

BIENNIAL NARRATIVE REPORT, 2009—2011**School of Library and Information Studies****Faculty of Education****University of Alberta****December, 2011****Introduction:**

The faculty and staff of the University of Alberta, School of Library and Information Studies (hereinafter the School) are pleased to submit this *'Biennial Narrative Report'* for the period 2009—2011. As per instruction, the 'Report' is sequenced according to the *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies*, adopted by the Council of the American Library Association, January 15, 2008. Individual components of the Report are linked to the specific and deemed most appropriate Sections and sub-sections of those *Standards*. Similarly responses to the COA's specific outstanding questions, as referenced in Vicki L. Gregory to Ann Curry (April 18, 2010), have been addressed in the 'Report' and may be found within the appropriate Section relating to the particular *Standard* in question.

The University of Alberta, as articulated in *Dare to Discover: A Vision for a Great University* (<http://www.president.ualberta.ca/en/DaretoDiscover.aspx>), aspires to be unambiguously, unequivocally, and immediately recognized as a great university among a handful of peer, publicly funded, worldwide institutions. The University's "blueprint for greatness" is its academic plan: *Dare to Deliver 2011-2015: The Academic Plan for the University of Alberta* (<http://www.provost.ualberta.ca/>), which builds on four cornerstones of substance.

The School embraces, without hesitation, the *Vision* and the *Plan*, and most particular finds extremely comfortable place among the **four cornerstones**:

- ✚ **talented people** who are invigorated by. . .
- ✚ **learning and discovery** and a desire to share their enterprise within the context of an expansive sense of citizenship drawing generously on their talents and enterprise to . . .
- ✚ **connect communities**, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, but recognizing that to be successful they must be . . .
- ✚ **transforming organizations**—both within, that is, being an exemplar of an organization constantly evolving, continuously self-reinforcing, and at

a personal level supportive one of another—and without, by providing leadership to those engaged in societal change by way of understanding the integrative and powerful relationships of people, technologies, information, and the human record.

In addition, the School draws strength from the professional mandate of its host, the Faculty of Education, and recognizes the need to underpin its curriculum with unassailable values, while at the same time equipping students with ever increasing competencies for the field.

The School begins and ends with talented students. Our teaching is exemplary, and our talented instructors are constantly striving to innovate and find new approaches to curricular challenges. Inherent in the very essence of the discipline of library and information studies is the intention to connect people with their communities through the exploitation of library and information services, and to similarly connect those communities one with another—locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Perhaps most importantly, as a professional community we do transform, individually and collectively, the institutions, communities and even nations of which we serve or are a part.

I: Mission, Goals and Objectives:

(Applicable: Standards Section I) Within the context of the University’s vision and academic plan, the School sees the process of developing its mission, goals and objectives as evolutionary and not episodic. It renewed a process reported in the previous biennial report, which will be ongoing, to gauge continuously the environment in which the School performs. Within this context the School reviewed and restated its vision, mission, goals, and strategic directions. With regard to our processes, the Committee on Accreditation, by way of correspondence from Vicki L. Gregory to Ann Curry (April 18, 2010) queried “the nature of student participation in the revision of the School’s Mission, Goals and Objectives”. Students enjoy representation on several of the committees within the School that deal with such issues and they sit on the School’s Council a governing body with a wide array of stakeholders, which informs and ultimately approves the resulting statement. In addition, in this review cycle the draft product of the process was given to twenty-one (21) students in LIS 546 (Marketing Library and Information Services) for their review and comment. At the time, the class was evaluating a number of similar expressions from libraries and information organizations. Their critique and input was most helpful.

The final product of this activity can be found at: <http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/AboutSLIS/SLISMissionStatement.aspx>.

