TOPIC: Report of the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion and Approval

DRAFT MOTION: That the ALA Executive Board approve the motions to refer listed below (Next Steps), with initial reports to be received by the ALA Executive Board as indicated in each Next Step (1-8) and Overall Report Distribution.

REQUESTED BY: Peter Hepburn, Chair, Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation, Mary W. Ghikas, Senior Associate Executive Director, ALA

DATE: 30 March 2017

NEXT STEPS:

The Chair of the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation, in consultation with ALA Management, recommends that the ALA Executive Board refer The Report of the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation, as follows:

The attached report brings together a substantial amount of information gathered from review of the literature, from correspondence and from feedback gathered through online town hall meetings and questionnaires. Cumulatively, the data gathered shows a field responding. Information gathered is relevant to the work of many groups, both within ALA and within the broader LIS ecosystem. Equally, the Task Force is aware of ongoing work – defining specialized areas of competency, articulating the changing requirements of different types of libraries, etc. – that will be of value to the ALA Executive Board in moving forward this important discussion.

Proposed Report Distribution: Distribute the Report broadly both inside ALA -- including ALA Offices, Divisions, Round Tables and ALA/Council Committees – and externally, including ALA affiliates and other stakeholder organizations, with a request that organizations review and comment on the report, with a response to ALA Management by October 2017, for consolidation of a report to the ALA Executive Board by the 2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting. This distribution should be accompanied by distribution of the Report of the Task Force on Accreditation – Process and Communication, which is complementary in its coverage and recommendations.
Additionally, specific referrals and instructions are recommended as follows:

- **Recommendation #1:** External Review Panel (ERP) teams should reflect specialized areas of expertise represented in LIS programs as indicated in the report, with the ERP recruitment pool expanded to recognize members of related professional associations.

This recommendation complements the recommendation made by the TF on Accreditation – Process and Communications, to “modify and clarify goals of External Review Panel (ERP) site visits and reports.” That recommendation, along with others, has been referred to the ALA Committee on Accreditation which, working with the ALA Office for Accreditation, is reviewing that report and developing an implementation response to the ALA Executive Board.

**Proposed Next Step (1):** Recommendation #1 be referred to the ALA Committee on Accreditation for review and report back to the ALA Executive Board by Midwinter 2018.

- **Recommendation #2:** Future developments to the accreditation standards be designed to support student learning and development of practical experience and expertise, supplemented with core skills and theoretical knowledge.

- **Recommendation #6:** There be cyclical examination of, and, as appropriate, affirmation and/or revision of core competencies and values of librarianship.

The TF on Accreditation – Process and Communication recommended development of “a revised statement of competencies.” That recommendation was referred by the ALA Executive Board to the ALA Committee on Education, which is charged with “developing and recommending the association’s policies related to the full spectrum of education for all library and information studies personnel.” These two recommendations from the TF on the Context for Future Accreditation provide further guidance on that work.

**Proposed Next Step (2):** Recommendation #2 and #6 be referred to the ALA Committee on Education for review and report back to the ALA Executive Board by Midwinter 2018.

- **Recommendation #3:** The ALA Executive Board work with representatives of the two accreditation task forces and the ALA Committee on Accreditation, to develop a conceptual statement to be used as a framework for the development of future accreditation standards (by the ALA Committee on Accreditation).

**Proposed Next Step (3):** That the ALA Executive Board appoint a small working group, not to exceed 7 members, representing the TF on Accreditation – Process and Communication, the TF on the Context for Future Accreditation, the ALA Committee on Accreditation, the ALA Committee on Education, the AASL-CAEP leadership, and ALA Management, to develop a conceptual statement for discussion by the ALA Executive Board at the 2018 Fall Board meeting. **Recommendation #4:** The data from the surveys and any supporting documentation, and the transcripts from the chat sessions and any supporting documents be shared with the ALISE Board.
and the ALISE Council of Deans and Directors so that any information related to LIS education, but beyond the scope of the task force charge, will be readily available to these groups.

The data referenced will be valuable to ALISE, which collaborated with ALA on both task forces, and to both the ALA Committee on Education as it considers the broader questions raised in this report.

**Proposed Next Step (4):** That the ALA Executive Board direct that data from the surveys and any supporting documentation, and the transcripts from the chat sessions and any supporting documents, be shared with the ALISE Board and the ALISE Council of Deans and Directions, and, additionally, that these materials be shared with the ALA Committee on Education.

- **Recommendation #5:** (a) There be better accommodation of the interdisciplinarity of LIS as it continues to expand and is reflected in programs. This also applies to the long-term tensions/differences between library science and information science. (b) To accommodate this interdisciplinarity, the accreditation process should consult the accreditation standards put forth by similar disciplines

This recommendation has been divided. Part (b) as written seems beyond the capacity – given their existing workloads – of either COA or COE.

**Proposed Next Steps (5):** That the ALA Executive Board refer (a) to COA for incorporation in its current reconsideration of accreditation process, communications and future standards, and to COE, to inform its considered of competencies and streams of education within the LIS ecosystem. That the ALA Executive Board refer (b) to ALA Management to facilitate review of accreditation standards of similar disciplines and development of a summary report to both the ALA Executive Board and the ALA Committee on Accreditation.

- [Recommendation #6: See Recommendation #2]
- **Recommendation #7:** There be deeper exploration of the “Questions for Consideration” as presented on pages 11-12 of this taskforce report.
- **Recommendation #8:** There be exploration of alternative or complementary education models, such as alternate degrees, competency-based assessments, standardized licensure, and continuing education requirements.
- **Recommendation #9:** There be exploration of partnerships in accreditation with other professional associations and specialized accreditation programs, whether within the context of the United States and Canada only, further abroad, or both.

Several substantial questions are listed in this report:
- Change: What has occurred and what should be anticipated?
- Breadth: How can education effective serve broad and diverse communities?
Innovation: How can accreditation recognize and reward innovation in curricula and pedagogy?

Alternate degrees: Is there a need for the accreditation program to be more inclusive of alternate degrees/degree levels?

Management of accreditation: Is there a need for the accreditation program to establish additional partnerships?

Internationalization: Should internationalization beyond the U.S. and Canada be actively explored?

The Task Force on Accreditation – Process and Communication likewise raised some significant strategic questions including the following:

- **Scope:** Should broader international scope be considered? Should ALA accredit programs more broadly within iSchools?
- **Collaboration:** Should ALA develop collaborations with other associations (e.g., CILIP, ASIST, ALISE)?
- **Continuing professional education:** Should ALA accredit continuing professional development?
- **Business model:** Should ALA develop a new “business model” for LIS accreditation?

Because of the potential strategic impact of these questions raised by the TF on Accreditation – Process and Communication, the Board recommended “that the ALA Executive Board place these recommendations on a future agenda of the ALA Executive Board and request ALA Management to provide appropriate background information to inform the strategic discussion of the Board.”

**Proposed Next Step (6):** That the ALA Executive Board place these recommendations, along with similar recommendations from the ALA Task Force on Accreditation – Process and Communication, on a future agenda of the ALA Executive Board and request ALA Management, working with appropriate internal and external groups (e.g., the Committee on Accreditation, Committee on Education, ALISE) to (a) develop a timeline for a series of strategic discussions by the ALA Executive Board on issues related to LIS education and (b) provide appropriate background information to inform the Board’s strategic discussion of these issues.

- **Recommendation #10:** There be regular, iterative exploration of how to narrow or close the gap between LIS education and the needs of both employers and the graduates entering the field....

The gaps between educator, employer and graduate expectations is not new. A number of bodies, both within and external to ALA, have wrestled with this issue. The rapidity of changes within libraries and within the communities they serve has, however, given new importance to this discussion.

**Proposed Next Steps (7):** That this recommendation be referred to the ALA Committee on Education to inform its discussion of competencies and streams of education within the broad
LIS field, and that this recommendation be highlighted in the distribution of this report, particularly to ALA Offices and Divisions, with a request for comments to ALA Management, to be consolidated for subsequent review by the ALA Executive Board.

- **Recommendation #11:** There be the development of a comprehensive skills accounting to provide a framework against which librarians and information professionals can both measure their existing competencies and identify the need for further skills acquisition.

As part of the work on the ALA Strategic Direction: Professional and Leadership Development, there is ongoing exploration and initial work related broad frameworks, such as that developed by CILIP; tracking within specific competency areas, such as services to teens; and, flexible professional development tracking mechanisms.

**Proposed Next Step (8):** That this recommendation be referred to the implementation co-leaders on Professional and Leadership Development to develop a more detailed proposal in collaboration with ALA Offices and Divisions, with an interim report to the ALA Executive Board at the 2018 Spring Board meeting.

**SUMMARY BACKGROUND:**

The Task Force on the Future Context for Accreditation, along with the Task Force on Accreditation – Process and Communication – grew out of the work of an ALA Executive Board/Association for Library & Information Science Education (ALISE) working group, 2014-2015. Appointment of these two task forces was approved by the ALA Executive Board at the 2015 ALA Annual Conference (2014-2015 EBD#12.38), on recommendation of 2013-2014 ALA President Barbara Stripling. The task forces were appointed by 2015-2016 ALA President Sari Feldman. The Task Force on Accreditation – Process and Communication was received by the ALA Executive Board in Fall 2016 (2016-2017 EBD#5.2.1).
Report of the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation
March 27, 2017

Authored by Nicole A. Cooke, Peter Hepburn, Elizabeth Lieutenant, and Mirah Dow on behalf of the ALA Executive Board Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation

Preface

The work of the task force began in 2015. Not until near the end of the process did the task force know how the 45th presidential administration would take shape and what the implications would be for American society at large and for vulnerable populations in particular. Not until just before submission of this report did the task force have a sense of what extreme challenges may be in store for library services in the United States. Accordingly, the report could not take either into consideration.

On a separate note, the task force was not charged to examine process – our sister taskforce had that responsibility. That difference in charge warrants emphasis here so that the reader will not expect to find greater discussion of concerns with the current process. The task force, however, found itself discussing process at many junctures through to the point of submission of this document. Multiple members of the task force share a palpable sense of great urgency, of critical need, to attend to concerns with process. Consequently, as a task force, we encourage the Executive Board and appropriate bodies within ALA to address the recommendations in the other task force’s report as expeditiously as possible.
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The ALA Executive Board established the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation in 2015 to conduct research and provide recommendations to the Executive Board, Committee on Accreditation, the Office for Accreditation, the Committee on Education, and other ALA constituents and decision-making bodies. This task force, led by Executive Board member Peter Hepburn, worked in parallel with a sister task force led by past ALA President Barbara Stripling, whose group provided recommendations about the accreditation process and internal and external communication.

The charge before this task force was to develop a white paper that “describes the fields and context” within which ALA will be accrediting in the future and “to make recommendations as may arise in the process of that development to the ALA Executive Board”. As part of the white paper, the Executive Board requested information about

- the accreditation of information programs (i.e., who is doing what, how do they or might they relate to LIS programs);
- the disconnect, or perceived disconnect, between skills increasingly needed (e.g., information architecture), the current curricula of LIS programs, and standards / statements of core competencies currently in place;
- the representation of core values (e.g., public access, privacy, intellectual freedom) in LIS curricula and as a common thread that binds together LIS and related fields; and,
- the changing institutional context for accreditation, including factors such as pedagogical innovation, assessment, and resources.

The task force was also explicitly charged with seeking input from other professional organizations related to library and information science. To that end, there was both conversation with and, in some cases, representation from external organizations. Complementing this effort, the task force sought feedback from an array of practitioners and others through surveys and forums. As a further step, task force members undertook a deep exploration of literature related to LIS education.

The resultant report is significant in length, we acknowledge, and includes a dozen recommendations. They address, among other issues, the following:

- a perceived need for regular, even cyclical examination, and as appropriate, affirmation of the core competencies for librarianship;
- a perceived need for a comprehensive skills accounting to provide a framework against which to measure competencies;
- the desirability of partnerships in accreditation;
- the place of standardized licensure and continuing education requirements in the profession; and,
- bridging the gap between education and employer expectations.

