Valdosta State University
Dewar College of Education & Human Services

Master of Library and Information Science

Self-Study
Submitted to the Office for Accreditation, American Library Association
August 30, 2021
Required Information

Unit Organized and Maintained for the Purpose of Graduate Education in Library and Information Science
Department of Library and Information Studies, Dewar College of Education and Human Services

Degree Program Being Presented for Accreditation by the COA
Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)

Principle Administrators, Dewar College of Education College of Education and Human Services
Karla Hull, Interim Dean
Kate Warner, Associate Dean

Name and Current Title of the Administrator of the Program
Linda R. Most, Department Head

Parent Institution
Valdosta State University, a Comprehensive University of the University System of Georgia.

Chief Executive Officer, Valdosta State University
Richard Carvajal, President

Chief Academic Officers, Valdosta State University
Dr. Robert T. Smith, Provost and Vice-President
Dr. Sharon L. Gravett, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Services
Dr. Becky da Cruz, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research

Regional Accrediting Agency
Valdosta State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The current accreditation period is effective from January 2011 through December 2021. (https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/sacs/) VSU completed a reaffirmation site visit in March 2021. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees meets officially in December to review institutional cases. At that time, final decisions on accreditation are made public following each meeting on the SACSOC website. (https://www.sacscoc.org/institutions/?institution_name=valdosta&state=GA&results_per_page=25&curpage=1&institution=0011N00001h9EHeQAM&status=Accredited%2CCandidate)

Title and Version of the Standards Addressed in the Program Presentation
Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies, 2015.
Declaration Form

Declaration to Accompany Final Self-Study

The chief academic officer of the institution and the chief academic officer declare that:

1. To the best of our knowledge, the institution and the academic unit offering the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program, for which accreditation by the American Library Association is sought, do not discriminate in recruitment, admissions, or financial aid of students or in the appointment, promotion, or pay of faculty and support staff "because of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, gender, individual lifestyle, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

2. We acknowledge and agree that a review of the MLIS offered by Valdosta State University is scheduled for a visit Fall 2021; and are familiar with and hereby agree to proceed according to the procedures established by the Committee on Accreditation and described in the document Accreditation Process, Policies and Procedures (AP3).

3. To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in the accompanying Self-Study is accurate and reliable with respect to the program for which accreditation is being sought and with respect to the institution that offers that program.

Chief academic officer of the institution:

Robert Smith
Print name: ___________________________ Title: Provost and VP for Academic Affairs
Signed: ___________________________ Dated: 8/16/2021 | 12:05 PM EDT

Chief academic officer of the program:

Linda Most
Print name: ___________________________ Title: Department Head, MLIS
Signed: ___________________________ Dated: 8/16/2021 | 11:33 AM EDT
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<td>ALA</td>
<td>American Library Association</td>
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<td>ALEN</td>
<td>Applied Library Experience Notebook (SLOA 1.1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALISE</td>
<td>Association for Library and Information Science Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BlazeVIEW</td>
<td>VSU branded implementation of D2L Brightspace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOR</td>
<td>Board of Regents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPM</td>
<td>Beta Phi Mu, the International Library and Information Studies Honor Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>Collection Development Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>COA</td>
<td>Committee on Accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>COEHS</td>
<td>Dewar College of Education and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2L</td>
<td>Desire 2 Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLIS</td>
<td>Department of Library and Information Studies also referred to as “the department”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERP</td>
<td>The External Review Panel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>The Standard applies to the faculty as a whole, including both full-time faculty members (tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track) and part-time faculty members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Graduate Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>GALILEO</td>
<td>Georgia Library Learning Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIL</td>
<td>GALILEO Interconnected Libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>GKR</td>
<td>GALILEO Knowledge Repository</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLA</td>
<td>Georgia Library Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPLS</td>
<td>Georgia Public Library Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>IER/IEP</td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness Report / Institutional Effectiveness Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMLS</td>
<td>Institute for Museum and Library Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>LIS</td>
<td>Library and Information Studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMS</td>
<td>Learning Management System, VSU uses BlazeView (D2L Brightspace)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LiveText</td>
<td>A browser-based assessment management web application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGO</td>
<td>Mission, Goals and Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS</td>
<td>Master of Library and Information Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memo of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>PINES</td>
<td>Public Information Network for Electronic Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Program Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>The Valdosta State University Library and Information Studies Program; also referred to as “the program”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>POS</td>
<td>Program of Study</td>
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<td>RTA</td>
<td>Research Transaction Assignment</td>
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<td>SACSCOC</td>
<td>Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges</td>
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<td>SEP Cycle</td>
<td>Systematic Evaluation and Planning Cycle</td>
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<td>SLO</td>
<td>Student Learning Outcome</td>
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<td>SLOA</td>
<td>Student Learning Outcome Assessment</td>
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<td>SOI</td>
<td>Student Opinion of Instruction</td>
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<td>Standards</td>
<td>Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies.</td>
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<td>T&amp;P</td>
<td>Tenure and Promotion</td>
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<td>USG</td>
<td>University System of Georgia</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPAA</td>
<td>Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost</td>
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<td>VSU</td>
<td>Valdosta State University</td>
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Introduction

The Institution

Valdosta State University, located in Valdosta Georgia, 20 miles north of the Florida border along Interstate 75, accredited by the SACSCOC, is one of four comprehensive universities in the University System of Georgia. As defined by the Board of Regents of the USG: (https://www.usg.edu/institutions/#)

- The comprehensive universities characteristics include a commitment to excellence and responsiveness within a scope of influence defined by the needs of a specific region of the state, and by particularly outstanding programs or distinctive characteristics that have a magnet effect even beyond the region;

- a commitment to a teaching/learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom, that sustains instructional excellence, serves a diverse and well-prepared student body, promotes high levels of student achievement, offers academic assistance, and provides developmental studies programs for a limited student cohort;

- a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic programming at the baccalaureate and masters levels, as well as a range of professional programs at the baccalaureate and post baccalaureate levels, including a limited number of professionally-oriented doctoral level programs;

- a commitment to public service, continuing education, technical assistance, and economic development activities that address the needs, improve the quality of life, and raise the educational level within the university’s scope of influence;

- a commitment to scholarly and creative work to enhance instructional effectiveness and to encourage faculty scholarly pursuits, and a commitment to research in selected areas of institutional strength and focused on regional need.

Valdosta State enrolls undergraduate and graduate students. Spring 2021 overall enrollment was 11,231 total, with 8,586 undergraduates and 2,645 graduate students enrolled across all degrees and programs. The MLIS program head count was 394 students for Spring 2021, making it the largest graduate program at the institution by number of students enrolled. The MLIS program is delivered fully online.
Valdosta State University Vision and Mission Statement

Our Vision
Valdosta State University will be a catalyst for regional comprehensive progress.

Our Mission
As a comprehensive institution of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University (VSU) is a welcoming, aware, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving our communities’ rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. As such, the VSU mission consists of three interrelated parts:

Student Mission: To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.

University Mission: To operate the university with a focus toward human, environmental, and financial sustainability while increasing value to our local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. To expand opportunities for our students, employees, and varied community members by promoting social justice and service learning.

Regional Mission: To provide our region and our home with the resources and support necessary to develop and sustain a higher quality of living, greater economic and community development, and inspired innovation that nurtures and respects our diverse population and beautiful environment while promoting academic outreach, public and private entrepreneurship, and collaboration with all regional entities.

Valdosta State University fulfills its mission by focusing on inclusion in all aspects of the educational experience.

Developed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, August 2013. Approved by the President’s Cabinet, September 16, 2013. Approved by University Council, March 24, 2014. Approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, August 20, 2014. Reviewed and reaffirmed by University Council, October 9, 2019.

Institutional Leadership
During the current accreditation period Valdosta State (VSU) experienced significant changes at the presidential level and in the leadership of the Division of Academic Affairs. In June 2015, William McKinney, the incumbent president, left the university after three years in office. Through the next 18-month period, two interim presidents assigned by the Board of Regents led the institution. On December 9, 2016, the Board of Regents appointed President Richard J. Carvajal to lead the institution. President Carvajal came to VSU after serving as the Interim
President at Albany State University in Albany, Georgia. President Carvajal’s appointment has provided steady leadership and a revitalized sense of direction and focus for the institution. Under President Carvajal’s leadership, enrollment and funding have stabilized and then increased, and the university has come through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic in good shape.

The Division of Academic Affairs experienced its own period of instability after Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Phil Gunter died suddenly in May 2012. After a period of interim leadership, Dr. Hudson Rogers was appointed Provost and VPAA at the start of Academic Year 2014-2015. Rogers stepped down in June 2015 to move to the faculty and Academic Affairs was led by Interim Provost Brian Gerber until July 1, 2017, when current Provost and VPAA Robert T. Smith was appointed. Provost Smith has provided steady leadership and direction for Academic Affairs since his arrival on campus including leading the 2020 institutional pivot to adapt the delivery of the curriculum in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Institutional Organizational Model**

At Valdosta State upper administration is organized in the form of the President’s Cabinet and controls most institutional resources centrally. ([https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/handbook/organization.php](https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/faculty-senate/handbook/organization.php)) The administrative structure is fully described in Standard V.1. The institutional budget is funded from a combination of tuition income and state funds allocated by the governor in the annual budget. Guidance in managing the institutional budget is provided by the Budget Advisory Council, which is chaired by the provost. The Academic Affairs budget is managed centrally by the provost and funds are allocated to the colleges and departments each year. Briefly, faculty and staff salaries and benefits are established and managed centrally but broken out by college and department.

Each college receives its own operating budget and the academic departments each receive an individual budget allocation to cover internal operating expenses including communication, conference registrations, professional development, office supplies, and faculty travel. Part-time faculty are hired as needed by individual department heads but are paid centrally out of the Academic Affairs budget. Summer faculty salaries are outside the ten-month faculty contracts and are calculated based on the faculty members’ individual contract rates and course enrollments and paid by Academic Affairs out of summer tuition revenue.

Summer revenue has been shared back to the departments starting in 2019 though it is not counted in a department’s recurring annual budget. Summer revenue sharing is calculated annually based on a percentage of income earned after expenses. Departmental budgets were flat for most of the accreditation period through Academic Year 2019-2020. In Academic Year 2020-2021 as the Covid-19 pandemic negatively impacted state and institutional revenues, departmental operating budgets were reduced, and all travel budgets zeroed out in recognition of the USG directive that no academic travel would be approved or funded during the pandemic. The budget process and annual funding are fully presented in Standard V.6.

The Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research leads the Graduate School, an administrative unit that provides centralized support for all the graduate programs. The Graduate
School is advised by and communicates to the graduate programs via the Graduate Executive Committee. Membership on the GEC is open to all Graduate Program Coordinators and includes two at-large seats for graduate faculty representatives. Services provided by the Graduate School include the Graduate Admissions Office, Graduate Assistantships administration, management of dissertations and theses, and coordination of the annual Graduate Research Symposium.

Physical classrooms and lecture halls are controlled by Academic Affairs. Provision and management of the online learning management system Brightspace by D2L (Desire2Learn) is centralized at the university system level with each campus branding their implementation of the platform locally and choosing their own add-ins. At Valdosta State University, the D2L LMS platform is referred to as BlazeVIEW. The Banner registration system is also now administered at the system level and very little local input into the Banner setup and management is allowed other than scheduling, advising, and grading. A full description of institutional administration and infrastructure is provided at Standard V.1.

Odum Library is a unit of Academic Affairs and supports all academic programs equally. The library facilitates institutional access to the system-wide resources and networks provided through GALILEO. GALILEO stands for GeorgiA LIbrary LEarning Online and is a state-wide initiative of the Board of Regents. GALILEO is an online library portal to authoritative, subscription-only information that is not available through free search engines or Web directories. Participating institutions may access over 100 databases indexing thousands of periodicals and scholarly journals. Over 10,000 journal titles are provided in full-text. Additional resources include encyclopedias, business directories, and government publications. GALILEO is organized into three different sections targeted to academic libraries, public libraries, and the general public.

Odum Library provides information services for the entire campus community in all delivery modes and formats. It provides collection resources and management equally for all academic units. The program makes use of library resources that are available to the full campus and the university system and has the equal opportunity to use its departmental library allocation to request specialized materials to meet student needs. Library resources and services are presented in Standard V.12.

The College
As of Academic Year 2020-2021, the Dewar College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) houses five large academic departments: Human Services; Communication Sciences and Disorders; Teacher Education; Leadership, Technology, and Workforce Development; and Library and Information Studies. A full list of the academic programs and degrees housed in each department can be found on the COEHS Degrees and Programs webpage. The five COEHS departments are home to approximately 75% of the graduate students enrolled at the university. 78% of graduate enrollment across the university is in fully online programs.

On July 1, 2014, the MLIS Program was moved from the university library, where it was founded, to the COEHS and into the newly created Department of Library and Information Studies as a one-program department. The college was led at the time by Interim Dean Brian Gerber, who was then appointed to serve as interim Provost for Academic Year 2015 - 2016 and
Academic Year 2016 - 2017. Dr. Lynn Minor, Department Head for Early Childhood Education, thenceforth served as interim dean of the COEHS from July 2015-January 2018. In Fall 2017, a national search for a dean was conducted. Dr. Bernard Oliver applied for the position and was appointed dean. Associate Dean Don Leach had provided continuity at the leadership level through this period of change, but in 2018, Dr. Leach returned to the faculty and Dr. Kate Warner, formerly head of the Department of Human Services, applied for, and was selected to be the Associate Dean of the College. Under Dean Oliver’s leadership the COEHS undertook a two-year reorganization process, ultimately consolidating from nine academic departments to five. Throughout the reorganization process discussion continued as to whether the Department of Library and Information Studies would remain as an independent department or be moved into one of the proposed larger, merged departments.

In Spring 2020, the College Executive Committee, faculty, and the dean agreed upon an organizational structure featuring five academic departments including the Department of Library and Information Studies (Appendix Intro.A). The Office of Professional Education Services was established to centralize administrative support for initial teacher candidate field placements and certifications, and to support and manage program data for all the academic programs across the college.

In June 2020, Dean Oliver left the university and Dr. Karla Hull, Professor of Higher Education Leadership, was appointed interim Dean. Dr. Hull had previously served as Interim Dean of the Graduate School, was appointed Dean of the College in 2011-2012, was then asked to serve as Interim Provost until June 2014, at which time she returned to the faculty. Dr. Hull’s current appointment as Interim Dean is for the two-year period from July 2020 -June 2022, at the end of which time she plans to retire.

The COEHS leadership team has evolved as an outcome of the reorganization. Former department heads and interims have left the university, returned to the faculty, or been promoted to higher administrative positions. Since the reorganization concluded, the department head for Leadership, Technology & Workforce Development retired in May 2021 for health reasons and the Assistant Department Head has assumed leadership of that department. The department head for Communication Sciences & Disorders retired effective June 30, 2021, and a search was conducted in Spring 2021 to find her replacement. These changes result in Dr. Most, the department head for Library and Information Studies becoming the senior department head of the COEHS executive committee in terms of years in her position.

Under Dr. Hull’s and Dr. Warner’s leadership, the College Executive Committee has settled into a cohesive, collegial working group who are undertaking a series of initiatives intended to fully operationalize the new organizational structure, set the direction for the college, and guide the college in fulfilling its vision and mission and adhering to its values. (https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/deans-office/) The Executive Committee’s first two major projects so far are well under way. The college faculty committee structure has been updated and streamlined to facilitate shared governance and to address the needs and priorities of the college in its current configuration. Dean Hull has next asked the college tenure and promotion committee to recommend thorough revisions to update the college’s T&P policy. Those recommendations were sent to the Dean and Department Heads in late May 2021 for review and will go to the entire college faculty in Fall 2021 for comment and consideration.
Implementation of the updated T&P guidelines is expected to affect personnel actions submitted in Fall 2022.

**The MLIS Program**

The MLIS degree program was founded in 2001 under the leadership of the University Librarian and received initial accreditation in 2007 as an academic program housed in the University Library. The program was originally conceived of in response to the closure of the two established MLIS degree programs in Georgia at Clark Atlanta University and at Emory University. Impetus for the founding of the program came from the USG’s desire for a public, state-funded program that would prepare academic and public librarians for the state. Here it should be noted that in Georgia, public school library media specialists earn the M.Ed. in Instructional Technology: School Library Media and are certified as teacher librarians rather than earning the MLIS, as is typical in many other states.

The first accreditation cycle for the program was a time of growth and a somewhat challenging period for the program. In Fall 2011 the program submitted its special report to the ALA COA on its integration of student learning outcome assessment into its program assessment processes. This model of program assessment via the measurement of student learning outcomes continues as the heart of our program outcomes assessment system to the present. The program submitted its plan for the removal of conditional status in March of 2012 and its program presentation for renewal of accreditation in fall 2013. The program received notice of its continuing accreditation status from ALA COA in January 2014.

In Academic Year 2013 – 2014, the interim provost initiated a move of the MLIS Program to the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) after discussions with the Odum Library leadership and the COEHS leadership. The interim provost felt that an academic teaching program and its students would be better served and supported if the program were positioned as one of multiple comparable academic units in a college. The MLIS program was moved to the COEHS into the newly created Department of Library and Information Studies. The transition from Odum Library to COEHS went smoothly and the position of MLIS Program Director was reclassified to that of department head and member of the COEHS Executive Committee alongside the other COEHS department heads.

It should be noted here that the MLIS Program offices were not relocated because of the administrative move to the COEHS. The program has remained physically housed in its original suite in the library building. The five current COEHS departments are housed across five different locations on campus, so the MLIS Program is comparably housed to the other departments that make up the COEHS. The program’s physical resources are fully described at **Standard V.10**.

After the program received its notification of its continuing accreditation status, we have responded to ALA COA reporting requirements as requested and as scheduled. In October 2014, the program submitted its requested special report to address three areas of program management. The program continued to focus on the areas mentioned by COA, and in the December 2014 biennial report, further addressed progress made in those areas. No further special reporting was requested in those areas after that report. In the 2016 Biennial Report, submitted in February 2017, the program addressed the standards and submitted a copy of its
Degree Options
The MLIS Program offers one degree, the 39-credit Master of Library and Information Science, and coordinates one 51-credit dual degree program that offers the MLIS degree along with concurrent School Library Media Specialist Certification (State of Georgia) in partnership with the M.Ed.: Instructional Technology program in the Department of Leadership, Technology & Workforce Development. The dual program maintains a small but steady enrollment, described in Standard II.3, in subsection titled "cooperative degree programs, interdisciplinary coursework and research, and experiential opportunities" (page 70), and Standard IV.4, in subsection "Planning coherent programs of study starts with orientation" (page 146). The program has a memorandum of understanding with the Master of Archival Studies at Clayton State University, but no students have taken advantage of this partnership to date. This partnership is also described in Standard II.3, in subsection titled "cooperative degree programs, interdisciplinary coursework and research, and experiential opportunities" (page 70).

The MLIS Curriculum
The MLIS degree requires students to complete 39 credits distributed across six core courses, one guided elective in collection management, and six other electives. The MLIS curriculum follows a two-year course rotation schedule. The program is not cohorted but has required first semester and exit courses. Most students who enroll part-time finish in six to eight semesters. All core courses are offered every semester and elective courses rotate through a two-year cycle, though to meet demand, most electives are now offered at least once per year in multiple sections. The university is on a three-semester calendar and MLIS courses are offered year-round. Students may begin the program in the Fall or Spring semesters with the required first semester course, MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science. MLIS 7000 is not offered in the summer because the course content is too intensive to be condensed from sixteen weeks to eleven weeks and still provide appropriate coverage to all the content.

The curriculum supports career interests in Cataloging and Classification, Library and Information Center Management, Reference Sources and Services, applied library Technology, Youth Services, and Special Libraries, Archives, or Conservation Librarianship. The program also allows students to take a generalist approach to selecting their electives so that they can tailor their studies to their specific interests and career goals. A list of required courses and those recommended for each of the areas of interest is published on the program’s website and in the graduate catalog.

Course Delivery
The program was originally conceived of as a mostly asynchronous, mostly online program for working adults who wanted to earn an MLIS degree. In the early years of the program the students were almost all Georgia residents, and the majority were employed by the University System of Georgia. At that time, the program required a face-to-face orientation, held alternately
in Atlanta or Macon, and the required first semester *Foundations of Library and Information Science* course followed a four-weekend face-to-face intensive model. By 2010, the program was delivered fully online, and the weekend intensive *Foundations* course had been modified to follow the 16-week semester calendar in the fully asynchronous online delivery mode, as all the other courses in the curriculum were offered.

In 2012 the university system transitioned from the WebCT Blackboard learning management system (LMS) to the Desire2Learn platform (D2L) and centralized support for the LMS with the system office. During the current accreditation period, the university and the system have stayed with D2L and are now on the D2L Brightspace platform. Also offered are a selection of plug-in tools that faculty can use to support and enhance their online course delivery inside the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS. All MLIS courses are delivered fully online and asynchronously inside the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS following semester-long internal course calendars created by the individual instructors. The Office of eLearning and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) support faculty training in the use of all the online learning tools provided by the system and the institution. eLearning and VSU IT provide a series of student and faculty resources and tutorials to help users acclimate to the BlazeVIEW/D2L learning environment.

**From Orientation to the Exit Course**

**Orientation**
The program has required an initial orientation for incoming students since its inception. Orientation was originally delivered in the context of the weekend intensive model as part of the students’ first weekend of MLIS 7000 *Foundations* and scheduled alternately in Macon or Atlanta. By the start of the current accreditation period the orientation had been moved to campus and was held in August and in January during the weekend before classes started. At the same time, application numbers from beyond Georgia and the Southeast were increasing and the program was accepting increasing numbers of students from around the country.

Student orientation evaluation responses to the requirement to travel to Valdosta for orientation and the opportunity to visit campus and meet program faculty and fellow students were mostly positive but consistently expressed concern about the time and cost involved to travel from outside the southeast to Valdosta, GA. The January orientations were fraught with travel concerns as winter weather could interfere with students traveling from their homes in the northern states or include ice storms in Atlanta that would paralyze the airport and the city, making it impossible for students to complete their journeys to Valdosta. In fact, Atlanta experienced a winter storm over the weekend of January 9, 2011 in conjunction with an MLIS orientation weekend and some out of state students could not land in Atlanta to change planes for Valdosta. Students living in Atlanta and north Georgia could not drive on iced-over surface streets to get to the highways to travel to campus. At the other extreme, August orientations risked students being caught in drenching rains as they moved around campus.

By 2016-2017, the size of the incoming classes was outgrowing the largest available computer lab in Odum Library, and it had become more and more apparent to the faculty that orientation should be moved to an online format to ease the costs and travel pressures on the students and to align the orientation experience with the format in which the curriculum is delivered. In Fall
2017, orientation was moved online using the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS and has been delivered online since then with updates and revisions each semester based on lessons learned from the prior iterations.

Orientation is now delivered online during the first week of MLIS 7000 as part of the course content. All enrolled students must complete the orientation content before they can move on to engage with the actual course content. Students report feeling familiar with program expectations and well-prepared for online learning after they complete their orientation activities.

**Exit course**

The program was founded with an exit course as the culminating experience, MLIS 7800 *Capstone*, which included final exit requirements of a capstone paper and presentation and the preparation and submission of a portfolio. In the early years of the program, *Capstone* was delivered mostly online, and students were asked to come to campus in Valdosta to present their final papers in person. Well before the start of the current accreditation period, *Capstone* had been modified into a fully online course like the rest of the curriculum, and the students delivered their presentations remotely inside the LMS using the Blackboard Collaborate live classroom plug-in software. Presentations were typically scheduled during the evenings of the last week of classes and on the final weekend of the semester. Faculty and administrators were invited to attend the presentations as well.

As the demographic profiles and career interests of the students have evolved, the *Capstone* course has been revised to support the students’ changing career interests and goals. In 2021, instead of writing and presenting a formal academic paper, the program is pilot testing having the students prepare and deliver a professional quality webinar that addresses an area of practice aligned with their career goals. The webinars are recorded in advance rather than being delivered live and are shared inside the course website to facilitate watching and reviewing the work of the 40-50 students who now graduate each semester. This update is documented at **Standard II.1**, MLIS 7700 *Course Review* (page 51).

The ePortfolio is the other summative piece of work submitted by the students in their final semester. The ePortfolio is not positioned as a summative assessment of the students’ coursework but rather as a summative assessment of students’ ability to use commercial software to build a quality web product. Beyond demonstrating the students’ technical skills, the ePortfolio is their opportunity to present their best work in a format that they can use in support of their job searches or when applying for promotions from their current positions. The academic content of the ePortfolios has already been graded in the classes in which the work was done, so the individual academic elements are not scored, the ePortfolio assessment measures the technical aspects of the ePortfolio package. Because these ePortfolios are intended for the students to use beyond graduation, students also have the freedom to add artifacts from their jobs or other relevant school, work, or volunteer experiences to enrich the content and scope of their ePortfolios. A full description of the program’s assessment system will be presented at **Standards I.2** (page 20) and **II.5** (page 43).
Opportunities and Challenges

Moving to the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) has provided the program’s faculty with new opportunities to integrate into the life of the university and build collegial relationships with faculty from the other departments and programs housed in the college. Some program faculty members have developed research collaborations with colleagues in other departments, others have served on doctoral dissertation committees. Program faculty have had more opportunities to participate in shared governance at the college and university levels through their college committee assignments, their eligibility to run for college seats in the faculty senate and on university committees, and especially to have their applications for tenure and promotion considered by other teaching faculty rather than by the library faculty. The department head has benefitted from membership on the college’s Executive Committee, developing substantive peer relationships she can call upon for advice or help with university processes or to discuss leadership and management strategies and concerns.

Dr. Hull, the current dean, is interested in and engaged with the MLIS program and sees it as an asset to the college, as the program brings in significant enrollment and attracts national attention to the university. Program students are advancing in their work in libraries and information centers around the country and graduates are moving into leadership positions in public and academic libraries around the state and beyond, bringing positive attention to the program, the college, and the university. Dean Hull has provided enhanced administrative support for the program where she can by arranging for college administrative staff members, one from the Deans Office and one from the Office of Professional Education Services, to help with website redesign and to provide the faculty with some centralized advising support. Faculty have responded positively to these opportunities and to the help the college staff is now able to provide. Dr. Natalie Kuhlmann, the director of the Office of Professional Education Services, provides enrollment and accreditation data management support for all the college departments and in Academic Year 2020 - 2021 has worked closely with the MLIS program to assume management of some of the program’s stakeholder data collection, analysis, and presentation.

Program enrollment has grown steadily in the current accreditation period as the program is becoming known nationally for its fully online, applied curriculum, the extremely affordable State of Georgia eTuition rate that is the same for in-state and out of state students, and its continuing accreditation from the ALA COA. Public library systems that reimburse employee tuition costs see the program as a very cost-effective opportunity for their employees to earn their MLIS degrees. Within the University System of Georgia, employees can earn academic degrees at little to no cost through the USG’s Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and many have used the TAP benefit to earn their MLIS degrees and are now moving forward in their careers at the different USG member libraries.

The most significant challenge the program faces is supporting the steady growth in enrollment. In the current accreditation period, the program has been able to hire to replace faculty who resigned or retired, and the provost has provided two different limited term (three-year maximum) teaching lines to support the increased enrollment. The first limited term instructor line was converted to continuing contract in 2015 and renewed until the incumbent resigned in Spring 2019 for personal reasons. The line was converted to tenure track and filled successfully for Fall 2019. The new limited term line was allocated for Fall 2019 in return for the program
agreeing to increase the number of applicants admitted above that of prior semesters. The new line has been renewed through Spring 2022 and the department head has been given permission to ask for it to be converted from limited term to non-tenure track continuing contract based on steady enrollment numbers, and the incumbent has indicated an interest in continuing to teach full-time for the program.

While these limited term, teaching-intensive lines have been of great assistance in allowing the program to meet the demand for additional sections of courses, they have not helped with the increased advising and administrative work the large enrollment numbers generate. As program enrollment has approached 400 active students, managing the program with the help of one administrative assistant and one graduate assistant has become more challenging. In the past, the program has asked for one of the tenured faculty lines to be converted to a 12-month administrative contract to create an assistant program director or for a professional staff position to be created to provide higher level program management support, but this request has been declined repeatedly. The administrative support described above that Dean Hull arranged in Spring 2021 is the first recognition at the college level that, in addition to additional faculty lines, additional staff support is needed to support the program in its current configuration.

The other concern is the possibility of a decline in enrollment post-pandemic as libraries and information centers reopen with fewer positions available and fewer opportunities for staff members to move up once they earn their MLIS degrees. Program enrollment has been largely driven by the demand from working LIS paraprofessionals around the country who want cost-effective tuition and a fully online, asynchronous program delivery model so they can earn their degrees and qualify for promotional opportunities while working at their current institutions. As open library positions are cut to meet budget reductions, there will be less motivation for paraprofessionals to earn their degrees if there are no professional positions available for them to move into upon completion of their degrees.

**Self-Study Process**

The program was originally scheduled to submit its self-study in the summer of 2020, with the ERP’s site-visit scheduled for October 2020. Planning for the self-study began in Academic Year 2017-2018 with the decision that the department head would coordinate the self-study and each chapter would be written by a team of program faculty members. Institutional data would be requested from the relevant campus units by the department head. The faculty decided to use the Microsoft TEAMs tool to facilitate collaboration and store their drafts and their supporting documents. Chapter authorship teams were built based on faculty familiarity with the different areas of program management and to draw on individual faculty strengths whenever possible. The program’s administrative assistant would contribute by collecting and organizing a range of records housed in the department’s files.
Chapter Authors:

**Standard I: Systematic Planning**

Dr. Linda Most (Associate Professor and Department Head) and Dr. Colette Drouillard (Associate Professor and Assessment Committee Chair)

**Standard II: Curriculum**

Dr. Nicole Alemanne (Assistant Professor and Curriculum Committee Chair) and Dr. Linda Most

**Standard III: Faculty**

Dr. Changwoo Yang (Associate Professor, ALISE annual report statistical data manager), Dr. Yunseon Choi (Assistant Professor [tenured and promoted to Associate Professor, effective August 2021]), Dr. Lenese Colson (Assistant Professor)

**Standard IV: Students**

Dr. Xiaoai Ren (Associate Professor and advisor to the SOLIS student organization), Dr. Changwoo Yang, and Dr. Linda Most

**Standard V: Administration, Finances, and Resources**

Dr. Linda Most (Department Head)

**Editors:** Dr. Drouillard, with Dr. Most

The teams consulted with Dr. Most, Dr. Drouillard, and Dr. Yang to locate the various data sources they needed for their chapters and worked on their drafts with a target completion date of Spring 2020. Dr. Most and Dr. Drouillard then took over editing and mounting the self-study and appendices into a dedicated accreditation course website inside the BlazeVIEW/D2L learning management system. ERP members and anyone else who needed access to the final self-study would be enrolled in the accreditation course website.

In COA’s letter to the MLIS Program dated May 6, 2020, the program was notified that “the Committee also took action in consideration of the COVID-19 health crisis and voted to delay all scheduled comprehensive review visits by one year.” The program accepted the delay, and the ERP site visit was rescheduled to October 2021 with the self-study due date moved to June 2021. The faculty then turned away from preparation of the self-study to focus on managing their work during the pandemic: moving to working fully remotely rather than coming to campus and dealing with the variety of personal and student issues created by the pandemic. Work on the self-study resumed early in 2021 as Dr. Most returned to editing and updating the chapter drafts and appendices. In the spring of 2021 Dr. Drouillard and Dr. Most began the final editing and construction of the accreditation self-study course website inside the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS.

**Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Program**

VSU’s 2020 Spring Break began on March 16, 2020 as the pandemic was dominating the news and institutions were realizing they would have to come up with a response and plan to protect their students and employees. The university administration deliberated and consulted with the system office and announced that residential and commuter students should not return to campus.
after spring break but rather plan to continue their classes from home for the remainder of the spring semester. Spring break was extended for a second week to give the faculty who had been teaching face to face an extra week in which to do whatever it took to move their classes online.

For the MLIS program, the students’ access to their courses was not impacted by the institutional shift in instructional delivery modes because the program was already fully online in an asynchronous course delivery format. Program students were already studying from their homes and workplaces, but many experienced disruptions caused by family members becoming ill from the virus, as they lost access to their workplace computers or their home internet connections due to sudden economic hardships as some family members lost their jobs. Program faculty and staff experienced similar disruptions because, even though they were already teaching fully online, they had to pack up and move out of their campus offices and make the transition to working fully remotely from their homes. Both students and faculty reported instances of the Covid-19 virus affecting their families and causing further disruptions in their work.

VSU is a Microsoft campus, already using OneDrive, Outlook, Office 365, and other Microsoft products throughout the institution, so the decision was made to build a Microsoft TEAMs site for every course section, every department, administrative or support group, and every other entity on campus to support continuing productivity while working remotely. Program faculty elected to continue teaching via BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS because their courses were all fully built and already underway and there was no need to transition courses to the TEAMs platform for teaching purposes. The department did move to using TEAMs for all its collaborative needs other than teaching. All scheduled faculty and committee meetings were moved to TEAMs and faculty could use the departmental TEAMs site to meet with each other as needed.

The biggest impact of the pandemic on the program faculty, staff, and students was at the personal level. Faculty members and students were dealing with disruptions to their home and work lives like everyone else, but the courses continued, and students completed their work on schedule at the end of April, 2020. At the end of the spring semester, SOLIS, the program’s student organization, prepared a virtual celebration of the spring semester’s graduates when it became obvious that there would be no live commencement ceremonies held. Institutional impacts of the pandemic on the program were felt most strongly on the admissions process. Through the pandemic year, the program continued to do its work, holding committee meetings and faculty meetings via TEAMs, moving its admissions application review process online with the support of the Graduate Admissions office and meeting via TEAMs to discuss and rank the applications. Admissions recommendations were sent to the Graduate Admissions office for processing and final decisions as usual though turn-around time was slower. The application review and admission processes were slowed down because the graduate admissions staff had all moved to working from home, taking turns to come to campus one at a time to run the processes that could not be completed remotely. Nonetheless, admissions decisions were sent to the applicants, the selected applicants accepted admission, and the program’s initial advising and registration processes proceeded as in prior semesters, though more slowly.

All institutional Summer 2020 courses were moved fully online, and all summer campus activities were cancelled other than essential services. Faculty were told to continue teaching from home. Odum Library was one of the few units to remain physically open and accessible to
employees and local students. As a result, program faculty could access their offices if they needed anything they had left behind when they moved to working from home.

Academic Affairs instituted a Concierge Coaching program that would match trained staff members to undergraduates to provide one-on-one remote individual support to help them stay focused on their schoolwork despite the distractions. The program’s administrative assistant volunteered to become a concierge coach and fulfilled over half of her work hours working remotely as a coach during the summer. The department head resumed working on campus during the summer because the library building was open to university students and employees but was very lightly occupied.

Over the summer of 2020, Academic Affairs and the other units on campus developed a return-to-work plan for the fall. In August 2020 social distancing was implemented in the face-to-face classrooms and all the buildings across campus along with facemask and sanitizing requirements. As many undergraduate courses as could be scheduled in the space available on campus would be taught face-to-face or in hybrid formats with facemasks and social distancing requirements in place and undergraduates could return to their dorms. Online programs continued in their normal formats.

In preparation for the Fall 2020 return to campus, faculty with health issues were offered the opportunity to request accommodation to teach their Fall face-to-face courses remotely or fully online. Some of the MLIS program faculty received this formal accommodation, at the same time almost all the program’s faculty continued to work remotely through Summer 2021. In August 2020 Dr. Drouillard, Dr. Most, and Mrs. Peacock, the administrative assistant, returned to working full time on campus. The program held all its scheduled faculty and committee meetings regularly via TEAMs and the program’s work continued in this manner through Academic Year 2020 - 2021.

A key theme of the pandemic year for the program and the institution has been to be responsive to the needs of students, many of whom were experiencing pandemic-induced disruptions in their lives and work. Program faculty have made every attempt to support their students and give them extra leeway in the form of extensions or other accommodations as they completed their course requirements. The program’s student completion rates have remained high, as very few withdrew or disappeared. The program’s students enrolled for their Spring and Summer 2021 courses with many saying they wanted to take advantage of the pandemic’s impact on their employing libraries to focus on their studies, resulting in strong Spring and Summer 21 course enrollments.

To support all the faculty as so many were experiencing disruptions to their courses from having had to transition to online teaching so abruptly, Academic Affairs and the Faculty Senate agreed to allow each faculty member to decide whether they wanted to keep their Fall 2020 student opinions of instruction reports (SOI) private or allow them to be shared with the department heads as was standard practice. Some of the program faculty chose to keep their teaching evaluations private. Therefore, to keep the program’s SOI data accurate and representative of the program, we chose to freeze reporting faculty SOIs in the self-study for Academic Year 2019 - 2020, reporting SOI data from Fall 2019 and earlier in Table III.7 (page 99).
Because of the program faculty’s expertise in online teaching, some chose to step forward and volunteered to support their less-experienced colleagues from other departments in moving to online teaching on the fly. Dr. Nicole Alemanne, already active in the Center for Teaching and Learning (CELT) as a facilitator of Faculty Learning Circles, volunteered to serve as a mentor and resource for faculty who were moving into online teaching for the first time. Dr. Lenese Colson peer-led the second-year faculty learning circle through the year, helping her colleagues in other departments navigate their second year of employment and negotiate the pandemic impacts they experienced. Dr. Most continued to serve as secretary of the Council of Department Heads and, along with the council chair, had moved the group’s monthly meetings fully online in Spring 2020 and built a course website for all their documents and resources. Dr. Xiaoi Ren kept the program’s student association moving forward, supporting and facilitating their virtual and distributed activities. Dr. Colette Drouillard kept the program assessments on track and continued to coordinate the first semester Foundations course, helping the new students stay focused on their coursework and moving forward during the pandemic. Part-time faculty continued to teach their courses, saying they appreciated the opportunity to keep working and engaging with the students during the fall and winter 2021 lockdowns.

As we move into Academic Year 2021 – 2022, and plan for faculty and students to return to campus, it is very clear that our institution and our program’s students and faculty have weathered the worst of the pandemic and managed to have a successful year despite all the pandemic-induced stresses and disruptions to their lives. The program faculty have focused on their teaching, scholarship, and service and have worked well from a distance. Admissions application numbers for Fall 2021 are strong, and we look forward to continuing strong enrollment in the program, barring significant changes in the LIS employment outlook. Our biggest pandemic-induced challenge will be to return to working on campus and rebuilding our cohesiveness as a group.
Standard I: Systematic Planning

Introduction

The current accreditation period has been a time of focus and institutionalization of the Valdosta State University (VSU) MLIS program’s systematic planning via program assessment process, established during the program’s prior accreditation cycle. The program’s move from Odum Library to the Dewar College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) has provided support for this model of assessment as the program’s assessment model was strongly influenced by the types of program assessment used across the education disciplines. Developed and implemented in 2011-2012, the program’s student learning outcome assessment (SLOA) system was fully operational by Academic Year 2013-2014 and faculty were fully engaged with the process of continuous program improvement via student learning outcome assessments. SLOA review and analysis has served as the backbone of the program’s continuous review and improvement process throughout the current accreditation cycle.

The 2014 move to the COEHS has provided the program with access to an intellectual environment and peer groups deeply engaged in online graduate teaching and learning. While the university and the college were experiencing significant changes in leadership through 2016 and 2017 as described in the Introduction, the MLIS program focused on applying the programmatic assessment systems and tools it had built and on responding to the growth in enrollment it was experiencing. Enrollment growth started in Academic Year 2015-2016 after the program had received continuing accreditation from ALA COA in 2014. Throughout the current accreditation cycle, the MLIS program has focused on updating the curriculum in response to findings from the program assessments, changing student demographics, and changes in the field. The program has drawn on multiple data sources, starting with the findings from the 2014 self-study, the findings from its 2015 Comprehensive Program Review, and its annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports/Institutional Effectiveness Plans (IER/IEP), program and faculty evaluation processes, and on the results of the semi-annual review of SLOA data. All these data sources inform the program’s decision-making.

Standard I.1

The program’s mission and goals, both administrative and educational, are pursued, and its program objectives achieved, through implementation of an ongoing, broad-based, systematic planning process that involves the constituencies that the program seeks to serve. Elements of systematic planning include:

…implementation of an ongoing, broad-based, systematic planning process that involves the constituencies that the program seeks to serve.

Throughout the last eight years, the program has submitted its biennial reports and annual statistical reports as scheduled and has responded to the Committee on Accreditation’s (COA) requests for additional information as appropriate. The program has published its program outcome data on its website as requested of all ALA COA-accredited programs. To ensure a quality educational experience for the students, the program has responded to the COA’s concerns and suggestions as quickly as possible.
In October 2014, after achieving continued accreditation in January 2014, the program submitted its requested special report to address three areas of program management. The program continued to focus on the areas mentioned by COA, and in the December 2014 biennial report, further addressed progress made in those areas. No further special reporting was requested in those areas after that report.

The program most recently went through the institutional Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) process in Fall 2015 when it joined the COEHS. “Comprehensive program review is a university system requirement intended to evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs through a systematic review. Its purpose is to address the quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching, learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution’s mission.” The program had previously undergone the CPR process in 2012, while a unit of Odum Library. The program chose to undergo the process again in 2015 to document the progress it had made in the three years leading up to receiving continuing accreditation from ALA COA and to bring itself into alignment with the majority of COEHS graduate programs’ CPR schedule. The program’s next comprehensive review is scheduled for 2022-2023. The findings from the 2015 CPR, presented below, have informed the program’s systematic planning during the current accreditation period. (Appendix I.A, 2015 MLIS Institutional Comprehensive Program Review Report)

In the 2016 Biennial Report, submitted in February 2017, the program addressed the standards and submitted a copy of its 2015 Comprehensive Program Review. In the 2015 CPR, the program documented how it had addressed recommendations derived from the 2012 CPR and how it had engaged with its stakeholders to determine its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and to identify the action steps it should take in response to those findings. The program and its stakeholders reaffirmed the program’s mission statement and agreed upon a series of actions steps. The mission statement and these action steps have guided the program in the seven-year period beginning in Academic Year 2015-2016 to the present:

- Continue to review, refine, and adjust the curriculum to keep up with changes in the field.

- Continue to employ student learning outcome assessment results to evaluate program effectiveness and remain in compliance with accreditor expectations.

- Continue to lobby for additional faculty to allow us to effectively deliver the curriculum.

- Develop additional recruiting strategies to locate qualified part-time faculty to fill in for areas in which we lack full time faculty.

- Focus recruiting and admissions strategies on candidates most likely to successfully complete their degrees and be successful in obtaining professional positions.

- Encourage full time faculty to reduce time spent developing and teaching courses in order to enable them to increase their ability to complete existing research projects and develop new opportunities for research and publication.
• Maintain and grow alumni and stakeholder relationships.

• Prepare for the next accreditation visit in 2020 (postponed to 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

In April 2017, COA acknowledged receipt of the 2016 Biennial Report and requested that the next biennial report address how the program faculty was meeting Standard III.5, “…a sustained record of accomplishment in research or other appropriate scholarship (such as creative or professional activities) that contribute to the knowledge base of the field…” by asking the program to “include specific examples of how the program faculty was conducting original research and presenting and publishing their findings from their scholarly work”. The program responded in its February 2019 Biennial Report submission and in the COA’s April 2019 letter of response to the annual statistical reporting and the BNR, they noted that the narrative “does not provide evidence that ‘each faculty member’ has ‘a sustained record of accomplishment in research or other appropriate scholarship that contributes to the knowledge base of the field and to their professional development’ (Standard III.5) as the Committee requested prior.” The program was instructed to “Provide that evidence in the Self-Study…”. No requests for additional information were made. COA’s request is addressed in this self-study at Standard III.5 under the sub-header A summary of each current full-time faculty member’s major research accomplishments follows (page 101).

During the current accreditation period the program has practiced continuous program revision and improvement based on the 2015 CPR action steps, semi-annual student learning outcome assessment results, the annual institutional effectiveness report and planning process, stakeholder input, and changes at the institution and in the field. We will document these processes throughout the body of the self-study. In Spring 2019, the program began its next strategic planning process in conjunction with the quarterly meeting of the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) library directors, held for the first time in Valdosta so that the GPLS library directors could visit the regional public library system’s new main library building. The program was invited to provide a general update to the group of our public library stakeholders from all regions of Georgia.

We used this occasion to introduce each of the MLIS faculty members, who presented brief talks about their research, the program, and the curriculum. We also used the meeting as an opportunity to launch a new round of strategic planning with one of our largest groups of stakeholders, the GPLS library directors, with an exercise titled Envisioning Georgia’s Public Librarians 2024. The goal of the exercise was to ask the attendees to explore the predicted needs of Georgia’s public libraries in 2024 and identify the ways in which the program could better prepare its graduates to meet those needs. Small groups of GPLS library directors were asked to brainstorm and develop ideas in two stages. The first part of the activity asked the small groups to respond to the question:

What challenges do you think your library will face in the next 5 years?

The second part of the activity asked the library directors to generate three to five ideas in response to the question:
What knowledge, skills, and abilities will new graduates of the VSU MLIS program need to be able to help meet these challenges?

The program collected the resulting data, spent the summer analyzing it, and scheduled the dissemination of the findings as part of the next round of visioning and data collection. The second round was conducted as an interactive presentation at the Fall 2019 Georgia Libraries Conference, presented by the Georgia Library Association (GLA). The participant group included stakeholders from library academic and special libraries, as well as public librarians and directors who came to learn the findings from the data collected during the GPLS meeting. (Appendix I.B, Envisioning Georgia’s Public Librarians 2024).

The Fall 2019 visioning exercise was as successful as the one held in Spring 2019, and Dr. Most and Dr. Alemanne were working on the data analysis and synthesis from both sessions through January 2020. They and the faculty were discussing the next steps in the strategic planning process in the spring when the growing Covid-19 pandemic put the university into quarantine in March 2020 and forced the redirection of all institutional energy and resources to student support and continuation of classes. As a result, the program’s strategic planning process was put on hold. The university plans to return to full operations in Fall 2021 and the program plans to resume its strategic planning process in Spring 2022.

**Standard I.1.1**
Continuous review and revision of the program’s vision, mission, goals, objectives, and student learning outcomes;

During the current accreditation period the program has practiced continuous program revision and improvement based on the 2015 CPR action steps, the semi-annual student learning outcome assessment results, the annual institutional effectiveness report and planning process, stakeholder input, and changes at the institution and in the field. The program and its stakeholders reviewed and updated its mission, goals, and objectives in 2015 and have held to them since their confirmation. They serve as the starting point for all discussions of initiatives.

**…mission…**

The Department of Library and Information Studies at Valdosta State University educates a diverse community of online learners in the core competencies and values of the library and information professions, provides students with learning opportunities in traditional and emerging information environments, and prepares graduates to serve in a rapidly changing information society. (Approved by the DLIS Advisory Board, April 2015, Appendix I.C)

**…goals,…**

1. To prepare library and information practitioners to be successful in entry level positions in academic, public, and special libraries.
2. To make program-related decisions to improve the quality of the graduates, program, and better serve stakeholders through the ongoing cyclical use of data gathered and analyzed via the assessment system.
Graduates of the MLIS Program will:

1. Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers by demonstrating skills in
   - information resources
   - reference and user services
   - administration and management
   - organization of recorded knowledge and information

2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers.

3. Integrate relevant research to enhance their work in libraries and information centers.

4. Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists.

The program’s objectives are achieved through consistent and thorough application of the student learning outcomes assessment (SLOA) system, presented in detail below.

**Standard I.1.2**
Assessment of attainment of program goals, program objectives, and student learning outcomes;

Nine Student Learning Outcome Assessments (SLOA) are associated with the four Program Objectives (PO). Student achievement of the established success rates on the individual SLOAs are the key indicators of the program’s accomplishment of its objectives. The POs and their associated SLOAs are published on the program’s webpages. They align as follows in **Table I.1**:

**Table I.1**
Program Objectives and Associated Student Learning Outcome Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome Assessments (SLOAs)</th>
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| PO 1. Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers by demonstrating skills in information resources; reference and user service; administration and management; organization of recorded knowledge and information. | SLOA 1.1 Applied Library Experience Notebook (ALEN)  
SLOA 1.2 Collection Development Project |
| PO 2. Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers. | SLOA 2.1 Reference Transactions Assessment  
SLOA 2.2 Organization of Digital Resources  
SLOA 2.3 Career e-Portfolio Website |
| PO 3. Integrate relevant research to enhance their work in libraries and information centers. | SLOA 3 Research Proposal |
| PO 4. Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists. | SLOA 4.1 MLIS Foundational Knowledge Articulation Assessment  
SLOA 4.2 Ethics Project Report  
SLOA 4.3 Selected Capstone Artifacts |
The program objectives are introduced to the students during the MLIS Program Orientation as part of MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science.

The nine student learning outcome assessments are administered in conjunction with the students’ completion of assignments in each core course and their chosen collection development elective. The assessments are embedded in each core course and the instructors extract their students’ results, score them, and submit via the program’s LiveText assessment management tool. Individual student performance on each rubric element is scored as exceeds, meets, or below expectations. Students who do not submit the assessment are accounted for in the scoring as Did Not Submit. The aggregated SLOA results are scored as Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, or Below Expectations as follows:

- **Exceeds Expectations** = 90% successful completion of relevant elements of course assignments
- **Meets Expectations** = 80% successful completion of relevant elements of course assignments
- **Below Expectations** = performance below 80% on relevant elements.

Aggregated program assessment results are reviewed twice per year when the faculty meets as the assessment committee. Spring and Summer semester data as well as aggregated Academic Year results are reviewed in September. Fall semester results are reviewed early in the following Spring semester. Any assessment that results in 10% or more of the scores falling below 80% and scored as Below Expectations triggers a mandatory review of the assessment results and a discussion to analyze whether the course instruction and content is providing students with appropriate learning opportunities as well as considering if the rubric is accurately measuring the assessment element. The faculty advise the instructor and help with development of an action plan with the goal of making appropriate revisions to the course content, instruction or to the assessment rubric to enable students to meet or exceed expectations on the assessment rubric.

**Valdosta State MLIS Program Objectives and Associated Student Learning Outcome Assessments (SLOA)**

**Program Objective 1:**

SLOA 1.1 requires students to prepare an Applied Library Experience Notebook (ALEN). The ALEN is a collection of four elements that document field work and simulations of field work conducted across four core courses in the MLIS Program. Successful completion of these four field experiences or simulations demonstrates the effectiveness of the program in preparing students to perform professional level work in libraries or information centers. The ALEN includes:

- Element 1: LIS Journals Analysis Project
- Element 2: Reference Consultation Project
- Element 3: Management Client Report
- Element 4: Original Cataloging Project
The work may be conducted in conjunction with working information professionals and is completed under the supervision of professors or course instructors.

In order to provide multiple and varied field experiences or simulations of field experiences, and to evaluate the way in which the mastery of elements is demonstrated, this assessment records program performance over time and across multiple core courses. The LIS Journals Analysis project is housed in MLIS 7000, The Reference Consultation Project is housed in MLIS 7100, the Management Client Report project is housed in MLIS 7200, and the Original Cataloging Project is housed in MLIS 7300. Complete course descriptions are provided in Appendix II.B and discussed in Standard II.2.

SLOA 1.2 requires students to prepare a Collection Development Project (CDP), a simulation exercise to evaluate and select materials for a subject area in a library. This project provides data on student performance of the administrative, services and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers. The CDP simulates the process of building a collection using core knowledge and skills that can be contextualized to a number of curricular areas. The assessment is housed in a series of electives which include the principles and activities of collection development in relationship to the needs of a specific user group or the general population. One of these courses is required of each student. As of Fall 2020, five courses meet this requirement: MLIS 7400 Collection Development, 7420 Literature for Children, 7421 Multicultural Youth Literature, 7423 Literature for Young Adults, or 7440 Electronic Resources Management.

