

EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL **DRAFT** REPORT

on

Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS)

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

Conducted on Behalf of the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation

by

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Introduction

On March 24-26, 2013, the external review panel (ERP) acting on behalf of the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation visited the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) School of Information Sciences (SIS). Prior to the visit, the information in the Program Presentation (PP) and its numerous appendices (UNI=University evidence; SCH=School of Information Sciences evidence; PRO=Program evidence; CUR=Curriculum evidence; FAC=Faculty evidence; STU=Student evidence; ALU=Alumni evidence; FIN=financial evidence) was supplemented with data gathered through a survey sent to all currently-enrolled MLIS students and in response to questions posed via email to LIS Program Administrator Debbie Day. The ERP was given passwords to view materials for several courses housed in the CourseWeb Blackboard course management system. Onsite the ERP examined documentation referenced in the PP (including annual plans; annual reports; curriculum review materials; various surveys; course evaluations; financial information; minutes of meetings); toured the Information Sciences Building, the Hillman Library, the Archives Research Center, and the Visual Media Workshop; and visited five face-to-face classes. The ERP held group meetings with the MLIS Curriculum Subcommittee, adjunct faculty, teaching fellows, students, and alumni and employers. Individual meetings were scheduled with SIS senior administrators (Dean Ronald Larsen, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research Martin Weiss, Director of Administration Sandra Brandon); 12 full-time faculty, including LIS Program Chair Sheila Corral; key staff (LIS Program Administrator Debbie Day; Pitt Partners Program Administrator JoAnn Kavalukas; Director of Distance Education, eLearning Partnerships and Outreach Jeff Lawson; Student Services Manager Wesley Lipschultz; Student Services Specialist Brandi Belleau; Director of External Relations Kelly Shaffer; Manager of Information Technology & Networking Mark Steggert). Meetings were also scheduled with SIS Liaison Librarian Susan Neuman; Associate University Librarian Fern Brody; Director of the Center for Instructional Development & Distance Education Cynthia Golden; Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Juan Manfredi; and Provost Patricia Beeson. The meetings with students included a phone conference with an online student, a meeting with the MLIS Student Advisory Group, and two other open meeting times. This report outlines the facts, strengths, and challenges identified by the ERP.

All members of the Pitt administration and of the SIS administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and employers whom the ERP met or contacted were very cooperative in responding to questions and requests for information. The ERP appreciated the support given to us throughout the site visit, with special thanks to Dean Ronald Larsen, LIS Program Chair Sheila

Corrall, LIS Program Administrator Debbie Day, and Director of External Relations Kelly Shaffer for their assistance.

Standard I: Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The School of Information Sciences (SIS or the iSchool at Pitt) is one of 16 undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools at the University of Pittsburgh, which is a top tier research university with 446 degree programs including more than 200 graduate degrees. Current university enrollment is over 35,000 students, and of these more than 10,000 are graduate students. SIS has one undergraduate program (BS in Information Science) and three graduate programs: Information Science and Technology, Library and Information Science, and Telecommunications and Networking. These three graduate programs offer master's, CAS, and doctoral degrees.

The MLIS program is offered on the Pittsburgh campus and online through a system of online instruction developed by SIS--which was the first school on the Pitt campus to offer a degree program to online students. Since 2012 the school has been preparing to transition to an online program integrated with Pitt Online, a Blackboard-supported teaching and learning platform now used throughout the university. At this point all core courses are being offered online as well as in the classroom, and students who take their classes on campus may also sign up for some online courses. Those students enrolled in the online program are expected to fulfill the same requirements as students in the on-campus program.

As an autonomous unit within the University of Pittsburgh, the SIS dean answers directly to the Provost. Administratively, the school therefore has a great deal of autonomy in hiring faculty, setting the curriculum, and determining the direction of its degree programs. According to the program presentation, SIS "has created a culture of planning and assessment, not in response to demands from University administrators or external agencies, but in response to an intrinsic desire to ensure programmatic and curricular excellence" [PP 14]. Nonetheless, the dean is required to present an Annual Plan to the Provost, and program chairs are expected to use a university-wide Assessment Matrix for biannual evaluation of progress in meeting the goals and learning objectives defined by SIS.

The biannual assessments prepared by the LIS program chairs were available for 2010 and 2012. Using the matrix mandated by the university, these assessments focused on selected learning outcomes that were linked to specific core courses. Assessments were conducted by having faculty (who do not teach the selected courses) review a random sample of essays or projects from these courses. As a result of the assessments done in 2010, specific actions were

taken. For example, the LIS faculty increased emphasis on critical writing in the LIS core courses as the key skill for students [Assessment Matrix 2010 and discussion with the Curriculum Subcommittee].

In addition to the internal assessment discussed above, SIS commissioned an assessment of the online offering of the MLIS program from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), a private nonprofit firm whose mission is to improve strategic decision making in higher education. The NCHEMS evaluation informed planning for the transition of the online program to the Pitt Online system.

(Standard 1.1) SIS follows a systematic planning process with broad constituent participation. Each year SIS “evaluates progress against its stated long-term goals and short-term objectives” [PP 17]. Since the previous ALA accreditation the school has fully implemented a new management model in order to allow for better representation of the school’s constituencies and to foster interaction among the four programs of the school. In 2006 one of the first steps taken to achieve this was the creation of the SIS Council which consists of eleven members and the three program chairs who are *ex officio* members. In addition, the Board of Visitors (BoV) was reconstituted and convened in 2006. The BoV has since met annually and in 2011, after SIS had completed six years under the new management model, the BoV recommended that SIS engage in a school-wide visioning exercise and use this as the foundation of a five-year strategic plan. At this point the school is completing the exploration phase of the planning process [PP 5—SIS Roadmap].

The SIS mission is to “to support and advance the broader education, research, and service mission of the University by educating students, furthering knowledge, and contributing our expertise to advance humankind’s progress through information” [PP 15]. The website specifies five actions that flow from this mission:

- 1) Providing a high-quality undergraduate program in Information Science
- 2) Offering superior graduate programs in Library and Information Science, Information Science, and Telecommunications
- 3) Engaging in research and scholarly activities that advance learning through the extension of the frontiers of knowledge and creative endeavor
- 4) Cooperating with industry and government to transfer knowledge
- 5) Extending our expertise to local communities and public agencies to contribute to social, intellectual, and economic development in Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world.

With the exception of undergraduate teaching (which is offered through a separate program), evidence has been presented to show that all the actions delineated above are being undertaken by the faculty, staff, and administrators from the LIS program.

Each term MLIS students are provided opportunities to engage in research projects and community work that makes a contribution to the state and the region (actions 3, 4, & 5 above). In addition students may enroll for field experience credit offered through a wide range of potential employers that include libraries, archives, cultural institutions, and hospitals. In our discussion with employers, alumni, and Pitt Partners we found that Pitt students were prized for their effective and enthusiastic work in a variety of institutional settings.

Goals for MLIS graduates were revised and affirmed by the faculty of the MLIS program on April 6, 2011 [<http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/lis/degrees/goals.php>; PP 16]. They include:

Upon completion of the MLIS degree, graduates will incorporate the theories, knowledge, skills, ethical foundations and social responsibilities of the information professions into professional practice for the benefits of users. Specifically, graduates will be able to:

Draw upon the ethics, values and history of library and information science and other related disciplines.