(Applicable: **Standards Section I.1**) Renewing the School's vision, mission, goals and strategic directions demanded, in part, connecting also with various communities who are the beneficiaries of our graduates. In the first instance, we partnered with the Population Research Laboratory to survey residents of the Province of Alberta. (Each year since 1966 the PRL has conducted a public opinion survey of Albertans for Albertans.) This annual and renowned survey serves the research needs of both university researchers and external organizations. The survey traditionally “. . . explores public opinion on a wide range of public policy concerns”, whither by general design or under special contract. In the **2011 Alberta Survey** (See <http://www.prl.ualberta.ca/en/AlbertaSurvey.aspx>) the School of Library and Information Studies and the Alberta Public Library Service Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs co-sponsored and contracted survey questions about Albertans' perceptions of public libraries and public library services. This unique public opinion survey garnered responses from residents living in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary and from residents living in rural Alberta. The survey was undertaken by SLIS to inform future program development goals, such as an assessment of professional competencies available, and competencies required (perhaps currently lacking) with a focus on rural and regional system's librarianship.

II: Curriculum:

(Applicable: **Standards Section II.7**) The '2008-2009 Biennial Narrative Report' informed as to the process and changes made to the School's curriculum following an extensive review beginning in 2008 through 2009, led by Dr. Ali Shiri but involving the entire School faculty cohort (pp. 2-4). These changes were taken to the School Council and approved at meetings on December 14, 2009 and April 16, 2010 respectively. The School's 'Curriculum Committee', however, continues to review and monitor the curriculum in order to ensure the spirit and intent of the *Standards*, seeking always to improve, or to innovate. The 'Curriculum Committee', with due process of consultation within (students and faculty) and outside the School (external stakeholders), made additional recommendations for changes to Faculty Council, which were in turn approved by the School Council on December 1, 2011. These included:

- ✚ dividing LIS 545 into two (2) elective courses—a course in the 'Management of Human Resources', and a course in the 'Management of Financial Resources'. As per the School's protocol, LIS 545 would become the former, and an LIS 598 descriptor assigned to the latter. These two courses, taken together with LIS 504, 531, 546, and 587 provide a solid management/administrative stream within the School's curriculum array.
- ✚ restoring LIS 503—'Information Services'—to its previous 'Required' status. As a part of the 2009 curricular changes, LIS 503 had been designated an 'Elective'. This was

intended at the time to introduce more flexibility into the curriculum. However, as other public service related reference courses rely upon the baseline core competencies of LIS 503, and as most students elect to take the course in order to take advanced courses with an LIS 503 pre-requisite, and as a significant number of MLIS programs in North America include a similar course within their required array, and most importantly, as students lobbied to have it returned to the core, the prudent course was to reverse the previous change.

- ✚ Introducing a new LIS 600 'Capping Exercise' for non-thesis students—an e-portfolio representing examples of the student's course work, leadership and innovation potential, communication skills, and involvement in professional life. It is intended to represent a distillation of important learning outcomes of the MLIS program and to provide students with representation of their work for employment purposes.

(Applicable: *Standards Section II.7*) The '2008—2009 Biennial Narrative Report' similarly referenced the introduction of "1-credit weekend courses, and reported that ". . . These courses cover new and emerging topics that may find a permanent home within the curriculum in the future, while in the short term allowing the School flexibility to fill gaps in the curriculum. The courses double as for-credit courses for SLIS students and professional development workshop courses for practicing information professionals" (p. 4). In correspondence Vicki L. Gregory to Ann Curry (April 18, 2010), it was requested that in the 2009-2011 biennial narrative report the School explain ". . . how the 1-credit weekend course/workshop (BNR, p. 4) aligns with the academic component of the graduate program [*Standard II*].