Program Objective 2:
The program’s success at achieving Program Objective 2 is measured through analysis of student performance on elements of the Reference Transaction Assessment, or RTA: SLOA 2.1, the Organization of Digital Resources: SLOA 2.2, and the Selected Capstone Artifacts: SLOA 2.3.

SLOA 2.1 The Reference Transaction Assessment (RTA) is a simulation in which students receive questions typical of reference transactions that require online searches in order to locate answers. Students must prepare and post answers to hypothetical clients in a format consistent with an online question and answer service. Seeking information on these queries requires that students devise search strategies consistent with the way in which the electronic resources organize content. Students convert their answer documents to html format in order to submit the results of their information searches.

SLOA 2.1 is housed in MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services. It includes scoring that reflects the students’ ability to understand and implement rapidly changing information access and organizational technologies and follow professional ethics and service norms in the context of the information delivery environment.

SLOA 2.2 The Organization of Digital Resources is an assignment in which students work on analyzing and evaluating digital collections by identifying user information needs, subject access, and metadata scheme. Students choose one Library of Congress digital collection.
SLOA 2.2 is housed in MLIS 7300 *Organization of Information*. It includes scoring that reflects the students’ ability to respond to the rapidly changing technological environment in which information is organized and made accessible.

**SLOA 2.3 Career e-Portfolio Website:** Evaluation of students’ ability to create an e-portfolio provides evidence of the program’s effectiveness in preparing its students to design and develop a digital product. Each student creates a web-based e-portfolio that includes multiple elements (e.g. introduction, hyperlinked table of contents, résumé, professional development plan, etc.).

SLOA 2.3 is housed in MLIS 7800 *Capstone*. It includes scoring that reflects students’ ability to use software products to present information in the online environment.

The program’s success at achieving Program Objective 2 is measured through analysis of student performance in assessments 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

**Program Objective 3**

The program’s success at achieving Program Objective 3 through 2020 was measured through analysis of student performance on the preparation of a Research Proposal, SLOA 3. During 2020, the faculty undertook a thorough review of MLIS 7700 *Research Methods*, discussed in Standard II.1 (page 51). One of the key outcomes of the course review was a significant update to SLOA 3 such that students will now develop, conduct, and report on an assessment project instead of preparing a research proposal.

**Through 2020: SLOA 3, The Research Proposal**, measures students’ ability to (1) interpret and evaluate the research of others so that they may apply those findings in their professional practice; (2) maintain currency of knowledge of the field through their use of the professional literature; (3) contribute to the professional literature; and (4) perform research in furtherance of their duties. Introductory skills to conduct research as well as evaluate the research of others in multiple disciplines including library and information science are evaluated through the process of proposal development. The Research Proposal is a comprehensive task that demonstrates an important student learning outcome and measures Program Objective 3, the ability to integrate relevant research to enhance work in libraries and information centers. SLOA 3 is housed in MLIS 7700 *Research Methods*.

**Effective in 2021: SLOA 3 The Research Project**, measures students’ ability to (1) interpret and evaluate the research of others so that they may apply those findings in their professional practice; (2) maintain currency of knowledge of the field through their use of the professional literature; (3) contribute to the professional literature; and (4) perform research in furtherance of their duties. Introductory skills to conduct research as well as evaluate the research of others in multiple disciplines including library and information science are evaluated through the process of developing, conducting, and reporting on a research project. The Research Project is a comprehensive task that demonstrates an important student learning outcome and measures Program Objective 3, the ability to integrate relevant research to enhance work in libraries and information centers. SLOA 3 is housed in MLIS 7700 *Research Methods*. 
Program Objective 4

The program’s success at achieving Program Objective 4 is measured through analysis of student performance on the Foundational Knowledge Assessment (also referred to as the Foundations Module Essays) SLOA 4.1, the Ethics Project Report SLOA 4.2, and the Selected Capstone Artifacts SLOA 4.3.

SLOA 4.1, ensures that the program’s students receive broad exposure to the foundational concepts that inform the Library and Information Science (LIS) field during their first semester of study. Through the work informing this assessment students begin to construct a personal intellectual infrastructure that they will build on as they develop into LIS professionals. In response to prompts assigned during the course, students write a series of essays addressing foundational concepts of the field. The essays serve to document the students’ introduction to the field and their development of an initial theoretical framework they will build on during the balance of their LIS coursework. SLOA 4.1 is housed in MLIS 7000, Foundations of Library and Information Science.

SLOA 4.2, The Ethics Project Report, completed in the first semester of study, SLOA 4.2 prompts students to develop and demonstrate their understanding of the role of professional ethics in their careers, and provides them with an orientation to the ethical frameworks they will need to employ when making professional decisions. The report is developed as a group project, allowing students to learn the negotiating and collaborating skills they will need as working professionals. The project introduces students to the role of professional associations as the negotiators and keepers of codes of ethics for their members. The assessment measures the students’ ability to work in groups to explore, analyze, and reflect upon the role of codes of ethics in professional practice. The report includes the students’ self-assessment of their ability to comply with codes of ethics that fall outside their personal belief systems. SLOA 4.2 is measured during MLIS 7000.

SLOA 4.3, The Selected Capstone Artifacts, the concluding project in the final course for the MLIS degree, requires students to present their synthesized knowledge, writing skills, and presentation skills. The demonstration of professionalism throughout the Career E-Portfolio is required for fulfillment of MLIS program requirements. SLOA 4.3 is measured during MLIS 7800, Capstone.

Elements of the e-portfolio include:

- Résumé or CV
- Professional Development Plan: Each student creates and records a personal plan for professional development. For students who need to seek employment, this will include a detailed job-hunting plan. For all students, this includes plans for solidifying and updating their professional knowledge in the two-year period following graduation.
- Capstone Paper: Each student prepares a paper of publishable quality on a topic of the student’s choice, with the topic subject to instructor approval.
- Capstone Presentation: Each student delivers an online conference-style presentation about his/her capstone paper. Each student uses presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint®) to illustrate points and information.
The program is currently piloting an assignment revision in MLIS 7800 that will replace the current Capstone Paper assignment with a Capstone Presentation assignment that requires students to research, prepare, and present a professional quality webinar on an area of LIS practice.

**Institutional Effectiveness Reports**

Every year, each academic and administrative unit submits an institutional effectiveness report and plan as part of the institution’s compliance with SACSCOC standards. The MLIS program reports selected SLOA results and demonstrates their use in continuous program improvement. We outline plans for improvement on the selected elements during the coming year’s work in the annual institutional effectiveness plan. Starting in Academic Year 14 the program has been reporting on the challenge students have experienced in achieving SLOA 3 and documenting efforts to improve their outcomes. These efforts included revising course instructional elements and testing them for a year, reviewing and revising the relevant assessment rubric to make sure it was actually measuring the appropriate summative elements, and repeating the cycle. Students’ continuing problems meeting the required performance levels on this assessment contributed significantly to the need to review the course in its entirety for relevance to the students’ needs and to keep up with changes in how social science research is used in library practice. In Fall 2021, the faculty will report on the implementation of the revisions to SLOA 3 as part of our contribution to the institution’s continuous improvement process.

**Standard I.1.3**

Improvements to the program based on analysis of assessment data;

Program improvements flow directly from the analysis of assessment data as described above. Course and curriculum revisions flow from the SLOA review process and are described in detail in Standard II.1, in the sub-standard *Curriculum Reviews* (pages 49-52). The SLOA review findings in turn inform the annual Institutional Effectiveness planning and reporting processes, contributing directly to program improvements and documenting the program’s commitment to SACSCOC’s and ALA COA’s expectation of continuous program improvement grounded in the assessment of student learning.

Other assessment data the program draws on to inform continuous program improvement include final course grades, the student opinions of instruction (SOI) submitted for each course every semester, student participation in open forums with the department head, annual faculty evaluations, graduation rates, exit surveys, alumni surveys, and employer surveys.

**Course grades**

The Graduate School requires that all graduate students maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher to continue in their degree programs and qualify for graduation. 
[https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/our-programs/retention-dismissal-readmission-policies.php](https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/our-programs/retention-dismissal-readmission-policies.php)

Earning grades below “B” in graduate courses will result in the following consequences:
Students admitted Fall 2011 and thereafter will be dismissed from the Graduate School if they accumulate three or more academic deficiency points unless otherwise indicated by individual program policy. A grade of “C” (although it may be credited toward a degree) equals one deficiency point. A grade of “D,” “WF” or “F,” or “U” (none of which will be credited toward a degree) equals two deficiency points. Candidates admitted PRIOR to Fall 2011 and receiving two grades below “C” (“D”, “F”, “WF”, “U”) will be dismissed from the program. One grade below a "C" results in a warning.

The department head receives notification of any students receiving deficiency points at the end of each semester and so notifies the student’s advisor. If the student is not dismissed, the advisor and the department head review the student’s academic record and come up with a retention plan. The plan is shared with the student and followed up upon by the advisor. The goal is to support the students in improving their performance so that they can continue their studies and graduate.

**Student Opinions of Instruction (SOI)**

SOIs are anonymous surveys completed by students and conducted in each section of each course each semester. SOIs are reviewed by the instructor and the department head and included in each instructor’s annual faculty activity report. While student opinions of instruction are known to skew to the extremes rather than to the center, they can be helpful in determining an instructor’s overall effectiveness and can point out weaknesses in instruction if the responses are consistent across most or all the respondents in a particular course. If an instructor’s students across all their sections in a semester respond similarly to the SOI survey, the department head has a good indication that there is a problem the instructor and the department head need to address. By contrast, consistently high scores and detailed positive comments are a good indicator that the instruction has been successful, and the students are satisfied with their learning experience.

**Student Open Forums with the Department Head**

Beginning in Fall 2014, the program launched an annual opportunity for students to speak directly to the department head and faculty during what was billed as a Town Hall Meeting, held at the Georgia Library Association conferences in October 2014 and 2015. Starting in Spring 2016 the town hall meetings moved online to allow students residing outside Georgia to participate. Marketed as the opportunity to Talk to Dr. Most, these online meetings with the department head are now offered three times per year, towards the end of each semester.

Few students attend unless there is a significant issue occurring and they want to communicate it directly to the department head. This was the case when a former faculty member was experiencing significant health problems that had not been communicated to anyone in the department. Students reported the instructor’s lack of engagement across all the courses the individual was teaching, thereby alerting the department head to the developing problem.

In a typical session, when no specific problems are occurring, first semester students log in and ask for details about how different courses work and for clarification on program expectations or
requirements. Students who are close to graduating often join in for a chance to chat with the department head and reflect on their time in the program or say thank-you for the opportunities they’ve experienced. The forums are scheduled for two hours and average 6-10 participants per session.

**Annual Faculty Evaluations**

A formal opportunity for the faculty to reflect on their teaching, scholarship, professional development, and service, and how well they accomplished their goals in those areas for the past year. In February, the faculty submit their annual faculty activity reports for the preceding calendar year and their plans for the coming year. These reports include their SOI data for the year. The department head reviews the reports and prepares the faculty evaluations. Each faculty member can meet with the department head to discuss the results of the past year and their goals for the coming year. These meetings are the primary opportunity for the department head to address areas of concern and endorse faculty successes. The signed annual faculty evaluations are forwarded to the dean and then to the provost. Performance on any element of the review evaluated as unsatisfactory triggers an action plan and a six-month follow-up with the faculty member. Continued poor performance can lead to non-tenured faculty receiving a terminal contract for the subsequent year. A tenured faculty member who receives unsatisfactory rankings over multiple years will be addressed before and during the post-tenure review process following policies established by the Board of Regents and detailed in the institution’s faculty evaluation model. Given that successful teaching is the path to students’ achievement of the student learning outcomes, faculty assessment is a significant element of continuous program assessment and improvement.

**Constituent Satisfaction Surveys**

Assessment does not end at graduation. Constituent satisfaction surveys are conducted regularly with different groups. The same evaluation categories, aligned with the program objectives, are used in the **graduating student survey**, the **alumni survey** – distributed 1-2 years after graduation, as well as a **survey of employers of graduates**, distributed every three years.

Findings from these surveys are reviewed by the department head and published on the program’s outcomes webpage. Any areas of concern are brought to the faculty and addressed as part of the curriculum review cycle.

The three surveys are aligned. Each group is asked to identify the extent to which they agree with a series of statements as related to the program graduates’ preparation to become an entry level professional librarian or entry level information professional. “The VSU MLIS program prepared me to…”

- Perform administrative functions such as management, marketing, supervision, collection development, OR electronic resources management in a library or information center
- Provide effective public services such as reference, circulation, instruction, OR programming to meet needs in a library or information center.
- Effectively perform library technical or technology services such as cataloging,
acquisitions, serials management, OR circulation systems management to meet needs in a library or information center.

- Effectively use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in a library or information center.

- Integrate relevant research to enhance my work in a library or information center.

- Demonstrate professionalism in my work.

The surveys show that employers are the most satisfied with the graduates’ preparation for their work, consistently scoring 90% - 100% agree or strongly agree across all outcomes. Alumni, two years after graduation, are the least satisfied with their preparation for professional work, scoring from 85% - 100% agree or strongly agree on all outcomes with the exception of Outcome 3: Effectively perform library technical or technology services such as cataloging, acquisitions, serials management, OR circulation systems management to meet needs in a library or information center. 51% - 68% of alumni scored agree or strongly agree on their preparation in this area with the percentage in agreement increasing with the recency of their graduation year. Much of the disagreement in Outcome 3 can be attributed to the students enrolled before the resignation of the faculty member who led this area of the curriculum in 2018. Improvements in this outcome have been increasing since the arrival of the new faculty member who oversees this area of the curriculum and teaches the core and elective courses. Graduating student agreement in this area has risen significantly since the arrival of the new faculty member.

Aggregated survey results for the current accreditation period can be found on the MLIS Program Satisfaction Survey webpage.

Addition and Deletion of Courses

Addition and deletion of courses is the result of systematic curriculum review, decline in popularity as the profile of the student body has evolved, or increasing student demand for additional content in a popular area of the curriculum. Faculty can develop and test new courses as special topics courses and use the SOI and the peer course review processes to fine tune the new courses. If enrollment demand and positive SOIs continue, the course can be submitted to the curriculum committee for consideration as a permanent addition to the curriculum. Established courses that decline in popularity and do not draw appropriate enrollment are offered less frequently in the course rotation schedule. If they still do not attract enough enrollment, the curriculum committee is asked to review the role of the course in the context of the curriculum as a whole and then delist the course.

Elective Course Updates

Course updates for electives are the responsibility of individual faculty members. They are inspired by SOI results, peer course review, findings from faculty research in areas relevant to the course content, and changes in the field. Curriculum updates are conducted by area of practice and follow a schedule. They are the responsibility of the curriculum committee to manage and are led by the faculty members with expertise in the relevant area of specialization.
An advisory committee consisting of stakeholders with expertise in the area is assembled and the relevant professional standards and competences are consulted. The committee prepares a report and proposal for the recommended revisions and updates and presents them to the faculty.

**Standard I.1.4**

Communication of planning policies and processes to program constituents. The program has a written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals, and is supported by university administration. The program’s goals and objectives are consistent with the values of the parent institution and the culture and mission of the program and foster quality education.

The program has published its written mission statement, goals, and objectives on its [Program Overview webpage](#). The program operationalizes and measures attainment of its goals and objectives through application and analysis of its published student learning outcome assessments on the [MLIS Student Learning Outcomes webpage](#).

**Table I.2 Communication of Planning, Policies, Processes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituent Group</th>
<th>Channel or Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS Faculty and Administration</td>
<td>• MLIS faculty meeting minutes; reports from COEHS Executive Committee and Graduate Executive Committee meetings at faculty meetings (monthly)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• SLOA review meetings and reports (fall and spring semesters)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• SOI data (each semester)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• SOLIS e-newsletter (quarterly)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• MLIS faculty mailing list, TEAMs platform, social media, MLIS Village (ongoing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current MLIS students</td>
<td>• Program website (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Graduate School website (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• University email (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Class announcements, BlazeVIEW (LMS) mail, MLIS Village announcements and forum posts (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Live Talk to Dr. Most sessions (each semester)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Banner course registration system for grades and credits earned (ongoing)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• SOLIS online meetings and virtual or distributed activities (fall and spring)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Social media (ongoing)</td>
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<td>• State conferences (annual)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• National professional conferences (ad hoc)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLIS Alumni</td>
<td>• Alumni email address list</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• MLIS Village announcements and forum posts (ongoing, graduates retain access)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Georgia Library Association annual conference constituent meet-up/ self-pay dinner, booth, conference presentations (annual)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Georgia Library Association listserv (ad hoc)</td>
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<td>• Program website, social media (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• SOLIS newsletter (quarterly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employers and stakeholders</td>
<td>• Employer email list (ad hoc)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Virtual forums (ad hoc)</td>
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<td>• Program website, social media (ongoing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• State conferences (annual)</td>
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<td>• SOLIS newsletter (quarterly)</td>
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Summaries of monthly faculty meeting decisions and action steps are published on the program’s [Departmental Meetings and Documentation webpage](#), full faculty meeting minutes are distributed to the faculty and are filed in the department offices (Appendix 1.D). Institutional or program policy or process updates are communicated directly to students and faculty via university email and posted as announcements in MLIS Village, the program’s online student center, an open-ended course available to all enrolled students and alumni inside BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS.

Student representatives attend monthly faculty meetings and curriculum committee meetings. They use the SOLIS (student organization) newsletter and MLIS Village communication tools to communicate information and news directly to the MLIS student body. Student accomplishments are also highlighted in the SOLIS newsletter, which is published quarterly on the SOLIS website, and sent to current students and faculty via email.

The program takes a booth at the state library association annual conference and faculty are present to speak with students, prospective applicants, employers, and other stakeholders. Faculty presentations at the state and national levels disseminate their research to constituent groups.

Program planning during this accreditation cycle has been grounded in the findings of the 2015 Comprehensive Review process, an institution-wide evaluation that aligns with Board of Regents requirements. The program will begin its next comprehensive program review in 2022 and will use the results of that process to inform review of its mission goals and objectives and strategic planning during the next accreditation cycle.

Like all academic units, the program operates under the university’s centralized budgeting and services models, described in Standard V.6. All instructional resources, faculty, and student services are centralized other than the individual departmental discretionary operating and travel budgets, which are assigned yearly. The program is fully supported by the university administration and is seen as a leader among the graduate programs. The program is especially noted for the steady growth of its enrollment and completion rates. Support has been provided in the form of approval of replacements for faculty who have retired or resigned and the provision of additional limited term faculty lines to support the growing enrollment. Most recently, the COEHS has been able to provide some additional administrative support for advising and data collection and management from its Office of Professional Education Services.

The university’s Vision and Mission are part of the university strategic plan:

**VSU Vision:**
Valdosta State University will be a catalyst for regional comprehensive progress.

**VSU Mission**
As a comprehensive institution of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University (VSU) is a welcoming, aware, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving our communities’ rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and
opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. As such, the VSU mission consists of three interrelated parts:

- **Student Mission:** To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.

- **University Mission:** To operate the university with a focus toward human, environmental, and financial sustainability while increasing value to our local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. To expand opportunities for our students, employees, and varied community members by promoting social justice and service learning.

- **Regional Mission:** To provide our region and our home with the resources and support necessary to develop and sustain a higher quality of living, greater economic and community development, and inspired innovation that nurtures and respects our diverse population and beautiful environment while promoting academic outreach, public and private entrepreneurship, and collaboration with all regional entities.

Building upon the VSU mission statements, The Dewar College of Education and Human Services’ vision and mission statements provide the foundation for the Department of Library and Information Studies mission statement:

**COEHS Vision Statement**
Dewar College of Education and Human Services will be a leader in transforming lives and communities through education and service.

**COEHS Mission Statement**
The Dewar College of Education & Human Services prepares professionals for multiple roles in 21st century educational, business, and community settings. Our graduates use theory, research, evidence-based practice, and collaboration for the improvement of the health, well-being, and education of diverse citizens in our region, the nation, and the world.

The program has a written mission statement and a written strategic or long-range plan that provides vision and direction for its future, identifies needs and resources for its mission and goals, and is supported by university administration.
The program’s mission statement aligns with those of the university and the college in its focus on diversity, providing appropriate learning opportunities, and recognizing the rapidly changing society in which graduates will perform, whether regionally, nationally, or globally:
DLIS Mission Statement
The Department of Library and Information Studies at Valdosta State University educates a diverse community of online learners in the core competencies and values of the library and information professions, provides students with learning opportunities in traditional and emerging information environments, and prepares graduates to serve in a rapidly changing information society.

Standard I.2
Clearly defined student learning outcomes are a critical part of the program’s goals. These outcomes describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. They enable a faculty to arrive at a common understanding of the expectations for student learning and to achieve consistency across the curriculum. Student learning outcomes reflect the entirety of the learning experience to which students have been exposed. Student learning outcomes address:

Student learning outcomes are required for every course offered by the program. They ground the program in a culture of assessment. Learning outcomes for each elective reflect what the student should know and be able to do at the end of the course. Learning outcomes for the six required core courses and the required collection development elective reflect what the student should know and be able to do both at the end of each required course and, taken together, reflect what all students need to know by the time of graduation. Course learning outcomes are clearly stated on each syllabus. They are required whenever a new course is proposed for addition to the curriculum.

Standard I.2.1
The essential character of the field of library and information studies;

MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services - An introduction to concepts and processes in reference and information science and to fundamental information sources and services provided by libraries and information organizations. An overview of the reference function includes the history and future of reference service, question negotiation, information needs analysis, effective research strategies, evaluation of information sources in various formats, and ethics of information services. Required of all students.

MLIS 7200 Management of Libraries and Information Centers - An introduction to the functions of library management and its underlying theoretical concepts. This course provides an overview of the history of management, an introduction to management theory and functions, including planning, leading, organizing, staffing, controlling, budgeting, human resource issues, and an understanding of management as a system involving all staff. Required of all students.

MLIS 7300 Organization of Information - An introduction to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for organizing and retrieving information, including organizational systems objectives, structures, formats, standards, and vocabularies; choice and form of access points; authority control; subject access; the impact of new technologies; and the information life cycle. Required of all students.
Standard I.2.2
The philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field;
MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science* - In MLIS 7000 each student prepares a substantive discussion post in which they document their understanding of professional ethics and information ethics and how the two concepts overlap and differ. Students work together on a group project in which they review and analyze the ethics statements and professional standards of one of the specialized LIS professional associations.

MLIS 7650 *Information and Ethics* - An introduction to the basic ethical precepts of the information professions and the importance of ethics. The course examines differences among ethical, legal, moral, and religious systems and includes a case-study methodology to explore ethical situations in the professional practice, drawing upon lessons offered by relevant professional organizations and their ethics codes. Elective course.

Standard I.2.3
Appropriate principles of specialization identified in applicable policy statements and documents of relevant professional organizations;
MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science* - In MLIS 7000 students work together on a group project in which they explore the role of professional associations in the LIS fields and review and analyze the ethics statements and professional standards of one of the specialized LIS professional associations.

MLIS 7100 *Information Sources and Services* - In MLIS 7100 all students review and apply the RUSA Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service as they learn to deliver reference services and practice reference transactions.

MLIS 7220 *Public Libraries* – A study of the American public library and its place in contemporary communities. Topics include standards, planning, evaluation, governance, funding, and advocacy.

MLIS 7610 *Information Policy* - The study of governmental information policy, with emphasis on the United States. Issues include privacy, intellectual property, access to information, media deregulation, and networking initiatives. Elective course.

MLIS 7710 *Archival Theory and Issues* – An introduction to archival theory and practice. The course explores archival history and the profession, including legal issues, standards and ethics, terminology and concepts, research tools, and methods and practice.

Standard I.2.4
The importance of research to the advancement of the field's knowledge base;
MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science* - In MLIS 7000 each student reviews and analyzes a set of LIS professional journals and submits an essay in which they document their understanding of the role of peer review and scholarly research and publication in the LIS professions. Required of all students.
MLIS 7700 Research Methods - An introduction to the various approaches to social science research and research methods. Students will perform small-scale research projects and develop skills in the research uses of libraries and the needs of library patrons. Required of all students.

**Standard I.2.5**

The symbiotic relationship of library and information studies with other fields;

MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science - An introduction to the library and information science field, its history, and future directions. The focus is on the history, concepts, and technological development of the discipline. Students will gain familiarity with library and information theory, the discipline and sub-disciplines within the information sciences, and ethical practices and standards. Required of all students.

MLIS 7800 Capstone - Required for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MLIS degree. Emphasis will be on synthesis of knowledge, honing writing and presentation skills, and creating a professional development plan. Required of all students.

Students’ programs of study are bookended with MLIS 7000 in the first semester and MLIS 7800 in the final semester. In MLIS 7000 students prepare a series of discussion posts in the form of essays in which they document their learned understanding of the fundamentals of the LIS professions. Their first discussion is focused on the definitions of and importance of professionalism in LIS. They then study and respond to the different types of information institutions that make up the landscape of LIS and the service populations whose needs the institutions address. Students also complete a group project in which they explore the different professional associations that make up the larger LIS universe and then analyze the ethical statements and professional standards established by one of the associations.

In MLIS 7800 students conduct extensive reading and discussions on the nature of professionalism and the importance of diversity in LIS, with a focus on how professionalism is expressed across a diverse professional community. In MLIS 7800 students formerly researched and prepared a publishable paper on a topic of personal and professional interest to them. Effective in 2020 the assignment was updated so that students prepare and present a professional quality webinar on a disciplinary topic aligned with their workplace and/or career interests and targeted to an appropriate audience.

MLIS 7710 Archival Theory and Issues - An introduction to archival theory and practice. The course explores archival history and the profession, including legal issues, standards and ethics, terminology and concepts, research tools, and methods and practice. Elective course.

MLIS 7970 Libraries and Literacies in History - An exploration of the development of reading, writing, and information management from the proto-literate stages of the ancient Near East to the present computer age. Intellectual foundations of research and librarianship will be emphasized in their historical context. Elective course.

The program also offers students the opportunity to earn concurrent certification as a school library media specialist (State of Georgia) for those interested in the relationship between LIS and P-12 education. Students also may take up to four courses at Clayton State University in the
Master of Archival studies program if they wish additional content in this area beyond that already provided in the program’s curriculum.

**Standard I.2.6**
The role of library and information services in a diverse global society, including the role of serving the needs of underserved groups;

Each student must complete one of the following Collection Development electives. In each of the courses listed below, students conduct a needs evaluation for the population the collection will serve and then prepare a hypothetical collection to support the information needs of the population they are supporting.

- **MLIS 7400 Collection Development** - Principles and processes for building and maintaining library and information center collections. Identification, evaluation, selection, acquisition, and preservation of materials in all formats will be emphasized. The contexts of all types of libraries, needs of diverse patrons, and legal and ethical issues will be considered.

- **MLIS 7420 Literature for Children** - A study of the literature created for children in relation to their needs, interests and abilities. Emphasis will be on the process of evaluation in order to meet the developmental, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of children.

- **MLIS 7421 Multicultural Youth Literature** - A survey of multicultural literature for children and teenagers. Evaluation, selection and use of multicultural literature in school and public libraries will be emphasized.

- **MLIS 7423 Literature for Young Adults** - A study of the literature created for young adults in relation to their characteristics, needs, interests and abilities. Emphasis will be on the process of evaluation in order to meet the developmental, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of young adults. Literature will be considered from various perspectives, including literary and artistic merit, popularity with teens, social and personal usefulness.

- **MLIS 7440 Electronic Resources in Libraries** - Policies and procedures for managing electronic information resources as part of a library collection. Selection, budgeting, acquisition, cataloging, assessment, copyright, licensing, and preservation are considered.

In MLIS 7440, students prepare a profile of a library e-collection that responds to the library’s mission, user group profile, and its collection development policy or guiding principles. They then build a hypothetical electronic collection that meets the needs of their library’s service population.

- **MLIS 7180 Library Services for Patrons with Special Needs** - Disability issues in libraries, with a particular emphasis on visual disabilities. Obtaining funding and providing services for patrons with special needs will be emphasized. Elective course.
Standard I.2.7
The role of library and information services in a rapidly changing technological society:

MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services - In MLIS 7100 students learn how information and communication technologies have impacted the delivery of information services. They develop skills in online searching and virtual reference services, in identifying resources relevant to answering client questions, and they build online pathfinders targeted to a specific information need.

MLIS 7300 Organization of Information - In MLIS 7300 students study metadata creation and application in catalog records, they learn about the move from AACR2 to RDA and what the change means in terms of organizing information to support access by information users. Each student completes a project in which they analyze and evaluate a digital collection by identifying user needs, controlled vocabulary, and the metadata schemes being used.

MLIS 7440 Electronic Resources in Libraries and MLIS 7425 Youth Electronic Resources - In MLIS 7440 and MLIS 7425 students learn to evaluate, select, acquire, and use electronic information resources to meet the information needs of different user groups.

Other elective courses in the different areas of interest in the curriculum, especially those in the 7500 series, focus on the provision of library and information services in a rapidly changing technological society:

- MLIS 7510 Essential Technologies in Libraries
- MLIS 7520 Database Design for Information Professionals
- MLIS 7540 Integrated Library Management Systems
- MLSI 7570 Information Architecture
- MLIS 7580 Digital Libraries
- MLIS 7290 Project Management for Libraries
- MLIS 7997 Digital Preservation (Special Topics course)

Standard I.2.8
The needs of the constituencies that the program seeks to serve.

MLIS 7200 Management of Libraries and Information Centers - As part of MLIS 7200, each student functions as a management consultant to a library or information center manager and researches a management issue identified by the client. Students interview the client to learn about their constituents and about the specific issue, then prepare an annotated bibliography and set of recommendations based on their research which they deliver in the form of a consultant’s report to the client. They receive feedback on their work from the client and the instructor.

MLIS 7280 Community Building - Based upon theoretical and pragmatic aspects of community building through libraries in areas such as social services, social learning/media, civic engagement, cultural enrichment, and the creative spirit. MLIS 7280 provides students with the tools they will need to identify different constituent groups and conduct community analyses.
designed to identify their constituents’ needs. Elective course.

In addition to the courses described at I.2.6 that focus specifically on identifying and providing information collections and resources that meet the needs of specific user groups in the context of a global society, the following elective courses allow students to explore the information service needs and the institutional management policies and practices designed to meet those needs for different library and information center user populations:

- MLIS 7210 Academic Libraries
- MLIS 7220 Public Libraries
- MLIS 7222 Adult Services in Public Libraries
- MLIS 7230 Special Libraries and Information Centers
- MLIS 7422 Programming for Children and Young Teens
- MLIS 7740 Rare Book Librarianship

**Standard I.3**  
Program goals and objectives incorporate the value of teaching and service to the field.

Teaching is at the heart of the university’s mission and comes first in priority in the preamble to the institutional mission statement. Service is prioritized as well: “Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region.”

The MLIS program’s mission flows from that of the university and expressly states that the program “educates a diverse community of online learners…and prepares graduates to serve in a rapidly changing information society.”

Student achievement of program outcomes is dependent upon good teaching, and faculty SOIs and student learning outcome assessment results both provide strong evidence of high-quality teaching across the faculty. The students, in turn, are prepared to incorporate teaching as a facet of their practice through their accomplishment of Program Objective 1: *Graduates of the MLIS Program will perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice by demonstrating skills in information resources, reference and user service, administration and management, organization of recorded knowledge and information.* Program Objective 4 also speaks to students’ preparation for teaching and service as they: *Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists.* Thus, program graduates teach whether in a one-to-many situation involving standing in front of a class, delivering a children’s library craft program or interactive story hour, or they are embedded in an online course and supporting the course instructor by teaching the students how to access the needed resources. Approaching library program and service delivery through the lens of teaching and learning circles back to the last clause of the program’s mission and shows that the program “prepares graduates to serve in a rapidly changing information society” as can be seen in the examples provided.
Standard I.4
Within the context of these Standards each program is judged on the extent to which it attains its objectives. In accord with the mission of the program, clearly defined, publicly stated, and regularly reviewed program goals and objectives form the essential frame of reference for meaningful external and internal evaluation.

The program’s mission, goals, and objectives are publicly available on the program’s webpage and have been fully contextualized in the different elements of Standard I, above. The mission statement was adopted in 2015 and has been our touchstone during this accreditation period. It is aligned with the college and university missions and sets the tone for the MLIS program.

Standard I.4.1
The evaluation of program goals and objectives involves those served: students, faculty, employers, alumni, and other constituents.

When we resume our new planning cycle - interrupted by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on our institution, our students, and our stakeholders - we will revisit our mission and goals. We will return to the data collected from our stakeholders in 2019 and will use the 2022-2023 Comprehensive Program Review process to engage our various stakeholders in a holistic look at our program in its entirety.

In preparation for resuming the planning cycle and beginning the CPR, the MLIS program will participate in a college-wide initiative to reinvigorate the different program advisory boards. In Summer 2021, the COEHS dean charged each department head with encouraging each program in their department to schedule a meeting of their existing advisory board or build a new group and meet with them in Fall 2021. Each advisory group will be asked if the program’s graduates are meeting their needs and what the program needs to do to better prepare its graduates to meet the needs of the constituents the advisory board members represent.

Every year our program objectives are assessed in terms of student learning outcomes and our nine student learning outcomes are reviewed for continuing relevance to the needs of our constituents. Student performance informs all review of the SLOAs and is documented in each semester’s review process. Student representatives engage with ongoing planning through their participation in monthly faculty and curriculum committee meetings.

Students have had indirect input into ongoing program planning through the advising process. As an example, students regularly asked their faculty advisors if they had to “declare a track” and commit to taking their electives in one of the listed areas of specialization. The program’s curriculum was organized into tracks that aligned with different areas of practice: Reference, Management, Cataloging, Technology, and Youth Services. Students regularly expressed anxiety over having to commit to a track, and faculty regularly had to remind their advisees that the tracks were planning tools, not program requirements given that the tracks do not appear on student transcripts.

Faculty discussed the problems the term ‘tracks’ was causing for the students and developed the concept of recasting the curriculum tracks as areas of interest. This change in positioning of the existing information was pilot tested in Academic Year 20 and student response to the change in the labeling of the program’s organization of its electives has been uniformly positive. The organization of the curriculum into areas of interest for student planning purposes has been
updated on the program’s website and will be published in the Academic Year 2021-2022 graduate catalog. This change should allow students to plan coherent programs of study without worrying about whether they are restricted to just one area of the curriculum for their course selections.

Faculty articulate their goals in their annual faculty activity reports (FAR), which they submit each February. In their FARs, faculty list their previous year’s goals for teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development, report on their progress and accomplishments, and set new goals for the coming year. Typically, the faculty’s goals are individual and refer to their specific, teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development initiatives. Their priorities are aligned with those of the university as the university and college priorities inform all faculty evaluation processes and all personnel actions.

Employer input is collected via a set of survey questions that ask how well our graduates perform administrative functions, provide effective public service, perform library technical services, use existing and emerging technologies effectively, integrate relevant research, and demonstrate professionalism in the context of their work in libraries or information centers.

**Standard I.5**
The program has explicit, documented evidence of its ongoing decision-making processes and the data to substantiate the evaluation of the program’s success in achieving its mission, goals and objectives.

Faculty and curriculum committee meetings are held monthly. The curriculum committee usually meets the week before the general faculty meeting so that it can make the most current report possible to the faculty. Faculty and curriculum committee minutes are kept in the department office (available in Appendix I.D), and summaries of faculty meeting outcomes are published on the program’s website.

All curriculum review and revision processes are documented in Curriculum Committee minutes and reports are filed with them (Appendix II.C). They have been submitted to COA with the relevant Biennial Reports.

The assessment committee meets early in the fall and spring semesters. Full minutes and data documenting student performance on the SLOAs are maintained as evidence of how the SLOA results inform program decisions (Appendix II.A). Detailed reports have been submitted to COA with the relevant Biennial Reports and are published on the program’s outcomes webpage. Findings from selected SLOAs and evidence of how they are used to improve the curriculum are reported to the university assessment committee via the Institutional Effectiveness Reporting and Planning processes. Copies of the reports are included in the Appendix I.E of this self-study.

Results of constituent group surveys are analyzed and trends or problem areas are noted and addressed. Aggregated stakeholder survey results are published on the program’s outcomes webpage and updated annually. Employer, alumni, graduating student, and fieldwork supervisor surveys are located in Appendices II.D.1-4.

Annual Faculty Activity Reports and evaluations are completed, reviewed, and acted upon each
year. Copies are kept in the department and the originals are forwarded to the college dean and the provost.

Summary reports from each *Talk to Dr. Most* student forum are published in the [SOLIS Newsletter](#) so that all students can benefit from the answers to the questions their colleagues asked during the actual sessions.

**Standard I.6**
The program demonstrates how the results of the evaluation are systematically used to improve the program and to plan for the future.

Teaching is assessed continuously as students complete a variety of assessment measures including coursework, SOIs and SLOAs. These performance measures provide the backbone for program improvement and planning as:

- The program collects and aggregates the SLOA scoring data to show the percentage of students who have met or exceeded pre-set minimums for each SLOA. Results of these measures are reviewed and acted upon, thereby

- Providing evidence of achievement of program goals or areas of concern that can be used to improve the program and plan for the future.

- Constituent groups complete a series of surveys in which each group evaluates graduates’ ability to meet the program’s objectives in the context of the workplace. Results are reviewed and any areas of concern are reported to the faculty to address through curriculum or other program improvements.

- Faculty report their teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development activities annually and are evaluated on the accomplishment of their goals. Results of faculty evaluations are used to improve the program’s teaching and contributions to scholarship and service.
Standard II: Curriculum

Standard II.1
The curriculum is based on goals and objectives, and evolves in response to an ongoing systematic planning process involving representation from all constituencies. Within this general framework, the curriculum provides, through a variety of educational experiences, for the study of theory, principles, practice, and legal and ethical issues and values necessary for the provision of service in libraries and information agencies and in other contexts. The curriculum is revised regularly to keep it current.

The Valdosta State University (VSU) Department of Library and Information Studies offers one degree, the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS), delivered asynchronously through the D2L Brightspace learning management system, which VSU has branded as BlazeVIEW. The VSU MLIS degree program (the program) requires the completion of 39 credit hours (13 courses).

All students must complete a core curriculum of six required courses (the core curriculum) and one collection development course that meets the core curriculum collection development course requirement (21 credits):

- MLIS 7000: Foundations of Library and Information Science
- MLIS 7100: Information Sources and Services
- MLIS 7200: Management of Libraries and Information Centers
- MLIS 7300: Organization of Information
- MLIS 7700: Research Methods
- MLIS 7800: Capstone

- Core Curriculum Collection Development Course: One course from those that fulfill the core curriculum collection development requirement (see Standard II.1 at A Variety of Educational Experiences (page 48) and Table II.2)

For the balance of their coursework (six elective courses, 18 credits), students choose from a wide range of elective courses.

To graduate from the program, students must demonstrate mastery of entry-level professional knowledge and skills by:

- Completion of the degree with a grade point average of 3.0 or better and a grade of B or better in all core courses; and
- Completion of MLIS 7800 Capstone course requirements, including a final paper, a presentation of the paper, and a professional portfolio.

The program approaches curriculum development with a focus on continual and systematic improvement, using multiple data inputs including program evaluation outcomes, instructor evaluation of student opinion of learning surveys, and stakeholder surveys.

The curriculum is described in detail in Standard II.2.

Students are encouraged to develop programs of study early in their tenure. The curriculum is
structured around six optional areas of interest (formerly called optional tracks, see Standard II.1 at *From Curriculum Tracks to Areas of Interest*, page 52) that help guide students in selecting their courses around their individual personal and professional interests and goals. Students may plan their programs of study around one or more optional areas of interest mapped in the [VSU Graduate Catalog](https://www.valdosta.edu/graduate/catalog/) or plan a general program of study that supports their professional interests.

### Measures to Assure Alignment of the Curriculum with Program Goals

The program has held to two overall goals for the majority of the current accreditation cycle:

1. Prepare library and information practitioners to be successful in entry-level professional positions in academic, public and special libraries.
2. To make program-related decisions to improve the quality of the graduates, program, and better serve stakeholders through the ongoing cyclical use of data gathered and analyzed via the assessment system.

Prior to 2015, the second program goal was less descriptive. It was modified to emphasize program quality and service to stakeholders. The Program Goal #2 used for academic years 2013-2014 through 2014-2015 is included below for reference:

Prior Program Goal 2. Use data gathered and analyzed through the assessment system to make program-related decisions.

### MLIS Program Mission

The program’s mission, approved by the Department of Library and Information Studies Advisory Board in [April 2015, Advisory Board Minutes](https://www.valdosta.edu/graduate/catalog/) (Appendix I.C).

The Department of Library and Information Studies at Valdosta State University educates a diverse community of online learners in the core competencies and values of the library and information professions, provides students with learning opportunities in traditional and emerging information environments, and prepares graduates to serve in a rapidly changing information society.

The overall program goals are supported by four program objectives (POs), which are mapped to the [ALA’s eight Core Competences of Librarianship (2009)](https://www.ala.org/ala/mgrap/publications/standardspolicies/2009-standards-policies/la-accreditation-standards/la-accreditation-standards-core-competences.cfm):

- **Program Objective 1**: Perform administrative, service, and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers by demonstrating skills in information resources, reference and user services, administration and management, and organization of recorded knowledge and information (ALA Core Competences 1, 2, 3, 5, 8).
- **Program Objective 2**: Use existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers (ALA Core Competence 4).
- **Program Objective 3**: Integrate relevant research to enhance their work in libraries and information centers (ALA Core Competence 6).
• **Program Objective 4:** Demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists. (ALA Core Competence 7).

The program’s success at meeting its goals and objectives is measured through the analysis of the outcomes of four student learning outcome assessments (SLOAs) mapped to the four program objectives (POs) as well as the ALA Standards (2015) and Core Competences (2009) as shown in Table II.1.

**Table II.1**

*Alignment of POs to SLOAs, Performance Points, ALA Standards and ALA Core Competences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PO</th>
<th>SLOA</th>
<th>Performance Points</th>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1 Applied Library Experience Notebook (ALEN)</td>
<td>Journals Analysis (MLIS 7000)</td>
<td>II.1, II.2 II.2.1</td>
<td>1A, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1J, 2A, 2B, 5B, 5D, 6B, 6C, 6I, 4A, 5A, 5C, 5B, 5D 5E, 5F, 7C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reference Consultation Project (MLIS 7100)</td>
<td>II.1, II.2 II.2.1</td>
<td>I1, 4A, 5A, 5C, 5B, 5D 5E, 5F, 7C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Management Client Report (MLIS 7200)</td>
<td>II.1, II.2 II.2.1</td>
<td>1E, 1F, 1J, 6B, 6C, 8C, 8D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Original Cataloging Project (MLIS 7300)</td>
<td>II.1, II.2 II.2.1</td>
<td>3A, 3B, 3C, 1J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Collection Development Project (CDP)</td>
<td>CDP (MLIS 7400, MLIS 7420, MLIS 7421, MLIS 7423, or MLIS 7440)</td>
<td>II.1, II.2 II.2.1</td>
<td>1I, 1J, 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, 8A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1 Reference Transaction Assessment Project</td>
<td>Delivery of Resources (MLIS 7100)</td>
<td>II.2.4</td>
<td>4A, 5G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethics &amp; Service Norms (MLIS 7100)</td>
<td>II.2.4</td>
<td>4B, 5G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Users With Exceptional Needs (MLIS 7100)</td>
<td>II.2.4</td>
<td>4A, 4B, 5G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explaining Concepts (MLIS 7100)</td>
<td>II.2.3</td>
<td>4A, 5D, 5E, 5G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Organization of Digital Resources</td>
<td>Organization of Digital Resources (MLIS 7300)</td>
<td>II.2.3, II.2.4</td>
<td>1J, 3A, 3B, 3C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Career e-Portfolio Website</td>
<td>Career e-Portfolio Website</td>
<td>I.2, I.2.7 II.2.2, II.2.3</td>
<td>4A, 4B, 4C, 4D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Research Project</td>
<td>Research Project (MLIS 7700)</td>
<td>I.2.3, I.2.4, I.2.1, II.2.2, II.2.5, II.2.7</td>
<td>II, 6A, 6B, 6C, 8C, 7D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1 MLIS Foundational Knowledge Articulation Assessment</td>
<td>Foundational Knowledge Articulation Assessment (MLIS 7000)</td>
<td>I.2.1-3, I.2.5-10 II.2, II.2.3-7</td>
<td>1A-1K, 3A, 4A-C 5A, 8B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 Ethics Project Report</td>
<td>Ethics Project Report (MLIS 7000)</td>
<td>I.2.2 I.2.3, I.4, II.2.7</td>
<td>1A-C, 1E-H, 1J- K, 7A, 8D, 8E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 Selected Capstone Artifacts</td>
<td>Résumé or CV (MLIS 7800)</td>
<td>I.2.1, II.2.1, IV.5.6</td>
<td>II, 4A, 7A, 8B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development Plan (MLIS 7800)</td>
<td>I.2.1, I.2.2, I.2.8 II.2.1, II.2.7</td>
<td>7A, 7B, 7D, 8C, 8D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Webinar (MLIS 7800)</td>
<td>I.2.1, I.2.4, II.2.2</td>
<td>7A, 7B, 7D, 8C, 8D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SLOAs are housed in the program’s six core courses and the collection development elective courses. The program’s success at achieving its objectives is measured through the analysis of aggregated student performance results in the SLOAs. The SLOAs are scored as Exceeds Expectations (90% successful completion of relevant elements of course assignments), Meets Expectations (80% successful completion of relevant elements of course assignments), Below Expectations (performance below 80% on relevant elements), or Did Not Submit, and these scores are derived from the summative elements of the assignment rubrics that are applied during course-level assessments of student learning. Summary outcome assessment results are published on the MLIS website on the VSU MLIS Student Performance of ALA’s Core Competences webpage. See Appendix II.A for the SLOA Outcomes for the current accreditation period.

Program Objective 1

The program’s success at achieving PO 1 is measured through analysis of student performance on all elements of the Applied Library Experience Notebook (ALEN, SLOA 1.1) and the Collection Development Project (CDP, SLOA 1.2).

SLOA 1.1 requires students to prepare the ALEN, a collection of four elements that document field work and simulations of field work conducted across four core courses in the MLIS program. Successful completion of these four field experiences or simulations demonstrates the effectiveness of the program in preparing students to perform professional level work in libraries or information centers. The ALEN includes:

- Element 1: LIS Journals Analysis Project (MLIS 7000)
- Element 2: Reference Consultation Project (MLIS 7100)
- Element 3: Management Client Report (MLIS 7200)
- Element 4: Original Cataloging Project (MLIS 7300)

The work may be conducted in conjunction with working information professionals and is completed under the supervision of professors or course instructors.

In order to provide multiple and varied field experiences or simulations of field experiences, and to evaluate the way in which the mastery of elements is demonstrated, this assessment records program performance over time and across multiple core courses. The LIS Journals Analysis project is housed in MLIS 7000, the Reference Consultation Project is housed in MLIS 7100, the Management Client Report project is housed in MLIS 7200, and the Original Cataloging Project is housed in MLIS 7300. Complete course descriptions are provided in Appendix II.B, MLIS Program Course Descriptions and the general alignment of courses is outlined in Standard II.2 subsection Program Structure, page 57.

SLOA 1.2 requires students to prepare the Collection Development Project (CDP), a simulation exercise to evaluate and select materials for a subject area in a library and to develop plans for continued management of the materials. This project provides data on student performance of the administrative services and technical functions of professional practice in libraries and information centers. The CDP simulates the process of building a collection using
core knowledge and skills that can be contextualized to a number of curricular areas. The assessment is housed in a set of electives that fulfill the program’s collection development requirement. The **Standard II.1** subsection *A Variety of Educational Experiences* (page 48) discusses the CDP and includes Table II.2, where the elective courses that include content and assignments meeting the requirements for SLOA 1.2 are listed.

**Program Objective 2**
The program’s success at achieving PO 2 is measured through analysis of student performance on elements of the Reference Transaction Assessment (RTA, SLOA 2.1), Organization of Digital Resources (SLOA 2.2) and the Career e-Portfolio Website (SLOA 2.3)

For **SLOA 2.1**, the **Reference Transaction Assessment (RTA)** is a simulation in which students receive questions typical of reference transactions that require online searches in order to locate answers. Students must prepare and post answers to hypothetical clients in a format consistent with an online question and answer service. Seeking information on these queries requires that students devise search strategies consistent with the way in which the electronic resources organize content. Students convert their answer documents to html format in order to submit the results of their information searches. The assessment includes scoring that reflects the students’ ability to understand and implement rapidly changing information access and organizational technologies and follow professional ethics and service norms in the context of the information delivery environment. SLOA 2.1 is housed in MLIS 7100.

**SLOA 2.2**, the **Organization of Digital Resources** Assessment is housed in an assignment in which students work on analyzing and evaluating digital collections by identifying user information needs, subject access, and metadata schemes. Students choose one *Library of Congress digital collection*. The assessment includes scoring that reflects the students’ ability to respond to the rapidly changing technological environment in which information is organized and made accessible. SLOA 2.2 is housed in MLIS 7300.

**SLOA 2.3**, the **Career e-Portfolio Website**, evaluates students’ ability to create an e-portfolio and provides evidence of the program’s effectiveness in preparing its students to use commercial software to design and develop a digital product. Each student creates a web-based e-portfolio that includes multiple elements (e.g., introduction, hyperlinked table of contents, résumé, professional development plan, etc.).

The assessment includes scoring that reflects students’ ability to use software products to present information in the online environment. SLOA 2.3 is housed in MLIS 7800.
Program Objective 3
The program’s success at achieving PO 3 is measured by students’ ability to (1) interpret and evaluate the research of others so that they may apply those findings in their professional practice; (2) maintain currency of knowledge of the field through their use of the professional literature; (3) contribute to the professional literature; and (4) perform research in furtherance of their duties. Introductory skills needed to conduct research as well as evaluate the research of others in multiple disciplines including library and information science are evaluated through the process of proposal development. Through Spring 2020 this outcome was measured based on performance on the preparation of a Research Proposal (SLOA 3). The Research Proposal was a task that demonstrated an important student learning outcome and measured students’ ability to integrate relevant research to enhance work in libraries and information centers. In Summer 2020, as part of our work in continual improvement, a more comprehensive project in which students completed a full small research project was tested, along with a revised assessment (SLOA 3, Research Artifacts). Modifications to the assessment were piloted in Fall 2020. The faculty approved the results of the pilot test, and the research project modification will be continued. SLOA 3 is housed in MLIS 7700.

Program Objective 4
The program’s success at achieving PO 4 is measured through analysis of student performance on the Foundational Knowledge Assessment (SLOA 4.1), the Ethics Project Report (SLOA 4.2), and the Career E-Portfolio (SLOA 4.3).

SLOA 4.1, the MLIS Foundational Knowledge Assessment, also referred to as the Foundations Module Essays effective 2019-2020, ensures that the program’s students receive broad exposure to the foundational concepts that inform the Library and Information Science (LIS) field during their first semester of study. Through the work informing this assessment students begin to construct a personal intellectual infrastructure that they will build on as they develop into LIS professionals. In response to prompts assigned during the course, students write a series of essays addressing foundational concepts of the field. The essays serve to document the students’ introduction to the field and their development of an initial theoretical framework they will build on during the balance of their LIS coursework. SLOA 4.1 is housed in MLIS 7000.

