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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 2004 ALA Midwinter Meeting 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 program review is scheduled for fall 2010:

- Master of Library Science and Master of Science in Information Science offered by the School of Information Science and Policy; University at Albany, State University of New York, and released the graduate program from conditional accreditation.
- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College, Boston.
- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the School of Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

COA has granted conditional accreditation of the Master of Library Science and Master of Arts in Library Science offered by the School of Library and Information Studies, Texas Woman's University. The next Masters program review will take place prior to July 2007.

For information about a particular program, contact the school.

Contact information and a complete list of programs and degrees accredited by COA can be found in the [Directory of Institutions Offering Accredited Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies](#).

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in the spring 2004 academic term:

- Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
- St. John's University
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Denver
- University of Kentucky
- University of Western Ontario

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in the fall 2004 academic term:

- Dominican University
- Kent State University
- Queens College, City University of New York
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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](#)

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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.

Issues in Library Education Heard by the ALA Committee on Education

By Lorna Peterson, Associate Professor, School of Informatics, State University of New York at Buffalo

As Chair of the Committee on Education (COE) 2002-04, I have had the opportunity to observe and listen to practitioners and educators voice their concerns regarding the education and training of the library workforce—by this I mean to include the professional, credentialed MLS librarian as well as others working in libraries. Many say that the problems regarding curriculum, access to programs, structure of programs and the faculty in them, have always been with us and always will be. As evidence most recently, just look to the first Congress on Professional Education (1999), which sought “to examine the initial preparation of professional librarians as a first step in studying the broader issues of education and training for librarians and other library workers” (Final Report of the Steering Committee, COPE, June 1999) and the 2000 KALIPER report. But I am not convinced that the profession would benefit by ignoring some of the alarms that our practitioners and educators have been sounding. In that spirit, I offer this opinion piece of jottings of some of the issues that have come before the COE and I believe need discussion within the library education community. I hope my observations will elicit a reasonable discussion among all our communities so we can shape policy that is in the best interest of our profession. Here are my thoughts:

Certification

Certification concerns individuals, not institutions. Certification is the documentary evidence of meeting standards and is a formal process of making certain that an individual is qualified in terms of particular knowledge or skills. The Allied Professional Association (APA) of the ALA was established to meet this certifying mission.

Opportunities

Post-MLS certification may improve professional practice in librarianship through the establishment of continuing professional development goals, standards and credentialing; and it can recognize those individuals who have demonstrated both mastery of a body of knowledge and skills and continuing commitment to ongoing professional development. Several LIS programs offer Certificates in Advanced Studies for this very purpose. Many practicing librarians seek additional education and training beyond the MLS in order to improve their practice and service.

- What will LIS programs provide beyond the general advanced certificate for the post MLS interested in certification?
- How will LIS programs work and coordinate with state library agencies, networks, associations and other providers of certification opportunities?
- Are there particular LIS programs poised to serve as models of excellence for this?

Challenges

- Pre-MLS certification may result in deprofessionalization. Although many libraries are staffed with non-MLS staff, particularly those serving in sparsely populated areas, it is important to affirm that a librarian is a degreed ALA accredited MLS graduate.
- Will budget conscious institutions use the non-MLS, but certified in some LIS activities to staff libraries and keep salaries low?
- What are the ALA and the ALISE positions on certification, specifically, pre- and post-MLS

certification?

Accreditation of Associate Degrees

Some states offer associate degrees in library science and a movement within the degree program is calling for accreditation. Regional accreditation of the institution that grants the AA/AS is not seen as adequate for quality control. The MLS is the entry-level degree and has been recognized as such since 1951. ALA policy 54.2 states: "The master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association (or from a master's level program in library and information studies accredited or recognized by the appropriate national body of another country) is the appropriate professional degree for librarians." For an excellent overview of accreditation and library education, see Bill Summers' position paper available at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/prp/prism/current/onepage1/>

- What body would accredit the AA/AS?
- What are the ALA and the ALISE positions on this topic?
- Is the proposed accreditation of associate degrees a possible detriment to the professional degree? ALA does maintain a list of library technician programs available in the US, UK, Canada and Australia and also maintains a document "Criteria for Programs to Prepare Library Technical Assistants" so it cannot be said that this segment of the workforce is ignored by the profession.
- But, who would pay for the proposed accreditation and serve on its review teams?
- And does the profession need this?

Bachelors Degrees in Information Science/Informatics

In order to grow a program, and in order to take advantage of the newly emerging information occupations, some LIS programs developed BA/BS degrees in information science. The popularity of these degrees has people asking for the BA/BS in library science (Pennsylvania does offer the BLS). They see the problems of hiring at low salaries and in remote settings as being solved by dropping the educational level. At the same time, they diminish the importance of the breadth and depth of education needed to be a good librarian.

- What are the positions taken by ALA and ALISE on the bachelor degrees in information science?
- How is the MLS articulated to the public as the professional degree for the librarian so the public knows that this is in their best interest?
- It is four years after the releasing of the KALIPER report that summarized and identified the trends of new information degrees. Is it time to evaluate the impact of these degrees?

