Prism

In this issue:

ALA accreditation at a glance

67 ALA-accredited programs

63 Institutions with ALA-accredited programs

33 U.S. states (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico) with ALA-accredited programs

5 Canadian provinces with ALA-accredited programs

42 ALA-accredited programs offering 100% online programs †

2 Programs with candidacy status

17,173 Total number of students enrolled in ALA-accredited programs in fall 2018 *

6,138 Graduates of ALA-accredited programs during the 2018-2019 academic year *

† As identified by the programs
* As reported by programs to the Committee on Accreditation.

News and announcements

CoA announces accreditation actions

At the COA meeting at the 2020 Annual Conference

Continued Accreditation status was granted to the following programs (listed in alphabetical order by institution), with the next comprehensive review visit scheduled to take place in spring 2028, reflecting a one-year extension to next visit extended to all programs due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

- Master of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. Meets all standards. No follow-up reporting required.
- Master of Science at the University of North Texas. Meets all standards. No follow-up reporting required.
- Master of Library and Information Science at the University of Maryland. Meets all standards. No follow-up reporting required.

Initial Accreditation status was granted to the following program, with the next comprehensive review visit scheduled to take place in spring 2028:

- Master of Library and Information Science at Southern Connecticut State University. Follow-up reporting is required related to Standard II. Curriculum, regarding progress on curriculum planning and development; Standard III.1-2 and 7 Faculty, regarding progress on faculty recruitment and with research productivity; and Standard V. 10 Administration, Finance, and Resources, regarding resolution of facility and space needs.

Precandidacy status was granted to the Master of Library Science at Middle Tennessee State University.

From the Director of the Office: Outlook

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

Working remotely these many months now to be safe in this time of pandemic has had effects both exhausting and enlightening. It is definitely a more integrated work and home life! It now seems nostalgic to think about work-life balance. Not being alongside each other tends to take some of the joy out of the work for staff and volunteers. It was fortunate that all but one spring visit was able to be conducted onsite. Having shifted to live video conferencing for reviewer training this fall has enhanced our learning opportunities.

This fall we welcome an accomplished group of new members to the Committee on Accreditation (CoA):

- Frank Cervone, Executive Director for Information Services at the School of Public Health at University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Cervone has served on 12 ALA external review panels, four of those as chair. His career in library and information services (LIS) includes four-years as a university vice chancellor for information services and chief information officer, as LIS faculty and head of a Master of Library and information studies program, and years prior as an academic librarian.

- Cheryl Contant, Vice President of Academic Affairs (retired) and Adjunct Professor, University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. Dr. Contant comes to the ALA-CoA as a public member outside of the field of library and information service, from the field of planning and well versed in accreditation, having served on and as Chair of the Planning Accreditation Board https://www.planningaccreditationboard.org/.

- Diane Kelly, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), is a designee of the Association of Library and Information Science (ALISE) Council of Deans, Directors, and Chairs. Dr. Kelly served as Director of the School of Information Sciences at UTK and prior to that, Professor at the School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

- Brett Waytuck, University Librarian at the University of Regina, is the Canadian Federation of Library Associations designee to CoA. He worked for the Government of Saskatchewan as Executive Director of Student Achievement and Supports and prior to that was Provincial Librarian/ Executive Director, having come up through Reference Services at the Bracken Health Sciences Library and before that managed the Health Resource Centre.

- Shali Zhang, Dean and Professor at Auburn University, is an experienced ALA external review panelist. Prior to that, Dr. Zhang was Dean of Libraries and Professor at the main library (Mansfield) at the University of Montana.

Rachel Applegate was appointed by ALA President Julius Jefferson to Chair CoA in the fourth and final year of her CoA term. Dr. Applegate is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and an Associate Professor in Library and Information Science. Don't miss her inaugural column Perspective in this edition.

The Committee will continue its work on a template for the Self-Study as Standards review proceeds. The CoA decision in May to offer a one-year delay to next visit for comprehensive reviews has freed up their docket for that work.

The Accreditation Working Group that the ALA Executive Board, appointed by prompting of the [Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness](#) and the CoA, has been meeting regularly developing its recommendations.

TECH DEVELOPMENTS

Although paperless cloud platform document sharing was the normal way that CoA worked before the pandemic, the shift to video conferencing for meetings has intensified the commitment to thorough reviews.

