

## **Spring 2006 volume 14 number 1**

### **COA Announces Accreditation Actions**

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2006 ALA Midwinter Meeting 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 for fall 2012 unless evidence persuades COA that the review should be conducted at an earlier or later date:

- Master of Arts offered by the School of Information Resources and Library Sciences at the University of Arizona.
- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the School of Information Management in the Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University.
- Master of Science and Master of Arts offered by the School of Information Studies at Florida State University.
- Master of Science in Library and Information Science provided by the Palmer School of Library and Information Science at Long Island University.

COA has granted conditional accreditation to the following program. The next program review will take place in spring 2009.

- Master of Library Science offered by the School of Library and Information Science, the Catholic University of America.

Individuals wishing further information about a particular program should contact the program. A complete list of programs and degrees accredited by COA can be found at <http://www.ala.org/lisdir>.

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in the spring 2006 academic term:

- University of Alberta
- University of Buffalo-State University of New York

- [University of Maryland](#)
- [University of North Texas](#)
- [University of Pittsburgh](#)

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in the fall 2006 academic term:

- [University of British Columbia](#)
- [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#)
- [University of Washington](#)

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.

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From the Director: **OUTLOOK**

by [Karen L. O'Brien](#), Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

If 2005 data is any indication, 2006 should be a good year for most ALA-accredited programs. Data submitted for the [2005 ALISE Statistical Report and Database](#) show that enrollment increased for a majority of ALA-accredited programs, additional full-time faculty members were added, and total income was up from 2004. A summary comparison of gains and losses in these areas is available in the [2005 Summary of Statistical Reports](#) available on the Office for Accreditation web site.

This year's ALA Presidential emphasis on education for librarianship has brought a lot of effort to bear on addressing a perceived crisis in LIS education. The Fall 2005 edition of the *[Journal of Education for Library and Information Science](#)*, for instance, contains four articles on the subject. The [Forum on Education for Librarianship](#) at the ALA Midwinter Meeting 2006 provided a unique chance to exchange a variety of opinions from both practitioners and educators, hear, and discuss issues. The discussion group I facilitated at the Forum included two doctoral students, a library historian, a faculty member and ALA Councilor, and two practitioners. Their perceptions and recommendations included:

1. Need for greater balance of practice and theory in LIS education.
2. Need for more original LIS research on management.
3. Programs not "deserving" accreditation seem to be accredited anyway.
4. Internships ought to be offered by every program.
5. LIS students already working in the field ought to intern in an area outside of their current experience.
6. Programs ought to interview their graduates at regular intervals about the value of their learning.
7. The profession has not adequately defined 'information organization.'

8. Collection management courses are not adequately reflecting how much vendors influence collection decisions.
9. Cataloging needs to focus on user needs more directly, including public services' perspectives.
10. Cataloging needs to include knowledge of a variety of access points.
11. Dual-degrees ought to be encouraged.

Some of these comments have validity and can be addressed on the program level through curriculum content revision as necessary. However, other comments show a lack of knowledge about both the practical constraints on LIS programs in their larger higher education settings and the purposes of professional education and accreditation. A lack of empirical data that could serve as a reality check on how well programs are preparing entry-level generalists exacerbates this problem. Educators and practitioners must face this challenge together through open and frequent communication and a research agenda.

It is safe to say that the tension expressed in point 1 between practice and theory exists for all professions. Dealt with constructively, the tension is creative and leads to expanded curricula that serve constituencies of practice as well as institutional research agendas. Many programs do address this tension through internship and practicum opportunities.

Related to this tension between theory and practice is the perception expressed in point 3 which reflects a misunderstanding of one of the fundamental principles in the formulation of accreditation standards for professions: the importance of the “fit” between programs and their parent institution. Just as institutions vary considerably whether public or private, urban or rural, large, small or medium sized, so do programs vary.

All ALA-accredited programs are required to address the ALA Standards in their own context and 94.6% of programs have been shown to have curricula that address the 2005 draft core competencies that ALA President Michael Gorman refers to in his paper on education for librarianship.

Education for librarianship has sustained itself well through partnership with complimentary disciplines, beginning in 1982 with the creation of the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies (SCILS) at Rutgers University. In 1996, eight (8) of the 56 existing ALA-accredited programs were partnered with other disciplinary or professional programs. Today there are 61 programs, 21 in schools or colleges partnered with related disciplines such as communication, computer science, and education. Through these mergers programs have strengthened their influence within institutions and increased disciplinary reach.

We have seen programs respond to the needs of professionals by increasing distance education opportunities. Since 1997 programs offering distance education options has grown from 75% to 88%. Fifty-four (54) of the 61 programs offer some form of distance education -- not all of it online: “face-to-face at other locations” is a common distance education approach to underserved populations.