Apply the principles of information management.

Advance the creative and ethical applications of information technologies.

Apply the principles of management to various functions in information environments.

Plan, implement, evaluate and advocate information services to meet the needs of diverse users.

Promote intellectual freedom and equity of access to information.

Understand and apply research in library and information science.

Promote a commitment to the advancement of the information professions through advocacy, continuing education and lifelong learning.

These are consistent with the values of the parent institution [PP 14-15] and the overall SIS mission.

(Standard I.2) The Program Presentation states that a “special area of emphasis” for the SIS self-study process was the decision “to focus *on transformational change* to highlight how the School and its LIS curriculum are responding to the profound changes taking place in the profession” [PP 11]. This emphasis on change closely corresponds to Standard I.2 which states that the program reflects “the role of library and information services in a rapidly changing technological society” [I.2.9]. The Program Presentation includes a table [PP 21] correlating each MLIS program goal outlined above (formulated as student learning outcomes) to one or more

components of Standard I.2. These goals guide curriculum development, curriculum revision, and student advising. Evidence of how these goals are addressed is documented through the syllabi of the core courses and the electives which in many cases do have learning outcomes explicitly stated in course materials.

(Standard I.3) Continuous review of the curriculum and MLIS program goals is central to the planning and assessment culture of the school. Curriculum discussion takes place at monthly faculty meetings where new courses and significant revisions to existing courses are discussed as well as changes in or addition of specializations [PP 18, minutes of meetings SCH 14, and faculty interviews]. Annual meetings of the SIS Board of Visitors (which includes alumni) provide opportunities to benefit from advice from constituents outside the school [SCH 3]. Suggestions from students are solicited at monthly meetings between administrators and the MLIS Student Advisory Group made up of representatives of student organizations [PP 19, PRO 6, and meeting with students]. Student representatives also serve on the SIS Council which functions “as the primary voice of the faculty, staff and students” and play a key role in the planning process [PP 17].

The Program Presentation notes that students “are made aware of the School’s mission and goals, as well as program goals, through the School’s and MLIS Web sites, at orientation, and through initial advising sessions” [PP 24, <http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/lis/degrees/goals.php>].

Standard II: Curriculum

(Standard II.1) As noted above in discussion of Standard I.1, the MLIS program identifies specific goals stated as learning outcomes that were revised and affirmed by the MLIS faculty on April 6, 2011 [PP 25]. Although these goals are not explicitly identified in the syllabi of required core courses, it is probable that students when well-advised meet most of these goals (see research exception below) through a combination of core courses and electives. The faculty continues to consider a portfolio requirement for MLIS students demonstrating how they are meeting these outcomes [CUR 7 2012 Curriculum Assessment]. Explicit inclusion of learning outcomes in course syllabi, tied to program goals, would make the connection of required courses to achievement of program goals more visible.

The program faculty as a whole serves as the curriculum committee [PP 26]. For spring 2013, a faculty Curriculum Subcommittee was established to review MLIS core courses [PP 26; CUR 8]. Curriculum revisions and improvements are discussed informally as well [Curriculum Subcommittee meeting on March 25]. Every two to three years, the whole course catalog is reviewed and courses are deleted as necessary [PP 26]. New, experimental courses are

periodically introduced based on faculty and PhD student interest in developing and teaching a course that corresponds to their area of research or which address a change in the profession [CUR 3].

The Office of the Provost has mandated a Learning Outcomes Assessment process [CUR 7 Assessment Matrix; email from Dean Larsen with attached memo about required Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes dated February 11, 2013]. In 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, MLIS faculty assessed and mapped learning outcomes (MLIS goals) to specific courses [CUR 7 Assessment Matrix]. Faculty will decide in April 2013 which program goals to assess in this round [Larsen memo].

One goal in particular seems not to have been adequately met, and stakeholders complained. Most significantly, the MLIS program was lax in meeting the goal to “understand and apply research in library and information science” [PP 25]. At the MLIS sponsored reception at the 2012 conference of the Pennsylvania Library Association (PLA), alumni requested a research methods course that aligns with the above stated research goal [ALU 1]. In response, a research methods course, LIS 2110, has been developed and is now available to on-campus students. In spring 2014, LIS 2110 will be offered via Pitt Online [Sheila Corral interview]. It was noted that in the 2011-2012 Assessment Matrix written by Martin Weiss, core course LIS 2000 Understanding Information was mapped to the research goal through an assignment in which students “will be able to write a comparative analysis of a publication from the professional or research literature on information and assess the author’s findings by using supporting examples from the text” [CUR 7].

A second curriculum request voiced at the PLA conference reception is the need to address facility-related management issues [ALU 1] that aligns with the goal to “apply the principles of management to various functions in information environments” [PP 25]. In response, a module on facilities was added to LIS 2700 Managing Libraries and Information Systems and Services in Changing Environments [CUR 1; CUR 8].

A third curriculum request voiced at the PLA conference reception was the need for an academic library specialization [ALU 1]. In response, a new course on academic libraries will be offered in fall 2013 and an academic libraries specialization has recently been added to the specialization options available to on-campus students [Sheila Corral interview].

The MLIS Student Advisory Group asked for additional hands-on computer lab opportunities; subsequently, LIS 2600 Introduction to Information Technologies was revised to include these.

The curriculum provides opportunities for a variety of classroom and fieldwork experiences for study of theory, principles, practice, and values necessary for provision of service in libraries and information agencies in other contexts [PP 27, 30; Kavalukas interview].

(Standard II.2) The curriculum is concerned with recordable information and knowledge, and the services and technologies to facilitate their management and use, which is evident in core and elective courses [PP 28; CUR 1]. The curriculum encompasses information and knowledge creation, communication, identification, selection, acquisition, organization and description, storage and retrieval, preservation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation synthesis, dissemination and management through core courses and electives, but specializations may have different emphases [PP 28; CUR 1].

(Standard II.3.1) The curriculum fosters development of library and information professionals who will assume an assertive role in providing services through courses such as LIS 2700 Managing Libraries and Information Systems and Services in Changing Environments, a core course for six of the eight specializations; LIS 2774 School Library Center Management; and the three credit 150-hour Field Experience [PP 30; Kavalukas interview].

(Standard II.3.2) The curriculum emphasizes an evolving body of knowledge that reflects the findings of basic and applied research from relevant fields [PP 31; CUR 1; CUR 8]. Course materials are regularly updated to reflect the evolving body of knowledge [PP 31; CUR 1]. One-credit four-week summer courses provide opportunities for PhD students and faculty to address evolving bodies of knowledge [Academic term schedules available onsite]. As well, WISE courses provide students the opportunity to take courses that address newer concepts within library and information science [CUR 6].

(Standard II.3.3) The theory, application, and use of technology is central to three specialties (Information Technology, Digital Libraries, and Archives and Information Science) and integrated into other specialties (Children & Youth, Health, Individualized, Reference, and the School Library Certification Program [PP 28; CUR 1; faculty member Leanne Bowler interview] . Students in most specializations in the 36-credit MLIS program are required to complete LIS 2600 Introduction to Information Technologies. Students in the digital libraries specialization have a choice of three more advanced technology courses to fulfill this requirement. Other required courses and electives address the theory, application, and use of technology through readings, discussion, assignments, and hands-on projects [CUR 1].