The task force further acknowledges that the tension between the library and the information science components of LIS education remains difficult to resolve and warrants further
consideration, especially in terms of how the iSchools fit into the landscape of accreditation of LIS programs. Also, the research highlights the fact that the conversations currently being had in the field not only overlap, but consistently recur in the discipline and the professional fields, and are likely to do so again.

It is hoped that this report, if not fully resolving these issues, provides some framework for navigating them going forward.
Introduction

The ALA Executive Board established the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation in 2015 to conduct research and provide recommendations that could be used by the Executive Board, Committee on Accreditation, the Office for Accreditation, the Committee on Education, and others. This task force, led by Executive Board member Peter Hepburn, worked in parallel with a sister task force led by past ALA President Barbara Stripling, whose group provided recommendations about the accreditation process and internal and external communication. Task force membership was, in part, established to be representative of key stakeholders within the association, including the Committee on Accreditation, the Committee on Education, the Committee on Diversity, AASL, ACRL, and PLA.

The charge before this task force was to develop a white paper that “describes the fields and context” within which ALA would be accrediting in the future and “to make recommendations as may arise in the process of that development to the ALA Executive Board”. As part of the white paper, the Executive Board requested information about

- the accreditation of information programs (i.e., who is doing what, how do they or might they relate to LIS programs);
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- the changing institutional context for accreditation, including factors such as pedagogical innovation, assessment, and resources.

The task force was also explicitly charged with seeking input from other professional organizations related to library and information science. To that end, there was both conversation with and, in some cases, representation from external organizations. Complementing this effort, the task force sought feedback from an array of practitioners and other constituents through surveys and webinars / online forums. As a further step, task force members undertook a deep exploration of literature related to LIS education. Please see the appendices for further information.
The Challenge

The task force focused on three primary sub tasks – research, outreach, and writing – to source information for the white paper. The outreach group focused on two tasks: seeking feedback from organizations and individuals. This included parts of ALA (divisions, round tables, committees) as well as other professional associations. The appendices include formal statements from several bodies. The group also undertook surveys of LIS students and of employers in the field. There is discussion of the survey results in a forthcoming section, and the survey document is included in the appendices.

The research group had the considerable task of reviewing the literature in LIS and related fields, including information found in subscription databases, blogs, and social media platforms. Ultimately the body of research was culled and categorized four ways:

1. Accreditation (in LIS and/or other fields)
2. Library Skills and Knowledge
3. LIS Education (future, re-envisioning, etc.)
4. Quality Assessment of LIS Education

Deeper discussion of the corpus of research follows in a forthcoming section, but as a whole, the research affirmed that LIS education is evolving. Indeed, LIS education has a long history of changing to reflect times and trends, though the evolution has perhaps been most profound in response to the current digital era. Despite changes in the field, the core values of librarianship have remained largely constant, and ongoing conversations related to LIS education and accreditation acknowledge those values.

The research yielded certain themes common throughout examination of professional associations and accrediting agencies. Student learning outcomes, student retention, assessment, and faculty credentials are among the areas that come under scrutiny during accreditation processes. The research showed, however, that even when LIS programs hold continued accreditation status, there is still a gap, or at least the perception of one, between the skills, knowledge, and competencies graduating students are equipped with on the one hand, and employers’ expectations and advertised requirements on the other. The tension between expectations of graduate education within institutions and expectations among students, graduates, and professionals was a recurring theme in the research and in the results of the outreach work.

The task force saw the discussions surrounding LIS knowledge and skills, quality assessment of LIS education, and the future of LIS education as being somewhat cyclical in nature. That is, similar conversations have been had before, and in more cynical moments the task force speculated that such questions would vex ALA, librarians, and LIS programs and program staff again. Harnessing the cyclical examinations of LIS education and accreditation so as to anticipate its movements and address what will arise would be a fruitful outcome from the work this task force as a whole.
Understanding the Context of Accreditation

Currently, LIS education is evolving. It has a long history of changing to reflect the times and trends, perhaps no more so than in the constantly changing digital era. A review of the literature in four areas (accreditation in LIS and/or other fields; library skills and knowledge; LIS education; and, the quality assessment of LIS education) indicates that future trends in LIS education will emphasize information, organizations, and people through advocacy and outreach. In addition, the literature recommends and suggests new competencies that LIS educators must teach in their programs to equip graduates for new career opportunities. Equally, the future of LIS education must focus on a balance between attitude, in the form of local advocacy, community outreach, and global collaborations; and aptitude, in the form of new competencies and skills. There is also the need to include key stakeholders in the development of LIS education as it evolves.

Accreditation (in LIS and/or other fields)

Context of academic units offering ALA-accredited degree programs. As of submission of this report, there are 65 ALA-accredited degrees offered by 60 academic units. Though this report collectively refers to them as LIS programs, the breakdown is not so uniform. Of the ALA-accredited degrees, 36 are in library and information science/studies (LIS), 13 are in library science/studies (LS), 9 are in information science/studies (IS), and 8 are unspecified (e.g., MA or MS, with no disciplinary designation). Of these 60 academic units, 38 offer a dual/joint degree option, 28 offer another master’s degree, and 5 offer two ALA-accredited master’s degree programs. 37 academic units offer post-master’s certificates/certification, and 18 offer continuing education and/or non-degree options. 38 academic units offer a PhD program, and 16 offer a bachelor’s program.

Of the 60 academic units that offer ALA-accredited degrees, 30 include LIS in their name, 28 include information-only, 2 do not include library or information, and none include library-only. 25 of these academic units exist as stand-alone units, while 35 are situated within another academic unit (e.g., the Department of Research Methods and Information Science, housed within the College of Education). Of those units situated within another, they are most often affiliated with education and learning (12 academic units), followed by arts and sciences (8), communications and media (7), and computing and information technology (6). Affiliations were also found with business administration (3 academic units), engineering and applied sciences, human and social services, and social and behavioral sciences (2 academic units each), followed by interdisciplinary professional studies, natural sciences, psychology, and research methods, respectively (1 academic unit each).

Based on this analysis, the majority of academic units seeking ALA accreditation share the following characteristics and educational offerings:

- They are situated within another academic unit rather than existing as stand-alone units.
- Their names are inclusive of both library and information science.

1 http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/directory
They offer one ALA-accredited LIS degree program, dual/joint degree(s) option(s), a PhD program, and post-master’s certificates/certification options.

Context of the specialized accreditation of information-related programs. The ALA’s accreditation program first incorporated information science, albeit in a limited manner, through adoption of the 1972 Accreditation Standards. The next Standards revision, in 1992, expanded the scope of the ALA’s accreditation program in incorporating information studies. Since this time, the ALA has faced a unique challenge in negotiating the association’s more specific scope, libraries, with the accreditation program’s broad scope, library and information studies. The Standards are perceived by some as more strongly “concerned with the practice of librarianship than the study of information.” However, librarianship is only addressed in two of the five major Standards areas – I. Systematic Planning and II. Curriculum. Furthermore, the definition of library and information studies itself does not specifically concern itself with the profession of librarianship:

The phrase "library and information studies" is understood to be concerned with recordable information and knowledge, and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use. Library and information studies encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, and management. This definition incorporates a field of professional practice and associated areas of study and research, regardless of a degree’s name.

While information, as disciplinary study and science, has been within the purview of the ALA’s accreditation program for more than two decades, tensions between the role of library science and information science within LIS education persist. Feedback solicited from the iSchool Caucus characterized this tension as follows:

Information is a phenomena-defined field with an academic home typically evaluated according to research university standards. Librarianship is a more stakeholder-defined field, evaluated less on scholarship and more through negotiation with its professional community. Few believe we can resolve this tension in the near term but it forms a context in which we can perhaps better understand the challenges of developing an accreditation process that will satisfy all parties.

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2 http://www.jstor.org/stable/25618478
3 http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/standards/standards
4 http://www.ala.org/aboutala/
5 iSchool Caucus Deans and Directors of North American iSchools with ALA-accredited master’s programs, as reported by Dr. Andrew Dillon. See Appendix for the full report.
6 ALISE Deans, Directors, and Chairs, as transcribed from the webinar “The Context of Future Accreditation: Input Session”
7 ibid, pg. 2
8 iSchool Caucus Deans and Directors feedback
While it is important to acknowledge the historic tensions between these two disciplines, for this report’s examination of the context of LIS education and its relationship to other information education accreditation programs, it may be worth considering the information-related disciplines as part of a continuum, with library science and information science as interrelated disciplines that share particular traits, values, and interests.

The institutional structure of academic units with ALA-accredited degrees reveals certain preexisting relationships between information programs and cognate disciplines and professions. The strong relationship between the LIS and education disciplines is recognized within the ALA accreditation program through its partnership with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).9 Two relationships – arts and sciences, and social and behavioral sciences – reflect the broad interdisciplinary nature of the LIS field and do not lend themselves to specialized accreditation programs. Relationships with disciplines such as communications/media and computing/IT, followed by business administration and applied sciences/engineering, exist. The Information Professionals Task Force of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) previously identified each of these disciplinary areas as aligned with the scope of information professional education programs.10

Disciplinary Spheres

Cross-cutting Disciplines: Business, Communications, Education, and Public Administration

Based on this analysis, the following specialized accreditation programs are most closely related to the accreditation of North American information programs, and warrant further investigation:

- **Business**
  - AASCB\(^a,b\) Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International
  - ACBSP\(^a\) Accreditation Council for Business Schools & Programs
  - IACBE\(^a\) International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education

- **Communications**

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9 [http://www.ala.org/aasl/education/caep](http://www.ala.org/aasl/education/caep)
10 [https://www.asis.org/IP_Task_Force_Study_7-11-08.html](https://www.asis.org/IP_Task_Force_Study_7-11-08.html)
Archival Science and Museum Studies do not have specialized accreditation programs, but as the disciplinary spheres indicate, there is opportunity for further investigation:

- American Alliance of Museums – Accreditation Commission (accreditation of museums, not degree programs)
- Society of American Archivists – guidelines for graduate programs as well as certification of individuals through the Academy of Certified Archivists

Expansion of the ALA accreditation program beyond the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico is also worth considering. While the accreditation program has historically been limited to these two countries, a program located in the United Kingdom received pre-candidacy status in December 2016. Should this program advance to candidacy status and secure initial accreditation, it will be the first ALA-accredited program outside of North America. Potential internationalization of the ALA accreditation program is not explored in this report, but should be examined in the future. Expansion of accreditation in additional jurisdictions would need involvement from representatives of those jurisdictions.

Questions for Consideration
The plentiful and diverse educational options – lateral (MA), hierarchical (BA and PhD), and supplemental (certificates and continuing education) – coupled with the low number of programs that have pursued accreditation for multiple master’s degrees, indicate an area for future consideration: should the ALA consider expanding its accreditation program to include these alternate academic offerings? If so, it may consider the following:
At this time library and information services, and the accreditation of educational programs, are at a critical juncture. They exist in an atmosphere of remarkable change—in the professions, in education for those professions, and in the larger world. It is incumbent upon us to recognize the manifold changes, to embrace those which can benefit the professions and education, and to manage change as best we can. What are the changes that have occurred very recently? What changes can be anticipated in the short and medium terms? How can education work to serve effectively very broad and diverse communities? How can accreditation recognize and reward innovation in curricula and pedagogy? How much accreditation change to adept at anticipating the context of the future?

Is there a need for the accreditation program to be more inclusive of alternate degree levels (BA and PhD)? In 1951, the master’s-level credential was deemed the appropriate degree for library professionals. Since that time, alternate credentialing structures has been proposed for other members of the LIS professions, for example, the certification programs offered through the ALA-APA for administrators and support staff. It may be worth considering whether the exclusive focus on the master’s degree – designed to be both the entry-level and terminal degree – is appropriate for the range of employment options within LIS organizations and professions. While the responsibility for examining this question falls within the purview of the Committee on Education, not the Committee on Accreditation, it may also be worth considering whether this relationship and decision-making arrangement is structured effectively within the ALA.

