

**Southern Miss School of Library & Information Science
Focus Group
Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference
Hattiesburg, Mississippi, October 18, 2018**

Greeting and statement of importance of constituent feedback and as an example, cited the development of a course on education, LIS 590: Library Instruction, which focuses on information literacy instruction, as a result of feedback from focus groups.

Welcome to guest Dr. Creel who would address plans for public library service learning project.

- 1. We are thinking of offering LIS 629: Studies in Children's Literature, which formerly included work done at the Children's Book Festival, as an independent study with some assignments related to the CBF. Karen suggested a CBF newsletter with each student assigned an author or other aspect to write about. What are your thoughts on that?**
 - Good idea – could include distant students to do equivalent assignments
 - Should involve de Grummond Collection as it is such a rich resource
 - Yes, could include write-ups of individual authors
 - Could also include video podcasts by students for multimedia newsletter.

- 2. Also thinking of offering summer workshops for CEU credit – there are many workshop submissions for the CBF and only room for a finite number. Do you think there would be interest in inviting some of them for summer workshops for CEU credit sponsored by CBF?**
 - Yes, good idea
 - What about adding a day of just workshops before or after the CBF since people would already be in town?

- 3. What about a research day in fall that focuses on research related to children's or YA literature?**
 - Need to partner with English Lit, de Grummond Collection (spoke with Eric Tribinella and Ellen Ruffin and both are enthusiastic about cooperative effort; however, SLIS/CBF would need to be one to control/coordinate it)
 - Could include research papers, posters, presentations related to research
 - Could be part of Graduate Research Symposium or at least not conflict with Undergraduate or Graduate Research Symposium.

 - **Dr. Creel, would you like to talk about the service-learning project you are working on related to public libraries and underserved populations? Dr. Creel noted that the project would involve USM Social Work to develop ways to help public libraries with**

services to the homeless and economically disadvantaged so we would like your ideas and comments on this problem.

- Could use entire course on homelessness in public libraries
- Need to consider also how to protect patrons from homeless with mental problems
- Safety should be primary concern – one attendee notes that they welcome homeless but also have had to develop and enforce policies for safety, offensive behavior (violators will be asked to leave and banned for period of time but need security personnel to enforce)
- Could compile resources and services to help homeless – attendee said they created a one-sheet of services and staff checks accuracy periodically
- Need for staff training to deal with homeless, those with mental problems

4. What do we need to be teaching students before they do a practicum?

- Budget and financing (we have had requests for advance management courses – College of Business offers online Graduate Certificate in Business Foundations, which is a great option so we recommend that)
- Importance of networking, basic writing and grammar
- Critical thinking skills
- Presentation skills; how to do effective ppt (one attendee recommended “Life After Death by PPT” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjcO2ExtHso>)
- USM attendee recommended using online resources of Speaking Center
- Students need to practice job interview and presentation skills in front of an audience to become skilled and comfortable in job interviews.

5. Any final comments, suggestions?

- Need to teach more technology and technical skills (Dr. Welsh requested that attendees send her info about any new technology they think would be useful for students)
- Need course or course content on incarcerated youth, partnerships with Big House Books – perhaps special topic for LIS 670
- Need to provide students more info on different areas of librarianship (Dr. Creel noted that our podcasts of various librarians we posted in BB is no longer available and we need to create some new ones; she asked for librarians and archivists to send us podcasts of themselves and what a typical day for them is like).

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Hattiesburg, Mississippi, October 18, 2017

Greeting and brief overview of actions based on previous focus group feedback.

- Need grant course or course content
 - Scholarship/conference travel assignment added to LIS 500
 - Grant application assignment added to LIS 605
- Need info on e-rates for public libraries
 - MLC helps public libraries with e-rates and is willing to do workshops
- Strategies to deal with homelessness, mental health issues, social problems in pub libraries
 - School of Social Work will be joining our college so there will be opportunities to partner with them to address these problems
- More scholarships
 - Working on endowing Elizabeth Hayes Scholarship – when contributions reach \$15,000 will be endowed and interest on investments will be awarded each year as scholarship
 - Dr. Norton working on grant funding for LIS education
- More management courses/advanced management courses
 - USM College of Business offers online Graduate Certificate in Business Foundations that we recommend for library directors
- More technology courses or course content
 - Faculty updates technology course content each semester
 - Option for online Graduate Certificate in Instructional Technology.

