been working in assuring the quality of the programs. The COA will continue to assess whether the 1992 *Standards* work in the new online environment or whether new standards are needed. ▲

### References

1. Olsen, Florence, “‘Virtual’ Institutions Challenge Accreditors to Devise New Ways of Measuring Quality,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 6, 1999, pp A29-30.
2. Perley, James and Denise Marie Tanquay, “Accrediting On-Line Institutions Diminishes Higher Education,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* XLVI, no. 10 (October 29, 1999): sec. B, pp 4-5; Steven Crow, “Virtual Universities Can Meet High Standards,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, XLVI, no. 10 (October 29, 1999): sec. B, pp 5-6.
3. Olsen, A29-30.
4. The American Library Association, *Standards for Accreditation of Library & Information Studies 1992*, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1992).
5. *Standards*, p 3.
6. *Standards*, p 12



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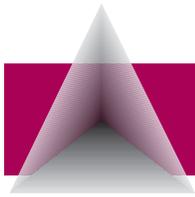
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## ALA seeks CHEA recognition

Ann L. O'Neill

The American Library Association Committee on Accreditation has started the process of seeking recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CHEA is a non-governmental agency which works to promote academic quality by recognizing accrediting agencies such as ALA.

Meeting CHEA's recognition criteria indicates that the accreditation standards and policies of ALA work to advance academic quality, demonstrate accountability, and encourage programs to plan for purposeful change and needed improvement. Detailed information about CHEA and the recognition process and guidelines can be found on its Web site ([www.chea.org](http://www.chea.org)).

CHEA recognition involves a two step process. The first step is the accrediting agency demonstrating eligibility to be recognized by CHEA. ALA has filed this application and we are awaiting CHEA's decision regarding eligibility. The second step is CHEA's actual review of the agency. The review process includes ALA developing a self-assessment document demonstrating our compliance to the CHEA criteria. Then CHEA representatives will review this document and a decision will be made by the CHEA Committee on Recognition. The American Library Association review has been scheduled for 2001.

The recognition process is a new activity for CHEA. The American Library Association, however, has been reviewed and recognized successfully by the Council on Postsecondary

Accreditation and the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation. These organizations preceded CHEA in the role of recognizing accrediting agencies. CHEA is honoring the recognition of ALA and all agencies previously approved by CORPA until CHEA conducts their own reviews.

I will keep you informed of our progress and status as the recognition process continues. ▲

## New edition of the LIS Directory available

The 2000 edition of the *Library & Information Studies Directory of Institutions Offering Accredited Master's Programs* is now available.

Each LIS program entry includes contact name, address, phone, fax, and email; degrees and certificates offered; and distance education opportunities. The entries are listed within states or provinces, and an institution name index is included for ease of access. The Web version ([www.ala.org/accreditation.html](http://www.ala.org/accreditation.html)) includes indexes to the states and provinces, links to program Web sites and contacts' e-mail addresses.

The *Guidelines for Choosing a Master's Degree Program in LIS* is included for prospective students.

The thirty-two-page print version is available for \$8.80. For order information, call 800-545-2433, press 8 (Fax-on-Demand) and enter Document Number 511 at the prompt. ▲

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# First-timer's view

*Melody M. Hainsworth*

There is a first for everything and everyone has one. In this instance, this was my first COA accreditation site visit. I had been an external review panelist for several years, so I was really excited to get my first invitation to go onsite. I found there are a number of pieces involved to making a site visit successful, both from the COA team's perspective and the host library school.

The team has a need for you to be timely, to carry your weight, to turn up where you should, when you should and, most importantly, to be prepared. This preparation includes the reading that must be done, the preliminary report which must be written prior to the visit, and the close to final draft before you leave the site. I noted that as a team, it takes only one member who isn't ready to affect the others. We are all busy people and no one wants to carry someone else, especially since if you do not have the time to do the work you should not have volunteered.

Luckily, my first team had a seasoned Chair and I was the only first-timer. The other three members were ready to proceed at the first dinner meeting, were never late for meetings and collected data efficiently. They were a joy to work with. On my part, I made the decision to have my next- to- final draft completed before I left the site. Therefore, I had my laptop with me so I could work as much as I needed in my hotel room. I also lugged along every piece of printed material the school had submitted plus the information from COA. I did wish I had brought my portable printer.

Where do you start and how do you proceed, when it is your first time? Well, I made sure I responded quickly to the e-mails from our chair and COA staff with the information they needed. I set up my e-mail inbox folders and e-mail alert capabilities so no communication was missed. As soon as the chair said we should book our airfare, I phoned the travel agent. The library school and your chair need

to know when the members are arriving for scheduling purposes. When the school e-mailed with the hotel information, I called the hotel directly to check on how to get from the airport to the hotel. I did all I could in preparing to ensure I would not be late for the organizational meeting.