In response to this query, it is appropriate to reinforce that the courses have been both popular amongst students as well as the practicing community. Since the first course was offered, May 8-10, 2009, there have been twenty (20) such courses delivered to this date. In terms of academic integrity the courses have been true to the intended purpose; that is, providing the opportunity for engaging students in a sequence of current topics that, in any given period of time, are relevant to their library and information studies. They have been vetted through School curricular channels, with instructors appropriately screened and post-delivery assessment undertaken by way of the University's 'Universal Student Rating of Instruction' (USRI) protocol, as is the case with ALL University courses. In terms of alignment with *Standard II* of the '*Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies*' the following in particular are applicable:

- ✚ II.1—providing "a variety of educational experiences, for the study of theory, principles, practice, and values necessary for the provision of service in libraries and information agencies and in other contexts".

- ✚ II.3.1—“fosters development of library and information professionals who will assume an assertive role in providing services”.
- ✚ II.3.4—“responds to the needs of a rapidly changing technological and global society”.
- ✚ II.3.7—“promotes commitment to continuous professional growth”.
- ✚ II.4—providing “opportunity for students to construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met . . .”.

As noted above, the courses also provide an opportunity for those in practice to benefit similarly from some in-depth perspective on these same topics. This would be in the spirit of Standard I.2.10; that is, program objectives reflect “the needs of the constituencies that a program seeks to serve.” And perhaps most importantly, a side-benefit (even an unintended consequence) has been the dynamic interactions that take place with both students and those in professional practice resident in the same course. Learning outcome—priceless!

(Applicable: *Standards Section II.7*) In the School’s concerted effort to reconnect with, and engage its regional community of practice in a discussion of professional development aspirations, and to ensure that the School’s current and ongoing offerings are relevant to library and information workers, the School surveyed professionals in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia about their continuing education activities and needs. We asked questions about what topics might be of interest, what dates/times/locations fit best within their schedules, and what format would be most conducive to learning and most convenient within their work/life continuum. Data is currently being analyzed and will soon be publicly available. An immediate and most positive by-product of this activity was the realization that the School needed to be more visible and active at all of the region’s numerous provincial conferences, regional systems’ annual development workshops, etc. A representative of the School is now attending (individual appropriate to the program) as many of these events as can be identified.

(Applicable: *Standards Section II.5 and 7*) The School is preparing a ‘Program Approval Template B’ for consideration by the University for a proposed online MLIS degree program. A ‘Template B’ is the institutional and provincial form utilized for program vetting and approval. The proposed program will build upon the existing and well regarded in-person program. Students will meet the same admission, program, credit, and course requirements as current students. Two streams of focus are imagined (tentative): one in digital curation and one in rural, small and medium sized community public and regional librarianship. The development of the program and approval path is anticipated to take a year.

III: Faculty:

(Applicable: *Standards Section III.1*) The School welcomed Tami Oliphant Assistant Professor, on a term appointment and with an earned doctorate from the University of Western Ontario. Dr. Oliphant has previously taught undergraduate and graduate courses at the University of Western Ontario. She will be teaching 'Publishing', and 'Research Methods'. Her doctoral research focused on how people use information and discursive strategies to justify, argue, or explain why they did or did not use complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to treat depression. Her current research interests include information behaviour, publishing and media, research methods, and user services. In addition to her instructional responsibilities and research, Dr. Oliphant will be involved in a number of SLIS strategic initiatives, such as the online MLIS initiative, the continuing professional education initiative, and also taking responsibility for SLIS marketing and communications functions.

(Applicable: *Standards Section III.1, 3, 4*) With opportunity to renew its faculty cohort, the School has posted two (2) additional full-time tenure track positions. The date of the appointments, at the Assistant Professor level, will be July 1, 2012. In brief, we are seeking candidates who are committed to teaching in a student- and community-centred environment, who are excited about research and its applications, and who share our passion for libraries, other information centres, and the related professions as they are practiced in large urban and smaller rural communities. Our recruitment brochure can be found at: <http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/SchoolOfLibraryAndInformationStudiesNews/2011/December/TwoFullTimePositionsatSLIS.aspx>.

