

EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL REPORT
on
THE MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROGRAM
at
THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

by the
External Review Panel
on behalf of the
American Library Association
Committee on Accreditation

FINAL VERSION

Jean Preer, Chair

Sheila Anderson
Michele Cloonan
Hiram Davis
Andrew Dillon
Diane Schwartz

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INTRODUCTION

The School of Information Sciences of the University of Pittsburgh Sciences had its origins in the Carnegie Training School for Children's Librarians founded in 1901. It became part of the University of Pittsburgh in 1962 and celebrated its centennial in 2001. (For its centennial history, see Carol Bleier, *Tradition in Transition: A History of the School of Information Science*, 2001, and go to <http://www.sis.pitt.edu/aboutSIS/history.html>) The program, then the Carnegie Library School, was among the first accredited by the American Library Association in 1925, and has been continuously accredited by ALA since joining the University of Pittsburgh. (For a historical listing go to <http://www.ala.org/ala/accreditation/historical/historicallist.htm>).

The visit of the External Review Panel extended from Sunday, April 2, to Tuesday, April 4, 2006. Onsite panel members included Jean Preer, chair, Sheila Anderson, Hiram Davis, and Andrew Dillon, and offsite members Michele Cloonan and Diane Schwartz. On Sunday, April 2, onsite panel members attended an introductory brunch with the SIS dean, Ron Larsen, the two associate deans, Martin Weiss and Mary Kay Biagini, the director of distance education, Sue Alman, and the DLIS department chair, Maggie Kimmel, followed by an extensive tour of the SIS building, guided by Theresa Benedek, Manager, Personnel and Administrative Services. Late Sunday afternoon, the four onsite panel members attended a reception with about 80 current students, alumni, adjunct faculty and employers of SIS graduates (many of whom were connected with the program in multiple ways). After informal conversation, the attendees participated in roundtable discussions with members of the panel, each member talking with a group of about 20. Those associated with the school library media program made up one group; the other groups included students, graduates, and adjunct faculty associated with a variety of other program areas.

On Monday, April 3, and Tuesday, April 4, the four onsite panel members attended staff meetings, interviewed faculty and staff, sat in on courses, and spoke with adjunct instructors and students. On Monday, all panelists met with the eight members of the Student Services Team. Jean Preer and Hiram Davis met with the Operations Team including Dean Larsen, Associate Deans Biagini and Weiss, and staff members Theresa Benedek, Marsha Washington, and Kelly Shaffer. On Tuesday, all onsite members attended the meeting of the SIS Planning and Budget Committee and interviewed Dean Ron Larsen. Later on April 4, all onsite members participated in the exit interview with Chancellor Mark Nordenberg and Provost James Maher. Dean Larsen, Associate Dean Mary Kay Biagini, and DLIS chair Maggie Kimmel attended the exit interview as well.

The panel interviewed 12 full-time faculty members, 3 adjunct instructors, and 12 staff members and librarians. Andrew Dillon interviewed full-time faculty members Richard Cox, Chris Tomer, Sherry Koshman, Karen Gracy, and Daqing He, and adjuncts Armon Ripple, Elizabeth Mahoney, and Denise Callihan. Jean Preer interviewed faculty members Maggie Kimmel, Toni Carbo, Martin Weiss, Stuart Shulman, and Mary Kay Biagini, and staff members Sue Alman, Marsha Washington, Theresa Benedek, Tara Czekaj, and Kelly Shaffer. Hiram Davis interviewed Assistant University Librarian Amy Knapp and IS Librarian Elizabeth Mahoney, and staff members Marsha Washington, Mark Steggart, and Susan Williams. Sheila Anderson interviewed faculty members Maggie Kimmel, Mary Kay Biagini, and Judith Jablonski, staff member Terry Kizina, Practicum Supervisor D'nis Lynch, and Cooperating Teacher Librarian Linda Rosenbaum of the School Library Certification program by telephone. Diane Schwartz interviewed faculty member Ellen Detlefsen by telephone.

Panel members sat in on eleven classes, all but one of those that met during the site visit, including LIS 2222 Archival Appraisal (Dillon), LIS 2970 Information Visualization (Davis), LIS 2194 Information Ethics (Dillon), LIS 2002 Retrieving Information (Davis), LIS 2324 History of Children's Literature (Anderson), LIS 2700 Managing Libraries and Information Systems (Preer), LIS 2587 Applications in Medical Informatics (Anderson), LIS 2670 Digital Libraries (Davis), LIS 2323 Resources for Young Adults (Anderson), LIS 2585 Health Consumer Resources and Services (Preer), and LIS 2600 Introduction to Information Technologies (Davis). Panelists viewed each class for about 15 minutes then, after the instructor left the room, spoke with students about their experiences in the program for about 20 minutes.

Onsite panel members conferred with offsite panel members by conference call at the end of the afternoon on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. Hiram Davis conducted a conference call about diversity issues with Dr. Howard McGuinn, Dean of University Libraries at Seton Hall University, and Dr. Teresa Neely, Director of Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico, members of the SIS Diversity Committee and GAPP, the Group to Advise on the Program Presentation.

Offsite member Diane Schwartz worked with Sheila Anderson in an email survey of FastTrack students and offered guidance on medical librarianship. Michele Cloonan offered guidance on matters relating to budgets, research funding, and faculty appointments.

The program furnished extensive information in multiple formats in advance of the site visit and provided additional resources, comfortable quarters, and the fullest degree of cooperation during the panel's time on campus.

I. MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES*

[I.1] The University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences (SIS) and its LIS master's degree program have formulated vision and mission statements, objectives and goals within a broad-based planning process. The Goals for MLIS Graduates, adopted in 2004, are subject to continuous review in consultation with students, alumni, and area employers. In fall 2005, constituents of the program, including alumni and employers representing different types of libraries, met in a series of focus groups to consider how the MLIS program helps students prepare for careers in library and information science. These groups addressed the competencies and behaviors being sought in new hires and reaffirmed the Goals for MLIS Graduates, adopted in 2004, while suggesting that management be included as a separate goal. This modification was approved by the LIS faculty in October 2005. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 3; Standard II, Appendix II, p 113.) In addition, the program has convened a series of meetings with the Group to Advise on the Program Presentation (GAPP) to ensure constituency participation in formulating the program's submission. (GAPP membership list in Program Presentation, Overview, Appendix A, p. 31).

