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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 2007 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 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, Archival, and Information Studies, University of British Columbia.
- Master of Science in Information Science and Master of Science in Library Science offered by the School of Library and Information Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Master of Library and Information Science offered by The Information School, 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 (initial accreditation)

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

- University of Montréal
- University of Wisconsin-Madison

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For further information about a particular program 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

STANDARDS REVIEW COMMENTARY

When the *1972 Standards* were under revision (eventually resulting in the *1992 Standards*), the Committee on Accreditation requested broad review and comment. These comments reflected the same concerns now being expressed about the current *Standards* update: that the standards must encourage innovation and embrace the interdisciplinary nature of the field (e.g., management, computer science), while clearly defining the field. The first concern, regarding innovation, has much to do with the continuing rapid pace of technological change. The second concern reflects the need for LIS programs to survive within academic institutions. Both of these issues, of course, remain as relevant in 2007 as they were in 1992. Since the implementation of the 1992 Standards, our programs have gone through two accreditation cycles under their guidance. The accreditation process evaluations programs have submitted to the Office for Accreditation suggest that the current *Standards* have proved useful to programs as an external catalyst for continuous improvement. We have the same goal for the updated *Standards*.

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ASSESSMENT

What has proved confounding for programs in applying the 1992 *Standards* is developing assessment systems that can be presented clearly for their impact on student learning. To quote the *Standards*, "... the requirements for evaluation include assessments, not only of educational processes and resources, but also of the successful use of those processes and resources to achieve established objectives" (Standards, p. 3). The [Office website](#) section on [Resources for Programs](#) brings together a selection of [outcomes assessment resources](#).

Most programs are able to describe systematic progress with their assessments in their Biennial Narrative Reports. There has been a great deal of progress with assessments made between the first and second cycles of comprehensive reviews under the 1992 *Standards*. As we move further into the third comprehensive review cycle under the 1992 *Standards*, this progress continues. It is with that understanding that the COA prepared the [update to the 1992 Standards](#) now under review.

INTERESTING TIMES PARADOX

A member of the board of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors ([ASPA](#)), Paul Gaston, Provost, Kent State University, reminded those of us in attendance at the recent spring meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, about the paradoxical curse and blessing of living in interesting times. He invited us to take an historical perspective as we heard and read the reports coming in about the [USDE negotiated rulemaking](#) that was taking place, as it happened, just down the street.

Library and information studies has certainly evolved through interesting times since 1883 when Melvil Dewey reported at the ALA Annual Conference that Columbia University was considering establishing the first library school, to the present in which 61 programs are ALA-accredited, one candidate program has just concluded their comprehensive review visit, one program is in candidacy with a visit scheduled in fall 2008, another is in precandidacy status, and two applications for precandidacy are under consideration. Moreover, enrollment is on the rise as the [programs' most recent statistical reports](#) reflect.

CELEBRATE!

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We will celebrate the COA's Fiftieth Anniversary at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC, with generous sponsorship from [Marquis Who's Who](#). COA's accreditation efforts continue an eighty-year-old ALA tradition of assuring educational quality for the profession.

Last December the Office for Accreditation successfully completed the Council for Higher Education Accreditation ([CHEA](#)) five-year interim reporting process to continue national recognition. CHEA is an association of 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities and recognizes sixty regional and specialized accreditors.

We say thank you and good luck to Steven Giese, our former Program Officer, as he returns to work as a reference librarian this month.

Finally, as we proudly display our [new logo and quality seal](#), we know we have a lot to celebrate.

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 2006 academic term.