(Applicable: *Standards Section III.1*) The '*Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library & Information Studies*' correctly acknowledges that "part-time faculty enrich the quality and diversity of a program" (p. 8). This is universally true, but the impact felt on smaller schools is more pronounced. It is particularly pronounced when the individual is a renowned library educator and leader. In the 2010-11 academic year the School welcomed as a 'Distinguished Visiting Scholar' such an individual—Dr. Brooke E. Sheldon. Dr. Sheldon was Director of the School of Information Resources and Library Science at the University of Arizona; she was Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at Austin; and, Dean at Texas Woman's University. A Canadian by birth, she received her Bachelor's Degree from Acadia University in Nova Scotia, her Masters in Library Science from Simmons College, and her PhD in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh. Acadia also awarded her an honorary Doctor of Civil Laws. She is also one of the program faculty of the Canadian 'Northern Exposure to Leadership Institute'. During her tenure in the School she taught 'Foundations of Library and Information Studies', but even more importantly she mentored the entire School, faculty, staff and students alike. Having her in the School was truly an enriching experience.

(Applicable: *Standards Section III.1*) At the University of Alberta ‘Adjunct Academic Staff’ can be appointed for the purpose of enabling a unit “to benefit from the contributions of scholars, researchers and practitioners who are not otherwise affiliated with the University, and to recognize and encourage interaction between the University and persons in business, government, education and the arts.” They are distinguished individuals in their field and bring honor to the institution. (See: <http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/Policies/AdjunctStaff.aspx>)

‘Adjunct Academic Staff’ are not typically remunerated. On the other hand, a ‘Sessional Instructor’ is remunerated for teaching one or more University courses. An Adjunct faculty member can also be a ‘Sessional Instructor’ but does not have to be so. During this reporting period we appointed two (2) new and additional Adjunct Professors: Mary-Jo Romaniuk, who will also be teaching LIS 546 (‘Marketing Library and Information Services’ and ‘Management of Financial Resources’); and, Dr. Margaret (Marmie) Hess who will lend support and provide advice and counsel to the School in various ways.

(See: <http://www.slis.ualberta.ca/PeopleGroups/AdjunctProfessors.aspx>)

(Applicable: *Standards Sections III.2 and 5*) The University of Alberta, including the Faculty of Education and, in particular the School of Library and Information Studies has offered in past, offers today, and will undoubtedly continue to offer a nurturing environment for teaching, research, and scholarship in general. That environment yields positive results, particularly within a Canadian context. Faculty reports (see Attachments 1 and 2) demonstrate individual’s research/publication productivity year over year; and, rigorous teaching evaluations coupled with Faculty level and University level support systems foster excellence in teaching. Frequently these individual accomplishments yield peer or institutional recognition. Some examples over the biennial reporting period are:

- ✚ 2009-2010. Professor Margaret Mackey was awarded a University of Alberta Killam Professorship. This award is made to outstanding academics based on recognition of an aggregate of scholarly activities such as teaching, research, publications, presented papers, supervision of graduate students, and courses taught. Professor Mackey was also awarded an Honorary Fellowship at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- ✚ 2010-2011. Professor Lisa Given was awarded a Martha Piper Research Prize. This prize is given in recognition of University of Alberta faculty members who are at the early stage of their careers and who enjoy a reputation for original research.
- ✚ 2011. Sessional Instructor Shelagh Genuis won the ProQuest Doctoral Dissertation Award. This award recognizes outstanding recent doctoral candidates whose research contributes significantly to an understanding of some aspect of information science.

Instructor Genius was also awarded the Best Information Behaviour Poster Award at the American Society of Information Science & Technology annual meeting.

- ✚ 2011-. Professor Toni Samek, building upon her previous winning of the Faculty of Education 2009 Graduate Teaching Award, was nominated to put an application forward as one of the University of Alberta's applicants to the prestigious '3M National Teaching Fellows' awards. To be clear, Professor Samek has not won such an award—yet—but, it is a significant honor in its own right to be one of the University's nominees.