(Standard II.3.4) Interwoven into the curriculum is a focus on meeting the needs of a diverse society [Meeting with MLIS Student Advisory Group, March 25]. A strong emphasis on diversity is evident in an assignment for LIS 2700 [Observation of James “Kip” Carrier’s class,

March 26]. Since 1995, the Office of the Provost has sponsored an annual Faculty Diversity Seminar offering ten university faculty members fellowships to redesign their courses to be more inclusive in terms of race and gender. James “Kip” Currier, a 2010 fellow, redesigned the core course LIS 2700 to include a

- diversity and inclusion statement
- teaching philosophy underscoring a commitment to nurturing and sustaining an inclusive learning community
- dedicated module on diversity and inclusion. [CUR 9]

Through the WISE (Web-based Information Science Education) consortium students can take two elective courses offered online by other LIS programs in the U.S., Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Examples of course offerings addressing the needs of a diverse society are Information for Special Needs Populations and LGBTQ Literature for Young Adults [CUR 6].

(Standard II.3.5) This standard is reflected in the University of Pittsburgh’s mission statement: “The University of Pittsburgh’s mission statement recognizes that the institution has responsibilities in a global society” [PP 38]. The Office of the Provost’s mandated Assessment Matrix encourages graduate programs to incorporate global competence into their curriculum [Office of the Provost memo, Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, dated February 11, 2013]. MLIS faculty will complete an Assessment Matrix for 2012-2013 in May 2013 [Dean Larsen email dated March 28] for selected core courses providing evidence that the curriculum addresses global competence.

The MLIS program consisting of eight specializations addresses the needs of a rapidly changing technological and global society through structured programs that integrate new media, emphasize the transformative nature of information technology and digital content, and literature from a global perspective [PP 38; CUR 1; CUR 2; CUR 5]. Examples of WISE course offerings addressing the needs of a rapidly changing technological and global society are Social Informatics, Scholarly Communications and ePublishing, International Issues and Innovations, and International Librarianship [CUR 6].

(Standard II.3.6) The MLIS program provides direction for future development of the field by offering courses that address future research areas, service areas, and technologies [PP 40]. Increasingly, faculty are researching and writing with MLIS students, thus preparing a new generation of library and information professionals to move the profession forward [Faculty interviews].

(Standard II.3.7) The curriculum provides opportunities for students to foster professional growth through competencies statements of relevant professional organizations that are mapped

to courses and reflected in assignments [PP 41]. The 3 credit 150-hour Field Experience offers students opportunities to be mentored by practitioners and gain practical work experience that fosters professional growth [Kavalukas interview]. The enrollment in Practicums/Field Experiences has grown to 50.6% in 2011-2012 from 42.3% in 2006-2007 [PP 46]. Faculty members bring in library and information professionals as guest speakers who provide insight and guidance about the profession to MLIS students [PP 42].

(Standard II.4) The 36-hour MLIS program provides students the opportunity to construct coherent programs of study within its eight specializations (note that a ninth specialization on academic libraries was added this spring)

[<http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/lis/degrees/academic/index.php>] . Core courses and suggested electives are identified in the MLIS Program Planners [CUR 5]. Most Program Planners are dated September 13, 2010, and since then curriculum changes have been made. All but one of the specializations require four core courses. Archives and Information Science (or APRM) requires six core courses [PP 28]. The revised program plan for APRM is outlined in CUR 8.

A strength of the MLIS program is the opportunity for substantial customization. For most specializations (APRM being the exception), two-thirds of courses taken are electives, which could undermine students' opportunities to develop coherent programs of study unless well-advised (this is especially true for the Individualized specialization). Although faculty members currently have somewhat high advising loads [PP 77], student survey data compiled by the ERP indicated overall satisfaction with advising. The shift to fall-only admissions should address issues of course scheduling and sequencing noted in meetings with students and in student survey responses. As the online students can now pursue only the individualized specialization, advising is important, given the current limitations on courses available to online students [Discussion with online student on March 26]. Recently introduced one-credit courses offered during the summer term allow students to take four-week classes on a range of topics. Students electing this option must take three one-credit courses during the summer term. These one-credit courses offer online students additional course opportunities.

The curriculum includes experiential opportunities through the 3-credit 150 hour Field Experience and the scholarship-based Partners Program. Students take courses outside LIS such as ADMPS 1001 Social Foundations of Education, ANTH 0680 Introduction to Physical Anthropology, SWRES 200 Evaluative Research in Social Issues [Cross Program Courses information available onsite].

Course content is evident in syllabi [CUR 1; CUR 8]. Sequencing is not as evident. At the MLIS Student Advisory Group meeting on November 28, 2012, students asked for increased

course sequencing [PRO 6]. Students' concerns about sequencing are being addressed by the newly instituted fall 2012 MLIS policy that students will be admitted in the fall term only [PP 44]. This change should ensure that students follow a clear path through their degree, beginning with the four (or in the case of APRM, six) required core courses and ending with electives within each specialization [PP 44].

(Standard II.5) The MLIS specializations include a study of services and activities relevant to that particular specialization [PP 49-50; CUR 4; CUR 5]. Specializations are built on a foundation of core courses and take into account the statements of knowledge and competencies developed by relevant professional organizations [PP 49; onsite meeting with Curriculum Subcommittee on March 25; Leanne Bowler interview]

(Standard II.6) The curriculum, regardless of forms or locations of delivery, conforms to the requirements of these standards, which is evident in the same goals and learning outcomes for online and on-campus modes of delivery [CUR 1]. All academic requirements for the MLIS program are applied uniformly, regardless of modality, with the limitation that currently the online option supports only the individualized specialization [PP 51].

(Standard II.7) The curriculum is continually reviewed by faculty. Although curriculum review is a continuous and ongoing process [PP 26], faculty embarked on an in-depth and comprehensive review of the curriculum at its December 5, 2012 MLIS faculty meeting [CUR 8]. A range of issues was presented for faculty to consider as the review progresses [CUR 8; December 5 minutes]. The faculty established a subcommittee to lead efforts in revising four core courses. Review and revision of LIS 2500, LIS 2600, and LIS 2700 had been completed by the time of the site visit; information about these revisions is included in minutes of the LIS Curriculum Review Committee [CUR 8].

The curriculum is receptive to innovation (see APRM changes below) through new course offerings and its one-credit four week summer courses [faculty member Elizabeth Mahoney discussion]. Recent revisions to the APRM specialization include a name change to Archives and Information Science effective for students entering the program in the fall 2013 term [PP 53; memo from Alberta M. Sbragia, Office of the Provost, dated March 21, 2013 in CUR 8], sequencing of courses [CUR 8], the addition of one new elective, and the reworking of several required courses. These changes were made in response to and in anticipation of changes within the archives field [PP 53].

Members of the Curriculum Subcommittee who wrote the Standard II section of the PP found it difficult to address one aspect: Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of students' achievements and their subsequent accomplishments [Meeting with subcommittee

members, March 25]. A listing of students' accomplishments was provided [PP 54], but faculty has not identified aspects of these accomplishments that could inform further development of the curriculum. In Fall 2012, SIS partnered with the University of Pittsburgh on a survey administered to recently-graduated students to gather data on current employment and its relationship to the student's academic program. Data provided to SIS on March 20, 2013 for more than 60 graduates shows almost all secured employment related to their program of study in a range of organization types (academic library, technology firm, public library, archives, research company, museum, school library, state library, foundation) [Report provided onsite].

