Prism: The Office for Accreditation Newsletter

ALA American Library Association

PRISM

is published by the Office for Accreditation at the American Library Association

Fall 2007 volume 15 number 2

COA Announces Accreditation Actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference under the 1992 Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies.

The Committee on Accreditation granted initial accreditation to Valdosta State University's Master of Library and Information Science program. The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2014.

The Committee granted continued accreditation to the following programs:
- Master of Library and Information Studies, The University of Oklahoma
- Master of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University
- Master of Science in Information Studies, The University of Texas at Austin

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2014.

The Committee granted conditional accreditation to the Master of Library and Information Studies program at The University of Rhode Island. The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2010.

The Committee continued the conditional accreditation of the Master of Library Sciences and the Master of Arts in Library Science programs at Texas Woman's University. A progress review visit is scheduled to occur in 2010.

The following institutions have programs being reviewed in the fall 2007 academic term:
- University of Montréal
- University of Wisconsin-Madison

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

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

Look for updates to both the standards and the process in 2007/08. The proposed updates reflect commentary gathered since 2002 for the standards and since January 2007 for the process document, following release of the second edition of the Accreditation Process Policies and Procedures (AP3) in December of 2006.

Standards Update

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) has reviewed commentary on the proposed update to the standards at its regular meetings and will continue discussion at its fall meeting being held November 16-18, 2007. The Committee welcomes three new members this fall: Vicki Gregory, Professor, School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Florida; Joe Janes, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Academics, Information School at the University of Washington; and Larry Bernstein, MD, Chief of Clinical Pathology at New York Methodist Hospital, one of the two public-at-large members. The Committee will decide what additional updates are needed to the document before it is presented for consideration of approval by the ALA Council at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference.

Policy Update

COA will consider an update to the policy on student status following withdrawal of accreditation, I.7.10 (c), in response to comments at the Deans, Directors, and Chairs session held by the Office for Accreditation at the 2007 Annual Conference of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) held in Seattle. It was suggested at that session that the 18 months to graduate with an ALA-accredited degree that the policy allows for is not enough time. The results of a survey of programs conducted subsequently by the Office for Accreditation support the need to allow more time: the average time to graduation, combining part- and full-time students in the class of 2005/06, was 28 months.

Further evidence in support of the suggestion to lengthen time to graduation is the trend seen in the Summary of Statistical Reports (available from Office for Accreditation Reports) that show the number of part-time students steadily increasing for most programs since 2000. The only year that more programs saw a decline rather than an increase in part-time students was in 2004. That year, 24 of 57 institutions reported an increase in part-time students, in contrast to 33 that saw a decline

Implementation

If COA makes a policy change decision at its 2007 fall meeting in November, the effective date of the policy change will also be determined at that time. The Office for Accreditation will contact each accredited, candidate, and pre-candidate program about the decision. COA decisions are also posted to the website on the Office for Accreditation Reports page following each COA meeting.

The proposed updates to the standards will carry an effective date of one year hence: if ALA Council approves of the updates in June of 2008, the effective date would be June 2009. This would mean that programs entering the review cycle after June 2009 would be expected to address the updated standards. Biennial narrative reports due in 2009 would also need to address the updated standards.

I look forward to the chance to meet with you at the next Annual ALISE Conference or ALA Conference, and in the meantime corresponding electronically. As you can see from these proposals, your comments matter to us.

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 2007 academic term.

Chairs
- Diane L. Barlow, College of Information Studies, University of Maryland
- William E. Buchanan, Department of Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
- Carol A. Doll, School of Information Science and Policy, University at Albany
- Timothy W. Sineath, School of Library and Information Science, University of Kentucky
- Philip Turner, University of North Texas
- Raymond F. von Dran, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University (deceased)

Panelists
- George Abbott (NY)
- Camila A. Alire (NM)
- Rachel Applegate, School of Library and Information Science, Indiana University
- Dawn Bostwick, Nassau County Public Library System
- Bert Boyce, School of Library and Information Science, Louisiana State University
- Kathleen Burnett, School of Information Studies, Florida State University
- Greg Byerly, School of Library and Information Science, Kent State University
- Judith J. Field, School of Library and Information Science, Wayne State University
- Lisa Hinchliffe, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Jennifer Jung Gallant, Elyria Public Library System
- Joan Howland, University of Minnesota Law School
- William Goodrich Jones, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Debbie Kalvee, Brock University (Ontario, Canada)
- Gertrude Koh, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Dominican University
- Barbara Moran, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina

- Jennifer Paustenbaugh, Oklahoma State University
- Lorna Peterson, Department of Library and Information Studies, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- Sydney Pierce, School of Library and Information Science, The Catholic University of America
- Marion Reid, California State University San Marcos
- James Rettig, University of Richmond
- Tim Richards, University of Michigan-Dearborn
- Judith Robinson, Department of Library and Information Studies, University at Buffalo
- Jerry D. Saye, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Diane Schwartz, Kaleida Health Library (NY)
- Pamela C. Sieving, National Institutes of Health
- Mary Stansbury, School of Library and Information Science, Kent State University
- Jana Varlejs, School of Communication, ILS, Rutgers University
- Tyler Walters, Georgia Institute of Technology
- Sheri Webber, College of Information, Florida State University
- Mary Elizabeth Wendt, The New York Public Libraries

From the COA Chair: PERSPECTIVE

Letter from the COA Chair, Richard E. Rubin

> "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler."
> --Albert Einstein

The complexity of the challenges facing library and information studies education makes some yearn for simple solutions--if only there were one right way to do it. Not since Dewey opened the first school of library economy at Columbia in 1883 has there been just one way to run a library school. Even then, Dewey's school competed with a wide variety of alternative training methods.

An exploration of the formative period of library education from 1883-1923 reveals a considerable struggle within the American Library Association to establish standards for the many forms of library education offered during this time. It was a struggle that highlighted many differences in emphasis and approach. How much theory versus practice should be included in the courses and curriculum? Do summer programs or apprenticeships provide the same quality of education as longer-term library schools? Is a high school diploma a sufficient entrance requirement or should the entering student possess some work or college experience? What type of "degree" should be offered—a master's, bachelor's, or certificate? The struggle over standards and what type of library education was needed proved sufficiently intense to produce a schism between library school educators and practitioners, contributing to the creation of a new association in 1916 for library educators: The Association of American Library Schools, now the Association for Library and Information Science Education.

Sometimes one wonders when listening to today's debates over LIS education whether the wounds of those early differences have ever fully healed. There remain substantive differences in perspective among many LIS educators and between library educators and practitioners. These underlying differences still fester and produce arguments that can generate more heat than light.

As important and potentially divisive issues rise for discussion and debate in library education today, it is important to step back and take a long-range perspective. Rather than search for simple solutions, we need to search for understanding-- understanding of the sometimes subtle and myriad forces that shape LIS institutions individually and collectively and understanding the many commonalities of values and substance shared by all schools of library and information studies. A higher ground produces a better vision.

Richard E. Rubin is Professor and Director of the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. He can be reached at mailto:rrubin1@kent.edu.

Standard II: The Key to Curriculum Evaluation

by Kathleen Burnett, Associate Professor, Florida State University, College of Information

External review panels are the eyes and ears of the Committee on Accreditation. In the case of curriculum, it is the responsibility of the external review panel to ensure that all evidence of a program's compliance with Standard II: Curriculum is available to the COA so that it may answer the overarching question: Does the curriculum conform to the requirements of these standards, regardless of forms or locations of delivery selected by the school? (Standard II.6)

To assist the COA in answering this question, the panel compares the evidence provided in the program presentation with each subsection of the standard. To verify that evidence and to answer questions that may emerge during the comparison, the panel conducts a site visit, which may include visiting classrooms, talking with faculty, staff, students, employers and alumni, and examining syllabi and documentation regarding course evaluations and curriculum review. During the site visit, the panel focuses on gathering evidence around the following five questions, each of which relates to a subsection of Standard II:
1. Is the curriculum based on goals and objectives and does it evolve in response to a systematic planning process? (Standard II.1)
2. Is the curriculum concerned with recordable information and knowledge, and the services and technologies to facilitate the management and use of recordable information and knowledge? (Standards II.2 and II.3)
3. Does the curriculum provide the opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study through course content and sequencing of courses, including any cooperative degree programs, interdisciplinary coursework and research, experiential opportunities, and other similar activities that will foster development of the competencies necessary for productive careers? (Standard II.4)
4. Are specialized learning experiences built upon a general foundation of library and information studies? (Standard II.5)
5. Is the curriculum continually reviewed, receptive to innovation, and is the evaluation used for ongoing appraisal, to make improvements, and to plan for the future? (Standard II.6)