The Office continues working with IT to move from email lists (phasing out by August 2021) to the online communities platform [Connect](#) for the Committee and review panels.

Programs are now submitting draft and final versions of the self-study through Web portals. Ready access by volunteer reviewers is paramount to a smooth review and that access to the final version persist for the CoA is essential to being able to conclude reviews on time.

-- Wishing you and yours good health!

From the CoA Chair: Perspective

By Rachel A. Applegate, 2020-21 Chair, Committee on Accreditation (Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs, Indiana University - Purdue University, Indianapolis, School of Informatics and Computing)

As someone who has served as an External Review Panelist (ERP) and Chair, and a CoA member for the last three years, it is a pleasure to now step into the role of chair. I am always alert to the main constituencies: LIS students, LIS professionals, and, ultimately, our public.

It has been since January 2020, as the pandemic hit, that the CoA was able to meet in-person—in May and June we met virtually. In January I was teaching a course on Academic Library Management and my students were picking institutions to study and discovered that across dozens of varied colleges and universities, almost half of all graduate students, in all areas, were in online programs—already! At that same time, I was reading a biography of Richard Feynman, a physicist who entered graduate studies just as World War II began. Talk about context! In 2020, LIS professionals are on the front lines deploying their superior skills to help

all of us stay connected, cope, and keep learning. Witnessing this, I have great confidence in our future, knowing what we are accomplishing.

Immediate past CoA Chair Loretta Parham shared with you in this column last Fall about initiatives to improve accreditation by attending to its relevance and reducing administrative burdens by having the right information to understand how programs are doing in relation to the ALA-CoA Standards and process, policies, and procedural requirements, and no more! As the CoA met again by video conference in May 2020, it took action to address the disruptions brought on by the pandemic to offer programs a delay of the next visit. The silver lining for CoA is that these review delays create time in CoA meetings to discuss priorities and options and attend to one of its primary charges: revising the Standards. The main goals of which include to:

- Faithfully reflect the needs of the profession, present and future; removing issues and revising dated language
- Elicit sufficient documentation from programs for external review panelists and CoA members to see what programs are currently accomplishing and are planning for the future.
- Ensure programs remain accountable to students and employers, but also
- Remove irrelevant and burdensome requirements.

Ideally, accreditation self-studies and other reports simply *reflect* the good work and planning a program is already doing, all the time in a regularized (systematic) way. Writing it up in formal documentation can be tedious, but it is as necessary as writing a research report, spelling out a management plan, or preparing a dossier for promotion.

I look forward to working with present and new members of the Committees this coming year. Thank you all in the field, and in library and information science programs, and on the Committee past and present, and our great External Review Panelists!

In profile: Cheryl Trepanier

Cheryl Trepanier is an MLIS graduate (2019) of the University of Alberta where she developed an interest in LIS education and in the strategic ownership and use of information in the context of transparency, privacy, and open access. As a Research Assistant, she was involved in a number of LIS-related projects and co-published with faculty members in the areas of professional ethics and privacy. Post-graduation, Cheryl was invited to be a member of the School's accreditation working team with responsibility for critically editing, auditing, co-authoring, and project managing the School's *Self-Study*.

Previous to her MLIS studies, Cheryl worked in private industry, holding a number of progressively responsible positions in business planning and marketing that encompassed market research, development of business plans, identification and attainment of growth opportunities, customer negotiations, contract drafting, and performance monitoring.

Q. How did your career path lead to your work with the University of Alberta (U of A) on its ALA comprehensive review that concluded last June?

A. Prior to undertaking my MLIS studies, I had worked in business planning and marketing in private industry. Writing business plans involves documenting processes and measurements using key metrics and relevant examples, evaluating and synthesizing evidence to demonstrate and build upon core strengths, and providing a go-forward plan to address areas of weakness and potential opportunities. Completing the ALA *Self-Study* was similar to this type of work – with the added challenge of fitting a program's narrative into the Self-Study structure!

While completing my MLIS, I had the opportunity to work as a research assistant to the Chair of the U of A's School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS), Dr. Toni Samek, which provided the opportunity to work on a number of initiatives that directly supported the program's *Self-Study* including the preparation of a comparative analysis of the MLIS program relative to the U of A's (then) newly published strategic plan; the benchmarking of key metrics of MLIS programs in Canada and the USA; and, the re-design of the annual SLIS Employment Survey (and subsequent analyses) to reflect the expanded focus of information professionals and to provide more precise identification and measurement of relevant job-related responsibilities, competencies, and underlying student learning objectives. Additionally, collaboration on joint research projects allowed me to demonstrate my writing skills, care in ensuring the accuracy and consistency in published research, and project management practices.

