

Fall 2010

## Student Learning Outcomes and Accreditation

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# PRISM

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## ***Prism: the Office for Accreditation newsletter***

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Laura Dare, editor

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### **ALA accreditation at a glance**

62	ALA-accredited MLIS programs
57	Institutions with ALA-accredited MLIS programs
33	U.S. states (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico) with ALA-accredited programs
5	Canadian provinces with ALA-accredited programs
16	ALA-accredited programs offering 100% online programs †
1	Program with candidacy status
3	Programs with pre-candidacy status
20,019	Students enrolled in ALA-accredited MLIS programs in fall 2009 *
7724	Graduates of ALA-accredited MLIS programs during the 2008-2009 academic year *

† As identified by the programs

\* As reported by programs to the Office for Accreditation



## COA announces accreditation actions

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association (ALA) has announced accreditation actions taken at the 2010 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

Continued accreditation status was granted to the following programs:

- University of Michigan
- University of Toronto

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2017.

Continued accreditation status and release from conditional status was granted to the following programs:

- University of Rhode Island
- Texas Woman's University

The next comprehensive review visit at each institution is scheduled to occur in 2017.

Conditional accreditation status was granted to the following program:

- Southern Connecticut State University

The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled to occur in 2013.

The following institutions have programs that will be visited in the fall 2010 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego.

- University at Albany, SUNY
- Clarion University of Pennsylvania
- Drexel University
- St. Catherine University
- Simmons College
- University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

The following institutions have programs that will be visited in the spring 2011 academic term. The accreditation decisions will be made by the COA at its meeting at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

- University of Denver
- University of Kentucky
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- University of Western Ontario

ALA accreditation indicates that the program meets or exceeds the *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies*, established by COA and adopted by ALA Council. The accreditation process involves rigorous, ongoing self-evaluation by the

program and verification of evidence through an external review. COA evaluates each program for conformity to the *Standards*, which address mission, goals and objectives; curriculum; faculty; students; administration and financial support; and physical resources and facilities. The *Standards* can be found at [www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/index.cfm).

A complete list of programs and degrees accredited by ALA can be found at [www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/directory/index.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/directory/index.cfm). Individuals who would like more information about a particular program should contact the program.

The ALA COA is a leading force in accreditation, having evaluated educational programs to prepare librarians since 1924. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recognizes ALA COA as the authority for assessing the quality of education offered by graduate programs in the field of library and information studies.

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### From the Director: **OUTLOOK**

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

Fall begins the fiscal year at ALA. This is a time for staff to assess what was accomplished last year and determine goals for fiscal 2011. The Office for Accreditation (OA) staff accomplished all the goals we set for fiscal 2010, including streamlining the review process through electronic document delivery and improving service with the addition of areas of concentration to the MLIS directory. This expanded way to search for program information will be fully implemented by the end of October.

Staff will have a chance to plan strategically with the Committee on Accreditation (COA) this November and move forward with clarified alignment to the ALA 2015 plan, available at <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/plan/index.cfm>.

#### **Welcoming COA Members**

Two new COA members begin their four-year terms this fall: Arthuree Wright, Interim Director of Libraries at Howard University, and Ling Hwey Jeng, Director of the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University. Vicki Gregory, Professor at the University of South Florida, accepted appointment to serve as COA Chair for a second and final year of her four-year term on COA. One of the two public members-at-large, David Werner, accepted a second two-year term. Dr. Werner has just been appointed Interim President of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. There seem to be many "interim" appointments being made at higher education institutions—a sign of the turbulent times. Too bad interim doesn't mean part-time, considering the weight of the COA docket.

Orientation for new COA members will be conducted at ALA Headquarters on November 18, the day before COA convenes for its fall meeting. Orientation has proven crucial to helping new COA members understand the ethical and operational context in which the Committee operates as an accreditor. The Code of Good Practice ([http://www.aspa-usa.org/principles\\_aspa.asp](http://www.aspa-usa.org/principles_aspa.asp)), promulgated by the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), provides guidance as does the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (<http://www.chea.org/default.asp>), which recognizes ALA-COA as the accreditor in good standing for the professional degree in library and information studies.

### **Accreditation Recognition Review**

Our comprehensive review by the CHEA is now underway, beginning with submission of an application for eligibility. This fall, the CHEA Committee on Recognition will make its recommendation to the CHEA Board of Directors as to whether ALA is eligible to enter into the reaffirmation of recognition phase of the review process. If eligibility is conferred this January, the reaffirmation of recognition process will begin. The recognition review process includes preparation of a self-study document and a visit from a CHEA reviewer to a COA meeting. In January 2012, the COA chair and I will meet with the CHEA Board of Directors to conclude the review. The CHEA Board will make a reaffirmation of recognition decision following that meeting.