SLOA 4.2, the Ethics Project Report, assigned in the first semester of study, allows students to develop and demonstrate their understanding of the role of professional ethics in their careers, and provides them with an orientation to the ethical frameworks they will need to employ when making professional decisions. The report is developed as a group project, allowing students to learn the negotiating and collaborating skills they will need as working professionals. The project introduces students to the role of professional associations as the negotiators and keepers of codes of ethics for their members. The assessment measures the students’ ability to work in groups to explore, analyze, and reflect upon the role of codes of ethics in professional practice. The report includes the students’ self-assessment of their ability to comply with codes of ethics that fall outside their personal belief systems. SLOA 4.2 is housed in MLIS 7000.

SLOA 4.3, Selected Capstone Artifacts, gives students an opportunity to present their synthesized knowledge, writing, and presentation skills, and create a professional development
plan. Elements of the e-portfolio include a résumé or CV, a professional development plan, and a recorded webinar that showcases students’ expertise on a topic in library and information science and their ability to communicate their knowledge. The webinar replaces a paper and presentation that had been required for the assessment prior to Summer 2020. In Summer 2020 this change was piloted as part of our efforts toward continual improvement and with a goal of developing a project that focuses on skills needed for work in all types of libraries. SLOA 4.3 is housed in MLIS 7800.

Table II.1 maps POs to related SLOAs, course performance points (assignments), ALA Accreditation Standards (2015), and ALA Core Competences (2009). Individual standards and competences are addressed by multiple performance points, which provides a holistic view of each and enhances program outcomes.

The use of SLOA outcomes to inform curricular evaluation is described in Standard II.4, under the sub-header *Procedures for the continual evaluation of the curriculum...* (page 77).

*...an ongoing systematic planning process involving representation from all constituencies.*

**The Curriculum Committee**

The Curriculum Committee has responsibility for the development and review of the curriculum and reports to the faculty and to the department head, who builds the schedule and assigns faculty to the scheduled courses each semester. The committee is chaired by a faculty member who holds the position for two to three years to ensure continuity of the work. The composition of the curriculum committee is intended to provide balance in representing facets of the curriculum and to support current priorities in curriculum development and review. The committee membership includes one student representative. The curriculum committee meets monthly during the fall and spring semesters to conduct its work (monthly meetings may be cancelled if there is no business to conduct, and ad hoc meetings may be called if necessary). Curriculum Committee meeting minutes for the current accreditation period can be reviewed in Appendix II.C.

**Curriculum Review**

Curriculum reviews are conducted to ensure that course offerings remain aligned with (1) the program’s goals and objectives, (2) the findings from the systematic analysis of the Student Learning Outcome Assessments; and (3) the most current and relevant professional standards and outcomes measures. Under the general oversight of the Curriculum Committee, the faculty member responsible for guiding the review of a core course or track (now referred to as areas of interest) assures the input of stakeholders and experts in the subject area (e.g., practitioners, faculty from other schools, and alumni) while consulting relevant professional standards to determine the scope and content of the course, or the track and the courses it encompasses. Faculty who conduct reviews are subject specialists for that area. Course and track reviews are conducted on a rotating schedule. In addition to larger curriculum reviews, faculty who teach individual courses are responsible for updating their courses on a regular basis; see **Standard III.7 Faculty assignments relate to the needs of the program and to the competencies of individual faculty members** (page 108) for more information on faculty curriculum maintenance.
responsibilities. **Standard II.5** (page 77) provides a discussion of the systematic curriculum review process and **Standard II.1** under the sub-header *The curriculum is revised regularly to keep it current* (page 49) presents details of the curriculum actions taken during the accreditation period.

The faculty as a whole meet as the Assessment Committee twice each year to review the outcomes from the application of the SLOA rubrics to assess how well the program is meeting its objectives. Meetings are held in January to review fall semester outcomes and in August or early September to review spring and summer semester outcomes. See **Standard I.5** (pages 39-40) for information and detail.

**A Variety of Educational Experiences**
The program requires all students to complete 13 courses (39 credits). Seven courses are required, including six core courses and one collection development requirement. The balance of a student’s program of study is selected from a range of electives according to the student’s interests and professional goals.

The core courses and (3 hours each) include:

- MLIS 7000: *Foundations of Library and Information Science*
- MLIS 7100: *Information Sources and Services*
- MLIS 7200: *Management of Libraries and Information Centers*
- MLIS 7300: *Organization of Information*
- MLIS 7700: *Research Methods*
- MLIS 7800: *Capstone*

Students may select from a list of electives that are designated as fulfilling the collection development requirement. Each of these courses includes an assignment that is evaluated to fulfil SLOA 1.2 (Collection Development Project). As part of the program’s efforts toward continual improvement, the set of courses that fulfills SLOA 1.2 has been revised twice during the accreditation period (**Table II.2**).
Table II.2  
Electives that Fulfill the Collection Development Requirement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Reason for Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AY 2013-2014 to AY 2016-2017</td>
<td>MLIS 7130 Humanities Information, MLIS 7150 Social Science Information, MLIS 7400 Collection Development, MLIS 7420 Literature for Children, MLIS 7440 Electronic Resources in Libraries</td>
<td>MLIS 7130 and MLIS 7150 delisted and decision made to restrict assessment to MLIS 7400 and MLIS 7440 to assure consistent learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2017-2018 to AY 2019-2020</td>
<td>MLIS 7400 Collection Development, MLIS 7440 Electronic Resources in Libraries</td>
<td>Decision made to revise youth services literature courses to include content to meet or exceed the standards and competences assessed by SLOA 1.2 thereby serving the needs of students focused on youth services by increasing focus on collection development practices for materials meeting the needs of children and young adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2020-2021 to Present</td>
<td>MLIS 7400 Collection Development, MLIS 7420 Literature for Children, MLIS 7421 Multicultural Youth Literature, MLIS 7423 Literature for Young Adults, MLIS 7440 Electronic Resources in Libraries</td>
<td>Reason given for change at this time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The core courses and the collection development requirement address different facets of the “basic knowledge to be possessed by all persons graduating from an ALA-accredited master’s program in library and information studies” (http://www.al.org/educationcareers/sites/ala.org.educationcareers/files/content/careers/corecompetences/finalcorecompstat09.pdf). Student mastery of the core competences of librarianship is measured through the SLOAs. The alignment of the contents of the core courses and the collection development requirement with the Competences of Librarianship ensures that the program meets **Standard II.1**.

The large selection of elective courses provides a wide range of additional educational experiences. Students can take courses to further their knowledge of core subjects, to explore new areas of study, and to pursue experiential learning. See **Standard II.2** for information on the curriculum.

**The curriculum is revised regularly to keep it current.**

The program’s curriculum has evolved as new trends in practice have surfaced, as faculty members have updated the courses in their areas of expertise, as student interest in an area of practice has grown or diminished, and as we have conducted systematic curriculum reviews. This evolution reflects the program’s commitment to continual improvement regarding the scope of course content and the best way to deliver that content. Curricular revision is grounded in the connection to ALA accreditation standards and the core competences, as well as the input of stakeholders and subject area experts. See **Standard II.5** under the sub-header *The curriculum is continually evaluated...* (pages 78-80) for details and information.

**Curriculum Reviews**

As part of the program’s work in continual improvement, four optional tracks and two core
courses were reviewed and revised during the current accreditation period.

- **Technology Optional Track Review**: A full review of the optional track in technology was conducted during Spring 2014 through Spring 2015 based on stakeholder feedback from the employer, alumni, and graduating student surveys. The following curriculum changes were made based on the outcomes of the review:
  - MLIS 7996 *Essential Technologies* was added as a special topics course, then added to the curriculum as MLIS 7510 *Essential Technologies in Libraries*.
  - MLIS 7500 *Computer Applications* was delisted in favor of MLIS 7510 *Essential Technologies in Libraries*.
  - MLIS 7540 *Integrated Library Management Systems* was added as a regular course.
  - MLIS 7550 *Library Systems & Automation* was delisted in favor of MLIS 7540 *Integrated Library Management Systems*.
  - MLIS 7505 *Applied Technologies in Library Practice* was delisted in favor of MLIS 7510 *Essential Technologies in Libraries*.

- **Reference Sources and Services Optional Track Review**: A full review of the optional track in reference sources and services was conducted in 2016. The following curriculum changes were made based on the outcomes of the review:
  - MLIS 7130 *Humanities Information* and MLIS 7150 *Social Science Information* were delisted in favor of MLIS 7140 *Advanced Reference*, which covers both topics.
  - MLIS 7140 *Advanced Reference*, first offered as a special topics course, was added as a regular course and was scheduled to be offered every fall semester.
  - MLIS 7430 *Information Literacy* was revised to focus on library instruction and renamed *Information Literacy Instruction*.
  - MLIS 7180 *Library Services for Patrons with Special Needs* was revised to focus on needs of all diverse patrons and scheduled to be offered biennially in fall semesters.
  - The reference sources and services track (now the reference sources and services area of interest) was revised to include seven possible courses.

- **Library Management Optional Track Review**: A full review of the optional track in library management was conducted in 2016 and 2017. The following curriculum changes were made based on the outcomes of the review:
  - MLIS 7280 *Community Building*, first offered as a special topics course, was added to the catalog.
  - MLIS 7290 *Project Management for Libraries*, first offered as a special topics course, was added to the catalog.
  - MLIS 7270 *Information Management* was delisted. This course was cross listed with PADM 7110 *Information Management* (Public Administration), but no MLIS students had registered for it in the several years prior to the review and the
course was deemed to not align with the outcomes of the track review.

- **MLIS 7700 course review**: A review of the core course MLIS 7700 *Research Methods* was conducted from Fall 2018 - Fall 2019 to determine whether, and to what extent, the course should be refreshed. The standalone course review was conducted because MLIS 7700 is a core course that is not included in an optional track (area of interest) and would not otherwise be reviewed. The following changes were made to MLIS 7700 based on the review:
  - A new data analysis assignment was developed based on input from Georgia library deans and directors.
  - Three assignments were replaced with two new types of formative assignments:
    - readings quizzes to support students in learning the material and encourage them to read the textbook; and
    - quantitative and qualitative article critiques focused on assessing research methodology and article quality.
  - The course review recommended changes to the research proposal assignment, which were implemented for the Spring 2020 semester. However, work on the course continued in concert with a reassessment of aspects of MLIS 7800 *Capstone*. Based on this work, the research proposal was replaced beginning in Summer 2020 with a set of assignments that walk students through conducting a small research project. This revision came out of a decision to focus the course on evidence-based library and information practice and build student understanding of the importance of research in all types of libraries. In addition, the MLIS 7700 research proposal had previously been aligned to the MLIS 7800 *Capstone* paper requirement. With the changes to MLIS 7800 *Capstone* (see below), this is no longer the case and the research project in MLIS 7700 is now students’ opportunity to conduct research.

- **Cataloging and Classification Optional Track Review**: A review of the cataloging and classification track was completed during the previous accreditation period in the 2012-2013 academic year. Revisions to the track were scheduled to be made but the faculty member in charge of the review did not implement those changes. That faculty member left the program at the end of the 2017-18 academic year. With the hiring of a new faculty member with expertise in this area of practice, some of the recommendations were implemented in MLIS 7300 *Organization of Information* in Summer 2018 and more extensive changes to the track were made during Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. These revisions aligned the courses with current standards and best practices. The following changes were made to bring the cataloging and classification courses up to current standards:
  - MLIS 7310 (formerly *Introduction to Descriptive Cataloging*) was revised, and the name was changed to *Introduction to Metadata for Catalogers* to recognize
changes in the course.
  o MLIS 7330 (formerly Metadata and Advanced Cataloging) was revised, and the name was changed to Advanced Metadata to recognize changes in the course.
  o MLIS 7355 (formerly Subject Cataloging and Classification) was revised, and the name was changed to Cataloging and Classification to recognize changes in the course.

- **MLIS 7800 Capstone**: In late spring 2020 the faculty member teaching MLIS 7800 conducted a review of exit courses in peer programs. Based on the results of that review, in Summer 2020 several changes were implemented to provide a focus on synthesizing students’ learning from their courses and to align the course with needs of students in all types of libraries. These changes were made in consultation with other members of the faculty who have taught MLIS 7800 and include:
  o Enhancements to job hunting materials development including requiring submission of a second draft of the resume and a vision essay for the career development plan.
  o The ePortfolio required for graduation has been enhanced to include a set of student reflections on MLIS course assignments.
  o An assignment in which students develop a webinar in an area of professional interest replaced the capstone paper. Decreasing numbers of students were interested in, or ready to implement, the research proposal they had developed in MLIS 7700. The webinar assignment allows students to research and develop a presentation introducing a product or tool that might be used in any type of library while demonstrating expertise in their area of interest. Because all students now implement a small research project in MLIS 7700 these changes constitute an overall enhancement to students’ research activities and program expectations.

Appendix II.C, Curriculum Committee Minutes, includes reports and documents summarizing the areas of interest (formerly tracks) and course reviews and changes.

**From Curriculum Tracks to Areas of Interest**

As described at Standard I.4.1, students have input into shaping the curriculum, in this case, through the advising process. Over the years, students have consistently asked their advisors if they have to “declare a track” when planning their programs of study and thereby commit to taking their electives in one area of specialization. Since its founding, the program’s curriculum has been organized into tracks or concentrations that align with different areas of practice: Reference, Management, Cataloging, Technology, and Youth Services, as has been mentioned earlier in this chapter in the context of systematic curriculum review. Students regularly expressed anxiety over having to commit to a track and faculty regularly had to remind their advisees that the tracks are planning tools, not program requirements, and do not appear on student transcripts, nor are they required to complete the degree requirements.

Faculty discussed the problems the term ‘tracks’ was causing for students and explored the
concept of recasting the curriculum tracks as *areas of interest*. The organization of the curriculum and degree requirements would not change in any way. The only change would be in the labeling of the existing curriculum’s structure and concentrations. The new *areas of interest* language was pilot tested in MLIS 7000 *Foundations* in Academic Year 2019-20 and the student response to the change in the labeling of the concentrations has been uniformly positive. A catalog change request to reflect this new labeling was submitted early in 2021 to update the language in the Graduate Catalog and was accepted. Once the catalog change request was approved, the program’s website and advising materials were updated and the program’s elective courses are now organized into optional areas of interest. The Graduate Catalog for Academic Year 2021-2022 has been published and it reflects the new language. This change in the labeling of the curriculum should allow students to plan coherent programs of study without worrying about whether they are restricted to selecting their electives from just one area of specialization. The curriculum’s optional areas of interest are published on the program’s webpages and in the graduate catalog with the following text as the header. The area of interest course lists are presented in Table II.3.

**Optional Areas of Interest**
The MLIS Program has developed *optional Areas of Interest* in Cataloging & Classification, Library Management, Reference Sources & Services, Technology, Youth Services, and Special Libraries, Archives or Conservation Librarianship. These lists have been constructed to help students select courses that have been identified as beneficial in LIS professional positions in each of the areas. These lists can be used as a starting point for constructing their program of study and adapted to meet individual interests, experiences or expertise, or areas where students want to enhance current or develop new areas of expertise.

**Table II.3**
MLIS Curriculum Optional Areas of Interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7300</td>
<td>Organization of Information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7310</td>
<td>Introduction to Metadata for Catalogers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7330</td>
<td>Metadata and Advanced Cataloging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7355</td>
<td>Cataloging and Classification</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7360</td>
<td>Indexing, Abstracting &amp; Thesaurus Construction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cataloging and Classification - courses that may be of interest include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7200</td>
<td>Management of Libraries &amp; Information Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7210</td>
<td>Academic Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7220</td>
<td>Public Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7222</td>
<td>Adult Services in Public Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7230</td>
<td>Special Libraries &amp; Information Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7240</td>
<td>Marketing Library Services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7250</td>
<td>Human Resources Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7260</td>
<td>Leadership in Libraries and Information Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7280</td>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7290</td>
<td>Project Management for Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Library Management - courses that may be of interest include:**
Curriculum Changes
During the current accreditation period the program made numerous changes to the curriculum based on reviews of best practices, stakeholder input, and student interest. A track was deleted and a new optional area of interest was developed, new courses were developed and courses were revised, and several courses were delisted. Table II.4 contains a timeline of MLIS curriculum actions during the current accreditation period. Changes grouped by type of action include:

Reference Sources and Services - courses that may be of interest include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7100</td>
<td>Information Sources &amp; Services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7110</td>
<td>Online Searching</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7120</td>
<td>Government Information Services</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7125</td>
<td>Genealogy for Librarians</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7140</td>
<td>Advanced Reference</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7430</td>
<td>Information Literacy Instruction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technology - courses that may be of interest include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7330</td>
<td>Metadata and Advanced Cataloging</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7440</td>
<td>Electronic Resources in Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7510</td>
<td>Essential Technologies in Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7520</td>
<td>Database Design for Information Professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7540</td>
<td>Integrated Library Management Systems</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7570</td>
<td>Information Architecture</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7580</td>
<td>Digital Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth Services Librarianship - courses that may be of interest include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7220</td>
<td>Public Libraries</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7420</td>
<td>Literature for Children</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7421</td>
<td>Multicultural Youth Literature</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7422</td>
<td>Programming for Children and Young Teens</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7423</td>
<td>Literature for Young Adults</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7425</td>
<td>Youth Electronic Resources</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Libraries, Archives, or Conservation Librarianship – courses that may be of interest include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number</th>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7230</td>
<td>Special Libraries and Information Centers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7310</td>
<td>Introduction to Metadata for Catalogers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7330</td>
<td>Advanced Metadata</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7520</td>
<td>Database Design for Information Professionals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7710</td>
<td>Archival Theory and Issues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7330</td>
<td>Preservation Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7740</td>
<td>Rare Book Librarianship</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Action Taken</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **AY 2013 - 2014** | • MLIS 7330 renamed Metadata and Advanced Cataloging (formerly Cataloging the Web)  
• MLIS 7350 Advanced Cataloging delisted; content integrated into MLIS 7355 Subject Cataloging and Classification  
• MLIS 7355 renamed Subject Cataloging and Classification (formerly Advanced Classification) |
| **AY 2014 - 2015** | • MLIS 7111 Info Retrieval in Science, Technology & Medicine delisted due to low enrollment  
• MLIS 7170 Health Science Librarianship delisted due to low enrollment  
• MLIS 7610 Information Policy added to the catalog  
• Full review of all courses in the Optional Track in Technology |
| **AY 2015 - 2016** | • MLIS 7125 Genealogy for Librarians added to the catalog (previously offered as a special topic course)  
• MLIS 7505 Applied Technologies in Library Practice delisted due to low enrollment; content integrated into MLIS 7510 Essential Technologies in Libraries  
• MLIS 7996 Essential Technologies offered as a Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences course  
• Full review of all courses in the Optional Track in Reference Sources and Services (review continued through Fall 2016) |
| **AY 2016-2017** | • MLIS 7500 Computer Applications delisted due to low enrollment; content integrated into MLIS 7510 Essential Technologies in Libraries  
• MLIS 7510 Essential Technologies added as to the catalog (previously offered as MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences)  
• MLIS 7540 Integrated Library Management Systems added to the catalog  
• MLIS 7550 Library Systems & Automation delisted due to low enrollment; content integrated into MLIS 7540 Integrated Library Management Systems  
• Full review of all courses in the Optional Track in Library Management  
• Optional Track in Health Sciences delisted due to low enrollment |
| **AY 2017-2018** | • MLIS 7130 Humanities Information and MLIS 7150 Social Science Information delisted due to low enrollment; content integrated into MLIS 7140 Advanced Reference  
• MLIS 7270 Information Management (cross listed as PADM 7110) delisted due to low enrollment  
• MLIS 7995 Advanced Reference offered as an MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences course |
| **AY 2018-2019** | • MLIS 7290 Project Management for Libraries added to the catalog (previously offered as MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences)  
• MLIS 7140 Advanced Reference added to the catalog (previously offered as a special topics course)  
• MLIS 7700 course review  
• MLIS 7999 Understanding Information Behavior offered as an MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences course  
• Cataloging and classification area courses brought into alignment with current standards |
| **AY 2019-2020** | • MLIS 7280 Community Building added as a regular course (previously offered as MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences)  
• MLIS 7310 renamed Introduction to Metadata for Catalogers (formerly Introduction to Descriptive Cataloging)  
• MLIS 7330 renamed Advanced Metadata (formerly Metadata and Advanced Cataloging)  
• MLIS 7355 renamed Cataloging and Classification (formerly Subject Cataloging and Classification)  
• MLIS 7995 Introduction to Grant Writing for Libraries offered as an MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| AY 2020 - 2021 | • MLIS 7680 Understanding Information Behavior added to the catalog (previously offered as MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences)  
• MLIS 7730 Preservation renamed Preservation Management to clarify course focus and to distinguish from MLIS 7997 Digital Preservation Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences course offered in Spring 2021  
• MLIS 7997 Digital Preservation offered as an MLIS 799X Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences course |

**Standard II.2**
The curriculum is concerned with information resources and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use. Within this overarching concept, the curriculum of library and information studies encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation and curation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis, dissemination, use and users, and management of human and information resources. The curriculum:

The MLIS program curriculum addresses information resources and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use through its six core courses and the collection development requirement. The program’s electives cover the scope of the library and information studies curriculum (Standard II.2.2) and are designed to train students to serve the needs of academic, public, and special libraries and information agencies’ patrons. The curriculum also provides education in the use of technologies to facilitate the management of libraries and information agencies.

In addition to addressing the foundational requirements for LIS curricula through the core courses, the program offers elective courses that address a wide range of aspects of the knowledge and skills expected of entry-level LIS professional degree holders in a variety of subfields of LIS. Electives are developed to support the program’s focus on preparing students for entry-level professional work in academic and public libraries, special libraries, and information centers, and electives are added, revised, and delisted to reflect program needs and professional best practices following the curriculum reviews previously described. Students choose electives in consultation with their advisors. They may choose their electives following one or more of the six areas of interest or they may design a general program of study (Standard II.3, sub-header …opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations…. pages 65 - 69).

The program’s curricular areas of interest align with the broad areas of study identified in Standard II.2 to address specialized aspects of information resources and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use. MLIS 7960 Supervised Fieldwork and MLIS 7950 Independent Study in Library and Information Science are available for students who wish to pursue further specialized experiences (Standard II.3 …experiential opportunities, and other similar activities, pages 71 - 73). Full course lists for the areas of interest are published on the MLIS program website and in the VSU Graduate Catalog. Course descriptions are also available on the MLIS program website, in the VSU Graduate Catalog and in Appendix II.B MLIS Program Course Descriptions. Current and archived syllabi are available on the program’s website.
Program Structure
Courses are numbered to indicate their general alignment by topic, although there is by necessity some break in the numbering and not all courses fit neatly into a topic area. Most topic areas are anchored by a core course. The optional areas of interest help students who are interested in topic areas to develop their programs. The change in terminology from optional tracks to areas of interest was implemented to emphasize the use of this information as a resource for program planning.

- The course numbering system begins with MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science. This course stands alone in the 70XX series.

- MLIS 71XX: Courses addressing information sources and services, and services to diverse populations. This curriculum series includes the advanced reference course and references services and skills courses. The core course in this series is MLIS 7100 *Information Sources and Services.*
  - The reference sources and services area of interest addresses the communication, identification, selection, retrieval and interpretation of recorded knowledge as applied to the information needs and characteristics of adult information seekers.

- MLIS 72XX: Courses addressing the management of libraries and information centers, the different types of libraries and information centers, and the specialized knowledge and skills library managers must develop. The core course in this series is MLIS 7200 *Management of Libraries and Information Centers.*
  - The library management area of interest encompasses the management of libraries and other information organizations, as well as the management of the people and processes the organizations employ.

- MLIS 73XX: Courses that focus on the organization of information; cataloging and classification; metadata; and indexing, abstracting, and thesaurus construction. The core course in this series is MLIS 7300 *Organization of Information.*
  - The cataloging and classification area of interest addresses skills and knowledge needed to manage the organization and description of recorded knowledge in information institutions.

- MLIS 74XX: Courses that focus on library and information center collection development and management, as well as information resources and programming for targeted populations. This range includes courses addressing resources, services and programming for children and young teens. The courses that fulfill the collection development requirement are also contained in this series.
  - The youth services librarianship area of interest addresses communication, identification, selection, and retrieval and interpretation of recorded knowledge as applied to the information needs and developmental stages of children, adolescents and young adults.
• MLIS 75XX: Courses that focus on applied information technologies as understood in the LIS discipline; these courses focus on automated systems as well as digital libraries and programming. There is no core course in this series.
  o The technology area of interest addresses digital information management and knowledge creation, digital information storage and retrieval, and the application and management of the digital technologies used to implement these processes.

• MLIS 76XX: Courses that focus on information policy, information ethics, and information behavior. There is no core course in this series.

• MLIS 77XX: This range covers research methods and courses focused on the management of archival and special collections and preservation of materials. The core course in this series is MLIS 7700 Research Methods.
  o The special libraries, archives, or conservation librarianship area of interest focuses on special collections, archives, and preservation. This area of interest was added in Spring 2021 to support the increasing number of students who wish to focus on these areas of LIS practice and reflects the program's commitment to continual improvement. Electives in this area of interest include courses in the 72XX, 75XX, and 77XX ranges, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature.

• MLIS 7800 Capstone is the culminating course in the program. It is the only course in the 78XX series.

• MLIS 79XX: This range is used for special topics courses and for structured individual projects including directed independent studies and supervised fieldwork.

The curriculum:

Standard II.2.1
Fosters development of library and information professionals who will assume a leadership role in providing services and collections appropriate for the communities that are served;

The program focuses on supporting the development of professionals who will become leaders in all types of libraries and information centers, and the curriculum emphasizes the connection of libraries and information centers to the communities they serve. The construction of the core curriculum around the ALA Core Competences and its alignment with the ALA Standards for Accreditation ensures that areas of leadership important to ALA and the library field are emphasized.

A wide range of specialized courses focused on management, leadership, and building community are offered through the library management area of interest:

• MLIS 7200 Management of Libraries and Information Centers
• MLIS 7210 Academic Libraries
- MLIS 7220 Public Libraries
- MLIS 7222 Adult Services in Public Libraries
- MLIS 7230 Special Libraries and Information Centers
- MLIS 7240 Marketing Library Services
- MLIS 7250 Human Resources Management
- MLIS 7260 Leadership in Libraries and Information Centers
- MLIS 7280 Community Building
- MLIS 7290 Project Management

The program's effectiveness in developing library and information professionals who will assume leadership roles is attested to in responses to the Employer Survey, in which respondents who agreed or strongly agreed on the program’s students' performance on administrative functions, service and programming provision, and professionalism topped 70% (Figure II.1).

**Figure II.1**
Employer Survey: Preparation of MLIS graduates and interns for entry level LIS professional positions

![Bar chart showing percentages of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed](chart.png)

Further evidence of students' preparation for leadership roles in libraries and information centers can be seen in the results of the graduating student survey, in which large majorities of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the programs prepared them to perform administrative functions, to provide services and programming, and to demonstrate professionalism are show in Table II.5. (Graduating Student Survey results, Appendix II.D.2)
Table II.5
Graduating Student Survey: Preparation to become an entry level LIS professional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Graduation Year (Summer-Spring)</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>Total Strongly Agree/Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly Agree %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...perform administrative functions effectively in a library or information center.</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...provide effective public service in a library or information center.</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...demonstrate professionalism in my work.</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stakeholder input is discussed in **Standard II.5** in sub-section *The curriculum is continually evaluated with input not only from faculty, but also representatives from those served including students, employers, alumni, and other constituents* (pages 78 – 80) and survey results are available in the [program’s website](#) and in **Appendix II.D.3**.

**Standard II.2.2**  
Emphasizes an evolving body of knowledge that reflects the findings of basic and applied research from relevant fields;  
SLOAs 3 and 4.1 provide direct evidence of the program’s emphasis on an evolving body of knowledge that reflects the findings of basic and applied research from relevant fields. These assessments are housed in two of the program’s core courses. SLOA 3 is housed in MLIS 7700 *Research Methods*. SLOA 4.1 is housed in MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science*. In addition, elective MLIS 7680 *Understanding Information Behavior* emphasizes how theory and research undergird service to library patrons.

**Standard II.2.3**  
Integrates technology and the theories that underpin its design, application, and use;  
PO 2 addresses the requirement to integrate technology and the theories that underpin its design, application, and use to meet needs in libraries and information centers. The curriculum integrates the use of technology into all courses and by delivering all its coursework through an online
learning management system. SLOAs 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 provide evidence of all students’ exposure to the theory and application of technology and of their readiness to use technology in entry level professional work in libraries and information centers. These assessments are housed in three of the program’s required core courses, MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services, MLIS 7300 Organization of Information, and MLIS 7800 Capstone. The program also offers a set of electives focused on applied technologies in libraries and information centers; and students may take individual technology courses or focus their program of study on technology. These courses cover a range of knowledge and include:

- MLIS 7510 Essential Technologies in Libraries
- MLIS 7520 Database Design for Informational Professionals
- MLIS 7540 Integrated Library Management Systems
- MLIS 7570 Information Architecture
- MLIS 7580 Digital Libraries

Other elective courses cover technology-related content within the context of other topic areas, including:

- MLIS 7310 Introduction to Metadata for Catalogers
- MLIS 7330 Advanced Metadata
- MLIS 7360 Indexing, Abstracting, and Thesaurus Construction
- MLIS 7425 Youth Electronic Resources
- MLIS 7440 Electronic Resources in Libraries
- MLIS 7997 Digital Preservation (special topic course)

The program’s effectiveness in developing library and information professionals who are technologically proficient is attested to in responses to the Employer Survey; over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program’s graduates and interns effectively performed library technical services and over 86% agreed or strongly agreed that they effectively use existing and emerging technologies to meet library needs (Figure II.2). (Employer survey results, Appendix II.D.1)
Further evidence of students' preparation for leadership roles in libraries and information centers can be seen in the results of the graduating student survey, in which large majorities of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the program prepared them to perform administrative functions, to provide services and programming, and to demonstrate professionalism. This is displayed in Table II.6.

Table II.6
Graduating Student Survey: “The VSU MLIS program prepared me to...”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Graduation Year (Summer-Spring)</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>Total Strongly Agree/Agree %</th>
<th>Strongly Agree %</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... perform library technical services effectively in a library or information center.</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>42.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... use existing and emerging technologies effectively to meet needs in a library or information center.</td>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>92.7%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standard II.2.4
Responds to the needs of a diverse and global society, including the needs of underserved groups;

The program’s curriculum addresses the needs of a diverse society, including the needs of underserved groups, in multiple core courses. Assessing student response to these needs is an aspect of SLOA 2.1 and SLOA 4.1. SLOA 2.1 includes scoring that reflects students’ ability to provide information services to users with exceptional needs. SLOA 4.1 includes scoring that assesses students’ awareness of the information needs of different service populations and the diversity of the individuals who make up those populations, as well as an awareness of the impact of images and stereotypes of information professionals on the ability to provide information services to a varied and diverse clientele.

The topics of diversity, cultural competence, and social justice are woven throughout the curriculum. For example, the elective MLIS 7421 Multicultural Youth Literature is a survey of multicultural literature for children and teenagers that emphasizes evaluation, selection and use of multicultural literature in school and public libraries. MLIS 7400 Collection Development strongly encourages students to engage with diversity, cultural competence, and social justice issues in the development and management of library collections through a specific lesson and with discussions and assignments included throughout the course. MLIS 7800 Capstone includes a discussion of diversity in libraries. Additionally, as part of the program’s continual improvement goals, MLIS 7180 Library Services for Patrons with Special Needs was redeveloped and renewed in Fall 2020.

Standard II.2.5
Provides direction for future development of a rapidly changing field;

As was noted in Standard II.1, under the sub-header The curriculum is revised regularly to keep it current, (page 49) the curriculum has evolved as new trends in practice have surfaced, reflecting the program’s commitment to continual improvement and continual evolution. The program’s core curriculum has had a stable set of learning objectives during the current accreditation period because these courses are the tentpoles that support the curriculum and ensure it is aligned with the ALA Standards for Accreditation and the ALA Core Competences. Within that framework, however, faculty continually update course content and assessments to ensure that the core reflects the rapidly changing LIS field. An example of this is MLIS 7300 Organization of Information, which is one of the core courses that addresses PO 2, the use of existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in libraries and information centers. During the current accreditation period the SLOA assessment for this PO has evolved from the Social Cataloging Technology Project assignment to the Organization of Digital Resources assignment. The current assessment includes scoring that reflects the students’ ability to respond to the rapidly changing technological environment in which information is organized and made accessible.

Elective courses are a key component of the program’s focus on the evolving field of librarianship. Eleven new electives have been added to the curriculum during the current accreditation period. These courses represent both new course topics (e.g., MLIS 7290 Program Management for Libraries and MLIS 7680 Understanding Information Needs) and refinements
in the way topics are delivered based on curriculum assessments. Changes to technology area of interest as a result of the track review illustrate this second point (see Standard II.1, under the sub-header The curriculum is revised regularly to keep it current, bullet item Technology track review (page 50).

The use of special topics courses to explore new topic areas is another example of the program's commitment to addressing the evolving nature of LIS knowledge. The fact that most of the special topics courses have been given permanent course numbers and added to catalog is a testament to their success. Table II.7 details the history of special topics courses during the current accreditation period.

Table II.7
MLIS 799X - Special Topics in Library and Information Sciences Courses Offered Academic Year 2013-2014 to Academic Year 2020-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>First Semester Offered</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genealogy</td>
<td>SU 2011</td>
<td>Added to the catalog as MLIS 7125 Genealogy for Librarians effective fall 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>SU 2012</td>
<td>Added to the catalog as MLIS 7280 effective fall 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential Technologies in Libraries</td>
<td>SP 2016</td>
<td>Added to the catalog as MLIS 7510 effective spring 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management for Libraries</td>
<td>SU 2017</td>
<td>Added to the catalog as MLIS 7290 effective summer 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Reference</td>
<td>FA 2017</td>
<td>Added to the catalog as MLIS 7140 effective fall 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Information Behavior</td>
<td>SU 2019</td>
<td>Added to the catalog as MLIS 7680 effective fall 2020; scheduled to be offered biennially in fall semesters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Grant Writing for Libraries</td>
<td>SU 2020</td>
<td>Scheduled to be offered every summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Preservation</td>
<td>FA 2020</td>
<td>Scheduled to be offered biennially in fall semesters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard II.2.6
Promotes commitment to continuous professional development and lifelong learning, including the skills and competencies that are needed for the practitioner of the future.

The MLIS’s Program Objective 4 states that students will demonstrate professionalism as librarians or information specialists. The curriculum promotes a commitment to continuous professional growth and the skills and competencies that practitioners will need in the future throughout the core courses. For example, the entry-level Foundations course (MLIS 7000) explicitly addresses the role of professional organizations throughout a professional career as well as stressing the importance of continuing professional development. Students are encouraged to join professional organizations and attend and present at professional conferences during their studies and the student ALA chapter is active and vibrant (see Standard IV.5.6, page 156).
The program formally assesses its ability to create this commitment to continuous professional growth among students through SLOAs 3, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3; housed in MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science*, 7700 *Research Methods* and 7800 *Capstone*. SLOA 3 measures the students’ commitment to continuous professional growth by assessing their abilities to learn from the professional literature and to conduct research in the course of their duties. SLOA 4.1 includes an essay in which students define professionalism based on course readings and apply their definitions to their personal career goals. SLOA 4.2 allows students to demonstrate their understanding of the role of professional ethics in their careers and provides them with an orientation to the ethical frameworks they will need to employ when making professional decisions. SLOA 4.3 documents the students’ career ePortfolios, the culminating product for the MLIS degree. It gives each student an opportunity to present their synthesized knowledge, writing skills, and presentation skills, and to create a **professional development plan** that addresses their short-term and long-term career goals and the steps they will take in support of those goals.

**Standard II.3**

The curriculum provides the opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met within the context of program requirements established by the school and that will foster the attainment of student learning outcomes. The curriculum includes as appropriate cooperative degree programs, interdisciplinary coursework and research, experiential opportunities, and other similar activities. Course content and sequence relationships within the curriculum are evident.

*…opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations…*

The design of the MLIS curriculum ensures that students build their programs of study starting with a broad base of relevant knowledge and skills, guided by the ALA *Standards* and *Core Competences*. The program also draws upon the missions and standards of other professional organizations as appropriate (see **Standard II.4**, page 75). All core courses and at least one course that fulfills the collection development requirement are offered every semester and the program strives to offer as many sections as needed to ensure that students can complete prerequisites and subsequently enroll in electives in a timely manner. Responsive scheduling of required courses allows students to complete their degrees on their own schedule.

Individual sections of core courses are capped at a maximum of 20 to 25 students; sections of MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science*, MLIS 7700 *Research Methods* and MLIS 7800 *Capstone* are capped at 20 due to the intensive nature of the course content. The scheduling frequency of the required courses and the number of students enrolled per semester is shown in Tables II.6, II.7, and II.8. The steady growth in enrollment in the core courses shows that students are supported in building their programs of study and progressing through the program.

The university expects and the department head maintains a two-year course rotation schedule to ensure that most students can earn their degrees within their preferred timeframe. The current course rotation schedule is available on the program’s website in the [Academic Advising page](#).
The course rotation schedule has been published in the current format since Fall 2015. Copies of course rotation schedules for the current accreditation cycle are available in Appendix II.E.

Tables II.8 and II.9 show the steady increase in enrollment in the program’s core courses, demonstrating that we have been able to meet demand for seats in these courses and thereby allow the students to make steady progress in their studies. The tables are continuous and split only for readability.

Table II.8
Enrollment in Core Courses Fall 2013 through Summer 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number and Name</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Spr 2014</th>
<th>Su 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Spr 2015</th>
<th>Su 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spr 2016</th>
<th>Su 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7000 - Foundations of Library and Information Science</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>47</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7100 - Information Sources and Services</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7200 - Management of Libraries and Information Centers</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7300 - Organization of Information</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLIS 7700 - Research Methods</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLIS 7800 - Capstone</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The program does not admit students for the summer semester. MLIS 7000 is required of newly admitted students in fall and spring semesters.

Table II.9
Enrollment in Core Courses Fall 2016 through Spring 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number and Name</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spr 2017</th>
<th>Su 2017</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
<th>Spr 2018</th>
<th>Su 2018</th>
<th>Fall 2018</th>
<th>Spr 2019</th>
<th>Su 2019</th>
<th>Fall 2019</th>
<th>Spr 2020</th>
<th>Su 2020</th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
<th>Spr 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7000 - Foundations of Library and Information Science</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>79</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLIS 7100 - Information Sources and Services</td>
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<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLIS 7200 - Management of Libraries and Information Centers</td>
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<td>MLIS 7300 - Organization of Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLIS 7700 - Research Methods</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The program does not admit students for the summer semester. MLIS 7000 is required of newly admitted students in fall and spring semesters.

Students can build their programs around the six areas of interest or follow a general program of study that supports their professional interests (see Standard II.1, From Curriculum Tracks to
The university requires that every student be advised each semester before registering for classes. The MLIS program requires that all students consult with their advisors early in their academic careers to prepare a preliminary program of study and estimated schedule of completion for their coursework. Prior to Spring 2019, newly admitted students were assigned to individual faculty advisors. Beginning Spring 2019, incoming students are assigned to Dr. Colette Drouillard, who shepherds them through registering for their first semester.

As of Spring 2021 the COEHS is providing additional support for initial advising through the Office of Professional Education Services. Dr. Drouillard and the other faculty will have the services of a full-time staff member who will support basic advising functions such as facilitating first semester registration with Dr. Drouillard, tracking student progress, tracking Graduation Application status and other standard procedures, leaving the faculty free to focus on mentoring and in-depth program advising as the students so request. During MLIS 7000 Foundations of LIS, students are introduced to the curriculum, the course rotation schedule, and the academic planning aids the program utilizes. They use these resources to develop programs of study within the context of the course advising labs. They are then assigned to permanent faculty advisors based on their interests and planned programs of study (students may revise their programs of study at any time). These advisors guide the students through the rest of their programs. Program advising is described in more detail in Standard IV.4, beginning on page 143.

Students are advised to take MLIS 7100, 7200, and 7300 early in their studies because these courses are prerequisites for specialized electives. They are also generally advised to take MLIS 7300 Organization of Information before they take MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services because the faculty feel students will do better learning to seek information if they first understand how it is organized. Advisors consult with students prior to each registration period. These consultations are typically conducted by email and faculty members keep notes of these consultations in their personal advising files. After these consultations, students’ advising holds are lifted and they become eligible to register. Advisors recommend courses and strategies based on students’ interests and the course rotation schedule but respect students as adults and emerging professionals, acknowledging that students have the final decision on courses they take and the order in which they take them. Once a student’s Banner account is set eligible to register, advisors do not have control over students’ course registration processes and students may choose any course listed for which they have met prerequisites.

Students’ individual needs, goals, and aspirations are recognized in several ways. Electives comprise over half of students’ program of study (including their ability to choose their preferred course to satisfy the collection development requirement), allowing students to design their program of study around their professional goals in consultation with their advisors. Students are allowed to transfer up to six hours of prior coursework or relevant coursework taken at another institution to count toward graduation if approved by the advisor, the department head and the Graduate School. As of Fall 2020 students may not transfer a Foundations course from another MLIS program (other than as an elective) because program advising has been integrated throughout MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science. Students may also pursue independent study and/or supervised fieldwork opportunities in order to further personalize their programs of study (Standard II.3, …experiential opportunities, and other...
similar activities, pages 71-73). Within all courses, students are encouraged to use the required assignments to explore their career interests to the extent possible. Students complete MLIS 7800 Capstone in their last semester of study. In this course they reflect on their learning over the course of their programs of study and prepare and deliver presentations on topics of professional interest to demonstrate that they have developed the competencies necessary to begin productive professional careers.

Elective courses allow students to tailor their programs of study around their interests and professional goals. Electives are developed and taught by faculty members who have subject area expertise, and the proposed syllabi are reviewed by the curriculum committee and the faculty before being submitted for addition to the curriculum. The program aspires to offer all elective courses at least biennially to help students complete the program on their preferred timetable; electives with high demand are offered annually and MLIS 7400 Collection Development is offered twice per year (generally with two sections) due to very high demand. Currently half of the elective courses are offered at least annually (Table II.10) including electives in each topic area. The current course rotation schedule is available on the academic advising page of the program’s website.

**Table II.10**  
*Frequency of Current Elective Courses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Rotation</th>
<th>Number of Courses</th>
<th>Percent of Total Electives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offered twice per year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered annually</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered biennially</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total current electives*</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes special topics courses; does not include independent study or supervised fieldwork.

Most of the program’s students enroll in one to three courses per semester and the typical time to the degree is eight to nine semesters. The university defines part-time status for graduate students as five – eight credits per semester and students who apply for federal financial aid must take at least five credits to qualify for student loans, effectively two MLIS courses per semester. The course rotation schedule fully accommodates this pattern of matriculation to graduation. Total enrollment in courses grew by 112.4% over the current accreditation period as shown below in Figure II.3.
This enrollment growth is a good problem as it demonstrates increasing demand for the program and the university’s support for the program but adds strain to program administration. The program dedicates many curricular resources to support our growing student body. Historical enrollment patterns are used to make the initial determination of the number of sections that will be offered for each course. The university’s enrollment system (Banner) accommodates course wait lists, and the program makes every effort to open additional sections of courses as necessary and possible during course enrollment periods (instructors also accept paid course overloads if they can accommodate additional students without affecting the experience of all students). This dedication to offering sufficient course sections to meet demand is illustrated by Figure II.4, which shows that the total number of sections offered in Academic Year 2019-20 was 75.5% higher than the total number offered in Academic Year 2013-14. In addition, the discrepancy between the 112.4% enrollment growth and the number of additional sections demonstrates faculty flexibility in supporting student needs.
...cooperative degree programs, interdisciplinary coursework and research...

The program has partnered with the School Library Media Certification Program in the Department of Leadership, Technology, & Workforce Development in the COEHS to offer the Dual Program of Study for MLIS and Concurrent Media Certification (State of Georgia) from almost its initial accreditation. The dual program requirements are listed in the Graduate Catalog and published on the program’s website.

The dual program curriculum was developed in partnership with the faculty in the Master’s in Education in Instructional Technology: School Library Media (IT:SLM) to provide students who want to work in Georgia public libraries or k-12 school libraries the opportunity to earn the MLIS with concurrent school library media specialist certification (State of Georgia). The dual program curriculum assures that all requirements for both the MLIS and the state teaching certification can be met by students who complete the full curriculum. Students apply to and enroll in the MLIS program, then declare their interest in the dual program and are assigned to the MLIS program’s dual program coordinator as their advisor. The students complete the required MLIS curriculum elements then apply for admission as non-degree seeking students to the certification only program in School Library Media and are advised by one of the IT:SLM faculty for the certification portion of their dual program of study. Most dual program students wait to take MLIS 7800 Capstone in order to complete their MLIS degree requirements at the same time or the semester after as they finish their certification requirements. Maintaining their
status as active degree seeking MLIS students throughout their certification coursework allows them to remain eligible for financial aid throughout both portions of their studies because students enrolled in certification-only programs are not eligible for federal financial aid.

The dual program has had a small but consistent number of students participate since its inception. Enrollment and completion:

- Completed both the MLIS degree and concurrent or subsequent school library media certification: 37
- Currently enrolled in MLIS degree and the school library media certification: 5
- Completed MLIS degree but withdrew from school library media certification: 8

(Source: Dr. Natalie Kuhlmann, Director, COEHS Office of Professional Education Services)

Students interested in other types of interdisciplinary experiences can register for up to six credits in other VSU departments or at another institution and transfer the credits to their MLIS degree with the approval of their advisor, the department head, and the Graduate School.

The program is enrolling an increasing number of students who are interested in archives and special libraries. The new optional area of interest in special libraries, archives, or conservation librarianship was developed in response to the growth in this area of practice and these students are assigned to an advisor with expertise in the area. Students are also able to take courses in Clayton State University’s Master of Archival Studies (MAS) program as transient students (for purposes of continuity of financial aid) through a system-wide cooperative arrangement that allows student to use their home institution’s financial aid award to pay for courses at another university. Advisors aid the students in registering as transients and transferring up to six credits into the MLIS program after they complete those courses. If the student does not want to use financial aid to pay for their Clayton State courses, they would apply as a non-degree-seeking student to the MAS program, take the courses they want, and then transfer the completed course credits back to VSU. Historically, there has been very little demand for the Clayton State University program among our students, but we continue to make students aware of the opportunity. On the other hand, we have had one or two students who began the MAS program at Clayton State change direction and apply to the MLIS program because they find that earning the MLIS degree with a focus on archival and preservation coursework will better support their goals for their studies.

…experiential opportunities, and other similar activities.

Opportunities for specialized learning are available to all students through MLIS 7950 Independent Study in Library and Information Science. This course gives students an option to pursue specialized learning through supervised reading and research in areas of study not normally available in regular course offerings under the direction of a faculty member (and with the approval of their advisors). The student and the faculty member agree upon course learning outcomes and sign a formal agreement which is placed in the student’s permanent file. The student and the instructor then meet regularly to review the student’s progress. The independent study documentation forms are available on the program’s web pages. The list of students
completing independent studies and the topics of their courses is available in **Standard V.11, accommodations for independent study, and media production facilities** (pages 189 – 190).

Experiential learning opportunities are available to all students as an elective course via MLIS 7960 *Supervised Fieldwork*. Students must have the permission of their advisors and the instructor in order to enroll in MLIS 7960 and are encouraged to choose this course late in their programs of study after they have a sense of the type of library or information environment in which they would like to gain hands-on experience. MLIS 7960 requires 120 hours of hands-on engagement at an approved library or information center. Students may do their fieldwork at the system or institution where they are employed if they do so in a different department and under a different supervisor. They may not count their scheduled regular work duties towards their fieldwork hours.

Fieldwork students must be supervised by a librarian who holds an MLIS or equivalent degree and has been in a supervisory position for at least one year. Learning objectives specific to the students’ interests and goals are identified collaboratively by the student, the on-site supervisor, and the course instructor and confirmed using a signed work agreement. Under exceptional circumstances students may repeat MLIS 7960 once for a total of six credits. Students log and post their hours and a summary of their activities via the course website four times during the semester. At the end of the fieldwork experience students submit documentation or artifacts that present highlights of their learning. **Guidelines for MLIS 7960** are available in the program’s web pages.

MLIS 7960 has been offered since before the program’s initial accreditation. It is offered in fall and spring semesters; summer supervised fieldwork is discouraged because the summer semester is not long enough to allow most students to complete the required 120 hours of fieldwork while still meeting their other obligations. Should a student win a competitive summer internship and request to earn academic credit for the experience, individual arrangements are made based on the student’s specific circumstances. Students completing their fieldwork experiences and their supervisors are surveyed each semester. The supervisor survey comprises primarily open-ended questions about the student’s strengths and areas for improvement. Supervisors report uniformly positive results, with constructive comments on areas for improvement. Supervised Fieldwork Supervisor Survey results are in **Appendix II.D.3** and examples of student experiences and fieldwork artifacts are available in **Appendix II.F**. As these examples of site supervisor feedback demonstrate, MLIS 7960 brings significant value to both students and their supervised fieldwork sites, and site supervisors are a big factor in the success of our partnerships with the cooperating sites:

**Comments on student strengths:**

“[Student] developed an ambitious practicum schedule and did an excellent job with balancing her commitments to the practicum and to her regular position in our library.

“Her practicum goals were outside of her job description so they were quite appropriate for practicum-level study. At the same time, many of the goals met in the practicum will be useful in [Student]'s future job development should she choose continue working here post-MLS (i.e. instruction, proactive relationship building with internal departments for ESL students goal, proactive relationship building and project management with external units for
depository collection goal.)

“Other strengths: organization, dependability, follow-through, frequent checking in, and very good rapport/communication with students, faculty, and staff related to practicum goals.”

On areas for improvement:
“If [Student] wishes to pursue a career in digital archives, she is well on her way to understanding the critical concepts and the day-to-day work to done. She is already a competent and reliable worker, so I would say areas to improve would be simply gaining more knowledge of archival functions and their roles in preserving archival materials and making them accessible and discoverable. More hands-on training in any area of archival work would likely benefit her.”

Other comments about the students or the VSU fieldwork process:
“It was great to help “grow” another (possible) cataloger, and [Student] will do well in technical services and/or in any other area her road leads. The fieldwork process was clear with its guidelines and flexible in scope to allow for unforeseen circumstances like this spring. I hope [Student] was able to learn enough this semester in-person. I wanted her to get a good foundation in the practices and tools of cataloging, i.e. the practical things that I wished someone showed me when I was a cataloging librarian fresh out of library school. I arranged the internship so she would experience what a technical services librarian in an academic institution does on a regular basis, i.e. cataloging, with the addition of reference/circulation work, collection development duties (as a subject specialist), and collaborating with and/or assisting other depts. One upside this spring was that [Student] had the chance to watch a number of training and professional development webinars. Under normal working conditions, you sometimes don’t have any time to watch webinars. A few extra hours/days to attend a training and more importantly, to absorb the information, makes a lot of difference - so I’m glad [Student] had the opportunity to do that. I wish [Student] the very best and know she will do well.”

Note: This fieldwork took place during Spring 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic spread and all USG institutions moved to remote work.

Ninety-five MLIS students have completed fieldwork during the current accreditation period. See Appendix II.F for a spreadsheet listing site supervisors and placement sites by year of placement.

Course content and sequence relationships within the curriculum are evident.