1. What were some of the most useful LIS courses you had?

- Reference
- Library instruction
- Library management
- Ethics
- Archival courses
- Youth services/programming
- Children's Lit
- YA Lit

2. What courses or course content do you think should be added to the curriculum?

- Partnership with social services in public libraries to address homelessness, mental health issues
- Outreach projects
- Government information
- Paraprofessional resources

3. In your library, do you see any trends that you think should be addressed in future courses?

- More grant information
- Personnel management
- Conflict resolution
- Workshop on facility maintenance
- Planning/library space utilization
- Safety and security, liability

4. What topic would you like to see less of or deleted from online classes?

- No response

5. We are thinking of adding a certificate related to library analytics or library science and technology that could include spatial analysis (GIS), advanced database searching and/or analysis, database development, etc.: a) Do you think that would be useful? b) If so, what courses would be useful?

- a) Yes, more experience/expertise in sci-tech useful and valuable
- b) More tech courses, coding, database design and usability

6. Re-instate specialist degree? If so, what should it include?

- Yes, would like to see specialist degree and Ph.D. degree offered
- Should include higher-level technology courses, research courses

7. Any suggestions about outreach or recruiting such as conferences, events?

- Ambassador program great idea
- Should market certificates at relevant conferences – archival certificate at archival conferences, youth services certificate at public library and youth literature conferences, educational conferences
- Should attend career day in high schools

8. Any final comments, suggestions?

- Need SLIS calendar with courses listed each semester or 8 weeks and important dates related to registration, drop/add dates, other important dates and info such as LIS conferences/ambassador opportunities
- Calendar should be available on SLIS website and sent out on listservs each semester.

**Southern Miss School of Library & Information Science
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Natchez, Mississippi, October 22, 2016

Greeting and brief overview of actions based on previous focus group feedback (appendix).

- 1. Are there challenges in your library that were not addressed in library school or is there anything you think should be added to the curriculum?**
 - Need workshop or course content on e-rates
 - Reader's advisory course or content
 - Problems in public libraries with patrons with mental health issues; need to add course content or workshops on solutions to deal with mentally ill, de-escalation techniques, safety and security training.

- 2. In your library, do you see any trends that you think should be addressed in future courses?**
 - Library management and other courses need to address how to handle budget cuts, how to find funding
 - Need information about how to start a friends of the library group
 - Need information on legal issues.

- 3. What were some of the most useful LIS courses you had?**
 - Collection development
 - Reference
 - Cataloging
 - Practicum.

- 4. What would you like to see more of or see added to online classes?**
 - Ethics course should be required.

- 5. What would you like to see less of or deleted from online classes?**
 - Information science (this course has recently revised textbook and content to be more relevant)

- 6. Saturday classes?**
 - Yes, if shorter such as 8 weeks

- 7. Dr. Norton has expressed interest in teaching a Saturday class. What topics would be of interest? Management of e-resources?**
 - Not much interest in Saturday classes since most consider weekends 'family time'

- 8. Re-instate specialist degree?**

- Yes, definitely would like to see specialist degree and doctoral degree offered.

9. Any suggestions about recruiting such as conferences, events?

- Like the SLIS ambassador program; helps with funding conference registration.

10. Any final comments, suggestions?

- Like that we solicit feedback and incorporate into the curriculum.

SLIS Actions from Focus Group feedback:

Library directors need business classes such as accounting, management, finance

- Contacted College of Business – they have new online Business Foundations Graduate Certificate

E-books, e-services card for access to e-books, e-zines, etc.

- Dr. Norton modified 654 title and content to – e-Resources Management

How to use social media effectively, efficiently to market library services

- More content related to social media added to technical courses (social media planning workshop and team assignment added to LIS 557)

Interest expressed in course on rural and small libraries since there are many small branch or rural libraries in Mississippi and surrounding states.

- LIS 415: Public Libraries modified to Rural and Small Libraries with focus on public libraries
- Future plans to develop grad course, LIS 515: Rural and Small Libraries, so it could be cross-listed

Need more practicum hours in school library for licensure

- SLIS developed and received approval to offer LIS 589: School Library Practicum

Interest expressed for library instruction course to be an elective for school library licensure emphasis.

- Just approved revisions to MLIS w/licensure emphasis. Students may choose two of three courses: LIS 517 – Children’s Lit, LIS 518 – YA Lit, LIS 590 – Library Instruction.

On how to improve the practicums or expand opportunities, feedback was to develop a list of practicum sites.

- SLIS is in the process of developing an Excel file of practicum sites.