The program has advisory groups in its individual curricular specializations. The School Library Certification Program hears from a Practitioners Advisory Group and an Advisory Group of Recent Alumni. (PAG and AGORA membership list in Program Presentation, Standard II, Appendix, p. 102) Faculty members in preservation and archives consult with members of the Archives and Preservation Committee. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 3) Since 2004, Associate Dean Dr. Mary Kay Biagini, Distance Education Director Dr. Sue Alman, and adjunct Dr. Amy Knapp have met informally with local directors and associate directors of academic libraries in the Pittsburgh area and the Carnegie Public Library. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 3) In addition, each school at the University of Pittsburgh is required to have an outside group of advisors. Under the leadership of its dean, Dr. Ron Larsen, the School of Information Sciences has reconstituted its SIS Board of Visitors, reducing its size and ensuring that the members have knowledge in the disciplines taught in the school and can be supportive of its programs. The newly constituted board, which has been approved by the Provost and Chancellor, will meet in fall 2006. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 12)

*Note: The numbers in brackets in the text refer to the provision of the standards being discussed. References to sources appear in parentheses throughout the text. All Web pages were accessed 5 May 2006.

The vision, mission and goals of SIS, and the specific goals of the MLIS program are consistent with the values of the university and foster quality education. The University of Pittsburgh's current mission statement, approved in 1995 and reaffirmed in 2000, calls for superior graduate programs and the advancement of learning through research, artistic, and scholarly activities. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 2-3). The School of Information Sciences has aligned its mission with that of the university. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 4-5). The school's original mission statement, adopted in 1995, focused on the broad scope of the information sciences and the uniqueness of the school and highlighted the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and service. In 2005, after much discussion, the faculty adopted a new mission for the School of Information Sciences to "support the broader education, research and service mission of the University by educating students, furthering knowledge and contributing our expertise to advance society through information." This mission is implemented by action steps that match the university's mission: providing superior graduate programs and the advancement of learning through research, teaching and service. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 8-9) In 2005, the school also adopted a new vision, "To be the premier information science school: Transforming society through information." (SIS University of Pittsburgh, Plan FY07, March 1, 2006, p. 3, viewed onsite)

The academic units of the University of Pittsburgh participate in a highly organized planning process based on shared governance that was instituted in 1992 to facilitate greater participation by faculty, staff, students and administrators. The framework is established at the campus level with the university's Planning and Budget Committee which sets planning parameters, reviews planning proposals, and considers policy matters related to university mission, strategic plan, facilities, and changes in academic and administrative units. Each school elects a representative to the campus PBC committee each year. In addition, each school has its own Planning and Budget Committee and is responsible for determining its own vision, mission, goals and objectives as part of the ongoing planning process. Beginning in September each year, the Planning and Budget Committee of the School of Information Sciences (SIS PBC) with elected and appointed members, assesses its performance against the goals of the previous year and formulates the school's plan for the coming fiscal year. Specific instructions are issued by the Provost in January and the school's Planning Document is submitted to the Provost by March 1. The Provost responds to the school's submission by July and the SIS PBC acts on the Provost's comments when it begins work again in the fall. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 6-7)

The School of Information Sciences is to be commended for its continuous consideration of these goals in formulating its specific objectives for each fiscal year. SIS has articulated three long-term goals to move it toward its vision: strategic leadership, intellectual vitality, and financial strength. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 10.) The SIS Objectives for FY06 included optimizing enrollment, enhancing diversity, enhancing research productivity, fostering a high quality of student life, strengthening the curriculum, and promoting the school and its programs. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 10) An assessment of the performance on each of the FY06 goals was presented in the Planning Document submitted to the Provost on March 1, 2006 along with new strategies to accomplish those goals in FY07. (SIS University of Pittsburgh, Plan FY O7, March 1, 2006, viewed onsite) In addition, the school has formulated more than one hundred action items relating to the program's objectives, and, using a tool developed with outside consultants, regularly tracks progress on each item. (SIS Tactical Plan and Monthly Progress Status Report, viewed onsite)

The master of library and information science program adopted its own mission statement in 2004 and its own goals for graduates in October 2005. The mission is to educate for leadership in libraries, archives and information centers, conduct research to advance the information sciences, and perform public service to support the information professions and the public good. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 12)

[I.2a] Program objectives, geared to the requirements of the COA Standards, are stated in terms of educational results to be achieved and embody the essential character of the field of library and information studies. MLIS graduates are expected to be able to “draw effectively upon the knowledge and historical background of library and information science and related disciplines;” successfully “apply the principles of selection, organization, retrieval, user services and preservation”; and “apply the principles of management to various functions in information environments.” The management objective was added in October 2005 as the result of alumni and employer input. (MLIS Goals for Graduates, Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 14)

[I.2.b] The philosophy, principles, and ethics of the field are embodied in MLIS goals and reflected in course offerings. MLIS graduates are expected to “incorporate . . . ethical foundations and social responsibilities of the information professions into professional practice.” Further, they are to “promote the ideals of equal access to public information and of intellectual freedom.” (MLIS Goals) To implement this goal, the program regularly offers a class in Information Ethics. In addition, SIS is a known leader in this area.