IV: Students:

(Applicable: *Standards Section IV.1*) The School is blessed with truly remarkable students. And, while on the face of it there is nothing new in this assertion, it is relevant to rehearse the evidence of the statement. For example, in the period encompassed by this biennial narrative, the School admitted 143 students to the MLIS program, with a total of 195 completed degrees from sixty-three (63) distinct institutions. The average entering GPA is 3.51 (on a 4 point system). Students are multi-national, and the program has attracted three (3) students of declared aboriginal descent. Despite the apparent successes of the ongoing approaches to recruitment, the School forcefully believes in continuous improvement. To this end it has recently begun an evaluation of its recruitment strategies, including establishing a distinct visual identity for its print recruitment literature. Other elements of the strategy are under discussion, but the intent is to enhance quality even further, and increase numbers as appropriate and responsibly aligned with acceptable capacity as represented by tenured or tenure-track faculty resources.

(Applicable: *Standards Section IV.5*) The School certainly “provides an environment that fosters student participation in the definition and determination of the total learning experience”. However, that “total learning experience” goes well beyond the classrooms, laboratories, study halls and lounges of the School. It also must incorporate, for example, the regional community of practice. The School is most pleased to report that effective November, 2011 the Library Association of Alberta (<http://www.laa.ca>), one of the largest and most active associations in Canada, will offer every student a complimentary personal membership in the Association for two years, which includes: all the benefits of a full membership, including participation in continuing education programs, and eligibility for Association grants. This provides tremendous opportunity for interested students to enhance their learning experience, to network with regional professional colleagues, to establish mentoring relationships, and to meet and interact with institutional library and information service center leadership.

V: Administration and Financial Support:

(Applicable: **Standards Section V.3**) In September, 2010 the School welcomed new Director and Executive Professor Ernie Ingles. Ernie has significant executive experience serving the University of Alberta in a variety of capacities, most recently as Vice-Provost with administrative oversight for the Library System, the Department of Museums and Collections, Archives, Printing Services, the University of Alberta Press, and the University Bookstore. He has been an active player within the library and information technology communities, having served over one hundred professional associations and community organizations in senior executive capacities. He has published frequently including seminal reference tools such as:

- ✚ **Canada: World Bibliographical Series (Volume 62)**. (Oxford: Clio Press, 1990, pp. 393).
- ✚ **Bibliography of Canadian Bibliographies/Bibliographie des bibliographies canadiennes**. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994, pp. 1178).
- ✚ **Peel's Bibliography of the Canadian Prairies to 1953**. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003, pp. 900) (with Merrill Distad).

Through his '8R Research Group', he has published The **Future of Human Resources in Canadian Libraries** and **Training Gaps Analysis: Librarians and Library Technicians**

He is passionate about the "socialization of students into the field" (see *Standards V.3*) and to that end for twenty (20) years has delivered the 'Northern Exposure to Leadership Institute', a program devoted to motivating recently graduated librarians to take on leadership roles.

He has been the recipient of numerous awards (but not limited to) the **Ruth Cameron Medal for Librarianship**, the **Marie Tremaine Medal for Bibliography**, the Canadian Association of College and University Libraries' **Award for Outstanding Librarian**, the **Outstanding Service to Librarianship Award** from the Canadian Library Association, the Canadian Association of Research Libraries' **Award for Distinguished Service to Research Librarianship**, the **Outstanding Alumni** awards from the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta (honorary), and the Canadian Business and the Royal Bank **Innovator of the Year Award**. In 2001 he was elected **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada**; in 2011 he was acknowledged by Red Crow College for his contribution to the First Nations of Canada with an **Honorary Degree, Blackfoot Eminent Scholar PhD**.

(Applicable: **Standards Section V.4**) The School as also renewed two of its three administrative team, now encompassing Amandeep Power, Lauren Romaniuk and Sophia Sherman.

