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COA Announces Accreditation Actions

The [Committee on Accreditation](#) (COA) of the [American Library Association](#) has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2002 ALA Annual Conference under the 1992 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies*.

COA has continued the accreditation of the following graduate programs leading to the first professional degree in library and information studies and has scheduled the next program review in the year indicated:

- Master of Arts in Library and Information Science program offered by the School of Library and Information Science, University of Iowa (2009)
- Master of Science program offered by the School of Information Sciences, University of Tennessee. (2009).
- Master of Arts in Library and Information Science program offered by the School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida (2009).

COA has granted conditional accreditation of the following programs. The next program review will be no later than July 2005:

- Master of Library and Information Science program offered by the School of Library and Information Science, University at Southern Mississippi.
- Master of Science in Library Service program offered by the School of Library and Information Studies at Clark Atlanta University.

Graduate programs leading to the first professional degree in library and information studies at the following institutions will be reviewed in the academic year 2002-2003:

University of Alabama, University of South Carolina, McGill University, North Carolina Central University, Wayne State University, Clarion State University of Pennsylvania,

University of Michigan, University of Toronto, Southern Connecticut State University, and Drexel University.

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>.

The American Library Association is a leading force in accreditation, having evaluated educational programs to prepare librarians since its creation in 1924. The [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) (CHEA) recognizes the ALA Committee on Accreditation as a reliable authority to determine the quality of education offered by graduate programs in the field of library and information studies.

Committee on Accreditation 2002 - 2003

Carla Stoffle, Chair

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Term expires 2006

Jennifer Cargill

Dean of Libraries
Louisiana State University
Term expires 2004

Bertrum H. MacDonald

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S. Michael Malinconico

EBSCO Professor of Library Service, School of Library and Information Studies
University of Alabama
Term expires 2006

Tana Massaro

Swedish Covenant Hospital
Term expires 2004

Sharon M. McPherron

Public Member
Term expires 2004

Louise Robbins

Professor and Director, School of Library and Information Studies
University of Wisconsin--Madison
Term expires 2006

Charles T. Townley

Professor, College of Education
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces
Educational Management and Development Dept.
Term expires 2003

Philip M. Turner

Dean, School of Library and Information Sciences
University of North Texas
Term Expires 2004

Robert Wedgeworth

President, Laubach Literacy
Term Expires 2005

Mary Elizabeth (Ma'lis) Wendt

Associate Director, The New York Public Library
Term Expires 2005

From the COA Chair: **PERSPECTIVE**

New COA Chair Sets Agenda

Carla J. Stoffle, Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation

Dear Colleagues:

It is with excitement I accepted the appointment as Chair of the Committee on Accreditation. This is a crucial time for our profession as we travel full speed into the new century. Indeed, I accepted this appointment knowing there is important work to be done--and that it must be done thoroughly, well, and with integrity.

Luckily, I am following a thoughtful and hard working leader, Jane Robbins. Staffers in the Office for Accreditation are quintessential professionals. Karen O'Brien and Ann O'Neill have already eased work. Also, we are lucky in that we have the blueprints to forge ahead because of our strategic plan. However, (and perhaps this is a warning) I am a questioner. You can expect me to ask why and where's the data--often. I want us to stretch ourselves and be aware of our assumptions; I think this makes for better decisions.

I think our immediate agenda, addressing core competencies and standards, is crucial and important. Also important, as stated in the strategic plan, is improving communication with all our stakeholders. Our strategic plan can guide us in preparing the very best professionals, improving diversity and our relationships with colleagues.

I look forward to working with all of you and please feel free to contact me at anytime at stofflec@u.library.arizona.edu.

From the Director: **OUTLOOK**

Introducing AP3

Ann O'Neill, Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

One of the first things Jim Baughman said to me when he was appointed Chair of COA in 1998 was "We need to revise the process documents. This is one of my top priorities as chair!" Although COA and Office staff started revising the documents in 1998, "normal" work events such as staff changes, ALA Congresses, etc., meant that it was four years before I could borrow Steve Martin's line from "The Jerk" and say, "The new documents are here! The new documents are here!"

In addition to COA members and Office staff, many others were involved in the development of *Accreditation Process Policies and Procedures* (AP3). For example, Kimberly Werner, an accreditation consultant, conducted surveys about document features and did the first major reordering and editing of the documents. Grace Sheldrick of Wordsworth Associates edited the document for consistency and clarity and created the index. Deans, directors, and chairs of programs and external review panel chairs provided comments on different drafts. COA members and Office staff held meetings about changes, discussed comments, and reviewed the processes of other accreditors. The contributions of these individuals and groups made AP3 stronger and easier to use.

Let me assure you - the basic accreditation process has not changed! AP3 incorporates process changes that COA has made since the original documents were published in 1995. Two examples: 1) review panels no longer make specific conclusions about compliance with the *Standards*, and 2) more detailed information about the candidacy process for new programs (sections I.7.4 and I.7.5).