[I.2.c] Beyond five core courses, MLIS students may pursue specialties in a variety of areas. These are outlined on the SIS website, <http://www.sis.pitt.edu/%7Edlis/academics/specializations/specializations.html>, and in separate brochures, including the MLIS information packet sent to prospective students. In addition, panel members visited classes in each of the school's specialty areas--School Library Media, Archives and Preservation, and Medical Librarianship/Medical Information--and interviewed faculty in each specialty. These program specializations are highly ranked in the U.S. News & World Report 2007 edition of *America's Best Graduate Schools*, released during the panel's visit. In addition to the School's overall ranking of 7th, its specialization in Medical Librarianship/Informatics ranked 1st, Archives and Preservation Management, 4th, Services to Children and Young Adults, 4th, School Library Certification, 9th, Digital Libraries, 10th, and Information Systems, 5th. (http://www.sis.pitt.edu/updates/news/04_17_2006.html)

Program specializations reflect the principles and standards of relevant professional organizations, including ethical codes and competency standards of the American Library Association, the Association for Library Service to Children, the American Association of School Librarians, the Medical Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, and the Society of American Archivists. (Program Presentation, Standard II, p. 42-43)

[I.2.d, e] MLIS goals embody the value of teaching and service as well as the importance of research. SIS objectives include the obligation of faculty to provide high quality programs at the graduate level and to "extend expertise to local communities and public agencies to contribute to social, intellectual and economic development in the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world" and to "engage in research and scholarly activities that advance learning through the extension of the frontiers of knowledge and creative endeavor." (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 9)

[1.2 f, g] Goals for MLIS graduates provide that they will be able to contribute to the body of basic and/or applied knowledge in library and information science and be able to draw upon the knowledge and historical background of related disciplines. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 14). Through its specializations in medical librarianship, school library media, and archives/preservation, the program embodies interdisciplinary connections with the health sciences, education, and history. SIS and the MLIS program expect that the more fluid organizational structure recently approved will further interdisciplinary teaching and research between LIS, information science, and telecommunications particularly in the new Digital Libraries specialization. (Interviews with administrators and faculty members, discussion at meeting of SIS Planning and Budget Committee, April 4, 2006)

[I.2.h, i, j] Goals for MLIS graduates include the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate information services to meet the needs of current and future users and to promote ideals of equal access to public information. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 14; Standard II, Appendix II.E, p. 113) SIS Objectives for FY06 and FY07 include “Enhance diversity initiatives to increase the percentage of students, staff and faculty in underrepresented groups.” (Program Presentation, Standard I, p.10, SIS Plan FY07, March 1, 2006, p. 16, viewed onsite) The MLIS program, in its constant addition of new technology, its use of new modes of instructional delivery, and its IMLS grant to include students from the U.S. Virgin Islands in its FastTrack program, models the role of library and information services in a rapidly changing technological and global society. The MLIS program is a founding member of WISE, a consortium of ALA-accredited schools offering distance education. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 19) SIS is a founding member of the I-school consortium in the United States, and since 2003, Dean Larsen has been a leading participant in an international group of I-schools. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 13)

[I.2.j] Through constant communication, the MLIS program seeks to meet the needs of the constituencies that it serves. The FastTrack MLIS program, implemented in summer 2001, was planned after extensive discussion among the faculty concerning distance learning program and various delivery options. By offering both online courses and blended options in addition to on-campus instruction, the program responded to the needs of students working full time and those unable to travel to campus for regular class sessions. (Program Presentation, Overview, p. 18; MLIS program brochure)

[I.3] The mission and values of the program are reviewed, updated regularly, and posted on the program’s webpage. (<http://www.sis.pitt.edu/aboutSIS/missions.html>) The school’s vision, mission, overarching long-term goals, and yearly objectives, are constantly in play as the school plans for the future and monitor its progress. Within this framework of planning, the MLIS program considers its own mission and, with input from students, faculty, and alumni, subjects its own goals to yearly review and revision.

II: CURRICULUM

[II.1] The MLIS is one of six degrees offered by the School of Information Sciences. It requires completion of 36 credit hours of graduate study. The curriculum is designed, managed, and regularly evaluated by the faculty. Ultimately the curriculum is shaped through the school’s strategic planning process, which sets the mission and

vision of the school.

[II.2] The curriculum consists of 5 core course areas:

- Understanding Information
- Organizing Information
- Retrieving Information
- Management
- Information Technology

This core curriculum aims to introduce students to the concepts, values, and competencies of professionals in the LIS field while electives allow specialization or exploration. The coverage of the curriculum is sufficient to allow students to focus on particular areas of the library and information professions, with specific strengths in evidence in the archives, information technology and subject specific resources and services areas, including health sciences librarianship and school library media. (Program Presentation, Standard II, p. 7-10)

The basic structure of the curriculum is comparable with other graduate library and information science programs, and the core mirrors closely the general form identified by Markey (2004) in her examination of the field. However, following recent decisions taken by faculty, only one core course is truly common to all students (LIS 2000 “Understanding Information”). All other core requirements may be met by a choice of courses, depending on the student’s area of interest and technical expertise. In practice, most MLIS students who are not in the archives specialization will complete three common courses in the core. In 2003-04 the faculty decided to eliminate ‘type of library’ courses (Special, Public, Academic) and to consolidate management and related courses around a student’s declared focus (libraries, school media, preservation management, archives and records management).

In recent years much effort has been spent planning and implementing a FastTrack distance education masters program, implemented in 2001, and complementary ‘blended’ courses involving distance and on-campus students. The resources required to manage this program concerns some of the faculty since the FastTrack program has been very successful in attracting and retaining students. While this innovation is labor-intensive, the process of designing the distance education courses seems to have enriched the entire curriculum and encouraged on-campus courses to include greater use of technology. The programs delivered online or on campus seem comparable in offerings and quality. [II.6]

There has also been considerable development of a specialization in Archives and Records Management.

Plans for a standalone archives degree track have been dropped due to lack of resources, but the current offerings effectively provide a distinct and complete program for archives-oriented students who must select that track upon admission.

[II.3] The curriculum provides core IT skills to students and integrates the application and use of appropriate technology into courses. As in most schools, the faculty has deliberated extensively on how best to meet this standard given the diversity of student experience and knowledge found in most cohorts. As well as allowing for different courses to meet the core requirement in IT, there is a large suite of IT related electives available to all students in the program. (Program Presentation, Standard II, p. 7)

Preparing students to work in a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual society and with underserved groups is not explicitly treated in the program presentation, but discussions with faculty and students indicate broad awareness of these issues and their attendant treatment in class discussions. Students spoken to on this matter felt the issues were regularly discussed in class. [II.3.4, II.3.5] Summer offerings include a highly popular course, LIS 2568 Multicultural Resources and Services, that introduces students to the diverse ethnic communities of the Pittsburgh area. (Program Presentation, Standard II, Appendix II D, p. 84; interview with Mary Kay Biagini)

[II.4] The curriculum offers a large number of electives that enable students to tailor the program to their own goals. There is a range of independent study options that further allows individual tailoring of one's studies. Students can include up to 6 credits of courses from outside SIS also.