Chairs:

- **Bryan Corbett**, University Archivist, University of Alberta
- **Rick Forsman**, Director, Denison Memorial Library, University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center
- **Edward D. Garten**, Dean Emeritus and Professor, University Libraries, The University of Dayton

Panelists:

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- **Mary Ann Berry**, Professor and Chair, Department of Library Science, Sam Houston State University
- **Mary E. Brown**, Professor, Department of Information and Library Science, Southern Connecticut State University
- **Joseph A. Busch**, Principal, Taxonomy Strategies (CA)
- **Linda D. Crowe**, System Director, Peninsula Library System (CA)
- **Edward Erazo**, Reference and Instruction Coordinator, University/College Library, Broward Community College
- **C. Olivia Frost**, Interim Dean and Professor, School of Information, University of Michigan
- **Martha L. Hale**, Dean, School of Library and Information Science, The Catholic University of America
- **Violet H. Harada**, Professor, Library and Information Science Program, University of Hawaii
- **Edward Harris**, Dean, School of Communication, Info. & Library Science, Southern Connecticut State University
- **Mary E. Helms**, Associate Director, McGoogan Library of Medicine, University of Nebraska Medical Center
- **Lynne McKechnie**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Information & Media Studies, Western Ontario University
- **Annabel K. Stephens**, Associate Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, The University of Alabama
- **Jennifer A. Younger**, Director of University Libraries, University of Notre Dame
- **Leila Wallenius**, Head of Reference, Leddy Library, University of Windsor
- **Lynn Westbrook**, Assistant Professor, School of Information, University of Texas at Austin

From the COA Chair: **PERSPECTIVE**

Letter from the COA Chair, Thomas W. Leonhardt

**Future Directions of ALA Accreditation
Presented at the
American Library Association Forum on Education
on January 19, 2007**

In 1992, after several years of work and deliberation, the American Library

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Association adopted and published the [*Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies 1992*](#) (Chicago: American Library Association, 1992) with an effective date of January 1, 1993. Ten years later, in 2002, ALA's ad hoc Standards Review Committee issued its [report](#) documenting changes that had occurred over the intervening ten years, a period that saw much change in LIS curricula and in the expectations of employers. The external review panels and the Committee on Accreditation (COA) had also been changing their policies and practices during those ten years to reflect what was actually going on in accredited programs. The Standards Review Committee made four specific recommendations and offered advice on the application of the standards to better reflect the changes, mainly technological, that educators and practitioners were living with. It is not a long report but it is rich in observation and advice and is a document that one should read before looking at the proposed revisions to the *Standards* now before us.

The Committee on Accreditation does not operate in a vacuum nor does it apply the *Standards* in a vacuum, rather, it receives continuous feedback from its members, the Office of Accreditation (without which COA could not do its work), the external review panels ("ERP"), from ALA divisions and committees such as the Committee on Education, from educators, and from employers and practitioners. COA and the Office of Accreditation have annual meetings with members of the Association of Library and Information Science Educators, meetings designed to learn from one another. As an example, as a result of the meeting in San Antonio, beginning in 2009, all six members of the ERP will be available as on-site visitors instead of only four as is current practice. Program deans and directors, who deemed the expense of additional visitors worth the benefit of having two additional reviewers on site when needed, prompted this change.

I often refer to the Committee on Accreditation as an organic committee, one that changes each year as some members go off and others come on, as one chair finishes a term and another assumes leadership of the group. The mixture of educators, practitioners from different types of libraries, and public members with no library connections at all beyond a library card, ensures diverse observations and opinions as programs are evaluated. The most common evaluation is for re-accreditation but COA also reviews non-accredited programs for admission to pre-candidacy or candidacy status and then for initial accreditation. No program is admitted to pre-candidacy unless it has clearly demonstrated an understanding of the ALA *Standards* and has presented a realistic plan for meeting those standards.

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There is a common misapprehension that a program loses (or should lose) accreditation when it fails to meet one or more standards during a comprehensive review. Programs that are having such difficulties receive conditional accreditation and specifics about what needs to be corrected. Failure to correct those specifically noted problems could lead to withdrawal of accreditation. It has been many years since a program has failed to remove the conditional status from its accreditation. The revisions currently under review, we hope, will improve the process to where conditional accreditation is even rarer than it is today.

Where else is ALA accreditation headed? One direction lies toward Standard II. Curriculum and the needs of practitioners, those who hire graduates of the ALA accredited programs. Standard II reads in part,

The curriculum provides the opportunity for students 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 and that will foster development of the competencies necessary for productive careers. The curriculum includes as appropriate cooperative degree programs, interdisciplinary coursework and research, experiential opportunities, and other similar activities. Course content and sequence relationships within the curriculum are evident.