Is there a need for the accreditation program to establish additional partnerships? The partnership model between the ALA and CAEP could be expanded to other LIS practice specialties. For example, a partnership between the ALA accreditation program and the American Bar Association (ABA) may recognize ABA-accredited credentials as an appropriate professional degree for law librarianship. The CAEP partnership is managed primarily within the ALA’s American Association of School Librarians (AASL). Given the specific areas of expertise housed within specific professional associations, the exploration and establishment of additional accreditation partnerships would be best considered by the ALA consulting with appropriate professional associations (e.g., the American Association of Law Librarianship and the American Bar Association).

Is the ALA’s accreditation program conducive to academic units pursuing multiple degree accreditation? The low number of academic programs that offer multiple master’s ALA-accredited degrees (5 of 28) may indicate that the ALA accreditation program is not appealing. This low number may also reflect degree offerings in tangentially related professions and disciplines (e.g., Identity Management and Security at Texas-Austin, Telecommunications and Network Management at Syracuse) that do not necessarily have a strong demand for accredited credentials.

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11 http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/officers/eb_documents/2014_2015ebdocuments/ebd12_11_1_accreditation_discussion_fa14_0.pdf (p. 20)
12 http://ala-apa.org/certification-news/
Exploration of the Literature

Library Skills and Knowledge

The literature examined provide valuable insight regarding the knowledge and skills needed by librarians in the digital age, and it addresses the expectations and priorities institutions consider when hiring entry-level librarians. Based on examination of job advertisements, employers continue to value non-technical skills as heavily as technical skills; however the nature and pervasiveness of technical skills has changed enormously. There is also extensive exploration of how graduate LIS programs ensure that their students and graduates are prepared for both the demands of graduate study and professional work in the modern environment. The literature identifies an issue with library graduate education competencies, with some programs discussing competencies but few requiring formal skills assessment.

A tension between education and training arises in the literature as well as in other spheres – this tension was prevalent in the online forums, for example, and it is one that task force members themselves have discussed. LIS programs do not teach job skills but the intellectual underpinnings that will enable librarians to acquire and apply skills thoughtfully, deliberately, and effectively. In a work environment where jobs have become scarcer in some parts of the profession and some locales, where employment projections for librarian positions in the United States remain slower than average, and where job postings are often worded and weighted more heavily in favor of skills, it is understandable that students and graduates think in terms of the practical. There is, however, a danger if programs try to emphasize practicality at the expense of the theoretical: the landscape of practical shifts quickly and unexpectedly, and programs simply cannot stay apace. This is even truer when curriculum development processes are taken into consideration, which at many institutions involves multiple levels or iteration of review before implementation. The time lag involved works against any program trying to focus only on teaching current skills.

Programs do not solely instruct students in the theoretical, of course. The literature shows that there is an abundance of practical knowledge being imparted through LIS programs. On the other hand, the research also points to gaps, not just in the perception that endures among practitioners and students that programs are not as responsive to demands for skills as they might like. This is borne out in studies such as Krasulski’s, which examines access services – still a core part of most libraries – and confirms the existence of a gap in library graduate education in this aspect of librarianship. Askew and Theodore-Shusta’s work, meanwhile, indicates that while research methods courses and evaluation courses are prevalent in programs, assessment as a skill is not emphasized in LIS program curricula despite having become more important in the field.

Does accreditation actually hinder programs in being responsive? The standards for accreditation (to be discussed further in the next section) change infrequently, and only after very

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lengthy, careful consideration. Although the accreditation standards have consistently encouraged innovation and continuous improvement, programs may perceive the standards as a constraint on experimenting that prevents them from attempting new things in an effort to address a changing landscape of library skills. A key point the literature discusses is that LIS education programs seek to educate generalists when they may need to focus on educating specialists. That would, however, entail the development (and assessment) of additional tracks for different types of librarians and library education.

The literature, as well as the outreach conducted by the task force, places a focus on core competencies. This is true when it comes to library skills and knowledge as it is in other areas. The current ALA core values of librarianship are referenced time and again. Still, there are other ideas of what needs to be included in core competencies. A recurring one, as expressed in surveys and forums (see the following sections), centers on cultural competencies; that is, an understanding of, appreciation and respect for, and knowledge of how to work on issues and situations related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This means different things, in different contexts (i.e., in the LIS classroom and program, in a work situation with coworkers of all levels, and in a work setting with library users). Other ideas for revisions to what are considered core competencies in the field of librarianship are also present in the literature, though none quite as powerfully and pervasively.

While sociocultural knowledge has arisen as a genuine consideration for LIS education, evolving technologies and emerging trends continue to have an impact on LIS education. As Hu notes, this has led to the establishment of new curricula, new course design and methods to organize LIS education, new competencies for faculty, and new efforts to recruit students. Job markets have expanded for graduates, both within libraries and elsewhere. There is connection here regarding how programs have diversified, carving out niche areas for instruction. In Cox and Corrall’s study, the resilience of the profession’s core jurisdiction is apparent despite pressures to erode it, but librarianship fills new niches through forays into teaching, and more recently into open access and data management. The diversification necessitates variation in curricula at a minimum, and further highlights the issue of whether niche areas are commonly addressed within current core competencies, or if there are new competencies to be developed and applied.

Although the task force has focused on the future context for accreditation, the members have had conversations around issues of licensing, professional credentialing, and continuing education. The survey of the literature did not include this topic area, however. It merits acknowledgement as a concern for further exploration, and given such models as licensure of public or school librarians in certain states and the continuing education program through the ALA Allied Professionals Association, there are examples to draw upon should nationwide practices be desired. Reinforcing this is feedback from the iSchools, as shared by Task Force member Andrew Dillon, which recommends consideration of “moving to a graduate certification/licensing system for librarianship as an alternative to program accreditation.”

18 http://ala-apa.org/
19 iSchool Caucus Deans and Directors feedback.
The literature surrounding library skills and knowledge speaks strongly to the differentiation between education and training, and at the same time exposes the divide between the practical and the theoretical. Accreditation is a factor in shaping how programs are structured as much as responsiveness to the ever-changing field of librarianship is. Core values are at the core of LIS instruction, and the knowledge and skills imparted in LIS education map back to them.

Quality Assessment of LIS Education

Quality assessment of LIS education includes accreditation. The concept of Quality Assurance (QA) in LIS education promotes two objectives: accountability and quality improvement from a global perspective. A key aspect of QA is to develop standards for quality LIS education. Put slightly differently, per Tammaro, QA has the aim of facilitating the recognition of qualifications of professionals possessing an LIS education.20 The research offers up at least three models: Learning Outcome, IFLA SET Quality, and Model Curriculum. Of those three, the Learning Outcome model rises to greatest prominence among Tammaro’s findings. A common theme to what the research team found regarding quality assessment is familiar already: much of the literature discusses the existence of a “gap” between LIS education and employers’ expectations.

The literature examined by the team focuses not just on models, but also on trends in LIS education, including the development of frameworks for information professionals. Beyond that, there is also the “re-envisioning” LIS education and the MLS degree. There is clear reiteration of the need for core values within the profession while developing new competencies for future information professionals. Core values and competencies, in fact, were on the minds not just of various authors, but also of many of the respondents to the surveys and participants in forums and other conversations – matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion are on the minds of many. As Bertot, Sarin, and Jaeger note in their “Re-envisioning the MLS” report, the emphasis for future LIS education should focus on a balance between attitude (advocacy, outreach, collaboration) and aptitude (competencies, training, skills).21 Discussion of core values and competencies will recur in the next section.

A study from Australia by Partridge and Yates points to the need for key stakeholders, such as students, educators, and employers, to be included in the development of LIS education programs.22 These same stakeholders are to be engaged in the quality assessment of LIS education programs, as required by the ALA standards. The body of literature gathered does not speak to who those stakeholders may be otherwise, but some are represented on the Committee on Accreditation, including practitioners, LIS faculty, and members of the public. There are other associations, however, whose members hold a vested interest in LIS education. ALA is the largest library membership association, but others such as the Medical Library Association, Special Libraries Association, American Association of Law Libraries, and the Music Library Association

exist. There are librarians among the ASIS&T membership, and, as crucially, there are LIS faculty members, too. A role for ASIS&T and the Association for Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE) in accreditation brings up a thorny question for the task force: what is the place of iSchools in accreditation?

The task force approached the topic of how iSchools fit in with accreditation multiple times, perhaps never really landing on it. The research team itself did not glean any particular guidance from the literature it examined on the relationship of iSchools to the accreditation process. Instead, it may be the report from the iSchool’s Deans and Directors Caucus that offers the most salient points:

- Librarianship is a more stakeholder-defined field, evaluated less on scholarship and more through negotiation with its professional community.
- The standards emphasize a professional mindset, concerned with the practice of librarianship more than the study of information.
- As the accredited programs all exist as graduate degrees in universities, they must operate within a broader context of research and scholarly expectations of the parent institution. Further, since more and more accredited programs exist within interdisciplinary colleges, not only are their resources less directly targeted at individual degree programs, which complicates reporting….

The task force has not resolved the issue of how iSchools participate in and may contribute to accreditation but acknowledges that the future context of accreditation necessarily must address what that relationship can be or should be.

As for other stakeholders, and as previously noted, LIS students and recent graduates shared through the task force’s surveys and webinars their perception of a gap between education and employer needs. This conclusion is affirmed through the literature querying student’s perception of their LIS education programs, and evidenced in student-led initiatives to supplement their LIS education. The research team found that, when queried, Australian

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23 iSchool Caucus Deans and Directors feedback.
LIS students are optimistic about the LIS profession, consider the role of technology in their future careers and stress the importance of workplace experience, as noted in the study by Combes et al.\textsuperscript{32} That same study found that many students also report a high satisfactory level with their LIS courses. This particular article is indicative of the situation in Australia, and is among several the research team selected to report on education and accreditation in other countries. Overall, the task force did not spend much time considering accreditation outside of North America.

The exception to this is the accreditation of programs in Canada. ALA currently accredits the 8 programs in that country. The task force itself not only has formal representation from the profession in Canada, it also undertook outreach to Canadian librarians in hopes of learning more from them. As task force member Andrew Dillon reports from his conversation with the iSchools, there is also a concern among Canadian LIS faculty that the current process is too US-centric and lacks awareness of the higher education context in Canada, which differs in key ways from the US.\textsuperscript{33} This was confirmed by a task force member who reiterated that some Canadian LIS faculty indicated concern about representation on accreditation committees; because Canadian higher education differs from the US, it is very important to have Canadian accreditation committee members. Currently, the Committee on Accreditation does include a member appointed in consultation with the Canadian Federation of Library Associations.

The forum for Canadian participants did not reveal quite so much concern among practitioners or students, but there are still some differences. Law on copyright, privacy, and intellectual freedom are not exactly the same as in the United States. While conversations on diversity in the United States often focus on race and ethnicity, particularly on underrepresented minority groups, in Canada, the French-English language divide still resonates. And, issues related to Indigenous peoples are far more prominent than for the analogous groups in the United States. A final difference lies in the governmental structures, in each country, which affect educational funding as well as funding for libraries themselves. There is some perception that the current accreditation standards do not accommodate issues specific to Canada and their LIS programs.