[II.5 & II.6] The School has strong programs in School Library Certification, Medical Librarianship/Medical Informatics, Digital Libraries, and in Archives and Records Management. For students in the latter specialization the core requirements are met mostly by courses focusing on archival issues rather than the standard LIS classes. Students must be admitted to either track at the outset. Relevant professional organizations are represented in the curriculum largely by the individual faculty and their choices in readings, experiences etc. The FastTrack distance education program for the MLIS closely mirrors the curriculum for the on-campus program.

[II.7] The curriculum undergoes regular and systematic review by the faculty. (Program Presentation, Standard II, Appendix II.C, p. 67) Curriculum issues are routinely discussed and voted on at the monthly faculty meetings, with the faculty comprising the LIS Curriculum Committee as a "Committee of the Whole." (Program Presentation, Standard III, Appendix III.E, p. 87) MLIS curriculum goals are formulated every year as part of the SIS planning document, and every two years the entire inventory of courses is examined by the faculty as part of the

review for currency and demand. (Program Presentation, Standard II, p. 2) Courses are added or removed by faculty vote. New courses can be offered at any time, with approval of the chair and faculty. Before these can be permanently added to the curriculum they must receive formal approval of the faculty.. During the site visit it was announced that faculty member Sherry Koshman had just received a grant for teaching innovation. (SIS PBC meeting April 4, 2006; http://www.sis.pitt.edu/updates/news/04_18_2006.html)

All full time and adjunct faculty have their courses evaluated by students in accordance with the university's requirements. These evaluations form part of the promotion and tenure dossier for faculty members. In addition, the School of Information Sciences has introduced a peer-review system for teaching that leads to periodic evaluation of all faculty members, annually for adjunct and untenured faculty, and every three years for tenured faculty. (University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Teaching 3 December 2004.)

Student accomplishments are assessed by feedback from employers and the use of key outside measures such as the PRAXIS test scores for Library Media Specialists. The program presentation reports that online exit interviews with students have proven difficult to implement (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 8), but there have been regular meetings with a variety of alumni (and with employers) in preparation of the program presentation, and the dean and faculty regularly meet alumni at annual conferences for informal discussions. The Student Services Team is working to implement a more effective student survey mechanism. (Student Services Team meeting, April 3, 2006) Discussions with alumni indicated strong satisfaction with the quality of education received at Pittsburgh.

III: FACULTY

[III.1, 6] The Department of Library and Information Science (DLIS), School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, has an excellent faculty capable of accomplishing the program's objectives. (Program Presentation, Standard III, Appendix III.H, p. 102-103) The faculty possesses diverse credentials that are appropriate for their respective teaching responsibilities. There are 12 full-time faculty in the department with each member holding a Ph.D, or an equivalent degree. Four members of the full-time faculty received their doctorates at the University of Pittsburgh. (Program Presentation, Standard III, Appendix III.F, p. 98-100) Full-time faculty carry the major share of teaching, research, and service activities required for the program, teaching at hours and using

various instructional modes to meet student needs. [III.5, 6] Curriculum vitae provided for the full-time faculty indicate a high level of research activity and professional involvement (Program Presentation, Standard III, Appendix III.B Faculty Publications and Professional Activities 1999-2005). SIS has identified intellectual vitality as one of its three overarching goals. (Program Presentation, Standard I, p. 10) Faculty publications, professional activities, and grant funded research (Program Presentation, Standard III, Appendices B, C) contribute to a rich intellectual environment.

Adjunct faculty, some with many years of service in the program, teach approximately one-third of the master's level courses, depending on course offerings, and complement the competencies of full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty are well-integrated into the department having both formal (classroom) and informal (practicum oversight) responsibilities of master's students. They may attend faculty meetings. The Dean meets with or communicates regularly with the adjunct faculty to solicit their viewpoints on a variety of topics. There is a good sense of collaboration between full-time and adjunct faculty who are highly regarded for the important contributions they make to the master's degree program. The program benefits from the long-time commitment of a number of adjuncts with outstanding professional credentials. These include Angela Pollis, retired librarian of USX Corporation, elected in 1999 to the Special Libraries Association Hall of Fame.

(<http://www.sla.org/content/SLA/awardsrecognition/awardsrecipients/awardpast/index.cfm#HOF>; Interviews with faculty and adjuncts; Program Presentation, Standard III, Appendix III.I, p. 104)

[III.2] Continuous review of the curriculum, including yearly program goals, encourages innovative approaches to the achievement of each domain of practice. (Program Presentation, Standard II, p. 1-2)

The decision to eliminate the two-department structure of the School was strongly supported by the faculty.

(Interviews with LIS faculty) There are potential benefits to the change with the most noteworthy outcome being enhanced interdisciplinary research. It is anticipated that new interest groups will be created that will have an overarching effect, bringing together individuals with a variety of interests and expertise. New course offerings also are likely to emerge from the change in structure, but the traditional training programs will not disappear. It also is likely that the new structure will lead to a creative deployment of the faculty. Finding faculty with the diverse knowledge, skills, and abilities will be the real challenge. The restructuring will lead to the creation of program degree coordinators instead of department chairs. (SIS PBC meeting, April 4, 2006)

[III.3] The University of Pittsburgh has a system-wide commitment to recruiting a diverse faculty, and DLIS has established a similar priority for the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty. SIS has just introduced the use of non-tenure stream faculty positions to provide additional flexibility in the hiring process. This practice, used for some time in other parts of the university, enables the hiring of faculty members with a particular strength, such as research or teaching, to concentrate in that area, or provides additional time for a non-tenure stream faculty member to build a research record before transferring to the tenure-stream. (Interview with Dean Ron Larsen, April 4, 2006). Dr. Judith Jablonski, assistant professor, is the first faculty member in DLIS to hold such a non-tenure stream appointment. The university also has an organized mechanism for identifying possible positions in the Pittsburgh area for “trailing spouses.” (interview with faculty member Stuart Shulman, April 3, 2006; brochure of the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education, Faculty Partner Resume Exchange Program) Recruiting new faculty appears to be a challenge due to the timing of the approval process at the University level. This is an area that needs to be addressed by University administration to avoid losing potentially attractive candidates.