As documented in Standard II.2.2, the program numbers its core courses and electives to indicate their alignment by area of practice. All MLIS courses fall into the university’s 7000 numbering sequence, indicating that these courses are open to graduate students only. Course numbering is revised as necessary, such as when special topics courses receive permanent course numbers.
The course descriptions and the course rotation schedule indicate all required prerequisites or corequisites, as published in the Graduate Catalog. MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science is a prerequisite or corequisite for all required courses and is taken in students’ first semester in the program. MLIS 7300 Organization of Information is a prerequisite for all cataloging and classification electives and MLIS 7200 Management of Libraries and Information Centers is a prerequisite for most management courses. MLIS 7100 Information Sources and Services is a prerequisite for MLIS 7140 Advanced Reference. Two elective courses are prerequisites for other electives: MLIS 7220 Public Libraries is a prerequisite for MLIS 7222 Adult Services in Public Libraries and MLIS 7310 Introduction to Metadata for Catalogers is a prerequisite for MLIS 7330 Advanced Metadata. MLIS 7800 Capstone is taken in the students’ final semester of study.

Several electives can be taken by nonmatriculated students and alumni for professional development because they require no prerequisites or corequisites:

- MLIS 7110 Online Searching
- MLIS 7125 Genealogy for Librarians
- MLIS 7280 Community Building
- MLIS 7290 Project Management for Libraries
- MLIS 7420 Literature for Children
- MLIS 7421 Multicultural Youth Literature
- MLIS 7422 Programming for Children and Young Teens
- MLIS 7423 Literature for Young Adults
- MLIS 7425 Youth Electronic Resources
- MLIS 7430 Information Literacy Instruction
- MLIS 7510 Essential Technologies in Libraries
- MLIS 7540 Integrated Library Management Systems
- MLIS 7740 Rare Book Librarianship
- MLIS 7970 Libraries and Literacies in History

Course descriptions and prerequisites are published in the Graduate Catalog and on the MLIS program webpages. Current and archived course syllabi are also available on the MLIS webpages so that students can explore course scope, content, and student learning outcomes to help plan their programs of study. Outlines of the areas of interest are also published in the Graduate Catalog and on the program’s Program Overview webpage.

Standard II.4
Design of general and specialized curricula takes into account the statements of knowledge and competencies developed by relevant professional organizations.

The core curriculum is informed by statements of knowledge and competencies developed by the American Library Association and other relevant professional associations. The core curriculum’s alignment with the ALA COA Standards and ALA COE Core Competences are shown in Tables II.1 and II.9.
Specific guiding principles for each core course:

In MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science* are introduced to the range of specialized professional association and their guiding documents, including:

- American Library Association Code of Ethics
- Special Libraries Association Competencies for information professionals of the 21st century
- Medical Library Association Code of Ethics for Health Sciences Librarianship
- Society of American Archivists Code of Ethics for Archivists
- American Society for Information Science and Technology Professional Guidelines
- Association of Independent Information Professionals Code of Ethical Business Practice
- American Association of Law Libraries Ethical Principles

Students review the different guiding documents established by each group and discuss their importance to LIS professional practice, then work together in small groups to analyze the ethics statements and professional standards of one of the specialized professional associations. Required of all students.

In MLIS 7100 *Information Sources and Services* all students review and apply the RUSA *Guidelines for Behavioral Performance of Reference and Information Service* as they learn to deliver reference services and practice reference transactions. Required of all students.

MLIS 7200 *Management of Libraries and Information Centers* and the courses in the Library Management area of interest are informed by the LLAMA Foundational Competencies for Library Leaders and Managers. These competencies and the WebJunction Leadership-related Competencies informed the review and revision of all the courses in the Library Management Area of Interest conducted in 2017-18. (Appendix II.C) They inform all the courses offered in this area of the curriculum. Elective courses focused on the different types of libraries and information centers are informed by guidelines and best practices for their specific areas of practice.

MLIS 7300 *Organization of Information* and its associated courses in the 7300 series are informed by trends and changes in the field, especially the move from AACR2 to RDA. The program subscribes to the RDA Toolkit and students use it to learn the basics of the RDA: *Resource Description and Access* standards for organizing and providing access points for recorded information. Required of all students. These standards and best practices inform the elective courses offered in this area of the curriculum.

MLIS 7700 *Research Methods* introduces students to the theories and practices of social science research. Students learn about the policies and practices inherent in the conduct of research with human subjects and the roles of institutional review boards in protecting the rights of participants in research projects. Required of all students.

**Elective Courses**

MLIS 7210 *Academic Libraries* is informed by the principles and practices of the Association of College and Research Libraries. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher
Education informs MLIS 7430 *Information Literacy Instruction*.

MLIS 7220 *Public Libraries* exposes students to the policies, publications, tools, and resources provided by the Public Library Association.

MLIS 7230 *Special Libraries* is informed by the Special Libraries Association’s *Competencies for Information Professionals*.

MLIS 7710 *Archival Theory and Issues* is informed by the Society of American Archivists *Core Values of Archivists* and their *Code of Ethics for Archivists*.

Courses in the youth services area of interest are informed by the YALSA *Mission, Vision, and Impact Statements* and the ALSC resources for the support and enhancement of library services to children.

The [Dual Program of Study for MLIS and Concurrent Media Specialist Certification](State of Georgia) is informed by MLIS degree requirements and State of Georgia teacher certification standards and requirements.

The program’s six required core courses and the collection development requirement (21 hours) provide students with entry-level professional expertise as specified in the program objectives. Together these courses address all elements of ALA’s *Core Competences for Librarianship* (2009). Most core competences are covered by multiple courses, which helps students understand the importance of the competences in specific practice focuses as displayed in Table II.11. Student learning outcomes for each core course link to the program objectives, which derive from this standard, and are included in the course syllabi (current and archived syllabi are available on the [MLIS program website](#)).

**Table II.11**

*ALA Core Competences Mapped to Required Courses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALA Core Competences</th>
<th>COURSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>MLIS 7000 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>MLIS 7100 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>MLIS 7200 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>MLIS 7300 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>MLIS 7700 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1F</td>
<td>MLIS 7800 ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1G</td>
<td>Collection Development ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1H</td>
<td>2A      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1I</td>
<td>2B      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1J</td>
<td>2C      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
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<td>1K</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>3B      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>3C      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>4A      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>4B      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E</td>
<td>4C      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F</td>
<td>5A      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td>5B      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4E</td>
<td>5C      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4F</td>
<td>5D      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D</td>
<td>5E      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
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<td>5E</td>
<td>5F      ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5F</td>
<td>Collection Development ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VSU MLIS 2021 Self Study – Standard II Curriculum
Standard II.5

Procedures for the continual evaluation of the curriculum are established with input not only from faculty but also representatives from those served. The curriculum is continually evaluated with input not only from faculty, but also representatives from those served including students, employers, alumni, and other constituents. Curricular evaluation is used for ongoing appraisal and to make improvements. Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of students' achievements.

Procedures for the continual evaluation of the curriculum...

The MLIS curriculum is reviewed systematically in consultation with the Curriculum Committee. Revisions are conducted to make sure that course offerings remain aligned with (1) the program’s goals and objectives, and (2) the most current and relevant professional standards and outcomes measures. As discussed earlier in Standard II, curriculum revision is informed by the findings from the systematic analysis of the SLOA results and by area of interest and course reviews. Faculty members with relevant expertise take responsibility for guiding curriculum reviews of topic areas with stakeholder input, relevant professional standards, and syllabi from other MLIS programs considered in the evaluation of each area under review as previously described at section II.4.

All full-time faculty are members of the department’s assessment committee, which meets in the fall and spring semesters to review SLOA outcomes. Areas that have been identified as needing improvement are discussed, with faculty who teach the courses addressing the reasons for any problems and the potential solutions. Changes to the SLOA assessments and rubrics are also discussed at these meetings so that all faculty have input in the process. Area of interest and course reviews are completed in consultation with the Curriculum Committee and outcomes of the reviews and recommendations for changes are reported and discussed in faculty meetings so that faculty have input in the process.

...representatives from those served. (Stakeholder Input)

Current students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders all contribute to curriculum development and maintenance.

- **Students**: Student input is collected in several ways. The head of the department meets directly with students once per semester to solicit input and answer questions. Representatives from the Student Organization of Library and Information Science (SOLIS) attend monthly faculty meetings and Curriculum Committee meetings to
participate and give input. Each semester graduating students are surveyed in MLIS 7800 Capstone. The Graduating Student Survey items focus on perceived level of preparation to perform in the areas of librarianship as specified in the program objectives and students can comment on their MLIS preparation in a final, open-ended question. The survey is anonymous and collected using survey software. Outcomes of the graduating student survey are published on the program’s website. Outcomes of the Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) surveys also provide valuable feedback on courses (see Standard IV.8).

- **Alumni:** The same categories queried in the Graduating Student Survey (Appendix II.D.4) are used for a survey of alumni that is conducted each year. Initially this survey queried alumni two years after graduation but beginning in 2020 we are surveying alumni one year after graduation to align with the new COA requirements. Outcomes of the alumni surveys are published on the program’s website.

- **Employers and Other Stakeholders:** Input from employers and other stakeholders is collected and used in multiple ways. These stakeholders are included in track and course reviews through the use of advisory panels and surveys (see Standard II.5, Procedures for the Continual Evaluation of the Curriculum, pages 77 - 78). Employers of alumni are also surveyed periodically and queried about alumni performance of administrative functions and library technical services, their use of existing and emerging technologies to meet needs in the library or information center, their ability to integrate relevant research to enhance their work, and whether or not they demonstrate professionalism in their work. Outcomes of the alumni surveys are published on the program’s website. As discussed in Standard II.3, …experiential opportunities, and other similar activities… (pages 71 - 73), students’ fieldwork supervisors are surveyed each semester. The fieldwork survey is focused on student performance, but also gives respondents a chance to give feedback on the students’ preparation for professional work.

The curriculum is continually evaluated with input not only from faculty, but also representatives from those served including students, employers, alumni, and other constituents.

The MLIS curriculum is reviewed systematically under the auspices of the Assessment and Curriculum Committees. Evaluations are conducted to ensure that the program and its course offerings remain aligned with (1) the program’s goals and objectives, (2) the most current and relevant professional standards and outcomes measures, and (3) the ALA core competences. Revisions are informed by the findings from the systematic analysis of the SLOA results. When a core course or track is identified as needing revision, the Curriculum Committee asks a faculty member with relevant expertise to take responsibility for guiding the revision as the subject specialist for that area (Standard II.5 and Standard III.4).

As discussed previously, the SLOA process and the track and course reviews constitute the primary activities for programmatic curricular review (faculty regularly update individual
courses). These are rigorous evidence-based processes, and they represent two different and complementary approaches to curricular evaluation. The SLOA process is fundamentally a program evaluation tool and measures the program’s success at teaching areas connected to the ALA Core Competences.

Track/Areas of Interest and course reviews evaluate what course content should be delivered and include input from stakeholders and subject area experts. The SLOA process is continual, with the relevant assessments conducted for all course sections in every semester, and the full faculty meet twice a year to discuss outcomes and address any issues that arise from the evaluation. (https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/documents/summary-sloa-longitudinal-outcomes.pdf) Through this process most areas of concern have been identified and addressed and now over 75% of students perform at the “exceeds expectations” level (Figure II.5).

**Figure II.5**  
*Percentage of Students Performing at ’Exceeds Expectations’ or ’Meets Expectations’ Proficiency Level by Academic Year (Fall – Summer)*

![Bar chart showing percentage of students performing at different proficiency levels from 2012-13 to 2019-20.]

**NOTE:** The reported percentages for each rubric level were calculated by dividing the number of students performing at that specific rubric level by the number of students performing at any one of four rubric levels (N minus “No Response/NA”). Students are assessed multiple times throughout their program to monitor subject proficiency. The rubric levels were changed in academic year 2018-19 from Target (3 points), Acceptable (2 points), and Unacceptable (1 point) to Exceeds Expectations (3 points), Meets Expectations (2 points), and Below Expectations (1 point).

The track and course review processes are cyclical; during the current accreditation period formal reviews of three tracks and one core course were conducted and changes were made to a fourth track and a second core course based on more abbreviated reviews. This demonstrates the program’s focus on continual improvement. The SLOA review process, in turn, informs the program’s Institutional Effectiveness planning and reporting, described at length in Standards I and V. To assure the ongoing appraisal and continuing improvement of the program, we have
developed a schedule in which all areas of interest and core courses that are not part of areas of interest will be reviewed at least once during the next accreditation period as illustrated in **Standard II.7. Figure II.6 Proposed Curriculum Review Schedule** (page 83).

The program’s Curriculum Committee meets regularly during the academic year and brings its recommendations to faculty meetings for review and approval. Once the program completes its review of a track or course, the recommended curricular revisions are sent to the COEHS Executive Committee. After approval by the college, the changes move to the university’s Graduate Executive Committee for review and approval. The Graduate Executive Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research, who supervises and coordinates all educational programs at the graduate level throughout the university with the assistance of other deans, directors, department heads. From the Graduate Executive Committee course changes are referred to the Academic Committee of the Faculty Senate and the Vice President for Academic Affairs for final approval. The Graduate Executive and the Academic committees meet monthly during the academic year to review proposals for curriculum change, new or revised courses, or new degrees as they relate to academic programs.

Individual faculty members monitor the effectiveness of their courses through assessment of student achievement at the course level. The university-administered Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) for each course allows students the opportunity to provide immediate anonymous evaluation of course content and instruction and anonymous feedback to each instructor every semester. SOI data are returned to the faculty member and the program director after grades are posted. Starting in Summer 2019 a new SOI platform, SmartEvals, gives faculty the opportunity to add questions to the survey. These questions can be used to inform changes to course design or delivery. Student achievement at the program level is discussed in **Standard II.5 subsection Curricular evaluation is used for ongoing appraisal and to make improvements. Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of students’ achievements** (page 80) and student achievement data are discussed at **Standard II.6** (page 81). Links to representative examples of student ePortfolios, which include papers, presentations, projects, and reflections, can be viewed in **Appendix II.G.**

**Curricular evaluation is used for ongoing appraisal and to make improvements. Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of students' achievements.**

Several direct and indirect measures of student achievement inform evaluation of the curriculum and are used to make improvements:

- **Student grades on individual assignments and final course grades are a direct measure of student achievement in the courses in which they are enrolled. Their levels of success at meeting course outcomes directly inform evaluation of individual courses and areas of the curriculum.**
- **Student opinions of instruction (SOI) comments provide information that informs course and curriculum evaluations and can be used by faculty to make direct improvements to individual courses.**
• Program-level student learning outcome assessment (SLOA) results directly inform curriculum evaluation and are used to guide improvements to the core courses.
• Alumni and Employer surveys provide indirect evidence of students’ preparation for professional work and thereby contribute to curriculum evaluation and improvement.
• Fieldwork supervisors’ assessments of student performance, their preparation for their fieldwork placements, and the students’ accomplishments during their placements are indicators that can be used to assess relevant areas of the curriculum.
• Direct input from students at conferences and during the Talk to Dr. Most sessions each semester contribute to evaluation of the curriculum as students indicate what aspects of the curriculum are or are not working for them.

**Standard II.6**
The program has explicit, documented evidence of its ongoing decision-making processes and the data to substantiate the evaluation of the curriculum.

This standard has discussed in detail how the program uses multiple types of data and input to inform ongoing decision-making processes. These data include SLOA assessments, track and course reviews, tracking of demand for courses, and stakeholder surveys. Documentation for this Standard is delineated in **Table II.12**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation Type</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Committee documentation</td>
<td>Curriculum committee minutes</td>
<td>Appendix II.C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum committee membership rosters</td>
<td>Appendix III.F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program evaluation documentation</td>
<td>SLOA Review reports</td>
<td>Appendix II.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional Effectiveness Reports / Institutional Effectiveness Plans</td>
<td>Appendix I.E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track and course review documentation</td>
<td>Optional track/area of interest in technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional track/area of interest in reference sources and services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional track/area of interest in library management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optional track/area of interest in cataloging and classification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Area of interest in special libraries, archives or conservation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dual program of study for MLIS &amp; Concurrent GA School Library Media Certification</td>
<td>All track/area of interest review documents are filed with curriculum committee meeting minutes for the year and can be found in Appendix II:C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MLIS 7700 Research Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MLIS 7800 Capstone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course and curriculum documentation</td>
<td>Optional track/areas of interest descriptions</td>
<td>Standard II.1 <em>From Tracks to Areas of Interest.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• reference sources and services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*VSU MLIS 2021 Self Study – Standard II Curriculum*
The program demonstrates how the results of the evaluation of the curriculum are systematically used to improve the program and to plan for the future.

As the discussion for Standard II has demonstrated, the program is dedicated to continual systematic improvement and has developed processes to support this focus. Processes and curriculum structure are described throughout the standard:

- Alignment of the curriculum with program goals, ALA accreditation standards (2015), the ALA Core Competences, and professional organization standards: Standards II.1, II.2.2, II.2.3, II.2.4, II.2.5, II.2.6, II.3, II.4, II.5

- Systematic planning and curriculum revision: Standards II.1, II.5, II.6, and II.7
• Program structure: Standards II.1, II.2, and II.3

• Stakeholder input: Standards II.2.1, II.2.3, and II.5

• Programs of study: Standard II.3

As a result of the systematic processes in place, future curriculum development will be an extension and refinement of the processes used during the current accreditation period. However, in addition to the standard continual systematic improvement mechanisms, the program has planned several specific projects:

The program will conduct a systematic review of the full curriculum, including structure and courses offered, based on input from the ERP, program stakeholders and a review of peer and aspirational program curricula. The program will integrate the planned systematic review of the curriculum into its next institutional comprehensive program review, scheduled for Academic Year 2022 - 2023.

• The curriculum review cycle builds out from reviews of the optional tracks (now areas of interest). All tracks have been reviewed within the last ten years. A review schedule has been developed to ensure that all areas of interest and required courses are reviewed within the next accreditation period (Figure II.6). This schedule is contingent on the outcomes of the systematic curriculum review described above (e.g., if program requirements change the schedule will be revised accordingly).

Figure II.6
Proposed Curriculum Review Schedule, Spring 2022-Spring 2027

• The program will continue to use the findings from the SLOA review process to inform annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports and Plans.

• The Records Committee is beginning a project to ensure that all data and documents are easily available to faculty members and other interested parties. Currently, data and documents are saved and held in multiple locations. Although the required documentation was located for the development of this Standard, the process of gathering documentation
highlighted the problems connected to this relative lack of organization. The Records Committee will investigate procedures for ingesting data and documents into a repository and will report to the faculty with recommendations when the project is completed. The results of this project will be documented in the next accreditation period.
Standard III: Faculty

Standard III.1
The program has a faculty capable of accomplishing program objectives. Full-time faculty members (tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track) are qualified for appointment to the graduate faculty within the parent institution. The full-time faculty are sufficient in number and in diversity of specialties to carry out the major share of the teaching, research, and service activities required for the program, wherever and however delivered. Part-time faculty, when appointed, balance and complement the competencies of the full-time tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty and are integral to the program. Particularly in the teaching of specialties that are not represented in the expertise of the full-time faculty, part-time faculty enrich the quality and diversity of the program.

The program has a faculty capable of accomplishing program objectives.

The faculty of the Valdosta State University (VSU) Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) Program is comprised of eight full-time faculty members. Of these, five are tenured and promoted at the conclusion of Spring 2021. Two faculty members are in tenure track lines. One faculty member is currently in a non-tenure track (limited term) faculty line. The program also hires part-time faculty as needed to incorporate additional expertise and experience into the curriculum.

The MLIS Program is led by a department head who is a tenured faculty member assigned to a twelve-month administrative appointment. The department head currently teaches one course each in the fall and spring semesters. The other seven faculty members are appointed to ten-month faculty contracts. In addition to their teaching and research, they chair or participate in all MLIS program administrative committees. Ten-month faculty have the option to teach during summer semesters depending on student demand and the availability of summer funding. They receive compensation for summer teaching equal to 10% of base salary for each summer course taught that meets minimum enrollment expectations and their summer earnings cannot exceed 33.3% of their salary for the immediately preceding academic year.

The MLIS faculty have expertise and experience that addresses the program’s objectives. That expertise is demonstrated in faculty curriculum vitae listing their academic training, professional experience, their teaching, and in their research agendas. That expertise will be documented throughout this chapter. As new or replacement faculty lines are considered, the curricular needs of the program define the search. These needs are identified during faculty meetings at which time search criteria are established.

Full-time faculty members (tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track) are qualified for appointment to the graduate faculty within the parent institution.

All the program’s full-time and part-time faculty members are appointed as members of the university’s graduate faculty in compliance with SACSCOC expectations. The criteria for membership on the graduate faculty are directly related to VSU’s and the graduate school's mission statements. The Graduate Executive Committee, a committee in which all graduate programs are represented, chaired by the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research,
has established and approves two categories of membership on the graduate faculty: Full membership and Temporary membership. The Graduate Executive Committee sets criteria for each level of membership based on how completely an applicant meets the published criteria for membership in the graduate faculty. Any faculty member, whether full- or part-time, who is teaching graduate level classes and/or serving on dissertation or thesis committees is required to hold either full or temporary membership on the Graduate Faculty. Full members are appointed for a period of five years and temporary members for three years. The Graduate Faculty membership lists are published at https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/graduate-faculty-list.php. Newly hired full-time faculty members who teach graduate courses in their first year and all part-time faculty are appointed as temporary members (See Table III.1). Full time faculty members who teach in graduate programs are expected to be able to qualify for and maintain full graduate faculty status by the point at which they are eligible to apply for said status.

Table III.1
Current Program Full-time Faculty Graduate Faculty Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Graduate Faculty Status Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicole D. Alemanne</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra Carruth</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunseon Choi</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenese Colson</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colette Drouillard</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda R. Most</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaoai Ren</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changwoo Yang</td>
<td>Full</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The full-time faculty are sufficient in number and in diversity of specialties to carry out the major share of the teaching, research, and service activities required for the program, wherever and however delivered.

As the number of students enrolled in the program has grown, the number of faculty lines has increased. As of Spring 2021, the faculty includes a department head who holds faculty rank and seven tenured/tenure-track faculty and one limited term faculty. During the accreditation period, the program experienced some movement among the faculty.

In Fall 2014, the tenure-track line formerly held by the retired program director, Wallace Koehler, was converted to a full-time instructor position. A search was held and Ms. Mary Jewel Eller Suddeth, a long-time part-time instructor, was hired into this full-time line with a 4-4 course load and no advising or committee responsibilities. Ms. Suddeth held this position from Fall 2014 until the end of Spring 2019 when she resigned. She later agreed to resume part-time teaching.

In the academic years between 2013-2017, the program employed Dr. Anita Ondrusek as a full-time faculty member. In spring 2017 she retired from the university with the rank of Professor. Her line was preserved, and a successful search resulted in the hire of Dr. Nicole Alemanne at
the rank of Assistant Professor. Dr. Ondrusek then returned as a part-time rehired retiree from Fall 2017 to Fall 2019 and was awarded the title of Professor Emerita in 2019. Rehired retirees are employed following USG Policy 8.2.8.3 Employment Beyond Retirement.

Dr. Harold Thiele, who was responsible for the Cataloging and Classification Track, was hired in Spring 2011 and resigned from the university in Spring 2018. Thiele’s tenure-track line was preserved and filled in Fall 2018 with the hire of Dr. Yunseon Choi at the rank of Assistant Professor.

In Spring 2019, after Mrs. Suddeth resigned, the instructor line was reclassified to a tenure-track Assistant Professor line and a successful search was held, resulting in the hire of Dr. Lenese Colson. Because of the high quality of the final candidates in the search and the continuing increase in enrollment, the provost approved a new Assistant Professor limited-term line, and it was offered to Dr. Debra Carruth, the other finalist in the search. Dr. Lenese Colson, the newly hired Assistant Professor on tenure track, is now teaching some of the management electives previously taught by Suddeth and other part-time instructors, as well as several sections of core courses. Dr. Debra Carruth, the limited-term Assistant Professor, had previously taught part-time for the program, covering the courses in the youth services and youth literature areas that were previously taught by Associate Professor, Dr. Colette Drouillard. Dr. Drouillard now oversees MLIS 7000, the required first semester Foundations course, which requires multiple sections to meet enrollment demand. Both Dr. Carruth and Dr. Colson are now teaching sections of MLIS 7000 in concert with Dr. Drouillard. Dr. Colson has also taken the lead in teaching MLIS 7800, the Capstone exit course.

As documented in faculty curriculum vitae (Appendix III.A) the faculty have diverse expertise congruent with the program’s objectives. This expertise is demonstrated through academic training, scholarship, professional experience, and professional and academic service. The tenured and tenure-track faculty members all have earned doctorates in library and information science fields or other related disciplines. Faculty with doctorates in fields other than LIS have earned the MLIS or equivalent degree. Current and former full-time faculty credentials are listed in Appendix III.A.

The full-time tenure-track MLIS faculty participate in the profession by publishing in peer-reviewed and professional journals and delivering presentations of their work at professional meetings. Faculty members hired on limited term contracts at the rank of Assistant Professor or Instructor are not obligated to fulfill publishing requirements. They carry additional teaching responsibilities to fill their workloads. Tables III.2 and III.3 show the number and types of articles and papers published by the program’s faculty members since 2013.
Table III.2
Current Faculty Scholarship Record: 2013-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Length of Service as of 6/2021</th>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
<th>Book Or Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicole D. Alemanne</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra Carruth</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>not expected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunseo Choi</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenese Colson</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colette Drouillard</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Most</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xiaoi Ren</td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changwoo Yang</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Individual titles, conference, and publication venues are listed on faculty CVs

Table III.3
Former Faculty Scholarship Record: 2013-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
<th>Book or Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wallace Koehler</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Ondrusek</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold Thiele</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2013-2018)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The faculty has published in some of the leading scholarly journals in the field, including *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, *Journal of Research on Libraries & Young Adults*, and *The Library Quarterly*, thereby demonstrating the contribution of their work to the field. The significance of the faculty’s research is also demonstrated by looking at metrics other than numbers of publications per year. For example: the article, “A Content Analysis of Errors in MLIS Students’ Online Searching Assignments”, by Ondrusek, Ren, and Yang published in *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, was one of the top 10 downloads from Volume 60, Issue 4, in 2019.

At the program and the university levels, individual faculty productivity is evaluated for each calendar year as part of the *Annual Faculty Activity Report and Action Plan* (AFARAP), submitted each February. Further evaluation occurs at the pre-tenure review (at the start of the third year of appointment), the tenure review (at the start of the fifth year of appointment), promotion reviews, and post-tenure reviews (five years after the grant of tenure). The evaluation
process is discussed in full at Standard III.8.

**Part-time faculty, when appointed, balance and complement the competencies of the full-time tenured/tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty and are integral to the program.**

The program has engaged seventeen part-time instructors during the review period. Part-time instructors may come from other departments of the university, may be working librarians and library managers with expertise in their areas, or specialists in specific areas of information technology, and may be alumni of the program. They are expected to hold the terminal degree in the field and have demonstrated expertise in the material they are teaching. Their CVs are found in Appendix III.C. A summary table listing the current positions, degrees, and courses taught by each part-time faculty member is located in Appendix III.D. All part-time faculty teach online and have remote access to the University’s online teaching and learning resources.

Part-time faculty are an integral element of the program. Their skills and expertise have enabled the program to augment its course offerings through utilization of their knowledge and expertise in specialty areas of the LIS fields. As a matter of departmental policy, core courses are taught or led by full-time faculty. A part-time instructor who teaches a core course does so under the supervision of a full-time faculty member who has expertise in the subject area. Appendix III.E provides a spreadsheet listing all courses taught by part time instructors by semester from 2013 – 2021.

**Course distributions by full-time and part-time faculty**

For the review period, a total of 358 courses were offered, many with multiple sections: 286 (80%) were taught by tenure track and full-time faculty and 72 (20%) were taught by part-time faculty as is shown in Table III.4 and Figure III.1. In addition, a total of 512 classes (sections) were offered: 421 (82%) were taught by tenure track and full-time faculty and 91 (1.8%) were taught by part-time faculty as shown in Table III.5 and Figure III.2. During this same period, 272 core classes (sections) were offered: 241 (88.6%) were taught by full-time faculty and 31 (11.6%) were taught by part-time faculty as is shown in Table III.6 and Figure III.3.

The increase in part-time faculty teaching load, as shown in Figures III.1 and III.2, correspond to the steady increase in enrollment since 2013. As the number of students enrolled has increased, the program has employed more part-time faculty to meet the demand for additional sections of established courses or to cover elective courses in their areas of specialization.

The course and section totals for each academic year listed in Tables III.4 and III.5 include both core courses and electives. In Spring 2019, as described above, the program was approved to hire an additional full-time Assistant Professor on a limited-term contract to help meet demand for courses and sections. This contract has been approved for Academic Year 2021 - 2022 and the department head has asked the dean to explore options for converting this line to continuing contract, non-tenure track.

During the review period, Academic Years 2013-2014 through 2020-2021, a total of 358 courses were offered, of these 286 (79.8%) were taught by tenure track or full-time faculty and 72
(20.1%) were taught by part-time faculty. The number of courses for each academic year as is shown in Table III.4 and a comparison of how the numbers have changed each year is illustrated in Figure III.1.

Table III.4
Courses Taught by Full-time and Part-time Faculty, 2013-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N (total)</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure III.1
Courses Taught by Full-time and Part-time Faculty

There were a total of 512 course sections offered in the current accreditation period, with 421 (82.2%) taught by tenure track or full-time faculty and 91 (17.8%) taught by part-time faculty. The number of sections for each academic year as is shown in Table III.5 and a comparison of how the numbers have changed each year is illustrated in Figure III.2.
### Table III.5

*Sections Taught by Full-time and Part-time Faculty, 2013-2021*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N (total)</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N (%)</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>80.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>512</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure III.2

*Sections Taught by Full-time and Part-time Faculty*

During the current accreditation period, 272 sections of core courses were offered: 241 (88.6%) were taught by full-time faculty and 31 (11.4%) were taught by part-time faculty. The number of core course sections for each academic year is shown in **Table III.6** and a comparison of how the numbers have changed each year is illustrated in **Figure III.3**.
Table III.6
*Full-time and Part-time Faculty Teaching Core Course Sections by Academic Year 2013-2021*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Core sections</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure III.3
*Full-time and Part-time Core Sections Teaching Loads*

As can be seen when looking at Figures III.1, III.2, and III.3, the increasing number of part-time faculty employed has dropped again in response to the addition of non-tenure track faculty members who have picked up the additional teaching part-time faculty were carrying.
Standard III.2
The program demonstrates the high priority it attaches to teaching, research, and service by its appointments and promotions; by encouragement of excellence in teaching, research, and service; and through provision of a stimulating learning and research environment.

Standard III.2.1
The program demonstrates the high priority it attaches to teaching, research, and service by its appointments and promotions…

VSU, the Dewar College of Education and Human Services (COEHS), and the program both place a high priority on strong teaching, scholarship, and service. The university, college, and the program evaluate candidates at each level for appointment along several criteria. To be appointed as a full-time faculty member, the applicant must hold a relevant terminal degree, typically the PhD or equivalent at the time of appointment. Candidates are expected to have subject background and teaching skills necessary to eventually cover a range of courses related to their areas of specialization as well as one or more core areas of LIS. Similarly, a candidate’s propensity for successful scholarship and service is considered. Familiarity with online learning is a required attribute for all candidates for open faculty positions and candidates are asked to describe their experience with online teaching and learning as part of the search process.

Once a candidate is invited to campus, s/he undergoes an interview process that includes delivering a presentation that incorporates their research and teaching philosophies. All finalist candidates also meet with the COEHS Dean while they are visiting the campus. Throughout the selection process, candidates are encouraged to address their teaching, scholarship, and service preparation and priorities.

Once appointed, the new faculty member is encouraged to take full advantage of the resources available and is mentored to develop effective strategies to be successful. At the department level, senior faculty members and the department head mentor the new faculty member throughout the first year of service. This mentoring includes sharing syllabi and course resources already in place for the courses assigned to the new faculty member in addition to more general mentoring regarding university policies and practices, resources for teaching and scholarship, and early career development. The Office for the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) provides a university-wide orientation and first-year support for all new faculty.

Beginning in Fall 2018, the Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) has also provided networking and support opportunities for new faculty, including launching an annual New Faculty Learning Community (NFLC). The NFLC is a year-long cohort-based faculty learning community that addresses the needs of faculty who are in the first year of employment at the university. Because of the success of this learning community in Academic Year 2019-2020, in Fall 2020 a second-year faculty learning community was formed to continue their work from the prior year. MLIS Assistant Professor, Dr. Lenese Colson completed the first-year learning community with her cohort and is peer-leading the Second-Year Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for Academic Year 2020-2021.

Full discussion of the faculty appointment process is presented at Standard III.3 and the institutional promotion and tenure processes and policies are presented at Standard III.8.
Standard III.2.2

… by encouragement of innovation in teaching, research, and service.

VSU and the program support teaching, scholarship, and service innovation through several funding pools that promote professional and curriculum development.

- The VPAA offers seed funding to support new research projects. Faculty may request up to $5000 ($7500 if a joint application is submitted) to develop initial research projects and/or as the match for external funding applications. These funds may be used to support travel, hire graduate assistants, and support equipment and software purchases. Award of these funds was suspended in Academic Year 2020-2021 due to Covid-19-induced budget constraints.

- Presidential excellence awards recognize faculty excellence in teaching, research, and service, online teaching, and the scholarship of Teaching and Learning across the university.

- The VPAA provides funding to promote instructional improvement.

- The VPAA provides funding for professional presentations.

- The VPAA’s office manages applications for a variety of other types of faculty funding, including the reassignment of time for scholarly research and academic leave, as well other related faculty support activities.

- The Director of the Center for International Programs and the VPAA provide additional funds for travel outside the United States and its possessions for professional presentations.

- Each college also provides some funds managed by its dean to support professional travel.

- Each department is allocated funds managed by the department head to support professional or departmental travel.

- The Office of Sponsored Programs and Research Administration helps faculty identify sponsored research grants, grant development, and grants management.

- The Faculty Senate Committee on Committees assists individual faculty members to identify VSU Faculty Senate committees on which they may wish to serve. Statutory committees of the Faculty Senate draw their membership from across the faculty with seats apportioned by college. The program’s participation in faculty governance was initially included under the library faculty’s service allocation until the program was moved to the COEHS and program faculty are eligible to run for election to the college’s allocation of seats. Program faculty members hold a proportional number of the Senate statutory committee seats allocated to the COEHS. For example, Dr. Nicole Alemanne is...
serving a three-year term as the chair of the Senate Committee on Committees. Faculty university committee assignments are documented in Appendix III.F Faculty Committee Assignments.

The Center for eLearning and the Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT) provide a range of applications and resources to support and encourage innovation in teaching. From 2018 to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic CELT offered a series of face-to-face faculty learning circles dedicated to innovations in teaching, both in the classroom and online. The CELT House itself offers multiple meeting rooms and gathering spaces for faculty to work together in small groups or on their own. The house was closed during Academic Year 2020-2021 due to impacts of Covid-19, but CELT moved to offering the full range of faculty development and support activities using a variety of online platforms. The CELT staff supports faculty by facilitating professional development opportunities related to their roles as teachers, scholars, practitioners, and leaders throughout their career stages. The Center for eLearning, housed in the university library, supports faculty who teach online, hybrid, and technology-enhanced courses. The Center for eLearning is now under the CELT umbrella on the administrative organization chart.

**Standard III.2.3**
...and through provision of a stimulating learning and research environment.

The university has centralized much of its educational hardware and software training in the Center for eLearning. Program faculty members have relied on the Center for eLearning for support for online course development and improvement, especially for guidance and training when new educational software is introduced. These tools allow faculty to create a stimulating online learning environment in their courses. Faculty attend group classes addressing new software or software updates as appropriate. eLearning also offers one-to-one consulting and training, which has been used more heavily by MLIS faculty because this service allows for more targeted assistance than the group classes, which tend to be aimed at faculty members less experienced with online learning or who are less frequent users of the software. Faculty participation in training and professional development classes offered by the different support groups across the university is documented on their individual university training transcripts, found in Appendix III.G, with professional development and training obtained outside VSU listed in Appendix III.H.

VSU encourages faculty to engage in scholarly endeavors and to share the fruits of their research. As demonstrated above, the university provides resources to initiate research, to promote grant opportunities, and to present the findings from research. VSU and the program assist faculty to acquire the necessary computing hardware and software to accomplish research goals. In support of these professional expectations, VSU funds $3,000 start up grants for all newly hired faculty members that can be utilized in a variety of ways. Program faculty members have typically used their start-up funds to acquire the additional computer hardware and software they need to support their research and the preparation of online teaching content.

The program reviews the balance of teaching, research, and service to support its faculty and their successful achievement of tenure and promotion in rank. The details of these review processes are provided at **Standard III.8**.
Standard III.3
The program has policies to recruit and retain faculty from diverse backgrounds. Explicit and equitable faculty personnel policies and procedures are published, accessible, and implemented.

**The program has policies to recruit and retain faculty from diverse backgrounds.**

The program is guided by University System of Georgia (USG) and Valdosta State University (VSU) policies to ensure explicit and equitable recruitment, selection, and retention policies for its faculty. The program makes all its hiring recommendations in full compliance with USG and VSU policies. The relevant USG and VSU policies are referenced below.

The program publishes its position openings in accordance with university policy on the university’s list of available positions, with the system Board of Regents’ employment clearinghouse, and with *Inside Higher Education*. Additionally, the program announces faculty openings through the [JESSE e-mail list](#) and the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) job board. Members of the faculty attend the ALISE annual conference to advertise and recruit potential faculty. Copies of all position openings advertised during the current accreditation period are available in Appendix III.1.

Four former full-time faculty members (Wallace Koehler, Harold Thiele, Anita Ondrusek, and Mary Jewel Suddeth) and eight current full-time faculty members have been employed during the current accreditation period. The eight current faculty members include seven women, one of whom is African American, and three foreign nationals from China and South Korea, one of whom is male. There have been 17 part-time faculty employed between 2013 and 2021. Of these, eleven are women. The program does not collect data on faculty religion or sexual orientation, nor does it consider either descriptor in the selection or retention of its faculty.

**Explicit and equitable faculty personnel policies and procedures are published, accessible, and implemented.**

The USG has promulgated strong direction that addresses equitable and explicit faculty personnel policies:

No person shall be excluded from employment or participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination, harassment, or retaliation under any program or activity conducted by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) or any USG institution based on any characteristic protected by law. Incidents of discrimination, unlawful harassment, and retaliation will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the USG.

These USG policies are mirrored by those of VSU:

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student
Faculty, students, and staff in the University community who feel they have been discriminated against in any of the categories above, should contact the Office of Social Equity. Through the use of due process procedures appropriate action will be taken to address instances of discrimination and sexual harassment. For more information, contact the Office of Social Equity, 1208 North Patterson Street, Phone (229) 333-5463.

The program complies with the above policies in all its hiring processes.

The Office of Social Equity (OSE) at VSU, a free-standing office until 2020 and now under the oversight of the University’s Human Resources unit has the responsibility to oversee the application of equitable personnel policies. Relevant responsibilities include certifying faculty search pools as compliant with institutional equity policies. The unit also responds to and investigates equal opportunity concerns. The program’s search committees have complied with all guidance from this unit and have submitted their application pools for review during each search.

**Standard III.4**
The qualifications of each faculty member include competence in designated teaching areas, technological skills and knowledge as appropriate, effectiveness in teaching, and active participation in relevant organizations.

Faculty competence in designated teaching areas is documented first through the record of their academic training, provided in Appendices III.A, III.B, III.G, and III.H. Second, most of the faculty have come to their academic careers with a range of relevant professional experiences. The program’s full and part-time faculty have had diverse professional experiences working in a variety of library types, settings, and applied research positions. Examples include a former academic library director, a teen librarian, an archivist, reference librarians, library consultants, catalogers, managers, and a media researcher. These work experiences, augmented by their academic credentials and scholarly research experience, provide the faculty with the specialized knowledge required to cover program content. The faculty’s relevant professional experience is documented in Appendix III.J. Part-time faculty qualifications are found on their CVs in Appendix III.C and summarized on the table at Appendix III.D.

...technological skills and knowledge as appropriate,...

VSU actively promotes the technological skill development of its faculty by providing opportunities to enhance their relevant knowledge and skills through the programs offered by the Center for eLearning, described above. The array of technology assistance eLearning provides helps faculty gain competence with new software and tools as the university adds them to its
resources. The Center for eLearning and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) schedule training across all the educational technologies used at VSU in addition to those related to online learning, as well as offering training in several other academic and administrative topics. The Division of Information Technology also offers training in webpage management and editing, and in the productivity tools available at the University. The department supports additional specialized technological skills development by reimbursing the registration fees for relevant webinars and training sessions, such as the sessions that address the regular updates to the RDA Toolkit for catalogers, used in several of the program’s courses.

Two program faculty members earned certificates through the Center for eLearning’s Introduction to Instructional Design in Online Instruction training. Earning this credential led to Dr. Alemanne being named one of the experts in one of the modules in the BlazeVIEW 101 course, a resource specifically built to help faculty across the university transition their courses from face-to-face to hybrid or fully online during the COVID-19 outbreak in the spring 2020 semester. The “Ask the Expert” module is where faculty could communicate with colleagues and staff in the Center for eLearning to share teaching tips and solve problems. Dr. Alemanne’s expertise in online teaching was subsequently recognized with her two-year appointment as a Chancellor’s Learning Scholar for VSU. She is assigned to CELT, where for Spring 2021 she led a faculty learning circle titled Leveraging Pandemic Pedagogy.

...effectiveness in teaching....

Effectiveness in teaching can be assessed both directly and indirectly. Students provide one element of the direct assessment of faculty performance and course content through their participation in course evaluations, known as the Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) and collected for every course each semester. The University facilitates the SOI data collection process by sending the SOI link to students via email and to individual faculty members who are asked to post the links in their course websites, along with instructions on how to access and complete the surveys. Individual instructors are asked to encourage students to participate in the SOI process.

While the University places great emphasis on the SOI, the VPAA’s office recognizes that it is difficult to obtain high return rates without unduly influencing students. Thus, in Spring 2019, faculty from each academic college, including program faculty, piloted a new platform, SmartEvals, to provide a more up to date interface for VSU’s Student Opinions of Instruction process. This system replaced the SOI Portal in use since 2008. The SmartEvals platform also allows instructors to add customized questions to each course’s unique evaluation instrument, thereby enabling the instructors to request tailored feedback on any course element or innovation. During the pilot, the standard SOI instrument of 13 questions was utilized. VSU implemented SmartEvals for all VSU sections in Summer 2019. While still early in use, the increase in response rate was positive. The SOI results are also used in the annual Faculty Evaluation process described at Standard III.8.

In Spring 2020, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a nationwide move of face-to-face courses to online delivery across U.S. college and universities, and VSU followed that trend. In response to this on-going crisis, the University decided to proceed with collecting SOI
data as scheduled but left the decision as to whether to share the SOI results with the university up to individual instructors. While the program faculty was already teaching fully online (its established delivery mode), program faculty and instructors in other fully online programs were offered the same option not to share their SOI results as the balance of the faculty. For these reasons we have limited the date range of the aggregated SOI results presented in the self-study to Summer 2013 – Fall 2019. Aggregated Program SOI results by semester are reported in Table III.7 and disaggregated SOI data for 2019 - 2021 are available in Appendix III.K

Table III.7
MLIS Program Aggregated Student Opinion of Instruction Results, 2013 – 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Su13 Mean</th>
<th>Fa13</th>
<th>Su14 Mean</th>
<th>Fa14</th>
<th>Sp15 Mean</th>
<th>Su15</th>
<th>Fa15 Mean</th>
<th>Sp16 Mean</th>
<th>Su16 Mean</th>
<th>Fa16 Mean</th>
<th>Sp17 Mean</th>
<th>Su17 Mean</th>
<th>Fa17 Mean</th>
<th>Sp18 Mean</th>
<th>Su18 Mean</th>
<th>Fa18 Mean</th>
<th>Sp19 Mean</th>
<th>Su19 Mean</th>
<th>Fa19 Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>450</td>
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<td>432</td>
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<td>302</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>82</td>
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<td>129</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*5(strongly agree), 4(agree), 3(neutral), 2(disagree), 1(strongly disagree)

Note: 2020-2021 data will be added when it becomes available

SOI questions 1-10 are Likert Scale questions scored 5 (strongly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (neutral), 2 (disagree), 1 (strongly disagree). Questions 11 – 14 are open questions with comment boxes provided for text responses.

The SOI statements and questions are:

1. Course assignments were clearly explained in the syllabus or other handouts.
2. Course policies (for example, attendance, late papers) were clearly explained in the syllabus or other handouts.
3. The instructor was well prepared for class.
4. The instructor made effective use of class time to cover course content.
5. Course assignments were returned in a timely manner.
6. The instructor explained grading criteria (for example, grammar, content) clearly
7. The instructor was willing to discuss course-related issues either in person or by email / telephone.
8. The instructor responded to student questions on course material in a professional manner.
9. This course increased my knowledge of the topic.
10. This course helped me further develop my academic skills (for example, reading, writing, speaking, critical analysis, performance, artistic abilities, etc.).
11. On average, how many hours per week did you spend on this course?
12. What were the best features about this course?
13. What are your instructor’s strengths?
14. What suggestions would you give your instructor for improving the course?

A second category of assessment of teaching effectiveness is a series of course peer reviews,
expected annually for the program’s tenure-track faculty as part of their tenure dossiers and described at Standard III.8. The faculty use the findings from the peer review of their courses to modify or clarify course design and content as recommended.

Indirect assessment of teaching effectiveness is conducted through analysis of the Student Learning Outcome Assessment (SLOA) data, collected from 2012 forward and fully discussed in Standards I and IV. Faculty are asked to reflect on their teaching over the past year and set goals for their teaching for the coming year in their annual faculty activity reports and plans. Department heads review these documents annually and discuss the reports and plans with the faculty members individually before forwarding them to the college deans.

…and active participation in relevant organizations.

Finally, the faculty’s active participation in appropriate organizations is documented in Appendix III.I, Professional Memberships and Service.

The program encourages its faculty to stand for election as officers and serve on committees of professional associations and relevant community organizations. Program faculty are members of a wide range of national and state professional organizations. The department head holds leadership positions in the state library community, serving as chair of the State Board for the Certification of Librarians and secretary of the Board of Trustees of the South Georgia Regional Library system.

In addition to their leadership roles during the period under review (Academic Years 2013–2014 to 2020-2021), faculty have made and attended presentations, published in association journals, and served on association committees. When faculty attend professional conferences as part of their service or scholarly responsibilities, they also attend sessions relevant to their teaching areas. This range of participation contributes to professional development and Appendix III.I provides evidence of faculty service to the professional community in their areas of expertise. Additionally, the MLIS Program holds an institutional membership in the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE).

Standard III.5
For each full-time faculty member, the qualifications include a sustained record of accomplishment in research or other appropriate scholarship (such as creative and professional activities) that contribute to the knowledge base of the field and to their professional development.

VSU values faculty scholarship as one expression of its mission, as articulated on the Academic Affairs webpage and supported through the variety of faculty funding opportunities previously described.

Among the grants available through the University is the Faculty Scholarship Support Fund, coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs under the guidance of the Faculty Scholarship and Research Committee of the Faculty Senate. The committee reviews applications and makes awards in three different categories: Faculty Scholarship for Instructional Improvement, Course/Curriculum Development, and Professional Presentation. The MLIS faculty have
consistently secured Professional Presentation grants to fund the presentation of their research at disciplinary conferences. Other funding received by MLIS faculty for scholarship development has come from VSU Strategic Focus grants and from an initiative to fund reassignment of time for research to new faculty.

All the above funding sources combined with other ad hoc sources of funding received MLIS faculty are documented in Appendix III.M Faculty Funding Awards for the following categories:

- Faculty Research Seed Grants
- Faculty scholarship support funds
- Faculty internationalization funds
- Other university funding

Through the University Tenure and Promotion (T&P) Policy, individual colleges and departments have latitude in defining the scope of scholarship. The University policy stresses the importance of both publication in the scholarly press and presentation at professional meetings. COEHS tenure and promotion policies acknowledge the importance of both and recognize the value of publications and presentations in both academic and professional venues. Faculty members are encouraged to establish their own individual research agendas and collaborative research is encouraged but not required. Seeking and securing external funding to support research is encouraged but not required of institutional faculty.

Evaluation of faculty scholarship is part of the tenure and promotion process and is also included in the annual faculty evaluation conducted at the departmental level, then reported to college deans, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs as described in the University’s new Faculty Evaluation Model. The tenure and promotion process will be fully presented at Standard III.8.

Program faculty publish findings from their research in peer-reviewed and professional journals, thereby disseminating their findings and documenting their record of accomplishment in research and other areas of scholarship. They also present their findings at academic and professional conferences. The numbers of publications and presentations are documented in Tables III.2 and III.3. Titles of publications and presentations and the presentation venues are listed on the faculty curriculum vitae, available in Appendix III.A.

A summary of each current full-time faculty member’s major research accomplishments follows:

**Dr. Nicole Alemanne** focuses her research agenda on developing research-trained practitioners in the context of LIS education. She has collaborated with colleagues both inside and outside the university to examine the pedagogical options for teaching social science research methods to master’s students. She has delivered several peer-reviewed conference presentations on different stages of this research and has published on this topic in conference proceedings and in the *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science*. She has used the findings from her research to inform revisions to the program’s required MLIS 7700 *Research Methods* course, as described at Standard II.1, *Curricular Review*, page 47 - 48. Her prior research streams focused
on online education and the use of information technology tools in elementary education. She has also worked extensively in the assessment of rural broadband access and needs. This policy work has informed her development and teaching of MLIS 7960 Information Policy.

**Dr. Yunseon Choi** has been conducting research in the areas of social tagging, indexing, metadata, and the organization of information in digital contexts for most of her career. Her current work is focused on developing and using automated tools to find meaningful content in online reviews of children’s books. This research builds directly on her earlier research into all aspects of the social tagging phenomenon. She has published and presented extensively in her areas of research, including in conference proceedings of the leading associations in the field. Peer-reviewed journals in which her work has been published include *Knowledge Management, The Electronic Library*, and *The Library Quarterly*. Her scholarship and her research interests directly inform and support her work teaching MLIS 7300 Organization of Information, MLIS 7330 Advanced Metadata, and MLIS 7355 Cataloging & Classification.

**Dr. Lenese Colson** conducted her dissertation research on gender as a factor that affects differences in participation in information technology. She was supported in her doctoral studies via her work on a grant-funded project exploring the relationship between what school library media specialists do and what student learners gain in school libraries and she collaborated on several publications generated by the project. This work led to her position as a post-doctoral fellow for the American Association of School Librarians, researching causality in school libraries and student success. Another related collaborative research stream of Dr. Colson’s focuses on reaching hidden communities within the academy. All of this research flows from Dr. Colson’s undergraduate studies in computer science and her two Master’s degrees, in Curriculum and Instruction and in LIS. She has merged this knowledge with her professional work in public libraries to inform her teaching at VSU, as she has been updating courses assigned to her and launching her new research agenda as a second-year tenure track faculty member.

**Dr. Colette Drouillard** has recently completed a series of projects, presentations, and publications deriving from her participation as a Fellow in the Google and ALA-funded Librarians Ready to Code initiative which focused on integrating computational thinking into library programming for children and young adults. The grant explored ways to expand the LIS curriculum to integrate computational thinking concepts into LIS youth services courses with the goal of preparing LIS educators who would teach MLIS students to perform this work in their libraries, thus reaching young library users and introducing them to computational thinking early in their lives. Work on this project also involved reviewing grant applications for direct funding to working librarians to incorporate computational thinking into their library programming. Dr. Drouillard was then able to use her experience reviewing the Ready2Code grant applications to inform the design of a new special topics course in grant writing for libraries, a course students have been requesting. The first iteration of the course was offered in Summer 2019 and it is being offered again Summer 2021.