Evaluation of the curriculum involves stakeholders served by the program such as alumni at the MLIS-sponsored reception during the 2012 conference of the Pennsylvania Library Association [ALU 1], MLIS Student Advisory Group [PRO 6], and students surveys [SCH 16; SCH 17]. Suggestions such as additional hands-on computer activities, sequencing of courses, a research methods course, and an academic libraries specialization have been considered and have been/are in the process of being implemented. Remaining issues (noted in responses to ERP student surveys) include limited elective offerings in the summer and the lack of specialization options for online students. The Program Director is aware of these issues and working with faculty to address them [Corrall interview].

Standard III: Faculty

(Standard III.1) SIS has lost a significant number of faculty due to death, illness, retirements, and relocation over the past several years. SIS has actively pursued recruiting and hiring new faculty who have the education, professional experience, and research orientation to meet the specific goals of the MLIS program. For example, Sheila Corrall was hired as Director and Professor in fall of 2012. Professor Corrall brings "academic library" expertise to the school, a formerly missing component, and there are now plans to add an academic libraries specialization [added to the MLIS program website since the PP was prepared]. Professor Beaton is another hire who began in fall 2012. A search in the current academic year focused on archives was not successful and will be repeated next year [Larsen interview]. The endowed Boyce Chair will also be filled next year; these additional positions will enable LIS to meet their current needs. All eligible full-time LIS faculty are members of the University's Graduate Faculty [PP 57; Faculty interviews]. Faculty appointments are not all tenure-stream; Alison Langmead (joint with History of Art and Architecture), Elizabeth Mahoney (formerly iSchool librarian), and Kip Currier are all non-tenure-stream. The full-time faculty is also augmented by visiting faculty,

most recently the appointment of Stephen Griffin, formerly a senior program officer at NSF, in a position funded by the A.W. Mellon Foundation to focus on cyberscholarship [PP 56-57].

The full-time LIS faculty teach most of the core courses and the majority of all courses during the fall and spring. They also teach the same courses online that are taught on-campus, when those courses are part of the online offerings [FAC 4]. Well-qualified adjuncts and doctoral teaching fellows are strategically used to broaden the range of electives and specialization courses that may be offered [Adjunct Faculty and Teaching Fellow interviews].

Faculty members make major commitments to research in their fields and across disciplines. For example, Professor Richard Cox, three time winner of the Society of American Archivists Waldo G. Leland Award for the best monograph, has been a prolific author of books and articles on a wide range of topics in archives and in LIS education. Collaborative research, as well as cross-teaching, has also been occurring across the degree programs within SIS. For example, Professor Beaton (LIS) is currently involved in a research project with a member of the information science faculty regarding social issues and problems with a significant information component. Many articles are co-authored with faculty from the other SIS degree programs as well as faculty outside of SIS [FAC 3]. Examples of cross-teaching include a course from IS, Geospatial Information Systems, that has been offered for MLIS students and the cross-listing of the LIS course, "Copyright and Fair Use in the Digital Age" for other departments [Faculty interviews; FAC 4].

(Standard III.2) The school's approach to the evaluation of faculty accomplishments and workload was significantly revised in 2007, creating a parametric faculty model that accounts for teaching, research, and service activities [PP 61; FAC 5]. In the spring, each faculty member submits an annual report to the Dean. Faculty merit increases, as well as other incentives (such as stipends for online course development) are allocated based on this model [Faculty interviews; Dean Larsen interview]. Onsite interviews with faculty revealed an overwhelming acceptance and appreciation of this parametric model implemented by the Dean.

Support for teaching is offered by the University's Center for Instructional Design and Distance Education (CIDDE). This department includes the Faculty Instructional Development Lab (FIDL) which assists with instructional theory, learning theory, and information and multimedia technologies in instructional design. CIDDE offers a course to new faculty. The course is required for PhD students and is available to other faculty on an as-needed basis. PhD Teaching Fellows as well as the LIS faculty spoke of the strong support received from CIDDE. Support also comes in the form of teaching assistants in courses with significant enrollments

and/or multiple sections. Teaching Fellows add variety to the course offerings by presenting courses of current concerns or of their research interests.

SIS's peer review of teaching scheme [schedule provided PP 62] and student evaluations through the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching (OMET), required for every course, provide faculty with timely feedback on the effectiveness of the course and teaching. The peer review is structured and regular; guidelines are provided in "Policies and Procedures for the Review of Teaching" [FAC 6]. Student course evaluation summaries were provided onsite and revealed positive ratings for all current faculty members [FAC 7, onsite only].

The faculty's online teaching innovation and excellence has been recognized by the WISE consortium [PP 63], including three awards for Ellen Detlefsen and one for Mary Kay Biagini. Leanne Bowler received an ALISE/Pratt-Severn Faculty Innovation Award in 2012 for "incorporating evolving technologies in the curricula" [PP 63].

Student assistants (GSAs/GSRs) are available to assist faculty with research-related projects as well as teaching [Observed in onsite classes]. New tenure-stream faculty are given reduced course loads and additional GSA support to develop their research program [Faculty interview]. Research Discretionary Funds (RDF) are provided by the Dean to support travel to conferences, student research assistants, and the purchase of equipment [Faculty interview]. Two SIS staff members provide grant writing assistance [Faculty and Dean interviews]. Evidence of research effectiveness includes numerous grants. For example, active research grant recipients include [FAC 2]:

- Bowler, PI (Pitt – Central Research Development Fund)
- Currier and Larsen, Co-PIs (Andrew Mellon Foundation)
- Larsen, PI (Andrew Mellon Foundation and National Science Foundation)
- Tomer, PI (Institute of Museum and Library Services)
- Weiss, PI (National Science Foundation, 2 grants)

In order to build a "vibrant and collaborative environment," the school offers dozens of colloquia each year and weekly "Brown Bag" lunches with the Dean. Workshops feature the research interests of the faculty [Faculty and Dean interviews]. A complete list of colloquia and workshops for Fall 2012 is in SCH 9 and an up-to-date listing of such events can be found on the public website (<http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/colloquia/index.php>).

(Standard III.3) SIS defines "diversity of faculty" in two ways: 1) faculty exhibit a variety of professional and scholarly backgrounds; and 2) recruitment and retention of faculty from underserved populations. There is evidence, from the list of faculty and their areas of

expertise [PP 72-73], that there are diverse professional and scholarly backgrounds within the unit.

SIS has found it challenging to find candidates who meet the second definition of diversity, a challenge shared across campus [Vice Provost Juan Manfredi interview]. The University's Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity and Inclusion provides leadership and resources to increase the success rate of attracting diverse candidates. These efforts include publishing ads in sources that are targeted to diverse populations and including strong encouragement within the ads [PP 66 and Faculty interviews]. The challenge is a result of an insufficient number of diverse candidates for the disciplines needed by SIS. The iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3), an innovative, multi-year, grant-funded initiative hosted by SIS, is an effort to resolve this problem at its root. I3 works with under-represented undergraduate students, helping them gain the confidence and expertise that they will need to continue their education through the graduate school level and possibly into academia as a career. It will be many years before the rewards of this initiative will be realized [Faculty interview].