### **Four Programs Seeking Initial Accreditation**

Four programs continue in the pipeline for initial accreditation. Among those is the Master of Library, Information and Media Studies at Chicago State University, currently in precandidacy accreditation status. I visited with them in August during a retreat—their new library is a beautiful addition to that lovely campus in south Chicago. The Master of Library Science at East Carolina University continues to progress in precandidacy status. The Master of Information Studies at the University of Ottawa, currently in precandidacy, will submit an application for candidacy this fall. In candidacy status, the Master of Library and Information Science at St. Catherine University was visited by an External Review Panel October 4-5. COA will make an initial accreditation decision on that program at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in January.

**By Vicki L. Gregory, Chair, ALA Committee on Accreditation, and Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of South Florida**

## **Student learning outcomes and accreditation**

Recently I attended the fall meeting of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA) with Karen O'Brien, Director of the Office for Accreditation. We found the program informative and helpful in understanding how professional accreditors for other disciplines and fields face many of the same issues we do as members of the Committee on Accreditation (COA). One issue that kept coming up was student learning outcomes, particularly at the program level. Evaluation of student learning outcomes at the course level (often referred to as course objectives) has been around for quite some time, but expanding student learning outcomes to the program level is something that higher education is still wrestling with.

Student learning outcomes can be defined as statements that specify just what it is that students will know, be able to do or be able to demonstrate when they have completed a course or program. These outcomes are usually expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes or values. To be useful, student learning outcomes should be measurable in a way that allows the program to analyze and understand where changes need to be made to the curriculum or other parts of the program. As accreditors, we are primarily interested in program-level rather than course-level outcomes. Course-level outcomes should contribute directly to program-level outcomes, but not necessarily vice versa.

The 2008 *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* places high importance on program-level student learning outcomes. Standard I.2 states, "Program objectives are stated in terms of student learning outcomes and reflect the essential character of the field of library and information studies," and includes ten elements identified as important components of those objectives and outcomes.

From the COA perspective, student learning outcomes contribute to the success of students and the program by:

- Assisting LIS colleges, schools and departments in understanding how to better facilitate student learning;
- Providing LIS colleges, schools and departments with feedback as to how their programs are meeting the needs of students and employers;
- Enabling students and graduates to articulate what they are learning or have learned from the program.

At the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans, the COA will present a program on Monday, June 27, from 10:30 a.m. to Noon, on the subject of student learning outcomes. The

members of COA believe that a discussion on this subject will be useful to educators and practitioners, so we are moving the program from the usual Sunday afternoon to Monday morning, with the expectation that this new time slot will allow more people to attend.

We look forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

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## **Spotlight on process and policy**

**By Laura Dare, Assistant Director, ALA Office for Accreditation**

### **ALA accreditation: Not a rubber stamp!**

In each issue we focus on an aspect of process or policy of ALA accreditation. This issue's column provides an overview of the accreditation process from start to finish (except that it's never finished). We hope you find it informative. If you have an idea for a future column, please send it to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org).

Many members know that ALA accredits master's programs in library and information studies (MLIS). In fact, accreditation was ranked second in a 2009 survey ([http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/plan/background/survey\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/missionhistory/plan/background/survey_analysis.pdf)) of what members value most about ALA. Among members not directly involved in LIS education, however, the perception may be that ALA accreditation is a one-time, rubber-stamp process – sort of like renewing your driver's license. You get the expiration notice in the mail, perhaps take a simple test, get your new license, and then forget about it for a few years until you receive another renewal notice. Actually, ALA accreditation – like most higher education accreditation – is an ongoing process designed to foster continuous improvement of LIS programs.

ALA accreditation is granted to programs that demonstrate that they meet the *ALA Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies*. The *Accreditation Process, Policies and Procedures* (AP3, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) manual, available at [http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/AP3SecondEdition\\_revised11-20-09.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/standards/AP3SecondEdition_revised11-20-09.pdf), details how the process works. Unless you've lived through an entire cycle as a program head, however, you probably aren't familiar with the many points of contact that the Committee on Accreditation (COA) has with programs to ensure that they continue to improve and develop.