**Dr. Drouillard** and **Dr. Linda Most** have been collaborating on their current research area since 2018, first exploring and presenting on the concept of the hidden curriculum as it pertains to identifying non-academic knowledge and skills online graduate students need to learn to be successful in their chosen degree programs. They presented on this topic to the Georgia Council of Graduate Schools and at the Association for Library and Information Science annual
conference in 2019. Dr. Drouillard has been using the findings from this first stage of exploratory research to inform course revisions to MLIS 7000 *Foundations of Library and Information Science* and to revise and update the program’s new student orientation. Dr. Drouillard is currently collecting data from MLIS 7000 students documenting their response to the non-academic content included in their orientation and in a series of labs they must complete inside MLIS 7000. Dr. Drouillard and Dr. Most will next analyze and submit the findings from the data collection for review and publication. Dr. Drouillard is also sharing the preliminary findings of this research with an institutional task force convened to review and enhance the university’s current graduate student orientation materials and processes.

**Dr. Linda Most** has been serving as the department head on an administrative contract for the current accreditation period. This contract has no expectation of scholarly productivity. Nonetheless, she has been collaborating with Dr. Drouillard on the project described above because its outcomes will directly influence the quality of the graduate student experience at Valdosta State and will be shared with the field via conference presentations and submission of publications presenting the findings from the research.

**Dr. Xiaoai Ren**’s current primary research areas are in the following broad categories: (1) environmental literacy and (2) community in the digital era, and (3) teaching and learning in the digital environment. She also has an interest in resource sharing among libraries. Her research interests are consistently informed by her teaching and the values and beliefs she holds about the LIS profession and the social issues she believes the LIS professions can take an active role to help solve. Her research and teaching supplement and inform each other.

1) Libraries have been expected to serve the greater good in society and this research will investigate the LIS profession's perception of their roles and responsibilities and their practices in fulfilling those expectations. One approach is to investigate libraries' roles and practices in building sustainable community from the environmental perspective to understand the challenges libraries face and how they balance the many competing needs of serving the greater good with limited resources.

2) Community building practice in digital era and whether libraries can play a significant role to support this practice: an investigation of people's information needs and information behaviors in the digital age to support community development, economic advancement, health, culture, hobbies, and other activities of everyday life.

3) Findings from her work on teaching and learning in the online environment will lead to improvements in students' learning experiences and learning outcomes.

The overarching goal of Dr. Ren’s research is to accurately capture the perceived roles and responsibilities of libraries in the society and develop useful tools and resources to help them achieve their goals more effectively. Findings from her work will be helpful for libraries when making decisions on allocating limited resources across competing priorities.

**Dr. Changwoo Yang** is interested in Human-Computer Interaction, applied information technologies in library practice, digital libraries, and social computing. He has drawn on these interests to inform his research collaborations with his colleagues, contributing his expertise in various applied information technologies to collaborative projects in online learning and LIS education. He also works with quantitative data analysis and takes the lead in preparing the
statistical analyses of data collected in the collaborative projects in which he participates. His work has been presented at the conferences of the Association for Library and Information Science Education and published in the Journal of Education for Library and Information Science.

**Dr. Debra Carruth** is employed in a non-tenure track, limited term, teaching-intensive faculty line and there is no expectation of professional scholarship associated with her position. Her earlier research and publications focused on the information needs of young adults and this work continues to inform her teaching and course development.

**Major research accomplishments during the current accreditation period by faculty who are no longer employed at VSU include:**

**Dr. Wallace Koehler**, Professor Emeritus and the retired program director, researched, published, and presented internationally on Information and Ethics, and LIS Education in the African nations. His scholarship contributed to his teaching areas as he developed and taught MLIS 7650 Information and Ethics and he brought international LIS educators into one-semester residencies at the university.

**Dr. Anita Ondrusek**, Professor Emerita, researched and published extensively in the area of reference and user services instruction, health sciences information instruction, and in education in special libraries and information centers, and taught courses in these areas of the curriculum. She mentored and collaborated extensively with the junior faculty, supporting their scholarly and professional development until her retirement.

**Mrs. M. Jewel Suddeth**, former full-time instructor, was employed in a non-tenure track teaching intensive continuing contract line that did not include any expectation of scholarly research or publication. Nonetheless, she used her MBA and her MLIS degrees in combination with her experience as a public library director to contribute to the review and updating of the management track of the curriculum during her time on the faculty. She taught courses in the management area of the curriculum and continues to do so on a part-time basis.

**Dr. Harold Thiele**, former assistant professor, had research interests in archives management and archival preservation, and in cataloging and classification. He did not publish his research and this was a contributing factor in his decision not to apply for tenure and to resign from the institution.

**Standard III.6**
The faculty hold advanced degrees from a variety of academic institutions. The faculty evidence diversity of backgrounds, ability to conduct research in the field, and specialized knowledge covering program content. In addition, they demonstrate skill in academic planning and assessment, have a substantial and pertinent body of relevant experience, interact with faculty of other disciplines, and maintain close and continuing liaison with the field. The faculty nurture an intellectual environment that enhances the accomplishment of program objectives.

**The faculty hold advanced degrees from a variety of academic institutions.**
Several of the program’s faculty hold doctorates from the Florida State University College of Communication and Information (FSU CCI). This is consistent across the university as a whole. In Academic Year 2020-2021 Valdosta State employed 295 total tenured or tenure track (227 tenured, 68 not tenured, but on track) full-time faculty of which 50 tenured or tenure-track faculty members have earned their terminal degrees from Florida State University. (Source: VSU Office of Institutional Research) The next two highest clusters of faculty member degree-granting institutions are from the University of Georgia, where 23 faculty earned their terminal degrees, and from Valdosta State University, where 27 faculty earned a master’s, specialist, or doctoral degree. (Source: http://catalog.valdosta.edu/faculty/)

There are several reasons why 34% of the faculty at VSU come from one of these three universities. The primary reason is a result of Valdosta State University’s classification as a regional comprehensive university, which also informs the institution’s and the program’s comparatively low faculty salaries. Also important is the geographic location, as many of the faculty have family in the area or other personal reasons for wanting to work in the southeast. As discussed in detail at Standard V.7, ... and is sufficient to attract, support, and retain personnel needed to attain program goals and objectives. (pages 180 - 181), program salaries have consistently been among the lowest reported in the ALISE annual statistical reports during this accreditation period. As a regional comprehensive university, VSU cannot compete with salaries offered by the MLIS degree granting institutions that are classified as High Research Activity Doctoral Universities. Therefore, Valdosta State and the program have identified and leveraged other institutional attributes such as geographic location - close to extended family for many applicants, class size, teaching and service focus, etc. when recruiting potential tenure-track faculty.

The three tenure-track faculty searches held during the current accreditation period attracted diverse applicant pools of approximately 15-20 applicants and each pool was certified by the Office of Social Equity. Eight to ten telephone interviews were held during each search to reduce the pool to three finalists per search. In two of the three searches, 2/3 and 3/3 of the finalists had earned doctorates from the Florida State University College of Communication and Information and were living and working in the region. Each local finalist expressed strong personal or family reasons for wanting to stay in the region, which enhanced the appeal of joining the program’s faculty. All three searches followed university and college policies and the backgrounds and qualifications of the finalists, and the successful candidates met the approval of both the College Dean and the Provost. Faculty degree-granting institutions are included in Appendix III.I.

**The faculty evidence diversity of backgrounds, ability to conduct research in the field, and specialized knowledge covering program content.**

The program’s faculty have diverse backgrounds as evidenced by their professional experiences and educational credentials other than their doctoral degrees. This diversity of backgrounds is documented in their CVs, found in Appendix III.A. Faculty ability to conduct research in the field is congruent with the university standards and initiatives as described at Standard III.2 and III.5. They have continued to develop their specialized knowledge in different areas of program content through their ongoing participation in professional service to the field, documented
in Appendix III.L. Their intellectual biographies are shaped by their broad range of professional experience, educational backgrounds, wide variety of second masters’ degrees in different fields and from different universities, listed in Appendix III.B. They have worked in a variety of professional settings and countries and their teaching is enriched by their varied backgrounds. Their relevant professional work is documented in Appendix III.J.

In addition, they demonstrate skill in academic planning and assessment, have a substantial and pertinent body of relevant experience, interact with faculty of other disciplines, and maintain close and continuing liaison with the field.

The faculty demonstrate their skill in academic planning through their work in structured curriculum review and revision. Each area of the curriculum is planned in advance and systematically reviewed and each review incorporates stakeholders, professional standards, student input, and trends in the field. Individual courses are updated within the established learning objectives to respond to the needs of the students and the professions. The curriculum review process is fully addressed in Standard II.5 Curriculum.

Faculty demonstrate their skill in academic assessment each semester as they implement established program-level student learning outcome assessments (SLOA) in the core courses they teach. They report their SLOA outcomes via the program’s assessment management tool (LiveText) and come together as the assessment committee every fall and spring to review and analyze the prior semester’s assessment results. They work together to develop strategies to help students improve their mastery of any assessments that score below the program’s stated percentages. The program’s academic assessment process is fully addressed in Standards I.1.1 and I.1.2.

Faculty take rotating leadership roles in different facets of program and academic governance as documented in Appendix III.F, Faculty Committee Assignments, resulting in an environment where they work collaboratively, learning from each other and from their experiences. This process is organized through a series of departmental faculty committees:

- Admissions
- Assessment
- Curriculum
- Records Management
- Scholarships
- Student & Alumni Groups
- Tenure & Promotion
- Textbook Review
- Webpage

A scope statement for each program committee and the committee rosters for each academic year are included in Appendix III.F. Senior faculty mentor newer colleagues in the program’s assessment systems and in their management of committee work. This model of governance allows all faculty to participate in academic planning and each faculty member also takes
leadership of curriculum review and revision as relevant to their individual areas of expertise as described in **Standard II.5**. This collaborative environment has enabled the faculty to work together to continuously develop, evaluate and integrate program assessment into the curriculum resulting in a continuous cycle of assessment, and review and revision of the curriculum as documented at Standards I and II.

Program faculty interact with other faculty collaboratively both within and beyond the university. Within the university, faculty serve on the Faculty Senate and many other university and college level committees alongside other faculty members. Program faculty have been invited to serve on dissertation committees in the departments of Public Administration and Higher Education Leadership when their expertise has been relevant to the topic of the dissertation. Faculty interact with their peers across the field through research collaborations, attendance at professional conferences, service on professional association committees, and participation in the peer review process at the university and the disciplinary levels. All of these discipline-oriented and university-level collaborative and service activities allow the faculty to maintain close and continuing liaison with the field and many of these relationships are documented on their CVs and in the different appendices to this chapter.

**The faculty nurture an intellectual environment that enhances the accomplishment of program objectives.**

The collaborative process described above results in an intellectual environment that is focused on developing skilled entry level professional librarians and information practitioners in accordance with the program’s mission and objectives as discussed at Standards I and II. The students’ awareness of and engagement with the program’s intellectual environment is created and maintained starting with the presentation of the Program Objectives at orientation and on all relevant syllabi. Learning Objectives are included on all syllabi and addressed in the courses. The online course environment is managed to create an intellectual atmosphere that supports the accomplishment of the program’s objectives. Courses are kept up to date through the curriculum review process described in Standard II and through the course peer review process described at **Standard III.8**. Students are encouraged by faculty to interact with and learn from each other and to ground their coursework in real-world settings whenever possible.

The faculty support students’ intellectual development and professional preparation by encouraging them to join their state library associations via the ALA Joint Student Membership program and to participate in state level conferences and activities. Students are encouraged to participate in the university’s annual Graduate Research Symposium. Program students have presented findings from their course research projects both in person and remotely via online conferencing software since the symposium’s inception in 2009 (in the current accreditation period the number of participants each year has been: 2014 - two; 2015 - two; 2016 - one; 2017 - one; 2018 - two; 2019 - two). For those presenting remotely, faculty mentors assist by setting up their posters and facilitate the internet connectivity required to allow the students’ active participation. Recent revisions to MLIS 7700 Research Methods that have further encouraged students to engage in research are described at **Standard II.1, Curriculum Review** (pages 47 - 48). The faculty also provide students with the opportunity to develop professional skills through semester long supervised fieldwork placements in MLIS 7960, as presented at **Standard II.3**,
Experiential Opportunities (pages 71 - 74).

All courses are taught fully online and asynchronously via the system-wide D2L Brightspace learning management system, branded at VSU as BlazeVIEW, and take full advantage of all the online teaching tools and resources available to create and nurture a stimulating intellectual learning environment aligned with program.

Standard III.7
Faculty assignments relate to the needs of the program and to the competencies of individual faculty members. These assignments assure that the quality of instruction is maintained throughout the year and take into account the time needed by the faculty for teaching, student counseling, research, professional development, and institutional and professional service.

Faculty assignments relate to the needs of the program and to the competencies of individual faculty members.

Program faculty discuss their teaching assignments with the department head when schedules are being prepared and the department head assigns courses according to faculty members’ prior teaching, professional experiences, academic interests, expected course demand based on enrollment and student advising, and the needs of the program. While faculty members teach courses for which their professional experience and educational backgrounds make them particularly suited, faculty teaching assignments follow from the program’s curricular planning process. Every effort is made to permit faculty to teach the courses they prefer, but the program is guided by the curricular needs of its students, institutional workload policies (described below) and the resources available. The department head sets the schedule and teaching assignments for each semester following the university’s scheduling timeline.

The tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching workload is specified in the institutional Faculty Workload Policy. The standard undergraduate teaching load for tenured and tenure-track (fall/spring) faculty is no more than 24 credit hours (a 4/4 course load) per academic year. The standard graduate teaching load weights a 3-credit graduate course at 1.33 loads and so is set at 3/3 as documented in the current Faculty Workload Policy. The workload for full-time non-tenure track faculty is set at no more than 30 credit hours per academic year as a 5/5 load, and for graduate faculty is set at 4/4 using the weighting just described.

Program practice assigns newly hired faculty to a 2-3 teaching load in their first year to allow them time to establish themselves and adapt to university policies and practices. Faculty course assignments are publicly available by semester on the program’s website.

Each section of a course is counted as a separate entity for purposes of calculating the teaching load. The 3/3 course load for MLIS tenured and tenure-track faculty is the norm. A 4/4 load is assigned to non-tenure track teaching-focused faculty in limited term or continuing contract lines who have been hired specifically to meet the demand for seats in the program. Any deviations below the 3/3 load are the result of a one-course unit (3 credits) of reassigned time for approved purposes, typically for research or a specific administrative project.
Paid overloads
Beginning in the Spring 2020 semester, full-time program faculty members have been offered the opportunity to teach an extra section of a course for which they were already scheduled in order to meet the demand for additional seats resulting from the steady growth in program enrollment. Demand for additional seats is tracked via the Banner waitlist feature. Once a course waitlist reaches ten students, an additional section may be requested by the department head to the dean. Faculty are compensated at the part-time teaching rate for any additional sections they agree to accept. Any faculty member offered a paid one-course overload can decline without prejudice if they so wish.

Table III.8
Full-time Faculty Paid Overloads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2020</th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
<th>Spring 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colson, Lenese:</td>
<td>Carruth, Debra:</td>
<td>Alemanne, Nicole:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7220 IC</td>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7420 IC</td>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7400 IB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang, Changwoo:</td>
<td>Choi, Yunseon:</td>
<td>Colson, Lenese:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7510 IB</td>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7300 IC</td>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7800 IC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang, Changwoo:</td>
<td></td>
<td>+1 section MLIS 7700 IC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The program is led by a department head who is a tenured faculty member but is placed in a twelve-month administrative faculty position and typically teaches one or two courses per semester in fall and spring. During the current accreditation period, the department head has served as the instructor for MLIS 7960 Supervised Fieldwork each semester it has been offered. She also taught MLIS 7800 Capstone each semester through Spring 2019. She taught MLIS 7250 Human Resources Management in Fall 2020 because there was no other instructor available on short notice to cover the course.

Summer teaching
It is typical for the program faculty to teach in the summer because of the year-round nature of the student body. Teaching in the summer is voluntary and comes with additional compensation at 10% of the annual salary for the previous year per section, up to a maximum of 33% of the previous contract. Summer class schedules include all the core courses other than MLIS 7000 and selected elective courses, following the published course rotation schedule. Full-time and part-time faculty members teach a mix of core and/or elective courses during the different summer terms as they prefer and as demand permits. Part-time faculty are hired for summer courses based on their areas of specialization and because full-time faculty summer teaching requests have been filled and/or are at the maximum allowable number of sections per full-time faculty member.

Special topics courses
Faculty can propose and teach Special Topics electives in areas of high interest to students or in emerging areas currently engaging the profession. Part-time faculty with relevant expertise may also propose special topics courses relevant to student areas of interest. Table III.9 shows the special topics courses offered during the current accreditation cycle and indicates those that have been added to the curriculum with *.
Table III.9
Summer Special Topics Courses, 2013 - 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genealogy for Librarians*</td>
<td>McGhee (PT)</td>
<td>2013 2014 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Programming **</td>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management for Libraries***</td>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Information Behavior ****</td>
<td>Alemannne</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Preservation</td>
<td>Livingston (PT)</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant-Writing for Libraries</td>
<td>Drouillard</td>
<td>2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colson &amp; Carruth</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Added as a permanent elective in Summer 2016.
** content integrated into MLIS 7540 after two iterations as a special topics course
*** Added as a permanent elective in Summer 2019.
**** Added as a permanent elective in Fall 2020.

The university expects all degree programs to maintain a two-year course rotation schedule and to make it publicly available. (VSU Department Heads Handbook 2.04, 2.06) The program does so and uses the course rotation schedule as a significant systematic planning tool. The course rotation schedule supports student advising and faculty can use it to plan for their future teaching assignments. A full discussion of the course rotation schedule is available at Standard II.3 and the current schedule can be seen in Appendix II.E.

The average advising load for faculty for the past several years has ranged from 40 - 60 students. A full description of faculty advising responsibilities and resources is provided at Standard IV.4, ...coherent plan of study... (pages 143 – 149).

These assignments assure that the quality of instruction is maintained throughout the year and take into account the time needed by the faculty for teaching, student counseling, research, professional development, and institutional and professional service.

The current institutional workload policy states that “this teaching load assumes that faculty will be able to fulfill the other expectations required in their promotion and tenure documents, their annual evaluations, or in their position descriptions. The distribution of effort among teaching, scholarship and creative activity, and service may vary among faculty members, and individual faculty workload may vary from term-to-term or year-to-year, depending on the mission and priorities of their program, college, and the university. However, the distribution of effort should always balance the scholarly, creative, and service interests of individual faculty members with their responsibility to deliver academic programs and services of high quality” (VSU Faculty Workload Policy). The Dewar College of Education and Human Services’ Policy and Procedures Manual also provides guidance on calculating faculty workload.

The standard workload distribution for tenure-track faculty and tenured faculty is set at 60% teaching, 20% research/scholarly creative activity, 10% service for the department, the college, the university, and professional service, and 10% other duties such as completing annual compliance training.
All MLIS required (core) courses are offered every semester including during the summer, and elective courses are offered according to the published two-year course rotation schedule. Therefore, faculty members can plan their teaching in advance assuming they will continue to teach the courses they have taught in prior semesters and balance their time between teaching, advising, research, professional development, and their service commitments. As mentioned above, faculty can decline any paid overloads that might be offered to them without prejudice. Faculty can decline to teach in the summer or ask to teach fewer than the maximum allowed three summer sections if they so wish, again, without prejudice.

Multiple annual checkpoints support the maintenance of high quality of instruction throughout the year. First, the department evaluates student learning outcome assessment results twice a year and uses the assessment finding to identify any areas of the core curriculum in which students are not achieving the program’s published standards. As explained in depth at Standards I and II, responding to the findings from the SLOA reviews is a high priority for the program and is one of the primary ways the program maintains its expected quality of instruction.

Institutional and program processes and policies provide tools by which the faculty can manage their time and meet all the different obligations of their positions. It is the program’s custom to provide newly hired tenure-track faculty members with a 2/3 teaching load in their first semester to give them time to adjust to their new teaching environment and establish their research agendas. A tenure-track or tenured faculty member can apply for consideration for one unit of reassigned time if the faculty member needs time for a research project and can so justify in the application. Academic leave to support research and professional development is available following system and institutional policies. “The policy of the Board is that the leave is granted for only “the purposes of promoting scholarly work and encouraging professional development” (Board of Regents Policy Manual §8.2.7.4).” There is no expectation that every faculty member will receive academic leave (the equivalent of a sabbatical semester or year) in the USG’s policies. To date, no program faculty have applied for academic leave, but some have received summer funding in the form of Faculty Research Seed Grants to support their research projects and allow them to teach a lighter load in the summer.

**Standard III.8**
Procedures are established for systematic evaluation of all faculty; evaluation considers accomplishment and innovation in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

The institutional faculty evaluation model is published and explicitly states the elements considered. The model draws from many sources and relies on multiple data elements. The BOR establishes the general time in rank and other criteria for promotion and the grant of tenure within the USG. Promotion and tenure are formally granted by the BOR upon the recommendation of individual university presidents. New faculty are not appointed with tenure unless there are exceptional mitigating circumstances. Depending on experience and record, faculty can be appointed at various ranks. New faculty joining the university with relevant experience from their prior employment can request years towards tenure. This request must be approved in writing by the Dean and VPAA. Tenure is not transferable from one USG institution to another.
The COEHS faculty evaluation process, shown in Figure III.4, follows the institutional model and is designed to highlight faculty accomplishments and to encourage continuous improvement in the quality of teaching, scholarship, and service. Processes for evaluating the teaching, scholarship, and service of faculty members involve colleagues, administrators, and students. These procedures are outlined in the VSU Faculty Evaluation Model, COEHS Tenure and Promotion Guidelines, VSU Tenure and Promotion Policies, The University System Policy Manual for Academic Affairs, and the University Faculty Handbook.

**Figure III.4**
*Faculty Evaluation Timeline*

A detailed annual timeline for the annual faculty activity report and action plan (AFARAP) and for the years in which a pre-tenure, tenure, promotion, or post-tenure action occurs is specified in the VSU faculty resources web page.

**Annual Faculty Activity Report and Action Plan (AFARAP)**

Each faculty member prepares an AFARAP in the opening months of each calendar year. The AFARAP covers the prior calendar year. It evaluates performance over the calendar year rather than the academic year so that it will align with the calendar the state legislature uses to determine merit raises in the years in which such raises are awarded by the governor (discussed below). Originally compiled using a written template, the AFARAP process was moved to a digital format in 2017 when VSU contracted with the Digital Measures Faculty Activity System. This online faculty portfolio product allowed faculty to track and document their teaching, research, and services activities and export their data to the required report format. The Digital Measures System was replaced by the APL NextED electronic faculty portfolio platform in 2019. APL NextEd is currently in use as the faculty portfolio platform and the university is working with the vendor to create customized reports and data entry screens to support faculty needs and university expectations for annual reporting and other specialized applications.

The department head completes the Annual Faculty Evaluation form based on what is reported in the AFARAP, highlighting the faculty member’s accomplishments and areas for development in teaching and instruction, professional growth and productivity, and college and community service. The evaluation model in place throughout the accreditation period allows a faculty member’s performance during the previous year to be rated either as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Indicators of quality such as accolades, recommendations for improvement, status of action plan goals, and progress toward the next personnel action (pre-tenure review, promotion, tenure, or post-tenure review) are included in the Annual Faculty Evaluation.
The results of the evaluation are discussed with each faculty member, signed by both parties, and then submitted to the Dean. Faculty members can respond in writing to the annual evaluation if they wish to do so. Any faculty member who receives an unsatisfactory rating on any section of their annual evaluation is expected to meet with the department head on or before September 15 of the Fall semester to discuss progress since the evaluation.

In Academic Year 2020-2021 the Faculty Senate approved a new faculty evaluation model that will include a five-point rating system for faculty performance. Departments will each develop internal scoring rubrics to use to implement the new rating scale and the new instrument is expected to be implemented in January 2023 to review faculty performance during calendar year 2022. The rubrics are anticipated to be designed in the Fall 2021 semester so that the faculty will know how they will be evaluated starting in January 2022.

Despite the limitations of the binary satisfactory/unsatisfactory scoring system of the current AFARAP, the data included in each year’s reports and the faculty members’ reflections on the preceding year contribute significantly to program management and decision-making. An unsatisfactory score in any performance area triggers the need for specific written recommendations when an activity in the relevant performance category is determined to need improvement or does not meet expectations. A follow up meeting is then scheduled at mid-year to see if the agreed upon recommendations have been implemented.

Failure to address an unsatisfactory area of performance is grounds for a written review and an eventual terminal contract for non-tenured faculty. During the current accreditation period, the program implemented a series of recommendations for one tenure-track faculty member during the review period and used the outcome of those recommendations to inform its decisions about retention. The faculty member chose not to apply for tenure and was offered a terminal contract for the subsequent year.

**Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) Surveys**

Faculty are subject to course-level evaluations by their students at the close of each semester, called student opinions of instruction (SOI). The SOI is administered online through the Office of Academic Affairs with the support of the Information Technology staff to maintain the platform. The SOI assessment results become available to instructors and supervisors shortly after grades are posted. SOIs remain available for evaluation thereafter.

SOIs are incorporated into all formal evaluation processes including Tenure and Promotion applications and the annual Faculty Activity Report and Action Plan, thereby giving students a significant voice in the evaluation of all teaching faculty. All courses taught by part-time faculty members are evaluated using the SOI as well. Aggregated SOI scores per semester are provided in Table III.7. Individual faculty SOI reports from 2019 forward are available in Appendix III.K.

Faculty use the Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) reports to help inform their course revisions and management, such as choice of textbooks or readings, assignments, grading practices, course calendars and the flow of course content. For example, when Dr. Most taught MLIS 7960 Human Resources Management in Fall 2020, she implemented a new textbook on short notice and had to realign course content that supported the previous textbook to follow the structure of
the new selection. She also reordered the assignments to better fit into the flow of the new textbook’s chapters.

Students used the comments section of the SOI to indicate what worked in the flow of the course and what did not. As the result, one course assignment - a written essay - will be scaled down and moved to the first half of the semester. Students indicated they spent the most time on their Policy Manual Analysis projects and wanted the amount of work they had done to be better recognized in the assignment weighting. Therefore, the assignment value will be increased, the assignment will be moved to the second half of the semester, and students will use their final presentations to share the key findings from their policy analyses with the class. Dr. Most shared these plans with the instructor who will be teaching the course the next time it is offered, and that instructor has agreed to implement the recommended changes when she prepares her course.

Course Peer Reviews
All untenured tenure-track MLIS faculty are expected to submit at least one course per year for peer review. Tenured faculty may request a course review whenever it suits their needs or in preparation for an application for promotion. The faculty member may ask an MLIS peer to undertake the review or identify a faculty member from another VSU graduate department or MLIS school who is qualified to comment on the instructional design and subject content of the course. These peer reviews, when combined with SOI reviews, help faculty improve instruction in areas such as course organization, appropriate use of technology, encouraging interactivity, and the quality of teaching. The departments have flexibility in the format used for course peer reviews. One model used by the program is found at Appendix III.N.

Merit Pay
All VSU faculty members are evaluated according to individual departmental standards for the award of merit pay within those calendar years where funding for merit pay is allocated to the Board of Regents by the Governor and the legislature. Criteria for the determination of merit increases include annual faculty evaluations, research productivity, academic achievements and publications, academic honors and recognition, relevant professional achievements and recognition, and non-teaching services to the institution. Like most academic units, the program has developed an internal merit pay rubric that reflects the needs and priorities of the group. The guidelines for awarding merit raises are available in Appendix III.O MLIS Guidelines for Awarding Merit Raises which aligns with the COEHS and university policies for determining merit pay. The program has applied the rubric in the years when merit pay was available. Deans review the department heads’ recommendations for merit pay and have the authority to adjust the percentages up or down for any reason as the process moves forward.

Standard III.9
The program has explicit, documented evidence of its ongoing decision-making processes and the data to substantiate the evaluation of the faculty.

Tenure and Promotion Reviews
Criteria for tenure and promotion are delineated in the following set of documents:

- The Board of Regents’ Policy Manual, Section 803.7.1
Committee Memberships
Each candidate for tenure and/or promotion in mutual agreement with the department head will nominate a committee of at least three tenured program faculty members who are not placed in an administrative position over that faculty member. The committee to review faculty members seeking promotion to associate professor must consist of tenured faculty of a rank equal to or superior to that of associate professor; for a candidate seeking promotion to full professor, committee members must hold the rank of full professor. The committee for faculty members seeking tenure only may consist of tenured faculty holding the same or higher rank as the candidate.

Since there were too few MLIS faculty members who meet the specified criteria for committee service until 2018, other tenured Valdosta State University faculty from related fields were nominated jointly by the candidate, the departmental committee chair, and the department head. Once formed, the committee reviews the candidate’s dossier for content and quality and submits a formal evaluation and recommendation to the department head. The department head then reviews the dossier and the committee’s recommendation and prepares their own evaluation and recommendation to the dean. The departmental committee and department head are expected to address the quality and appropriateness of the candidate’s work in the context of the guidelines.

The COEHS Tenure and Promotion Committee is composed of one faculty member from each department and an ex-officio member/facilitator. The COEHS committee evaluates all tenure and promotion dossiers forwarded by the departments for completeness and alignment with college expectations and makes formal recommendations to the Dean. The COEHS committee relies on the departmental evaluation to address the quality of the candidate’s work. Additionally, the COEHS committee regularly reviews the COEHS Tenure and Promotion Guidelines and makes appropriate recommendations for revisions to the COEHS deans and department heads.

The COEHS Tenure & Promotion committee members serve two-year year terms, and the chair is elected by the members. In Academic Year 2020-2021 the COEHS is concluding a full review of its tenure and promotion policies and guidelines. The deans and department heads will begin their work on the guidelines in Summer 2021 with the intent to submit them to the faculty for review and comment in the fall for implementation in Academic Year 2022-2023. Faculty applying for personnel actions in Fall 2021 will follow the current guidelines.

The University Tenure and Promotion Committee (UTPC) consists of one or two members from each academic college. Currently there are two members from the COEHS with one member from the area of Human Services and one from the area of Education. Terms of committee
members are for three years, with membership changes staggered across any three-year period. All members must be tenured with the rank of associate professor or professor. No member other than the chair may simultaneously hold an administrative appointment. The UTPC reviews all dossiers for due process and highlights any concerns with an application for the Vice President of Academic Affairs to consider. The VPAA makes the final recommendations to the President.

**Pre-Tenure Review**

Each tenure-track faculty member is required to submit a dossier in support of pre-tenure review at the start of the third year of service. That document demonstrates the teaching, service, and scholarship achievements of the candidate to date. Departments and colleges are responsible for defining the standards for teaching, service, and scholarship within the general parameters of the University policy.

Pre-tenure reviews are formative and are completed by the departmental tenure and promotion committee and submitted to the department head. Committees are created consisting of at least three tenured VSU faculty of equal or superior academic rank. Administrators in a direct supervisory position over the faculty member may not serve. Where sufficient tenured faculty of appropriate rank do not reside in a department, faculty from other VSU departments may be asked to serve. The faculty member receives a written evaluation/recommendation letter from the tenure and promotion committee. The department head uses the committee feedback to develop specific recommendations and a summary of progress toward tenure and meets with the candidate to discuss the review findings. This formative feedback is shared with the faculty member and copied to the dean. It is otherwise not a personnel action.

**Promotion and Tenure Reviews**

Beginning in their fourth year of full-time university service (if hired as an Assistant Professor or the fifth year if hired as an Associate Professor), tenure track faculty members are eligible to apply for promotion, and they are eligible to apply for tenure in their fifth year. A dossier and committee, like those created for the pre-tenure review, are required. A faculty member may elect to apply for tenure only or to postpone a tenure application to the sixth year, at which time the faculty member must apply for tenure or receive a terminal contract for the seventh year. An associate professor may request promotion to professor after five years in rank. ([https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/tenure-and-promotion-policies-and-procedures.pdf](https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/documents/tenure-and-promotion-policies-and-procedures.pdf))

Faculty members are reminded that according to the USG policy manual, excellence in teaching for all teaching faculty is emphasized. USG minimum requirements for promotion include the following:

1. Superior teaching
2. Outstanding professional service to the institution, and/or the community
3. Outstanding research, scholarship, creative activity or academic achievement
4. Professional growth and development

While VSU guidelines emphasize the teaching and scholarship areas for tenure, promotion under the COEHS Tenure and Promotion Guidelines requires that candidates demonstrate activity in each of the four areas.
Specific submission dates and portfolio guidelines are described in the COEHS Tenure and Promotion Guidelines. Recommendation for tenure and promotion proceeds from the department tenure and promotion committee and department head to the COEHS Tenure and Promotion Committee, to the COEHS Dean, to the University Tenure and Promotion Committee, to the provost, and then to the President. A faculty member denied tenure is given a terminal one-year contract for the following academic year. A successful candidate is so notified by the president and the action becomes effective at the beginning of the next academic year.

At the start of the current accreditation period, the program was operating under its own set of tenure and promotion procedures as the result of its founding and organizational positioning as a distinct teaching unit housed in the university library. When the program was moved to the COEHS at the start of Academic Year 2014-2015, the program’s tenure and promotion policies were carried forward to facilitate continuity for upcoming personnel actions for those faculty members who had been hired while the program was part of the library.

The program’s tenure and promotion policy document is listed on the Academic Affairs Tenure and Promotion Procedures web page but all tenure track faculty hired since Academic Year 2014-2015 are required to follow the COEHS Tenure and Promotion policies and procedures. The MLIS T&P document has been included in their dossiers to provide additional context for reviewers unfamiliar with the LIS discipline, its journals, and professional associations. As part of the COEHS tenure and promotion policy review process, the MLIS document officially was sunset and removed from any future role in program personnel actions in August 2021. Disciplinary descriptive elements from the policy document were retained to inform future applications for personnel actions.

During the 2014-2021 accreditation review period, five current MLIS faculty members achieved tenure and/or promotion. Two faculty members retired and were granted Professor Emeritus status following the University System of Georgia’s policies.

At VSU, it is possible for the VPAA to terminate non-tenured faculty on the recommendation of the department head and the dean. This process is outside the T&P process and results in a one-year, terminal contract for that faculty member. A faculty member who does not apply for tenure by the end of the sixth year in service may also be granted a one-year terminal contract. One MLIS faculty member opted not to apply for tenure in Fall 2016, received a terminal contract for Academic Year 2017-2018, and terminated his employment in May 2018.

Finally, a tenured or non-tenured faculty member may be dismissed before the end of a contract term for specific reasons, following the BOR Policy 8.3.9 Discipline and Removal of Faculty Members. No program faculty member has been removed under this policy.

During the current accreditation period, no recommendation for tenure or promotion has been denied to an MLIS faculty member. Table III.10 shows the pre-tenure schedule and completed tenure/promotion reviews during the 2014-2021 accreditation review period.
Table III.10
Pre-Tenure Schedule and Completed Tenure/Promotion Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Pre-tenure review</th>
<th>Promotion to Associate Professor</th>
<th>Tenured</th>
<th>Promotion to Professor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alemanne, Nicole</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choi, Yunseon - hired with two years towards tenure from her prior academic position</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colson, Lenese</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drouillard, Colette</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most, Linda</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ondrusek, Anita</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren, Xiaai</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiele, Harold</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>chose not to apply for tenure in Fall 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang, Chang woo</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post-Tenure Review

The post-tenure review takes place five years after the most recent promotion or personnel action (tenure) and continues at five-year intervals unless interrupted by a promotion, impending candidacy for promotion within a year, or approved leave of absence. Any faculty members who hold 12-month administrative contracts do not go through post-tenure review unless/until they return to a faculty contract.

Post-tenure review is completed by the departmental tenure and promotion committee and submitted to the department head. It is intended to “assist faculty members with identifying opportunities that will enable them to reach their full potential for contribution to system institutions.” The review is intended to be “both retrospective and prospective, encouraging a careful look at possibilities for different emphases at different points of a faculty member’s career.” (https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/faculty-evaluation-model.php)

The department head uses the committee’s recommendation to develop specific recommendations and a summary of progress. This formative feedback is shared with the faculty member and copied to the dean. The dean forwards the results of the review to the provost.

During the 2014-2021 accreditation review period, two faculty members completed post tenure/fifth year review as shown in Table III.11.

Table III.11
Post Tenure Review 2014-2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty name</th>
<th>Personnel action</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drouillard, Colette</td>
<td>Post-Tenure Review</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang, Chang woo</td>
<td>Post-Tenure Review</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tenured faculty members who hold administrative positions above department head are reviewed five years after returning to a full-time teaching appointment. The review process for department heads will be the same as for faculty except the report from the review committee will be submitted to the dean of that college. There are no program faculty members who hold administrative positions other than the department head.
Annual Faculty Activity Report and Plan

The Annual Faculty Activity Report and Action Plan (AFARAP) and supporting documents and data used to substantiate the evaluations of faculty are explicitly documented and housed in the department. Copies of the annual evaluation documents are forwarded to the COEHS dean and from there, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Copies of the letters of review issued at each level of evaluation of applications for tenure and promotion are kept in the department’s personnel files.

The reviews, evaluations, and personnel actions described above all contribute to program-level decision-making processes. Published scholarship, faculty activity reports, Student Opinions of Instruction, peer reviews of courses, tenure and promotion applications, and pre- and post-tenure reviews all contribute to an understanding of the strengths and areas of interest of the faculty members. Discussions at each level of review uncover areas where individual faculty members can contribute to program, college, and institutional effectiveness.

Faculty strengths and interests contribute to program improvements and student learning

The following four examples demonstrate how the program’s awareness of faculty interests, experiences, and strengths as documented through the various personnel management processes contributes to program and institutional improvement and enhanced learning experiences for program students. The documentation that supports these stories and others is also considered when identifying faculty to represent the program internally or externally, and when reviewing faculty requests for funds for external professional development, or additional instructional hardware or software.

Dr. Nicole Alemanne has demonstrated her ongoing interest and expertise in online learning through her documented professional development activities, her service work with the Center for eLearning and the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), and the sharing of her expertise through some of her scholarly activities. Based on this record, Dr. Alemanne was nominated for and selected as one of four institutional Chancellor’s Learning Scholars for 2020-2022 charged with leading faculty learning in high impact practices in online and hybrid teaching. She and her colleagues will lead local faculty learning circles that address the themes of the program for the year. In turn, she will be able to help improve program outcomes through her leadership as chair of the Curriculum Committee, and her contributions to curriculum reviews and peer course evaluations going forward.

In another example, Dr. Colette Drouillard has an ongoing interest in program assessment that is grounded in her first master’s degree in Adult and Career Education and her prior employment in federal and state occupational safety training, assessment, and management. This knowledge and experience inform her deep engagement in the development and maintenance of the program’s Student Learning Outcomes Assessment system through her continuing service as chair of the program’s Assessment Committee.

As an outcome of Dr. Drouillard’s work guiding the youth services area of the program curriculum and her engagement with professional children’s and youth services librarianship, Dr. Drouillard was selected as a 2017 fellow in the ALA and Google Libraries Ready to Code.
project, charged with redesigning youth services and library media courses to embed ready-to-code concepts into MLIS student learning. The fellows then reviewed grant applications submitted by librarians who wanted funding to embed ready-to-code concepts in their local children’s programming. Dr. Drouillard brought what she had learned as a Google Ready to Code fellow back to the program as she used the experiences gained through her fellowship to first develop a module on writing grants to support youth services programming in public libraries for one of her courses. She then expanded the module content to a full course on grant writing for public libraries and offered it as a special topics course in Summer 2020. She shared the course with her colleagues who are teaching it in Summer 2021. This pattern of sharing and growing a personal interest to benefit the program and its students can be seen in the work of other faculty members as well.

Dr. Xiaoai Ren has an ongoing commitment to sustainable living and environmental protection. She brings this commitment to her service as a member of the Campus Wellness team. She uses it to inform her service as the advisor to the program’s student organization. It also informs her scholarship as she has been surveying public libraries on whether and how they focus on environmental protection in their collections and programs. She will use the findings from her research as she updates her courses in the coming years.

Dr. Linda Most has used her experience as the department head and program leader to support her service to the state and local professional communities, serving as chair of the State Board for the Certification of Librarians and secretary of the board of trustees of the local regional library system. She has used these experiences to inform her teaching and the curriculum more generally by making sure the faculty have the information they need to help their students understand the different certification requirements for professional librarians in different states.

**Standard III.10**
The program demonstrates how the results of the evaluation of faculty are systematically used to improve the program and to plan for the future.

The results of the multi-level faculty evaluation process described in **Standards III.8** and **III.9** serve as a significant source of the information used to inform program improvement. As illustrated in **Figure III.5**, the Annual Faculty Activity Report and Action Plan (AFARAP) and Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) surveys are collected yearly and are supplemented by reviews grounded in criteria related to faculty tenure. The diagram also targets those areas of program improvement and planning that have benefitted from a feedback cycle to faculty, namely, updates to curriculum and courses, building a body of research and scholarship that relates to the profession, and a service component that is central to the library and information sciences profession.
Faculty evaluations and personnel actions have been systematically used to improve the program by documenting the evolving strengths, achievements, and areas of expertise found amongst the faculty and then leveraging that growth towards program review and revision. Curriculum reviews have been led by the faculty members with the most expertise in the areas under consideration. For example, Dr. Drouillard used her training in young adult literature and her ongoing research into the reading behaviors of young people to inform the review of the youth services concentration. When Dr. Choi arrived, she used findings from her research and her relevant prior teaching experience to update the program’s courses in the organization of information, cataloging, classification, metadata, and thesaurus construction as they came up in the course rotation schedule.

Dr. Ren and Dr. Ondrusek worked together on updates to the courses in the information sources and services concentration. This work was significantly informed by Dr. Ondrusek’s contributions to new editions of reference and information sources textbooks as well as her collaborative research into the way students learn the principles of online searching in information services. Dr. Ondrusek and Mrs. Suddeth updated and reconceived the courses focused on the management of libraries and information centers by drawing on Mrs. Suddeth’s business education background and long experience as a public library director and Dr. Ondrusek’s familiarity with curriculum development informed by standards, competencies, and stakeholder participation.

All the curriculum updates completed during this accreditation period have been undertaken to meet the needs of the program’s students and to keep the curriculum aligned with the program’s mission to prepare entry level professionals for work in libraries and information centers in Georgia and the US. Faculty expertise in their areas of scholarship and practice has been instrumental in maintaining the alignment of the curriculum with the changing needs of
incoming students. At the same time, faculty have used their knowledge of the curriculum and their teaching experiences to inform their participation in the admissions application review process, thus helping to select incoming students who can best benefit from the program’s curriculum and delivery mode. This alignment of curriculum focus with student interests and goals has resulted in high student satisfaction rates and positive employment outcomes as reported on the program’s outcomes pages.

Faculty research and scholarship is informed by their backgrounds, teaching areas, and service projects. The ongoing opportunities for reflection and the expectations that the different evaluation processes include give the faculty time, space, and a performance evaluation structure in which to consider how to position their research initiatives to potentially inform their teaching or show them elements of their teaching that can inform new research initiatives. The expectation for professional and community service embedded in the different evaluation processes encourages the faculty to engage with the communities the program and the institution serve. In return, the faculty keep current on the needs of the communities the program serves and use this knowledge to inform curriculum review and development.

Together, the data and outcomes from the various faculty evaluation processes document the faculty’s competence and provide evidence that the program faculty can and do deliver and maintain a curriculum that supports its students in the achievement of their goals for their degrees and their careers.
Standard IV: Students

Introduction

The following standard provides details about the VSU MLIS Program’s efforts to support students and to uphold its mission: “The Department of Library and Information Studies at Valdosta State University educates a diverse community of online learners in the core competencies and values of the library and information professions, provides students with learning opportunities in traditional and emerging information environments, and prepares graduates to serve in a rapidly changing information society.”

(https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/our-program/)

Over the last several years, steadily increasing demand for admission in the program has resulted in a rapid growth in enrollment and expansion of the curriculum. Table IV.1 shows enrollment trends for the past eight years.

Table IV.1
Annualized Applications and Admissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Applications *</th>
<th>Number of Applicants Accepted</th>
<th>Number of Applicants Denied</th>
<th>% Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/our-program/program-outcomes.php#RATES (Note: *Withdrawn or incomplete applications are not considered in the applicant pool)

The program’s physical location in South Georgia was a logistical challenge for students outside the southeastern United States until we transitioned the one remaining element of the program, new student MLIS Program Orientation, from a mandatory face to face program held on campus in Valdosta, GA to one that was fully online and asynchronous. Table IV.1 provides evidence that the number of applications submitted and students accepted to the program increased after this transition was implemented in Fall 2017.

Beginning with the founding of the program in 2001 and through the first two-thirds of this review cycle, the majority of students in the program were Georgia residents. During the current accreditation cycle, the percentage of out-of-state students has risen steadily as shown in Table IV.2. Moving the required orientation from face-to-face to fully online in Fall 2017 was a significant trigger for the transformation of the program’s student body from one that was largely Georgia-centric to one that now has more out-of-state than in-state students.

Table IV.2
In-State and Out-of-State Student Enrollment, Fall 2013 to 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In State</th>
<th>Out of State</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>139 (89%)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>143 (82%)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>150 (70%)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>150 (63%)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>143 (62%)</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>149 (56%)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>136 (44%)</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>145 (39%)</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standard IV.1**

The program formulates recruitment, admission, retention, financial aid, career services, and other academic and administrative policies for students that are consistent with the program’s mission and program goals and objectives. These policies include the needs and values of the constituencies served by the program. The program has policies to recruit and retain students who reflect the diversity of North America’s communities. The composition of the student body is such that it fosters a learning environment consistent with the program’s mission and program goals and objectives.

The COEHS Vision statement, *The Dewar College of Education and Human Services will be a leader in transforming lives and communities through education and service*, informs the mission of the program. The college’s mission provides the foundation for its recruitment, admission, retention, financial aid, career services, and other policies for students, guides the MLIS Program’s mission and goals, reviewed in **Standard I.1**, and helps ensure that we are sending graduates into the workforce with the education and experience that our stakeholders not only expect, but require from entry level LIS professionals.

The Graduate School and Department of Library and Information Studies’ admission policies have minimum requirements, but admission does not rely upon any one criterion alone. The program recognizes that, for a variety of reasons, students may need to build up their qualifications before being admitted to a degree program, or they may need to address issues impeding their academic progress. The goal is to balance the needs of potential employers for well-prepared graduates with the potential of some students. Standards for admission, assessment of applications, and the program’s holistic approach of evaluating academic, intellectual, and individual qualities and experiences for each applicant and the option to admit on probationary status will be discussed in detail in **Standard IV.3**.

***recruitment, admission, retention,***

During the current accreditation period applications for admission have steadily increased. Demand for admission is frequently ascribed to three attributes of the program: 1) The University System of Georgia’s extremely competitive eTuition rate (the cost of tuition for fully online degree programs is the same for out-of-state students as it is for in-state students), 2) continuing accreditation by ALA-COA, and 3) the fully online, asynchronous delivery mode of
the program’s curriculum. Applicants also often indicate that the program’s focused and applied curriculum best aligns with their goals for their degrees.

We appreciate the high demand for seats in our program and are careful to select applicants who will support our goal of developing and maintaining a diverse and highly promising student body. Application and admission numbers are reported publicly on our Program Outcomes webpage and are presented in Table IV.1.

Because of continuing high demand for admission to the program, student recruiting is conducted on a limited basis, primarily in-state, and strategically at the national level. Our target applicant for admission is an experienced LIS paraprofessional who wants to obtain the MLIS to enable their transition into entry level professional positions in academic, public, or special libraries and information centers. Though the program does not recruit internationally we do receive applications from overseas from time to time.

…recruitment,…

Coordinated by the department head, recruiting is primarily accomplished via three strategies:

1. **Conference exhibit booths** at state (GLA Conference) and national (ALA Annual via the ALISE joint recruiting booth) conferences to connect with alumni, students and prospective students.

2. **Word of mouth.** Alumni and stakeholders play a significant role in spreading the word about the quality and flexibility of the program.

3. **Program rankings of online MLIS programs.** Prospective applicants look at these third-party rankings for information about program affordability and satisfaction. Examples of groups that have ranked the program in their top ten include:
   - Online U, [Most Affordable Master’s in Library Science Online](#)
   - Master’s Program Guide, [50 Best Master of Library Science Online Degree Programs 2018](#)
   - Best College Reviews, [Top Online Master’s Programs in Library Science](#)
   - Guide to Online Schools’ 2020 Accredited Online Library Science Degrees. While it’s unclear where data is obtained in many cases and methodology used to develop the ranking of these lists can be questionable, potential applicants researching MLIS degree programs see the rankings online and they have enabled applicants to find our program.

4. **University, graduate school, college, and program webpages** all serve as recruiting vehicles for the program. An overview of the program is included on the Graduate School’s webpages and the program’s homepage provides a full description of the program, application process, and expectations for enrolled students.

The program also occasionally sponsors exhibit tables or student/alumni events at a variety of
other conferences. Exhibit tables are set up and manned by faculty, MLIS students and/or alumni who serve as program ambassadors.

- 10th National Conference of African American Librarians, Atlanta, GA (2017)
- Alumni reception at ALA Midwinter meeting, Atlanta, GA (2017)
- Metro-Atlanta Library Association’s regional MLIS Programs Fairs, Atlanta, GA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table IV.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment Events</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/Regional Conferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...admission,...

The admissions application process is conducted under the guidance of VSU’s Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research (formerly the Dean of the Graduate School). The associate provost supervises the Graduate Admissions Office, which manages the application process for all graduate programs and sends completed application packages to the programs for review. The program sets admissions criteria in conjunction with the college and the Graduate School. The criteria used by the program in the admissions application review process are reviewed and updated as necessary by the departmental Admissions and Recruitment committees.

The program’s Admissions Committee reviews applications holistically, assessing academic qualifications, experience, areas of interest, and compatibility of the applicant’s goals with the program mission and delivery, and determines whether or not to recommend the applicant to the Associate Provost for admission to the program. The Graduate Admissions Office processes the program’s recommendations, and the associate provost sends out formal acceptance letters. A comprehensive discussion of admission requirements and procedures is provided in Standard IV.3.

As shown in Table IV.1, the number of applications received by the program has increased steadily since Academic Year 2013 - 2014. In Fall 2019, in return for receiving an additional full-time, limited term faculty line, the program was able to offer admission to 20 additional applicants. Figure IV.1 summarizes student enrollment by semester and illustrates the fluctuations between semesters based on the number of students admitted and graduating each term for a consistently increasing student enrollment over Academic Years 2013-2020.
The first step in retaining a diverse, talented, and promising student body is admitting students capable of success in a graduate program. Equally important is providing guidance when students struggle to meet expected levels of academic performance. The students are introduced to the Graduate School’s policies on academic grades, scholastic probation, dismissal, and readmission options as part of their first semester orientation work.

These retention efforts and the program’s admission requirements help the program to select and retain students that will be successful and provide them with opportunities and tools to attain the greatest possible outcomes of their education. Table IV.4 documents the retention and graduation statistics for the past eight years.
Table IV.4
Retention and Graduation Rates (data as of January 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th># of Accepted Applicants Who Enrolled</th>
<th>% of Accepted Applicants Who Enrolled</th>
<th>% of Enrolled Students Retained One Year Later</th>
<th>% of Enrolled Students Who Graduated with MLIS*</th>
<th>% of Enrolled Students Not Graduated But Considered Active**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>78.1</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>85.2</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-21</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Part-time students average 2 ½ to 3 years to complete the MLIS degree program.  
**A student is considered active if they have enrolled in MLIS coursework within the last three semesters.