The Office for Accreditation continues our collaborative efforts with fellow accreditors, both specialized and regional. The online Guide to Accreditation went live February 17, 2006. Lessons include "Preparing for a Visit," "On-site Skills," and "Post-visit Activities." The next steps will be customizing instruction specifically for our purposes. Also, the ALA Office for Accreditation has been invited to present on our approach to accreditation at the Higher Learning Commission 2006 Annual Meeting on Sunday, April 2, 2006.

The Office will be working throughout this spring and summer to compile our Interim Report for continued recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

As always, I welcome your ideas to enhance our work together. I can be reached at [kobrien@ala.org](mailto:kobrien@ala.org) and my direct phone number is 312-280-2434.

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## **External Review Panelists Acknowledged**

External review panelists contribute a substantial amount of their time and energy participating in the accreditation process to assure quality in LIS education. We extend our appreciation to the following panelists who served during the fall 2005 academic term.

### **Chairs:**

- **Elizabeth Aversa**, Director and Professor, SLIS, University of Alabama
- **Margaret Maes Axtmann**, Associate Director for Information Resources, University of St. Thomas
- **Daniel Callison**, Associate Dean, SLIS, Indiana University
- **Bruce Kingma**, Associate Dean, SIS, Syracuse University
- **Vivienne Monty**, Senior Librarian, York University

### **Panelists:**

- **Ana Maria Cobos**, Librarian, Saddleback College
- **Andrew Dillon**, Dean, SI, University of Texas at Austin
- **Judith Meadows**, Director, State Law Library of Montana
- **Marion Reid**, Assistant to the Vice President of External Affairs, California State University, San Marcos
- **Stuart Sutton**, Associate Professor, University of Washington
- **Eric Albright**, Director, Health Science Library
- **Joan Kaplowitz**, Assistant Head of Reference, Louise Darling Biomedical Library, University of California, Los Angeles

- **Carol Truett**, Professor, Library Science, Appalachian State University
- **Michael Havener**, Director, GSLIS, University of Rhode Island
- **William Jackson**, Senior Fellow, GSLIS, Dominican University
- **Alvan Bregman**, Librarian, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- **Anne Diffendal**, Consulting Archivist, Lincoln, Nebraska
- **Joyce Wright**, Director, Undergraduate Library, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- **Steven Hagstrom**, Director of Library Services, Tarrant County Junior college
- **Lynne McKechnie**, Associate Professor, Information and Media Studies, Western Ontario University
- **John Leide**, Professor, GSLIS, McGill University
- **Susana Hinojosa**, Librarian, University of California, Berkeley
- **H. Frank Cervone**, Assistant University Librarian for Information Technology, Northwestern University Library
- **John Philip Mulvaney**, Library Director, Williams Library, Northern State University
- **James Matarazzo**, Professor and Dean Emeritus, GSLIS, Simmons College
- **Greg Byerly**, Associate Professor, Kent State University
- **C. Olivia Frost**, Professor and Acting Dean, SI, University of Michigan
- **LeRoy Robinson**, Librarian, Houston Public Library
- **Timothy Sineath**, Director, SLIS, University of Kentucky

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## 2005-2006 COA Roster

**Thomas W. Leonhardt, Chair**  
 Director, Scarborough-Phillips Library  
 St. Edward's University  
[thomasl@admin.stedwards.edu](mailto:thomasl@admin.stedwards.edu)  
 Term expires 2006

**Karen Adams**  
 Director, University Libraries  
 University of Alberta  
 Term Expires 2008

**Lynn Silipigni Connaway**  
 Consulting Research Scientist  
 OCLC  
 Term expires 2009

**Ruth E. Faklis**  
 Director, Prairie Trails Public Library District  
 Term expires 2009

**Paula J. Fenza**

Grants Manager  
Mather Institute on Aging  
Term expires 2007

**Katy M. Marre**

Professor of English  
University of Dayton  
Term expires 2006

**Richard Rubin**

Director, School of Library and Information Studies  
Kent State University  
Term Expires 2006

**Nancy K. Roderer**

Director, Welch Medical Library  
Johns Hopkins University  
Term expires 2008

**Carla J. Stoffle**

Director, University Libraries  
University of Arizona  
Term expires 2006

**Danny P. Wallace**

Director, School of Library and Information Studies  
University of Oklahoma  
Tem Expires 2007

**Virginia Walter**

Professor, Department of Information Studies  
University of California, Los Angeles  
Term expires 2007

**Ann C. Weeks**

Professor, College of Information Studies  
University of Maryland  
Term expires 2006

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From the COA Chair: **PERSPECTIVE**

**Letter from the COA Chair, Thomas W. Leonhardt**

The Committee on Accreditation is, like all ALA committees, a volunteer organization. The work we do would not be possible without the support and guidance of the ALA Office for Accreditation. I am pleased to report that the Office is now operating at full strength for the first time in a couple of years. This is a welcome development that allows us all to be as productive and effective as we need to be to serve our broad constituency.

