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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 2006 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 for spring 2013 unless evidence persuades COA that the review should be conducted at an earlier or later date:

- Master of Library and Information Studies offered by the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta.
- Master of Library Science offered by the College of Information Studies, University of Maryland.
- Master of Science offered by the School of Library and Information Sciences, University of North Texas.
- Master of Library and Information Science offered by the School of Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh.

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 Graduate School of Education Library and Information Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo.

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

- The University of British Columbia
- The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- The University of Washington

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in the spring 2007 academic term:

- The University of Oklahoma
- The University of Rhode Island
- San Jose State University
- The University of Texas at Austin
- Texas Woman's University
- Valdosta State University

For further information about a particular program should contact the program. A complete list of programs and degrees accredited by COA, a current schedule of comprehensive reviews, and more information about the ALA accreditation process can be found at the ALA Office for Accreditation web site.

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.

From the Director: OUTLOOK

by Karen L. O'Brien, Director, ALA Office for Accreditation

The Committee on Accreditation Wants to Know *How* You Know What Your Learners Know

Outcomes assessment, expressed in the ALA Standards as evaluation of "educational results to be achieved," has become the focal point in regional, national, and specialized accreditation.*Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* (1992), p. 4, 9. For instance, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, with its 510 member institutions, moved in that direction with their 2002 standards, expressing their intensified interest in "evidence that the institution is achieving its goals" (outcomes) rather that in "resources," (inputs). *Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness: Understanding Middle States Expectations* (2002), p. 3. The National Association for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) unit standards, updated for 2006, require "performance assessments" of students as evidence that the unit meets accreditation standards. *NCATE Unit Standards* (2006), passim. As a result, programs recognized under the AASL-NCATE program recognition process have these assessment instruments in place or are constructing them in order to retain NCATE accredited status.

As the ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA) emphasized in their program at the 2006 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, *Outcomes Assessment in ALA Accreditation: Making it Work for You*, the ALA Standards require evidence of "assessments, not only of educational processes

and resources, but also of [their] successful use … to achieve established objectives." *Standards*, p. 3. The Standards require programs to "use the results of their evaluations for broad-based, continuous program planning, development, and improvement." *Standards*, p. 3. The External Review Panel report describes assessment systems in place and COA looks for how the results of assessment are used to develop the program. To help programs in this process, the Office for Accreditation published *Outcomes Assessment for Library and Information Studies Resource Manual* over a decade ago. The Office has since developed a [Selected Outcomes Assessment Resources](#) web page, but the 1995 manual is still useful and offers good advice: "Outcomes assessment, like planning and evaluation in general, is a cyclical process consisting of these steps: Plan, Do, Test, Change, Plan." *Outcomes Assessment*, p. 8. Copies of the manual are available from the Office by contacting accred@ala.org.

Programs within an institutional culture that promotes assessment, often catalyzed by the regional accrediting authority, do well in the ALA accreditation system. Combining various accreditation reports may be a way of creating a unified culture of assessment, or might at least make the various reporting efforts less time intensive. This is the thinking behind a program that [Gail Dickinson](#) and I have proposed to the ALISE Conference Programming Planning Committee for the [2007 ALISE Annual Conference](#) entitled *Preparing Reflective Professionals: Systemizing the Proof.*

Finally, as COA continues its review of the 1992 Standards, updated documents will be circulated for review and comment. Please plan to join COA at town hall meetings to be held at upcoming ALA Midwinter Meetings and Annual Conferences to hear about the Standards revision process and to comment on the updates.

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 spring 2006 academic term.

Chairs:

- **Ann Curry**, Associate Professor, School of Library, Archival & Information Studies; University of British Columbia
- **Evelyn H. Daniel**, Professor/Dean Emerita, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- **Edward T. O'Neill**, Research Scientist, Office of Research, Online Computer Library Center
- **Jean L. Preer**, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University
- **Annabel K. Stephens**, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Science, The University of Alabama

Panelists:

- **Eric Albright**, Director, Health Science Library, Tufts University
- **Sheila B. Anderson**, Library Director, Dover Public Library (DE)
- **Gail Avery**, Executive Assistant to the Director, DC Public Library (Washington, DC)