The key words in this paragraph are “competencies necessary for productive careers.” This is an ambiguous phrase that defies specificity. ALA has been trying for the past four years or so to provide specificity through what is known as “core competencies.” The draft statement core competencies statement currently under review has not been adopted by ALA Council but nevertheless, it is a working document that provides some guidance.

The Committee often hears anecdotal evidence that a program is not teaching the core competencies (most usually cataloging, as it used to be taught). No matter how prescriptive one thinks the *Standards* ought to be, a school or program’s curriculum (and I am not speaking of only LIS programs) is the primary responsibility of the school or program and the complete responsibility of the home institution. Yet, COA addresses gaps in the curriculum that may leave graduates unprepared for practice through the application of Standard II. Moreover, the draft core competencies have offered a way to evaluate the curricula of ALA accredited programs.

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When these [core competencies were compared with the ALA Standards](#), 94.6 percent (53 of 56 programs) had courses that addressed all eight (8) competencies. Let me share the second paragraph of this report:

The American Library Association's descriptive accreditation standards allow programs to accomplish their goals in a manner that is "[c]onsistent with the values of the parent institution and the culture and mission of the school, [and] program goals and objectives." (Standard I) The ALA Standards require that an accredited program's mission, goals, and objectives reflect "the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field" (Standard I) and that its curriculum "foster development of the competencies necessary for productive careers." (Standard III) ALA-accredited programs are meeting those requirements and the many others that the Standards require.

ALA accreditation is headed in the same direction as the profession. Librarianship is a profession composed of both educators and practitioners and a profession that is challenging the way we have *always* done things: from cataloging and reference to everything in between. Our core values remain the same even as many of the words we have used to describe them have changed. These changes should be reflected in the [proposed standards update](#) and that is why your [suggestions and observations](#) are so important. COA welcomes your comments and hopes to hear from you soon.

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.

News and Announcements

External Review Panelist Training in Washington, DC

During ALA's 2007 Annual Conference in Washington, DC, the Office for Accreditation will sponsor an introduction to External Review Panel service for new panelists and training on Standard II:

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Curriculum, for experienced panelists. This session will be held in the Franklin Park Room of the Hamilton Crowne Plaza Hotel on Saturday, June 23, 2007, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Renee McKinney at rmckinney@ala.org if you would like to attend.

Town Hall Meeting on the ALA Standards Update during ALA Annual Conference

Please plan to attend the Committee on Accreditation's Town Hall Meeting on the ALA Standards for Accreditation on Monday, June 25, 2007, 1:30-3:30 pm in the Chinese Room of the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

The ALA Office for Accreditation is seeking a new Program Officer

Responsibilities: Share in the development and maintenance of the Office website, electronic publications, databases, training materials, and accreditation documentation. Manage electronic and paper records according to established policies. Coordinate collection and distribution of reports. Provide general support as needed for the activities of Office and the ALA Committee on Accreditation.

Requirements: Bachelor's degree required; MLIS strongly preferred. Minimum of four (4) years relevant work experience. Advanced skills in MS Office applications: Word, Excel, and Access, and experience with web content management systems preferred. Excellent oral and written communication with the ability to work with a variety of constituents. Prior work with volunteers a plus. Ability to work independently and organize/manage multiple projects.

Salary Range: From \$35, 190.

Please forward resumes to jbeckman@ala.org.

New Resources on the Office for Accreditation Website

- [Presentations from the 2007 Midwinter Meeting External Review Panel Chair Training](#)

AASL-NCATE NATIONAL RECOGNITION NEWS

AASL Program Reviewer Training at ALA Annual Conference in Washington D.C.

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Training for program reviewers and program report writers at the ALA 2007 Annual Conference(Washington, DC) is scheduled for Saturday, June 23, 2007 from 8:00 am - 10:00 am at the JW Marriott in the Dirksen Room. RSVP to Renee McKinney at rmckinney@ala.org.