Composition of the Student Body
As of Fall 2021, the student body of the MLIS Program was comprised of 372 students. The composition of the students varies in race/ethnicity, age, gender, location (for example, applicants for Fall 2021 came from 27 states and Washington D.C.), educational background, pace through the program, and areas of interest and work experience in LIS.

Valdosta State University (VSU) is a learning environment based on trust and mutual respect in which open dialogue, vigorous debate, and the free exchange of ideas are welcome. (VSU Blazer Creed) The program collects applicants’ race/ethnicity information by self-identification on admissions applications. The COEHS Office of Professional Education Services provides the program with data about race/ethnicity (Table IV.5), gender (Table IV.6), and age (Table IV.7) that are mapped to the categories used in the annual ALISE Statistical Survey.
Table IV.5  
**Enrollment by Self-Reported Race/Ethnicity, Fall 2013-2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Multicultural</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>1590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>311</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>157</strong></td>
<td><strong>175</strong></td>
<td><strong>214</strong></td>
<td><strong>239</strong></td>
<td><strong>227</strong></td>
<td><strong>268</strong></td>
<td><strong>307</strong></td>
<td><strong>374</strong></td>
<td><strong>1961</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H</strong> – Hispanic/Latino of any race</td>
<td><strong>AI</strong> – American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td><strong>A</strong> – Asian</td>
<td><strong>B</strong> – Black/African American</td>
<td><strong>NH</strong> – Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td><strong>U</strong> – Race/Ethnicity Unknown</td>
<td><strong>W</strong> – White</td>
<td><strong>Int</strong> – International</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.6  
**Enrollment by Gender, Fall 2013-2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>38(24%)</td>
<td>119(76%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>37(21%)</td>
<td>138(79%)</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>47(22%)</td>
<td>167(78%)</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>48(20%)</td>
<td>191(80%)</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>40(18%)</td>
<td>177(82%)</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>51(19%)</td>
<td>217(81%)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>54(18%)</td>
<td>253(82%)</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>65(17%)</td>
<td>307(83%)</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.7  
**Enrollment by Age, Fall 2013-2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>20 to 24</th>
<th>25 to 29</th>
<th>30 to 34</th>
<th>35 to 39</th>
<th>40 to 44</th>
<th>45 to 49</th>
<th>50 to 54</th>
<th>&gt;54</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial aid
Another way the program supports the recruitment and retention of a diverse, talented, and promising student body is via the university’s affordable eTuition rate and opportunities for financial aid. The eTuition rate for students enrolled in online programs is the same for both in-state and out-of-state students. The eTuition rate is competitively positioned and very appealing to prospective students. Information about current tuition and fee schedules is posted on the University Website.

In October 2018, the program was ranked no.1 in the most affordable Master’s in Library Science Online by SR Education Group. Financial Aid in the form of Federal Student Loans is available to all qualifying graduate students. Program students are also encouraged to apply for a wide range of university and outside scholarships as well as to consider other funding opportunities that may be available to them through their public or academic library employers.

Table IV.8
Percentage of Students Receiving Financial Aid, 2013-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AY13-14</th>
<th>AY14-15</th>
<th>AY15-16</th>
<th>AY16-17</th>
<th>AY17-18</th>
<th>AY18-19</th>
<th>AY19-20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#Enrolled</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Awarded</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent funded</td>
<td>75.78%</td>
<td>65.22%</td>
<td>69.23%</td>
<td>90.40%</td>
<td>66.52%</td>
<td>80.21%</td>
<td>60.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VSU Office of Institutional Research

Graduate Assistantships and Other Tuition Waivers
Although the MLIS is a fully asynchronous online program, the program does have some students who live in Valdosta or in close enough proximity to consider applying for a graduate assistantship. Students who are awarded graduate assistantships must provide 19 hours of work each week on campus in exchange for a stipend and a tuition waiver. Assistantships are awarded in the fall and spring, summer assistantship funding is awarded competitively, based on funds available and the number of applications received. Virtual assistantships are available in very limited numbers.

The university’s Archives and Special Collections and the Office of eLearning are examples of on-campus units that have provided assistantships held by MLIS students. MLIS students who receive these assistantships have the opportunity to work with the collections, librarians, and professional staff in the different departments. Other programs that MLIS students have been placed into include campus offices such as Campus Wellness and the Center for International Programs. The MLIS Program itself is allocated one administrative Graduate Assistant position in the Fall and Spring semesters. Due to the position requiring work with student records the MLIS program usually hires students enrolled in other degree programs in order to protect enrolled students’ privacy. On rare occasions there is an exception made for applicants who have special skills, such as the ability to work on the program website. There have been two MLIS students that have been placed in the program office for graduate assistantships. The program has not received funding for any research or teaching assistantships. Teaching assistantships are allocated to Master’s degree students who can teach on-campus undergraduate courses or sections.
There are several scholarships and other programs available for residents of the state of Georgia. University System of Georgia (USG) employees are eligible for tuition waivers through the USG Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and the MLIS Program has enrolled an increasing number of students who have utilized that program. Additionally, Georgia residents over the age of 62 are eligible for free tuition through the USG’s 62 and Older Program.

Table IV.9
Tuition Waivers Awarded to MLIS Students by Category, 2013-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MLIS Term</th>
<th>USG TAP Waiver</th>
<th>Graduate Assistant Waiver</th>
<th>Senior Citizen Waiver</th>
<th>Non-degree seeking, employee waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2015</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2016</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2018</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2019</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2020</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2020</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2021</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MLIS Students Receiving Graduate Assistant Waivers 2013-2020

- Dorothy Ellis – records not retained
- Kelly Strickland – Physics, Astronomy, Geography, and Engineering Dept.
- Ben Mullis – MLIS Office
- Douglas Carlson – University Archives and Special Collections
- Jessica Whitten – MLIS Office
- Megan Crews – University Archives and Special Collections
- Kailyn Middleton – Academic Support Center – Tutoring English
- Allison Tolman – Campus Wellness
- Tera Ray – eLearning Office
- Rufus Freeman – COEHS Undergraduate Academic Advisor
- Jessica Lamb – University Archives and Special Collections
After stipend and waiver, students who are awarded a VSU graduate assistantship are responsible for $38 in tuition and mandatory fees. (Taxes also come out of the stipend.) The value of a VSU Graduate Assistant waiver for a range of assignments during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 are shown in Table IV.10, and for Summer 2021 in Table IV.11.

Table IV.10
Value of Graduate Assistant Tuition Waiver Academic Year 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>14 hour</th>
<th></th>
<th>19 hour</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>Tuition Waiver</td>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin GA</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,774</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,774</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Assist</td>
<td>$2,580</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$4,104</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>$2,580</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$4,104</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T of Record</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$4,524</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In State Tuition for 6 credit hours
**In State Tuition for 9 credit hours

Source: Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research

Table IV.11
Value of Graduate Assistant Tuition Waiver Summer 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>14 hour</th>
<th></th>
<th>19 hour</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>Tuition Waiver</td>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>Stipend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin GA</td>
<td>$1,660</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,184</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>$1,660</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,184</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Assist</td>
<td>$1,935</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,459</td>
<td>$2,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>$1,935</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,459</td>
<td>$2,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T of Record</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
<td>$1,524*</td>
<td>$3,774</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In State Tuition for 6 credit hours
**In State Tuition for 9 credit hours

Source: Office of the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research

Scholarships
Program scholarship information as well as information about other funding opportunities for program students is available via the MLIS website. In 2016, the program was the beneficiary of the newly funded Baker Family MLIS Scholarship for one in-state student. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, the program was honored to be able to offer the Merryll Penson MLIS Scholarship, funded via donations made to the University System of Georgia Foundation in honor of Merryll Penson, the former USG Executive Director of Library Services on the occasion of her retirement. Earlier in this accreditation period, the program benefited from the H.W. Wilson Foundation’s funding of scholarships awarded to LIS programs to support students and received two three-year $15,000 grants from the Foundation. This funding program ended after changes at
the H.W. Wilson Foundation.

Program scholarships are awarded following individual award specifications. Some are competitive awards; some are based on needs. Each scholarship has criteria that students must meet in order to be eligible. The criteria and the scholarship application process and deadlines are available to students on the MLIS Awards and Scholarships webpage. The MLIS Scholarship Committee meets twice per year to review departmental scholarship applications and selects recipients based on the individual award criteria. In selecting scholarship recipients, the program’s Scholarship Committee members consider the following criteria as appropriate to scholarship specifications: state or county residency, academic performance, student goal statements, and/or financial need.

MLIS students are eligible to apply for the Dorothy Dewar Service Scholarships from the Dewar College of Education and Human Services. MLIS students are also encouraged to seek out external scholarship funding opportunities from their state library associations, their employers, and a variety of national organizations.

The program posts announcements about external funding and scholarship opportunities in its MLIS Village Community forums. MLIS Village is the program’s virtual student lounge housed in the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS. Information is also shared through the MLIS Student Organization of Library and Information Science (SOLIS) newsletters.

The Georgia Library Association and other professional associations around the country have helped many program students finance their education via their scholarship opportunities. The Georgia Library Association has an established scholarship program for students who are enrolled in an ALA-accredited MLIS program and who agree to work for one year following graduation in a library-related capacity in Georgia or who agree to pay back a prorated amount of the award plus interest within a two-year period. Program students have also received national awards, including multiple scholarships awarded to ALA Spectrum Scholars.

Additionally, the program provides funding to encourage students to attend professional conferences by reimbursing their registration fees using SOLIS funds. The program faculty and student ALA chapter fundraising activities generate funds to assist with costs related to conference registration and travel for students. The program provides up to $400 of reimbursement for the travel expenses for students who are selected to participate in the ALA Student-to-Staff program (suspended in 2020 due to Covid-19 impacts).

Table IV.12 outlines the financial support MLIS students received during this accreditation cycle including both internal and external funding. The external funding is voluntarily self-reported by students, so the actual amounts may be higher.
### Table IV.12
Assistantships, Scholarships, Awards, and Grants, 2014-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Type</th>
<th>13/14</th>
<th>14/15</th>
<th>15/16</th>
<th>16/17</th>
<th>17/18</th>
<th>18/19</th>
<th>19/20</th>
<th>$ Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional funding other than financial aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSU Graduate Assistantships by semester</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>See table above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker Family $1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy Dewar Service $1,200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSU MLIS Merit One course tuition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$13,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merryl Penson $1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. W. Wilson One course tuition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>exhausted</td>
<td>$12,306</td>
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<td>H. W. Wilson travel awards</td>
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<td>ALA Student-to-Staff Reimbursement $400</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Funding – in-state</td>
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<td>GLA Beard Scholarship $1500</td>
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<td>Archive Institute (SGA3) $500</td>
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<td>Gail Rogers Honorary Scholarship $1,000</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Blanch E. Woolls $2,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bound-to-Stay-Bound Books $8,000</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Connecticut Library Association: Caroline M. Huber Scholarship $4,000</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Kino Lorber $2,000</td>
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<td>AALL LexisNexis</td>
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<td>Missouri Lib Association Scholarship $2,000</td>
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<td>New Hampshire Library Association Scholarship</td>
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<td>14/15</td>
<td>15/16</td>
<td>16/17</td>
<td>17/18</td>
<td>18/19</td>
<td>19/20</td>
<td>$ Value</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Library Association Scholarship $1,000</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Paid Internships</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>CNN est. $2,500</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC est. $2,500</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
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<td>Information Literacy Fellowship (University of Missouri-Kansas City) est. $10K</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library of Congress Junior Fellows $6,000 total value</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Career services**

In addition to sharing job search resources on the department website, the program uses the MLIS Village community site in the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS and the informal VSU MLIS Program Facebook group page to share job announcements, professional events, and other activities such as webinars with current students and alumni. Students and alumni are encouraged to post announcements to share with the community.

The VSU MLIS Student Organization SOLIS also supports professional activities and events, including featuring alumni in the SOLIS newsletter and inviting them to share their experiences and tips on applying for scholarships and/or job seeking. All students also get faculty feedback on their resumes, cover letters, and ePortfolios when they enroll in the required exit course, MLIS 7800 Capstone. More information about career services is provided at Standard IV.5.3.

**Standard IV.2**

Current, accurate, and easily accessible information about the program is available to students and the general public. This information includes documentation of progress toward achievement of program goals and objectives, descriptions of curricula, information on faculty, admission requirements, availability of financial aid, criteria for evaluating student performance, assistance with placement, and other policies and procedures. The program demonstrates that it has procedures to support these policies.

**Current, accurate, and easily accessible information about the program is available to students and the general public.**

The MLIS Program is committed to providing access to the information that students and the general public need. To meet their needs, the program shares information across a variety of channels including the program’s website, social media accounts, email, and the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS platform.

**MLIS Program Website**

To provide convenient and continuous access, the program houses most information on its
The MLIS Program website provides a comprehensive introduction to the department and the program. The program updates the website frequently to keep it current.

Information documenting the program’s progress towards achievement of program goals and objectives is available on the Program Outcomes webpage. This page is maintained and updated annually by the COEHS Office of Professional Education Services after Student Learning Outcome Assessment (SLOA) results have been reviewed and analyzed and after annual student admission, retention, and graduation data have been collected.

The following MLIS webpages are among those that are the most relevant to current and prospective students:

- **Student Resources** – a page that lists policies governing MLIS program, and campus resources such as VSU Counseling Center and VSU Academic Support Center
- **Academic Advising** – a page that includes information to help students planning for courses, and applying for graduation
- **FAQs** – a page that answers questions on topics ranging from applying to the program, taking courses, transferring credit, financial aid, and more

The MLIS webpages contain direct links to:

- **Program Overview** – the page that lists mission, goals, and objectives followed by an overview of the curriculum including Student Learning Objectives mapped to Program Objectives, Curriculum, Program of Study, Core Courses & Electives, and Optional Areas of Interest
- **Program Outcomes** – acceptance, retention, graduation rates; employment outcomes
- **Faculty & Staff Directory** – the page with links to faculty and staff profiles
- **Admissions** – the page that links to all pertinent policies and procedures
- **Scholarships & Awards** – the page that includes financial support recommendations
- **Course Syllabi** – a page with both archived and current course syllabi
- **Employment** – this page provides students and alumni with a broad range of resources for employment opportunities.

**University Webpages**
The University website also contains information that is applicable to MLIS students. The official Graduate Catalog is now published exclusively online. It conveys academic policies and requirements as well as information about applying to and progressing through the MLIS Program. The Graduate School website provides detailed program information excerpted from the Graduate Catalog including application and admission information, program retention, dismissal and readmission policies, and graduation requirements. The procedures that support these policies are implicit or embedded in the content provided on each webpage referenced above.

**Social Media**
The MLIS program maintains a closed Facebook group, Valdosta State University MLIS, for
current students, alumni, faculty, and invited stakeholders. Through this group, members can share announcements, professional articles, job ads, and other information. Incoming students are invited to join the Facebook group as part of their orientation. The program uses the Facebook group as an informal communication platform as compared to the departmental website and the MLIS Village community site inside VSU’s LMS BlazeVIEW.

The Valdosta State University MLIS Facebook group contributes significantly to building a sense of community among students, faculty, and alumni. The downside is that not everyone is a Facebook user. The program’s student organization SOLIS is exploring the possibility of using LinkedIn as a channel to increase engagement of current MLIS students and alumni and enable them to more effectively share professional news and hiring information. But as with FaceBook, not all students or alumni have LinkedIn accounts, so SOLIS officers are still considering a range of possible ways to encourage current students as well as alumni to create accounts so they can connect with the MLIS LinkedIn group account and participate in networking opportunities.

Learning Management System
The University System of Georgia provides the D2L Brightspace LMS as its online learning platform for all its member institutions. Each institution then brands and tailors the Brightspace platform to meet its specific needs and policies. The MLIS program delivers its curriculum via this platform, which the university has branded as BlazeVIEW. The program has built and maintains a program-wide open-ended BlazeVIEW course site, titled MLIS Village, that serves as the online student hub for announcements, resources, and non-course-related communication.

The content in MLIS Village is targeted to current students, though alumni continue to have access to MLIS Village as long as their university email accounts are active. Students, alumni and faculty members can post announcements, communicate with each other on discussion boards, or hold meetings using the embedded live classroom feature, BlackBoard Collaborate Ultra. All current MLIS students are enrolled in MLIS Village and new students are enrolled in and introduced to MLIS Village during the MLIS Program Orientation in their first semester. The program head hosts a regularly scheduled drop-in live chat session for current students inside MLIS Village called “Talk to Dr. Most,” typically held once per semester. The sessions give students an opportunity to ask any questions they might have for the department head. A summary of each session is published in the subsequent SOLIS newsletter so that those who do not attend can benefit from any of the points raised during the session.

Print Materials
The program makes limited use of print materials in courses and program promotion. These materials are made available in the department office but are most often distributed at conferences in which the program has a booth or when the College or the Graduate School is conducting face to face recruiting activities. Most communication with prospective applicants is conducted via email or telephone.
Standard IV.3

Standards for admission are applied consistently. Students admitted to the program have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; the policies and procedures for waiving any admission standard or academic prerequisite are stated clearly and applied consistently. Assessment of an application is based on a combined evaluation of academic, intellectual, and other qualifications as they relate to the constituencies served by the program, the program's goals and objectives, and the career objectives of the individual. Within the framework of institutional policy and programs, the admission policy for the program ensures that applicants possess sufficient interest, aptitude, and qualifications to enable successful completion of the program and subsequent contribution to the field.

The Graduate School and Department of Library and Information Studies’ admission policies have minimum requirements, but admission does not rely upon any one criterion alone. All applicants are required to submit a personal statement, three letters of recommendation, a resume, two essays and official transcripts. Applicants with an undergraduate GPA below 3.0 are also required to submit a letter of exception to provide an explanation for why an exception should be made for a GPA that does not meet the program’s stated requirements and how the student plans to maintain the required 3.0 graduate GPA if they are admitted.

While prospective students find instructions for the admissions process on the MLIS Admission Requirements webpage, and general instructions on the VSU Apply to Graduate School website, they complete the application process via the Radius portal. The required documents are received and verified by Graduate Admissions and all complete applications are made available to the program’s Admissions Committee for review after the application deadline for the semester has passed (Fall semester, March 15; Spring semester, October 15; Summer semester, no new student admissions).

Standards for admission...

The MLIS Program’s admissions standards are summarized in Table.13 below:

This program is designed to meet the graduate education needs of library and information science professionals residing in the state of Georgia and in the United States.

Table IV.13
MLIS Program Admissions Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Documents</th>
<th>Admission Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Graduate Application</td>
<td>• Application Fee (credit or debit card and e-checks accepted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official transcript from your bachelor’s degree-granting school and from any graduate coursework (Transcripts of coursework completed in-residence at VSU will be obtained by the Graduate School)</td>
<td>• Must hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally-accredited institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Must have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the last two years of undergraduate coursework or at least a 3.0 graduate GPA in a Master’s program from a regionally-accredited institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• GPA calculations of the last two years of coursework include all undergraduate courses taken in the last 60 hours completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation of International Transcripts - Applicants who have completed coursework at an institution outside of the United States must submit a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Required Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Documents</th>
<th>Admission Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>course-by-course evaluation of the coursework. This transcript evaluation must be completed by an international education credentials evaluation service. We consider evaluations from any services on the NACES Membership list.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| MLIS Application Essays (Guidelines) | • Two application essays that describe your interest in the program and work experience in the LIS field.  
• The applicant will upload these items to their self-service checklist in Radius. ([https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/application-status-check.php](https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/application-status-check.php)) |
| Resume | • Submit a copy of your resume or curriculum vitae.  
• The applicant will upload these items to their self-service checklist in Radius. ([https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/application-status-check.php](https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/application-status-check.php)) |
| Three Recommendations | • Letters from current or former LIS employers are preferred.  
• Letters may come from former professors or professionals acquainted with your academic or vocational background and interests.  
• Recommenders will be sent an automated email with a link to a recommendation form from the application portal using the information the applicant provides.  
• All letters must be accompanied by the appropriate recommendation form. |
| VSU Medical Form | • The form must be completed and signed by the student/applicant.  
• This form must be received prior to enrollment, NOT prior to admission.  
• Applicants who are currently enrolled, and those who attended VSU in the past, are not required to resubmit the Medical Form. |
| Letter of Exception (Instructions) | • All applicants must submit this item in the event that, when recalculated, his or her undergraduate GPA might not meet the minimum GPA requirement of 3.0. |


The application essay guidelines require applicants to respond to two questions, with an additional optional question, to help application reviewers understand each applicant's goals for pursuing a degree and the applicant's degree of familiarity with a critical issue facing the field. The admissions committee considers both the quality of the essay content and of the written communication skills. The specific instructions are:

- **Essay 1A** (Required, maximum of 500 words). Explain what personal, educational, and/or employment experiences in your adult life have shaped your desire to earn the MLIS degree at VSU. Highlight work experience in library or LIS positions. Also describe your professional goals, how you arrived at them, and why an MLIS degree is necessary to accomplish those goals.

  Please also address why you believe that you will be successful working in the fully asynchronous online learning environment of the VSU MLIS program.
Essay 1B (Optional, maximum of 250 words). If the VSU MLIS Program has an area of study that interests you, describe how following that area of study will support your professional goals. Descriptions of the areas of study are available at: https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/our-program/

- Essay 2 (Required, 750-1000 words). In this essay, please identify one major issue or trend currently affecting the dynamic, changing field of library and information science. Critically assess this issue or trend and present your response in the form of an essay. You may consult and cite additional sources such as relevant articles published in academic or professional journals to support your assessment.

International Applicants
Because the MLIS Program is delivered fully online, student visas cannot be issued to international applicants who wish to apply to this program to study in the United States. International students who do not require a student visa can apply to the program and enroll from the countries in which they live. In addition to the submission of all the required materials referenced above, international applicants whose first language is not English must submit official scores on the TOEFL exam.

International applicants whose first language is not English but who have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher from a U.S. institution may be exempt from the TOEFL requirement. Applicants who have completed coursework and earned degrees at an institution outside of the United States must submit a course-by-course evaluation of the coursework. This evaluation must be completed by an international education credentials evaluation service such as Josef Silney, ECE, etc. The transcript evaluation does not replace the transcript requirement. Official transcripts must be submitted along with the transcript evaluation. This requirement is published on the Graduate School’s MLIS Admissions Requirements page.

Assessment of an application…

Each application is reviewed holistically using a rubric. Since 2013, the rubric has been revised several times as needed to reflect the evolving needs of the committee as identified during each review cycle. In the most recent revision, in 2019, the committee added prompts intended to focus on the importance of finding evidence in application materials “that applicant will be successful in the Online Asynchronous learning environment and that applicant can work independently and has requisite maturity to succeed in program.”

Admissions recommendations are arrived at by reaching consensus among the program’s Admissions Committee members. Each committee member reviews a subset of the application pool individually, applying the program’s application review rubric to each application. (Appendix IV.A) Each application is reviewed by a minimum of two Admissions Committee members. Admissions Committee members are all full-time faculty, and they draw on their experiences and observations from teaching and advising to inform the revisions to the
application evaluation rubric.

The rubric guides the committee members to evaluate individuals based on their academic history, work experiences, career objectives, personal statements, recommendation letters, and writing skills. This selection process seeks to identify individuals whose career goals align with the program’s mission to educate entry-level librarians for academic, public, and special libraries.

In Spring 2020 the committee agreed to have three readers per application to avoid split recommendations but found that two readers would be sufficient going forward. After applications are read and individually scored, the scores are tallied, and the committee reviews the scoring as a group and then makes its recommendations to the department based on group consensus. Ultimately, the MLIS Department Head makes the final recommendations for admission to the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research. Typically, the Associate Provost accepts the program’s recommendations, but holds the ability to make final admissions decisions and sends out the official letters offering admission to the MLIS Program.

The university’s graduate admissions policy does allow newly admitted students to defer their enrollment by one semester on a case-by-case basis. If an accepted applicant asks to defer, the Graduate Admissions Office is informed, and the student’s start date can be updated one time to the subsequent Fall or Spring semester.

Through Academic Year 2018 – 2019 the application review process was conducted using paper copies of the application packets prepared by the Graduate Admissions Office staff. In Academic Year 2019 - 2020 the Graduate Admissions office completed their shift to a fully online application submission process and is now able to provide graduate program application reviewers with digital access to the applications via the online appReview portal. Fall 2020 was first semester in which the portal was used to review applications and the program faculty found that we were able to reduce the time required for the application review and decision-making process cycle by about two weeks, thereby allowing us to notify prospective applicants two weeks earlier than had been possible previously.

The program will continue to work with Graduate Admissions to increase use of the application review portal’s features as we become more familiar with it. To further reduce the wait time applicants experience between the application due date and formal notification of their status, the program has instituted the practice of sending an email to all accepted students once the admissions committee has finished its work and the decisions have been communicated to the Graduate Admissions Office. This email helps newly accepted applicants begin their planning as quickly as possible and allows the program to gauge the percentage of accepted applicants who intend to enroll. The most recent iteration of this email message sent by the department head opens with the following paragraphs:

The MLIS Program Admissions Committee has reviewed your application and recommended you to the Graduate School for admission to the MLIS Program for August 2021. You are to be commended for your excellent application and credentials!

The Graduate Admissions office is in the process of updating your application status with
the university. You will receive a longer welcome email from me next week featuring information about your online orientation, and with advising and registration instructions for your first semester. A formal letter of acceptance from the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research will be mailed within the next few weeks.

In the two years since the program began the use of this type of preliminary admission notification, we have found applicants to be appreciative of the early notification and more patient about the time required for the Graduate Admissions Office to complete processing admissions decisions. Applicants who are not admitted receive a decision letter alone.

Probationary Status
To qualify for consideration for entry on probationary status, applicants with GPAs below 3.0 must explain in the Letter of Exception the circumstances leading to their low performance in their previous degrees and the steps they will take to succeed in an asynchronous online graduate degree program. This requirement is published with the other application requirements.

Applicants who are denied admission to the program may appeal the decision. The program responds to appeals following the Graduate School’s guidelines and resolves the appeal by reviewing the application and revisiting the decision. If an appeal is accepted, the applicant is typically asked to defer their start date and offered early acceptance to the following semester because the size of the entering class precludes adding another student.

Denied applicants are also offered the opportunity to contact the department head to find out why their applications were denied. This correspondence is conducted via email and the department head responds to each inquiry individually. Some applicants use this opportunity to ask how to strengthen their applications because they wish to reapply, and those applicants are provided with general information about why they weren’t among the applicants selected and, when appropriate, are provided suggestions for areas of improvement that could enhance future applications.

Time to degree
Given that the majority of students take courses on a part-time basis, most students graduate within two to four years after they begin the degree. In keeping with the retention statistics provided in Table IV.4, the program looked at the time to degree for students who graduated in Academic Years 2015-2016 through 2020-2021.

Table IV.14
Time to Complete Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Total Graduates</th>
<th>Mean Semesters</th>
<th>Median Semesters</th>
<th>Mean Years</th>
<th>Median Years</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>2015 – 2016</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016 – 2017</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017 – 2018</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 – 2019</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 – 2020</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 – 2021</td>
<td>98*</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VSU Office of Institutional Research;
*Academic Year 2020-2021 data is incomplete, missing Summer 2021 graduates.
Standard IV.4
Students construct a coherent plan of study that allows individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met within the context of requirements established by the program. Students receive systematic, multifaceted evaluation of their achievements. Students have access to continuing opportunities for guidance, counseling, and placement assistance.

The program’s curriculum structure and the advising processes work in tandem to encourage students to articulate their individual professional needs, goals, and aspirations from their entrance into the program to their final Capstone experience. MLIS students receive continuous feedback on their academic progress through advising, coursework evaluation, and additional guidance.

…coherent plan of study…

Advising is a key component in helping students to construct coherent programs of study. To assess how well the program supports students’ needs, goals, and aspirations, alumni are asked to complete surveys. These formal feedback mechanisms suggest that students have had a positive experience in the program and feel prepared to begin their professional careers. Chapter 2 includes results of these alumni surveys. One area that was identified in alumni surveys and via discussions with current students was a need to develop the Program of Study earlier in their studies rather leaving the time up to the student. Through 2018, students were assigned to a faculty advisor based on their identified areas of interest and goals at the time of admission to the program, but beginning in 2019 all newly admitted students were assigned to a single faculty advisor who also was the lead instructor for the course all students are required to take during their first semester, MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science, and development of a coherent program of study is now integrated into multiple areas of that course.

Initial Advising
Students admitted to the program through 2018 were advised by a faculty member assigned as an advisor during the admissions process. During the application review process, the admissions committee noted the applicants’ area(s) of interest and goals on the application cover sheets and the faculty as a group reviewed the folders and based on those interests and the prior number of advisees each faculty member was already ready advising, decided who would advise each admitted applicant. Each student’s advisor received the student’s application file, including the student’s essay on career goals and used this information to start a dialogue on what direction a student might want to take in planning their courses.

Incoming students were encouraged to consult their advisors prior to their first semester, particularly if they intended to take any courses in addition to the course all students are required to take during their first semester MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science. Students admitted on probationary status were usually advised to only take one course during their first semester.

Starting with students accepted to begin in Spring 2019, the program modified its initial advising process to better support entering students. Incoming students are assigned to a single advisor,
the tenured/tenure track faculty member who coordinates MLIS 7000, who provides initial
advising to each student prior to registration for their first semester of study. Integrated into
MLIS 7000, students complete an MLIS Program Orientation at the beginning of the semester
that introduces elements of the program and provides an overview of resources available to them
as fully online graduate students. Within the course there are a number of assignments and labs
to help students develop an understanding of the skills and experiences required or preferred for
their area(s) of interest, culminating in a lab where they will develop a proposed MLIS Program
of Study (POS) using two forms that are included in Appendix IV.B.

After review by the faculty advisor, students receive feedback on their proposed POS, discuss
their elective course selections for their stated area(s) of interest and how they were impacted by
what they learned doing the research and analysis required for the Job Ad Analysis assignment.
After considering advisor feedback or recommendations, they may make changes either based on
advisor suggestions or necessary due to course scheduling, and finally complete the advising
process by having their registration holds lifted so that they are able to register for their second
semester courses.

After students have completed their POS and made any necessary revisions, the POS is used to
identify the most appropriate faculty advisor based on an alignment between the students’ areas
of interest and goals, faculty members’ teaching and research interests, and current faculty
advising loads. The new advisor receives a copy of the POS and will continue to use it as the
student progresses through their MLIS studies.

Prior to having each student develop a complete POS during their first semester in the program, a
tenured/tenure track faculty advisor needed to consult with each student every semester in order
to verify their progress, ensure they were planning courses for the upcoming semester(s) that
both met core course requirements and enhanced academic development in their area(s) of
interest, discussed any required or recommended revisions to their plan for the following
semester, and finally set each student’s Banner account as eligible to register for the coming
semester. This required the tenure/tenure-track faculty advisors to contact and provide each
individual student they were assigned to as an advisor with advising and guidance multiple times
each year in order to meet university advising requirements and to ensure students were selecting
appropriate electives for their individual areas of interest or career goals.

The transition to our new advising model began in Academic Year 2019-20 and the model is
continuing to evolve and improve. Beginning with students admitted to the MLIS Program in
Fall 2021 there will be a COEHS Academic Services Specialist that will be our MLIS Program
Advising Coordinator (PAC). Initially the PAC will coordinate and track communication with
our newly admitted students, lift holds for students who have submitted MLIS 7000 Advising
Forms with no unusual responses, lift registration holds and respond to let students know their
registration holds have been lifted. Any Advising Forms that have any unexpected content or
include questions are forwarded to the primary faculty instructor for MLIS 7000 who will review
the information, answer any questions, and discuss any potential problems with the student prior
to lifting registration holds.

As the Fall 2021 cohort moves forward, the PAC will continue work with newly admitted
students while continuing to support students who have completed MLIS 7000 in a similar
fashion each semester by providing an initial point of contact with the students and completing the advising process for those who are continuing without significant changes to their POS plan. The PAC will forward information about students who have questions, or want to change electives to a new area of interest, for assistance from their assigned faculty advisor. Eventually it is anticipated that the PAC will take on much of the basic semester-to-semester advising workload so that faculty are able to focus their time and attention on mentoring and advising students who require assistance.

Students will continue to be encouraged to contact their advisors at any time throughout the program for any type of relevant assistance or information. Should a student wish to change faculty advisors, they are able to do so at any point in their course of study by submitting the Advisor Re-Assignment Request Form, available on the MLIS Student Resources webpage. (https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/student-resources/)

The program’s advising practices align with university expectations. University policy states that each semester, students must contact their advisors to be advised before they can register for their classes. The university uses the Banner registration system and Banner is set to default to placing a hold on registration each semester that can only be lifted by an advisor or department head.

**Continuing student advising**

The Banner registration system used by the university allows students to register only after their advisors unlock their accounts for each registration period. The program schedules an advising week each semester for student-advisor consultations and publishes these dates along with information germane to course selection in advising bulletins (Appendix IV.C) distributed each semester via student email accounts and posted in the MLIS Village course inside the LMS.

To facilitate the students’ ability to construct and follow coherent programs of study, the program provides information on the Program Overview webpage that aligns the curriculum with different areas of professional practice, organized into a series of optional areas of interest (previously referred to as tracks). These optional areas of interest are discussed in Standard II.1, From Curriculum Tracks to Areas of Interest, pages 52 - 53. Starting in Academic Year 2020 - 2021, the optional curriculum tracks were repositioned from Tracks to Areas of Interest to respond to student questions about whether following a tracks was required or if the track would appear on their transcript or diploma. This change was addressed in Standard II.1 at From Curriculum Tracks to Areas of Interest, pages 52 – 53.

Selecting and following a specific area of interest is not required and neither the previously utilized tracks nor the newly updated areas of interest are reflected on the students’ transcripts or degrees. The curriculum tracks were originally developed to help advisors guide students in selecting appropriate courses based on their areas of interest and their career goals. Students are also pointed to the MLIS 3-Year course rotation schedule for help in planning their programs of study.

Students are strongly encouraged to seek advice from their advisors whenever needed, not just for course registration. Meetings between students and their advisors can be scheduled whenever
necessary, by email or over the phone. Advising topics can cover requests to transfer credit from a previous graduate program, preparing applications for graduation, requesting support for scholarship applications or references for job interviews, and whatever else may be on the students’ minds.

Planning coherent programs of study starts with orientation
Advising entering students and encouraging them to think about planning a coherent programs of study (POS) begins in their first semester and has always been a significant part of new student orientation, no matter the delivery format of the orientation content. From the start of the current accreditation period through Spring 2017, the program’s new student orientation was conducted face-to-face on campus the weekend before the start of the semester, and all incoming students were expected to attend.

During the on-campus orientations, the MLIS faculty introduced incoming students to continuing opportunities for assistance in constructing programs of study as well as all the other policies, practices, and resources they would need to be successful in the program. All faculty attended and participated in this two-day on-campus orientation. Alumni and current students were invited to be peer advisors for the new students. The orientation schedule was printed out for everyone. New students met the faculty, were oriented to the basic tenets of the LIS profession, discussed academic honesty issues, met with their advisors, attended a peer advising session where they had the opportunity to interact with current students and alumni, stepped through process of creating logins to all institutional network accounts, interviewed each other in small groups, obtained their VSU ID cards, and received introductions to the use of online library resources as well as to the learning management system (LMS) they would use to take their courses. Several segments of the orientation were designed to provide previews of faculty expectations in areas such as time management, course loads, and technology preparedness.

Beginning in Fall 2017, in recognition of the increasing number of out-of-state students and the high cost of travel to and lodging in Valdosta, orientation was transitioned to a fully online format. In Academic Year 2017-18, orientation was delivered via the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS the week before the semester started using temporary login ID’s because new VSU students don’t have access to BlazeView/D2L until the first day of their first class. In Academic Year 2018 – 2019, orientation was moved to the first week of the semester and delivered inside MLIS 7000 to provide students with continuing access to the orientation content once classes had started.

In Academic Year 2019-20, orientation content continued to be presented during the first week of classes and was expanded to include a series of labs to provide a basic introduction to many areas of basic software, applications, and academic skills that graduate students are expected to be familiar with, but because our students are frequently returning to school after a significant period, most required an introduction to or opportunity to refresh old skills. These were integrated into each of the 15 modules of MLIS 7000 and run in parallel to the course content as much as logistically possible.

The continuing evolution of MLIS Program Orientation format and content has been based on student responses to their orientation experiences, institutional roadblocks uncovered as different schedules were tested, the need for many students to have an introduction to technical and academic resources in order to be prepared for future courses, and faculty evaluations of how
much the students engaged with the orientation content based on when orientation was scheduled and how it was delivered. A key component of the current first semester experience is working with the new students to help them plan their entire program of study for their MLIS degrees.

The university expects that all departments will include an Academic Advising page on their websites. The program academic advising webpage includes links to:

- A 3-Year Course Rotation Schedule (course offerings projected in advance)
- Optional Areas of Interest
- Dual MLIS and School Media Certification curriculum materials
- Program of Study forms
- Graduation Application forms

To assist students with completing program requirements in a timely fashion, the program schedules core courses two to three times each academic year with sufficient sections to meet student demand. Elective courses rotate regularly on a two-year cycle as documented in Standard II.3. The most popular electives are now offered annually with as many sections as needed to meet demand.

A 3-Year course rotation schedule is posted on the MLIS website and updated annually. Using this schedule, students have a full picture of the curriculum and how it is structured. They can see the number and variety of courses from which they may choose; they can target those courses related specifically to their academic goals; and they can prepare, both financially and mentally, for the course loads they want to assume in order to complete their programs of study by their preferred graduation date. Students have seven years to finish their degree requirements before their credits start to expire.

Students have the option to focus on optional area(s) of interest in Cataloging and Classification, Library Management, Reference Sources and Services, Technology, Youth Services, or Special Libraries, Archives, or Conservation Librarianship as described under Standard II.1 at From Curriculum Tracks to Areas of Interest, pages 52 - 53. For students who wish to acquire concurrent certification as a K-12 library media specialist (State of Georgia) in conjunction with the MLIS degree, the Dual Program is offered collaboratively with the Instructional Technology Program. Dual Program students apply to the library media specialist certification as non-degree seeking students after they have completed most of their core courses and are assigned to a second faculty advisor from the library media specialist program to support them in completing the prescribed program of study necessary to complete both MLIS degree and Georgia teaching certification requirements for library media specialists.

Students who request transfer of graduate academic credit from a previous degree or from non-degree seeking graduate courses completed at another institution and students who declare the Dual Program must complete a Program of Study form. Their requests must be approved by the advisor, department head, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Advising measures for a student whose GPA begins to decline or falls below 3.0 are intensive. The student’s advisor provides the first line of consultation. The advisors receive copies of the letters issued by the Graduate School alerting the student to the deficiency points they earn for
grades received below a B. Generally, the advisor will recommend that the student reduce his/her course load in order to be able to better focus on their schoolwork. If failing grades were the result of hardship circumstances (defined by the VSU Student Affairs office), the advisor will provide the student with contact information for the Student Affairs official who reviews such cases and the link to the policy that outlines criteria and procedures for applying for a hardship withdrawal. Students requesting a hardship withdrawal must withdraw from the entire semester, not just one course. Students who start having trouble before mid-term are advised to withdraw from the course in which they are having problems so that they can concentrate on their other courses and try to finish the semester successfully.

If a student is dismissed, the Graduate School policy requires a one-year “wait” period before the student may re-apply for admission. Again, the advisor guides the student who wants to re-apply through this process. Students are only considered for readmission if it will be numerically possible for them to raise their GPA to the 3.0 required to qualify for graduation.

Other curricular options that support students in meeting career goals include an Independent Study option, MLIS 7950, and a 120-hour Supervised Fieldwork elective course, MLIS 7960. The fieldwork course offers students the opportunity to complete 120 hours of learning through work in a library or information center and was required for students who wanted to complete the tracks in Cataloging and Classification, or Reference. Guidelines and documents necessary to fulfill fieldwork obligations are available on the program’s website. The fulfillment of the Dual Program requires a 100-hour internship divided equally among elementary, middle, and high school libraries and supervised by a faculty member in the Department of Leadership, Technology, & Workforce Development (previously known as the Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology until Academic Year 2020 – 2021) where the school library media courses required for the Dual Program are taught.

Table IV.15 shows the number of students who completed optional tracks over the years. This information is verified by reviewing the programs of study students submit as part of their applications for graduation. Following a track was optional and the tracks were used as a tool to advise students who were interested in specific areas of professional practice. As the program moves into the next accreditation cycle a full review of the curriculum will be undertaken and the first step in the program review is to complete the transition from offering curriculum tracks to aligning the curriculum to the areas of interest. This shift occurred with the publication of the Academic Year 2021 - 2022 graduate catalog. This change in language was piloted in MLIS 7000 in Spring and Fall 2020 to beta test the new catalog language and formally implemented in MLIS 7000 in Spring 2021 to provide students with more flexibility in planning their programs of study. The content of the areas of interest will be the similar to the structure of the tracks, but the change in language eliminates the implication that the program requires students to follow and finish a track. The anticipated outcome is that students will be able to focus their programs of study in the area(s) that will help them develop the professional skills they need and are of interest them, and that their advisors will help them select the most appropriate courses to meet their goals for their degrees.
Table IV.15
Track enrollments, Academic Year 2013-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Dual Program</th>
<th>Cataloging</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Youth Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AY13-14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY14-15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY15-16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY16-17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY17-18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY18-19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY19-20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Guidance
In addition to the MLIS new student orientation, the university provides significant support services for online graduate students. The Graduate School’s webpages include a New Graduate Student Online Orientation to help facilitate new students’ transition to graduate study. The webpage includes materials on various topics ranging from registration to financial aid and more. The program includes a link to this webpage in its welcome letter to newly admitted students.

Students receive systematic, multifaceted evaluation of their achievements.

At the course level, students receive instructors’ feedback on their assignments in a number of formats. The BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS provides instructors with the ability to build grading rubrics into their course websites and this tool is widely used by the MLIS faculty. Instructors can include comments while grading with D2L rubrics. Viewing the rubric results allows students as well as faculty to identify academic strengths and areas that need improvement. The instructors can make comments directly on assignments too. The LMS also allows instructors to provide comments on assignments in audio and video formats. All instructors are required to specify their grading scales on their course syllabi. They are also required to include the university’s academic integrity policy in their syllabi. The COEHS had a standard syllabus template that all the degree programs housed in the college were required to follow until Summer 2021. In February 2021, the COEHS Executive Committee determined that Educator Preparation language was no longer required on all college syllabi and launched a syllabus template review process. The goal of the process is to have a new template approved for each department by Fall 2021.

MLIS students must maintain a GPA not lower than 3.0 to continue in good standing in the Graduate School and to qualify for enrollment in the MLIS 7800 Capstone class. Students can appeal either individual assignment or final course grades. The process is initiated by first informally discussing the issue with the instructor responsible for the grade assigned. If the matter is not resolved, then the student can complete a VSU Grade Appeal Form and present it to the instructor. If the matter is not resolved, the students can bring their concern to the department head, and then to the Dean of the college and, finally to the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research.
High achieving students and those who show exceptional interest or academic performance in a particular branch of the LIS profession are encouraged to present at conferences or apply for internships. Students’ conference activities are reported in the SOLIS newsletters and are also shared on the program’s Facebook group page. Selected students have presented their research at Valdosta State University’s Graduate Research Symposium each year since its inception in 2009. Links from that webpage lead to abstracts for these MLIS poster presentations and the page numbers to locate them: 2019: page 18, 2018: pages 12-13, 2017: page 13, 2016: page 12, 2015: pages 16-17, 2014: page 17, and 2013: page 21.

**Students have access to continuing opportunities for guidance, counseling, and placement assistance.**

The program maintains an electronic bulletin board discussion forum in the MLIS Village BlazeVIEW site where all job listings and position announcements received by the program are posted. Alumni retain access to MLIS Village as long as their VSU email accounts remain active and they are also able to post job announcements. Job-hunting resources are provided on a publicly accessible page of the MLIS website in addition to being posted inside MLIS Village.

The program nurtures active state and national alumni communities via our VSU MLIS Facebook group and meetups at the Georgia Libraries Conferences. Many alumni use the Facebook group to post position announcements and professional development opportunities and encourage students and recent graduates to apply for open positions at their institutions. An Alumni Spotlight is featured regularly in the SOLIS Newsletters so that current students can learn more about the career paths other program graduates have taken. Student and Alumni awards and publications are also published regularly to celebrate those accomplishments and to provide inspiration and models for current students to follow as they work toward their career goals.

**Standard IV.5**

The program provides an environment that fosters student participation in the definition and determination of the total learning experience. Students are provided with opportunities to:

The program invites students to participate as stakeholders in their own learning experiences. Students have an active voice in program planning and decision-making through many different venues. Students provide feedback on the overall perception of their program experiences via the Graduating Students Survey each semester and the Alumni Survey conducted two years after graduation. As shown in the table below, throughout this accreditation cycle, most students have agreed that the program has successfully prepared them to become entry level professional librarians or information services professional.
Table IV.16
Graduating Students’ Perception of Program Preparation, 2013-2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The VSU MLIS program prepared me to:</th>
<th>Strongly Agree/Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree/Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perform administrative function</td>
<td>80.70%</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide effective public service</td>
<td>81.10%</td>
<td>8.60%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform technical services</td>
<td>74.80%</td>
<td>13.40%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use emerging technology</td>
<td>84.70%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate relevant research</td>
<td>93.90%</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate professionalism</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Standard IV.5.1
Participate in the formulation, modification, and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs;

Program students are offered many different ways to participate in the formulation, modification, and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs.

Students can provide feedback by participating in periodic curriculum review surveys that aim to determine students’ satisfaction with the current course offerings in certain LIS subject areas such as management, reference, technology etc. Program course offerings in the different areas of practice are reviewed regularly to make sure the current course offerings in each subject area are up-to-date and meeting stakeholders needs and expectations.

During the current accreditation cycle, the following concentrations were reviewed and updated:

- Technology
- Reference
- Management
- Research Methods

Other than with the review of the MLIS 7700 Research Methods course, most curriculum reviews were focused on the course offerings in the concentration as a whole. One component of each curriculum review is to seek input from current students, alumni, and employer stakeholders, seeking their perceptions of whether the course offerings helped them acquire the competencies needed. More details on these curriculum reviews can be found in Standard II.7.

Each year the program’s graduating student and alumni surveys provide anonymous feedback that can be used to inform policy development in the department. Survey questions and results for graduating students can be viewed and for alumni in Appendices II.D.2 & II.D.4

Finally, students contribute to policy development through their participation as members of departmental committees. The president and vice president of SOLIS represent the student body...
respectively at the monthly faculty and curriculum committee meetings. These representatives serve as the bridge between the student community and the program by bringing students’ concerns to the faculty, and by communicating departmental policies and changes to the students.

The department head has held online student town hall meetings at least twice a year since Spring 2016. These “Talk to Dr. Most” forums provide students with the chance to share their thoughts and concerns with the department head each semester. These meetings serve as effective alerts to potential problems with specific courses or instructors. Typically, these forums tend to be most active when the students are unhappy about something. When all is going well, attendance at the online town hall meetings is very low and students typically drop by just to say hello or to see if anyone else is discussing anything interesting. Prior to 2016, the Town Hall meetings were held annually in conjunction with the Georgia Libraries Conference. This was a period when the student body was primarily Georgia-centric and much smaller. A summary of each town hall meeting is published in the subsequent issue of the SOLIS newsletter so that all students have a chance to see what was discussed and what answers were provided.

**Standard IV.5.2**

Participate in research;

MLIS 7700 *Research Methods* is a core course in the MLIS curriculum that introduces students to basic social science research methods and skills. Students learn the elements of research design, different research methods, ethical issues involving research with human subjects, and how to critically evaluate published research. In MLIS 7000, each student is required to complete the CITI Training Program - Students in Research. The training ensures that the students understand the ethical principles of conducting research with human subjects.

Students have the opportunity to conduct a small-scale original research project in MLIS 7800 *Capstone*. The research projects conducted in the *Capstone* class have generated posters accepted for the VSU Graduate Research Symposium and presentations at state library conferences. A list of program students who have presented their work at the VSU Graduate Research Symposium since 2013 is provided at **Standard IV.3**.

The program also encourages students to present their research at conferences and to publish in peer reviewed LIS journals. Though accurate statistics are not kept for student presentations outside the university, some information can be found through communication between faculty and students. SOLIS publishes self-reported student research activities in its seasonal newsletters. Program students most frequently present their research at the Georgia Library Association’s annual conferences, but have presented outside of Georgia at the conferences of the Public Library Association, the Florida Library Association, the Tennessee Library Association, and other state and national LIS conferences and meetings.

**Standard IV.5.3**

Receive academic and career advisement and consultation;

Academic advising was discussed in detail in **Standard IV.4**. MLIS students receive academic
advisement and consultation from their advisors, course instructors, and the department head as needed and are required to contact their advisors every semester before they can register for courses.

Career advising is featured in the two required courses that bookend the curriculum, starting in MLIS 7000 and concluding in MLIS 7800 as well as in the process of academic advising as all faculty advisors guide students with course selections, write letters of reference, and are available to discuss career planning. Career planning resources are also provided to students in the content of many elective courses.

Admission to the program begins with the submission of a statement of the applicant’s goals for their degree, including submitting an optional short essay indicating which areas of the curriculum are of the most interest to them. These statements are considered carefully during the application review process for alignment with program goals and strengths. In MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science, the required first semester course, career advisement and consultation begin in conjunction with the students’ study of the foundations of the LIS professions. Each first semester student is required to interview a working LIS professional that holds an ALA accredited MLIS to learn about their path to their current position. Each student is also required to conduct a job ad analysis by exploring the scope of employment listing services provided to them, selecting a series of position announcements relevant to their career goals, and analyzing the requirements and areas of preferred expertise employers list for the positions. Students then prepare and submit a preliminary program of study in which they identify the courses they want to take in order to develop the skills needed to meet expectations for the work they want to do after they graduate. Based on their areas of interest and plans for their programs of study, the first semester students are then assigned to the faculty advisors whose specialties correspond most closely to the students’ academic and career interests and goals. Students also begin to build their required ePortfolios in MLIS 7000. They will use these portfolios to document their learning and house their academic and professional work highlights throughout their time in the program.

In MLIS 7800 Capstone, the required exit course for the program, students complete and submit their ePortfolios for review. Students are encouraged to use their ePortfolios as support for their job application packets if they are actively pursuing a promotion or change in employment. During the course, the students spend several weeks discussing expectations for professional positions and what professionalism means in the context of their career goals. Students submit their resumes for review and suggestions for strengthening the presentation and content, and also develop personal templates for their cover letters and their requests for professional references. In Academic Year 2020 - 2021, as part of the updates to MLIS 7800 and in response to student demand, the program is increasing opportunities for career advisement by adding a formal week of career counseling to the Capstone course. Students finish their Capstone course by researching, designing and producing a webinar in which they present on one or more topics relevant to their current work or professional goals. These webinars can be included in their ePortfolios so that prospective employers can see what the graduates can do firsthand.

Throughout their time in the program, students have access to many opportunities and options to obtain career advisement and support. The elective course MLIS 7960 Supervised Fieldwork is available for students who want to get hands-on experience in a new area of LIS practice by
utilizing the skills they are learning in their classes or to learn about the day-to-day work and expectations at the next level of responsibility above their current employment. As almost all program students are already working in LIS environments, typically in paraprofessional positions, very few request a fieldwork placement, but the course is offered every fall and spring and the instructor works with the students individually to find suitable fieldwork sites.