[III.8] The MLIS program at the University of Pittsburgh takes pride in the quality of its teaching program and the innovative instructional achievements of its faculty. The FastTrack program is a good example of the faculty’s willingness to invest in new instructional modalities. While interaction with faculty in other disciplines has been limited to date, that is expected to change as a result of the School’s restructuring. The university offers excellent support in the development of pedagogical skills and a variety of university-wide activities support teaching excellence. The Center for Instructional Design and Distance Education (CIDDE) provides assistance to faculty wishing to expand their presentation and delivery skills using new technologies. Evaluation of teaching is an ongoing process with a newly introduced system of peer evaluation of teaching. (SIS Evaluation of Teaching Policy and Procedures 3 December 2004) The university expects department chairs and/or deans to engage in a systematic review of faculty, at least annually for tenure-stream faculty and every 3 years for tenured faculty. Gathering evidence of scholarly output and quality teaching are the key goals of the assessment process. In addition, evidence of public and professional service is also required for advancement. The dean has introduced a parametric model of evaluation that can vary research, teaching, and service expectations in accordance with the faculty member’s position in the tenure process. Some tenured faculty currently mentor junior colleagues, but the process is informal. The Dean stated that he hopes to formalize the mentoring program. (Interview with Ron Larsen, April 4, 2006) Reorganization of the school will doubtless necessitate revision of the SIS Promotion and Tenure Policies and

Procedures last revised in 1999. (Program Presentation, Standard III, p. 12). This topic is already under consideration by the SIS Planning and Budget Committee. (SIS PBC Meeting, April 4, 2006)

IV. STUDENTS

[IV. 1] The school's policies related to recruitment, admission, financial aid, and placement are consistent with its mission and program goals. The Recruitment Cadre, including faculty, staff, current students, alumni, and employers, has had the financial support of a \$15,000 grant. Prospective students are encouraged to visit the school's web site and to attend information sessions that are held throughout the year. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 8-13)

Led by Terry Kizina, Director of Recruitment, Admissions, and Financial Aid, the school is actively attempting to recruit minority students. (Interview with Terry Kizina, April 3, 2006) To promote this effort, the school had created a half-time position in the school devoted to diversity. That staff member, who was well-connected in the community, has taken a full-time position elsewhere on campus, and Mr. Kizina is hopeful that the school will be able to fill the position in the future. The person in the position targeted Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and visited campuses to reach potential applicants. The total number of students of color in the MLIS program has varied, with 45 enrolled in fall 2005. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 14)

[IV. 2] Kizina is responsible for assisting potential students and providing information about the program to those who regularly inquire about it. Accurate, current information about the program is easily accessible to prospective students and the general public in a variety of formats. Program mission and goals, along with information about faculty and curricula, admissions procedures, and financial aid is available in printed brochures and on the website. (<http://www.sis.pitt.edu/aboutSIS/brochures.html>) Publications are also used to aid recruitment into specialized programs including the Archives and Records Management, Preservation Management, School Library Certification, and Medical Librarianship/Medical Informatics. These recruitment activities have resulted in many inquiries about the program, mostly through the school's website. Tangible items, including frisbees and t-shirts, also promote the school and enhance recruitment efforts. The school has put forth an effort to recruit a diverse pool of candidates for the program, and the availability of financial aid has been a factor in minority recruitment success. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 14). The school has also targeted specialized recruitment for prospective students in the FastTrack MLIS Program. Some of the activities related to these efforts

have included virtual Open Houses, exhibitions at library conferences, and on-site meetings at Pennsylvania libraries.

The program provided the ERP with a wealth of materials related to information about the program, faculty, and students. The information was arranged throughout our meeting room, including notebooks with syllabi from various courses, information about internships that had been completed in the past, and photographs of students involved in various activities.

[IV.3] The program has clearly stated and evenly applied standards for admission.

(<http://www.sis.pitt.edu/%7Edlis/academics/admissions.html>) The grade point average required for admission is a minimum of 3.0; Graduate Record Examination scores are not required for admission. Careful consideration has been given in allowing potential students to be accepted who have not met the grade point average requirement. Ten or fewer students may be admitted each year on a provisional status, and they are required to earn a grade of “B” or better in their first twelve credits of core courses. The FastTrack MLIS program requirements are the same as those for on-campus students. (<http://fasttrack.sis.pitt.edu/>) Overall, assessment for admission is based on intellectual and academic factors related to both the individual’s career objectives and the constituencies to be served by graduates of the program. (Program Presentation, Standard IV p. 17-20)

Financial aid is made available only to students who are admitted to the School, and in the Fall Term 2005, 16% of on-campus students received some form of financial aid. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has provided funding for the recruitment and retention of students of color with disadvantaged backgrounds for the past fifteen years. In 2005-2006, the school was awarded a total of \$112,000, including \$45,000 in scholarships and \$67,000 in stipends. An additional \$12,000 was given to the school in Commonwealth Funds for recruitment, and these funds were used to recruit at Historically Black Colleges and Universities and library conferences. The financial aid process is currently being revised, and funding can be provided to more students if more in-state students are funded. The level of support by the university and the state is reasonable and sustainable, especially since financial aid efforts directly tie into minority recruitment goals and activities. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 21-22)

Faculty advising is important to the school and clear guidelines have been set regarding initial and future contact with students. A New Student Orientation is held so that students can meet faculty members, and students may elect to change advisors as needed. Students are given sufficient time to learn about program requirements and the school’s website is thorough, providing extensive information about the expectations for students in completing

the program requirements. All new FastTrack MLS students have access to CourseWeb, a product that is devoted to distance education. The product includes information about distance learning, on-campus visits, external links, and discussion boards. There are also tools available through CourseWeb for teaching and learning, including small group discussions, e-mail, and online chats. (Program Presentation Standard IV p. 23)

While on site, panel members watched a demonstration of CourseWeb and how it is used with FastTrack students and viewed a video that was created by students in Dr. Sue Alman's marketing class (LIS 2830 Marketing and Public Relations for Libraries) and used by the American Library Association to promote National Library Week. Additionally, the panel received information regarding how FastTrack students and traditional students are able to interact via the CourseWeb. FastTrack students are provided with PowerPoint materials and other information that traditional students are given in a regular classroom setting.

