Appendix 5.2G

7.4. University Priorities Committee Report

Southern Miss Academic Program Prioritization

School of Library & Information Science
College of Education and Psychology

(A) Consistency with University Mission, Vision, Values, and Priorities (10%)

Courses in library science were first offered at The University of Southern Mississippi in 1926. Initially an undergraduate program preparing school librarians, Library Science was a department in the College of Education and Psychology from 1951 to 1976. In 2003, the School of Library and Information Science rejoined the College of Education and Psychology.

The first master's degree in library science (M.S.) was awarded in 1965. In 1976, the School of Library Service was established as an autonomous professional school, and the university conferred the first Master of Library Science (M.L.S.) degree in 1977. The library science graduate program was accredited by the American Library Association in 1980. With university-wide reorganization in 1988, the school was renamed the School of Library Science and became part of the College of Liberal Arts, an administrative placement that enabled the library school to strengthen ties with several disciplines. In 1993, it was again renamed and became the School of Library and Information Science. The degree awarded became the master of library and information science (M.L.I.S.). In July 2003, the School of Library and Information Science rejoined the College of Education and Psychology as part of the university-wide reorganization.

SLIS is the only Mississippi institution to offer library and information science degrees and has been assigned leadership status in library and information science by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. The University of Southern Mississippi's School of Library and Information Science provides a comprehensive, diversified program of quality education for professional librarians, archivists, and information specialists. It performs a vital role in the development and expansion of library services at all levels and in the continuing education of practicing information specialists throughout the state and the region.

SLIS was fully re-accredited by ALA in 2005 for the maximum number of seven years. SLIS is scheduled for re-accreditation in 2012 and is in process of regular evaluation and revision of the curriculum and course content in response to changing needs of the field. Most recent changes include revising the undergraduate degree requirements, revising LIS 201: Introduction to Information Literacy to fulfill the requirements of a GEC course, and developing a Certificate in Archives and Special Collections.
SLIS has a tradition of student diversity but the number of African-American students has declined in recent years. To address this problem, SLIS applied for and was awarded an IMLS grant of $429,388 to fund minority recruitment and support.

The vision of SLIS is congruent to that of the university in engaging and empowering individuals to transform lives and communities. Our students and alumnae contribute to the information literacy of the state, nation, and region. While the number of adults with low skill levels rose in most states, in Mississippi the percentage of adults with low skills dropped 9 percentage points, from 25% to 16%. Increasing information literacy in children and adults is an emphasis of public librarians and school librarians. Public libraries are regarded as ideally suited to promoting the development of information literacy and encouraging lifelong learning in their communities and schools with certified professional librarians have been linked to higher student achievement regardless of socio-economic or educational levels (U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, 2008).

SLIS attracts many students through its Web site (http://www.usm.edu/slis/), currently in the process of revision and update, by national and international programs such as the Children’s Book Festival and the British Studies Program LIS course, and by word-of-mouth from graduates. SLIS, (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&rref=mf&gid=19469532533), Southern Miss LISSA (LISA Student Association), and faculty Facebook pages have facilitated networking with many SLIS alums, students, and prospective students.

(B) External and Internal Demand (15%)
As one of only 14 fully online MLIS programs, SLIS attracts students from across the state and the nation. Although 40% to 50% of our graduate students are out-of-state, as the only accredited LIS program in the state, our priority is to educate professional librarians in Mississippi. According to Miss. Library Commission Quick Facts, in 2007: (http://www.mlc.lib.ms.us/pdf/quickfactsfy2007.pdf):

- There are 122 FTE employees with master’s degrees in Library Science (MLS) in Mississippi public libraries.
- Mississippi ranks 50th in the nation in the number of MLS librarians per capita.


- A master’s degree in library science is the main qualification for most librarian positions
- Librarians held more than 150,000 positions in 2006, most in school and academic libraries, but more than one-fourth in public libraries. The remainder worked in special libraries or as information professionals for companies and other organizations.
- Despite slower-than-average projected employment growth, job opportunities are still expected to be favorable because a large number of librarians are expected to retire in the coming decade.

There is a growing need for archivists, particularly government archivists. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, a much faster-than-average employment growth for archivists is projected in 2010-2011. Just since 2007, the Leon Levy Foundation has awarded nearly two dozen institutions more than $10.3 million to identify, preserve and digitize their archival collections and to make them available online to scholars and to the public. SLIS alumnae work as archivists in institutions such as Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Mississippi Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby, Mississippi College Special Collections, Southern Miss McCain Special Collections, Tulane University Libraries, Georgia Archives, Tennessee State Library & Archives, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Virginia Historical Society, Wesleyan College in Macon, and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

The need for professional school librarians is indicated by recent studies that determined there is a measurable difference in students’ achievement where school libraries are staffed by certified library media specialists. When a school library is adequately staffed, resourced, and funded, it can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socio-economic or educational levels of the community (U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, 2008).