Policies and procedures, including the Faculty Review Model, Peer Review of Teaching Guidelines, and Promotion and Tenure, are available and implemented [FAC 5, 6, 8].

(Standard III.4) Teaching responsibilities are based on expertise, with full-time faculty teaching most of the core courses, as well as electives, and part-time faculty offering specialized courses or electives. Teaching effectiveness is evaluated through student evaluations and peer review (see Standard III.2). In addition, the program faculty complete a yearly review of a core course and the associated assignments to ensure stated learning objectives are being met [PP 69]. As part of a school with two technology-related academic programs, technology is embraced but used appropriately. A core course, LIS 2600, Introduction to Information Technologies, addresses technology in information centers and libraries. Other courses incorporate technology as appropriate [PP 69 has examples]. Rooms are equipped with instructional technology [Onsite tour].

Faculty members are supported with funds to participate in professional organizations [Faculty interviews]. Many are members of ALA and ALISE, and other membership reflects the expertise of the faculty, such as MLA, ASIS&T, SLA, Society of American Archivists, and IEEE Computer Society [PP 75]. Bowler, Corral, He, and Larsen all serve on Conference Program Committees in their field [PP 70].

(Standard III.5) The scholarly output of the LIS faculty ranges from adequate to significant. There is a culture of research and professional engagement that is expected and rewarded in the tenure and promotion process. Examples of strong publication output include

Professor He with 24 authored or co-authored articles and Professor Bowler with 11 articles in the 2011 and 2012 time period [FAC 1]. Nearly all members of the faculty serve on an editorial board and/or as a peer reviewer for granting agencies, award juries, or journals [PP 70-71].

(Standard III.6; see also Standard III.3) Faculty have advanced and terminal degrees in library and information science and other related and complementary degrees [PP 72-73 and FAC 1]. The research areas of the faculty range from traditional library interests such as academic librarianship, copyright, archives, and collection development to related or new wave interests such as strategic management, digital humanities, cyberscholarship, and interactive system design. Faculty members also bring practical experience to the classroom. Examples of previous professional work include academic library director (Corrall), archivist (Cox), public library manager (Currier), and reference librarian (Tomer) [PP 74 and Faculty interviews].

(Standard III.7) Faculty teach two courses in each regular semester unless the load has been adjusted to facilitate research, a special service project, or teaching in the third term. Full-time faculty teach the core courses and within their area of expertise [PP 75-76 and faculty interviews]. Faculty may also design and teach courses outside of the core or required courses, allowing them to share their “research interests and passions” [Faculty interviews].

Advising loads have averaged approximately 30 students per faculty member between 2006 and 2011. In 2012, the load increased to 52.44, partly because new faculty members were not given advisees in their first year [PP 77]. Faculty do not believe their advising load is burdensome. They commented that not all advising is individual or face to face [Faculty interviews]. Students are assigned to advisors based on chosen specialization or expressed interests [Student interviews]. Program administrators and student advisors complete most of the non-academic aspects of advising, recruiting, registration, etc. [Day and Lipschultz interviews]. Web-based resources are also accessible for policy and other information [Website review].

(Standard III.8) Systematic review occurs via Faculty Annual Review, Peer Review of Teaching, OMET Student Surveys, and the Promotion and Tenure process. Faculty colleagues, students, the Dean and Associate Dean, as well as the Provost are involved in these reviews [FAC 5, 6, 7, 8].

Standard IV. Students

(Standards IV.1 and IV.2) There are clearly defined published policies for admission, financial aid, and the recruitment of students found on the SIS website. Online handbooks for new graduate students and new MLIS students also provide clear information for students in these areas. Information is also available via social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

[PP 94]. Students heavily use the social media sites and are looking forward to the conversion to LinkedIn because as alumni they will still be able to maintain contact with the program [Onsite student interview].

The Program Chair, with recommendations from the faculty, makes the decisions on determination of financial support. Only full-time students are eligible for financial support. From 2006-2008, most financial aid was distributed to the MLIS students. This shifted in 2009 to PhD students, although the proportion of MLIS students receiving financial support now exceeds 30% [PP 90-91].

The majority of students are female, younger (the number who are age 20-25 now exceeds those 26-34), US citizens, and not diverse [PP 84-87]. SIS has implemented quite a few initiatives to grow the diversity. SIS has changed its recruiting practices with the addition of funding from the Provost's Office Funds for Disadvantaged Students and with very enthusiastic SIS support staff [Lipschultz and Belleau interviews]. The iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3) is also seen as a potential feeder for the MLIS program [PP 86-87] although the Institute is only for undergraduates and does not yet yield many students into the MLIS program [Faculty interview]. Onsite document verification indicated that MLIS diversity is indeed increasing. Fall 2010 showed a 5.87% diverse student body, Fall 2011 an 8.68% diverse student body, and Fall 2012 a 12.03% diverse student body. Fall 2013 MLIS diversity admits could yield a 17.65% diverse student body. The largest growth is in Hispanic students [MLIS Student and Placement Statistics available onsite]. As the staff utilize the graduate prospect (potential student) system more effectively, they feel assured they will be able to increase diverse representation in the years to come [Lipschultz and Belleau interviews].

Students feel that if SIS classes were more commingled, with opportunities to study together with students pursuing the information science and/or telecommunication degrees, diversity would improve, as well as their learning experiences [Onsite student interviews]. As part of the recent i-fest (April 3-6, 2013, <http://www.i-fest.pitt.edu/>), Assistant Professor Leanne Bowler organized a Bots and Books Design Challenge, bringing together students' interests in children's literature with more the more technical interest in robot construction, a tangible example of commingling [Bowler interview]. Students onsite indicated effective infusion of diversity throughout their classes. Conversations with two faculty members confirmed that diversity is strongly represented in the curriculum.

The enrollment of both online and onsite MLIS students in the program has gone down intentionally (characterized as "rightsizing") in order to balance the distribution of students across the SIS degree programs. This was intended to give faculty more time for research and service.

Faculty members indicate that this did indeed happen and they see this very positively, as it enhances classroom management [Onsite faculty interviews].

Recruitment plans developed by SIS are designed for each of the degree programs [STU2] and are reviewed each year to determine effectiveness. The review determines strategies for recruitment the following year. They have a well-documented and detailed recruitment plan [STU2] and two staff devoted to this area [Lipschultz and Belleau interviews].

Information on career placement and different types of library careers is provided on the SIS website and via the listserv. The website provides guidance about resources to help students understand career options and effectively prepare for job searches. A University Career Development Center, with an individual assigned solely to SIS, is available to MLIS students, but students interviewed onsite indicated that this information is not widely known, despite an explicit link on the SIS website (<http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/about/career-resources.php>). The relationship with the University Career Development Center is evolving [Lipschultz and Belleau interviews].

(Standard IV.3) Guidelines, procedures, and standards for admission and provisional admission [PP 97-98] are clearly documented online and in their handbook. An admissions committee (LIS faculty) reviews applicants, looking at backgrounds and strengths according to their defined guidelines and policies. Applicants can consult with program administrators to determine the specialization or course of study [Onsite faculty interview]. In the fall 2012, a plan was implemented to only accept new students in the fall term [PP 95-96]. Onsite students as well as faculty indicated that this will help with course sequencing and is a welcomed change.

