

*News from the
ALA Office for Accreditation*

February 14, 1992

Prudence W. Dalrymple, Director

TO: Deans, Directors, Chairs of ALA-Accredited programs

This will be the first of what I expect to be a series of regular communications between the Office for Accreditation and the deans, directors and faculty of library and information studies programs. As I mentioned at the January 24 meeting, I intend to establish some kind of newsletter from this office to all of you, but since I also welcome communication from you, let me begin by once again giving you appropriate numbers and addresses:

E-mail: U36765@UICVM.UIC.EDU

Voice mail directly to me: 1-800-545-2433 x 2435

Office: 1-800-545-2433 x 2432

FAX: 312-280-2433

1992 Standards for Accreditation

As you no doubt have already heard, ALA's Council adopted the proposed revised Standards for Accreditation, effective January 1, 1993. There will be a moratorium on site visits through calendar 1993, with site visits under the new standards beginning in spring 1994. The COA is prepared to extend this moratorium if desirable or necessary. As a result of these events, the COA work plan distributed for your information at the January 24 meeting will be substantially revised to address at the broadest level some of the various issues related to the accreditation process.

In addition to affirming its intent to continue and intensify its review of accreditation processes, COA intends to appoint an advisory panel to provide two-way communication between COA and the various constituencies affected by the accreditation process. COA hopes to put together a relatively small panel that reflects the wide variety of constituencies affected by accreditation of library and information studies master's degree programs.

COA also adopted the recommendations of its Working Group charged to examine the reporting process presently used by accredited programs to communicate with COA between site visits. These recommendations include:

- o simplifying the reporting process;
- o coordinating data collection with ALISE;
- o changing the previous practice of extending accreditation annually to one in which accreditation extends from site visit to site visit, unless other action is taken either by COA or the school.

1992 Spring COA Meeting

The Spring Meeting of COA will be held in Chicago, May 1-3. The major focus of this open meeting can be most succinctly expressed as "Where does accreditation go from here?" This is an excellent opportunity for you and your faculty to express your ideas and "vision" about the process of accreditation and how it can function effectively for your program within its institutional context, and for its students, faculty, and external constituencies (see enclosed). COA Chair (Charles Bunge) and I will be putting together the agenda; please send your responses to the ALA Office for Accreditation by April 1.

Analysis of COA Recommendations

Those of you who attended the San Antonio meeting may recall that I promised an analysis of the recent COA recommendations. I have not forgotten, and have targeted early March as a date when I can put together a summary of those recommendations which I will send out to you. For those of you who missed the meeting, an analysis was done recently of COA recommendations made to schools during the last five years. The summary document I am describing will indicate the frequency with which these recommendations are made, but will not identify any of the schools that received the recommendations.

Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA)

On January 30-31, 1992, I attended COPA's Professional Development Program on Assessment in the Accrediting Process, a project of COPA funded in part by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. The presentation and discussion focused on the draft reports of three task forces who examined accreditation for educational effectiveness in three areas: institutional effectiveness (with a strong focus on undergraduate teaching); outcomes and accountability (the external publics of accreditation such as state and Federal government, and the academic community); and program effectiveness (specialized accreditation such as library and information studies programs). I will be preparing a summary of these interim reports for the COA; if you are interested, I would be happy to send you a copy when it is available.

Department of Education

On February 4, the National Advisory Committee on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility voted to recommend that the Secretary of Education extend for five years recognition of the American Library Association as a recognized accrediting agency under the criteria of the Department of Education. Many thanks are due to my predecessor June Lester, who prepared an excellent petition which contributed greatly to a successful outcome.

American Library Association
COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION

Accreditation Process Issues Response Form

The Committee on Accreditation is beginning a major review of the processes and documents that are used to apply the Standards for Accreditation. Please help us by responding to the questions below and sending your response to the ALA Office for Accreditation (50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611) by April 1.

A. What components or aspects of the present accreditation process should COA revise or discontinue? (You are invited to outline on a separate sheet your views on the nature of the revisions that are desirable.)

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B. As COA develops a revised accreditation process, what are important issues or questions that the Committee should address? (This list might well have overlap with the one you provided in question A.)

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C. Are there basic or important components or characteristics that you believe should be part of any accreditation process that COA uses? If so, please list them.

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D. COA plans to appoint an advisory panel to advise us on the review and revision of the accreditation process and to provide two-way communication between COA and the various constituencies that are affected by accreditation. What constituencies or perspectives do you think should be represented on such an advisory panel?

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