The document also includes new policies and procedures that were not in the 1995 documents. There is a new precandidacy status and process (section I.7.3) to allow formal communication between COA and new LIS programs. COA also developed a "progress review" process for conditionally accredited or initially accredited programs (section I.7.9). In this process the Committee can schedule a three year progress review without

requiring all of the steps (i.e. Plan for Program Presentation) or time (one year lead instead of two years) of the comprehensive review process.

The Committee also incorporated changes that arose from comments from its constituencies. These include ending the use of the "shortened review" procedure and establishing a "notice of concern" procedure between comprehensive reviews (section I.9). The latter describes specific steps and reports that both COA and the program must follow to address serious concerns about compliance with the *Standards*.

AP3 is a new document; and despite our best efforts I am sure that people will find errors and inconsistencies. One of my goals for the new document was to develop something that could be easily updated and reprinted. Please contact me if you have comments or suggestions. We'll do our best to incorporate them in future printings.

My thanks to everyone who contributed to AP3. Special thanks to my staff - [Ryan Brown](#), [Renée McKinney](#), [Karen O'Brien](#), and former Assistant Director [Mary Taylor](#) - for all of their hard work on this project for the last four years.

New Accreditation Process Manual

Renée McKinney, Program Officer, ALA Office for Accreditation

The ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA) and the Office for Accreditation are pleased to announce the publication of the revised accreditation process manual, Accreditation Process Policies and Procedures. Known simply as *AP3*, the new manual brings together in one publication the process documents: *An Overview*, *Guidelines for the Program Presentation*, and *Guidelines for the External Review Panel*.

AP3 reflects contributions of constituents such as external review panelists and deans through several drafts. It includes new features such as a comprehensive table of contents that references section numbers to the fourth level of description, a detailed index, and definitions of accreditation terms used in the manual.

The manual includes a complete timeline for the comprehensive review process and two more timelines specifically oriented toward the preparation of the Program Presentation and the External Review Panel's site visit to the program. The new manual features additional guidelines on content and format to help in the preparation of the Program Presentation and the External Review Panel report. *AP3* also includes examples of appropriate evidence and ways of gathering and analyzing that evidence.

The processes, policies and procedures in *AP3* take effect September 1, 2002. Comprehensive reviews with program site visits scheduled for fall 2002 will be the first to be conducted under the aegis of *AP3*.

Copies of *AP3* will be automatically sent to deans, directors and chairs of ALA-accredited programs and to External Review Panel chairs and panelists for comprehensive reviews scheduled from fall 2002 through spring 2003. If you don't receive a copy of *AP3* by the end of September 2002, and would like to have one, simply click here for the [.pdf](#) or [HTML](#) file or contact the ALA Office for Accreditation via email (rbrown@ala.org) or telephone (312-280-2432) to have a copy sent to you.

In 1992 the Council of the American Library Association approved the *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* as developed by COA in cooperation with allied professional associations. Policies, procedures, and documents used in conducting the accreditation process were subsequently revised and published in 1995. Since then, the COA has continued to review the Standards and revise the policies and procedures of the accreditation process. This manual reflects the changes to the accreditation process that have been implemented since 1995.

A revised appeal process, which is under the jurisdiction of the Executive Board of the American Library Association, has not yet been approved. Revision of the appeal process will proceed at the discretion of the Executive Board. A section entitled "Guidelines for Appeals" will appear in a later version of *AP3* that is expected to be published in the first quarter of 2003. The current *Guidelines for Appeals* remains in effect until the Executive Board approves a revision.

Apply Existing *Standards* to Distance Education

*Philip Turner, Dean, School of Library and Information Sciences, University of North Texas;
Member of COA 2001-2004*

Last June I was invited by the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) to speak on the topic, "Do we need separate standards for distance education?" I chose to take the negative viewpoint on this issue. I do believe that the rapid growth in the electronic delivery of courses and full master's programs in LIS education presents significant challenges to the accreditation process. I feel strongly that the way to meet the challenges is to provide training for external review panels and chairs and the Committee on Accreditation to enable them to apply the existing *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies* (1992) in light of emerging distributed or distance learning technologies. To illustrate my contention, I have selected portions of "Standard II--Curriculum" to point out questions that may be applied to distance education.

"The curriculum is based on the goals and objectives and evolves in response to a systematic planning process...." (p. 11)

How were the courses that are online selected? Were they the result of "pioneer" faculty moving their course online, resulting in a potpourri of unrelated courses? Was there a planning process involved in which the faculty decided how an acceptable program of

study could be provided? In investigating compliance with this Standard, the external review panel would need to look for evidence that the online portion of the curriculum evolved as the result of a systematic planning process. Such evidence might include minutes of committee and faculty meetings and interviews with faculty and administrators.