(Standard IV.4) The role of the advisor is well documented [SIS website]. An advisor is assigned to a student upon entering the program by LIS Program Administrator Debbie Day [Day interview]. Students are generally satisfied with the response time of their advisors [ERP student survey responses and onsite student meeting] and the need to meet with them only when they have a question or concern. Some indicated that the success of their advising experiences was dependent upon the individual faculty member with whom they were working [ERP student survey responses]. Students are also able to change advisors if they feel more comfortable with a different faculty member [Onsite student interview]. Onsite conversations with faculty did indicate high advising numbers [PP 77 shows most in the range of 40-70].

(Standard IV.5) The MLIS program has a very popular and grounded Partners Program that prepares graduates for position placement beyond graduation. This is a non-credit bearing program in which a full-time on campus student will generally work ten hours per week (though some may work as much as 17-18 hours per week) with defined community partners each

semester during the student's program at Pitt [PP 104 and PRO 9; Kavalukas interview]. The focus is on professional-level work, and JoAnn Kavalukas seeks to ensure that students are provided professional work opportunities. A listing and description of each of the partner program host sites is provided on the SIS website. In recent years, with the economic decline and reduction of funds, the number of participating institutions and students has declined. The program went from a high of \$1,376,092 in scholarships awarded through the Partners Program in 2010-2011, to \$235,086 in 2012-2013 in scholarships awarded as the number of paid opportunities declined [PP 105]. This has resulted in a more competitive scholarship process [Kavalukas interview]. Forty-five students were in the Partners Program in 2012-2013, down from a high of 81 students in 2009-2010 [PP 105]. Students who are onsite do not seem to be aware of the decline in the number of Partners, and feel, for the most part, that these placements are very helpful for the experiences they afford. Virtual placements will be a new focus, with two students already participating [Kavalukas interview].

It should be noted that the host survey of the Partners Program indicated that the program needed to integrate more practical experience into the theoretical program [PRO 7]. Onsite conversations with students did recognize that this was one of the goals of the Partners Program. Student assessment of the Partners Program has not yet occurred, but starting next semester, a 500-1,000 word reflective essay will be required of them [Kavalukas interview].

The MLIS program also offers a three-credit 150-hour field experience placement providing students with opportunities to apply their learning to a practical work experience. Field experience placements are seen positively by the students [Onsite student meeting]. A partial list of field placements is on the SIS website [PP 103; http://www.ischool.pitt.edu/lis/documents/Field_Placements_2012.pdf] and a print binder of field placements is available in the MLIS Office [Onsite verification]. A practicum is required for students in the School Library Certification Program [PP 104].

There are many opportunities for students to get involved with student organizations (including student chapters of ALA, SLA, SAA, and ASIS&T) and committees. There is a twenty-member MLIS Student Advisory Group [PRO 6] that meets monthly with the Program Chair and other faculty to discuss curricular and administrative interests. Online students have not been a part of the MLIS Student Advisory Group [Onsite student meeting]. Administrators are responsive to student concerns, and as an example, students said that they influenced the design of the third floor commons space and orientation for Admitted Student Day [Onsite student meeting]. Also student requests for more hands-on technology led to the redesign of a course [PP 106]. Students did note that it is often difficult to get involved with Colloquia, resume writing

workshops, and social activities because of work restrictions and very busy schedules [ERP student survey responses and onsite student meeting]. Discussions with an online student confirmed this, with a suggestion that online forums for distance students could help with the feeling of connectedness.

The SIS Council meets monthly with three student members (one each from undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels) [SCH 2]. The Council makes recommendations to the Dean on planning and budgeting. It develops and reviews policies and guidelines and coordinates committee activity [PP 105]. Students were able to influence the design of the third floor iSchool Commons as a result of their membership on the SIS Council [Onsite faculty interview].

Students complete course evaluation surveys for the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching. Based on the survey responses, as an example, the number of electives offered to archives students was increased [PP 106].

(Standard IV.6) One source of evaluation of student achievement is alumni surveys—the most recent in 2010 [PP 107]. The survey results showed positive feelings toward the program. 435 MLIS Alumni responded to this survey. Of those, 172 rated the quality of the program as “very successful”, 158 as “successful”, 83 as “adequate”, 18 as “not adequate”, and 3 with “no response”. Some of the reasons cited for the lower ratings were lack of practical preparation, classes that were too large, and strained resources [ALU 2]. The current effort to “rightsize” the MLIS enrollment is a response to these concerns. Other data used to inform assessment of student achievement include grade review; learning outcomes assessment; and statistical reports on time-to-degree, enrollment, and retention [PP 108].

Standard V. Administration and Financial Support

(Standard V.1) The School of Information Sciences is one of 16 undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools at the University of Pittsburgh. The administrative and academic head of the School is the Dean, who reports to the Provost of the University [UNI 3]. Each Dean works most closely with an assigned Vice Provost; for SIS this is the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Juan Manfredi. SIS has autonomy in determining the intellectual content of its program (with the Program Chair providing strategic leadership and oversight) [PRO 8], the selection and promotion of faculty (secure permission to search for faculty based on request to the Provost accompanied by a rationale for each position; appointments granted by the Provost based on recommendations from the Dean; promotion and tenure managed and supervised by SIS itself with recommendations to the Provost who conducts an additional review) [FAC 8], and the

selection of students (faculty lead the review of admissions and the Program Chair determines financial support distribution).

The University of Pittsburgh provides SIS significant resources that support the MLIS program: a dedicated building, IT support and access to instructional designers, and a world-class library system [see details in Standard VI].

(Standard V.2) During Dean Larsen's tenure since 2002, there have been significant efforts to create administrative structures to foster more collaboration between LIS program faculty and others in SIS. The departmental structure has been replaced by programs, each headed by a chair; the SIS Council supports all-school governance; and cross-program teaching and collaborative research are encouraged. This creates a more interdisciplinary environment for the MLIS program [Larsen and Weiss interviews].

Faculty members serve on the University Senate and Senate committees and on the Faculty Assembly and Assembly committees. The Dean serves on the Council of Deans and other campus committees. Staff members are eligible for service on the Staff Association Council [PP 115].

Ties with other units include joint appointments [FAC 9] and enrollment of MLIS students in courses in other SIS degree programs as well as other University units, including the School of Education and the Schools of Health Sciences [PP 116].

(Standard V.3) Dean Ronald Larsen holds a title, status, salary, and authority comparable to that of peer administrators across the university and at other iSchools. It is evident from the Dean's Annual Reports [SCH 18] as well as from interviews conducted onsite [Vice Provost Manfredi, SIS faculty, SIS administrative staff] that Dean Larsen is widely regarded as a thoughtful, effective leader who has worked to strengthen SIS and the MLIS program in particular despite facing significant challenges over the period since the last accreditation review. He is a national leader in the iSchool movement [FAC 1] and is attentive to all aspects of the SIS mission "to support and advance the broader education, research, and service mission of the University by educating students, furthering knowledge, and contributing our expertise to advance humankind's progress through information." The Dean is advised by the Associate Dean, the SIS Council, MLIS program faculty, and professional staff. He is the liaison to the SIS Board of Visitors, two of whose members are also on the University's Board of Trustees [PP 117].

(Standard V.4) The School's leadership comprises the Dean, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Research, and the Director of Administration. The Dean has created a suite of staff members to provide professional services to students, faculty, and the school.