(Applicable: **Standards Section V.5 and 7**) The *Standards for Accreditation* . . . state that "the parent institution provides continuing financial support sufficient to develop and maintain library and information studies education in accordance with the general principles set forth in

these Standards” (p. 11). The University of Alberta does provide that financial support. However, any academic enterprise can use more resources, particularly resources to enhance the learning experience for students (whether in the classroom or by way of scholarships). Often those resources can be obtained from alumni and other friends. The School has embarked on a program within the context of a University-wide renewed focus to identify and interact with its alumni beyond the normal give and take which exemplifies the positive, close and life-long relationship enjoyed by the School and its graduates. Over the past year a database of approximately 1,600 individuals has been created and the information verified (personal and professional) as best as possible within the bounds of appropriate and best development practice. The first phase is to connect to these alumni in a variety of ways—to ‘friend raise’ in order to make them aware of their School, its progress, and its needs. For the foreseeable future, in each quarter, a different form of communiqué will be utilized. The School is currently negotiating the services of a fund development officer to be shared with another University unit as the first stage in the creation of an on-going fund development strategy.

VI: Physical Resources and Facilities:

(Applicable: *Standards Section VI.1*) In correspondence Vicki L. Gregory to Ann Curry (April 18, 2010) it was requested that in the 2009-2011 biennial narrative report the School provide “. . . an update on the status of the computer lab and the outcome of the Faculty-wide Technology Audit held in January 2010”. The School is pleased to report that during this past summer the ‘Computer Lab (RS 1-15)’ has been completely upgraded with new Apple IMAC computers with 21.5 inch LED widescreens; in addition, the technology in all of the classrooms has been replaced. Both of these initiatives were the result of recommendations in the review audit. Perhaps more importantly, the School is fashioning a better relationship with the Faculty of Education Technology Services—the service provider on campus for the School.

Afterword:

The period embraced by this ‘Report’ has seen new leadership; it has embarked upon a review of its mission, goals and objectives insuring harmony with the intentions of its host institution and transparency with the communities it serves; it is evolving its curriculum as is appropriate; it is increasing and renewing its faculty cohort; it intends continuing to attract outstanding students; it has revisited its administrative structures and renewed its office support; it has refreshed and refashioned its visual identity; it has replaced much of its technology infrastructure; and finally, it has actively reconnected with its alumni. This is an exciting time.

Thank you to the Committee on Accreditation for the opportunity to submit this ‘*Biennial Narrative Report—2009-2011*’.

Attachment 1

Faculty Scholarly Activity

2006/07—2010/11

| Library & Information Studies | Publication type | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Book Chapter | 5 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| | Book | 4 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| | Edited Book | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | Book Review | 10 | 5 | 14 | 5 | 9 |
| | CD Review | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Encyclopedia entry | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| | Database | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Non-print | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Proceedings | 7 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 5 |
| | Proceedings Editor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Refereed Article | 12 | 14 | 10 | 15 | 11 |
| | Refereed Abstract | 2 | 2 | 18 | 13 | 3 |
| | Reprint | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Un-refereed Article | 11 | 16 | 11 | 7 | 9 |
| | Exhibition | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Translation | 0 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Software | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Attachment 2

Faculty Grants and Awards

2006/07—2010/11

| | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total | \$223,128.52 | \$272,368.82 | \$493,902.21 | \$625,941.22 | \$967,586.03 |
| Tri Council Funding (Principal Investigator, Co- Investigator, Project/Holder & Participant | \$184,068.89 | \$241,049.72 | \$369,400.65 | \$289,529.81 | \$270,563.11 |
| University Funding | \$27,059.63 | \$31,319.10 | \$24,501.56 | \$136,411.41 | \$37,022.92 |
| Other Funding (Foundations, Government, Industry, Etc.) | \$12,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$560,000.00 (\$2.8 million external grant shared by numerous collaborators 2010- 2015) |