Right after the COA makes an accreditation decision, a new cycle begins for that program. Programs that are granted continued accreditation enter into a seven-year cycle. For programs placed on conditional status, the cycle is three years. A decision of conditional accreditation includes a follow-up meeting with the program head to discuss the program's plans for coming into compliance with the *Standards*.

Interim reports provide the COA with the information it needs to verify that the program is continuing to meet the *Standards*. Interim reports inform the COA of program developments, answer questions in COA's letters, and address how the program is continuing to meet each standard. The COA responds in writing to every report it receives.

Each December 1<sup>st</sup>, every program must submit a detailed statistical report. This includes information on students, faculty, curriculum, and income and expenditures. Every other year, programs in the continuing accreditation cycle must submit a Biennial Narrative Report. Programs with conditional accreditation status, as well as programs with candidacy or precandidacy status, are required to submit annual reports that address progress toward meeting the standards and reaching program objectives.

Occasionally, the COA may require a program to submit a special report to respond to questions from previous reports or the comprehensive review or to update the COA on significant changes.

A comprehensive review of the program begins approximately two years before the next scheduled accreditation decision. During that time, the head of the program works closely with the Director of the Office for Accreditation and the Chair of the External Review Panel (ERP) to develop the Program Presentation (a detailed self-study document) and to plan the site visit, where the ERP will gather and verify evidence that the program is meeting the *Standards*.

The comprehensive review culminates in a meeting with representatives from the program, the Chair of the ERP, and the COA. In making its accreditation decision, the COA considers the Program Presentation, the report from the ERP, the meeting with the program and ERP Chair, and all reports since the previous accreditation decision. It's no wonder that COA meetings, and the preparation for those meetings, can be long and intense.

And then the cycle begins again. ALA accreditation is a rigorous, ongoing process that assures quality and continuous improvement of MLIS programs. For more information on ALA accreditation, please visit the Office for Accreditation website at [www.ala.org/accreditation](http://www.ala.org/accreditation) or contact us at [accred@ala.org](mailto:accred@ala.org).





## News and announcements

### **New “Areas of Concentration/Career Pathways” section added to Directory**

The Office for Accreditation is making a very exciting enhancement to the *Directory of ALA-Accredited Programs* that will appear in both the searchable online and pdf versions!

In response to comments and suggestions from several programs and inquiries from prospective students, the Office will add a detailed “Areas of Concentration/Career Pathways” section to the *Directory*. This new section will list 22 concentrations/pathways (listed below) offered by ALA-accredited MLIS programs. The concentrations/pathways represent those most frequently identified in a survey of the programs. This addition will provide prospective students with valuable information about program offerings and allow them to limit results to specific concentrations/pathways when searching the online directory.

Programs are encouraged to review and update their entire directory listings by October 22, 2010. If all goes well, the enhanced Directory will appear online by October 30, 2010, and the pdf will be updated by November 30, 2010. For more information, contact Kerri Price, [kprice@ala.org](mailto:kprice@ala.org).

#### **Areas of Concentration/Career Pathways within ALA-Accredited Programs**

Academic Librarianship  
Archival Studies  
Book Arts  
Children's Services  
Cultural Heritage Information Management  
Digital Libraries  
Health Sciences Librarianship / Health Informatics  
Information Systems Design / Analysis  
Knowledge Management  
Law Librarianship / Legal Information Services  
Management and Administration  
Music Librarianship  
Organization of Information  
Public Librarianship  
Records Management  
Reference and User Services  
School Library Media  
Science Librarianship  
Special Collections  
Special / Corporate Librarianship  
Thesis Option  
Youth Services  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **External Review Panel Chair training at 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego**

Date: Friday, January 7, 2011

Time: 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Location: To be determined – an announcement with location information will be sent to members of the ERP pool as soon as available.

External Review Panelists who have participated in two or more on-site visits are invited to attend training for ERP Chairs. The session will prepare attendees to lead an external review of MLIS programs seeking accreditation. The session will include a panel discussion, featuring experienced ERP Chairs and Office for Accreditation staff.

Program heads who want to learn more about the site visit and the role of the ERP Chair in the review are welcome to attend as observers. If you're interested in attending, please RSVP and indicate that you'd like to observe the session.

Please RSVP to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org), and include "ERP Chair Training" in the subject line.

### **COA to meet with Council of Deans at ALISE conference**

Representatives of the Committee on Accreditation and the Office for Accreditation will meet with the Council of Deans, Directors, and Program Chairs of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) on Friday, January 7, 9:30-11:00am, at the ALISE conference hotel, Hilton San Diego Resort and Spa.