A final aspect to quality assessment of is the notion of a checklist of sorts of the standards and other criteria to which programs should adhere. The literature gathered was not as clear on this matter, but again, the iSchools’ report raises concerns:

*Schools feel there is no clear guidance on what data and what evidence to provide to COA when formulating the program submission. There are no agreed benchmarks or comparative data points requested, and little or no emphasis on demonstrable outcomes. Instead, the standards heavily emphasize the importance of having a planning process, tied to no particular goal other than those the individual program might identify.*\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32} Barbara Combes, Jo Hanisch, Mary Carroll, and Hilary Hughes. “Student Voices: Re-Conceptualising and Re-Positioning Australian Library and Information Science Education for the Twenty-First Century.” The International Information & Library Review 43, no. 3 (September 2011).
\textsuperscript{33} iSchool Caucus Deans and Directors feedback.
\textsuperscript{34} iSchool Caucus Deans and Directors feedback.
This relates to information the task force heard anecdotally from deans, directors, and LIS faculty, such as the burden placed on programs to produce documentation in an effort to anticipate what reviewers may demand instead of being in service to self-reflection within the program and consequent moves toward improvement. The report produced by the task force on accreditation process and communication, chaired by past ALA president Barbara Stripling, addresses many of these concerns more directly. This task force affirms the recommendations of its sister task force and has taken their report into consideration, as the future of accreditation will depend in part on how much the process changes in accordance with the other task force’s recommendations.

The literature surrounding quality assessment of accreditation overlaps with that for library knowledge and skills in addressing core values and competencies. Quality assessment, however, also takes into consideration partnerships and the international aspect of accreditation. How the iSchools fit into the accreditation process remains an important topic of discussion; there is potential for significant change in this area concerning the future context for accreditation.

LIS Education (Future, Re-envisioning, etc.)

By this point in the literature review, overlap with previous sections becomes more apparent. This section illustrates the future of LIS education, which continues to be grounded in core values that continue to frame and shape information professionals.

As noted previously, the literature reviewed emphasized information, people, technology and organizations. In addition, the literature recommended and suggested new competencies that LIS programs must teach in order to equip graduates for new career opportunities. Examples, as posited by Blaise Cronin at his keynote at the III International Seminar on Library and Information Science Education and Research, include interdisciplinary collaboration, the use of information communication technologies, and the ability to innovate and advocate for local and global communities, which may bring about new career opportunities for information professionals. Other studies examine the relevancy of the MLS degree and discuss re-inventing (or re-envisioning) the MLS degree. The emphasis would be placed on engagement with people and communities, innovation, change and assessment, and emerging technologies.

The conversation again returns to the area of core values and competencies. As Bertot, Sarin, and Percell note, core values remain essential while future information professionals will need to have a set of core competencies that include (among others) the ability to lead and manage projects and people; to facilitate learning and education either through direct instruction or other interactions; to work with, and train others to use, a variety of technologies. The Bertot, Sarin, and Percell report is unique because it places focus on concepts and knowledge, and not on skills. The latter is not ignored, but it is clear from the literature that the authors put knowledge at a

premium over skills for the workplace in LIS programs. The actual core competencies themselves may change, but the authors acknowledge that tension between education and training remains.

Much of what the research team selected in terms of LIS education and its future turns out to have been addressed elsewhere in the literature in some form or another. Indeed, the overview of the literature demonstrates how the conversations return time and again to familiar themes, and while the question of education versus training feels most prevalent, it is clear that it is one of several recurring themes.
Survey Results

The outreach work undertaken by the task force was multi-pronged. Following on conversations with specific populations (the Deans and Directors body within ALISE, for example) more representative of LIS educators, the task force turned to surveying to elicit feedback from a broad cross-section of employers, students, and recent graduates. Two surveys were developed and distributed, one with a target audience of those who would hire workers with an ALA accredited degree, the other with a target audience of current students or recent graduates of LIS programs. Task force member Mirah Dow led the analysis of the results. The task force recognizes that the results cannot be considered statistically sound as there could not realistically be a representative sample to survey. Nonetheless, the survey results underscore what the task force learned through its research and its outreach to members of specific populations. Highlights from the data follow.

Most Needed in the Future

**Students** indicated that the most important skills and/or competencies by future librarians and other information professionals are

- soft skills (58/64 respondents, 90%);
- technology skills including digital literacy and computer languages (45/64, 70%); and,
- management and leadership (35/64, 55%).

Students also mentioned the need for instructional skills to teach patrons, research philosophy and methods, searching, cataloging, advocacy, customer service, collection development, information ethics, community assessment, cultural competencies, and information literacy.

**Employers** indicated that the most important skills and/or competencies needed by future librarians and other information professionals are

- technology skills (65/110, 59%);
- soft skills (44/110; 41%); and,
- library management (17/110, 15%).

Employers also mentioned the need for instructional skills, leadership skills, customer service, project management, flexibility, assessment, foundations of the field, searching, and community assessment.

Disconnect

**Students** (49/64, 77%) indicated that there is a current disconnect between the skills taught in current curricula of LIS program and what will be needed in the future. While there was no single pattern in response statements, there were statements suggesting courses should include more practice opportunities.

**Employers** (79/113, 70%) indicate that there is a current disconnect between the skills taught in current curricula of LIS program and what will be needed in the future. Response comments make clear that graduates of LIS programs need to be better prepared for practice, communication, and understanding politics of libraries.

Core Values
Students indicated that the core values that should in the future bind together LIS related fields and core elements of curriculum are

- access (31/56, 55%),
- interpersonal skills (17/56, 30%),
- customer service (15/56, 27%),
- social justice (13/56, 23%),
- intellectual freedom (11/56, 20%), and,
- diversity (11/56, 20%).

Employers indicated that the core values that should in the future bind together LIS related fields and core elements of curriculum are

- interpersonal skills (50/106, 47%),
- customer service (35/106, 33%),
- access (28/106, 26%),
- intellectual freedom (20/106, 19%),
- diversity (17/106, 16%),
- privacy (15/106, 14%), and,
- instruction (13/106, 12%).

Future Methods of Teaching

Employers recommended that future methods of teaching in LIS programs include student experiences in the field (45/94, 48%), and a variety of methods (15/94, 16%) including face-to-face opportunities to build interpersonal skills, webinars, and project-based learning.
Online Forums Results

In a continued effort to reach a wide variety of stakeholders, the ALA Task Force on Context of Future Accreditation held a series of four online forums with stakeholders. This series of online forums targeted certain populations and concluded with a general forum for those who did not otherwise had an opportunity to contribute. Each forum was hosted by a facilitator from the task force, with attendance at each forum capped at 100. The facilitator utilized a set of guiding questions, closely aligned with the open-ended questions included in the task force’s student and employer surveys. The conversations were recorded for future analysis. The four sessions were as follows:

- LIS faculty (other than deans and directors). Thursday, August 18, 2016
- Librarians and LIS graduates in Canada. Thursday, August 25, 2016
- Current LIS students and recent LIS graduates. Wednesday, August 31, 2016
- General forum open to all interested parties. Friday, September 2, 2016

Transcripts from three of the forums were downloaded in full; one transcript could only be partially downloaded, and the first 20 minutes were manually transcribed. Participant responses were coded thematically. The initial set of codes was drawn from the code book developed for the Task Force’s student and employer survey. These codes were inductively revised, as appropriate, to accurately reflect the meaning of each participant’s contributions. The coded results were then analyzed, organized, and presented in alignment with the Task Force’s charge. This approach aimed to emphasize areas of consensus across stakeholder groups, and frame the subsequent recommendations within the context of this report’s overall recommendations.

Practical Experience and Expertise, Supplemented With Core Skills and Theoretical Knowledge

The need for LIS students to enter the profession with practical experience was consistently emphasized more than any other issue or topic. Participants highlighted the value of practical experience, including improved student competitiveness in the oversaturated LIS job market, strengthened connections between students and practitioners, and prepared graduates that can better meet the needs of discerning employers.

Field experience was strongly encouraged outside of the classroom through internships, practica, work-study and co-op programs, residencies, and alternative spring breaks. Practical experience through course work was also encouraged, to a lesser extent, through service learning and field projects that partners students with community organizations and clients to work on tangible, real-world projects. A number of participants emphasized the need for paid experiences and opportunities. A few participants recommended awarding academic credit for prior field experiences, and that specific measures be designed to protect students from coercive or exploitative experiences.

A number of participants appreciated the theoretical knowledge that can be learned in pursuing an LIS degree, and recommended supplementing, not supplanting, philosophical and theoretical knowledge with practical experience and application to better bridge perceptions of a theory/practice, scholar/practitioner, academic/workplace divide.
Some participants also encouraged educational programs and the ALA’s accreditation program to shift from shallow, generalist curricula and more strongly emphasize in-depth learning through specialization and expertise cultivation. A few participants felt that the relatively brief length of time to degree completion (roughly 36 credits) and current expectation for all LIS programs to meet the needs of all students limited curricular depth and rigor and had a negative impact on program quality.

**Skills and Competencies Needed of Future LIS Professionals**

Participants identified a number of established and emerging skills, competencies, and dispositions that are increasingly important for future LIS professionals. There was some overlap between the competencies mentioned by participants and those included in the ALA Core Competences of Librarianship statement. The majority of the skills, competencies, and dispositions mentioned could be considered universal skills needed by all practicing professionals, regardless of industry or field, while others, such as information organization, are considered LIS-specific skills.

The following skills, competencies, and dispositions are listed in descending order, from most to least commonly mentioned:

- **Dispositions and habits of mind:** Advocacy, change-focus, creativity, critical thinking, design thinking, entrepreneurship, flexibility, forward-thinking, innovation, lifelong learning, problem solving, professional development, risk-taking.

- **Leadership:** Administration, leadership, management, and supervision of human, financial, and physical resources and projects.

- **Cultural competency:** Culturally competent practice that addresses accessibility, diversity, inclusion, intersectionality, multiculturalism, and multilingualism.

- **Research:** Research philosophies, publications, and scholarly communications, including publishing models, open access, open education resources, and intellectual property. Quantitative and qualitative methods, including assessment and evaluation.

- **Instruction:** Pedagogical and learning theories, instructional design and delivery, information literacy, and textual literacy development.

- **Technology:** Digital literacy and fluency in the creation, design, application, testing, and use of current and emerging technologies, including searching and information retrieval.

- **Community:** Community engagement and partnerships, outreach and marketing, community needs assessment.

- **Criticality:** Critical and alternate approaches, perspectives, and practices that advance social justice, counter bias and inequality, and challenge traditional and hegemonic ways of knowing.

- **Organization and Development:** Cataloging, encoding, metadata, and collection development.

- **Service:** Customer service, people-focus, and knowledge of social services.

- **History:** Foundations and history of the field, including the development of information ethics and values.

- **Interpersonal skills:** Conflict resolution, collaboration, negotiation, teamwork, and written and oral communication skills.

37 http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences
• Data Science: Data analytics, curation, management, and stewardship.

A few participants mentioned context-specific skills and competencies, including archives and records management, knowledge management, and humanities.

**Connection Between Skills and Program Curricula**

A majority of participants perceived a disconnect between the skills increasingly needed within the LIS professions and the current curricula of LIS programs. This disconnect was identified across all aspects of LIS curricula and within specific aspects of LIS curricula, such as technology, instruction, and management. Some participants recognized that any perceived disconnect was contingent on individual program strengths, curricula, specializations, and iSchool membership status. A number of participants felt that they were unprepared after entering the field upon graduation, and a few participants felt that ALA-accredited master’s degree programs was more a procedural requirement for professional employment than an authentic learning experience. Very few participants perceived a strong connection or no disconnect between the skills increasingly needed within the LIS professions and the current curricula of LIS programs.

**Core Values of LIS and Related Fields**

Participants identified a number of longstanding and new core values that bind the LIS field to cognate disciplines and allied professions. Each of the values included in the ALA Core Values statement were identified, along with a number of new professional values. Some participants suggested that the current values articulated within the ALA Core Values statement be refined and updated to reflect the current and broader context of the LIS field.

The following values are listed in descending order, from most to least commonly mentioned:

• **Equity:** Anti-oppressive, critical, and inclusive approaches, perspectives, and practices that advance social justice, counter bias and inequality, and challenge traditional and hegemonic ways of knowing.

• **Lifelong Learning and Professional Development:** Continuous professional development through reflective, theoretically grounded, and evidence-based practice that embraces change, innovation, and improvement.

• **Access and Accessibility:** Information should be freely, readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all individuals of all abilities.