"The curriculum provides the opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met...." (p. 12)

This is an especially important portion of this standard if a significant part of the master's program is delivered at a distance. What is the rationale behind the students' selection of their courses? The availability of web-based courses that allow for both time and place flexibility increase the possibility for the selection of courses based on convenience rather than adherence to a logical program of study. The review panel would probably look for advising guides that describe programs of study that have been developed by the faculty. They would interview students to determine the quality of formal and informal advising for distance education. They might study a selection of degree plans of graduates to determine if the courses actually taken match advising guides.

Each of the other standards contains sections that will require special awareness and training to apply the standard effectively in the distance learning environment. As an example, to judge "effectiveness in teaching" would probably require the ability to observe and make a judgment about an online class, an issue with which many deans and department chairs are just now facing. Enabling those involved in LIS education and accreditation to apply the existing standards rather than creating new standards for distance education courses and programs, is the way to meet the challenge.

Perspectives of a First-time Panelist

Joyce C. Wright, Director of the Undergraduate Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In February 2002, I had the pleasure of serving for the first time as a member of an External Review Panel for a site visit. With a practitioner's background and a consumer's perspective, I was excited about having this opportunity to serve the profession.

In preparation for the visit, I did the following:

- Familiarized myself with all the standards.
- Contacted the Chair of the review panel.
- Read the Program Presentation several times.
- Reviewed the university's and school's web pages.

After the above, I began pondering about what to expect. Having served on a regional accreditation team fifteen years ago, I had a general idea about visiting teams and how they worked. I knew it would be a challenge and indeed it was, before the site visit and afterwards. Even though I work in a library and interact with many graduate students, this experience gave me new insight into what's going on in library education. It also allowed me an opportunity to meet the library school faculty and university administrators.

Being a first-time panelist allows one the opportunity of working with experienced panelists. I was fortunate to have an excellent chairperson with great organizational skills who communicated regularly with the team. The other members on-site and off-site were dedicated to doing a good job and provided constructive feedback. It was interesting to meet the library science faculty and students. The classroom visits were engaging and faculty members responded to many questions during the process and gave referrals if they were not sure about something.

I found my experience very positive and enjoyed the process. The [ALA Office for Accreditation](#) has done a superb job training members of the profession to become reviewers. The workshops at ALA's Annual and Midwinter Conferences are excellent and keep one apprised of the issues relating to the Standards. Even though it may be a year or more before one is invited to serve on a panel, it is important to keep attending the workshops. Finally, it is good to keep a dialogue with an active panel member who can help mentor you during this exciting adventure!

External Review Panelists Gratefully Acknowledged

External review panelists contribute a substantial amount of their time and energy participating in the accreditation process to assure quality in LIS education. Appreciation is extended to the following panelists who served during the spring 2002 academic term.

Richard AmRhein, University Librarian, Valparaiso University

Barbara Barstow, Children's Services Manager, Cuyahoga County Public Library

James Benson, Dean of University Libraries and Director, Division of LIS, St. John's University

Anne Buck, University Librarian, California Institute of Technology

Keith Cottam, Director of the CC Center, Associate Dean, Outreach School, University of Wyoming, Casper College

Ann Curry, Associate Professor, School of Library, Archival & Information Studies, University of British Columbia

Hiram Davis, Dean of Library Services, California Polytechnic State University

Rick Forsman, Director, Charles Denison Memorial Library University of Colorado Health Science Center

Paula Galbraith, Enterprise Manager of Library & Information Services, Solutia Inc.

William Goodrich Jones, Associate Professor and Asst. University Librarian, University

of Illinois at Chicago

Robert Grover, Dean & Professor, School of Library and Information Management,
Emporia State University

Martha Hale, Professor, School of Library and Information Management, Emporia State
University

Violet Harada, Associate Professor, University of Hawaii

W. Michael Havener, Director, Graduate School of Library and Information Studies,
University of Rhode Island

Susana Hinojosa, Librarian, University of California

Robert Holley, Professor, Wayne State University

Kathy Latrobe, University Librarian/Professor, University of Oklahoma

John Leide, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Science,
McGill University

June Lester, Professor, SLIS, University of Oklahoma

Zary Mostashari, Professor & Chair, Library Department, Director of Collections and
Bibliographic Services, Long Island University

Edward O'Neill, Consulting Research Scientist, OCLC Online Computer Center

Ronald Powell, Library and Information Science Program, Wayne State University

James Rettig, University Librarian, University of Richmond

Nancy Roderer, Director, William H. Welch Medical Library, John Hopkins University

Timothy Sineath, Director & Professor, School of Library and Information Science,
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Annabel Stephens, Associate Professor, University of Alabama

Danny Wallace, Director and Professor, School of Library and Information Studies,
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Lynn Westbrook, Assistant Professor, Texas Woman's University

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