When I began to get documents from COA, I scoured them immediately, reading everything as a whole. Documents included the accreditation guidelines, information on the recent changes and the role of team members. From those I understood that, although I was going to be responsible for writing one section of the report, I should be ready to observe and comment on all areas of the standards. This decision affected how I read the library school documents. I read their report as a whole, with no notes being taken. When I received my area of responsibility from the Chair, I read the school's report as a whole again, looking for the comments in the area I was responsible for writing. I then created a rough graph for evidentiary information in my areas and went back to the report looking only for comments about those. It was from this graph and my general notes, that I began to get some ideas of what questions I might ask onsite and what documents I might need to see that were not in the report.

At the library school it can be very stressful for everyone. You have to remember that you are there to elicit information about their school, and subjugate any "this is how we do it at my school". Conversations between team members at times are confidential and so space to meet and talk away from the faculty is key. As the team met on the campus in our assigned room, we reviewed each area of responsibility and what information we would be seeking. Before we arrived we decided whom we wished to interview and that schedule was reviewed onsite. Dress professional - no casual clothing except for evenings.

As luck would have it, I was assigned my first regional accreditation for a university with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges, which immediately followed the COA visit. It was a unique opportunity to really focus in on the accreditation process, both professional and institutional. SACS/COC had no external review panel members. They always have a COC staff person attend with the onsite team and often the state executive director of their licensing board joins the team. COC teams are three times as large and the institution

must provide a meeting room and computer equipment at the hotel where the team stays in addition to the facilities onsite. Oh, and team members are paid \$50.00.

Why go to the effort to do a site visit? It forces you to be familiar with your profession's education credo and standards. You gain great ideas for your own institution. And you get to meet with other faculty in their home setting, outside of the conference milieu. ▲ *Melody M. Hainsworth, PhD, International College, Naples Florida, melody@naples.net*

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## Schedule of Evaluation Reviews

<b>FALL 1999</b>	<b>SPRING 2000</b>	<b>FALL 2000</b>	<b>SPRING 2001</b>	<b>FALL 2001</b>
Emporia	Long Island	Montreal	Pratt	Louisiana
Hawaii	Oklahoma	N.Y. - Albany	Puerto Rico	Syracuse
Indiana	San Jose	Wisconsin - Madison		
N.C. - Chapel Hill	Rhode Island			
N.C. - Greensboro	Texas-Austin			
<b>SPRING 2002</b>	<b>FALL 2002</b>	<b>SPRING 2003</b>	<b>FALL 2003</b>	<b>SPRING 2004</b>
Clark Atlanta	Alabama	Clarion	Simmons	Alberta
Iowa	McGill	Drexel	Wisc. - Milwaukee	Calif. - Los Angeles
South Florida	N.C. Central	Michigan		Kentucky
Southern Mississippi	South Carolina	So. Connecticut		Rutgers
Tennessee - Knoxville	Wayne State	Texas Woman's		St. John's
		Toronto		Western Ontario
<b>FALL 2004</b>	<b>SPRING 2005</b>	<b>FALL 2005</b>	<b>SPRING 2006</b>	<b>FALL 2006</b>
Dominican	Catholic	N.Y. - Buffalo	British Columbia	
Illinois	Dalhousie	North Texas	Maryland	
Kent State	Florida State		Pittsburgh	
Missouri			Washington	
Queens				

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## Professional education

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develop specific recommendations regarding appropriate educational levels, ranging from library technical assistants to librarians with post-graduate degrees. The task force will provide an interim report to the ALA Executive Board at the 2000 Annual Conference. Juliana G. Huiskamp, coordinator for Learning Resources, Northwest Iowa Community College is the Task Force 4 chair.

At the fall 1999 Executive Board Meeting, the Board approved the appointment of a fifteen-member Steering Committee to begin initial planning work for a second Congress on Professional Education. This Congress will focus on continuing education and will most likely be scheduled fall 2000. ▲

## Meetings in San Antonio

During the ALISE meeting, Program Presentations from the past two academic years will be on display in the Gutner Hotel between January 12 and January 16.

### **Wednesday, January 12**

Gutner Hotel, Magnolia Room

12:00 – 12:45

Office for Accreditation staff will meet with deans, directors, and chairs who are new to the ALA accreditation process.

12:45 – 1:30

Office for Accreditation staff will meet with all deans, directors, and chairs.

### **Friday, January 14**

Hyatt, Live Oak Room

4:00 – 5:00

The Committee on Accreditation will meet with all deans, directors and chairs.



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