Suggestions not yet addressed but perhaps will at a future date:

- Saturday classes? – not enthusiastically received by faculty but may be by new, future faculty
- Re-instate specialist degree? - supported by faculty but after more faculty are hired

**Southern Miss School of Library & Information Science
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Natchez, Mississippi, October 22, 2015

Greeting and brief overview of what's new at SLIS (handouts for LIS BS and MLIS)

- New undergrad course Public Libraries based on feedback from previous focus groups; spring course on Library Planning and Design
- More flexible admission requirements – GRE or Miller Analogies
- In process of approval online MLIS/IT dual master's
- Hiring new faculty fall 2016
- New Council on Community Literacy and Reading directed by Dr. Bomhold
- New endowed LIS scholarship fund to honor Dr. Elizabeth Haynes
- New recruitment materials, alum listserv.

Questions and responses:

- 1. Are there challenges in your library that were not addressed in library school or is there anything you think should be added to the curriculum?**
 - Need class that teaches how to do lesson plans, classroom management
 - Need more practicum hours in school library for licensure (more discussion on these two issues below)
 - Library directors need business classes such as accounting 600, management 600, finance 600 (this could be addressed with dual MLIS/MBA degree)

- 2. In your library, do you see any trends that you think should be addressed in future courses?**
 - E-books, e-services card for access to e-books, e-zines, etc.
 - How to use social media effectively, efficiently to market library services

- 3. Considering adding a graduate course on rural and small public libraries. What are your thoughts on that?**
 - Great idea, there is a national association of rural and small libraries so that indicates great interest
 - Many small branch or rural libraries in Mississippi and surrounding states.

- 4. Based on results of a recent survey SLIS is in process of revising MLIS w/Licensure requirements keeping requirements 508: School Libraries, 516: Technology in the School Library, and 607: School Library and the Curriculum and add more flexibility: choose two from 517: Children's Lit or 518: YA Lit or 590: Library Instruction. What are your thoughts?**
 - Unanimous support for the library instruction course and greater flexibility
 - This would allow elementary librarians to take children's lit and library instruction or HS librarians to take YA lit and library instruction.
 - Expressed unanimous support for a separate 150 hour school library practicum that could be taken any semester (and school library courses to be taught any semester)

- School library practicum should replace collection development course – school librarians noted that school libraries are so different from public and academic that 511 was not very useful for them – seemed to be more for public or academic libraries.
- School librarians thought it would be more useful to do a 150 hour school library practicum with some collection development readings and activities for school libraries.
- School library practicum would introduce students to the reality of school librarianship and importance of collaboration with teachers, administration, parents, and students.

5. We don't spend a great deal on advertising but use social media and exhibit tables at MLA, LAMP, and other conferences such as the Society of Mississippi Archivists. We recently had a table at the Rural and Small Libraries Association Conference and sent door prizes and brochures to library conferences in states such as Alaska and New Mexico. Any other ideas for recruiting more great students?

- Could develop lists of library directors or owners of library listservs to email information about the program
- Should have an exhibit table and recruit at Public Library Association conference – there are many public librarians who do not have LIS degree; also could exhibit at Southeastern Library Association (one of their officers is SLIS alum Melissa Dennis)
- Should target professional listservs such as medical or legal to market MLIS as second degree and career

6. Any ideas on how to improve the practicums or expand opportunities?

- Need to develop a list of practicum sites that would like to host a LIS practicum student

7. Saturday classes?

- Yes, if shorter such as 8 weeks

8. Re-instate specialist degree?

- Unanimous support expressed – would allow school libraries to earn AAA license or CEU credits and be useful for librarians who are interested in taking more coursework beyond MLIS degree but need financial aid
- Many alums say they would like to take British Studies so a degree beyond MLIS degree would allow them to take it as an elective and earn an advanced degree.

Southern Miss School of Library & Information Science

Focus Group

Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference

Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 15, 2014

Greeting and introduction of SLIS faculty

Questions:

- 1. What are we doing right? What do you like that you would like to see us do more?**
 - Ethics course should be core/required – coverage in 605 and 636 good but full course would be more useful to students
 - bibliometrics course redundant...
 - send faculty member to MLC's public directors group meetings; there will be huge need in years to come for public library administration; MS libraries need more graduates interested in going into *public library administration* and management, and perhaps there should be more managerial training
 - develop a modified or advanced management course for people that already have managerial experience
 - recommend to undergraduate students appropriate majors/minors, appropriate combinations for a career in the LIS field
 - need to modify school licensure courses; instead of a few practicum hours in each course, would be more useful to have full semester practicum. LIS 511 collection development course not as useful for school librarians so recommend to develop a semester-long school library practicum with collection development assignments instead of 511.