Apprenticeships

Frustrated by the inability to hire appropriate professional staff, some libraries have resorted to training programs in their libraries to teach reference, cataloging, storytelling, etc., somewhat reminiscent of the early 20th Century programs that were based in large metropolitan public libraries. Although LIS programs have responded to calls for making graduate library education more available geographically by developing web based and extension distance learning opportunities, these "mini-MLS" training programs within libraries persisted; and not as enhancements, but as substitutions for the education and training needed to serve in libraries. The 1923 Williamson Report served as the policy-making evidence that library education belongs in the university. Seventy years later, we seem to be moving backwards. The expediency of apprenticeship needs to be checked. This is not to say that in-service training in libraries should not be done. But the by-passing of graduate library education should not be encouraged either.

Clark-Atlanta SILS Closing

The impending closing (June 2005) of the Clark-Atlanta University School of Library and Information Studies points out some disturbing weaknesses in our field. Although responsibility for a program closing must be laid at the program leadership, at the same time, we see that association response carries little or no weight in turning around a closure decision. There is also no mobilizing force for assistance in writing letters, rallying alumni, etc. Again, this is the responsibility of the program, but some support and guidance for programs would be useful. There are the conflict of interest issues because ALA accredits the programs, and from the outsider viewpoint,

letters by ALA and ALISE are pure examples of self-interest. But this should not mean silence on our part. In response to the multiple closings of LIS programs in the very early part of the 1980 and 1990 decades, ALISE did write a statement on “The Role of Graduate Programs in Library and Information Science in Higher Education (1983; revised 1990),” placed it in its policy manual, but dropped it in the late 1990s. COE did put forth a resolution in support of Clark-Atlanta and ALA Council passed this. Council also passed that a task force be established “That ... [will] ... determine the strategies and procedures necessary to ensure that ALA is better positioned to detect warning signs of similar closures and take appropriate preventive actions.” Perhaps these actions will help future programs from closing.

These are just my thoughts and observations. For an opportunity to voice your opinions or concerns, I invite you to attend the Library Education Assembly at ALA Annual, Orlando, June 28, Monday, 11:30-12:30. Or write me, Lorna Peterson at: <mailto:lpeterso@buffalo.edu>

A Tribute to Volunteers and One in Particular

[Ann L. O'Neill](#), Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

I don't remember clearly the first time I met Susan Estabrook Kennedy, but I know that I will never forget her. Who, you might ask, is Susan Estabrook Kennedy? She was one of the unsung volunteers so vital to COA and to similar committees of other accreditors— the public member. The two public members of COA are appointed to represent the general public and to be the outside eyes and ears to our process. They have no library experience or background, yet they are willing to help evaluate our programs. To give you a sense of the breadth of the types of public members, in recent years a social worker, a member of the Chicago Board of Trade, a realtor, an English professor, and an association executive have all served on COA.

Susan was a history professor at Virginia Commonwealth University and had served as the dean of the department as well. She was a true Southern “steel magnolia” – charming, friendly, and witty, yet very tough when needed. She asked tough questions of both the programs and COA, but was not afraid to ask what to those of us in the field might consider an obvious or overly simple question. Susan could always find the right phrase for a letter or a question. And she loved to laugh.

I learned in September that Susan passed away very unexpectedly this summer. I was truly shocked, as were the current and past COA members that knew Susan. We shared many wonderful stories and thoughts about the contributions she made to COA, especially her phrase that was the opening of many piercing questions “Help me understand....” We decided that we needed to do something to honor Susan. I'm pleased to report that current and past members of COA and Office staff contributed \$1,250 to help support a Spectrum Scholar's attendance at this year's Spectrum Leadership Institute as well as \$600 to the VCU Susan Estabrook Kennedy Memorial Scholarship for undergraduates in history. I know that Susan would be pleased to receive this recognition.

I learned so many things from Susan. I miss her a lot. But, I know that she will always, “help me understand.”

2003-2004 COA Roster

Robert Wedgeworth, Chair

President, Proliteracy Worldwide

rwedge@proliteracy.org

Term Expires 2005

Barbara Barstow

Children's Services Manager

Cuyhoga County Public Library

Term Expires 2007

Jennifer Cargill

Dean of Libraries

Louisiana State University

Term expires 2004

Paul Fenza

Grants Manager

Mather Institute on Aging

Term expires 2005

Bertrum H. MacDonald

Associate Dean (Research)

Faculty of Management

Dalhousie University

Term expires 2004

S. Michael Malinconico

EBSCO Professor of Library Service, School of Library and Information Studies

The University of Alabama

Term expires 2006

Sharon M. McPherron

Public Member

Term expires 2004

Carla J. Stoffle

Director, University Libraries

University of Arizona

Term expires 2006

Philip M. Turner

Dean, School of Library and Information Sciences

University of North Texas

Term Expires 2004

Danny P. Wallace

Director, School of Library and Information Studies

University of Oklahoma

Tem Expires 2007

Ann C. Weeks

Professor, College of Information Studies

University of Maryland

Term expires 2006

Mary Elizabeth (Ma'lis) Wendt

Associate Director

The New York Public Library

Term Expires 2005

From the COA Chair: PERSPECTIVE

Letter from the COA Chair, Robert Wedgeworth

In my three years on COA I have seen the ALA accredited programs cooperate by submitting their reports on schedule and so the decision-making processes of COA have proceeded accordingly. Increasingly, programs are innovating by burning disks for their faculty curriculum vitae and other voluminous resource files that accompany their program review documents. Electronic submissions have also become the norm for Annual Statistical and Biennial Narrative Reports (BNR). COA has welcomed this natural migration toward electronic submissions because it greatly facilitates distribution of the reports to Committee members. It also eliminates transporting bulky print files to COA meetings. Although there was some contemplation of standards for electronic submissions, there does not appear to be a need to standardize formats at this time.