The panel compiles the evidence gathered based on these guiding questions together with that related to the other standards into its report to the COA. The COA uses the evidence from this report to inform its decision regarding the accreditation status of the program. To be successful in the ALA accreditation process, programs must closely study Standard II and document their curriculum's alignment with it.

News and Announcements

2007-2008 ALA Directory of Accredited LIS Master's Programs Available Online in October

The 2007-2008 edition of the [ALA Directory of Accredited Library and Information Studies](#) will be available online October 15, 2007 as a searchable database and as a PDF.

External Review Panel Chair Training at 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting

Experienced External Review Panelists (two on-site visits or more) are invited to attend training for ERP Chairs at the 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia. The session will be held on Saturday, January 12, 2008 from 9:00 a.m. - Noon. Location TBD. Please RSVP to Laura Dare at mailto:ldare@ala.org.

Program Presentations on Display at the 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting

Many programs give ALA permission to display their latest print program presentations for the benefit of other programs. This year, these program presentations will be on display at the Office for Accreditation table in the ALA Office of the Pennsylvania Convention Center during Midwinter. You will need a conference badge to enter the ALA Office and view the program presentations.

Laura Dare Assumes Position as OA Program Officer

Diving headlong into the 2007 Annual Conference maelstrom, Laura Dare began work as Program Officer in the ALA Office for Accreditation in June. Previously, Laura was a reference and instruction librarian at Moraine Valley Community College, in Palos Hills, IL. She also has experience in grant management, and corporate customer service and training. Laura holds an M.L.I.S. degree from Dominican University. Welcome, Laura!

Administrative Assistant Wanted for the ALA Office for Accreditation

Responsibilities: Provide primary administrative support for the Office of Accreditation, including processing correspondence and reports, tracking incoming and outgoing review documentation, maintaining files, and ordering supplies. Prepare small and large mailings. Respond to incoming communications (phone, email, faxes, and letters). Update web pages. Work on special projects and with other departments as needed.
Requirements: Minimum of 3 years of related work experience that includes practical experience in Word, Excel, and Access. Website content management system experience is a plus as well as strong Internet search skills. Should possess excellent written, oral, and electronic communication skills. A strong customer service attitude is necessary, as well as the ability to multi-task and coordinate office workflow, with strict attention to project deadlines.

Starting Salary: From the low 30s; negotiable based on experience. Applicants should forward a resume and letter of application to: American Library Association, Human Resources Dept. Ref. AdminAssist/OAccred, 50 E. Huron St, Chicago, IL 60611 via fax (312/280-5270) or email: mailto:mpullen@ala.org.

The American Library Association is an equal opportunity employer.

AASL-NCATE National Recognition News

AASL-NCATE Program Coordinator Available for Consultations in Arlington, VA

Renee McKinney will be available for consultation with AASL-NCATE program reviewers and program report writers at the NCATE Fall 2007 Institutional Orientation in Arlington, Virginia from Friday, September 28 - Sunday, September 30. Please contact Renee at 312/280-2436 or mailto:rmckinney@ala.org to arrange for a consultation.

Spring 2007 AASL National Recognition Decisions

Institution	Recognition Decision
Grand Valley State University	Conditions Removed; Nationally Recognized
Mansfield University	Nationally Recognized with Conditions
Salem State College	Nationally Recognized with Conditions
Catholic University of America	Recognition Decision Pending
University of Central Arkansas	Not Nationally Recognized
Fairfield University	Not Nationally Recognized
University of Central Oklahoma	Not Nationally Recognized

Programs under Review in Fall 2007
TBA