Accreditation Actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2003 ALA Midwinter Conference under the 1992 Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies.

Actions taken continue the accreditation of the following graduate programs leading to the first professional degree in library and information studies. The next review is scheduled in the year indicated.

- Master of Library and Information Studies program offered by the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama (2009)

- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at McGill University (2009)

- Master of Library Science program offered by the School of Library and Information Sciences at North Carolina Central University (2009)

- Master of Library and Information Science program offered by the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina (2009)

- Master of Library and Information Science program offered by the Library and Information Science program at Wayne State University (2009)

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in 2003:

- University at Albany-State University of New York
- Clarion University of Pennsylvania
- Drexel University
- University of Michigan
- Simmons College
- Southern Connecticut State University
- Texas Woman's University
University of Toronto
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

For information about a particular program, contact the school. Contact information is included in the directory of accredited programs.

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

COA Activities
by Carla J. Stoffle, Director, University Libraries, University of Arizona Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA)

Having now participated in two COA meetings, I can readily understand why this is seen as one of the hardest working ALA committees. And reviewing the programs up for accreditation (approximately 10 per year) is only the tip of the iceberg of the Committee’s workload. Continuous accreditation requires that Committee members review annual statistical data for all programs, as well as the biennial narrative reports submitted by half of the programs each year. In addition, special reports have to be carefully assessed, training for external review panelists must be addressed, as well as selection of the panelists for each accreditation review.

Some other activities that may be less well understood, in terms of the Committee’s work, are the communication with the professional activities such as the open meetings at ALISE, the efforts to improve the Committee’s processes, and the assignments which the Committee receives, such as those from the ALA Executive Board. This year, the Committee prepared an extensive program for ALISE members about how COA works and recent process changes. For Midwinter 2004, committee members are looking to partner with ALISE to have programs on outcomes/outcomes assessment and diversity initiatives that are successful in our schools. COA is interested in helping our schools better understand what is meant by these initiatives in the Standards.

At the spring 2003 meeting, the Committee will explore several topics and their implications for accreditation, such as the changing or developing structure of our schools, undergraduate programs and their impact on the MLS, and faculty shortages and the ways in which schools are compensating. The Committee will review and discuss accreditation procedures; for example, information needed by review panels and COA, training for panelists, outcome assessments, etc. A special task force appointed to explore whether the current Standards need revision has submitted its report. Their recommendations to the group will be discussed and action identified. An expansion of the conflict of interest criteria is also slated for discussion.
For the last two years, the Committee has been designing a new appeals process for schools that have had accreditation withdrawn. The appeal process requires approval by the Executive Board as it is their document. COA worked with the Board, programs, and experienced panelists on the new process that was approved at the 2003 Midwinter meeting. The Committee is now charged to work with the ALA Committee on Education to develop a process for vetting and getting feedback on the core competencies document developed by the Core Competencies Task Force. A joint committee will be selected before Annual Conference 2003 with a charge regarding how to move this work forward.

One other ongoing activity is the discussion with librarians from Mexico about how to establish an accreditation process for Mexican library schools. Several meetings have been held on this topic and more meetings and data collection are anticipated.

Finally, the Committee has completed a 5th year review of the Director of the Office of Accreditation and this review will be delivered during the spring Committee meeting.

As always, high on our list of priorities is maintaining open communication with the faculty of our schools. We hope that this update is not only evidence of our activity, but demonstrates our desire to work together.

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**Learning Opportunities Include Appeal Process**

by Ann O'Neill, Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

All accreditors continually look for tips and share information about training for external review panel members. We share this information at local meetings (Chicago and DC Area Accreditors) and national conferences (Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors, Council for Higher Education Accreditation). Many of the concerns and topics are the same whether the review is of a specialized program (ALA) or an entire institution (regional accreditors). For example, no accrediting agency wants reviewers to say “This isn’t how we do it where I work”, but we do want reviewers to understand our accreditation standards.

At ALA, the Committee on Accreditation and Office for Accreditation staff continually review and revise our training procedures. Recent training sessions have used actual program presentations and ERP reports, skits about interviewing students and university officials, as well as presentations from panelists, chairs, and programs. We make changes based upon evaluations collected at training sessions and suggestions from program faculty, panel chairs, and COA. For example, offering specific training sessions for ERP chairs arose from requests by these groups.