Fall 2006 AASL National Recognition Decisions

Institution	Recognition Decision
University of Georgia	Nationally Recognized
Rowan University	Nationally Recognized with Conditions
College of Notre Dame of MD	Not Nationally Recognized
Towson University	Not Nationally Recognized

Programs under Review in Spring 2007

- Fairfield University
 - Grand Valley State University
 - Salem State College
 - University of Central Arkansas
 - University of Central Oklahoma
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Statistical Reports Summary of Changes in ALA-Accredited Programs Fall 2005 - Fall 2006

Compiled by
Renée D. McKinney and Karen O'Brien, ALA Office for Accreditation

This document summarizes changes in ALA-accredited programs' enrollment, full-time faculty, and income from parent institutions between fall 2005 and fall 2006. Reports for previous years are available from the [Prism, Reports & Publications](#) area of the ALA Office for Accreditation website www.ala.org/accreditation. The Association for Library and Information Education ([ALISE](#)) publishes an [annual statistical report](#) on LIS education that compiles, analyzes, interprets, and reports statistical information about LIS programs offered by ALISE member schools.

The ALA Office for Accreditation extracts data for this report from statistical trend spreadsheets prepared by the Office, based on information that institutions provide to ALISE and the Office annually. The trend summary spreadsheets show changes over the period of years since COA began reviewing statistics in 1992. Each spring, the Office for Accreditation sends programs their trend summary spreadsheet enclosed with a letter from COA responding to their annual statistical report.

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Enrollment growth continued in the 2005/2006 term for 67% of programs ([Table 1](#)), showing an even stronger pace than last year's reporting rate of 63%. Full time enrollment continued to rise with 60% of programs showing an increase ([Table 2](#)), compared with 55% reported last year. Part-time enrollment continued to rise, with 67% of programs reporting an increase ([Table 3](#)), compared with 57% last year. Sixty-eight percent of programs gained minority students ([Table 4](#)), compared to 43% in last year's reporting. The rate of decrease slowed by 10% compared with last year: 38% last year compared to 28% this year.

FACULTY DECREASE TRENDING UP

[Table 5](#) shows that 42% of all programs increased full-time faculty numbers. However, decreases in full-time faculty out-paced last year's by a factor of +7%. Last year's reports

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showed nine (9) programs with a decrease, while 16 showed a decrease this year.

INCOME FROM PARENT INSTITUTIONS ON THE RISE

Forty-three (43) or 75% of programs reported increased financial support for ALA-accredited programs ([Table 6](#)); up from last year in which 66% of programs reported increased support.

TABLES

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50+ Students	3		1
TOTAL	34	0	23

Table 3: Change in Part-time Headcount Enrollment			
Fall 2005 to Fall 2006			
Number	Increase	No Change	Decrease
		2	
1-9 Students	12		7
10-19 Students	7		6
20-29 Students	5		0
30-39 Students	2		1
40-49 Students	2		0
50+ Students	10		3
TOTAL	38	2	17

Table 4: Change in Minority Enrollment				
Fall 2005 to Fall 2006				
Number	Increase	No Change	Decrease	Not Reporting
		2		7
1-9 Students	17		12	
10-19 Students	10		2	
20-29 Students	3		0	
30-39 Students	3		0	
40-49 Students	1		0	
50+ Students	0		0	
TOTAL	34	2	14	7*

Minority categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native; Asian/Pacific Islanders; Black, non-Hispanic; and Hispanic. These figures do not include international students.

** These figures do not include the seven ALA-accredited Canadian programs, as they are not permitted by law to collect or report information on ethnic origin.*

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Table 5: Change in Full-Time Faculty			
Fall 2005 to Fall 2006			
Number	Increase	No Change	Decrease
0		17	
1	12		11
2	5		3
3	3		2
4	2		0
>4	2		0
TOTAL	24	17	16

Table 6: Change in Income from Parent Institution in Thousands of Dollars			
Fall 2005 to Fall 2006			
Changes in Institutional Income \$000	Increase	No Change	Decrease
		1	
1-50	7		4
51-100	8		4
101-250	14		2
251-500	9		0
501-1,000	4		3
1,000<< />	1		0
TOTAL	43	1	13

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