LIS 201: Introduction to Information Literacy is a GEC course and is used by the College of Arts and Letters as a computer-competency requirement for their students.

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SLIS has collaborated with CoAL so that LIS 201 meets both the requirements of GEC and the needs of CoAL students.

(C) Quality (25%)

All SLIS faculty have doctoral degrees from accredited university programs such as those at the University of Alabama, University of Missouri, University of North Texas, and University of Tennessee. Professor Emeritus Dr. Rodriguez-Buckingham has masters’ degrees from the University of Washington and from Harvard University, in addition to a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He is a distinguished, well-known scholar on the history of books and publishing and was honored at the Library of Congress in November 2007 for his contributions to a scholarly work on the history of publishing. He is in the process of donating his valuable lifetime collection of rare, historical books and manuscripts to Cook Library and the Rodriguez-Buckingham Collection will be a valuable resource for SLIS, the university, and future scholars.

- In addition to Professor Emeritus Rodriguez-Buckingham, a retired full professor, current SLIS faculty includes three associate professors and five assistant professors; each of four tenured faculty and one untenured faculty have published at least one scholarly book and SLIS faculty have published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals and in juried conference proceedings.

Four SLIS faculty have been awarded the Southern Miss Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Fellowship, “Finding a Voice: Improving Oral and Written Competencies” (http://www.usm.edu/qep/). Three have completed the seminar (Haynes, Welsh, Bossaller) and one (Klingler) is scheduled for QEP in spring 2010. Welsh was one of 12

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faculty chosen for the 2007-2008 Learning Enhancement Center Podcasting Pilot Project, and was awarded the 2007 Excellence in Teaching Award from the College of Education and Psychology. In spring 2008, Bossaller was awarded the Southern Miss Service Learning Faculty Fellowship.

In June 2009, the Institute of Museum & Library Services awarded a $429,388 grant (matching amount: $82,354) to fund, "The Minority Scholarship Initiative at the University of Southern Mississippi's School of Library and Information Science." Southern Miss SLIS (Yu, principle investigator) and University Libraries will partner with the Mississippi Library Association and the Mississippi Library Commission to increase the number of underrepresented minority librarians in the state. Through targeted recruiting of minority undergraduates in Mississippi's universities and colleges, the project will award IMLS-funded scholarships to support 10 students earning a master's degree in librarianship. Scholarship recipients will gain experience and establish professional and interpersonal bonds with other librarians through mentoring and work assignments in the partnering organizations. Project staff will also conduct surveys and gather other data from these students to help improve minority recruitment and retention efforts in both libraries and library and information science education programs.

Catharine Bomhold, Ph.D., is the Director of the Fay B. Kaigler Children’s Book Festival (http://www.usm.edu/bookfest/), a regional and national annual event that for 43 years has attracted hundreds of attendees from 22 states to attend workshops and lectures from nationally-recognized authors and illustrators. The festival is named for Miss Fay B. Kaigler, a retired elementary school teacher and native Mississippian, who generously funded the Kaigler-Lamont Award to be given for distinguished service to children by a librarian or teacher. The Children’s Book Festival is co-sponsored by SLIS, the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation, and the de Grummond Children’s Literature Collection (http://www.lib.usm.edu/~degrum/), an internationally recognized collection of original materials donated by more than 1,200 authors and illustrators (de Grummond is listed in the British Library’s list of Children’s Literature Links, http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpsubject/literature/chillit/childlinks/childlinks.html).

Teresa Welsh, Ph.D., has served for 3 years as an Assistant Director of the Katrina Research Center. The KRC (http://www.usm.edu/katrina/), a research center and a repository of books, multimedia materials, archival materials, art, and artifacts related to Hurricane Katrina as well as other natural disasters. The KRC collection documents the historical record for educators, students, researchers, and the general public and is a valuable resource for those wanting to study the effects of and recovery from Hurricane Katrina.

- The mission of the KRC relates to the Southern Miss mission, vision, and strategic plan in that it promotes the generation, dissemination, application, and preservation of knowledge and has an ongoing and increasing role in community outreach activities; and the Center is becoming known nationally and internationally through conference presentations, publications, and contacts with scholars and researchers in other institutions such as the recent donation of digital copies of Columbia Universities’ Life Stories Project.
The KRC Collection is steadily growing due to some collection development awards ($1500 award from Alibris, $800 set of archival reference books from IMLS) and the generous donations of authors, publishers, and artists. To date, the collection of more than 350 books has a list value of more than $8,500 and the collection of more than 70 DVDs has a value of more than $750 (list values do not include the added value of signed books by authors such as President Bill Clinton, Dr. Douglas Brinkley, and Anderson Cooper or the growing collection of Katrina-related art and artifacts).

