

The University of Southern Mississippi School of Library and Information Science has been continuously accredited since 1980 and received continued accreditation with the next comprehensive review to be conducted in 2019 (COA correspondence, June 24, 2012). This is the first biennial report since the annual review. Even in such a short time there have been notable changes at the University of Southern Miss:

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resigned in April 2012. A national search for a new president is underway, with hopes to have a new president in place before fall 2013 semester.

The Interim President is retired president Dr. Aubrey Lucas who sought and obtained ALA Accreditation for SLIS during his first term as president in 1980.

The chief academic officer is Provost Denis Weisenberg; he was the interim provost at the time of the meeting with the Committee for Accreditation in June, 2012.

In August 2012 SLIS hired Dr. J. Brenton Stewart, recent graduate of the Madison, Wisconsin PhD program, where he was a Spectrum Scholar. His interest in antebellum south print history, organization of information, social informatics and his professional experience as a cataloger make him an especially good fit for us. (Appendix III Dr. Stewart Vita)

September 2012 the second issue of our online journal *SLIS Connecting* [aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting/](http://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting/) was made available.

Renewed Advisory Board met June 1, 2012, to hear a presentation of the program and discuss the issues that influence the School (Appendix I Presentation to Advisory Board).

Construction of three additional offices in our suite has been completed as of this writing and furnishings are being purchased. Funding has been made available from the Provost,



online program we serve many other states, and have international students. We periodically survey our students, employers, graduates (Appendix I see various survey excerpts). The most recent employer survey (February 2012) still indicates the desire for more management training in our students. This was somewhat disappointing since we had previously added additional budgeting tasks, more fiscal and physical planning tasks, and grant writing into core and management courses. The meeting with the Advisory Board also supported the need for increased management focus, from political attunement, i.e. to the delicate issues of personnel management (Appendix I Advisory Board Minutes). This information is critical to our decision making regarding our curriculum, and faculty hiring. We must recognize the challenges that our constituency continues to face, including Hurricane Katrina damage which continues to be visible in our state and which has had a long-lasting impact on state resources. The complexities of FEMA communication, personnel implications and all aspects of management from trying to restore collections, to designing and constructing new buildings have altered the nature of library management in Mississippi. The budgetary implications remain from the storm, as well as the increased impact through the 2008 economic crash. More recent events such as



rubrics and student outcomes may reveal that assessments are not capturing the data we are interested in, or that some element of the tool, the course, the curriculum is flawed.

recommendations regarding technology issues they wish addressed. We asked for scenarios for possible comp exam questions and for suggestions as to what technology competencies are most important for students to master at this time. We are still reviewing the information received from input at that luncheon.

We have been attending and participating in the Mississippi Library Association annual conferences, since 2002. We have made presentations, held focus groups and since 2006 held alumni breakfasts for community and general discussion. Each focus group has provided an opportunity to update the body on the activities of the school and to invite discussion of the challenges they face ~~and that~~ lend themselves to being addressed through the program.

At the 2008 Mississippi Library Association conference there were requests for SLIS to offer special forums or short courses focused on particular management challenges, such as difficult patrons, budget crisis management, legal issues and grant applications. We had not resolved our institutional issues about our ability to offer short forums and continuing education until recently. The improved technology will allow us to create podcasts, real-time webinars, etc. The process is developmental at this time, but we do believe we can have some short forums in place by fall 2013. However, we did make modifications in several of our regular courses to address their concerns and increased presentations in classes by practitioners dealing with management challenges, economic impacts and difficult patrons. The 2009 and 2010 MLA groups expressed continued interest in technology and management courses and the fiscal situation in Mississippi and nationwide. We continue to review our courses for methods to  
ore courses. We also began in 2009 to compare our educational program goals and objectives with the ALA Core Competencies and test the alignments, as well as verify the assessments (Appendix II)

2010, in 2011 during the winter break we were able to offer a - class on Library Programing for Youth, which has now evolved and been approved as a regularly listed course in our catalog, LIS 419/519: Programs and Services for Youth. In January 2013 we will offer a mini-session course on graphic novels and manga, at the request of many students and interested alums.

In the 2011 and 2012 focus groups issues regarding management, PR, community leadership and availability of short-focus courses were still frequently mentioned. The 2011 and 2012 attendees were also more interested in the accreditation process.

The School continues to work with online technology, developing more interactive class room situations, and practicum or internship opportunities. We circulated alumni surveys in 2011-2012 asking for feedback about the program and the appropriateness of the curriculum, overall the responses were in the positive range, that they felt the curriculum appropriate, but there were still suggestions for improvement. All of this information is still under study by the curriculum committee and will no doubt lead to some changes in how we teach, what we teach and the vehicles we use to do so.

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There have been changes in faculty composition at Southern Mississippi since the June COA meeting. We have hired Dr. J. Brenton Stewart as of fall 2012, and are recruiting to fill two more tenure track lines at the assistant professor level. Currently our full-time teaching complement is nine, eight members holding PhDs, one of those is a visiting assistant professor (one of the tenure track lines to be filled with a permanent person) and there is one visiting instructor. We plan to advertise for a fulltime instructor to assist with the undergraduate program. There is currently one Teaching Assistant handling two sections of an undergraduate information literacy course, we will add another Teaching Assisting in the spring. (Appendix III, Stewart vita)

We were fortunate to be able to hire Dr. Stacy Creel, (re 2010.  
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CUPA average. Additionally, it was possible to obtain some salary adjustments toward CUPA average for senior faculty Dr. Teresa Welsh and Dr. Elizabeth Haynes.

Dr. Xinyu Yu is in tenure and promotion process this year. Her publications and her performance as PI of a \$400,000 plus IMLS grant to support Mississippi Minority students while they earn their MLIS has demonstrated her professional growth and supports her consideration for tenure and promotion.

We believe the strong actions by the administration to improve economic conditions and hiring offers increase the likelihood of retaining desirable faculty. Both Dr. Creel and Dr. Stewart received more than \$10,000.00 startup money to support their research and travel, as well as new computer equipment and software.



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The School of Library and Information Science is an active participant in the academic decisions of the College and, through our committee memberships, the University. The director of the School serves on the College Council, and the Academic Curriculum Committee of the college and completed two 3 year terms as an elected member of the University Council of Chairs. SLIS faculty have served or are serving in University Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, Academic Council, University Advisory Committee (T&P), and Professional Education Council to list only a few.

SLIS was engaged through the College of Education and Psychology and in conjunction with the University Priority Committee (2009-2010) and the Academic Planning Group (2008-2009) in review of mission, goals and objectives as well as reputation, enrollment, production etc. The process involved the analysis of all university initiatives programs, degrees, certificates, etc. A system of review based upon *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, was used to examine every element of The University of Southern Mississippi. The review was a method to identify programs to be supported and grown or considered for discontinuation. SLIS ranked highly among the programs identified to be supported and grown, at 7th in the 54 initiatives of the College of Education and Psychology and 19th out of 257 university

