

EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL REPORT

on

Catholic University of America

of

Master of Science in Library and Information Science

by

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Introduction.

The School of Library and Information Science is one of twelve schools of the Catholic University of America. The American Library Association has continuously accredited this program since 1948 (*PP.*, p.1). The last comprehensive review decision was rendered by the Committee on Accreditation at Midwinter 2006, at which time the 2009 comprehensive review was scheduled. Areas of concern in the 2006 decision focused on the program's mission and goals, the junior status of the faculty, and concerns regarding physical facilities. In 2007, COA accepted the plan for removal of conditional accreditation (COA Correspondence Log).

With intensive involvement of the faculty and staff as well as advisory constituents, the Dean of the School has led an effort toward the adoption of a vision, mission, goals and objectives for the School's master's program. Through comprehensive planning, the program is now guided by a strategic plan that incorporates a continuous improvement process. Both the provost and the president described the re-visioning process of SLIS as an exemplar for other graduate programs on the campus, particularly Social Work and Nursing (Interview, Provost; Interview, President).

External Review panelists received the self-study from the School in early February 2009. During February and early March, the Dean answered requests for further information promptly.

On March 16, questions were submitted to two SLIS electronic discussion lists—one for students and one for alumni. These queries asked respondents to describe their experiences in the School, in particular advising and mentoring, leadership opportunities, and instruction. More than fifty responses from alumni spanning decades of the School's history and more than forty responses from current students were received. On March 19, 2009, questions were submitted to

adjunct faculty via their electronic discussion list regarding communication with the program and resulted in sixteen responses. In addition to the *Program Presentation*, the External Review panel (ERP) also had an extensive set of documents provided as appendices in electronic format. The School's website provided the panel with additional information.

While onsite March 22-24, the ERP examined documentation referenced in the *PP* and additional documentation provided at the ERP's request. A conference call was held with seven students from Virginia, in addition to two students from the Loudon County cohort who came to campus to join the conversation in person. A reception on Sunday followed breakout sessions during which the ERP met with alumni, employers, adjunct faculty, and members of the School's Board of Advisors. More than forty stakeholders attended. On Monday, the ERP held an orientation session for faculty and staff followed by individual meetings with each of the full-time faculty. Individual meetings were also held with Provost Brennan; Dr. Kim Kelley, Dean of SLIS; Dr. James Greene, Dean for Graduate Studies; Steve Connaghan, Interim Director for Library Administration; Kitty Tynan, Assistant Director, Public Services; and Anne Marie Hules, SLIS Librarian; Zia Mafaher, Director, Center for Information Technology and Policy; and SLIS computer lab staff. The Very Reverend David M. O'Connell, President, joined the ERP for a luncheon meeting. Over eighty SLIS students joined the ERP for discussion over dinner. ERP members visited a total of four classes. The visit concluded with the exit meeting with representatives of the SLIS community which was web cast via the School's website.

Standard I — Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) at the Catholic University of America (CUA) is dedicated to educating future librarians to work in all types of information

settings. It offers a Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS) degree and postmaster's certificate in advanced studies in library and information science.

I.I. In the last three years the School has been fully engaged not only in planning and revising but indeed re-creating its overall program. The process of these extensive revisions is documented in minutes of faculty meetings and supported by comments from faculty (both full time and adjunct), students, alumni and employers (Examination of documentation onsite). The new SLIS *Working Plan* has been at the core of this planning process, and stakeholder involvement is well documented (Interviews and examination of meeting minutes onsite). Very positive feedback gathered both onsite from faculty, alumni and employers as well as students via responses to questions posted to the student listserv serves as evidence of the involvement of a multiple constituency of stakeholders in the program revision and planning process.

The university's core values of "reason, faith and service" are consistent with those of the School. There is a focus on each of these three tenets "reason, by striving to achieve excellence in teaching and scholarship; faith, by striving to contribute toward the betterment of humanity and service, by including service as basic core value." (*PP.*, p. 9).

In a concerted effort intensive work within the School has resulted in a "revised set of program objectives that have stated outcomes to guide the School in its outcomes assessment efforts" (*PP.*, p. 24). Measures to evaluate the program's success in achieving its intended outcomes include: (1) comprehensive examination with a scoring rubric mapped to the program objectives; (2) regularly administered surveys of students, alumni and employers; (3) formal feedback from SLIS advisory committees; (4) Practicum and teaching evaluations. (*PP.*, pp. 25-26). During the onsite visit, these steps were acknowledged by both faculty and employers as

important elements that had been needed and are now in place to guide the institution into future planning (Interviews, Faculty and Employers).