The program maintains an electronic bulletin board discussion forum in the MLIS Village BlazeVIEW site where all job listings and position announcements received by the program are posted. Job-hunting resources are provided on a publicly accessible page of the MLIS website in addition to being posted inside MLIS Village. Students are introduced to these tools in MLIS 7000 as part of their job ad analysis projects and continue to reference them through their final MLIS course, Capstone.

Students are encouraged to take advantage of ALA’s student joint membership opportunities between the national organization and their state library associations. Students are also urged to join their state New Members Roundtables, networking, and/or mentoring programs as available. Georgia Library Association resources are highlighted as examples of the types of opportunities that may be available in other states and to support the in-state students in developing their professional networks. The program provides a discussion forum inside MLIS Village where all the internships, scholarships, student publication opportunities and other professional development opportunities received are posted.

The program nurtures active state and national alumni communities via our VSU MLIS Facebook group and meetups at the Georgia Libraries Conferences. Newly admitted students are invited to join the VSU MLIS Facebook group in their first semester so that they can begin to network with other current students and alumni.

**Standard IV.5.4**
Receive support services as needed;

**Standards V.11 and V.12** discuss the institutional support services available to all online students enrolled at VSU. These support services include but are not limited to the Academic Support Center, Access Office, and Library Distance Education Services, etc. Information about these resources is provided beginning with the initial orientation in MLIS 7000 and is also included in MLIS Village.

Faculty frequently provide links to relevant academic support services in their courses and actively refer students to the [graduate writing support programs](#) as appropriate. In 2021 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the University System of Georgia added expanded mental health services available to all students, both online and on-campus, called [Hope Connect@VSU](#).

**Standard IV.5.5**
Form student organizations;

Program students formed the *Student Organization of Library and Information Science (SOLIS)* in 2007 when the program received initial accreditation. Today, SOLIS is recognized by VSU as
a campus student association and by the American Library Association as an official student chapter. All program students are automatically members of SOLIS with no dues or initiation requirements imposed. The organization holds elections for officers annually in the fall. SOLIS maintains a webpage and publishes a newsletter regularly. The newsletters are archived on the SOLIS webpage and distributed electronically to all students and alumni via email and the MLIS Facebook group page. MLIS faculty member, Dr. Xiaoai Ren currently serves as the advisor for the organization and oversees SOLIS financial affairs. Dr. Anita Ondrusek served as the SOLIS advisor until her retirement in 2017. The SOLIS President, officers, and advisory board members act as liaisons to the faculty and advocate for program students. Officers for SOLIS include a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Communications Officer and advisory board members.

The SOLIS President is invited to attend and contribute to the monthly departmental faculty meetings. The SOLIS Vice-President represents the students at the monthly curriculum committee meetings. SOLIS is the principal conduit for student concerns and interests to be brought to the program’s policymaking environment and decision-making processes.

Table IV.17
SOLIS Officer–Representatives to MLIS Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Departmental Faculty Meetings</th>
<th>Curriculum Committee Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Ben Mullis</td>
<td>Emily Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>Jeanna Allums</td>
<td>Stacey Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>Stacey Wright</td>
<td>Kailyn Middleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>Jennifer Putnam</td>
<td>Jessica Perlove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>Ashton Hedrick</td>
<td>Heather Martz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2020</td>
<td>Sarah Shelton</td>
<td>Sarah Joseph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-2021</td>
<td>Matthew Yohn</td>
<td>Taryn Mirabello</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SOLIS Newsletter and program committee rosters

SOLIS has hosted a variety of events or activities for program students throughout the years, always making sure the activities are designed to include distance learning students wherever they may be. In recent years, activities have included fundraising and advocacy events such as the program’s first annual virtual 5K, VSU Heart Walk, Fundraising for Liberation Library, a Books for Veterans drive, and a Paws-to-Read activity. SOLIS organizes local meetups at conferences and promotes the #wearyourMLISshirt campaign. It has also provided peer advising by answering new MLIS students’ questions at the face-to-face orientations or online via dedicated discussion boards. Topics covered typically included selecting courses, course loads, career paths, and maintaining work / life balance.

All SOLIS activities are documented in the SOLIS newsletters. When the university cancelled the Spring 2020 commencement due to Covid-19, SOLIS officers organized a virtual celebration to recognize the accomplishments of the semester’s graduating students.

SOLIS supports program students who wish to attend the American Library Association annual conference by reimbursing their early registration fees. These reimbursements are funded from program T-shirt sales and faculty contributions. SOLIS funds have also been used to support SOLIS student activities by paying for gift cards or other prizes and to fund small-scale student research costs that might be incurred during the MLIS 7800 Capstone class.
Standard IV.5.6
Participate in professional organizations.

Program students are encouraged to participate in professional organizations and activities. The joint ALA/state library membership programs are introduced during new student orientation and students are encouraged to participate in state, regional, and national new member round tables as available. Georgia students are pointed to the Atlanta Emerging Librarians group and the Georgia Library Association New Members Roundtable and out of state students are encouraged to share similar opportunities they have found in their regions.

Students are encouraged to attend professional conferences, as discussed in Standard IV.5.2. SOLIS reimburses program students’ registration fees for ALA annual conferences. An MLIS student representative has been nominated to participate in the ALA Student-to-Staff program every year it has been offered. The program reimburses the student-to-staff participants’ travel costs up to $400. The program also encourages students to volunteer at LIS conferences when the opportunity arises. In 2017, program students volunteered at the ALA Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits and the 10th National Conference of African American Librarians, both held in Atlanta, GA. Students share their conference reflections in the SOLIS newsletter in thanks for the funding they have received.

Standard IV.6
The program applies the results of evaluation of student achievement to program development. Procedures are established for systematic evaluation of the extent to which the program’s academic and administrative policies and activities regarding students are accomplishing its objectives. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, staff, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

As shown in the Figure IV.2, the Program Evaluation Cycle, program assessment data derived from the SLOAs is a significant element of the system. Student assessment results, described above and extensively in Standard II.5, are integral to program evaluation and to the determination of whether the program’s academic and administrative policies and activities regarding students are accomplishing the program objectives.
At the course level, course objectives and student learning outcomes are clearly stated on all course syllabi. The syllabi inform students of the course learning objectives and how they are going to be assessed. The course assessments measure students’ mastery of the course learning objectives and their ability to apply what they have learned.

Students also are asked to evaluate courses at the close of each semester by completing the institution’s Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) surveys. In this anonymous survey, students let the instructors know their perceptions of their learning experiences and share any concerns or issues they experienced in the course. The faculty use their SOI results to improve their course content and delivery by addressing the issues or concerns raised by students. The institutional Tenure and Promotion policy requires that SOI data be included in the faculty members’ dossiers when they apply for tenure and/or promotion, and the results must be included in each faculty member’s annual review.

Program goals and objectives and Student Learning Outcome Assessments (SLOAs) align with the American Library Association’s Core Competencies of Librarianship and the 2015 Standards for Accreditation. A detailed description of the SLOAs is published on the VSU MLIS Learning Outcomes webpage where information about the program assessments in each of the core
courses is provided. The SLOAs allow the program to measure its success in preparing students with skills that correspond to *ALA’s Core Competencies of Librarianship* (2009) and the 2015 *Standards for Accreditation*. The faculty meet twice a year to review the results of the Student Learning Outcome Assessments and address any outcomes that fall below the 90% Target or Successful expectation.

The program employs multiple ways to involve its constituents in its evaluation processes:

- **Student achievement and success** are at the forefront of curriculum development. The program reviews its curriculum regularly. During the curriculum review process, inputs from stakeholders including current students, alumni, and employers are sought so that stakeholder needs and expectations, and their perceptions of how well the current curriculum is meeting their needs establish the starting point for curriculum review.

- **Between 2013-2020**, the program faculty made substantial modifications to the curriculum. Detailed documentation of the processes, methods of stakeholder input including student input, and the final decisions are included in *Appendix II.C Curriculum Committee Meeting Minutes* and in *Curriculum Review documents* included as attachments to the meeting minutes. See *Standard II.1, Curriculum Review*, pages 47 – 48, for a detailed presentation of the program’s curricular revisions from 2013-2020.

- **Each spring and fall semester**, the program’s faculty meet to review the most recent SLOA results and analyze their outcomes. Through Spring 2018 the SLOAs were scored as Target, Acceptable and Unacceptable. Starting in Academic Year 2018-2019, the levels were changed to Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Below Expectations. An action plan is required if scoring Below Expectations reaches 10% or higher. The action plan must be implemented, and its effectiveness will be reviewed in subsequent faculty retreats until the Below Expectations percentage drops below 10%. The discussion and analysis processes also consider the possibility that the issue with an outcome may be the result of the way the SLOA is expressed and implemented. Is the SLOA measuring the outcome the faculty really want to measure? In some cases, the result of the review can lead to revision of SLOAs and their corresponding rubrics. Copies of the SLOA review meeting minutes are available in *Appendix II.A*. Examples of action plans and SLOA revisions are included in each set of retreat meeting minutes. The program documents its use and review of the SLOA system in its annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports and Institutional Effectiveness Plans (*Appendix I.E*), demonstrating and reporting the program’s systematic application of assessment processes to support student learning and to contribute to the university’s goal of continuous program improvement across all its units of administration.

- **The program surveys its graduating students, alumni, employers and current students periodically**. Responses from the Graduating Students survey shown in *Table IV.16 in Standard IV.5* suggest that VSU MLIS graduating students feel satisfied with the program in preparing them for entry level professional positions in their chosen sectors of
the information professions.

- The program engages its various stakeholders in the decision or policy making process in different ways. The department head hosts online town hall meetings with students and listens to their concern and inputs (see **Standard IV 5.1**). The SOLIS President attends the monthly departmental meeting and participates in program planning. The SOLIS Vice President attends the monthly departmental curriculum committee meetings and participates in curriculum reviews and revisions. These elected representatives act as a bridge between the program and the student body, and provide important input on policy development in the program from the students’ perspective. They report back to the students using the SOLIS newsletter as appropriate. They have the opportunity to hold general online student forums each semester but generally choose not to do so. In preparing this self-study, the program acknowledges that its external Advisory Board – like many others across the COEHS departments - has become inactive. Plans are underway college-wide to revisit Advisory Board memberships, update the rosters, and reactivate the groups. The program looks forward to working with a revitalized advisory board and their involvement in its evaluation processes.

**Standard IV.7**
The program has explicit, documented evidence of its ongoing decision-making processes and the data to substantiate the evaluation of student learning outcomes, using appropriate direct and indirect measures as well as individual student learning, using appropriate direct and indirect measures.

The program has measures in place to assure systematic, documented evidence of student learning assessment. The direct measures for student learning outcomes are grounded in the SLOAs. The indirect measures of student learning outcomes include retention and graduation rates, and the graduating student, alumni, and employer surveys. These data are published and updated annually on the program’s webpages, as directed by the Office of Accreditation.

The program’s direct measures that assess individual student learning include course assessment activities such as graded assignments and final grades. Indirect measures of student learning and success include a series of constituent surveys addressed to graduating students, alumni, and stakeholder groups to inform curriculum review. Other indirect evidence of student achievement includes lists of scholarships, awards, publications, and placements. These achievements are shared with the student community through publication in the SOLIS newsletter, distributed directly to the student community via email and publicly available on the program’s website.

Monthly MLIS faculty meetings provide another opportunity for program committees to report their progress on meeting their goals and for the faculty to discuss any issues that arise and request student input via the participation of the SOLIS President. Program committees meet following appropriate schedules to do their work. The curriculum committee meets monthly when needed. The admissions committee meets twice each semester to plan for, review, then discuss and score the applications. The planning and budget committee meets at least once per semester to review the departmental budget, discuss discretionary spending, and identify areas of
financial concern. The tenure & promotion committee meets annually and then as needed within the year, depending on whether the program has any candidates who are eligible for a personnel action in a given year. The program sends one T&P committee member as its representative to the COEHS T&P committee. Other committees meet as necessary to work on their assigned responsibilities. All the committees keep minutes which are housed in the program offices. Summaries of all faculty meeting minutes are available publicly via the VSU MLIS Departmental Meetings and Documentation webpage. The full text of the faculty meeting minutes is available in Appendix I.D.

Scheduled surveys capture feedback from graduating students, alumni, and employers. The students taking MLIS 7800 Capstone each semester are surveyed as they complete their studies and prepare to graduate. The program also administers the alumni and employer surveys regularly. The MLIS graduates have been surveyed two years after graduation to learn about their work and reflections on their educations 24 months after graduation. Effective with the 2019 graduates, this survey has been rescheduled to one year after graduation to comply with changes in COA’s reporting requirements. The employers are surveyed every three years. These surveys ask respondents to rate how well they believe the program prepares its students with various skills and knowledge to become entry level librarians or information services professionals. In these surveys, the respondents’ responses are directly mapped to the student learning outcomes and program objectives. These survey data are summarized and presented to the faculty to identify areas of strength as well as areas for improvement. The survey results summaries are publicly available on the VSU MLIS Program Outcomes webpage.

**Standard IV.8**
The program demonstrates how the results of the evaluation of student learning outcomes and individual student learning are systematically used to improve the program and to plan for the future.

Improvements to the program as the result of the evaluation of student learning outcomes and individual student learning take place at all levels. The following evidence summarizes how the MLIS program uses the regular, systematic evaluation of student learning outcomes and individual student learning to improve the program and plan for the future.

At the individual student learning level, the students receive feedback throughout the semester in response to their graded course work. Their questions and performance in their classes provide the instructors with first-hand information on whether their course content needs to be further clarified, enhanced, or delivered using different modes.

Instructors review their Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) survey results after the end of each semester and use the results to make revisions and improvements to course design and delivery. The SOIs are reviewed by the department head as well. The results are considered in the faculty evaluation process and, therefore, become part of the promotion and tenure process for ranked faculty. When SOI results show that an instructor has areas that merit improvement, the instructor must demonstrate how improvements are being made in the self-evaluation section of their annual report.

Course peer reviewers provide constructive feedback on course design and delivery for their
colleagues. Instructors are free to conduct their own real-time course evaluations at any point during the semester to seek students’ input on how some element of the course is functioning or to address student concerns and then make real-time adjustments while the course is in progress. Peer course reviews are a required element of a candidate’s Tenure and Promotion dossier.

The program-level student learning outcome assessment results are reviewed twice per year in scheduled faculty assessment retreats held each spring and fall semester. The SLOAs align with the program objectives. The assessment results tell the faculty how well they are achieving the program’s goals and objectives. A 10% or higher unacceptable rate in SLOA performance triggers review by the faculty and the creation of an action plan the relevant faculty will follow to modify or enhance course learning activities until the acceptable performance percentage is attained. The instructors have the responsibility to decide how to modify or enrich their courses to improve their SLOA outcomes. They can add additional course instructions, clarify the assignment requirements, or provide other learning support as appropriate.

The SLOA outcome reviews at the faculty retreats can also lead to the revision of the SLOAs themselves or to refinement of the SLOA rubrics in order to better measure the outcome in question. Updates made to the learning outcomes necessitate the revision of course requirements, instruction, and assessment mechanisms as well. Each year, selected SLOA review results and the subsequent actions are reported to the university via annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports to demonstrate continuous program improvement efforts in action. These assessment outcomes and the activities undertaken to improve the results are documented and reported on until the 90% Exceeds or Meets Expectations outcome is attained.

A series of surveys are conducted periodically to gather evidence from graduating students and alumni by asking them how well they feel they have achieved the program’s learning outcomes. These survey data help the faculty and staff understand the students’ perceptions of their achievement and their individual goals for learning and career paths.

The VSU MLIS program is the only ALA accredited MLIS program in Georgia. It plays an important role in preparing entry-level librarians first for the state and second, for the country. The faculty and the administrators of the program and the COEHS understand the importance of the program’s academic and administrative policy development as it applies to its students and as it impacts its stakeholders in general. As evidenced in this Standard, the program utilizes a systematic data-driven evaluation process of student learning outcome assessments and student learning to systematically inform program improvement.
Standard V: Administration, Finances, and Resources

Standard V.1
The program is an integral yet distinctive academic unit within the institution. As such, it has the administrative infrastructure, financial support, and resources to ensure that its goals and objectives can be accomplished. Its autonomy is sufficient to assure that the intellectual content of its program, the selection and promotion of its faculty, and the selection of its students are determined by the program within the general guidelines of the institution. The parent institution provides both administrative support and the resources needed for the attainment of program objectives.

The program is an integral yet distinctive academic unit within the institution. As such, it has the administrative infrastructure, financial support, and resources to ensure that its goals and objectives can be accomplished.

The Valdosta State University (VSU) administrative infrastructure is led by a president and a cabinet of vice presidents. The president is the chief executive officer. The Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and Provost is the chief academic officer. The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). VSU’s academic degree programs are organized into colleges. Each college is led by a dean and composed of various disciplinarily related departments. The academic departments are led by department heads who hold twelve-month administrative contracts. The position of Department Head is an appointed academic administrative position, most often filled via a competitive search, rather than one held for a set period by a department chair in an internally selected, rotating appointment. At VSU department heads typically hold tenure though some are working towards earning tenure in their discipline.

At VSU, academic deans, department heads, directors, and other academic officers serve at the pleasure of the university president in their administrative roles. All hold faculty rank, most are tenured, and most are expected to teach in their disciplines. The deans report to the VPAA. In turn, the department heads report to their deans, and program directors report to their department heads. All university department heads are members of the Council of Department Heads. The deans sit on the Deans Council. Both the Council of Department Heads and the Deans Council are advisory in nature and serve as conduits for information from the administration to the faculty and staff.

The VSU MLIS degree program (the program) is the only academic unit housed in the Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS or the department). The department is led by a department head and is the equivalent of other academic departments on campus. The department is now housed in the James L. and Dorothy H. Dewar College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) as one of five academic departments, the others of which house multiple degree programs. The current organization chart for the COEHS is available at Appendix Intro.A. Each academic department has its own travel and operating budgets, and the department heads have control over those budgets. Personnel budgets are managed centrally.

In 2014 the program was moved from Odum Library, where it was founded as the MLIS Program in 2002, to the COEHS as a department. This move was initiated by interim provost Dr. David Danahar, who felt that all academic degree-granting units should be housed in academic
colleges. At the time of the move, the COEHS consisted of ten departments and was under interim leadership, which continued from Academic Year (AY) 2013-2014 to January 2018, when the next dean, Dr. Bernard Oliver, was hired. The changes in the college leadership have been reported in the biennial reports submitted during the current accreditation period. Dean Oliver was charged with reorganizing the college and did so over the next two years. At the start of AY 2020-2021 the initial reorganization outcome resulted in the COEHS consisting of seven departments, each led by a Department Head. ([http://catalog.valdosta.edu/2019-2020.pdf](http://catalog.valdosta.edu/2019-2020.pdf), pages 573-4)

Dr. Oliver left the university in June 2020 and Dr. Karla Hull, Professor of Education in the Department of Leadership, Technology, and Workforce Development, was appointed interim dean for a two-year term. Under Dr. Hull, reorganization continued, and the College was further reduced to its current configuration of five academic departments. ([http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/graduate-degree-programs/education-human-services/](http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/graduate-degree-programs/education-human-services/)) The reduction was achieved as additional programs were brought together under the umbrellas of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Teacher Education. The Department of Library and Information Studies remained independent after the final reorganization.

Dr. Linda Most is the current department head for Library and Information Studies. She first served as interim department head from the time of the Program’s move to COEHS until Spring 2015, at which time a national search was held and Dr. Most was chosen to lead the department. The department has its own operating and travel budgets, autonomy over its curriculum, and administrative support comparable to that of the other departments in the COEHS as will be documented throughout this chapter.

**Its autonomy is sufficient to assure that the intellectual content of its program…**

VSU’s MLIS degree program (the program) is an autonomous teaching unit housed within the Department of Library and Information Studies in the COEHS and is equivalent to other academic degree programs, operating under the supervision of a dean, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the president. Program faculty are institutionally competent to develop and implement its curriculum and intellectual content within the context of the institutional processes of the university, the stakeholders’ expectations of quality, and the standards of the profession. To frame the intellectual content of the program, the faculty consults with its stakeholders, applies the standards and ethics as defined by relevant professional groups, and complies with all procedures established by the university and applied by the COEHS, the Graduate Executive Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Office of Academic Affairs, and following the policies set by the University System of Georgia.

The program’s process for developing its curriculum is described in detail at **Standard II: Curriculum.** The responsibility for curricular content of specific courses rests with the individual instructors, the Curriculum Committee, and the program faculty. Individual instructors ensure that their course content is consistent with the learning objectives established by the program. Part-time faculty may construct elective courses in their areas of expertise, as directed by the department head. Part-time faculty teaching core courses or sections of core courses do so
under the guidance of the faculty member charged with responsibility for the subject area. In these core courses, standardized syllabi, learning objectives, and assignments are employed across all sections of a course.

… the selection and promotion of its faculty…

… the selection…

VSU academic departments and programs, including the MLIS Program have wide discretion in the selection of new faculty as well as in specifying the qualifications and expertise of those individuals. Upon authorization by the VPAA to the college deans, departments initiate new faculty searches. The university requires that appointees to the teaching faculty have the appropriate terminal degree in hand at the time of appointment. For the program, the appropriate terminal degree is the PhD or equivalent. To date full-time, tenure track MLIS faculty have all held the PhD, with one exception, a former faculty member who held the Doctor of Arts.

The department was granted a non-tenure track, renewable instructor line for AY16-17 and the qualification for that line was the MLIS degree. The selected candidate held both the MLIS and the MBA. The program has so far been permitted to replace faculty who have vacated their lines and in 2019 when the incumbent non-tenure track instructor resigned (and later returned to part-time status), the instructor line was converted to tenure track and successfully filled at the rank of Assistant Professor. At the same time, based on the strength of another finalist candidate, the VPAA approved the creation of a new limited term position for AY19-20 to help meet the steadily growing demand for admission to the program. This limited term line was renewed for AY20-21 based on the number of accepted applicants and has been renewed for AY21-22 based on enrollment.

USG Board of Regents policy (Regulation 8.3.7.4) states that new faculty are not hired with tenure, except under exceptional circumstances when the new hire is appointed at the level of associate or full professor, was tenured at their prior institution, and brings a demonstrable national reputation to the new position. New faculty may be hired with time earned towards tenure if their previous position and scholarship are relevant and are approved by the dean and the provost.

Departments define additional qualifications and requirements when hiring new faculty members. The program assesses its programmatic and curricular needs when either new or replacement lines are open. All program faculty members participate in defining the parameters of the search process. These qualifications and requirements are demonstrated in the position announcements published by the program and by the university in appropriate venues as shown in the DLIS Faculty Position Announcements which are included in Appendix III.1. The university advertises all open faculty positions in the USG Board of Regents’ Applicant Clearinghouse a statewide venue and in Inside Higher Education. Positions will be advertised in The Chronicle of Higher Education if requested by a department. The program advertises its open positions on the ALISE website and the JESSE email list as well.

At VSU, the VPAA guides the deans in setting faculty salaries and has final responsibility for faculty appointments and for approving initial salaries, again, in partnership with the deans.
Formal appointments are made by the VPAA. The dean provides the department head with a salary range as approved by the VPAA and the department head negotiates appointments and salaries under the guidance of the dean. Department heads are instructed to tell the selected candidate that they are recommending to the VPAA that an offer of employment be made at a specific salary. If the candidate accepts the offer, the VPAA’s office takes over the hiring process and issues the offer letter and subsequent contract. The university has historically set initial salaries based on studies provided through a subscription to the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). Starting in Spring 2020, as one result of an institution-wide Classification and Compensation (C & C) Study launched in Fall 2019, the university began consulting professional association salary data, including the ALISE annual statistical surveys, to prepare salary comparisons for disciplines not tracked in CUPA-HR.

The C & C Study was conducted for the university by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) at the University of Georgia as part of the Academic Affairs strategic plan for 2019-2024, goal 1.5. The intent of the study was to increase faculty and staff retention by developing:

1. New classification plans for academic faculty, administrative faculty, and staff that improve internal pay equity (pay relationships between positions).
2. New profile descriptions that are reflective of work being performed by unique positions within each administrative faculty and classifications.

A full discussion of the impacts of this study on the program and the university is provided at Standard V.7.

... promotion...

The Board of Regents (BOR) establishes the general time in rank and other criteria for promotion and the grant of tenure within the USG. Promotion and tenure are formally granted by the BOR upon the recommendation of individual university presidents. Each university establishes the specific criteria and processes by which faculty are promoted or tenured.

The promotion process at VSU is overseen by the University Tenure and Promotion Committee (UTPC), on which representatives from each college sit. The UTPC has responsibility for reviewing each dossier forwarded by a college dean for procedural and substantive due process errors, reviewing how tenure and promotion are awarded across campus, establishing university-wide procedural standards, and in this capacity making recommendations to the Provost. The UTPC also acts as a process review committee at the university level by evaluating all tenure and promotion dossiers forwarded by a dean or director and making a formal recommendation to the Provost.

Within broad guidelines, each VSU college defines the teaching, research and scholarship, and service requirements for the promotion and tenure of its faculty. The program published its first T&P policy in 2005 while a unit of Odum Library. That policy was later amended and adopted in
The academic year 2012-2013 to insure compliance with the university policy. The 2013 T&P policy applies to MLIS faculty hired in 2013 - 2015. The T&P policy at VSU and as it applies to the program is discussed in detail at (Standard III.9). Starting in Academic Year 2014-2015, the program faculty have been reviewed and evaluated following the COEHS tenure and promotion guidelines, with the MLIS Tenure and Promotion Procedures document included in their dossiers to help clarify departmental and disciplinary expectations for success. The MLIS document on the Academic Affairs Tenure and Promotion Procedures webpage under the COEHS Tenure and Promotions Procedures entry will be removed in Fall 2021.

In AY2020-21 the COEHS Tenure & Promotion Committee began revising and updating the college’s tenure and promotion policies. All five departments are represented on the T & P revision committee. In Summer 2021 their recommendations were forwarded to the COEHS deans and department heads for review and continuing revision.

... and the selection of its students are determined by the school within the general guidelines of the institution.

The Associate Provost for Graduate Study and Research leads the Graduate School, oversees the Graduate Admissions Office, has the formal responsibility for the admission and dismissal of VSU graduate students, and may grant waivers to graduate admission policies and academic policies. The program has primary responsibility in defining the number and qualifications of students it accepts and dismisses. The program establishes, within limits set by the Graduate School, application deadlines and required application documentation. For example, the Graduate School requires that all applicants hold at minimum bachelor’s degrees from regionally accredited institutions of higher learning. Applicants holding degrees from foreign academic institutions must submit transcripts that have been evaluated by authorized transcript and credentials evaluation agencies. Individual departments define appropriate grade point averages, undergraduate majors, standardized test scores if required, and other application requirements. The Graduate School has two categories of acceptance: regular and probationary. Departments determine the cut-off points between probationary and regular admission status. For the MLIS Program, the cut-off point is a 3.0 undergraduate GPA. Probationary admissions convert to regular status once the student completes nine hours of course work with a 3.0 graduate GPA or better. The minimum GPA to qualify for a graduate degree is 3.0/4.0 A detailed description of the Program’s admissions standards and policies is provided at Standard IV.3.

The parent institution provides both administrative support and the resources needed for the attainment of program objectives.

As will be documented in detail below, the USG and VSU provide the program with extensive administrative, physical, and virtual resources and facilities. Those administrative resources include support from university offices like the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), the Center for eLearning (eLearning), academic and administrative office space and technologies, the BlazeVIEW/Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management platform (LMS), and other teaching and learning resources. The university also provides extensive employee development and wellness opportunities from the Office of Employee Development and Campus
Wellness.

Valdosta State University (VSU) receives enrollment-based funding each year from the University System of Georgia (USG) as appropriated by the State Legislature. Salaries and related fringe benefits for faculty and staff are budgeted directly by the VSU President and administrators and are not subject to college or departmental discretion.

Each department receives two discretionary budget lines: operating and travel. Within wide latitude, departments may utilize those resources to meet departmental needs. The department head has the first authority to authorize spending of discretionary funds and the program’s Planning and Budget Committee provides guidance in establishing priorities for the use of those funds. Operating funds are used to pay telephone, copier, and postage expenses, to purchase furniture, electronic equipment, and office supplies. Conference registrations are paid out of the operating budget by university policy. Travel funds are used to underwrite the costs of professional travel within the state, the country, and globally. Travel in support of scholarship (conference presentations and research) is prioritized, followed by administrative travel for accreditation, recruiting, and alumni and student networking. Travel for professional development is considered and funded as resources permit. Please see Standard V.6 for additional discussion of Program funding.

As is shown at Standard III.2, program faculty, like all VSU faculty members, have access to several additional funding pools to support academic travel. During the current review period, faculty have applied for and received consistent VSU funding from outside the department (Appendix III.M). This funding includes grants from the Division of Academic Affairs Faculty Scholarship fund, the Center for International Programs’ Faculty Internationalization Fund, and from the Graduate School’s Faculty Scholarship fund to support research, presentations, and graduate student recruitment for individual members of the graduate faculty.

**Standard V.2**

The program’s faculty, staff, and students have the same opportunities for representation on the institution's advisory or policy-making bodies as do those of comparable units throughout the institution. Administrative relationships with other academic units enhance the intellectual environment and support interdisciplinary interaction; further, these administrative relationships encourage participation in the life of the parent institution. Decisions regarding funding and resource allocation for the program are made on the same basis as for comparable academic units within the institution.

**The program’s faculty, staff, and students have the same opportunities for representation on the institution's advisory or policy-making bodies as do those of comparable units throughout the institution.**

Program faculty, staff, and students have the same rights and obligations to the university as all other VSU faculty, staff, and students. The program faculty are represented equally with other faculty and staff throughout the governance structure of the university. Program faculty members serve equally on college and university governing and advisory committees with all other faculty. Program faculty can be nominated or self-nominate for openings on college committees or as college representatives to university committees. Formal faculty representation...
in university governance includes the opportunity for program faculty to run for election as a COEHS representative to the Faculty Senate. Dr. Drouillard served on the Faculty Senate from 2013-2016 in one of the Odum Library seats, as a legacy of the period during which the program was housed in Odum Library. Dr. Alemanne was elected to the Senate in Fall 2018 to finish an unexpired term of another COEHS faculty member and then was re-elected for a three-year term starting in Fall 2019, Dr. Colson was elected to the Senate in Fall 2020 for a three-year term.

Program faculty committee service across the college and the university is detailed in Appendix III.F, Faculty Committee Assignments. Program faculty members have participated on search committees for administrative officers of the university, most recently included on searches for the Associate Provost for Graduate Study and for the Dean of the COEHS.

The department head serves as a member of the COEHS Executive Committee along with the other COEHS department heads, as a member of the university’s Council of Department Heads, and has participated in the developmental Department Heads Round Table, offered by CELT since 2018. The department head also sits on the Graduate Executive Committee as the program’s representative to this body. Because the program enrolls and instructs only graduate students and is delivered fully online, the department head interacts extensively with the graduate school and holds the program’s seat on the Graduate Executive Committee in order to be able to advocate for all the online graduate programs and ensure they are treated equally with the face-to-face programs. The other seats on the GEC are held by program coordinators from all the different graduate programs across the university.

The program’s administrative assistant attends monthly faculty meetings and relevant committee meetings and is invited to participate in departmental deliberations. All VSU staff members are represented at the university level by the VSU Council on Staff Affairs and have an equal opportunity to run for elected staff positions in which they might wish to serve.

Opportunities for MLIS students to participate in institutional and program governance are limited by the distributed nature of the student body. Program students are represented through their Student Organization of Library and Information Science (SOLIS). The SOLIS president is an ex officio representative of the students to the monthly MLIS faculty meetings. The SOLIS vice president is an ex officio member of the MLIS Curriculum Committee. The SOLIS president is also a member of the MLIS Program Advisory Board.

Program alumni are not formally organized but are included in the program’s unofficial Facebook group and retain access to the MLIS Village student online hub within the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS as long as their VSU email addresses remain active. Current students are invited to attend all candidate presentations as part of the faculty search process. Candidate presentations are delivered in the Center for eLearning’s networked teaching lab and are narrow-cast to the program’s students via web-conferencing software inside the MLIS Village LMS site.

MLIS students are afforded the opportunity to submit proposals and present posters of their research at the annual VSU Graduate Research Symposia. Students may present virtually via conferencing communication software or come to campus to present in person. In Academic Year 2019-2020 and Academic Year 2020-2021 the Graduate Research Symposia were held fully online due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The program also encourages students to participate in the ALA Annual Conference Student-to-Staff program and hosts the Beta Beta Mu
chapter of the International Library and Information Studies Honor Society, Beta Phi Mu (BPM). Qualified graduates are selected by the faculty for nomination to BPM each year in the spring.

The Graduate School supports an Association of Graduate Students (AGS) but the membership activities are campus-based. Given that most of the graduate programs are delivered online, members of the Graduate Executive Committee regularly push AGS to develop more ways for online students to be involved.

**Administrative relationships with other academic units enhance the intellectual environment and support interdisciplinary interaction; further, these administrative relationships encourage participation in the life of the parent institution.**

The program has a number of administrative linkages with other academic units across the campus. Odum Library faculty who are academically qualified are invited to teach part time in the program. MLIS faculty have placed students in the library as interns. The University Archivist regularly recruits program students to fill the graduate assistant position assigned the archives. Cooperation of college, library, and program faculty in the development of different research proposals for external funding has proven successful. Program faculty have been invited to serve on dissertation committees in the doctoral programs in Higher Education Leadership and in Public Administration when dissertation committees are formed that fall within their areas of expertise. Program faculty have the opportunity to run for the Faculty Senate seats allocated to the COEHS like all other college faculty. Other university-wide elected seats held by program faculty have included seats on the Senate’s Academic, Technology, Athletics, Scholarship and Honors Committees and the Faculty Affairs Committee. Additional VSU and USG service on the part of the program faculty is documented in Appendix III.F.

This range of formal networking via elected and invited participation in university governance and other opportunities has led to informal networking across departments and programs, to include program faculty. Individual program faculty members have formed working relationships with the faculty members from other colleges to promote the intellectual environment of VSU. Through these formal and informal networks, the faculty participate in the “life of the parent institution.” At the same time, program faculty participate with faculty members at other USG institutions to promote intellectual interaction and cooperation. The program has a memorandum of understanding with Clayton State University to allow the transfer of credit between the Clayton State Master of Archival Studies and the MLIS degree programs. This relationship is explained on the program’s Frequently Asked Questions webpage.

**Decisions regarding funding and resource allocation for the program are made on the same basis as for comparable academic units within the institution.**

University funding and resource allocation is managed by the university’s Budget Services unit following the policies of the USG Board of Regents. The budget process is overseen by the Budget Advisory Council (BAC), which is chaired by the VPAA. All the academic colleges are
represented on the BAC equally with all other administrative units of the university. The academic deans receive their budgets from the VPAA and have authority over their college budgets. Department heads receive their operating and travel budgets each fiscal year and have control over these funds. In the fall of each academic year, the Budget Advisory Council calls for one-time and permanent funding requests from all administrative units of the institution for the coming year. The academic deans submit all funding requests from within their colleges to the BAC. In the COEHS, the dean asks department heads and other administrative managers to submit their permanent and one-time funding requests and personnel requests. The COEHS Executive Committee then ranks all requests other than personnel requests. The dean discusses personnel requests directly with the VPAA. All COEHS department heads have an equal opportunity to submit funding and personnel requests and to participate in the funding request ranking process. Any requests the program submits are considered equally with those submitted by other departments within the COEHS. All members of the university community have the right to attend Budget Advisory Council meetings to observe the budget process and to speak from the audience if appropriate.

Standard V.3
The administrative head of the program has authority to ensure that students are supported in their academic program of study. In addition to academic qualifications comparable to those required of the faculty, the administrative head has leadership skills, administrative ability, experience, and understanding of developments in the field and in the academic environment needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

The administrative head of the program has authority to ensure that students are supported in their academic program of study.

Graduate academic programs at Valdosta State University have the authority to establish their own curricula in accordance with the standards, practices, and norms of their disciplines within the context of general parameters set by the Board of Regents. The university expects that a department will maintain a two-year course rotation schedule for upper division undergraduate and graduate programs. Within this expectation, the program head has the authority to schedule courses as the program deems most appropriate to meet the needs of the students. After the semester schedule is published, the program head has the authority to request permission from the dean to add additional sections of courses to meet student demand and to request approval to hire qualified part-time instructors or offer faculty overloads as needed to cover those additional sections. In practice the program head can add sections and hire part-time instructors as needed to meet demand until the budget cut-off date for the semester in question. If an additional section is needed at the last minute, the program head so informs the dean and requests permission for a late hire of an additional part-time instructor or to add a faculty overload as appropriate to meet student demand. As of this writing, the program has consistently received permission to add additional sections or electives as needed in order to support students in their academic programs of study.

Graduate programs are solely responsible for advising their students and the program heads have the responsibility and authority to assign faculty advisors to incoming students. The program assigns faculty advisors to students based on the students’ expressed areas of interest, and
students have the right to request a change of advisor if they come to feel that a different faculty member would be a more appropriate advisor to help them reach their goals. In AY2020-21 the COEHS is beginning to implement basic professional advising for graduate students by degree program and the graduate faculty will assume the role of faculty mentors. The professional advisors will handle standardized processes such as making sure newly admitted students complete their pre-enrollment program requirements, that current students who are following their established programs of study are eligible to register each semester, refer questions from students about their programs of study to their assigned faculty advisor, and coordinate applications for graduation for students at the appropriate time. This is a new advising model for the program, and we are excited about the opportunities this advising model should provide for the students and the faculty.

The program encourages students to plan their individual programs of study (POS) during their first semester in the program. When the program required new students to come to campus for a face-to-face orientation over the weekend before classes started, planning the POS was a large part of the content of the orientation. When the face-to-face orientation was discontinued and all orientation and advising activities moved online, the faculty tried different methods of helping incoming students start planning their programs of study. Beginning in Fall 2019, the program has moved planning the POS and the introduction to all the related resources a student needs to do so into two of the labs that are now included in the required first semester Foundations of Library and Information Science course (MLIS 7000). A fuller description of the advising process is provided at Standard IV.4 ...coherent plan of study... (pages 143 - 149).

In addition to academic qualifications comparable to those required of the faculty, the administrative head has leadership skills, administrative ability, experience, and understanding of developments in the field and in the academic environment needed to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

Dr. Linda Most, the current department head for Library and Information Studies and the MLIS program leader, holds both the MSLIS and Ph.D. in Library and Information Studies from Florida State University, as well as an M.A. in History from Florida Atlantic University. She worked both as a professional librarian and as a corporate archivist before returning to school to earn her doctorate. Since arriving at the university in 2009, Dr. Most has continued her professional development. In 2014 she was appointed as Assistant MLIS Program Director once the incumbent indicated his intention to retire. Upon his retirement, a national search was held and Dr. Most was selected to become the department head in 2015.

Interim department heads are typically appointed by the dean and provost from among the department faculty. Permanent department heads at VSU are typically selected via national searches and are appointed into twelve-month administrative contracts while also holding faculty rank and (typically) tenure in their departments. The positions do not rotate and there are no term limits for department heads. Department heads serve at the pleasure of the president and their contracts are renewed annually. Department heads may request to return to the faculty at the end of an annual contract and that request will be negotiated individually.

Across the university, department head salaries vary based on discipline, the incumbents’ rank at
time of appointment, their number of years in their positions, and the size and complexity of their
departments. Table V.1 documents COEHS Department Head 12-month salary minimums by
department and rank, including administrative stipends, as of AY 20 after the completion of the
classification and compensation study described above. The table provides evidence that the
program head is appropriately compensated for her work in comparison to her peers in the
COEHS.

Table V.1
College of Education and Human Services Department Head 12-Month Salary Minimums by
Department and Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College - Discipline</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Adult &amp; Career Ed</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Adult &amp; Career Ed</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Comm Sciences &amp; Disorders</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Comm Sciences &amp; Disorders</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Comm Sciences &amp; Disorders</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Curriculum, Lead, Tech</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Curriculum, Lead, Tech</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Curriculum, Lead, Tech</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Deaf Ed, Special Ed</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Deaf Ed, Special Ed</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Deaf Ed, Special Ed</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Elem, Middle, Secondary, Subject Areas</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Elem, Middle, Secondary, Subject Areas</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Elem, Middle, Secondary, Subject Areas</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Social Work</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Social Work</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Social Work</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Kinesiology</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Kinesiology</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Kinesiology</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Library Science</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Library Science</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Library Science</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Human Serv - Psych, Counsel, Fam Therapy</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Human Serv - Psych, Counsel, Fam Therapy</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE&amp;HS - Human Serv - Psych, Counsel, Fam Therapy</td>
<td>Department Head</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table V.1 is no longer reflective of the current administrative structure of the COEHS. Beginning in AY2020-
21, the Departments of Adult and Career Education and of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology were merged
into the Department of Leadership, Technology, and Workforce Development. The new department is administered
by a department head and an assistant department head. The Departments of Kinesiology and of Deaf Education
and Special Education have been merged with the Department of Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Education
and the three previously distinct departments have become the Department of Teacher Education. The new
department is administered by a department head and an assistant department head. The Department of Social
Work was merged into the Department of Human Services. Effective in AY20-21, the COEHS consists of five
academic departments and additional administrative units.
Upon securing her current position, Dr. Most began participating in both required and optional administrative and leadership training opportunities offered by the university and the University System of Georgia (USG). She has attended all required university training sessions and annual retreats to which department heads are invited. In 2017 she was selected to participate in the university’s first leadership development institute. Starting in 2018 with its inception, and to the present, she has participated in the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching’s Department Heads Round Table meetings. She regularly attends scheduled Council of Department Head meetings and for AY20 and AY21 she served as the elected secretary of the council. She has served on the Graduate Executive Committee since 2014 and works closely with this group to develop and recommend updates to university policies and practices pertaining to graduate study. Along with these academic leadership responsibilities, in AY20 Dr. Most, like all her peers, participated in a multi-session administrative development workshop series as mandated in the Division of Academic Affairs’ Strategic Plan for 2019-2024, Objective 1.5.

Dr. Most regularly attends the ALA and ALISE Annual Conferences to keep up with developments in the professional and academic environments and is a member of the ALISE Deans, Directors, and Department Heads Special Interest Group. She also holds leadership positions in the Georgia library community. She serves locally as a trustee and the secretary of the Board of Directors of the South Georgia Regional Library System, and state-wide as the chair of the Georgia State Board for the Certification of Librarians, appointed to the trustee’s seat on the board by the Governor in 2014.

**Standard V.4**
The program’s administrative head nurtures an environment that enhances the pursuit of the mission and program goals and the accomplishment of its program objectives; that environment also encourages faculty and student interaction with other academic units and promotes the socialization of students into the field.

**The program’s administrative head nurtures an environment that enhances the pursuit of the mission and program goals and the accomplishment of its program objectives;**

The department head actively nurtures a collaborative and collegial environment, consulting with faculty and working within the department’s committee structure to encourage collaborative running of the program in support of its mission and goals and the attainment of its objectives. Monthly faculty meetings allow all faculty to have a say in program planning and decision-making. Resource allocation is conducted transparently and with input from the faculty via the monthly faculty meetings. Travel funds for the current accreditation cycle – through 2020 - were sufficient that all faculty have been able to attend professional and disciplinary conferences to present their scholarship and take advantage of congruent professional development activities without drawing on personal funds unless they choose to do so.
...that environment also encourages faculty and student interaction with other academic units and promotes the socialization of students into the field.

Program faculty are encouraged to serve on college and university committees, doctoral dissertation committees in Public Administration and Higher Education Leadership, and to attend college and university events. In prior years, program faculty had the opportunity to represent the COEHS on general recruiting trips but that model of general faculty recruiting is no longer active. There were also selected opportunities available to conduct focused recruiting for the program until Spring 2020 when all professional travel was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the program faculty have collaborated on research projects with colleagues from other departments.

Because the program’s curriculum is delivered 100% online and because the student body is national, the program is creative in promoting student socialization to the profession. Program students are encouraged to take advantage of ALA’s joint student membership programs with their different state library associations. Students can select an elective supervised field experience for academic credit, and all are encouraged to consider this course in their programs of study. The program actively participates in the ALA Student-to-Staff program and all nominated students have been selected to participate each year the program was offered. The program has funded the selected students travel costs up to $400 to facilitate their participation in the Student-to-Staff program. The program’s student organization, SOLIS, publishes a newsletter four times a year featuring student activities and accomplishments. SOLIS officers work creatively to provide distributed interactive activities for the students and have also established a LinkedIn group for students and alumni to use as a networking vehicle. SOLIS also reimburses student-rate early registration conference registration fees for students who attend the ALA Annual conference.

Students are encouraged to participate in their local and regional professional association conferences and the program has offered limited travel funding to help support student conference presentations by using funds from its H.W. Wilson Foundation grants. As these grants are no longer available, the program is looking for other options to support student conference travel. Students are also directed to the graduate school as a source of conference presentation travel funding. The Graduate School Student Resources webpage provides information about funding opportunities for all qualifying graduate students.

At the state level, the program actively encourages students to participate in their local student chapters and new member sections of their state LIS professional organizations. The program points its home-state students to the Atlanta Emerging Librarians group and the Georgia Library Association New Members Roundtable and uses these opportunities as examples for students in other states to look for. The program takes a booth at the annual Georgia Libraries Conference and hosts a self-pay networking meet-up for students and alumni the evening before the conference officially begins. The program does not have sufficient funding to host a national alumni event in conjunction with the ALA annual conference now that ALISE has suspended its annual joint reunion activities held during the ALA conferences.

The program maintains an online social media presence via a private VSU MLIS Program Facebook group and incoming students are given the information needed to request to join the
group at the start of their first semester. Faculty, students, and alumni all participate in the group and can post items of interest including relevant articles, job openings, conference photos, and program announcements. The faculty try to post informal commencement photos on this platform during and immediately following the fall and spring graduate commencement ceremonies. The Facebook group supports pre-professional and professional networking and socialization across the program’s students, alumni, and members of the employer stakeholder community.

**Standard V.5**

The program’s administrative and other staff support the administrative head and faculty in the performance of their responsibilities. The staff contributes to the fulfillment of the program’s mission, goals, and objectives. Within its institutional framework decision-making processes are determined mutually by the administrative head and the faculty, who regularly evaluate these processes and use the results.

**The program’s administrative and other staff support the administrative head and faculty in the performance of their responsibilities.**

As a one-program department, the program is supported by one administrative assistant (formerly classified as an administrative secretary) who works full time in the department. The program is also allocated one administrative/research graduate assistant (GA) by the graduate school. The administrative secretary serves as the first point of contact for the program, maintains departmental student paper and electronic records, attends faculty meetings and records minutes, processes all faculty travel authorizations and reimbursement requests, places and tracks all departmental purchase orders and other operating expenditures, supports the admissions application review process, and otherwise supports the running of the department. As a result of the 2019 Classification and Compensation Study described earlier, all secretarial positions across the university have been reclassified as Administrative Assistants I or II, or as Administrative Coordinators. The department’s secretary is now classified as an Administrative Assistant I with a corresponding salary increase, to be achieved incrementally over five installments, starting in February 2020.

The graduate assistant is funded via a university stipend and tuition waiver and works a maximum of 19 hours per week. The program selects its GAs from among students enrolled in on-campus graduate programs. Because the GAs the program hires are not enrolled in the MLIS Program, they are able to help maintain student records, including data entry to maintain the MLIS student database, working with admissions applications, and other student documents. The faculty are also able to make use of the GA’s time to help with their research as appropriate and get help with course support other than teaching or grading.

**The staff contributes to the fulfillment of the program’s mission, goals, and objectives.**

Unlike many accredited MLIS programs at larger or more research-oriented universities, the program does not have any dedicated professional or full-time staff support other than the
department’s administrative assistant. The administrative assistant is a contributing member of the program team and supports the program’s admissions process and maintains student records. She utilizes the program’s student database to help the faculty track student progress towards their degrees and provides requested reports to the department head and the faculty. The administrative assistant facilitates the department’s compliance with all university travel, purchasing, and accounting policies.

The program is also able to draw upon the resources of the COEHS, especially the Director of the Office of Professional Education Services, Dr. Natalie Kuhlmann. Dr. Kuhlmann provides data analysis and visualization services for all departments in the COEHS and helps the specialty-accredited programs in the college maintain compliance with their accreditation data collection and reporting. This work is in addition to her work overseeing college-level compliance with state standards for initial teacher preparation and certification. Starting in Summer 2021, the program will begin to integrate professional graduate student advising support from Dr. Kuhlmann’s staff into program operations.

At the university level, the program is supported at the same level as all other graduate degree programs via the following university-wide units: The Center for eLearning supports BlazeVIEW, the university’s installation of the statewide online learning platform, D2L Brightspace. The university’s Information Technology Solutions Center Service Desk staff and services are available to faculty, staff, and students for help with all information technology applications other than the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS. The Graduate Admissions Office manages the entire application submission process for the different graduate programs. Graduate Admissions staff handle the collection of all the applicants’ transcripts and supporting materials and review all applications for admission for completeness before releasing them to the graduate programs for review and consideration for admission.

Within its institutional framework decision-making processes are determined mutually by the administrative head and the faculty, who regularly evaluate these processes and use the results.

The program makes all decisions that are within its purview collaboratively via departmental faculty committees who manage the processes within their scope and bring their recommendations to monthly faculty meetings for consideration, and recommendations for implementation or return to committee to be revisited. The department head ensures that university and college policies and procedures are respected within the program’s decision-making process and, as a faculty member, contributes to faculty deliberations as well.

The program implements its student learning outcomes assessment (SLOA) cycle each semester and meets twice a year as the Assessment Committee, in the spring after the close of the fall semester and in the fall after the spring and summer semesters, to review the results from the previous assessment periods, consider the results, and evaluate whether the assessments have uncovered an area of the curriculum that needs to be reinforced or whether the assessment itself is measuring what we want students to learn. The faculty uses the results of the SLOAs to make recommendations for curricular change.
The program reviews its processes outside the scope of the SLOAs regularly as well. For example, as detailed in Standard IV.3, the Admissions Committee regularly reviews the program’s admissions essay questions and applicant responses to decide whether to revise the essay questions to encourage the richer and more revelatory essays to help the committee select the strongest applicants possible from each application pool. If the members of the committee agree that the admissions essay prompts need to be revised, the admissions committee brings their recommendation to the faculty for review. The department head then communicates the new essay questions to the graduate admissions office for implementation in the next application cycle.

The Curriculum Committee is responsible for initiating and maintaining the program’s systematic curriculum review process, described in detail at Standard II.1, Curriculum Review (page 47). The committee reviews and evaluates the program’s curriculum based on SLOA findings, stakeholder inputs, and trends in the profession. In the current accreditation cycle, the faculty has systematically reviewed and updated the technology, management, and reference tracks. For AY 2021-22, the curriculum tracks are being repositioned as areas of interest to better respond to student needs, but the curriculum review process will continue as described, focusing on one cluster of courses associated with one area of interest at a time.

**Standard V.6**
The parent institution provides continuing financial support for development, maintenance, and enhancement of library and information studies education in accordance with the general principles set forth in these Standards. The level of support provides a reasonable expectation of financial viability and is related to the number of faculty, administrative and support staff, instructional resources, and facilities needed to carry out the program’s teaching, research, and service.