[IV.4] When planning a program of study, students are guided by their academic advisors. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 23-24) Students may not register for classes until they have conferred with their advisor. The school offers many specialized courses, resulting in a program that can be diverse or concentrated in an area of specialization. Since the school has partnered with other library and information science programs throughout the country, students are able to take specialized courses online at other universities through the WISE consortium. There are also opportunities to be involved in internships that are located in diverse settings.

Professors described the guidance that they provide to students during the panel's visit. For example, Dr. Mary Kay Biagini described the counseling that she provides to students who are considering a career change from public librarianship to school librarianship. She also provided detailed documents that exemplified how school media specialists are guided through the certification process in Pennsylvania. (interview with Mary Kay Biagini, April 3, 2006). This extensive notebook was available in the panel's conference room for further exploration.

In conversations with panel members who visited classes, students described the many ways in which their performance is evaluated, including evaluation by their peers. Assignments are diverse, allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of content and the development of their skills in a variety of ways. Posting of work and participation in discussion on CourseWeb provides experience in a more public setting. Many courses employ teams to help students develop the "soft skills" seen as desirable by employers. (Class visits, April 3-4, 2006; conversations with employers at reception, April 2, 2006).

[IV. 5] Student organizations help future graduates learn about professional life. The Student Services Team is responsible for promoting student organizations and activities. Since the school has been successful in recruiting students from throughout the world, these organizations and activities allow future graduates to interact with each other in a setting outside the classroom while continuing to focus on their futures and the information professions. Students may participate in student chapters of the Special Libraries Association, the American Library Association, and the Society of American Archivists. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 24-27) These activities are diverse. Students from the University of Pittsburgh MLIS program organized a Book Cart Drill Team, and participated in a national competition sponsored by Demco Company at the American Library Association annual conference in Chicago summer 2005. The dean allocated funding to support the team. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 25)

Students participate in program planning and decision-making. A student representative sits on the SIS Planning and Budget Committee. Students may attend meetings of the faculty, and serve on the LIS faculty search committee. (Program Presentation, Standard IV, p. 7) During group discussions with panel members on Sunday evening, several students commented that they were involved in the process of revising the curriculum, especially as it related to school media specialists. The panel met with the Student Services Team and received detailed information on its role in making students feel at ease all of the way from inquiry to commencement. (Student Services Team meeting, April 3, 2006; SIS Student Services Team Goal and 2005-2006 Objectives distributed at the meeting).

[IV.6] Students are evaluated in a variety of ways and faculty use the evaluation of student achievement to modify assignments and courses. A database is maintained to track student progress. Faculty meetings are held to discuss students who may not be succeeding, and advisors work with these students to improve performance.. Students maintaining a GPA of 3.75 or better may be eligible for joining Beta Phi Mu, and a monetary award may also be available. Graduation rates are high. Students specializing in school library media have been successful in passing the PRAXIS exam. All faculty members are evaluated for each course they teach, administered by the University Office of Measurement and Teaching (OMET). Instructors use comments from the evaluations to prepare for future courses. [Program Presentation, Standard IV, p.6).

Because of a low response rate to a web-based evaluation and difficulty obtaining email addresses from the university computing services, the school is in the process of using a paper system for evaluation. (Program

Presentation, Standard IV, p. 8) Members of the Student Services Team stated that students may not feel comfortable providing feedback that is not anonymous and are exploring other methods to obtain student feedback. (Student Services Team meeting, April 3, 2006)

V. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

[V.1] SIS is an integral yet distinct academic unit within the University of Pittsburgh. The University has enjoyed stable yet able senior leadership, and this stability has benefited the School. The SIS Dean reports to Provost Maher, who has supported the School by awarding it incentive funds to advance strategic initiatives. SIS has autonomy sufficient to assure the selection and promotion of its faculty and the selection of its students. At the same time the University provides resources and support as is evidenced by SIS's healthy budget and high level of staffing. Notably, the University supported the School in the hiring of a full-time Director of External Relations. The school's newly appointed Director of Development, Tara Czekal, is funded by the campus office of institutional advancement. (Interview with Tara Czekal, April 3, 2006)

[V.2] SIS faculty have held key positions on campus including Secretary of the Faculty Senate, Chair of the University Press, and slots on the Provost's Planning and Budgeting Committee. Students and staff have held equivalent positions. (Program Presentation, Standard V, p. 4)

[V.3] Dean Ron Larsen was hired in 2002 following a national search. He was hired as dean and professor in accordance with University standards. He is a visible and internationally recognized leader. The program presentation and interviews on campus made it clear that although deans' salaries are confidential, Dean Larsen is compensated at the same level as other deans at Pitt. (Program Presentation, Standard V, p. 5-6)

[V.4] The school is supported by administrative and other staff are adequate to fulfill its mission and program goals. The SIS Dean is supported by two associate deans, Martin Weiss, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research and Mary Kay Biagini, Associate Dean for Student Services and Outreach. (Program Presentation, Standard V, p. 7-9) Dean Larsen has formed an Operations Team to carry out administrative decisions and logistics for the School. Team members include the Dean, the two associate deans, the Director of External Relations, the Manager of Financial Services and the Manager of Personnel and Administrative Services. (Operations Team meeting, April 3, 2006). About 30 staff are included on the SIS Organization Chart, which seems

to be more than adequate for the size of the School. (SIS Organization Chart, Program Presentation, Standard V, Appendix V.B, p. 24).