- **Barbara M. Barstow**, Children's Services Manager (retired), Cuyahoga County Public Library (OH)
- **Mary E. Brown**, Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, Southern Connecticut State University
- **Michelle Cloonan**, Dean, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College
- **Hiram Davis**, Dean of Library Services, Robert E. Kennedy Library, California Polytechnic State University
- **Andrew Dillon**, Dean, School of Information, University of Texas at Austin
- **Carol Doll**, Professor, School of Information Science and Policy, University at Albany, SUNY
- **Jean Donham**, Library Director, Cole Library, Cornell College
- **Mirah Dow**, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Management, Emporia State University
- **Joyce Dumas**, School Library Media Specialist (Retired)
- **Donna Dziedzic**, Executive Director, Naperville Public Library (IL)
- **Barbara J. Ford**, Director, Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
- **Vicki L. Gregory**, Professor and Director, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida
- **Jeff Kosokoff**, Collection Development Librarian, Simmons College
- **Kathy Latrobe**, Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma
- **Dale McNeill**, Director, Community Library Services, Queens Library (NY)
- **Bertrum MacDonald**, Associate Dean, Faculty of Management, Dalhousie University
- **Susan K. Martin**, President, SKM Associates (MA)
- **Arden A. Matheson**, Head, Business Library, University of Calgary
- **Charlotte Moslander**, Assistant Director of Library Services, St. Francis College
- **Lotsee Patterson**, Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Oklahoma
- **Charles Rubenstein**, Professor, School of Library and Information Science, Pratt Institute
- **Diane Schwartz**, Director of Libraries & Archives, Kaleida Health Library

From the COA Chair: PERSPECTIVE

Letter from the COA Chair, Thomas W. Leonhardt

During his 2005 ALA presidency, Michael Gorman provided several formal opportunities for discussion about library education, including a teleconference on June 9, 2006, that I attended in the Perry Castañeda Library on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. "Confronting the Crisis in Library Education" was the title of the teleconference, but by the end of the program the participants seemed to agree that although we could do more to strengthen library and information studies education in a continuous systematic way, *there is no crisis*.

The teleconference was generally about ALA accredited LIS education, so it should not be surprising that much of the discussion focused either directly or indirectly on the ALA *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies (1992)*. There were other issues too, such as continuing education, but for the purposes of this column, I would like to

discuss very briefly a couple of *Standards*-related issues and what we – library educators and practitioners – can do to ensure that LIS education and the accreditation process remain vital and valued by all concerned.

What I heard the speakers say echoes the main message of the *Standards*: "Program goals and objectives are fundamental to all aspects of master's degree programs and form the basis on which educational programs are to be designed and developed and upon which they are evaluated. Program objectives are stated in terms of educational results to be achieved." (*Standards*, p. 4) A key component of these goals and objectives is stated in Standard I: "A school's mission and program goals are pursued, and its program objectives achieved, through implementation of a broad-based planning process that involves the constituency that a program seeks to serve." (*Standards*, p.9)

It is important to acknowledge that although the core curriculum of library and information studies masters programs is reflected in the *Standards*, the *Standards* are not prescriptive as to how the curriculum is to be delivered. This encourages innovation. The accredited programs teach both practice and theory through course work and internships. We need to acknowledge that the *Standards* require students be able to "construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met within the context of program requirements established by the school." (*Standards*, p. 16) This encourages programs to plan curricula that serve students and their future employers.

One comment during the teleconference struck me as key to a more vital LIS education: there must be a dialog between educators and practitioners carried out though open conversations involving speaking *and* listening. Such true dialog, continuous (as called for in the *Standards*) and multifaceted (that is, not just face to face) should help us develop a mutual understanding of our roles in LIS education. There were many other issues raised during the teleconference, but my intent here is to illustrate the need for programs to provide a forum where educators and practitioners meet, not just through committees and task forces, but also in public forums, and not just at the ALA and ALISE annual meetings.

Programs can take advantage of local, state, and regional meetings and conferences, develop traveling road shows for areas served, and talk about current program offerings. Programs should ask practitioners which courses and specializations are needed and which ones are not needed. To aid them in the drive for continuous improvement programs should recruit students and employer representatives as advisory board members; clarify issues such as the relationship of information technology to LIS; and encourage practitioners from all types of libraries to volunteer for service on External Review Panels as part of the ALA accreditation process. ALA accreditation policies, practices, and processes benefit from such dialog and depend on it for its continuing vitality.

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

Plan to attend the second forum on education for the profession on Friday, January 19, 2007 during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Seattle. RSVP to [Lorelle Swader](#).