Some examples of Katrina-related research include:

- Historical research project funded by a History Channel Save our History Grant of $10,000: KRC historian supervised local eighth-grade students in an architectural survey of an historic Biloxi neighborhood. A booklet, As Time Keeps Turning: Biloxi Houses, was produced and distributed to students with some copies archived in the KRC collection by Nuwer (2008)\(^9\)


- Study of post-catastrophic disaster needs by LIS graduate students affected by Katrina by Welsh and Higgins (2008)\(^11\)

- Study of public libraries post-Katrina by Welsh and Higgins (2009)\(^12\)

- Case study of the creation and development of the KRC by Welsh (2010).\(^13\)

Some distinguished SLIS alums have earned a Ph.D. in addition to their M.L.I.S. degree:

- Joan Bessman-Taylor, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Library and Information Science, University of Iowa

- Jack Breyer, Ph.D., Director, Maury Oceanographic Library, Naval Oceanographic Office, Stennis Space Center, MS

- William Buchanan, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Library Science, Clarion University of Pennsylvania

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• Shellie Glass, Ph.D., Command Chief Knowledge Officer, U.S. Army Human Resources Command (AHRC-KM) Command Knowledge Management Office, Alexandria, VA
• Pam Ladner, Ph.D., Library Director, Assistant Dean of Library Resource Center, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Gautier, MS
• Terrence Newell, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Information Studies, Milwaukee WI
• John Ochola, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Collection Development Librarian, Associate Director of African Studies, Baylor University, Waco, Texas

At least six additional SLIS alums are working toward a Ph.D. degree including Jingjing Liu who is expected to earn her doctoral degree from Rutgers in spring 2010.

The LIS student organization LISSA (Library & Information Student Association) connects students with each other and with the department through regular face-to-face as well as online meetings and Facebook. Klingler and Yu are the current LISSA faculty advisors; Bomhold and Welsh served as LISSA faculty advisors from 2003-2008.

• Each year, LISSA sends a student to the American Library Association Annual Conference through the ALA Student-to-Staff Program. Students in this program work at the conference in return for lodging and conference fees (LISSA fundraising activities pay for transportation costs)
• Each year, LISSA students work at the Children’s Book Festival
• Each year, LISSA does a community service project. Recent projects have included a 10,000 book project that solicited new children’s and young adult books from publishers to be distributed to libraries affected by Hurricane Katrina, a book drive for Camp Shelby to establish a lending library for the soldiers, and a donation drive for supplies for a local women’s shelter.
• In 2005, LISSA was awarded Outstanding Student Organization of the Year by the Southern Miss Office of Student Activities.

(D) Productivity, Cost, and Efficiency (25%)

The M.L.I.S. degree program is the largest single graduate degree program at the University of Southern Mississippi. The program is racially and geographically diverse and attracts students from across the U.S. as well as some international students. The entire masters program and some undergraduate courses are available online, which allows for savings in classrooms, utilities, and supplies such as paper and copier costs. The online program also allows recruitment of students from across the state, region, and nation.

In response to a growing enrollment in archival courses and a growing number of SLIS alums working as archivists, SLIS has proposed a Certificate in Archives and Special Collections that is now in the process of approval. This 18-hour certificate may be earned by graduate students or graduates and is expected to increase enrollment in already-existing courses with no additional costs.
SLIS Curriculum Committee completed an audit of undergraduate and graduate core courses, including a technology audit for course requirements related to Web 2.0. with resulting committee recommendations to incorporate additional Web 2.0 in core courses. Revisions for course requirements for the undergraduate degree were submitted and have been approved. A new Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections has been approved and course requirements consist of existing courses.