[V.7] The Program Presentation provides evidence that the Dean, faculty, and staff are adequately compensated, and that there are good campus resources to support, professional travel, and leaves with pay. (<http://www.hr.pitt.edu/benefits/eligibility.htm>) Additionally, the University has an excellent program for “trailing spouses.” (Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education. Faculty Partner Resume Exchange Program brochure) There is a strong push from the senior administration for University of Pittsburgh faculty to enhance its research emphasis and bring in externally funded research dollars. SIS now has on its staff a full-time person to help faculty develop and write research proposals. Dean Larsen explained to the panel that changes in funding priorities at federal agencies including NSF make the process more challenging. The program is interested in the possibility of seeking additional NIH funding for its health related programs. (Interview Dean Larsen, April 4, 2006).

[V.8] The ERP was impressed with the continuous planning and evaluation processes that are taking place, both within SIS and throughout the University, of virtually every aspect of academic and administrative affairs. Faculty, staff, students, and other program constituents participate in an ongoing cycle of goal setting, action, and evaluation.

SIS has the resources that it needs to maintain its highly ranked programs in library and information science. The move to integrate its programs more fully was arrived at after thoughtful evaluation from all constituencies within SIS.

VI. PHYSICAL RESOURCES AND FACILITIES

[VI.1, 5] As indicated in the introduction to the Program Presentation on Physical Resources and Facilities “one of the greatest advantages for students and faculty in the MLIS program is the abundance of physical resources and facilities provided by the University and the School.” (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 1). Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the SIS Program is housed in the Information Sciences Building which is an eight-story structure of 67,530 square feet solely dedicated to the SIS Program. A number of significant renovations have been undertaken to the SIS Building, guided by a 1999 feasibility study that was conducted by the University’s Facilities Management Division and supported by an architecture firm and a space consultant. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 12) An annual space and resources planning process is conducted by the Dean, members of the

Operations Teams, and members of the SIS PBC. This working group is comprised of elected and appointed faculty an elected staff member and an appointed student member; each member is responsible for soliciting comments and suggestions for the constituency the member represents. The work of this group is part of the process of preparing an annual Planning Document that is submitted to the Provost. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 1)

[VI.2] The philosophy governing the allocation and utilization of SIS physical resources and facilities seems appropriately aligned with the mission, goals and objectives for the SIS Program. Space is allocated as needed rather than on a permanent basis, (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 1) The Program Presentation provides a comprehensive floor by floor overview of the changes that have made. Recently renovated space includes classrooms, conference rooms, computer laboratories for students, faculty offices, including offices and research space for emeriti faculty, visiting and adjunct faculty, staff, graduate student assistants and an enhanced student lounge. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 12-15) These physical enhancements have resulted in a modernized, more ADA-compliant facility that supports faculty and students in teaching and learning. An intensive tour of the building guided by the Dean and Theresa Benedek, Manager of Personnel and Administrative Services gave the Panel had a firsthand overview of the facility and related physical resources.

[VI.3] The program functions in a high tech environment. Faculty, staff and students teach, work and learn in an increasingly electronic environment. Thus, along with the physical enhancements outlined above, the University has made a substantial commitment to sustain and enhance the networking infrastructure, including hardware and software, available for faculty, staff and students (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 2). This infrastructure is sustained by an information technology fee of \$130 per term for full-time students and \$65 per term for part-time students. The University of Pittsburgh maintains a robust information technology infrastructure (Computing Services and Systems Development/CSSD) that benefits the students and faculty of the SIS Program. According to the Program Presentation, SIS students have access to seven CSSD Labs located throughout the campus. In addition, there is the Secure VPN Service, a virtual private network (VPN) that enables students to have remote access to the University Library's licensed databases. Students also have access to the University Web Portal: my.pitt.edu, to wireless areas and to email kiosks, all of which provides a broad range of information technology tools and services. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 2-3)

Complementing the University's networking infrastructure, SIS has developed an array of computing capabilities, including computer laboratories, for education and research. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p.18)

A combination of 18 smart classrooms and computer labs among the current facilities meet student and faculty needs. Lab facilities include (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 15):

- Main/Sun Solaris Lab
- Teaching Labs
- Research Labs
- Telecommunications Networking Lab
- Telecommunications Transmission and Device Lab
- AUGMENT Research

SIS has elected to commit its resources to the establishment and maintenance of its own computing and networking infrastructure ensuring that “the information technology services available to SIS faculty and students are of direct relevance and the highest quality possible.” (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p.19). In the next phase of space renovations, the Program plans to permanently install computer projection systems and glare-free lighting in all classrooms. A further augmentation to the “hardwired” infrastructure is the availability of four portable computing carts for faculty to use throughout the Building. In addition, faculty have access to three portable Epson LCD projectors to use with personal laptops. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 21)

[VI.4] Included among the Program’s significant assets are the SIS Information Science Library’s (ISL) collections and staff and the University Library System. The SIS library was consolidated on the third floor in 2002 (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p.13). The library is dedicated to supporting the research and teaching interests of the School’s faculty and students and provides extensive and current coverage in a wide array of relevant areas. As of 2003 resources included 99,842 volumes in on-campus and storage facilities, 726 paid subscriptions, 22,703 microform units, 81 linear feet of archival materials and 1,896 archival videos. The SIS Library has a staff of five, four of whom hold the MLS degree. SIS students currently have access to full-time service librarians from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. A half-time public services librarian provides reference on Saturday and Sundays. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 15) A significant programmatic element has been the establishment of a Bibliographic Instruction (BI) Program for students in the MLIS program. Classes have included:

- Introduction to PittCat and other Library Catalogs
- Electronic Resources for Library Science Research

- Library Science Research on the Web
- Library Science Database Comparison and Evaluation
- PRINT Resources in Library and Information Science
- Finding Dissertations and Conference Proceedings
- Resources for the History of the Book and Printing
- Children's literature Research in Paper and Electronic Resources