• **Intellectual Freedom:** Freedom from censorship, promotion of free expression, openness, transparency, and academic freedom, and facilitation of information and idea exchange.

• **Social Responsibility:** Advocacy, collaboration, and collective action to advance solutions to critical challenges facing the profession and the communities it serves.

• **Concern for the Whole Person:** Empathetic, human-centered approaches that embody an ethic of care and concern for the whole person.

• **Community:** Community outreach, engagement, and participation that affirm libraries and information centers as an essential and safe public good.

• **Privacy:** Protection of individual privacy, and freedom from surveillance and unnecessary or intrusive data collection.

• **Service:** Providing the highest level of service to all individuals in an equitable manner.
• Professionalism: Commitment to professional practice, engagement, and leadership, including organizational citizenship.
• Democracy: Protection of the right of all persons to free expression and equal access to information, with respect for and understanding of the differences in legislative and judicial definition and rule across municipalities and countries.
• Diversity: Respect and sensitivity for diversity, broadly defined, through culturally competent practice.
• Preservation: Ensuring current and future generations have access to the information they need in a format they can use through the preservation and stewardship of information and resources and environmental sustainability.
• Education: Support for lifelong learning through the advancement of digital, information, and text-based literacies.

Institutional and Accreditation Context
A number of participants encouraged respect for and understanding of the broader academic context of individual LIS programs as they relate to their academic institutions, their iSchools membership status, and emphasis on library and/or information studies. Additionally, an understanding of how higher education culture impacts LIS programs and how the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) impacts the ALA’s accreditation program was encouraged. A number of participants supported internal and external programmatic collaborations between LIS programs and with academic units in cognate disciplines and practica organizations. A few participants felt that the unique context of collaboration within interdisciplinary academic units, including iSchools, should be better understood and reflected within the ALA’s accreditation program.

Educational Credentials
A number of participants recommended revising the ALA-accredited master’s degree as the sole educational path for professional practice. These recommendations include alternative degrees and credentialing methods, including certificates and certifications, bachelor’s degrees and combined bachelor’s/master’s programs, individual licensures, learning modules, and workshops. A few suggested that alternate credentials could help recruit and retain students from underrepresented backgrounds, encourage stronger and more academically rigorous master’s programs, and improve the value of an ALA-accredited master’s program. Continuing education requirements for practicing LIS professionals were also suggested by some participants, with one suggesting the model used by the ALA-APA’s certification program. Participants also highlighted the value of dual-degree programs and obtaining a second masters. A few participants requested clarity and guidance on recognizing international or non-ALA accredited credentials.

Systematic Planning and Assessment
A few participants expressed support for current elements of the ALA’s accreditation program, including systematic planning, constituent engagement, program-level student learning outcomes assessment, quantitative and qualitative assessment, emphasis on programmatic changes and outcomes, and alignment of curricular decisions with program goals and objectives. A few participants suggested student learning outcomes assessment methods that are not explicitly mentioned in the ALA’s accreditation program, including formative assessment, the assessment of higher-order thinking skills, and the assessment of practical outcomes.
Teaching, Learning, and Pedagogy

A number of participants supported online degree programs and digitally enhanced learning methods, including flipped courses, blended learning environments, synchronous online instruction, and open online courseware. Participants also supported more engaging and student-centered pedagogies, including collaborative, team, and peer-based learning, project-based learning, self-directed learning, seminar-style discussions with minimal lecturing, and alternative and critical pedagogies. Some participants also desired more intellectually rigorous instruction that challenged and supported students to learn and develop. Inviting practitioners and experts into class, either through guest lectures or collaborative/team-teaching, was encouraged. Participants also expressed a desire for instructors with relevant professional experience and recommended that instructors be appropriately placed in courses that align with their professional and scholarly interests and background. A few participants were empathetic to the tenure, accreditation, and administrative burden placed on full-time faculty and recognized that it may compromise instruction quality. Universal Design for Learning Campus and campus resources and colleagues, such as a teaching center or instructional design staff, were suggested as useful methods to improve teaching and pedagogy.

Curricular Design

A number of participants noted that curriculum review and modifications processes may take a number of years. In response, some recommended the adoption of more agile and iterative curriculum development processes and methods, such as special topics and experiential courses, to better adapt to changes in field and meet the needs and expectations of constituents and employers. Some participants recommended a stronger emphasis on professional contexts, career advising, and post-graduation tracking (both within and beyond library employment) as methods to improve curricular quality. Some participants encouraged an improved ALA presence in LIS curricula through conference programs, webinars, and chats. Case studies, interdisciplinary sources, and student presentations were all considered useful course elements.

The task force shares the conversations surrounding curriculum but acknowledges that to the actual development of curriculum is within the purview of the programs and institutions and not the accrediting body.

Related Programmatic Elements

A number of participants expressed a need for more discerning admissions standards, such as prior field experience requirements or demonstrable commitment to the field, in tandem with initiatives to recruit underrepresented students and those pursuing LIS as a first career. Some participants also identified a need for current technology tools and resources, particularly for online students who might need special access and support.

Accreditation Reform

A few participants encouraged consultation or partnership with related accrediting agencies and professional associations, including the Association for Computing Machinery Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction (ACM CHI), the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). A few recommended
instituting a cyclical review of the accreditation program, broadening constituent engagement in accreditation reform efforts, or ending the ALA’s accreditation program.
Recommendations

The task force recommends that:

1. External Review Panel (ERP) teams should reflect specialized areas of expertise represented in LIS programs as indicated in the report, with the ERP recruitment pool expanded to recognize members of related professional associations. Furthermore, the aims and purpose of accreditation – to provide collegial means for the improvement of educational programs in a changing world – must be foremost throughout the accreditation process (both writ large and applied institutionally). In order to accomplish the purpose, external review panel members must be trained so as to provide formative assessment to institutional programs.

2. Future developments to the accreditation standards be designed to support student learning and development of practical experience and expertise, supplemented with core skills and theoretical knowledge.

3. The ALA Executive Board work with representatives of the two accreditation task forces, and the ALA Committee on Accreditation, to develop a conceptual statement to be used as a framework for the development of future accreditation standards (by the ALA Committee on Accreditation).

4. The data from the surveys and any supporting documentation, and the transcripts from the chat sessions and any supporting documents be shared with the ALISE Board and the ALISE Council of Deans and Directors so that any information related to LIS education, but beyond the scope of the task force charge, will be readily available to these groups.

5. There be better accommodation of the interdisciplinarity of LIS as it continues to expand and is reflected in programs. This also applies to the long-term tensions / differences between library science and information science. To accommodate this interdisciplinarity, the accreditation process should consult the accreditation standards put forth by similar disciplines.

6. There be cyclical examination of, and, as appropriate, affirmation and/or revision of core competencies and values of librarianship.

7. There be deeper exploration of the “Questions for Consideration” as presented on pages 11-12 of this taskforce report.

8. There be exploration of alternative or complementary education models, such as alternate degrees, competency-based assessments, standardized licensure, and continuing education requirements.
9. There be exploration of partnerships in accreditation with other professional associations and specialized accreditation programs, whether within the context of the United States and Canada only, further abroad, or both.

10. There be regular, iterative exploration of how to narrow or close the gap between LIS education and the needs of both the employers and the graduates entering the field. Any such exploration should be cognizant of the expectations for graduate education in institutions of higher education.

11. There be the development of a comprehensive skills accounting to provide a framework against which librarians and information professionals can both measure their existing competencies and identify the need for further skills acquisition.
Conclusion

The field of library and information science is as robust and vibrant as ever, increasing in interdisciplinarity, innovation, and impact. This growth is represented in LIS graduate programs, the positioning of said programs in their universities (LIS programs sit within a variety of schools, departments, and colleges and are paired with many other disciplines), and in the composition of their faculties. The research conducted by the task force indicates that this growth has outpaced the accreditation process. The process requires expanded expertise (in terms of ERP composition) and increased interdisciplinarity and inclusiveness in the standards used for evaluation.

This white paper consolidates a portion of the professional literature, and the task force’s outreach efforts solicited the opinions from people in the field - students, professionals, faculty, and administrators. In the appendices, peer professional organizations have provided their thoughts and hopes for the future of accreditation. There is great excitement and passion for the field, but the field’s processes need to be updated and need to be poised for continued and rapid growth, and it is hoped that this information and recommendations benefit the Executive Board, COA, the Office for Accreditation, and numerous other stakeholders in LIS education and accreditation.

This report is respectfully submitted by the members of the task force with thanks to the Executive Board and the associations and bodies we represent for the opportunity to contribute.
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The task force acknowledges former task force members Rosemary Bonnano and Mary Stansbury for their past contributions. The task force additionally thanks the many individuals and organizations who gave their time through conversations, e-mails, surveys, and online forums.
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Additional Sources


American Association of School Librarians – Proposed Statement on Future Accreditation

As a first step to review the nature and context of accreditation, ALA must decide the nature and context of the profession for which LIS candidates are being prepared. Changes in the profession, although acknowledged, have not always resulted in changes in accreditation. Fewer professional positions, sometimes with higher requirements, call for an increased scrutiny of the career-readiness of LIS graduates. ALA Standards do not encompass the entire range of standards for preparation for careers across the information professions. School librarianship, for example, is strengthened by its alignment of standards from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP, formerly NCATE). Other specialized areas of librarianship, however, have not incorporated standards from the unique dual disciplines required for both entry-level and advanced-level positions in these areas.

Accreditation has become extremely important for programs at the higher education level. The national stamp of approval as well as national rankings are frequently used as the basis for increased support of programs by university administration. Accreditation of professional preparation programs must change to accommodate the changing nature of the professions, but it is still a recognized benchmark for excellence. Accreditation is especially important for school librarians, since school library graduates of accredited LIS programs are approved for licensure by the accredited education unit.

Although the integration and alignment of information and computer science programs with library science programs is relatively recent, school librarianship has always stood at the intersection of two distinct professions: Education and Library Science. In many cases, LIS students who enter a program with a school library specialization must meet different, and often additional, admission and graduation requirements as well as certification requirements. The focus of their academic preparation, and to some extent its content, is to prepare for a career in education in which the school librarian is a specialist, a teacher, and a manager among other teachers representing a range of subject areas.

A key feature of the 2007 AASL Standards for the 21st Century Learner is “Dispositions in Action.” These dispositions, gleaned from values shared by the library profession, are taught and assessed. These are part of the learner outcomes that make up school librarianship, and part of the required key assessments that enumerate what graduates from school library preparation programs are required to know and be able to do.

One of the basic precepts of the profession has been that librarians work to advance the public good. To reflect this core ethical concept, the curriculum must focus not only on the inputs needed to ensure coverage, but also on the behaviors that demonstrate candidates fulfill this and other important values that librarianship embody such as access and intellectual freedom.

LIS programs, although differing in curriculum and specializations, have adopted a variety of similar formats for delivery. The choice of delivery method alone, though, does not change the content. By and large, the profession has accepted the variety of formats by which librarians are educated, but without an understanding of student outcomes, the only comparative measure of a program’s effectiveness are inputs such as syllabi and assessments.
Education for librarianship must in some ways mirror education for other professional fields. An understanding of the changed nature of librarianship, the recognition and alignment of standards in aligned fields, an acceptance of the broad range of the information professions, and attention to the ethical values of librarianship will serve as a different but crucial foundation for a new view of librarianship.
Input from ACRL to the ALA Task Force on the Future Context for Future Accreditation

An ACRL Board working group requested responses to an online survey sent to ACRL membership in May 2016 regarding input for the ACRL report to the ALA Task Force on the Future Context for Future Accreditation. A summary of the responses received is included in this document, and the full individual responses are available upon request. At ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, the ACRL Leadership Council discussed the questions below that had been previously posed by the Task Force. This document summarizes both the survey and Leadership Council responses.