Q. How do you feel your background prepared you for the process of a comprehensive review, including editing and auditing the draft and final versions of the Self Study?

A. The research work I did with SLIS sparked an interest in LIS education so I jumped at the chance to be a member of the accreditation preparation team at SLIS. As mentioned above, many of the planning, analysis, and communication skills relevant in both private and academic settings were directly applicable to the preparation of the *Self-Study*. Importantly, management experience in other organizational settings provided an appreciation of the systematic nature of decision-making in organizations with multiple stakeholders ('constituents' in the language of the *Self-Study*). Of course, as an MLIS graduate, I brought a familiarity with the subject matter which was helpful in contextualizing the requirements of each Standard and in writing responses using LIS-relevant language.

Q. What were your initial questions about the ALA Standards?

A. When I first read through the *Standards*, I was quite overwhelmed by the number of standards! Initially, I struggled with defining the distinctiveness between some of them and the subsequent task of sorting responses into the delineated baskets required by the structured format of the *Standards*.

Q. What did you find most difficult about working on the Self Study?

A. We knew that we had a solid program and met the accreditation requirements, however the organization and presentation of the information that we wanted to convey was challenging. To contextualize responses within individual *Standards*, we found that we were often repeating background information that was necessary to describe processes and communication flows that transcended pre-defined boundaries. In particular, *Standard I* which explores overall systematic planning necessarily draws content from subsequent *Standards* addressing curriculum, faculty, students, and administrative considerations. Ultimately, we wrote *Standard I* to include a number of comprehensive tables to support the immediate narrative as well as to establish parameters that could be referenced throughout the rest of the document. Examples include tables that outlined governance bodies, constituents, constituent feedback channels, evaluation mechanisms, and a program assessment flowchart. Where overlap was not eliminated completely, we ensured that the repetition was critical to the topic being discussed, was consistently presented throughout the document, and included accurate cross-references.

We also included two key processes that occurred during the accreditation period and wove them throughout the narrative of all five *Standards*. I believe that this was a strength of our submission as we were able to clearly demonstrate a comprehensive systematic approach to decision making that contributed to program improvement.

Q. What do you feel was the most important aspect of program preparation for the comprehensive review?

A. Program preparation is an on-going process that ideally starts immediately from the granting of the previous accreditation. The review is very evidence-based requiring a diverse collection of supporting documentation created throughout the reporting period so it is important that you partner early with your front-line personnel to facilitate and implement effective records management practices. Measurement is critical to demonstrating that you are meeting objectives and therefore it is important that you have feedback mechanisms in place during the accreditation period that validate program performance and improvement. In particular, the writing of the *Biennial Narrative Reports* to the Committee on Accreditation provides an opportunity to review and reflect on performance across the five *Standards* in the period leading up to the comprehensive review.

Q. What advice would you give to someone involved in working on a program's comprehensive review for the first time?

A. There are a few things that I learned during that preparation of our submission that I think are worth sharing:

- Celebrate the strengths and/or uniqueness of your program. The *Standards* are not meant to rigidly define your program, rather they provide a structured framework to demonstrate compliance and to initiate discussion of how your program and host institution fulfill the expectations of the ALA Office of Accreditation.
- Student learning objectives and subsequently program learning objectives (ideally) drive decision making - clearly demonstrate this flow.
- It is important to clearly understand and identify who your constituents are and the role that they play in shaping your program. Demonstrate how your program communicates with constituents and considers their input.
- Finally, although the Self-Study is a report of the past accreditation period, it really is a forward-looking document. Your responses should demonstrate how program decisions contribute to the continuous improvement of your program.

Q. What recommendations would you give programs if they are interested in bringing in an expert/contractor to assist with the Self Study and the comprehensive review?

A. Let your contractor ask questions and have the relevant people available to answer them!

When we self-assess, it is difficult to recognize where more detail, background, or nuance is required to fully explain or contextualize the knowledge that we are trying to impart. Having an outside perspective to identify gaps and rectify them (in collaboration with the relevant subject-matter experts) can be invaluable in providing the ERP with a coherent and comprehensive narrative of your program. Transparency – something near and dear to LIS professionals – is critical. Ideally, your external contractor will bring some grounding in the subject matter, be familiar with the *Standards*, but the program, through its personnel and records, is the gatekeeper to the information that must be conveyed. The role of the consultant will be to facilitate the best possible presentation of your program's compliance with the *Standards*.