Senior staff positions include: Director of Constituent Relations; Director of Distance Education, eLearning Partnerships and Outreach; Director of External Relations; Manager of Information Technology and Networking; Manager of Student Services; Manager of Personnel and Administration [Job descriptions in SCH 19; organization chart in SCH 11]. Since 2006 this administrative team has been built up to relieve faculty of administrative tasks, permitting them to spend their time and effort on teaching, advising, program design, and research. The staff are highly competent and dedicated professionals, valued by faculty for the quality of services they provide [Staff interviews; faculty interviews].

In 2006, the SIS Council was formally created and implemented as the primary voice of the faculty, staff, and students with regard to various governance functions with SIS; its mandate is “the expression of member views and the exercise of traditional academic responsibilities concerning the maintenance of appropriate academic standards in instruction, the development of educational programs and degree requirements, and the recommendation of policies in such areas as resource allocation, faculty and staff development, student affairs, research and service programs, and the School of Information Sciences’ relations with local, regional, national, and international communities” (<http://www.sis.pitt.edu/~scouncil/index.html>) [Members in SCH 2; Bylaws in SCH 5]. This structure ensures involvement of LIS program faculty and students in school-wide governance [Interviews with Larsen, Weiss, and LIS faculty].

A 17-member Board of Visitors reports and advocates to the Provost on behalf of the school. Board of Visitors members from the library/LIS education sector include Gary Byrd, Carla Hayden, James Matarazzo, James Williams, Mary Clare Zales; others like Clifford Lynch have expertise relevant to digital libraries [PP 120]. The Dean makes effective use of this Board of Visitors, especially in exploring strategic directions [SCH 3].

The Dean, in consultation with the Associate Dean and Director of Administration, determines necessary budget actions. In recent years strategic cost-cutting has been required to handle financial decreases to compensate for decreased state funding [PP 121]. The appointment of Sandra Brandon as Director of Administration has enhanced the ability of SIS to manage financial resources effectively [Interviews with Larsen, Weiss, Brandon].

(Standard V.5) The University has faced challenges with reduction in state support, from more than 30% of the budget in the 1970s to less than 10% at the present time, due to a \$43 million reduction in the last three years. To manage these cuts, the university curtailed or froze salaries, instituted an early volunteer retirement program for long-term staff, and carefully constrained spending across the university. Cuts were distributed equitably [PP 122]. Despite cuts, new faculty and staff hires have been made through reallocation of funds.

The distribution of funds to support students has been maintained, with strong support for MLIS students in particular [PP 123; Brandon interview]. SIS plans to compensate for reduction in budget due to future cuts in the near term by growing the Information Science and Telecommunications programs rather than LIS. Careful enrollment management—with enrollments at or exceeding the projected level—allows the school to retain and possibly secure additional budgeted funds.

A Director of Constituent Relations, who reports to the University's Office of Institutional Advancement, seeks to augment available endowment funds and charitable gifts. The School secured more than \$10M in the recent capital campaign, which includes funds to support scholarships, special projects, and research [PP 124; additional financial details in FIN 1, FIN 2, FIN 3].

(Standard V.6) The salary for the Dean is determined by the Provost. Faculty salaries are set by the Dean with the review and approval of the Provost. Each position's salary is based on comparable positions throughout the university and considering peer positions at other institutions. The salary for staff is determined by the category of the position [UNI1, UNI2 provide salary comparisons]. Merit increases for faculty reflect assessment based on a well-defined Faculty Review Model [FAC 5].

(Standard V.7) SIS budgets travel funds (~\$2,000 per year) for each faculty member. Discretionary funds derived from indirect costs can support research in the form of equipment purchases, student research assistants, or travel. Faculty members are eligible for sabbatical leaves on the same basis as faculty throughout the University [PP 125]. The proportion of MLIS students receiving some form of financial support from SIS has increased over the last two years to more than 30% [PP 126].

(Standard V.8) Annually the School crafts a report to the Provost of the University outlining progress toward strategic goals stated in the previous annual report [SCH 13; SCH 18]. SIS also prepares an annual budget. These processes permit the Dean, Associate Dean, and Director of Administration to review fiscal policies, administrative policies, and financial support actions. Then, Program Chairs and program faculty review program-level financial and administrative policies [PP 127]. Existing policies are reviewed and needed revisions implemented. In the period 2008-2012, revisions were made in the SIS Council Bylaws, the Peer Review of Teaching process, and the Promotion and Tenure guidelines, based on discussions in monthly faculty meetings or SIS Council meetings.

A significant change currently underway involves the transition of the existing MLIS online program to Pitt Online. This was informed by student evaluations, assessment of changes

in the online education market, advice from the SIS Board of Visitors, recommendations from an external consulting firm, and faculty review of program design options [PRO 3; PRO 5].

Standard VI: Physical Resources and Facilities

(Standard VI.1) SIS is housed in its own eight story building. Wired and wireless high-speed network access is available throughout the building. Seven classrooms vary in size from 18 to 75 seats. For classes larger than 75 nearby auditorium spaces are used. LIS shares the building with the other SIS degree programs. LIS faculty offices, a conference room, and other administrative spaces are located on the sixth floor. Most SIS administrative and staff offices are on the fifth floor. With support from the Provost, renovations of the building are underway on the third and eighth floors to provide student/collaborative spaces for SIS students [PP 123, 129; onsite tour].

The Student Collaboration Center on the third floor (opened March 19, 2013) is configured for individual and group study and includes conference/meeting spaces and multiple purpose areas with Mediasite tables and state-of-the-art technology for presentation and communication. Observations by the ERP noted the Student Collaboration Center to already be a very popular student space. Students are very excited about this new space and are grateful to have it. Actual usage and the operations of this space will be monitored through a digital suggestion box and observations of the student monitors working at the service desk. Much of the furniture is moveable and SIS will observe how students rearrange the space. Changes may be made based on these evaluations.

The renovation of the eighth floor is underway to replace a lesser used general computing lab with a smaller more specialized lab and to create research and work space for SIS doctoral students similar to the spaces created on the third floor. Some preliminary mechanical and electrical work has been done in this space. The lab will close at the end of the semester and it is expected that the renovated space will reopen for the fall semester. Consultations with SIS faculty and students over the past two years have informed the usage and design choices for these spaces [Faculty minutes March 4, 2012].

The layout has been dictated by the design of the building. It is an old building and its basic style makes structural changes quite difficult. A new building was encouraged by the Board of Visitors in 2011 but is unlikely due to budget constraints. The Provost has indicated consideration will be given to continued enhancement of the current building. A review of Building Renovations and Planned Enhancements at SIS states: “We anticipate future proposals to the Provost addressing substantial renovations to the First Floor spaces. While the precise

details have yet to be determined by the faculty and SIS Council, the concepts under consideration involve a more welcoming entrance that clearly marks this building as the iSchool, some informal interactive spaces, a lobby with comfortable seating, and some technology enhancements” [Onsite document].

Although the improvements are much appreciated, students still expressed some concerns that the new space would not be adequate. Students also expressed a desire for longer hours of access to the building especially late evenings and Sundays (currently restricted due to the cost of providing security outside of currently scheduled open hours). They have been using Hillman Library while the renovation was underway and also because of the Information Sciences Building hours and mentioned difficulty finding space in the graduate study room in Hillman Library and in the Hillman Library in general [Student interviews]. Space is also a concern for adjunct faculty members who currently have no private space or shared office to meet with their students or hold office hours, especially for confidential conversations [Adjunct interviews].

