

Board of Visitors: Tuesday, November 1, 2011

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1. What are the major factors in your discipline that are currently shaping its long term, strategic evolution?
 - The dramatic growth of networked, digital, interactive, and ubiquitous technology.
 - New pathways to literacy; new ways of learning. This will influence our own teaching as well as the nature of library services offered in public libraries.
 - Weak support in society for publicly supported enterprises.
 - Weak economy.
2. What is the impact of these factors? Why are they so important? What difference do they make?
 - Increased disintermediation. Public alienation from cultural organizations such as libraries, archives, museums.
 - Struggle to remain relevant to library users who don't understand what libraries are or who don't see their own interests, styles of communicating and learning reflected in library services.
 - Change and growth of tech is so fast that information professionals (librarians) can hardly keep up, making the "death of the library" a self-fulfilling prophesy.
 - Without a forceful message from librarians about what their new role in society should or could be, there is public misunderstanding or confusion as to what the function of the library is in society.
 - Lack of funding to effect dramatic change.
 - Less funding for libraries, museums, and archives = fewer jobs for information professionals.
 - Less funding for libraries, museums, and archives = libraries using yesterday's technology because not able to keep up.
3. How do these factors affect the future of SIS and your program?
 - We can't wait for the profession to catch up to technological change. We need to be ahead of the curve and train for a new librarianship now.

- However, we can't just train for a new librarianship if our students are simply going out to work in a 19th century model library. The learning our students receive will be (and is) seen by "old school" librarians as irrelevant and our students will not be perceived as desirable hires. So we need to be training the larger practitioner community, bringing them along with the changes that we make with our school.

4. How can the School respond most effectively to these factors?

- Train information professionals who see opportunity in ambiguity.

- Teach "innovation thinking": Design thinking?

- Teach evidence-based practice. (The customer is not always right!). Must have a basic research methods course. Should provide opportunities to take advanced research methods.

- Think big and aim higher in our teaching. Shape a profession, don't just train a technologist. Not enough to understand how tech works but also, where it fits into culture and society. Information professionals as change agents: Computer programmers should take ethics and sociology courses. Librarians should know more than names of resources – they should know how to create. Critically, librarians-in-training need to think about how the profession empowers communities, not just how it "serves customers".

- See the practitioner community as one of our student populations. More outreach. More linkages between class projects, experiments, etc.

- Get some new technologies, even in beta, out to the practitioner community as rapidly as possible. Why train our students to use this tech if they won't see it for ten years in practice?

- iSchools should work more closely with ALA to present a forceful message regarding the role of the information professional. Work with ALA to develop a new Bachelors degree. Begin to shape the Master degree for "master" librarians. Build prestige into the MLIS degree.

5. Who are the necessary partners that would need to be engaged in order to respond effectively?

- Business schools who are engaged in "design thinking".

- Design firms who can provide training in "design thinking" methods and can provide a crucible for testing design thinking. Should also be working with the concept of sustainable design.

- Local librarians, who are hungry to learn. Field projects where students practice design thinking alongside practitioners to devise novel solutions to real problems.

- ALA.

6. What would an effective response look like and what difference would it make?

- Some of this response needs to come from the broader iSchool caucus.

- Our school should make a *definitive decision* this year as to whether it wants to move toward a “one school” model. We’ve been circling around the idea for too many years. Remove program streams! Just have specializations. Stop locking our students down into inflexible models when the information professionals are in the midst of an exciting period of development.

- No more one-year MLIS. Shift the one-year down to a Bachelors degree. Build the Masters up to a two-year degree, with a large research/design project component during the second year.