1. What is the field for which we will be accrediting graduate education in the future?
   The Library and Information Science degree will continue to be relevant. The name of the school and culminating degree name are of less concern than the content of the program, which should be dealing with the issues as described in the answers to the questions below. Retaining the words “Library” in the name of the degree was mentioned as desirable by many discussants, as was the importance of accreditation for the degree. The majority indicated that academic libraries will continue recruiting information professionals for the unique knowledge and talents they bring to our organizations. As academic libraries increasingly take on new roles that expand beyond the core of the LIS profession, our organizations are likely to look to other professions for talent as well.

2. What is the practitioner’s perspective on accreditation?
   Accreditation is still relevant, and many respondents used words like “essential and “required.” There was much discussion on how libraries are constantly changing and will continue to transform. It is critical to have strong LIS programs that produce graduates ready to lead academic libraries into the future. As mentioned above, hiring institutions do indeed rely on the marker of accreditation for programs. The value of experiential learning, the need for more standardized curricula and a specific set of common skills for graduates are important and should have more emphasis.

3. What content should be included in graduate LIS programs that will support preparations for those who will work in the academic libraries of the future?
   ACRL Leadership identified the following content areas they believe LIS graduates need to demonstrate competence to be prepared to enter the modern academic library workforce:

   • Understanding of the philosophy, principles, and ethics of the library profession
   • Awareness of the research environment -understanding of how research is conducted across disciplines, the funding environment, regulations and compliance, and responsible conduct of research
   • Understanding of the scholarly communications environment, including emerging publishing and other dissemination models, author rights issues, the open access landscape, and evaluation systems
   • Understanding of current best practices in collection development
PLA Statement on Future Accreditation

TO: PLA Board of Directors
FROM: Larry Neal, PLA Past-President
RE: Statement on Future Accreditation

BACKGROUND

PLA was approached by Gary Wasdin, a member of the ALA Future Context of Future Accreditation Committee, to provide a statement on behalf of PLA’s members regarding this issue. The final proposed statement is a result of discussion and review at the PLA Spring Board meeting followed by draft review by several PLA leaders.

Charge of the ALA Task Force

To develop a white paper that describes the fields and context for which we will be accrediting in the future and to make recommendations as may arise in the process of that development to the ALA Executive Board. The discussion should address:

- Accreditation of information programs – who is doing what, how do they or might they relate to LIS programs; disconnect (or perceived disconnect) between skills increasingly needed (e.g., information architecture), the current curricula of LIS programs, and standards/statements of core competencies currently in place;
- Values – e.g., public access, privacy, intellectual freedom – as common threads binding together LIS and related fields and a core element in curricula; and,
- The changing institutional context for accreditation, including factors such as pedagogical innovation, assessment and resources.

The discussion/white paper should result in a conceptual statement as a framework for the development (by the ALA Committee on Accreditation) of future standards.

Explanation from Mary Ghikas

It would be extremely valuable if PLA could prepare a statement, grounded in your understanding of the libraries represented by your members that might help us answer the fundamental question “what is the field for which we will be accrediting graduate education in the future?” PLA’s work is helping to shape that future field and, I believe, should provide some significant insights into how statements of desired competencies and, ultimately, standards for accreditation, should change.

PROPOSED STATEMENT ON FUTURE ACCREDITATION

Public libraries have expanded beyond their traditional roles of providing information access and now position themselves as critical centers of learning, creativity, and community development. The challenge is to continue this transformation and ensure that tomorrow’s library
professionals are equipped to meet individual and community needs in a rapidly changing environment. The public library field will need to continue to amplify the widespread, systemic changes in services, staffing, and roles that show positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

People are moved to work in the public library because of its unique and unparalleled ability to help anyone learn, do, and grow. Future accreditation must ensure that degree programs attract and cultivate professionals who will gain a sound understanding of the philosophy and core values of librarianship. It is essential that students gain practical field engagement and an understanding of the public service-oriented skillsets\textsuperscript{38} that will continuously evolve and change over one’s career. The next generation of public librarians must be adept at developing new partnerships, creating cultures of innovation by adopting new tools and programs from others in and outside of the field, and rigorously applying resources to identify, measure, and respond to community needs. They must use data and continuous assessment to make ongoing programmatic improvement and communicate the public library’s impact to government, funders, and other stakeholders.

The Public Library Association (PLA) represents a wide range of professionals in public libraries of all sizes across the United States. The importance and requirement of an ALA accredited degree varies greatly by state and by library. The decision not to require an ALA accredited degree for a position may be driven by budgetary challenges or inability to attract prospective employees to a given location. In addition the decision not to require an ALA accredited degree may be that another degree or specialty altogether is better suited to meet the library’s service goals. Further, as the costs of higher education greatly outpace the increases in the starting salary of a public librarian, the financial barrier to receive an ALA accredited master’s degree will continue to increase and the return on investment will continue to decrease.

PLA urges that any future accreditation begin with a fresh, in-depth look at the field’s needs for library professionals. It is critical that the amazing and innovative things happening in the field are reflected in the way in which library education is evaluated through accreditation. Options to explore should include accreditation for undergraduate programs as well as offering LIS specializations for other degree programs such as information technology, early childhood development, social work, reading education and other related fields that may offer a broader and more diverse talent pool to ensure tomorrow’s public libraries best meet the needs of the communities they serve.

\textsuperscript{38} Examples of 11 essential skills identified in the March 2016 Library Journal article, “Top Skills for Tomorrow’s Librarians,” included: advocacy/politics, collaboration, communication/people skills, creativity/innovation, critical thinking, data analysis, flexibility, leadership, marketing, project management, and technological expertise.
ALA Sustainability Round Table (SustainRT) Statement on the Importance of the Inclusion of "Sustainability" Within the Context of Future Accreditation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement on the context of future accreditation. We, the board of the American Library Association’s Sustainability Round Table, urge the committee to add criteria related to the topic of sustainability in accredited library school curricula. It is SustainRT’s recommendation that at least a one-credit course be added to prepare future library leaders to be well versed in the issues surrounding sustainability not only for the institutions that they will help shape and lead but for those they serve as well.

In 2015 ALA Council passed the historic Resolution on the Importance of Sustainable Libraries. The second resolved statement speaks directly to why the Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation might consider adding "sustainability" to the Values covered in library school curricula as it is clearly a common thread that binds together LIS and related fields and would serve to strengthen the role of librarians and their libraries in their community, on their campus or at their school.

Text of the 2015 ALA Resolution on the Importance of Sustainable Libraries:

Whereas our communities are faced with economic, environmental and societal changes that are of great concern to our quality of life;

Whereas libraries are uniquely positioned and essential to build the capacity of the communities they serve to become sustainable, resilient and regenerative;

Whereas library leaders, and those who inspire future library leaders, have a mandate to ensure future access to economical library services;

Whereas libraries that demonstrate good stewardship of the resources entrusted to them can build community support that leads to sustainable funding;

Whereas the people who work in our libraries and those who access services in our facilities deserve a healthy environment in which to do so;

Whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has determined that: “Human influence on the climate system is clear… Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems”1;

Whereas the American Library Association has acknowledged in its 2015 Strategic Plan that “Libraries are widely recognized as key players in economic development, in building strong and vibrant communities, and in sustaining a strong democracy” and launched the ALA Center for Civic Life (CCL) in 2010 in conjunction with the Kettering Foundation to promote community engagement and foster public deliberation through libraries; and
Whereas libraries that demonstrate leadership in making sustainable decisions that positively address climate change, respect and use natural resources, and create healthy indoor and outdoor environments will stabilize and reduce their long-term energy costs, help build more sustainable communities, and thereby increase community support for the library; now, therefore, be it resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA) on behalf of its members:

1. Recognizes the important and unique role libraries play in wider community conversations about resiliency, climate change, and a sustainable future and begins a new era of thinking sustainably in order to consider the economic, environmental and socially equitable viability of choices made on behalf of the association;

2. enthusiastically encourages activities by itself, its membership, library schools and state associations to be proactive in their application of sustainable thinking in the areas of their facilities, operations, policy, technology, programming, partnerships and library school curricula; and

3. Directs the ALA Executive Director to pursue sustainable choices when planning conferences and meetings and to actively promote best practices of sustainability through ALA publications, research and educational opportunities to reach our shared goal of vital, visible and viable libraries for the future.

Library leaders well versed in the topic of sustainability are already demonstrating many practical applications in the field. Our professional opinion is that the need for library professionals with a solid understanding of, and commitment to, sustainability, will be critical to the future success of our profession and the institutions that we serve. For example:

- Sustainability is a topic that is cross-disciplinary in academia. The growing number of faculty incorporating sustainability into the core curriculum beyond the sciences, including the social sciences, business, and the arts is remarkable. For example, the G3 Program at the University at Albany School of Business, Going Green Globally, ensures all MBA students devote at least two weeks of study to the topic of sustainability. Library professionals, already supporting this critical campus-wide commitment to sustainability in learning and practice, would thrive more fully with support and acknowledgement from ALA. Additional training is needed within library programs to bolster the role of the academic librarian for optimum effectiveness in the sustainability movement.

- According to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), there are over 1,400 sustainability programs on U.S. and Canadian campuses, ranging from certificates to doctoral degrees. AASHE also refers to the 18 million students in colleges and universities in the United States who, “...if they graduate with the skills to help societies develop more sustainably, higher education will have indeed played a key role in leading us in a new direction. Thus, if we seek to create conditions that will ensure a more sustainable future, higher education will have to provide college and university graduates with the skills, background, knowledge, and habits of mind that will prepare them to meet the

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challenges presented by climate change, loss of biodiversity, a world population of 9 billion in 2050, limited water resources, global health issues, and extreme poverty.” According to AASHE’s report, curriculum change will, “depend on the expertise and ability of approximately 1.2 million faculty in the United States who write course syllabi, sit on curriculum committees, develop student learning outcomes, and create new academic programs to integrate sustainability into their teaching as they see fit.”

Librarians are key partners to the faculty in these academic processes.

For example:
- University of Massachusetts Amherst offers more than 350 sustainability courses. The Libraries launched the Sustainability Curriculum Initiative, pairing faculty with librarians to integrate library resources across the sustainability curriculum.
- The library at the University of Utah developed an extensive Collection Development Policy for Sustainability.
- The Hampshire College Library is one of many campus libraries providing seed libraries that help maintain local food supplies that may be threatened by climatic changes.

In addition, many academic librarians need skills for planning green buildings and renovations, sitting on sustainability committees, and forming green teams to address environmental issues in their library and on campus. Academic libraries are providing space for contemplative practices to aid learning and strengthen inner awareness to face uncertain times, as well as offering educational films, speakers, and programs related to urgent climate change matters. Unique collections are springing up to support sustainability on campus (e.g., seed libraries, bike pumps, Kill-o-Watt meters). All of these activities benefit from deeper understanding of sustainability issues, resource management and innovative solutions.

- A core competency for public library leadership will be sustainability. Library leaders that understand the Triple Bottom Line approach to sustainability for not only their library but the community served by their library is already critical to the success of libraries. The Triple Bottom Line is a framework with three parts: social, environmental (or ecological) and financial. Many organizations have adopted the TBL framework to evaluate their performance in a broader perspective to create greater value.
- For example, in New York:
  - The New York Library Association’s Sustainability Initiative that places the core value of sustainability as the centerpiece of a strategy for building community support (good will and dollars) for all types of libraries.
  - Language in the Handbook for Public Library Trustees of New York State that serves as a call-to-action for “sustainable thinking” for facilities, operations and outreach which means they will be looking for library leaders (read: directors) well versed in sustainability issues.
- Library Journal’s New Landmark Libraries Award specifies sustainability as a core requirement for the facilities recognized through their program.

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School librarians set an example for the school children with whom they interact. Helping prepare young children for an uncertain future based on climatic changes is part of a librarian’s responsibility to young patrons, exposing them to educational displays and reading materials geared toward the physical and emotional resilience needed in the years to come.