The COA has aligned its 2005 – 2010 strategic goals, objectives, and action plans with ALA’s strategic plan *ALA Ahead to 2010*. COA will continue to fulfill its charge of executing the accreditation program of ALA and developing and formulating standards of education for library and information studies for the approval of ALA Council (*ALA Handbook of Organization 2005 – 2006*, p. 14) and in doing so will address Strategic Objective 1., Goal Area II: Education of the *ALA Ahead to 2010 Plan*: “Ensure that accreditation standards reflect the needs and core values of the profession.”

Open sessions with COA, scheduled on Sunday afternoons at ALA conferences (Annual and Midwinter), take on even greater significance if these plans are to meet their objectives. The focal point of the 2006 COA open session is outcomes assessment. A better understanding and application of quality assessment (as outcomes assessment is referred to in the current standards) techniques will help “ensure that accreditation standards reflect the needs” of the profession. This session at the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans will be on Sunday, June 25th from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. (room not yet announced by ALA Conference Services).

I would like to remind readers of Prism that opportunities for serving on the Committee on Accreditation and for serving on external review panels come up every year. To serve on COA, you need to fill out a volunteer form and submit to the ALA vice-president, president-elect immediately following Annual Conference. For ERP service, you must submit your resume and attend the training session offered each year during Annual Conference. Your name will then go into a pool from which the Office pulls prospective ERP members who are then subject to vetting by given programs and by COA.

I welcome your ideas, comments, suggestions, and questions, so please let me hear from you.

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Thomas W. Leonhardt is Director of the Scarborough-Phillips Library at the St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas.  
He can be reached at [thomasl@admin.stedwards.edu](mailto:thomasl@admin.stedwards.edu).

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## News and Announcements

### Staff Changes at the Office for Accreditation

In December 2005, Steven F. Giese joined us as Program Officer. Steven has worked in libraries in the Chicago area for over eight years, most recently as a Reference & Instruction Librarian at Roosevelt University and the University of Chicago. He holds a M.L.I.S. from Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois and a M.F.A from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Evonne Moore started as Administrative Assistant in February 2006 after a brief stint with the Office as an independent contractor. Evonne has a background in corporate meeting consulting, general office assistance, and database administration. She is currently completing a bachelor's degree at Loyola University of Chicago in Organizational Development and Leadership.

### **COA Participates in ALA President's Forum on Education for Librarianship**

COA members and OA staff attended ALA President Michael Gorman's Forum on Education for Librarianship at the ALA Midwinter Meeting on January 20, 2006. COA member Richard Rubin presented a paper focusing on library education curricula. COA Chair Tom Leonhardt presented a paper addressing ALA's role in library education. OA Director Karen O'Brien facilitated a feedback discussion (read her summation in this issue's Outlook). Tom Leonhardt's paper and other Forum papers are available online at [www.michaelgorman.org](http://www.michaelgorman.org).

### **Comparison of ALA Draft Competencies and Core Curricula of ALA-Accredited LIS Programs Available Online**

ALA President Michael Gorman's emphasis on library education has prompted discussions within the profession about the relationship between LIS programs' curricula and students' core competencies. Assistant Director Renée McKinney's research indicates that LIS curricula are in line with ALA draft proposed core competencies. A report, *Draft Proposed ALA-Accredited, Candidate, and Precandidate Program Curricula: A Preliminary Analysis*, is available online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/prp/prismreports.htm>.

### **COA Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010 Available Online**

COA voted to approve a *COA Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010* at the ALA Midwinter Meeting on January 22, 2006. The Plan reflects the goals and key action areas outlined in *ALAhead to 2010*, the ALA strategic plan adopted in June 2005. Read the *COA Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010* online at [http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/coa/COAstrategicplan2004-2010APPROVED\\_MW06.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/coa/COAstrategicplan2004-2010APPROVED_MW06.pdf). *ALAhead to 2010* is also available online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governingdocs/aheadto2010/aheadto2010.htm>.

### **External Review Panel Training at 2006 Annual Conference in New Orleans**

Current and potential External Review Panel pool members are invited to attend a basic training on the roles of External Review Panelists, the Committee on Accreditation, and the Office for Accreditation in the ALA accreditation process. Friday, June 23, 2006, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Location TBA. Please RSVP to the Office for Accreditation online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/erpresource/ERPRSVP.htm> by May 15, 2005.

### **ALA Accreditation Appeals Process Program at 2006 Annual Conference in New Orleans**

Experienced External Review Panelists and program representatives are invited to attend a program on the ALA Accreditation appeals process and procedures. Friday, June 23, 2006, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Location TBA. Please RSVP to the Office for Accreditation online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/erpresource/ERPRSVP.htm> by May 15, 2006.

### **ALA Accreditation Outcomes Assessment Program at 2006 Annual Conference in New Orleans**

All interested parties can benefit from this Committee on Accreditation-led program on how learning outcomes assessment figures into the ALA Standards for Accreditation and ensuring professional competencies. Sunday, June 25, 2006, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Location TBA. Open to all conference attendees, but please RSVP to the Office for Accreditation online at <http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/progresource/ProgRSVP.htm> by June 15, 2006.

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