The departmental/program budget is allocated by the university to the administrative units from state funds awarded by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia and a portion of local tuition dollars. The college deans have overall responsibility for their entire college budgets, but department heads have control of their annual operating and travel budgets and the authority to hire part-time faculty at the set rate. The university provides computer and library services as well as general administrative infrastructure and the university system office provides significant statewide infrastructure support including the online learning management system, internet access, employee benefits administration, and other system-wide services and support. Institutional and system resources are not reflected in the department/program budget allocations for the current accreditation cycle, shown in Table V.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table V.2</th>
<th>MLIS Summary Initial Budgets, AY15-21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>AY 15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Personal Services</td>
<td>583,195</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Travel</td>
<td>16,921</td>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Operating</td>
<td>10,797</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: detailed annual budget summaries for the program are provided in Appendix V.B

In AY2018-19, the VPAA introduced a revenue-sharing summer pay model that encourages
departments to be entrepreneurial in their summer scheduling and allows faculty to teach to the USG-mandated maximum of 33.3% of their regular ten-month compensation for the previous academic year. The Valdosta State Policy on Summer Pay and the USG Policy 8.3.12.3 Summer School Salaries provide details on these policies. The summer revenue model was tested in 2018, then modified in 2019 to the current policy. The summer revenue sharing model sets course registration minimums and provides an option that allows faculty to teach low enrollment courses for a percentage of the per-course salary. MLIS program enrollment has been growing steadily and the new summer salaries model allows the department to meet more of the demand for seats in summer classes with the full-time faculty because of the additional sections the program is able to offer now that full-time faculty are authorized to teach up to three courses in the summer, rather than the earlier two-course limit per summer semester. If the summer budget is achieved, revenue sharing is paid to the departments according to the policy. Summer 2019 and Summer 2020 revenue sharing was paid directly to each department. The program’s Planning and Budget Committee has advised on and prioritized summer revenue spending requests for the department head.

Operating and travel budgets held steady through AY2019-20, while supporting a slightly larger faculty than in earlier years. The variation from initial funding to year-end expenditures that can be seen on the budget detail provided in Appendix V.B is a result of the authority the department heads have to move funds from one line to the other as needed via the budget amendment process. For AY2020-21 the operating and travel budgets across the university were cut in response to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on state revenues and local tuition income. In AY2020-21, the VPAA initiated a budgeting exercise intended to identify and forecast funding needs based on actual expenditures rather than simply distributing the same amount to the same departments year after year. The outcomes of this exercise have not been announced as of this writing.

**Standard V.7**
Compensation for the program's faculty and other staff is equitably established according to their education, experience, responsibilities, and accomplishments and is sufficient to attract, support, and retain personnel needed to attain program goals and objectives.

**Compensation for the program's faculty and other staff is equitably established according to their education, experience, responsibilities, and accomplishments…**

The University has historically set base faculty salaries at 95% of CUPA-HR by discipline. LIS is not listed as a discipline in this source, so the program has consistently advocated for the ALISE Annual Statistical Report salary data to be used to determine competitive starting salaries for new hires. Until AY2019-2020, new faculty were typically hired below the ALISE average salary for LIS assistant professors in the southeastern region.

In AY2015-2016, in response to increases in enrollment, the program was given a limited term instructor line. That line was converted to continuing contract at the end of AY17. As positions opened due to a retirement in AY 17, a terminal contract concluding in AY18, and the non-tenure track, renewable instructor line being vacated when the incumbent resigned and later
returned to part-time teaching in AY19, the program was authorized to hire replacement faculty for AY18, AY19, and AY20. Salaries for these positions were set by the VPAA and communicated to the dean and the department head as described above.

Due to the steady growth of the program, the department requested that the instructor line be converted to a tenure-track assistant professor line and that request was approved and so advertised in Spring 2019. Each of the three successful hires just mentioned was made at a higher pay rate for MLIS assistant professors than the rate in place in 2013 when the last new tenure-track hire had been made. These last three hires created a significant salary compression issue for the tenured associate professors, who were hired at lower rates and whose promotional pay raises were at the standard rate used across the university. The results of the institution-wide Classification and Compensation Study conducted in 2019 (introduced at V.1 and described below) should remedy the associate professor salary compression issue if the stepped salary increases are fully implemented over the remaining three years.

**Institutional Classification and Compensation Study, 2019**

Lower-than-average faculty salaries, inequities between disciplines, and salary compression have been an ongoing issue across the university. The university recognized this issue in **Outcome 1.5 of the institutional strategic plan**: “VSU will attract, develop, and retain a quality and diverse workforce that promotes student success by forming a more outcomes-oriented training program for managers by spring 2019; completing a classification & compensation study for faculty and staff by fall 2019; creating a faculty workload model that is consistent with comparator norms by spring 2020; and connecting promotion & tenure, as well as funding to support research and High Impact Practices, to the values inherent in this plan by spring 2021.”

In 2019, under the guidance of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, the university underwent an institution-wide classification and compensation study which resulted in significant changes for all university staff and faculty. The full report is attached as **Appendix V.A**. Key outcomes for the academic faculty classification plan were:

1. Improved internal equity (establishing consistent pay for positions of equal worth to Valdosta State University) for academic faculty employees.
2. Better linkage of academic discipline and/or programs at Valdosta State University to compensation in the external marketplace. (**Appendix V.A**, CVIOG Final Report, page 3).

A CUPA-HR peer comparison group of similar institutions from across the southeast was established and surveyed, but not all disciplines are addressed by CUPA-HR. “The Odum Library and the Library & Information Studies and Related Disciplines academic discipline grouping from the Dewar College of Education and Human Services utilized a national peer comparison group of public higher education institutions due to insufficient data available from the peer comparison group identified in [CUPA-HR]” (**Appendix V.A**, CVIOG Report, page 5). The peer comparison group referred to for LIS was the ALISE Annual Statistical Survey data, provided to the university’s HR executives by the department head.

A new classification plan for administrative faculty and staff was also developed that significantly reduced the number of position classifications across the university. Of relevance
to the program, because of the study, all secretarial positions across the institution were reclassified as Administrative Assistants I and II and minimum pay levels established.

Upon completion of the study, the CVIOG developed new minimum salaries for each identified academic faculty classification and each administrative faculty and staff classification. For academic faculty, the new minimum compensation rates at all ranks for each academic discipline compensation grouping are set at approximately 95% of CUPA-HR. For those disciplines not listed in CUPA-HR, national professional association salary data was used to establish minimums. ALISE 2017 salary data (reported in 2018) was used to determine compensation for the MLIS Program faculty going forward.

The costs to implement the new minimum salaries across the university are significant. As the result, the CVIOG and the university developed a five-year stepped implementation plan with a salary increase of 20% of the gap amount to be implemented annually. The first increase was made in February 2020 and the four subsequent increases were scheduled to be implemented each October, starting in October 2020. “The developed implementation strategy will take five years to fully implement and is contingent upon Valdosta State University meeting enrollment goals and budgetary availability” (Appendix V.A, CVIOG Report, page 12). On November 12, 2019, affected faculty and staff were notified of their new minimum salaries and their 20% gap funding amounts by letter and concurrent meetings with their supervisors. Any faculty members who wished to discuss or dispute their new compensation rates were given the opportunity to meet with HR leadership and their supervisors to discuss the process and their issues. The October 2020 scheduled 20% increase was put on hold due to the adverse budgetary impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. In Spring 2021 it was announced that there were sufficient resources in place to fund the scheduled increase and it was implemented at the end of March 2021.

The impact of the outcomes of the study to the MLIS program is that if the salary gaps are fully funded to the new minimums established by the study, the salary compression issue in the department will be appropriately addressed and minimum salaries for new hires will be more competitive to other similar MLIS degree programs within the context of the regional cost of living and the classification of the university as Comprehensive and Regional, rather than Research Intensive.

... and is sufficient to attract, support, and retain personnel needed to attain program goals and objectives.

Determining whether the institution’s program faculty salaries have been “sufficient to attract, support, and retain personnel needed to attain program goals and objectives” is a complex matter. The program’s faculty members are aware that their salaries are lower than those reported in the ALISE annual statistical reports, are not always in alignment with what their peers at the university are paid, and that associate professors are experiencing significant salary compression as the result of new assistant professors being hired at more competitive salaries than previously. Nonetheless, in this accreditation period, the program has not failed a position search because of the salary offered. Position announcements have attracted varied pools of applicants, many of whom have expressed personal or family reasons for wanting to work in South Georgia and for whom, therefore, the comparatively low starting salary has not been a barrier to accepting the
Retention of program faculty has not been an issue in this accreditation period, as those who have left the faculty did so as the result of either retiring, completing a terminal contract, or resigning and then stepping back to part-time status for personal reasons. The program has not had any faculty leave for positions at another university in this accreditation period, although one faculty member did so during the previous accreditation cycle.

**Standard V.8**

Institutional funds for research projects, professional development, travel, and leave with pay are available on the same basis as in comparable units of the institution. Student financial aid from the parent institution is available on the same basis as in comparable units of the institution.

The University provides several funding opportunities for all eligible faculty. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs manages the award of academic leave (often referred to as sabbaticals) as well as two funding pools, which are awarded competitively by a faculty committee that answers to the VPAA. The first funding pool awards up to $5,000 to provide seed funds for research proposals. The second pool awards up to $2,000 per year to individual faculty for travel to make presentations at professional meetings. The MLIS faculty have been successful in securing these professional presentation monies each year. Details are provided in Appendix III.M.

The Graduate School manages a small Graduate Faculty Scholarship fund and applications for this funding are ranked by a peer committee. The program faculty have benefited from these funds on a frequent basis as shown in Appendix III.M.

The Director of the Center for International Programs (CIP) manages a funding pool to support travel to meetings outside the United States and its possessions. A committee of university faculty assists the CIP in assessing applications. Over the years, members of the program faculty have received Internationalization Awards to support international travel to present their scholarly research.

To date, all approved faculty travel has been fully funded through a combination of university and departmental travel funds. It should be noted that all professional travel funds were suspended for AY2020-21 due to restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Faculty who participated in virtual conferences and virtual professional development opportunities were funded for their conference registration and presentation fees out of university and departmental funds.

Program students who qualify are eligible for university-wide financial assistance opportunities available to all graduate students. Most MLIS students enroll part-time (two courses per semester) to be eligible for federal financial aid in the form of student loans. Scholarship funding is limited. The MLIS Program has one scholarship funded by internal funds, one funded by H. W. Wilson Foundation (now spent down) and is the beneficiary of one endowed scholarship targeted to Georgia residents enrolled in the program. Program students have also benefited from a scholarship fund provided by the University System of Georgia Foundation using funds donated in honor of Merryll Pence (the retired head of USG library systems and
services) in AY19, 20, and 21. Funding for this scholarship is not guaranteed going forward but will be requested and distributed if awarded. Program students are also eligible to apply for any college- or university-level scholarships for which they qualify. Program students also apply for and receive outside scholarships, and some share the news of their funding with the program. The program lists several state-wide and national LIS professional scholarships and the students who have received them during the accreditation period at Standard IV.3, Table IV.12, Assistantships, Scholarships, Awards, and Grants, 2014-2020.

Standard V.9
The program has access to physical and technological resources that allow it to accomplish its objectives in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The program provides support services for teaching and learning regardless of instructional delivery modality.

The program has access to physical and technological resources that allow it to accomplish its objectives in the areas of teaching, research, and service.

The physical facilities available to the program provide strong support for the faculty to function in the online learning environment. Program offices are in a dedicated suite on the fourth floor of Odum Library. The program’s office suite was expanded during Summer 2013, incorporating an area previously occupied by under-used faculty study carrels. This renovation added two new faculty offices, one graduate assistant office, and expanded the administrative area to include a copier/file/mail room. The expanded suite now houses the entire program faculty and full-time staff in one location. In 2017, renovations to the Odum Library executive suite resulted in the repurposing of an administrative workroom to a conference room for the program’s suite. The new conference room can seat eight comfortably. The program also purchased a dedicated conference speaker phone for this room, and it was used regularly to facilitate meetings and faculty searches through March 2020, at which time the university moved to fully remote operations in response to the Covid-19 outbreak and pandemic.

Being housed in Odum Library has many advantages. Odum Library provides all the necessary physical resources and facilities to support the program’s objectives. This location also facilitates collaboration with the library faculty and staff and provides access to larger meeting rooms whenever needed. The eLearning office and the IT help desk are also housed in the library building, thereby encouraging synergies between program faculty and these two groups. The program uses the university’s physical and virtual infrastructure equally with all the other academic units to support online learning and teaching, and research.

The program provides support services for teaching and learning regardless of instructional delivery modality.

The program delivers the MLIS curriculum 100% online using BlazeVIEW, the university’s implementation of D2L Brightspace by Desire2Learn. The D2L LMS is provided to all USG institutions by the University System of Georgia and is supported locally by the Office of eLearning. The USG also provides a statewide help desk for all D2L users. VSU’s Office of eLearning provides additional online learning resources university-wide, including Infobase,
Qualtrics, Kaltura, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, and Turnitin. All program faculty have access to current computing hardware and software and any online learning tools provided by or supported by the university. The university’s Academic Success Center subscribes to a graduate-level online writing tutor service and program students have full access to these services. Appendix V.C documents one program student’s positive experiences with the graduate online writing tutor service.

The program budget is sufficient to support faculty acquisition of specialized online teaching tools or software licenses they may need in addition to those provided by the university, including, for example, the RDA Toolkit for use in courses that cover cataloging and the organization of information.

Beginning in Spring 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting move of faculty, staff, and students to working at home and the transition of delivering traditional face to face academic programs to online formats, the university invested heavily in the Microsoft TEAMS platform and provided all academic programs and each course with a TEAMS section to facilitate meetings and collaboration outside the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS. During the Covid-19 pandemic, TEAMS and Collaborate Ultra (inside the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS course websites) have become the key platforms utilized for teaching courses that typically meet face to face as well as to support most faculty and staff committee meetings. Some departments and administrative units use WebEx or Zoom as they prefer, but the platforms supported and provided across the campus are TEAMS and Collaborate Ultra. The program uses TEAMS for administrative meetings and continues to teach fully within the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS as has been its custom.

**Standard V.10**

Physical facilities provide a functional learning environment for students and faculty; enhance the opportunities for research, teaching, service, consultation, and communication; and promote efficient and effective administration of the program.

**Physical facilities provide a functional learning environment for students and faculty;**

University physical facilities available to the program provide strong support for the online learning and teaching environment. All full-time faculty have private campus offices equipped with desktop computers with necessary software, printing, and peripheral devices. Faculty are provided with up-to-date Windows computers and peripherals as part of the university’s basic faculty technology support plan. Faculty members who prefer to work in the Apple operating systems have been able to request computers and peripherals either using their start-up funds or through year-end budget surpluses and summer revenue. Faculty have also been able to request university-funded laptop computers to facilitate their work while off-campus by using their start-up funds, or waiting for year-end surpluses, summer revenue, or some combination of all three.

The university’s online learning management system, BlazeVIEW, operating on the D2L Brightspace by Desire2Learn course management platform, is the primary learning environment for the program’s students. D2L was selected as the learning management system for the USG
in 2012 and continues as the USG-wide LMS. The D2L learning management software and the USG’s and institutional support resources provide an up-to-date and fully functional online learning environment for students and faculty.

Because the program is delivered fully online, reliable technology support for the online learning and teaching environment is crucial. The university provides excellent technology resources and services for students and faculty. Odum Library has its own IT support unit which provides services to all the different units housed in the building. The library also houses the Center for eLearning, the New Media Center, and the IT Helpdesk. Program faculty receive full IT support from these units. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CELT) is housed at the north end of campus and provides faculty development programming in multiple modalities across the curriculum.

Odum Library also provides abundant support for distance education. Students and faculty have full access to generic library services and resources regardless of where the students are located by using the library’s Anywhere Access portal to access all online library databases and resources. Reference services are available to all online students via email, phone, live chat, and text message. Additionally, as students attending a University System of Georgia institution, in-state program students have privileges at other USG libraries. Students receive direct support for the LMS from the state-wide help line. Support for all VSU-provided online tools or platforms is provided by VSU’s IT Helpdesk or referred to the relevant unit. The contact information for the LMS help line is listed on the homepage of every course website.

From Spring 2011- Spring 2017, a two-day face-to-face orientation for new students was held at Odum Library each Fall and Spring semester. During the orientation, several Odum Library classrooms and conferences rooms were used as is shown below in Table V.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room #</th>
<th>Square footage</th>
<th>Library support</th>
<th>Computing support</th>
<th>Room characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odum 1470</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 multimedia instructor station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odum 1480</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 multimedia instructor station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odum 3270</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60 student computers, 2 multimedia instructor stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odum 4240</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>WiFi</td>
<td>Conference room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odum 4260</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>WiFi</td>
<td>Conference room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>110 seats, 1 multimedia instructor station</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Fall 2017, the program’s new student orientation was moved completely online and conducted using a unique BlazeVIEW/D2L course website dedicated to orientation content and deployed during the week before classes started. As of Fall 2019, new student orientation and first semester advising are fully integrated into the required first semester course, MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science, via a series of orientation modules deployed over the first four days of the semester and a series of 15 module labs that run parallel to the course content. Student response to this fully integrated model of orientation, advising, and program planning has been extremely positive, and the program plans to continue this model of orienting and supporting its first semester students within the required MLIS 7000 courses for
the foreseeable future, thus negating the need to identify and reserve relevant meeting and computer lab spaces on campus.

…enhance the opportunities for research, teaching, service, consultation, and communication;

The physical facilities of the university support faculty research, teaching, service, consultation, and communications. The institution’s library and library services are adequate to support research and teaching at the level expected of a regional comprehensive university. The university provides licenses to many software programs in support of research, including SPSS and Qualtrics survey software. MLIS faculty can engage in meaningful service to the department, the university, the community, and the profession using the facilities available. The university provides effective means of communication, including telephony and networked computing resources, as well as online conferencing applications for use inside the BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS or in non-course related meeting settings, as described above.

…and promote efficient and effective administration of the school’s program, regardless of the forms or locations of delivery.

After the Summer 2013 renovation of the MLIS suite and the 2018 creation of the program’s conference room, the program is comfortably housed with adequate room for all administrative activities, faculty, and support staff in the same suite. The physical resources allow for ample electronic and physical storage and provide adequate administrative equipment including a new departmental networked printer-copier, computers, and telephones. The program also has its own supply room, secured with a keypad, and can reserve either of the larger Odum Library administrative suite conference rooms as needed for face-to-face meetings. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, all faculty meetings and committee meetings have been conducted via the program’s TEAMs app.

University physical facilities available to the program provide strong support for the online learning and teaching environment and for faculty research needs. All full-time faculty have individual offices equipped with desktop computers and current software, printing, and peripheral devices. The program has been able to provide the faculty with up-to-date laptop computers, iPads, webcams, and other hardware they may need to support course development, teaching, and research activities. All faculty have access to institutional physical and digital research tools including the library’s physical and digital collections, SPSS statistical software, and Qualtrics survey software.

The library also houses experimental programs and resources including MakerSpace 3D printers and the V-Text Institutional Repository, which are accessible to students and to faculty. The university’s archives and special collections are also housed in Odum Library and are accessible to all members of the VSU community for both research and learning. Many of the collections are digitized and available to support online coursework and research. Part-time faculty have access to all the library collections and services, to the Center for eLearning resources and services in support of online teaching, and to the USG’s Desire2Learn Help Center.
Standard V.11

Instructional and research facilities and services for meeting the needs of students and faculty include access to information resources and services, computer and other information technologies, accommodations for independent study, and media production facilities.

**Instructional and research facilities and services for meeting the needs of students and faculty include access to information resources and services…**

Odum Library provides program students and faculty with access to an extensive collection of online academic resources including scholarly databases and bibliographic resources dedicated to the library and information science literature and a collection of subject LibGuides, including one dedicated to Library and Information Science (LIS) tools and resources. The LIS LibGuide serves as the starting place for students and faculty to access specialized and general online information tools. Featured specialized databases include *Library Literature and Information Science Retrospective* (LLISR); *Information Science and Technology Abstracts* (ISTA); and *Library, and Information Science Science Source*. Databases are available through Georgia Library Learning Online (GALILEO), an online portal to electronic library resources shared by educational institutions across the state. Students access the GALILEO collection of databases through the [Odum Library Anywhere Access portal](http://example.com) using their BlazeVIEW/D2L login and password. Students may also access the Odum Library’s Library and Information Science LibGuide and collection from outside the university or the learning management system through the Anywhere Access portal using their VSU single-sign-on login and password.

Many key LIS-related primary reference resources are available online via university or statewide subscriptions and are linked from the LIS LibGuide described above. Among these are the *Gale Directory Library*, including the *Directory of Special Libraries and Information Centers*, *The Encyclopedia of Associations*, and the *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media*. Odum Library also provides electronic access to *Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory* via Ulrichsweb, *Choice Reviews Online*, *ARBAonline*, *Books in Print*, the *Children’s Literature Comprehensive Database*; cataloging tools including *Sears List of Subject Headings*; and links to Library of Congress (LoC) resources and the Online Computer Library Center’s (OCLC) *WorldCat* (via GALILEO).

Key online information access tools available to Program students and faculty include:

- **GALILEO**: access to over 100 databases indexing thousands of periodicals.
- **GIL Express**: This service allows all currently enrolled students and faculty and staff access to all eligible circulating materials at all USG libraries.
- **GIL-Find**: The Catalogs of the University System of Georgia Libraries
- **Georgia Online Database** (GOLD): a state-wide union catalog and ILL facility that includes more than 200 private academic and public libraries
- **VSU ILL**: interlibrary borrowing beyond the USG. Circulating items and journal articles.
- **PINES**: interlibrary borrowing of circulating items among 256 Georgia public libraries in 124 counties

GALILEO ([Georgia Library Learning Online](http://example.com)) is an initiative of the Board of Regents of the
University System of Georgia. It is an online library portal to authoritative, subscription-only information.

The GALILEO Interconnected Libraries (GIL) Express service provides all enrolled in-state MLIS students with walk-in access to all University System of Georgia libraries. These libraries hold LIS-related print reference resources students can use. Out-of-state students have full online access to all Odum Library and state-wide digital resources as well as access to all electronic document delivery services.

**Odum Library’s interlibrary loan service** offers mail delivery of circulating physical/print resources to all distance learning students no matter where they live, as long as the students hold active student status and are in good standing with the university.

All reference resources required for graded assignments are electronically reserved for students to use or are available via online subscriptions. Through assigned course passwords, students can access specific items placed on electronic course reserve through the Odum Library’s electronic reserves feature at any time from any internet-connected computer.

As of Fall 2019, Odum Library holdings consist of:

- approximately 476,976 bound volumes
- 5,131 print serials including periodicals, newspapers, magazines, etc.

The total number of physical items in the Odum Library collection has decreased by 90,157 volumes from 2015 – 2019 as electronic resources have increased from 115,840 to 798,570 titles. The decrease is primarily the result of discarding bound serials back issues that were held in both print and online formats. *(Source: Michael Holt, Odum Library Assessment Librarian, April 2021 personal communication)*

The VSU Library collection spending in support of the MLIS program has fallen at the same rate as the overall spending on the collection as the library’s collections budget has fallen *(Appendix V.E)*.

Odum Library holds:

- 10,133 titles in Z and 611 titles in ZA across print and various ebook formats.
- 960 serials in classifications Z and ZA, in either electronic or print or both formats
- Approximately 29% of the titles in Z and 46% of the titles in ZA are available in ebook format.

The following collection analysis was provided by Ken Smith, Odum Library’s Collection and Resource Services Director:

Throughout the report period [to 2019], the library materials budget has been flat ($1,229,300). Since prices have not been, the library has responded by regularly cancelling serials and making minor adjustments to the allocation formula. The latter includes the following: The library has decreased the size of the standard “base
allocation” and increased the amount of money channeled through the allocation formula. The formula is based on a mix of price factors and demand factors. By funneling more money through the formula, we have endeavored to push more money to where it is needed. The second change has been to increase the proportion of money controlled by the Library (from 45% to 50%). This change has enabled the library to be more flexible, covering departments with small projected deficits, and insuring availability of funds for basic monographic purchases.

As a graduate program without any undergraduate sections, the MLIS program is awarded a double base allocation from the library’s materials budget. This is a long-standing practice, which also extends to the Social Work program. By lowering the underlying base allocation, MLIS and Social Work have seen relatively significant reductions in their overall allocations. Furthermore, with the library covering more departmental funding shortfalls, acquisitions originating from the library have become more selective and are targeted to support the university’s undergraduate retention initiatives.

Program faculty are creative and open to using open-source materials and developing their own content as needed to keep their courses up to date.

...computer and other information technologies,

The MLIS Program benefits from an extensive online learning support environment on campus and within the library. Faculty can access their files using any networked computers anywhere on campus or off campus through the University’s Microsoft OneDrive service. Each faculty member also has access to the department’ shared storage space on the university’s internal network drive, the V-drive, so faculty can share files over a mapped network.

The MyVSU web portal is the university’s student, faculty, and staff gateway to all the university’s online resources, tools, and services. MyVSU provides a customizable menu of all the university portals that students, faculty, and staff must access. This page includes links to portals such as Banner, BlazeVIEW, and all the University’s online tools and resources. All students and faculty also have off-campus access to their MyVSU accounts and the services it links to via any mobile, laptop, or desktop computer from which they can log in.

With the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the university purchased many laptop computers and MiFi wireless hotspots (with accounts) for use by students who were left without adequate computer hardware or internet connectivity. At least one of the program’s students shared that she had been given use of these emergency support tools to enable her to finish her degree after she lost access to the internet in her home and could no longer work as a substitute teacher because the schools were closed. VSU mailed the laptop and MiFi mobile hotspot to the student and she returned them by mail once she finished her coursework. Her story is told in an email message to the program head, provided as Appendix V.D.

Center for eLearning

The Center for eLearning is located on the second floor of Odum Library. The Center for eLearning provides training, instructional design consultation, and course development support.
for all VSU faculty who teach in online, hybrid, and technology-enhanced courses using BlazeView. MLIS Program faculty take full advantage of relevant Center for eLearning resources as documented in Appendix III.G. Full-time Faculty VSU Training Transcripts.

From Blackboard to Desire2Learn
In 2013 all online and hybrid programs in the USG completed the transition to Desire2Learn (D2L) the USG’s chosen learning management system. VSU migrated from Blackboard to Desire2Learn at the start of the Summer 2013 semester. D2L Brightspace is the latest update of the Desire2Learn LMS and the USG provides training and support mechanisms to all faculty and students through the USG D2L help center. The Center for eLearning provides local training classes in the use of D2L Brightspace for all VSU faculty and staff.

VSU Solutions Center (formerly the Information Technology (IT) Helpdesk)
The Solutions Center staff respond to all non-BlazeVIEW IT related problems, including but not limited to password reset support, data recovery, software support other than for the LMS, and manage campus technology status alerts. An incident ticket tracking system allows faculty, staff, and students to submit a work order any time and to check the status of an incident at any given time. All incidents can also be submitted by calling the IT Helpdesk.

The BlazeVIEW/D2L LMS is supported through the USG’s centralized Desire2Learn Help Center and their contact information is available on every course homepage as well as on the eLearning webpages.

The Solutions Center also maintains webpages of frequently needed instructions and consults with students via telephone, email, and web-based request forms. The Solutions Center Help Desk is physically located on the second floor of Odum Library, next to the circulation desk and is the on-campus point of contact for technical support for faculty, staff, and students. IT Helpdesk assistance is available in person, by telephone, or by email during the following times:

- Monday -Thursday: 8am-9pm
- Friday: 8am-5pm
- Saturday: 8am-1pm
- Sunday: 8pm-2pm

...accommodations for independent study, and media production facilities.

Independent Online Study and Training
In alignment with university policies the program offers the three-credit MLIS 7950 Independent Study course option in LIS every semester. Students who wish to pursue topics not covered in the program curriculum may propose an independent study to whichever faculty member they feel would be the most appropriate to serve as their instructor based on the content of the independent study. In practice, very few program students have taken advantage of this opportunity. In the current accreditation cycle, four students have requested permission to take MLIS 7950 Independent Study and all four proposals were approved, and the courses successfully completed. The department head, Dr. Most has served as instructor of record for all four independent studies.
• Summer 2013 Rachel Parrott, Disaster Planning in Libraries
• Summer 2014 Courtney Barron, Art Librarianship
• Fall 2018 Jason Hess, Open Educational Resources in Oregon
• Spring 2020 Crystal Valentine, Makerspaces in Public Libraries

…non-credit independent learning…

VSU has contracted with Infobase (formerly Hoonuit and Atomic Learning) to offer a wide range of online training resources. Infobase provides over 50,000 short, show-and-tell video training tutorials on over 205 of the most common applications (i.e., various operating systems, bibliography tools, Photoshop, HTML5, CSS3, etc.). Infobase tutorials are available online for faculty, staff, and student use at anytime from anywhere once the user logs in through the MyVSU portal. Faculty can embed links to relevant Infobase tutorials within their BlazeView course websites to help students master any new technologies they are asked to use in a course.

New Media Center

Located on the first floor of the Odum Library, the New Media Center provides specialized tools and equipment for working with digital media and for producing multimedia products and presentations. The New Media Center provides on-campus assistance to students and faculty in media content development, media presentations, and access to a wide variety of traditional and digital media equipment and software. Program faculty have full access to the production tools offered by the New Media Center. Faculty resources and support are extensive and include software training and an extensive collection of software and video tools to support course development. Finally, the New Media Center provides the VSU campus community with a wide variety of traditional A/V and digital equipment for check-out purposes. Starting in AY2019-20, the New Media Center began offering new high-end laptops for short-term faculty use for travel or campus use.

In principle, Media Centers housed in other USG libraries offer reciprocal on-campus use of their software and hardware resources to VSU’s distance learning students who live in their communities as specified by local policies. In practice, and in recognition of the national scope of our student body, the program faculty assign projects that can be completed using online resources they make available in their courses. Students are not required to locate a specialty media center to produce their assignments.

Standard V.12

The staff and the services provided for the program by libraries, media centers, and information technology units, as well as all other support facilities, are appropriate for the level of use required and specialized to the extent needed. These services are delivered by knowledgeable staff, convenient, accessible to people with disabilities, and are available when needed.

As the result of years of successful experience with online programs at all levels, the university has a well-developed infrastructure that provides the services and support described in the previous sections to meet the needs of the MLIS program. Most of the graduate programs at the
university are delivered online and university staff and services all accommodate the needs of online graduate students.

Odum library is well staffed, with 19 of 38 librarians and paraprofessionals holding MLIS degrees. Five Odum librarians have taught or are currently teaching courses for the MLIS program: Catherine Bowers (Information Literacy Instruction), Deborah Davis (Archival Theory and Issues), Guy Frost (Organization of Information and online cataloging fieldwork supervision), Emily Rogers (Academic Libraries, Government Documents, Information Sources and Services), and Ken Smith (Information Sources and Services). Twelve of the MLIS degree-holding library staff - three librarians and nine paraprofessionals - are alumni of the MLIS program who either earned their degrees while working in Odum Library or were hired for open positions after completed their studies. Several of the reference librarians have been embedded in MLIS courses to provide subject support and direct reference services for enrolled students. When the program required newly admitted students to attend an on-campus orientation, Odum librarians participated by presenting training on the use of their online resources as well as supporting the orientation program in many ways, from opening the library early so faculty could set up before students arrived to assisting students in locating resources.

Odom Library offers individualized reference services to all distance learning students via live online chat, telephone, email, or by embedding librarians in courses (at the request of the course instructors). With a librarian embedded in a course, students taking online classes are more aware of the library resources available to them. The embedded librarians who work with the program faculty and embed in MLIS courses also model exemplary information provision services to the current MLIS students. Librarians are also available for individual advanced research consultations by appointment. These consultations can be held in person, online via BlackBoard Collaborate Ultra, TEAMs, or other conferencing software, or by phone.

eLearning

The university’s online learning resources team supports the design and delivery of online instruction, provides training for faculty in all the online resources the university provides, and manages the different online learning tools the university makes available. The eLearning group includes instructional designers, an instructional technology specialist, and is managed by an associate director who holds a master’s degree in Instructional Technology. The eLearning group falls under the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) on the university’s current organizational chart.

Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT)

CELT supports the university faculty by providing professional development opportunities related to their roles as teachers, scholars, practitioners, and leaders throughout their career stages. Programs offered include hosting faculty learning communities; facilitating roundtables, retreats, and institutes; peer faculty mentoring, and individual consultations. CELT is under the Division of Academic Affairs. CELT, through the Center for eLearning, supports the integration of technology into the classroom and to support the delivery of fully online courses and programs. MLIS program faculty have all benefited from the programs and activities CELT offers, as documented in Appendix III.G.
Access Office
The Access Office is the campus unit that provides support to students with any accessibility issues regarding buildings, services, or activities on campus or in the distance learning environment. Staff members include a coordinator for Deaf/Hard of Hearing Services and an Accessibility Strategist. Access services available for online students include facilitation of closed captioning of recorded online course materials, real time interpreters for students delivering synchronous online presentations, and coordinating course accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities.

Students with disabilities can receive textbooks or other course materials in alternate formats (e.g., e-text, braille, audio files, etc) upon request (Alternate Media Request Form). The Access Office also assists in obtaining captioned copies of videos for instruction. If the material is not available in a captioned format, the Access Office staff will provide a transcript of the video (Captioning Request Form). The Access Office staff coordinates with the Information Technology division to assure that best practices for accessibility are followed in electronic settings.

Counseling Center
The Counseling Center provides free and confidential face to face services to all VSU students - including individual, group, and couples counseling - with the goal of helping students make positive changes in their lives. The Counseling Center is led by a director with a doctorate in counseling psychology and is staffed by a team of certified professional counselors and support staff. Counselors are licensed to practice in the State of Georgia so cannot deliver online counseling sessions to students who reside in other parts of the country. Online services other than actual counseling include a virtual relaxation room in which students and faculty can find resources for guided imagery and mindful meditation as well as lists of apps to help with anxiety and safety, mindfulness, journaling, and sleep. The Counseling Center also provides a list of links from reputable organizations on managing stress and a webpage featuring strategies for graduate student success. Faculty in online degree programs are encouraged to provide these links to their students within their course websites and on their program resources webpages. New for AY2020-21, the Counseling Center is providing access to fully online support services to all students, no matter their location or status at the university, via the HOPEConnect@VSU platform.

Office of the Dean of Students
The Office of the Dean of Students is responsible for managing the late withdrawal process for medical or hardship reasons. MLIS faculty are all familiar with the policies for medical and hardship withdrawals and refer students directly to the Office of the Dean of Students when circumstances so require.

New Media Center
The media center is staffed by two professionals, a staff technician, and a team of student technicians. MLIS faculty most often utilize media services to develop course-related media content to support online instruction. Services include audio and video editing, digital imaging, scanning, media transfer and duplication, BlazeVIEW video streaming, and traditional audio and video services. The staff members are available Monday-Friday from 8am to 7pm. In AY20, due
to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, New Media Center hours were reduced to 8:00-5:30 pm M-Th, and 8:00-3:00 pm on Fridays. Access to the New Media Center has been limited to conform to university-wide social distancing requirements for all face-to-face services.

**Campus Accessibility**

Accessible parking is available on the south and east sides of the library. Wheelchair-accessible elevators are in the original library building and in the library addition, so the MLIS program office suite, classrooms, and conference rooms are fully accessible to all members of the campus community. Various adaptive technology equipment and software are also available upon request.

Adaptive equipment and technology available in Odum Library:

- Adjustable workstation
- Television equipped with closed captioning capability
- Dragon Naturally Speaking
- Jaws
- MS Narrator
- PDF Equalizer
- Universal Reader Plus
- Victor Reader

**Standard V.13**

The program’s systematic planning and evaluation process includes review of its administrative policies, its fiscal and support policies, and its resource requirements. The program regularly reviews the adequacy of access to physical resources and facilities for the delivery of face-to-face instruction and access to the technologies and support services for the delivery of online education. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, staff, students, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

The MLIS Program and the College of Education and Human Services planning processes align with university planning policies and procedures. University timetables and deadlines clearly establish ongoing institution-wide review and reporting, which are informed by University System of Georgia and SACSCOC accreditation requirements. The University’s Office of Institutional Effectiveness manages these processes. For example, in compliance with SACSCOC requirements, every five to seven years each academic program undergoes a Comprehensive Review. The program underwent its most recent review in 2015-16 after it was moved from Odom Library to the COEHS. (Appendix I.A) The next Comprehensive Review for the MLIS Program is scheduled for AY 2022-23. Each September, each degree program and administrative unit prepares and submits an Institutional Effectiveness Report for the prior year and an Instructional Effectiveness Plan for the coming year. Program annual Institutional Effectiveness Reports and Plans are available in Appendix I.E.

The institution’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget process starts in the fall when the university system submits its budget to the Legislative Budget Office. Revenue
estimates and fee proposals are due for the Board of Regents’ consideration in December. The BOR then holds budget hearings with institutions in January or February. In April, the BOR allocates state tax and lottery funds based on the needs and missions of each institution, as presented at the hearings. Final budget proposals are usually due in May.

Once the original budget is approved, the amendment process begins. The University’s Budget Advisory Council (BAC) is charged to ensure the strategic allocation of resources in conjunction with institutional goals. Representatives of all the different colleges, constituent groups, and administrative units on campus sit on the Budget Advisory Council. BAC meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. The BAC meets in the fall to begin the planning process for the next year and to plan for end-of-year spending for the current year. At VSU, all annual spending must be completed by April 30. As end-of-year surpluses become evident, unencumbered funds are then applied to the Budget Advisory Council’s end-of-year projects spending list in the order approved by the President’s Cabinet.

At the program level, at the beginning of the academic year the faculty have an opportunity via the August faculty meeting to offer any recommendations for projects or propose special expenditures or discuss any proposed program-level changes. The Program Planning and Budget Committee next meets in January to review the status of any active planning proposals and to prioritize remaining departmental spending beyond regular operating expenses and expected faculty travel for scholarship or recruiting.

Starting in Spring 2019 with the implementation of the new summer revenue model, the program’s summer revenue allocation has been reviewed by the program’s planning and budget committee and spending requests have been solicited from the faculty as to how to spend their shares of the summer revenue. The committee prioritizes faculty requests based on faculty statements of need and availability of funds and then meets with the department head to make recommendations. In the three years that the summer revenue sharing model has been in place, all faculty funding requests have been fulfilled.

The department head has the authority to transfer balances between the program’s operating and travel budgets and those adjustments are made on the recommendation of the program Planning and Budget Committee after all spring spending requests have been reviewed and prioritized. Typically, there has been some remaining travel money that can be transferred to the operating budget to help fund faculty requests. These internal budget transfers are requested and documented via Budget Amendments submitted to the College’s Budget Manager in the Financial Services office. In Spring 2021 the VPAA led a university-wide budget planning exercise to attempt to better allocate funds to where they would be most needed and to break the cycle of departments regularly leaving thousands of dollars unspent. The outcome of this exercise has not yet been announced.

Physical resources and facilities are regularly reviewed at the university level as part of the University’s strategic planning cycle. The Budget Advisory Council includes significant facilities maintenance and development in its annual budget recommendations to the President based on input received from all the colleges and other administrative units across the university, as described above. The deans may request building renovation funds, but those requests will be pooled and prioritized by the BAC for end-of-year spending or to incorporate into the next year’s
budget. At the college level, the dean has some say as to where any college faculty are housed should there be a reorganization that would impact program alignments. The program has been housed in Odum Library since its inception in the early 2000s and the program’s suite has been enlarged as the program has grown so that it is adequate to house all the program faculty, staff, and one graduate assistant. There is no indication that the program will be relocated in the foreseeable future.

The program is provided with the necessary physical resources and facilities to offer its curriculum, to support student and faculty teaching and learning, and to meet research requirements. The program continues to have input into the evaluation of the available library and technology resources to ensure they meet student and faculty needs via faculty member service on the Faculty Senate, College, and departmental committees. Program faculty members and staff make recommendations for incidental supplies and technology needs as they come up during the monthly faculty meetings. Requests that fall within the purview of the program are reviewed, approved, and implemented as funds permit. Office assignments within the program’s suite, for example, are at the discretion of the program head after consultation with the faculty.

Requests related to building physical plant, repairs, keys, etc. require approval by the program head as well as the dean of Odum Library if they impact the library building where the program faculty is housed. The dean of the COEHS would approve any program expenditures requested that are above and beyond the annual operating and travel budgets assigned to the college departments.

Major equipment and computer-related purchases require approval at multiple levels, starting internally with the department head as budget manager, and then move to review by the Information Technology purchasing unit. To date, the program’s technology purchasing requests have all been approved, though the IT purchasing staff may make substitutions for requested equipment to meet institutional standards. Program faculty have developed good relationships with members of the IT staff and consult with their desktop and laptop support team leaders when considering new IT purchases. Program-level purchases are limited to internal operational tools and resources and do not require any student input. At the university level, faculty senate and student government representatives sit on the Budget Advisory Council and are included when any significant systems or services are reviewed.

**Standard V.14**

The program has explicit, documented evidence of its ongoing decision-making processes and the data to substantiate the evaluation of administration, finances, and resources.

The program maintains minutes of all faculty and committee meetings and publishes summaries of faculty meeting minutes publicly on its departmental webpages. Departmental budget summaries by year are available in Appendix V.B. During this accreditation period no substantive changes have been made to the program’s structure, delivery methods, or the overall structure of the curriculum. Incremental changes have been made to courses and course tracks as the result of review of a variety of data sources, including annual SLOA outcome reports, student opinions of instruction, and annual constituent surveys.
Assessment Committee meeting minutes, including semi-annual SLOA reviews are available in Appendix II.A. Details of curriculum reviews and changes are provided in Standard II.1 Curriculum Review, page 47 - 49. Curriculum Committee meeting minutes are available in Appendix II.C. Annual faculty evaluations follow university procedures and are conducted by the department head and submitted to the college’s dean for review. Copies are available filed in the department head’s office. Changes to the faculty as the result of annual evaluation outcomes are reported in Standard III.10. Faculty hiring has been requested and conducted according to university policies each year an open position line has been funded. DLIS Faculty Position Announcements can be reviewed in Appendix III.I. Annual financial documentation beyond the summaries provided in this report are available upon request.

**Standard V.15**
The program demonstrates how the results of the evaluation of administration, finances, and resources are systematically used to improve the program and to plan for the future.

The narrative responses provided to the various elements of Standard V, above, document the regular, systematic evaluation of program finances and resources and institution’s infrastructure from the perspective of student and faculty needs. Faculty have regular input into the allocation of the program’s financial and physical resources as described above. Faculty serve on university committees at all levels and contribute to the evaluation of institutional administration, finances, and resources. The faculty and the program director provide significant input and advocate for the needs of distance learning graduate students via their service on the Faculty Senate, the Graduate Executive Committee, the College Executive Committee, the Academic Committee, and other avenues as appropriate. Their participation is recorded in the relevant sets of committee minutes. The program uses the results of evaluative processes such as the Institutional Effectiveness Reports, the Comprehensive Program Review, and all college and university planning processes to inform and improve the program’s administrative processes, financial decisions, and use of program and institutional resources to plan for the future.
Synthesis and Overview

As demonstrated throughout the introduction and the five chapters of this self-study, the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program at Valdosta State University uses the results of systematic analyses of program data of all types to inform the decisions we make to support program growth and curricular development.

The Introduction provides an overview of the organizational structure of the institution and summarizes the significant changes in leadership the institution experienced at multiple levels during the current accreditation period. An overview of the program’s evolution including its move from the university library to the Dewar College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) and program innovations implemented during the current accreditation period are also presented. The program’s response to specific questions from the ERP chair asking us to address how the program and the institution have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic is also contained in the introduction. Each of the five chapters then addresses the relevant standard by reviewing key aspects of the program including systematic planning; curriculum maintenance and development; faculty background, qualifications, and productivity; student demographics, performance, and support; and program administration, financial stability, and institutional resources. This synthesis of our self-study provides a summary of the content for each chapter and the program’s plans as we move into our next accreditation cycle.

Chapter 1 provides an overview and analysis of the program’s systematic planning processes and details about its vision, mission, and goals, including descriptions of the constituents and planning mechanisms involved. A detailed description of the program’s objectives and associated student learning outcome assessments (SLOAs) is presented and the connections from the SLOA results to program and institutional effectiveness processes are established. The program underwent the institutional comprehensive review process in 2015 and the resulting action steps are presented. Those action steps have guided the program throughout the current accreditation period. Other sources of indirect program assessment data and the uses of these data to inform program planning and improvement are also presented. Moving forward, in 2022-23 the program will launch its next institutional comprehensive program review process, following the schedule mandated by the institution. Most of the programs across the different COEHS departments are also concurrently scheduled for this review. In preparation for the comprehensive review process, the program is participating in the college-wide initiative to reinvigorate the individual program advisory boards. The processes and findings from the comprehensive program review will establish the framework for the program’s next round of strategic planning and curriculum review.

Chapter 2 reviews the curriculum, presenting its organizational structure and a significant repositioning in the way the curriculum structure is now presented to students to help them plan coherent programs of study that meet their individual goals for their MLIS degrees. Without restructuring the curriculum or renaming any courses, the faculty have shifted from using the term Tracks to using the phrase Areas of Interest when presenting the curriculum’s organizational structure to the students. This change in terminology has helped alleviate the consistent misperceptions and resulting stress experienced as students assumed they were required to declare and follow a specific curriculum track. By repositioning the existing course clusters as addressing different areas of professional interest, faculty are better able to encourage
students to develop coherent programs of study that meet their individual needs. In conjunction with this repositioning of the course clusters and in response to growing student demand for seats in electives that inform work in archives and special collections, the program has packaged a suite of existing electives into a new area of interest named Special Libraries, Archives, or Conservation Librarianship to help students interested in this area of practice plan their courses accordingly. The chapter demonstrates how the curriculum is aligned to the program’s outcomes, the 2015 Standards, and the current ALA Core Competences for Librarianship (2009). The evolution of the curriculum is documented and the reasons for each change explained. Data demonstrating constituent perceptions of the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing the program’s students for entry level professional positions are presented and discussed. The use of these data to improve the curriculum and the program is addressed. Moving forward, future curriculum development will come via the extension and refinement of the curriculum management processes used during the current accreditation period. A systematic review of the curriculum is planned in the next two years. It will be informed by this self-study process, input from stakeholders, and review of peer and aspirational program curricula and the 2021 draft ALA Competences of Librarianship once the draft is approved by the ALA Executive Board and ALA Council. This curriculum review plan will inform the program’s institutional comprehensive review, scheduled for 2022-2023.

Chapter 3 presents information about the faculty, documenting that both full- and part-time faculty have the background, experience, and credentials necessary to deliver the curriculum fully online to the students. This chapter demonstrates that the faculty meet all institutional expectations for teaching, scholarship or creative activity, and service, including presenting and publishing their scholarship in national and international venues, thereby building a body of research, scholarship, and service that relates to the profession. All the current faculty members have achieved rank and tenure appropriate to their length of service and their contributions to the program, college, and institution. Chapter 3 also documents how institutional personnel processes were used in the case of a former faculty member who did not meet institutional standards for their work. MLIS faculty are fully integrated into the life of the program, college, and the institution, leading, and serving on important committees at all levels of faculty governance and receiving appropriate recognition for their work. The chapter also documents the faculty’s commitment to keeping both their individual courses and the MLIS curriculum current and how this work is informed by consistent review of program assessments. The most significant challenge ahead for the faculty is preparation for the move to a new faculty evaluation model that will feature a five-point rating scale for faculty performance rather than the binary satisfactory/unsatisfactory faculty evaluation scale long in use at Valdosta State University. The new rating scale will be used as the basis for annual faculty evaluations and subsequent scheduled personnel actions. Starting in Fall 2021 the colleges will establish basic performance criteria for the five levels of the rubrics and the departments will then further customize the rubrics to their specific needs. These new evaluation rubrics will be used to evaluate faculty performance beginning in calendar year 2022.

Chapter 4 discusses the resources, processes, and opportunities related to students, starting with recruitment, application, and admission, and progressing through orientation and matriculation, funding, course delivery, assessment, graduation, and beyond. A thorough discussion of the program’s utilization of a variety of data points to transform orientation and advising experiences to most effectively meet the evolving needs of incoming and continuing students is presented.
The program’s initial orientation and ongoing academic and career advising models have evolved as the program has grown and the student body has expanded from predominantly in-state residents to a student body that is national in scope. Orientation activities have evolved from being held on campus the weekend before classes began to being fully embedded in the required first semester course MLIS 7000 Foundations of Library and Information Science. Initial advising and course registration are guided by the MLIS 7000 faculty and support student preparation for their first semester experiences. The COEHS is developing a professional advising model to support graduate students and the MLIS Program’s incoming students are now being assisted by a college-level graduate advising staff member in conjunction with a traditional faculty advisor. The program and the college staff are working together to develop this new advising model to make it as effective as possible for all the program’s students. The mechanisms by which students contribute to curriculum review and program governance are documented. A review of stakeholder roles in evaluation of the program’s preparation of students to meet program goals is provided. The program is watching application and matriculation numbers closely as the information professions grapple with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on municipal and institutional budgets. While employment forecasts for the LIS professions are still strong, the program is focusing its recruiting processes and admissions decisions to enhance our ability to identify and admit a diverse pool of applicants whose career goals align with the program’s mission and goals and whose skills and experiences suggest the program’s curriculum and resources will meet their needs and abilities and enable them to be successful in meeting their stated goals for their degrees.

Chapter 5 presents the financial and physical resources as well as the administrative structure of the program, college, and institution, particularly as they impact the program’s students, faculty, and staff. The program’s autonomy and the institutional parity of its faculty, staff, students, and resources is presented in the context of a discussion of the centralized nature of most institutional academic governance, support services, and funding pools. Institutional support for all aspects of distance learning and the needs of remote students is documented to illustrate the full support of the program’s asynchronous online curriculum delivery. The MLIS Program is an integral yet distinct unit within the college and university with autonomy to make necessary programmatic decisions. The program’s budget remained stable until the 2020-21 academic year, when the Covid-19 pandemic adversely affected institutional revenues at all levels. Program funding has been restored for AY22. During the current accreditation cycle the institution underwent a comprehensive classification and compensation study and the positive impacts of this study on the program faculty and staff are presented. Also, during this period, the institution implemented a summer revenue model to incentivize programs to grow their summer enrollments and the program has benefited from this additional income. Moving forward, the program is preparing for the retirement of the interim dean of the COEHS at the end of June 2022 and the search for a permanent dean.

Final Overview

The environment in which the MLIS Program at Valdosta State University operates is markedly different from the environment discussed in the 2013 Program Presentation. In 2013, the program was housed in the university library and led by a Program Director who reported directly to the University Librarian. In 2014, the MLIS Program was moved to the Dewar College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) and established as a one-program
department led by a Department Head who also serves as the program director and reports to the Dean of the COEHS in parity with all other department heads in the COEHS. Program enrollment has more than doubled, from 157 students in Fall 2013 to 372 in Fall 2020. The program’s student demographics have broadened as well. In Fall 2013, the student body was 80% in-state and by Fall 2020 was 39% in-state. Program graduates report satisfaction with their educational outcomes and are advancing in their careers. The curriculum has evolved under the guidance of the faculty and program stakeholders. Program faculty members are effective teachers and productive scholars and participate in institutional leadership and governance at appropriate levels across the entire university. The program uses data collected from a broad range of sources to inform all decision-making processes. MLIS Program faculty are looking forward to maximizing the opportunity of the institution’s scheduled comprehensive program review process to move the curriculum forward to enhance our capacity to meet the evolving needs of our diverse student body and to contribute to the scholarly conversation in LIS. There may be challenges, as have been discussed in our self-study, but the program has the full support of our college and the university and is prepared and ready to respond appropriately.