Sustainability is the new normal. It needs to be a significant factor in the evolving profession of librarianship so we may stay responsible and relevant while contributing to the resilience of our world. We urge you to consider integrating sustainability understanding and practices into the evolving pedagogical innovations emerging in LIS curricula.
ASIS&T Position Statement on the ALA Accreditation Process and the Future Collaboration between ALA and ASIS&T in the Area of Graduate Professional Education
February 10, 2016

As a professional association that bridges the gap between information science practice and research, ASIS&T counts researchers and practitioners from a large number of diverse fields in its ranks, including information science, library science, computer science, management, and education. The ASIS&T membership is also enriched by the contribution of members who deal with information in other fields, such as law, medicine, linguistics, chemistry, humanities, history, and engineering, to name just a few. ASIS&T’s inclusive and evolving character reflects the current state of the information field, and its international and diverse membership plays an ever more important role in shaping the future of the field. As such, ASIS&T is concerned with the education of information professionals and with the accreditation process of Library & Information Science (LIS) programs by the American Library Association (ALA). ASIS&T’s ongoing interest in and commitment to professional education is supported by the Education & Professional Advancement Committee, which is charged with reviewing accreditation guidelines for LIS programs and monitoring accreditation changes.

Increasing interdisciplinarity and the imperative of creativity and innovation propel us in the direction of collaboration and partnership. With the field of information both composite and diverse, the development of accreditation standards should be a shared responsibility and a collaborative undertaking of several professional associations. ASIS&T is strategically positioned to contribute to the improvement of the accreditation process and, more specifically, to the development of more accurate and inclusive accreditation standards. ASIS&T’s extensive international reach and disciplinary diversity translates into a valuable contribution to the development of accreditation standards, which in turn reflects the dynamic nature and evolving educational expectations in the field. In this regard, ASIS&T makes the following statement.

It is imperative that accreditation standards be comprehensive and flexible enough to accurately represent educational requirements in multiple information fields, both in and outside of libraries, archives, and other longstanding information organizations. Accreditation must reflect the eclectic, diverse and pluralistic nature of the information field and must be fully applicable to an array of information professions. As a result, we call for the ongoing dialog between ALA and ASIS&T on accreditation issues.

The bedrock of professional education and professional accreditation is a fusion of values, ethics, and specific competencies. The latter includes field-specific knowledge and skills (e.g., computer science, library science, digital humanities) and transferable skills and attitudes (e.g., critical thinking, leadership abilities, creativity, problem solving, and so on). While the field-specific knowledge base varies from information field to information field, we call on ALA to recognize the commonality of professional values, ethics, and transferable skills in discussion and revisions of accreditation standards.

ALA has always conducted the accreditation process with the goal of “assuring quality, innovation, and value in the library and information studies education”
(http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/home). It is in the spirit of supporting this goal and the desire to take active part in this process that the ASIS&T statement is made.
Input from The iSchool Caucus to ALA Task Force on the Future Context for Future Accreditation

Background
As the nominated representative of the iSchool Caucus to the task force, I solicited input from the deans and directors of the North American schools that had accredited masters programs. The following is a general summary of main reactions, non-attributed to protect school and individual identities, as requested.

General discussion
Information is a phenomena-defined field with an academic home typically evaluated according to research university standards. Librarianship is a more stakeholder-defined field, evaluated less on scholarship and more through negotiation with its professional community. Few believe we can resolve this tension in the near term but it forms a context in which we can perhaps better understand the challenges of developing an accreditation process that will satisfy all parties.

As with the data already obtained across the ALISE schools, there is acknowledgement among many of the iSchool members that self-study can have value; schools can learn from examining themselves over time in a data-driven process. However much of this value is thought to be missing in the current ALA accreditation approach. Comments clustered around the following major themes:

The reporting requirement is too vague
Schools feel there is no clear guidance on what data and what evidence to provide to COA when formulating the program submission. There are no agreed benchmarks or comparative data points requested, and little or no emphasis on demonstrable outcomes. Instead, the standards heavily emphasize the importance of having a planning process, tied to no particular goal other than those the individual program might identify.

As a consequence of the absence of norms or benchmarks, schools tend to include more and more process reports in the hope of ensuring they do not miss ‘something’ that COA really wants. This can prove very costly in terms of preparation and encourages a belief that there is no obvious connection between the standards, the review process, and program quality. In this way, accreditation is not meeting its primary aim of fostering self-improvement.

Site team membership not appropriate
There is almost unanimous agreement that the site team membership is not serving us well. The size and make up of the team were particularly cited as problematic. Not only are there too many team members, but many recent team members seem to be retired or near-retired professionals who seem suspicious of change and innovation within the field. Many appear to have a very limited understanding of university processes, particularly at research institutions. Team membership seems to unduly impact the resulting review process.

Disconnect between site team and COA
There appears to be a disconnect between the site team’s report and the COA. Some members suggested being very surprised at the line of questioning in the COA meeting or the
decisions made by the COA that appear to overturn conclusions drawn by the site team. Several members felt the COA had not read the full program presentation very carefully and tended to ask questions that were covered in detail in the report.

Costs of program review
The cost of report generation and site team hosting is excessive. Several schools indicated spending significant staff and faculty time generating a report. The lack of clear instructions for report content also adds to the burden as schools respond by generating more information than may be required purely in the hope of meeting unstated expectations of COA. The excessive number of site team members also adds considerably to the financial burden on programs.

The appropriateness of accreditation by ALA
The standards emphasize a professional mindset, concerned with the practice of librarianship more than the study of information. As the accredited programs all exist as graduate degrees in universities, they must operate within a broader context of research and scholarly expectations of the parent institution.

Further, since more and more accredited programs exist within interdisciplinary colleges, not only are their resources less directly targeted at individual degree programs, which complicates reporting, but graduates of such programs are expected to gain employment in many more varied settings than libraries. The ALA accreditation standards and process do not adequately reflect this reality for many schools.

There is also a concern that the current process is too US-centric, and lacks awareness of the higher education context in Canada, which differs in key ways from the US.

Recommended Improvements:
1. Greater representation of appropriate educators on the COA standing committee.
2. Reduce site team size.
3. Construct site teams from leading scholars and professionals, at least appropriately experienced for the program being reviewed
4. Extend the period between accreditation reviews from 7 years to 10.
5. Identify meaningful outcomes and benchmarks to be reported for all programs seeking accreditation
6. Consider moving to a graduate certification/licensing system for librarianship as an alternative to program accreditation.
Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs In Library and Information Studies 2008

Proposals for Revision:
These proposals for revision reflect the experience and position of deans, directors and program chairs. They each in turn enjoy broad support from the Council of Deans, Directors and Program Chairs. Please note that the positions taken represent the views of the Council and not necessarily the views of ALISE as a whole.

In many cases, they also reflect practices undertaken by similar accrediting bodies in other disciplines.

We look forward to pursuing an accrediting process that is ongoing, formative, clearly documented and wholly transparent. For many of our members, the current model appears at times to be monolithic, unduly expensive and occasionally punitive.

Purpose:
To ensure that the process of accreditation for LIS programs reflects intended outcomes adjudicated through an open, clearly articulated, and supportive peer review process.

Process Recommendations:
• THAT the Chair of the COA meet annually with the Council of Deans, Directors and Program Chairs.
• THAT the COA delineate best practices in accreditation of professional programs as practiced by other agencies, make these available and make improvements accordingly.
• THAT the process of accreditation and how it is applied reflect respect for the diversity of institutions, models, approaches and practices.
• THAT there be recognition that different standards appear to reflect different levels of importance over time and that these changes and rationale be communicated.
• THAT the term of accreditation be reviewed, recognizing that a longer review cycle might require shorter-term interim reviews if specified minimum criteria are not met.
• THAT standards appearing problematic, that is, causing concern for several programs be made known to the Council and THAT the COA develop resource tools to enable programs to address the standard appropriately. Examples commonly cited include what constitutes an “ongoing, broad-based, systematic planning process” and assessment of “program objectives” and “student learning outcomes,” as interpreted by the COA.
• THAT the meeting between the program representative(s) and COA be open to the public and transparent, recognizing that adjudication and decision-making needs to be undertaken in private. This is common for other accreditating bodies and consistent with ALA policy; it should also dispel perceptions of hostility and idiosyncratic application of standards.

Standards Recommendations:
• THAT the standards articulate and ensure minimum evidence-based criteria for success.
• THAT there be recognition of the reality that not every standard will be present in every program and that an overall systems approach is required. Richness in programmatic diversity and excellence through collaboration should be fostered, not regimented uniformity.

External Review Team Recommendations:
• THAT number of site visitors be reviewed and perhaps reflect the nature of the program, viz., fewer for smaller programs, fewer for online programs.
• THAT the selection of site visitors be more rigorous to ensure sufficient background knowledge and experience to be successful.
• THAT the training for site visitors be more extensive and more rigorous, to include knowledge of the standards, their application and the role and responsibilities of senior administrators in major universities.

Other Related Recommendations to ALISE/Council of Deans, Directors and Program Chairs:
• THAT the president of ALISE and the chair of the Council of Deans, Directors and Program Chairs or designate(s) meet annually with the president of ALA to discuss appointments to COA and current issues and concerns.
• THAT the Council of Deans, Directors and Program Chairs appoint a liaison to report regularly on the work of the COA.
Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation - Surveys

Student Context of Future Accreditation Survey

**Purpose:** As a current library and information studies (LIS) student, you are invited to provide input that will contribute to descriptive details about future fields and context for accreditation. Data collected from this survey will be analyzed and findings used by American Library Association President Sari Feldman’s special task force in writing a white paper that will be presented to the American Library Association Board. Your responses to questions in this survey will be confidential.

**Informed Consent:** I understand that my responses to the Student Context of Future Accreditation Survey will be used by American Library Association President Sari Feldman’s special task force in the writing of white paper on context for future accreditation. I understand that my responses will be confidential. I understand that at any time I may withdraw my participation in the survey.

Accept  Decline

1. Given the dynamic and transformative nature of the field of library and information science, what do you believe will be the most important skills and/or competencies needed by future librarians and other information professionals? Please name skills and briefly describe each skill and/or competency.

2. Given the dynamic and transformative nature of the field of library and information science, do you feel there is a current disconnect between skills taught in current curricula of LIS programs and what will be needed by future librarians and information professionals? If so, please briefly explain.

3. Given the dynamic and transformative nature of the field of library and information science (LIS), what are core values that should in the future bind together LIS, related fields, and core elements of curricula? Please name values and briefly describe each value.

4. What recommendations do you have for future methods of teaching in LIS programs such as innovations in assessment of student learning, use of instructional resources, etc.? Please briefly describe.

5. What additional comments and/or suggestions do you have for the task force on the Context of Future Accreditation?

Employer Context of Future Accreditation Survey

**Purpose:** As an employer of current students or graduates of library and information studies (LIS) programs, you are invited to provide input that will contribute to descriptive details about future fields and context for accreditation. Data collected from this survey will be analyzed
and findings used by American Library Association President Sari Feldman’s special task force in writing a white paper that will be presented to the American Library Association Board. Your responses to questions in this survey will be confidential.

**Informed Consent:** I understand that my responses to the Student Context of Future Accreditation Survey will be used by American Library Association President Sari Feldman’s special task force in the writing of white paper on context for future accreditation. I understand that my responses will be confidential. I understand that at any time I may withdraw my participation in the survey.

**Accept**  **Decline**

1. Given the dynamic and transformative nature of the field of library and information science, what do you believe will be the most important skills and/or competencies needed by future librarians and other information professionals? Please name skills and briefly describe each skill and/or competency.

2. Given the dynamic and transformative nature of the field of library and information science, do you feel there is a current disconnect between skills taught in current curricula of LIS programs and what will be needed by future librarians and information professionals? If so, please briefly explain.

3. Given the dynamic and transformative nature of the field of library and information science (LIS), what are core values that should in the future bind together LIS, related fields, and core elements of curricula? Please name values and briefly describe each value.

4. What recommendations do you have for future methods of teaching in LIS programs such as innovations in assessment of student learning, use of instructional resources, etc.? Please briefly describe.