A majority of the master’s courses require research papers and, in addition students are required to complete a master’s research project. At least fifteen SLIS students have had their research papers published in scholarly journals and several additional student papers are in process of being published. A partial list of student publications is available at: http://ocean.otr.usm.edu/~w146169/mentorpubs.htm

Distinguished alumnae have enriched the SLIS program by generously guest-lecturing in online LIS courses without cost to the program. Examples include:

- Jack Breyer, Ph.D., Director, Maury Oceanographic Library, in LIS 642: Special Libraries
- Judith Burnham, MLIS, University of South Alabama Baugh Biomedical Library, in LIS 642: Special Collections
- Shugana Campbell-Williams, MLIS, Archivist/Digitization Specialist, Southern Miss Katrina Research Center in LIS 647: Introduction to Archival Organization
- Lenore Garder, MLIS, U.S. Army War College Library, in LIS 664: Government Publications
- Shellie Glass, Ph.D., Army Command Chief Knowledge Officer, in LIS 664: Government Publications
- Genoa Stanford, MLIS, Fort Benning Donovan Research Library, in LIS 664: Government Publications

An LIS British Studies course (LIS 480/487 or 580/587: British Libraries and Information Centers) is offered each summer and has attracted students from across the U.S. (17 students in 2007, 14 in 2008, and 17 in 2009). In addition to 8 Southern Miss. Students (7 grad students and 1 undergrad), the course has included students from Florida State University, Kent State University, Long Island University, North Carolina Central University, Queens College NY, Simmons College, University of Alabama, University at Albany, SUNY, University of Arizona, University at Buffalo, SUNY, University of Denver, University of Hawaii, University of Kentucky, University of Illinois, University of Missouri, University of Oklahoma, University of Rhode Island, Wayne State University, and Wichita State University. This international course has been useful for recruiting and public relations for the department, college, and university at no additional cost and has allowed faculty (Welsh) to attend international conferences scheduled just before the course or during the course mini-break at no additional cost to SLIS.
At the university level, three faculty have served on Faculty Senate (Norton, Haynes, Welsh). Haynes is currently chair of Academic Council and chair of the Children’s Book Festival Medallion Selection Committee; she has served on the Professional Education Council, Graduate Council, and the University Strategic Planning Committee. Welsh is serving on the Cook Library Fine Appeals Committee and was on the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection Curious George Ad Hoc Committee.

At the national and international level, Haynes has served as a grant reviewer, NEH Bookshelf Grant Program, proposal and manuscript reviewer, Linworth Publishing and Libraries Unlimited, a manuscript reviewer for Addision-Wesley, a member of American Library Association (ALA) accreditation site visitation team, University of Rhode Island; Chair of AASL/NCATE Portfolio review, and ALA Pay Equity Committee. She has served on the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) Board of Directors, Research and Statistics Committee, Facilitator and Chair Selection Committee, Judy Pitts Research Forum, Continuing Education Task Force, Chair of Administrator Award Committee, Chair of Critical Issues Committee, Supervisor's Section. Welsh is currently a member of the Advisory Committee for the International Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries 2010 Conference in Crete (QQML10); she has served as a member of the 2007 International Conference on Telehealth Program Committee, as a school representative for Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), as a member of the ALISE Membership Advisory Committee, the ALISE Garfield Dissertation Committee, and the University of Tennessee SIS Advisory Board.

(E) Potential (20%)

One area of possible growth is in medical informatics. A certificate in medical librarianship or medical informatics could be offered along with courses in medical informatics and consumer health information that could be marketed to relevant health-related programs at Southern Miss and to medical programs at William Carey and the University of Mississippi.

SLIS is in communication with Dr. Dave Davies about developing an honors section of LIS 201: Introduction to Information Literacy, which has the potential to increase overall enrollment in that course. SLIS is also exploring the possibility of creating an online graduate-level information literacy course that would be a requirement for new MLIS students and could be offered to other graduate programs as well.

LIS 201: Introduction to Information Literacy is a course that could be taught at local community colleges such as Pearl River Community College and Jones County Junior College, and Gulf Coast Community College, either face-to-face or an a IVN course. This course has potential to increase enrollment in the university and in SLIS since this course has been shown to be a good recruiting tool: each semester an average of one student in each section of LIS 201 will change their major to LIS.

Camp Shelby is a large, nearby base that could be used to market the LIS online program. Some of our undergrad and graduate LIS students are former career military or are
military spouses so marketing the SLIS at Camp Shelby has tremendous potential for recruitment for the online MLIS degree program.

Interest has been shown for reinstatement for the LIS specialist program as well as for a LIS doctoral program, perhaps as a Ph.D. in Education or Instructional Technology with a specialty in LIS.

(F) Additional Information (5%)

5% increase: instructor and/or adjunct faculty to teach undergrad courses, support for faculty scholarly conference attendance/participation, support for student scholarly conference attendance/participation

No change: continuation of efforts to operate effectively and efficiently without reduction in quality

5% reduction: use of Skype or other free online services instead of long-distance phone charges, use of more online resources/reduction of copier and paper supplies, delay of fulfilling needed faculty position(s)

10% reduction: all of the above including a longer delay in hiring new faculty.