More changes for training are planned. Karen O’Brien and Renee McKinney are developing “template” program presentations and panel reports to demonstrate the different ways information is provided as well as ways not to write reports. They are also working with members of the Chicago Area Accreditors to develop “generic” training...
materials for topics relevant to all accreditors such as panel conduct while on campus or
the purpose of accreditation. These materials can be adapted for ALA’s specific needs
and processes.

At the 2003 Annual Conference in Toronto we will offer for the first time, training on the
ALA/COA appeal process on Friday, June 20 from 10:00 to noon. This session is for
panelists who would be willing to serve on an appeal review committee if COA were to
withdraw or deny initial accreditation to a program. As required by our new appeal
process, appeal training will be offered annually. Trained appeal volunteers will help
shorten the timeframe of an appeal because they will be familiar with the appeal and
accreditation processes. The appeal process, as well as all the procedure documents, is
available on the Office’s website under accreditation documents.

For more information about training opportunities and volunteering for External Review
Panels please contact me or Karen O’Brien.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions. I look forward to seeing you in
Toronto.

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**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 fall 2002 and
spring 2003 academic terms. Those who led panels as Chairs are listed first.

**Chairs**

- **Elizabeth Aversa**, Director, School of Information Science, University of Tennessee
- **Danny Callison**, Professor/Executive Associate Dean, School of Library and Information
  Science, Indiana University
- **Evelyn Daniel**, Professor/Dean Emeritus, School of Information & Library Science,
  University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- **Barbara J. Ford**, Director, Mortenson Center for International Library Programs,
  University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- **Martha L. Hale**, Professor, School of Library and Information Management, Emporia
  State University
- **Edward Harris**, Dean, School of Communication, Information, and Library Science,
  Southern Connecticut State University
- **James M. Matarazzo**, Professor and Dean Emeritus, Graduate School of Library and
  Information Science, Simmons College
- **Fred W. Roper**, Dean, College of Library and Information Science, University of South
  Carolina
Herman L. Totten, Regents Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of North Texas
Raymond von Dran, Dean, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University

Panelists

George Abbott, Head, Media Service Department, Syracuse University Library
Gail W. Avery, Administrative Librarian, District of Columbia Public Library
Mary Ann Berry, Associate Professor, Department of Library Science, Sam Houston State University
Dawn S. Bostwick, Library Director, Nassau County Public Library System
Lorene B. Brown, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, Clark Atlanta University
Kathleen Burnett, Associate Dean and Professor, School of Information Studies, Florida State University
Charles Wm. Conaway, Associate Professor, School of Information Studies, Florida State University
Bryan Corbett, University Archivist, University of Alberta
James Patrick Craig, Professor/Chair, Department of Medical Library Science, Louisiana State University School of Medicine
Anne P. Diffendal, Consulting Archivist
William Fisher, Professor, School of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University
Stephen Hagstrom, Director, Library Services, Tarran County College
Joan Howland, Associate Dean, University of Minnesota Law School
Jennifer Jung Gallant, EMH Regional Medical Library
Ed Garten, Dean, Libraries and Information Services, University of Dayton
Joan Kaplowitz, Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, University of California - Los Angeles
Lucienne Maillet, Professor, Library and Information Science, Long Island University
Lynne McKechnie, Assistant Professor, Information & Media Studies, Western Ontario University
Diane Mittermeyer, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, McGill University
Vivienne Monty, Senior Librarian, Frost Library, York University
John Philip Mulvaney, Library Director, Williams Library, Northern State University
Lorna Peterson, Associate Professor, Department of Library and Information Studies, University at Buffalo, SUNY
Timothy Richards, Director, Mardigian Library, University of Michigan-Dearborn
Brooke Sheldon, Director, School of Information Resources & Library Science, University of Arizona
Timothy W. Sineath, Director, School of Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky
Terry Weech, Associate Professor, GSLIS, University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign
Ann C. Weeks, Professor, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland
Come Together for LIS Education

By John Philip Mulvaney, Director-Williams Library, Northern State University

Confrontations and misunderstandings between educators and practitioners about LIS education are nothing new. This is quite understandable given academia's relentless push toward theory and abstraction and the profession's equally strong pull toward day-to-day relevance. LIS is not alone in this; all professional schools face these same tensions. Law schools have solved this tension uniquely by graduating students who must go elsewhere to acquire the skills necessary to pass the bar examination.