5. What additional comments and/or suggestions do you have for the task force on the Context of Future Accreditation?
ALISE/ASIST Joint Panel on Accreditation:
Moving forward with LIS accreditation reform

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ABSTRACT
The landscape of education in Library and Information Science (LIS) is shifting as the ways in which information is managed and used in society evolves. As these changes happen how we validate our educational programs needs to change as well. Discussion about the ways in which accreditation of LIS education programs is currently conducted has become an increasingly contested issue within the Information community. This panel will examine the current approaches to accreditation, sketch the progress that has been made on accreditation reform, consider what educational institutions and the LIS community are seeking to achieve with accreditation, and conclude by considering the next steps for ASIS&T and the information community as we press forward with efforts to reform accreditation.

Keywords
Library and Information Science (LIS), Accreditation, Information, Libraries, Education, American Library Association, iSchools

INTRODUCTION
As increasing numbers of LIS schools have become information schools with diverse programs across the information field and its global landscape of educational institutions, the need for reforming American Library Association (ALA) accreditation has emerged as top priority for ALA and the LIS Schools as represented by Association for Library & Information Science Education (ALISE), and as well an important matter of concern of Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T). To this end, ALA has formed two task forces to consider the key issues: Task Force on Accreditation Process and Communication and Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation.¹
ALISE, ASIS&T, and educators more broadly in library and information science have a formal role to play as partners in current ALA efforts to reform accreditation and as well in defining broadly the information field of today’s information society in the digital world. Doing this effectively requires broader community engagement in discussions around the key issues. This Panel is an effort to reach out to the ASIS&T, ALISE and ALA communities to ask, how can we work together to reform the current accreditation process, and to seek new strategies for a collaborative process that will serve our shared community. The primary goal of reform must be to put into place an accreditation process that is beneficial, helpful, and expresses the academic quality, excellent student outcomes and CHEA Council on Higher Education Accreditation) values and purposes.

For this panel session we are joined by Peter Hepburn, member of the ALA Executive Board, and a Taskforce Chair, to engage in a frank discussion around issues and possible options. This will provide a significant opportunity for engagement in discussion as we move towards a collaborative effort to reform LIS accreditation, while recognizing as essential, the values and purposes of CHEA, under which ALA is accredited to accredit. To this end, the Panel will work to engage the ASIS&T and ALISE communities in the ALA efforts for accreditation reform now in progress, and to explore how educators, professionals, employers and others can contribute to reforming the long-standing process of accreditation for the broader constituency of information schools. The reforms must produce an accreditation process fit for the information field in the 21st century.

More recently the international consortium of Information Schools, commonly referred to as the iSchools, has identified the issue of accreditation from a global perspective as an issue requiring consideration. A focus on research, teaching, and public engagement at the nexus of information, people and technology binds the schools which belong to the iSchool consortium. The membership of the iSchool, although initially North American, now brings together a global community of researchers and educators linking some seventy-five institutions. The iSchool Consortium has for some years discussed issues around accreditation of its member schools and recently it has established an Accreditation Commission to examine the issues within the context of the iSchool Consortium and the global information community. The Commission has been charged to “to review the state of affairs with respect to the accreditation of iSchools and their respective programs. The commission is to assess options and propose alternatives, considering the existing resources (ALA, ABET) and the potential for new ones (iSchool Consortium). The commission is also requested to assess the level of interest among consortium members in an alternative accreditation process.41” The initial report of the Commission will be available by March 2017.

Our discussions will explore accreditation as a concept, attempt and to consider other accreditation models within our community (e.g., UK’s Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP)) and beyond. A focus of the discussion will be a reflection on the concept of accreditation and its perceived value to the LIS field from the perspectives of accreditation bodies, educators, and professionals.

THE CHALLENGE
LIS accreditation in North America assesses the performance of LIS community of schools which today numbers some 68 internationally recognized educational institutions against a standard established currently by the ALA on the advice of its Committee on Accreditation (COA). Most significantly, during the past several years, many of these Schools have engaged in substantial evaluation of the information landscape, assessment of the current and emerging needs of employers, and reflection on the educational needs of their students. This has led them to transform their programs to represent the enormous depth and breadth of the information field, the emerging needs of the information

41 Charge to the iSchools’ Accreditation Commission (June 2016).
users and employers, and the learning styles of our students. These changes have happened across a highly diverse community of schools in terms of programs and people. Their transformations reflect how each contributes to the field in a way that is authentic to their history, mission and goals. Together, though, they share a common understanding of the field, while cultivating and developing it to be cutting-edge, dynamic and socially and culturally responsive and positioned to make significant contributions both locally and globally. Through thoughtful reflection on education, research, service and community, and continued significant contributions of resources by their own institutions, the information schools, as a community and individually, have defined this rapidly changing field, and encapsulated their understanding of it through academic programs, research, publications, communications, and service.

The community of LIS schools and programs today enjoy strong leadership from three key associations: ALISE, our key association focused on LIS pedagogical practice, ASIST, a leader in information science and technology and the iSchools consortium, leading education for today’s global information society and digital world, and the iSchool Consortium. Each holds an annual conference of where members share research, discuss issues and work to advance the field. Each of these organizations contributes to promoting the sharing of knowledge and the shaping of educational practice and research direction. They do not currently directly make a significant contribution to shaping the accreditation process itself. Management of the accreditation process is led by the American Library Association which historically has represented the main employer of graduates from our programs. This approach may not align well with the expectations of the values and purposes which CHEA, an accreditor of accreditors and the accrediting body which accredits the ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA) accreditation process espouses. CHEA promotes leadership in accreditation by those organizations which are being accredited. That is, in this instance, the LIS community of schools and their professional bodies such as ALISE, ASIS&T and, perhaps, the iSchool consortium, should engage more centrally in shaping, running and managing the accreditation process. It is essential that we take the lead in the accreditation of information schools and programs, defining the field broadly in ways that reflect and keep pace with, if not anticipate and drive, change through future-forward strategies. If we do not, then the COA/ALA led accreditation process is increasingly likely to push our schools in an instrumentalist and neo-liberal vocational direction at the expense of educating creative activists engaged in ensuring equitable and sustained access to and understanding of information.

PROGRESS DURING 2016

During the last four years the Council of Deans, Directors, and Chairs of Library and Information Schools has been increasingly vocal about the values and benefits of the current accreditation process administered by the COA on behalf the ALA. Outside of this caucus many senior figures in the LIS education community have also pushed for a close look at the accreditation process and pressed for change in both how accreditation is administered and the ways in which the educators and their Schools are engaged in the process.

Beginning in 2014 we began to coalesce as a community around the key issues and during 2015 the foundations for progress were laid which in 2016 have begun to deliver a conversation and actions which may result in change. Among the achievements are:

1. A motion from the Council of Deans, Directors, and Chairs of Library and Information Schools that 66% of COA membership be nominated by Council passes unanimously. (This motion aligns with the CHEA value of peer review and federal guidelines for COA membership.)
2. Approval of this motion by the ALISE Board of Directors at their January 2016 meeting.
3. A Council of Deans, Directors, and Chairs of Library and Information Schools Council straw poll conducted in January 2016 in which 26 schools voted in favor of working with ALA to reform accreditation and 22 schools voted in favor seeking an alternative accrediting agency or mechanism. This straw poll supports the view that the heads of the 68 LIS Schools recognize the urgent need for reform and change in accreditation.
4. The President of ALA championed in October 2015 the establishment of two taskforces to consider the issues of accreditation as a direct outcome of the work of a joint ALA-ALISE working group on Accreditation which completed its work in 2015. These task forces aim to report preliminary findings by June of 2016 with an aim to complete their work by the close of 2016.
At one of the early meetings of the ALA Taskforce on ‘Process and Communication’, ALA and ALISE agree to adopt CHEA’s values.

In 2016 the CARE Committee was re-activated by the ALISE Board as the CARE Taskforce to champion communication, discussion and initiatives around developing new approaches to accreditation which could be discussed within ALISE and promoted more widely.

ASIS&T published a letter to the LIS community supporting re-visioning and reframing accreditation processes and practices.

ALISE Board and CARE members began discussions with CILIP, the UK accreditor for all UK programs as well as programs in the Middle East and Asia to consider some of the alternative approaches to accreditation. There was unanimous agreement that this model reflected key values we seek to emulate: helpfulness, improvement, peer-review, academic freedom, collegiality, academic quality and student achievement.

ALISE CARE Taskforce lead by members Giannini and Ross agree to respond to the Board’s request for help “in exploring ways in which ALISE can assist ALA in managing the accreditation process.”

In June of 2016 the iSchool Consortium, which over a number of years has had discussions about accreditation of its member institutions on a global scale, established an Accreditation Commission chaired by Professor Andrew Dillon (University of Texas at Austin) to examine the accreditation needs of the members of the iSchool consortium in the context of its global engagement.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PANEL

So from one perspective it looks as though the discussion around accreditation is gaining traction and progress is gradually being made. In fact progress is such that perhaps some may ask whether there is a need for further discussion among the education community and its professional societies at this stage. There are three reasons why examination of the issue is critical and timely. First sessions, such as the one proposed here, do much to maintain the pace of the discussion and forward movement. Second, given the change in the fabric of our schools and the prospects of the domains in which graduates are likely to take up employment we need to expand the communities which are actively engaged in discussion of the accreditation issues to ensure that the new developments reflect the broader communities themselves. Third, there are many open questions, such as those around value, community involvement, process, and perspective on which there is a need for intellectual engagement and shared vision.

The Panel will focus discussion around five key issues:

- How is the current accreditation landscape currently characterized?
- As the LIS field continues to grow and embrace new areas of knowledge and practice, do existing accreditation standards reflect these changes? If not, in what ways do they not do so.
- How do we measure the value of accreditation?
- How can educators and members of our professional communities become more involved in the defining the value proposition of accreditation?
- What roles should ASIS&T, ALISE, and the iSchool Consortium play in the accreditation process?

PANEL PARTICIPANTS

Moderator:

Professor Seamus Ross, Co-Chair ALISE Committee for Accreditation Reform in Education (CARE), University of Toronto and 2016 Visiting Professor, School of Information Sciences and Technology, Athens University of Economics and Business.

Panelists:

Professor Nadia Caidi, President Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T) and Professor University of Toronto.

42 In addition to these Panelists, Professor Tula Giannini, Dean of the School of Information at the Pratt Institute made significant contributions to the conceptualizing, design and development of our Panel.
Professor Kristin Eschenfelder, Co-Chair ALISE Council of Deans, Directors, and Chairs, and Professor University of Wisconsin (Madison), and a member of the iSchool Consortium Accreditation Commission.

Peter Hepburn, ALA Executive Board and Chair of the ALA Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation. Head Librarian, College of the Canyons.

Dr. Lynn Silipigni Connaway, Member of the ALA Task Force on the Context of Future Accreditation, President-Elect ASIS&T, and Senior Research Scientist at OCLC Research.

Professor Louise Spiteri, President, Association for Library & Information Science Education (ALISE) and Professor Dalhousie University.

STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION
The moderator will open the session with a brief Introduction about the session’s aims, goals, and structure. This will be followed by a four-minute introductory statement from each of the Panelists. Then we will move into 30 minutes of Table discussions around the Themes for the session. Each table will be asked to focus their deliberations on one of the core themes and to agree on four main points and one recommendation. These four points and one recommendation will be reported back to the group. The session will conclude with each of the Panelist providing one minute of summative comment reflecting on the group discussion and making suggestions on directions ASIS&T might take to contribute to the debate and next steps in the accreditation reform process.

PROJECTED PANEL OUTCOMES
The Panel will engage members of the ASIS&T community more broadly in discussions about accreditation to improve understanding of the issues, to make a contribution to developing a shared understanding of the values accreditation have to students, educators, professional societies and employers, and to identify ways in which ASIS&T can engage with progressing accreditation reform (perhaps even gaining support for an ASIS&T task force on accreditation and value).