At the U of A, I was fortunate that the Chair of the program not only had the availability and willingness to work through my questions and suggestions, she clearly communicated with program constituents including faculty, administrative staff, alumni and employers, and student representatives to legitimize my role by providing direction and encouragement to both speak with me directly and openly and to provide any documentation that I requested. This openness and co-operation was not only an efficient use of resources, it allowed me to more effectively understand and incorporate the contributions of the program's constituents.

External review panelists acknowledged

External review panelists contribute substantial time and effort to the accreditation process to assure quality in LIS education. We extend our appreciation to the following panelists who served on accreditation reviews during the spring 2020 academic term.

Chairs

Frank Cervone, Executive Director for Information Services, School of Public Health, University of Illinois at Chicago
Jean Donham, Professor (retired), University of Northern Iowa
Lynne C. Howarth, Professor, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
Win Shih, Director, Integrated Library Systems, University of Southern California Libraries

Panelists

Hermina G.B. Anghelescu, Interim Director and Professor, Wayne State University
Stephen Bajjaly, Professor, Wayne State University
Linda Cook, CEO (retired), Edmonton Public Library
Flor Cubero, Consultant, Information Systems and Accreditation of Higher Education Academic Programs
Peter Deekle, Dean of University Libraries (retired), Roger Williams University
Lesley Farmer, Professor of Library Media, California State University Long Beach
Gabriel Gomez, Professor, Department of Information Studies, Chicago State University
John Harer, Associate Professor (retired), Library Science Degree Program
Linda Lillard, Professor and Chair, Department of Information and Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Stephen Matthews, Library Director Emeritus, Foxcroft School
Bertrum MacDonald, Professor of Information Management, School of Information Management, Dalhousie University
Robert H. McDonald, Dean, University Libraries, University of Colorado Boulder
Tess Prendergrast, Adjunct Professor, iSchool, University of British Columbia
Lilia Pavlovsly, Director of the Master of Information Program and Associate Teaching Professor of Library and Information Science, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Keith Anne Stiverson, Director (retired), Chicago-Kent College of Law
Shali Zhang, Dean of Libraries and Professor, Mansfield Library, University of Montana

New external review panelists sought

Find out more about what is involved in serving on an external review panel at http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/becomereviewer/ERPform. If you are

interested or want to recommend someone, the External Review Panel Member Information Form is accessible from that page.

Especially sought are reviewers with expertise in:

- Archives and records management
- Cultural heritage information management
- Curricular review and redesign
- Distance education
- School librarianship
- Public librarianship
- Information science
- Information technology
- LIS graduate program administration
- Service to diverse populations
- French language skills
- Spanish language skills

AASL-CAEP recognition news

Spring 2020 reviewers

We extend our appreciation to the following program reviewers and auditors who served during the spring semester:

Mary Ann Berry, Retired/Adjunct, Department of Library Science, Sam Houston State University
Judy Bivens, Accreditation Co-Director and MLIS Program Coordinator, Trevecca Nazarene University
Naomi R. Caldwell, Associate Professor and Coordinator, Library Education Media Program, Alabama State University
Patsy M. Couts, Professor, Advanced Professional Services, College of Education and Professional Studies, University of Central Oklahoma
Sherry Crow, Professor of School Library Science, Teacher Education, College of Education, University of Nebraska at Kearney
April M. Dawkins, Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of North Carolina - Greensboro
Gail Dickinson, Associate Dean, Darden College of Education, Old Dominion University
Lesley Farmer, Professor, Librarianship Program, Dept. of ASEC, California State University Long Beach
Gail Formanack, Executive Director (retired), Eastern Library System

Meghan Harper, Professor, K-12 School Library Media Concentration Coordinator & MLIS Program Coordinator, School of Information, Kent State University
Nancy J. Keane, Library Media Specialist (retired), Rundlett Middle School
Ramona N. Kerby, Professor, School Library Media Program, McDaniel College
Janice Newsum, Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science, College of Education, University of Houston- Clear Lake

The next issue of *Prism* will be published in April 2021. Please stay tuned!

Send comments or feedback to accred@ala.org.