COA continues to monitor and review the performance of off-site External Review Panel (ERP) members. To date, this has for the most part been a successful expansion of the capabilities of the ERP providing additional knowledge, skills and experience to the on-site team.

The ALA Council has raised questions regarding the need to have earlier warnings of accredited programs that may be in danger of closing. While the confidential nature of COA deliberations and decisions preclude sharing of sensitive information, there are sources of published information that may be helpful to alumni and friends of programs that may be struggling. COA plans to give consideration to some helpful indicators of what to look for in cases where there is reason to suspect that a program may be failing to meet its obligations.

Since the meetings of COA are closed to the public there has always been a tendency for certain myths to develop regarding its operations. COA tries to dispel such myths by reporting as much as it can to the field. At the 2004 ALA Annual Conference, COA will sponsor a program, "Demystifying ALA Accreditation", intended to shed even more light on its aims and operations. Members completing their terms on the Committee will share their experiences in an effort to build greater understanding of ALA Accreditation.

Dr. Wedgeworth is President of Proliteracy Worldwide <http://www.proliteracy.org> in Syracuse, New York. He can be reached by phone at 315-422-9121 or at rwedge@proliteracy.org.

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 2004 academic term.

Chairs:

Hiram L. Davis, Dean of Library Services

California Polytechnic State University

Kathy Latrobe, Professor

School of Library and Information Science, University of Oklahoma

Joanne Gard Marshall, Dean
School of Information and Library Science,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Raymond F. von Dran, Dean
School of Information Studies,
Syracuse University

Thomas L. Wilding, Dean
Director of Libraries
University of Texas at Arlington

Jennifer A. Younger, Director of University Libraries
Director of Libraries
University of Notre Dame

Panelists:

George Abbott, Head, Media Services Department, Syracuse University Library

Richard AmRhein, University Librarian, Valparaiso University

Diane L. Barlow, Associate Dean, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland

Rosann Bazirjian, Assistant Dean for Technical and Access Services, Pennsylvania State University

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

Joseph A. Busch, Director, Solutions Architecture, Interwoven, Inc.

Daniel Callison, Professor and Executive Associate Dean, School of Library and Information Science-
Indianapolis, Indiana University

Anne P. Diffendal, Consulting Archivist

Martin Dillon, Director of Research, OCLC, retired. Dominican University.

Rick B. Forsman, Director, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center

Jennifer Jung Gallant, Manager of Branches and Community Services, Elyria Public Library System

Frances K. Groen, Director of Libraries, McGill University

Melody M. Hainsworth, Vice President, Information, International College

Ken Haycock, Professor, School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies, University of British Columbia

Caroline Haythornthwaite, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Library and Information Science,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Majorie M. K. Hlava, President and Chairman of the Board, Access Innovations, Inc.

Robert P. Holley, Professor, Library and Information Science Program, Wayne State University

Gertrude S. Koh, Professor, Dominican University

Carrol Lunau, Resource Sharing Officer, National Library of Canada

James M. Matarazzo, Professor and Dean Emeritus, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College

Charlotte Diana Moslander, Assistant Director of Library Services, St. Francis College

Jean L. Preer, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University

Jane B. Robbins, Dean, School of Information Studies, Florida State University

C. James Schmidt, Professor, San Jose State University

Pamela C. Sieving, Director of Library Services, Department of Ophthalmology, University of Michigan

Mary Stansbury, Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Science, Kent State University

James M. Turner, Professor, École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information, Université de Montréal

Tyler O. Walters, Institute of Paper Science and Technology

Fay Zipkowitz, Director of Book Operations, National Yiddish Book Center

New Web-based Directory of ALA-Accredited Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies Launched

By [Renee D. McKinney](#), OA Program Officer

The American Library Association's (ALA) Office for Accreditation is pleased to announce its new Web-based *Directory of ALA-Accredited Master's Library and Information Studies Programs* (<http://www.ala.org/lisdir>).

The directory exists on the ALA Web site in a database format, and allows users to easily search for programs that offer distance education, school library media programs, and degrees other than the ALA accredited degree. Program information may be searched by state or province, and programs are able to make changes to their listings, thus improving the currency of the directory between annual updates. Its online format also allows users to download a PDF version of the entire directory.

The Web-based Directory will greatly enhance the functionality and usefulness of the directory. The Office for Accreditation thanks the ALA accredited programs for their cooperation in implementing this exciting new Web-based publication.

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