(Standard VI.2) The new collaborative spaces on the third floor, large faculty offices, and convenient classrooms “provide a functional learning environment for students and faculty.” Technology in the SIS classroom space has been upgraded to allow faculty members to bring their own laptops to the classroom to be connected to projection and audio systems. The ease of this connection benefits both on-campus and online students by enabling greater use of digital resources.

Three research labs have been renovated since 2007 – Telecommunications Networking Lab (8th floor); Geoinformatics Lab (4th floor); and the Laboratory for Education and Research on Security Assured Information Systems (4th floor). Although not a part of the MLIS program, these and other labs devoted to usability, information retrieval and synthesis, personalized adaptive web systems, and spatial information provide opportunities for faculty collaboration with colleagues in other SIS programs and an environment “enhancing the opportunities for research, teaching, service, consultation, and communication.” Collaborations of faculty and students in other units on campus, such as the Visual Media Workshop, were also evident [PP 133; Faculty interviews].

(Standard VI.3) Students and faculty have access to a wide range of library and computing resources. The Center for Instructional Development & Distance Education (CIDDE) provides multimedia resources to aid the teaching and learning process. Working primarily with faculty, they support the creation of e-learning packages and design for online delivery of classes and provide instructional design expertise to faculty developing new courses, revising existing courses, or transitioning to the Pitt Online delivery of courses. CIDDE also assists students with

access to the Pitt Online platform. Jeff Lawson, SIS Director of Distance Education, eLearning Partnerships and Outreach, works with faculty and CIDDE to help evaluate options for course delivery [Onsite interviews].

The University Library System (ULS) provides access to over 6.3 million volumes, 5.5 million pieces of microforms, and 130,000 current serials. Students and faculty on and off campus can access PittCat+ and can receive a range of reference services by phone, e-mail, text, IM, or in-person. Susan Neuman is the ULS's designated library liaison to SIS [Neuman interview]. Due to declining circulation and the interest of the University Library to consolidate branch library services, the Information Sciences Library, formerly located on the third floor of the Information Sciences Building, was integrated into the main library collections in 2011. This move allowed for the creation of the much needed new student collaboration and study spaces on the third floor described above. Both students and full-time and adjunct faculty commented on the loss of the easily accessible physical library collection.

The ERP noted a lack of multimedia creation spaces on campus. Students, faculty, and staff confirmed this limited availability. Students in the LIS program can utilize the specialized Visual Media Workshop in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture when appropriate. "The mission of the Visual Media Workshop is to develop and encourage the creation of innovative methods for producing, disseminating, and preserving the multimedia presentation of academic work." This resource provides a learning environment for working with visual resources and is currently used by MLIS students in Independent Research Projects, Field Experience courses, and for Partners' placements opportunities [PP 137]. Further support of this type of multimedia utilization and creation facility in LIS will enhance the learning experience and expose students to resources for learning the use of multimedia, its role in today's libraries and information centers, and the resources for creating new information products in various media formats.

(Standard VI.4) Pitt provides access to an array of services to support education, research, and student life. Extensive computing resources are available to students and faculty including PittNet, access to Internet2, Eduroam, National Lambda Rail, Mobile Services, and the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center. Faculty acknowledged the high quality of the computer infrastructure on campus but noted that there are sometimes difficulties interfacing some very specialized applications [Faculty interviews; Faculty meeting minutes].

The Office of Disability Resources and Services, which supervises a University-wide initiative to create a barrier-free learning environment, provides a suite of services for students, faculty and staff. Some accessibility services are available for online students as part of their

program of study, such as the hearing impaired [PP 129]. Disability services and the services provided by CIDDE and the University Library System (noted above) are “sufficient for the level of use required and specialized to the degree needed.”

The University provides opportunities for students, including online students, to purchase/acquire software packages or licenses for specialized software at low, or no cost. Students receive an allocation of free printing using their student ID at networked printers across campus. A printer is now located in the new space on the third floor of the SIS building. Each Pitt student also receives free public transportation throughout Pittsburgh by presenting their student ID.

(Standard VI.5) Significant planning was undertaken for the renovation of the third and eighth floors in the Information Sciences Building. The faculty and staff provided their opinions to the Dean, the Associate Dean, and the Director of Administration. Three focus groups conducted by the 3/8 Space Committee sought input from students. The SIS Council provided a forum for these discussions and will continue to be consulted on incorporating these efforts into the existing facility. The Board of Visitors, while encouraging a new building to the Provost, has been instrumental in gaining campus-level support to consider continued enhancements to the existing building. The start of planning for future enhancements is noted above.

Continued development of an ongoing systematic planning and evaluation process for maintaining and improving the physical resources and facilities will insure that the entirety of the physical resources and facilities necessary to conduct both the on-campus and online program meet the needs of the students and faculty.

Summary

The MLIS program was last reviewed for continuing accreditation in spring 2006. Despite a very challenging period since then marked by the death or departure of multiple faculty, major budget cuts, and large MLIS enrollments relative to faculty size, the ERP confirmed that the MLIS faculty has embarked upon or completed a number of significant endeavors to enhance the MLIS program as highlighted in the introduction to the PP (9-11): comprehensive curriculum review, expansion and updating of specialization options, transition of the online MLIS program to a new platform, implementation and enhancement of the Partners Program and field experiences option, revision of core courses, diversity initiatives, and creation of research and educational offerings in cyberscholarship.

SIS students, faculty, and staff have a positive outlook and take pride in the MLIS program. SIS is recruiting capable and enthusiastic students who value the strong relationships

they develop with faculty and who remain connected to SIS as alumni. Students have opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research; to fill leadership roles in student chapters of professional associations, the MLIS Student Advisory Group, and SIS Council; and to engage in field experiences. They feel their coursework is relevant to their career goals.

The faculty profile reflects efforts to find and nurture strong junior faculty and to ensure strong leadership of the MLIS program with the recent hire of Sheila Corral. She will lead the faculty in further program enhancements through articulation of a new vision for the roles of librarians, review and redesign of courses and curriculum, and increasing emphasis on research by both students and faculty [Corral interview]. Faculty members contribute collaboratively to the work of SIS, the larger university, and their various professional associations. They are actively engaged in research. Dean Ronald Larsen has been a strong leader in a difficult period for SIS and has the respect of colleagues on campus, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Staff members provide a high level of service to faculty and students.

SIS has strong support from campus-level administration. Dean Larsen has a good working relationship with Vice Provost Manfredi and Provost Beeson. The continuing support of the Provost for upgrades to SIS facilities is noteworthy.

The ERP identified some challenges. As the migration to Pitt Online proceeds, there needs to be attention to effective communication with students, building community, and integrating online students into “the life of the school.” Continuing attention is needed to assessment of student learning outcomes at the program level, including the experience of students in the Partners Program. Because for the most part only a single faculty member anchors each specialization, there needs to be attention to sustainability of specializations as faculty retire, including decisions as to whether specializations should continue or new ones be introduced. The ERP recognizes that budget challenges remain for SIS and Pitt more generally. Rightsizing MLIS enrollments and decisions on faculty hiring need to continue to be attentive to needs for MLIS student advising and course offerings.