Most recently, practitioner concerns have been summarized by Barbara Moran in *LJ* (1 Nov. 2002) and Robert P. Holley in *C&RL News* (Mar. 2003). Both authors, to resolve this tension, call for increased communication and point to the three Congresses on Professional Education as a good start. I would like to suggest here another step practitioners could take to increase their understanding of LIS education: become involved in the ALA accreditation process. This voluntary process, overseen by the Committee on Accreditation and run by the Office of Accreditation, is the means ALA has chosen to ensure excellence in LIS education.

We all, practitioners and educators, want the phrase "ALA-accredited MLS required" to mean something. Ensuring its continued relevance, though, requires volunteering. First, LIS schools must volunteer to submit themselves to peer review according to the accreditation process. Second, COA needs volunteers from both LIS education and the profession at large to serve on the External Review Panels that review programs.

Practitioners need to bring to the process: time (a lot of it, in fact), an open mind, a concern for the profession and for LIS education, and a willingness to learn and to work hard. The benefits are substantial. You are able to view LIS education not just from a student or alumnus perspective, but that of a peer-reviewer. You quickly learn how committed LIS faculty are to quality and to educating their students for careers in libraries as well as other venues. You also gain an appreciation of the constraints LIS programs work under and a first-hand understanding of the current expectations of LIS students.

The biggest beneficiary of your participation in the accreditation process though, is LIS education. You will be able to speak from a different perspective and in public fora such as the Congresses on Professional Education, where very few of the attendees have COA accreditation experience. One of the most important things a profession does, however, is provide the means for its continued existence. Your participation in ensuring the excellence of the education that future LIS professionals receive is vital.
Committee on Education Collaborating for LIS Education

by Lorna Peterson, Associate Professor, University at Buffalo, School of Informatics, Department of Library and Information Studies; Chair, ALA Committee on Education (COE)

Created in June 1977 by ALA Council, the Committee on Education (COE) is charged with the responsibility for developing and recommending Association policies regarding the entire range of education for library and information workers. COE actively solicits information about the "condition, currency, relevance, and type of education necessary to improve current and future library and information services" which are then shared with the Committee on Accreditation, ALA membership and allied professional organizations. ALISE members are officially represented by board appointment, and this year's representative is Danny Wallace from the University of Oklahoma. ALA staff support is from the Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR) and Director Lorelle Swader is a tireless assistant to the HRDR affiliates and Round Tables.

How does COE solicit information from such a large and diverse constituency? The Library Education Assembly provides the structure for the membership, affiliated groups, and representatives appointed by ALA units to come together for information exchange and expression of concerns. This assembly is held at ALA's Midwinter and Annual Conferences. For the upcoming Annual conference in Toronto, Ontario, the Assembly will be held, Monday, June 23, 11:30-12:30. You are invited, and strongly encouraged, to attend and state your views about library education. At the Midwinter meeting, a spirited exchange took place between a new LIS graduate and a faculty member on the significance and meaning of "library" as our tradition. We were given an update on the plans for the third Congress on Professional Education (COPE III, Focus on Support Staff, May 16-17, 2003, College of DuPage).

COE collaborates when appropriate with the Committee on Accreditation (COA). At the Midwinter Conference, a special meeting of COE membership and the chair of the COA, Carla Stoffle, and Director of the Office for Accreditation, Ann O'Neill, took place regarding the Core Competencies Task Force.

COE has a high profile in the certification discussions and formation of the Allied Professional Association. HRDR provides information on certification.

Membership on COE is diverse and representative of ALA:
Howard Besser, UCLA
Karen Brown, Dominican University
Jenna Freedman, Barnard College
Taemin Park, Indiana University
Robert Rohlf, consultant-- Minneapolis, MN
Barbara Stein, North Texas University
Beverly Ku, intern
Lorna Peterson (Chair 2002-04), SUNY at Buffalo
Caroline (Cal) Shepard, SOLINET (CLNERT representative)
Danny Wallace, Oklahoma (ALISE representative)
Lorelle Swader, ALA Staff Liaison

Meetings are open and guests are welcome; comments are encouraged lpeterso@buffalo.edu.