

Roadmap to the SIS Board of Visitors meeting

April 29 – 30, 2013

iSchool Student Collaboration Space (3rd floor of SIS building)

Welcome to the 2013 meeting of the School of Information Sciences (SIS) Board of Visitors (BOV). We are particularly pleased to welcome new members to the Board. We will open this year's meeting with a continental breakfast at 8:00 am on Monday in the newly-renovated 3rd floor of the SIS building. The meeting, itself, will begin with a welcome from Chair Moyé at 8:30, followed by Provost Beeson's university update and charge to the Board.

You will find a substantial amount of documentation on the SIS BOV website. Following the Provost's charge, iSchool faculty and staff will be available to field questions and provide clarification for any of this material. I will try to direct you to a few items that are particularly relevant to this meeting that I hope you will have time to read in advance. You will find among the documents provided a report from each of the program chairs, the associate dean, and the SIS Council chair. The document "Disposition of BOV 2011 Recommendations" reports on the status of the work we discussed at our last year's meeting and, more specifically, the advice and recommendations you offered. I have also included a reference piece on the website that has influenced our deliberations over the School's vision and plans. A recent set of papers from a conference "Information Professionals 2050: Educational Possibilities and Pathways" contains several interesting articles. I think you will enjoy, in particular, the first three papers in the section labeled "Educational Trends."

Following our Q&A session, I will provide a brief review of major indicators that we track, such as enrollment trends and funding, and discuss the School's 5-year strategic plan. Jeff Lawson joined our staff last fall as the Director of Distance Ed, eLearning Partnerships and Outreach. He will update the Board on the status and directions for our online programs.

We also welcomed five new faculty members to the School last fall, and four of them will be available to introduce themselves and their work. Professor Sheila Corral joined the faculty as chair of the LIS program, moving from the University of Sheffield, where she had directed the Information School. She is leading the reaccreditation process for the MLIS program and will update you on progress. Professor Steve Griffin came to SIS as the Mellon Cyberscholar, following a long and distinguished career at the National Science Foundation. Dr. Brian Beaton joined us from the University of Toronto, where he completed his Ph.D., and Elizabeth Mahoney moved from her position as head of the Information Sciences branch library to become a SIS lecturer. Unable to attend the meeting is Dr. Rosta Farzan, who joined the IS faculty after completing two years as a post-doctoral researcher at Carnegie Mellon University.

We will break for lunch, during which Prof. Hassan Karimi will present some of his latest GIS work, and then reconvene at 1:30 pm to engage the primary topics of the meeting:

- Assessments and benchmarking

- Facilities upgrades
- Practical experience for students
- The boom in enrollment of international students

In order to facilitate these discussions, among the documents you will find on the SIS BOV website are samples of the assessments we routinely conduct for our own use, for Pitt, and for professional associations. Since we are currently in the throes of re-accreditation of the MLIS program, a document enumerating the standards against which MLIS programs are accredited is available on the website, as is our program presentation and the draft report of the External Review Panel that visited us in March. This material is quite extensive, so I offer it with the expectation that you will not read it, but may benefit from an understanding of the standards and the type of material we present.

Given the attention our facilities attracted at last year's meeting, I feel that I owe you a review of where those discussions have gone, and how our building is changing. The 3rd floor is now fully renovated and available to students for a variety of activities, from collaboration on projects and video conferencing to formal presentations and quiet study. You will experience the space directly, as it is the venue for our Monday sessions. We are upgrading the HVAC and power on the 8th floor with the intention of dedicating that space primarily to our Ph.D. students' research. The work on the 3rd and 8th floors is being funded out of our modest capital budget, with some help from the Provost. The Provost has indicated her interest in entertaining a proposal to upgrade other areas of the building, and so we are considering alterations to the 1st floor that would enhance the entry to the School, provide greater street appeal, and brand it more clearly as an information school.

Associate Dean Martin Weiss has examined 7 years of enrollment data to understand trends in international student enrollment. His presentation is available on the web site, and includes some discussion points that are fueling considerations for the future.

By now, most of you are familiar with our landmark iSchool Inclusion Institute (i3) diversity program that is generously supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. While I do not anticipate an extensive discussion of diversity issues, I am providing a report detailing progress on this key initiative. We are completing the third year and are currently recruiting our third cohort of students. You will find a current annual report documenting the fine work that has been going on in i3 under the leadership of Dr. Kip Currier and Mike Depew. As we approach the end of the first round of funding, we have submitted a grant proposal to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to continue support to the program for an additional three years.

We expect to finish about 5:00 and give you 30 minutes to amble over to the University Club for a reception from 5:30 – 6:30, where a number of our Ph.D. students will have posters to describe their research. Dinner is scheduled for 6:30.

Tuesday, we will reconvene over breakfast at 8:00 am and begin our closed session at 8:30. The Provost will join the meeting at 1:00 pm for a debriefing. I anticipate her being with the Board for an hour, after which you will have an additional hour to finalize your findings and recommendations.

The meeting is scheduled to adjourn at 3:00 pm.

Chair Moyé and I anticipate drafting the report immediately following the meeting, while memories are current and recommendations most clear.

I look forward to an interesting, creative, and productive meeting.

Ron