Another innovative program initiated by the ISL in 2005 was an informal series, "Conversations with a Librarian," designed to support assignments within the MLIS curriculum. Topics have included:

- Web evaluation skills and techniques
- Finding and citing scholarly sources in library science
- Search engines and internet directions
- Writing annotated bibliographies

The Bibliographic Instruction program is under continuous revision, and courses are added each term to address new features of the library environment as well as specific emergent needs of the students. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 17-18)

The University of Pittsburgh Library System is a significant asset for students in the MLIS program. A member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL, it is the 26th largest academic research library in North America with by 14 libraries on the Pittsburgh campus. (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 6) Strong connection and collaboration between ULS and SIS provides a number of direct benefits to students and faculty. MLIS students are afforded many practical learning opportunities. For more than ten years there has been a formal internship program that employs 10-12 MLIS students in the Hillman Reference department for one-year internships. Meeting with the SIS Librarian and the Assistant Director of ULS confirmed this. Additionally, in any given term, numerous MLIS students work side by side with ULS librarians in field placements or independent studies. Further, ULS facilities often serve as practical teaching labs, providing important learning opportunities. (Program Presentation, Standard, VI, p. 8) LIS 2216 Collections Conservation is held in the Preservation Lab of the ULS where students are provided with hands-on learning experience. Other labs include the Digital Research Library, the cataloging unit, Special Collections and Archives.

The Director of the University Library System holds a joint appointment in the Department of Library and Information Science, occasionally teaches a seminar for doctoral students and speaks regularly to MLIS classes. Further, other ULS librarians interact directly, formally and informally, with MLIS students. (Interviews with University and IS librarians, April 4, 2006).

Lastly, the Sources of Evidence (Program Presentation, Standard VI, p. 25-26) includes over thirty (30) sources that provide a compelling list of planning activities, programs, service, print and electronic resources, information technology tools that demonstrate that the SIS Program has at its disposal a significant number of Physical Resources and Facilities. These resources and facilities are marshaled and brought together in fashion that provides SIS faculty and students with a teaching and learning environment that makes the SIS program “world class.”

SUMMARY

[I] We commend the University of Pittsburgh School of Information Sciences and its MLIS program for having articulated vision, mission, and goals with constituent input and aligned with the university’s mission and goals. The program planning effort is an integral part of ongoing campus planning process. SIS is using three overarching goals (Strategic Leadership, Intellectual Vitality, and Financial Stability) as a framework for objectives against which performance is assessed every fiscal year and action items which are monitored monthly. We note that faculty are asked to align their professional goals with goals of school, thus involving them not only in the discussion of goals and objectives but in helping to accomplish them.

[II] The program has also established goals for the MLIS curriculum which are subject to yearly revision and benefit from input of students, alumni and employers. Based on five core courses, with variations allowed for curriculum specializations, the program melds traditional values and new technologies. With nationally ranked programs in school library certification, medical librarianship, archives/preservation, and digital libraries, the curriculum is comparable to the best in the country. Its faculty and students have been leaders in the use of new modes of delivery, particularly the FastTrack program which combines asynchronous learning with intense campus visits each semester. The use of new instructional techniques for distance education has enhanced instruction for students on campus who participate in blended courses. Student concern about large numbers of students in some classes should be addressed.

[III] The faculty includes teachers, researchers, and professional leaders with strong academic credentials, publishing records, and service experience. It includes nationally known scholars in diverse curricular areas and promising new faculty in new areas of concentration. The program provides resources for professional development, flexibility in modes of appointment, including the possibility of non-tenure stream appointments, support for the grant application process, peer evaluation of teaching, and a new method of evaluating overall performance. The reorganization of the school promises new avenues of collaboration across disciplinary lines with colleagues in information science and telecommunications. We commend the faculty for strongly supporting this change despite the inevitable uncertainties involved. During the 2005-2006 academic year the program has been conducting a search for two new faculty members. (http://www2.sis.pitt.edu/updates/news/01_27_2006.htm) The school will also be facing the retirement of long-time faculty. We urge the program to engage in succession planning to help recruit new faculty in an increasingly competitive environment.

[IV] The program uses a variety of mechanisms to publicize its offerings to prospective students. Reorganization of staff into a Student Services Team, with its own yearly goals, enhances support of students from inquiry through graduation. MLIS enrollment is up, with an increasingly strong applicant pool. Students must consult with their advisors before they can register for courses, ensuring a greater level of program coherence. They are evaluated in a variety of ways, and those assessments are used by faculty to modify courses and assignments. Students on campus and in the FastTrack program are well connected with each other, their instructors, and the program. Students demonstrate a high level of school spirit that continues in their contact with the program as alumni. The program has a long tradition of fostering diversity in its student body and has attracted a large number of Spectrum scholars. It has allocated resources to attract a diverse student body, including the use of scholarship funds, creation of a special half-time position, and the appointment of an admissions and recruitment director. We commend these efforts and urge them to continue.

[V] After considering such a change for decades, the school has undertaken a reorganization that will eliminate the departmental lines that have separated library and information science from information science and telecommunications. The new structure is intended to promote teaching and research collaboration across disciplinary lines and to allow flexibility in the use of resources and personnel. The school has been strategic in its use of staff, converting clerical positions to administrative assistants, organizing in teams, and hiring new staff members in the areas of public relations and fundraising. The program benefits from the commitment of several

long-time, knowledgeable staff members who have been recognized on campus and in the community for their excellent service.

[VI] The MLIS program is fortunate to reside in a facility dedicated to the School of Information Sciences, a large, eight story building, with an onsite library. Space is allocated on a flexible, as needed basis and undergoes continuous renovation. The building's infrastructure allows students to experience the latest in information technology. The MLIS program benefits from the building's integration of information science and telecommunications capabilities. The university library provides outstanding resources as well as bibliographic instruction, internships, and student employment.

Overall, the MLIS program demonstrates strength in every area, articulating its future, mapping a way to get there, measuring progress, and using resources to attract a strong faculty and an able, enthusiastic student body to a high quality, well-supported program.