### **New External Review Panelists sought**

The Office for Accreditation seeks experienced library and information professionals to participate in the accreditation process as External Review Panelists. We are particularly in need of librarians and educators with specializations and experience in the following areas:

- Archives and records management
- School library media
- Public librarianship
- Information science
- Information technology
- LIS graduate program administration
- Service to diverse populations
- French language skills
- Spanish language skills

Find out more about what's involved in serving on an External Review Panel at [http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERP\\_service\\_info.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERP_service_info.cfm). If you are interested and meet the minimum qualifications, please complete the External Review Panel Member Information Form, available at

<http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/resourcesforerp/ERPform.cfm>, and plan to attend the training session in June at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans.

If you know someone who might be interested in serving as an External Review Panelist, please encourage him/her to apply, or send a recommendation to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org).

### **NCATE/AASL program review training at 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego**

Date: Friday, January 7, 2011

Time: 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Location: To be determined

New and experienced reviewers and report compilers are invited to this session. Participants will learn about the NCATE process, application of the AASL Standards, and appropriate assessments. Please RSVP to Laura Dare, [ldare@ala.org](mailto:ldare@ala.org).

Prospective reviewers can find out more about the AASL/NCATE program review process at <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrarymed/informationprogram.cfm>.

### **Draft revised ALA/AASL Standards submitted to NCATE**

The AASL/NCATE Coordinating Committee submitted the final draft revised 2010 *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Librarian Preparation*, available at [http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/Final\\_draft\\_revised\\_AASL\\_standards\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/Final_draft_revised_AASL_standards_2010.pdf), to NCATE on August 17, 2010. The Specialty Area Studies Board (SASB) will review the revised standards and meet with representatives from the NCATE Coordinating Committee on October 20, 2010, and a decision to approved or not approve the standards is expected in early November.

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### **External Review Panelists acknowledged**

External review panelists contribute substantial time and energy to the accreditation process to assure quality in LIS education. We extend our appreciation to the following panelists who served during the spring 2010 academic term.

#### Chairs

- Eric Albright, Tufts University
- Jennifer Younger, University of Notre Dame

- Lynn Westbrook, University of Texas at Austin
- Daniel Callison, Indiana University
- Fiona Black, Dalhousie University

#### Panelists

- Kenneth-Roy Bonin, University of Ottawa
- Joseph A. Busch, Taxonomy Strategies
- Prudence Dalrymple, Drexel University
- John Cronin, public librarian (retired)
- Mirah J. Dow, Emporia State University
- Barbara Ford, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Frances K. Groen, McGill University
- Corinne Hill, Dallas Public Library
- Lisa Hinchliffe, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Judith Lin Hunt, Montclair State University
- Barbara F. Immroth, University of Texas at Austin
- Jeff Kosokoff, Tufts University
- Linda Lillard, Clarion University of Pennsylvania
- Mary Niles Maack, University of California, Los Angeles
- Susan K. Martin, SKM Associates
- Barbara Moran, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Edward O'Neill, OCLC
- Lotsee Patterson, University of Oklahoma
- Lorna Peterson, University at Buffalo, SUNY
- Jean L. Preer, Indiana University

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## AASL/NCATE recognition news

### Spring 2010 AASL recognition decisions

The following programs, which are part of NCATE-accredited education units, received National Recognition or National Recognition with Conditions during the spring 2010 semester. National Recognition is awarded to education programs in school librarianship that have been reviewed and approved by AASL's program reviewers using the *ALA/AASL Standards for Initial Programs for School Library Media Specialist Preparation*, available at [http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/ala-aasl\\_slms2003.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aasleducation/schoollibrary/ala-aasl_slms2003.pdf).

- Longwood University, School Library Media
- Northern Illinois University, Library Information Specialist
- Olivet Nazarene University, Library Information Specialist

- Plymouth State University, School Library/Media Specialist
- Southern Arkansas University, Library Media & Information Specialist
- Western Kentucky University, Library Media Education

**Spring 2010 reviewers**

We extend our appreciation to the following program reviewers and auditors who served during the spring 2010 semester:

- Sandra D. Andrew
- Judy T. Bivens
- Pauletta Brown Bracy
- Audrey P. Church
- Gail K. Dickinson
- Ramona N. Kerby
- Diane Kester
- Johan Koren
- Linda L. Lillard
- Andrea L. Miller
- Rebecca Pasco
- Brenda Pruitt-Annisette
- Robert C. Smith
- Linda J. Underwood
- Holly G. Willett
- Savan Wilson
- Jan M. Yates