Announcements

ALA Accreditation Manual, Second Edition

The Office will release the second edition of the ALA Accreditation Process, Policies, and Procedures manual (AP3) in fall 2006 in a new looseleaf ring binder format. The new format will allow users to easily remove old pages and substitute new ones, significantly reducing turn-around time for updates, corrections, and additions.

The new edition includes miscellaneous corrections; updates the annual statistical and biennial report deadlines to December 1; clarifies language in the "Progress Review," "Notice of Concern," and "Confidentiality and Ownership" sections; and moves the fee schedule to an appendix.

The Office will mail one hard copy of the updated manual to programs this fall. The manual will also be available online as a PDF at www.ala.org/accreditation. Please direct questions to Steven Giese, Office for Accreditation Program Officer, at sgiese@ala.org, or call toll free at (800) 545-2433, extension 2435.

2006-2007 ALA Directory of Accredited LIS Master's Programs Available Online in October

The 2006-2007 edition of the ALA Directory of Accredited Library and Information Studies will be available online October 16, 2006 as a searchable database and as a PDF. The PDF is updated semi-annually after the ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. Access the Directory at lisdir www.ala.org/lisdir.

External Review Panel Chair Training at 2007 ALA Midwinter Meeting

Experienced External Review Panelists (two on-site visits or more) are invited to attend training for ERP Chairs at the 2007 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Details on the date, place, and time will be posted at www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/ erpresource/resource.htm this fall.

The Role of Mission, Goals, and Objectives for Program Reviewers

Richard Rubin, Member, ALA Committee on Accreditation and Director, Kent State University, School of Library and Information Science

Understanding and assessing the mission, goals and objectives of a particular program are critical activities in any program review. It is vital that External Review Panelists place in proper perspective the role of the ALA *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies (1992)* and the program's stated mission, goals and objectives (MGO) when examining the program presentation. The standards and MGO's have two distinct but closely related functions.

First, the standards are the *lens* through which one views the program. All aspects of the program presentation are viewed through this lens. Consequently, while reading sections of the program presentation, the panelist should be able to identify specifically which standards are being addressed. As issues arise during reading the program presentation, the specific standard under which the issue falls should be noted. It is very helpful to the Committee on Accreditation when

the ERP report notes issues to be addressed by the program and identifies which particular standard or standards are implicated.

Second, the mission, goals and objectives identified in the program presentation establish the *perspective* or *point-of-view* from which the ERP views the program. There are many types of programs that can comport with the COA standards. The MGO's help the program under review, the program reviewers, and the Committee understand what the program is about: what it emphasizes and how it approaches the field. The MGO's help panelists and the Committee concentrate on the focal and unique aspects of the particular program. The more that is known about the perspective of the program, the greater the ability of the ERP and Committee to apply the standards in an appropriate and effective manner.

Panelists should keep in mind that there are tremendous variations in programs and their emphases. It is not the role of reviewers to impose their own perspective on the roles of programs—*that is the responsibility of the program itself*. However, the program presentation should be clear on the program's MGO's. The reviewer should be able to determine from the program presentation what the program's MGO's are and how the program accomplishes or meets those MGO's, including the educational outcomes achieved or expected. In addition, the reviewer should also be able to determine how the program's MGO's are integrated into the MGO's of the academic institution as a whole. This important role of the MGO's in program assessment is the reason why the COA places such importance on systematic and ongoing planning processes.

One way for both the program and the program reviewer to evaluate a program's planning activities is to address four questions:

1. What types of planning is the program doing? (Broad-based, curricular, programmatic)
2. How is planning accomplished? (Retreats, meetings, informal, surveys, systematic data collection and analysis)
3. How often is planning conducted?
4. Who is involved in the planning processes? (Internal and external constituencies)

Finally, the reviewer must examine how the program assesses the MGO's. Among the questions to be addressed are the following:

1. How does the program know it is doing the job?
2. What outcomes does the program expect?
3. What techniques does the program use and what data does it collect to support program assessment?

Program reviewers have a solid foundation on which to base their assessments: the ALA Standards. This foundation should be bolstered by clearly stated MGO's in the program presentation. By viewing the program through the lens of the Standards and the perspective of the MGO's program reviewers have the critical tools to evaluate subsequent sections of the program presentation and the program in its entirety.