- 2. Do you have any new challenges in your library that were not addressed in library school or is there anything you think should be added to the curriculum?**
 - e-rate, LSTA, LIS grants – cover not just grants/funding in general but these in particular
 - have more guest speakers in classes.

- 3. In your library, do you see any trends that you think should be addressed in future courses?**
 - address change management
 - more 1-hour courses in special topics: social media, publicity, more practical things.

4. We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the master's degree in library science, first offered in 1965. We were thinking about adding some historical information and images to the Web site. Do you have any other suggestions for how it should be celebrated?

- Reception at MLA, giveaways, yes to historical info and images on website.

5. Any questions or comments?

- Create an online form where libraries can submit requests for students for practica, volunteer work, special projects, etc.

Southern Miss School of Library & Information Science

Focus Group

Mississippi Library Association Annual Conference

Biloxi, MS, October 16, 2013

Greeting and presentation by SLIS Director Dr. Elizabeth Haynes about what's new at SLIS

Attendees were asked to fill out form to be added to the alumni listserv and also to indicate whether they would like to be a SLIS Ambassador and/or be willing to be a guest in a class or to mentor a practicum student.

Question :

Do you have any new challenges in your library that were not addressed in library school or is there anything you think should be added to the curriculum? We are in the process of developing some one-hour courses so what would you like to see taught?

- Instruction in how to write public relations materials such as press releases
- Mississippi-specific course on conditions and challenges specific to the state
- Grant writing, grant implementation and management
- Writing resumes, cover letters
- Systems administration/networking, setting up/ maintaining computers
- E-book platforms, audio books
- Business course(s) on budget management, cost accounting
- Legal issues and library policies, particularly those related to employees.

Other comments:

- Would like to see dual business/LIS degree
- Would like to see more technology incorporated into the curriculum such as basic HTML
 - Response: We now require students to take one of the technology electives: one related to school library technology; one on computer applications in libraries that includes learning latest versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, as well as use of social media related to libraries, e-portfolios, and production of multimedia tutorials; and one on Web site design and development
- Need to stress importance of students doing a practicum or internship; should be strongly recommended for those with little or no library experience
- Need to form connection/alliance with computer science
 - Response: We are thinking about a connection/alliance with instructional technology courses

We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the master's degree in library science, first offered in 1965. We were thinking about adding some historical information and images to the Web site. Do you have any other suggestions for how it should be celebrated? If so, please send them to us.

Additional comment sent via email, October 20, 2013:

--I've been associated with the department in different capacities since the early 1990s. The leadership of the department has always been strong and firm, but also very caring and accessible. I'm glad to see that Dr. Haynes is now director. I know she'll continue the department's well-established commitment to the field, and to students and librarians that are facing new and evolving challenges in a rapidly changing world.

--The previous director, in the tradition set forth by other such notable school heads as the venerable Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, was known to sign student admission letters with green ink (although she insists that it was done only because all other colors of ink were conspicuously missing from the supply closet--I'm not quite sure of that statement's veracity, however). Might I suggest that Dr. Haynes consider continuing this tradition? It may be quite the inspiration to new students who understand its significance.

--It's great to see new faculty, especially someone who specializes in public libraries. Many of the public librarians in our state are often not specifically educated in library and information science, but rather competent workers who have been promoted to managerial positions. Faculty who can focus on teaching skills specific to this area of the field and on recruiting practitioners to the program are a welcome addition.

--Which leads me to a question. Have the Library Commission and SLIS collaborated on any continuing education or recruitment opportunities? Has the faculty/staff of SLIS considered presenting one of the many continuing education day and half-day courses that the library commission offers? Or perhaps accompanying representatives on site visits to better understand the current state of our public libraries, and receive feedback from librarians? Putting a human face to SLIS, especially to areas that rarely attend conferences or only allow system directors to travel, may be beneficial in both understanding practitioners and gaining new students. Realistically, I understand that time and budget limitations may not make any of this feasible.

--One of the big challenges my library system is facing is the cost and limitations of downloadable ebooks. They are in high demand by the public, but the current plans available are not library friendly, and for us, still cost-prohibitive.

--I've spoken with two SLIS graduate students over the past few months who both were taking comprehensive exams. While admittedly nervous about their exams, both students were glad to see a wide variety of questions to choose from, and both felt they were prepared for entering the workplace as library professionals.

--Love the website--simple and easy to navigate.

--Last but not least, your table at MLA, even viewed only through facebook, was very eye-catching and professional.