I.2. A “Statement of Professional Competencies for Graduates” of the MSLS program has been developed by the faculty to ensure that students who graduate from the SLIS program are fully versed in all aspects of the professional practice. (*PP.*, p. 26). The School’s *Working Plan* includes regular milestones for curriculum revision “to ensure that it reflects the character of the LIS field.” (*PP.*, p 31). Four core courses (551, 553, 555 and 557) cover essential skills that provide students ample opportunities to be 1) skilled in organizing, disseminating, managing, and preserving information; 2) skilled in the use of information technologies and articulate the role of IT in facilitating information management; 3) capable of serving information seekers in a global society.” (*PP.*, pp. 30-31). During the onsite visit, current and past employers praised the caliber of students’ skills attesting to the high level of preparation of the School’s graduates.

To address the philosophy and ethics of the field, SLIS has established two relevant program objectives: 1) students are skilled in organizing, disseminating, managing and preserving information; 2) students demonstrate a commitment to the philosophy, principles, and legal and ethical responsibilities of the field (*PP.*, p 35). In a recent survey of the School’s alumni 9 out of 10 show that they feel prepared in understanding information policy and ethics, values and foundation principles of information professionals and in providing information sources and services. (*PP.*, p. 35). Comments gathered onsite from current and former students as well as employers confirm this high level of satisfaction with the School’s program in preparing them for the working environment.

Faculty are actively engaged in research as an indicator of the importance of research to the advancement of the field's knowledge base. Research is emphasized in 75% of SLIS courses (*PP.*, p.76). Cross-disciplinary research among the School's faculty shows the importance of contributions of other fields of knowledge to library and information studies. This is addressed in two of the School's main objectives: (1) interpret and apply research results from library and information science and related fields and (2) articulate the economic, political, cultural and social importance of the information profession (*PP.*, p 40).

Four of the School's eight goals recognize the importance of Library and Information Services (LIS) in a changing multicultural society. The *Working Plan* includes milestones generated in the original *Diversity Plan* for the School in 2006 (*PP.*, p 42). Evidence of significant success in this area has been the SLIS participation in the ALA Spectrum Scholarship Program providing matching scholarships for five students. In addition, a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to provide full scholarship and stipend for students who are employees of the District of Columbia Public Schools (*PP.*, p. 42) also demonstrates the School's successful programs to serve the needs of underserved groups. The School recognizes the importance of continuing to work towards fostering diversity among its faculty and students. (*PP*, p 272). The recent addition of two new faculty members of color is likely to aid in this endeavor, particularly since one has strong interest in the need for diversity in the profession (Interview, Faculty).

The School addresses the important role of Library and Information Services in a rapidly changing technological and global society through three of its program objectives (*PP.*, p. 43). A set of competencies related to professional identity, management, resources, services, information organization and technology is fully mapped to match these objectives (*PP.*, 27-30).

A revision of the program objectives (2007) included input from various constituencies (both internal and external to SLIS) to develop a *Technology Strategic Plan* and the *SLIS Working Plan*. Two of the School's main objectives focus on students being capable of serving information seekers in a global society and dedicated to professional growth (*PP.*, p 45).

I.3. The School acknowledges the importance of a continuous planning process as a way of attaining its objectives and developing the next steps to improve its performance. The School's various stakeholders affirmed the open communication and inclusiveness throughout the planning process of the past 18 months (Interviews, Alumni, Students, Faculty). The School's values, mission, goals, and objectives are available through its website and various forums provide ample opportunity for input from those served: students, faculty, employers, alumni and other constituencies.

Standard II Curriculum

II.1. The School's current curriculum has been shaped by the University's core values of reason, faith, and service combined with SLIS values of collaboration, community, innovation and excellence. Within the framework six areas of professional competency—professional identity, management, resources, services, information organization and technology—were identified and used to formulate the program objectives.

II.2. The result is a curriculum fully reflective of their stated objectives and competencies. This was achieved by a broad-based curriculum review that included the examination of the competency requirements and recommendations of eleven informational professional associations; adoption of the SLIS core competencies and subsequently the development of program objectives. The School presented the new mission, goals, values, core

competencies and program objectives to all of their stakeholders –students, alumni, adjunct faculty and their Advisory Board during the 2007-2008 academic year for feedback (*PP.*, p.56). Technology has been fully integrated into the curriculum to the extent that seventy-eight percent of courses integrate theory, application, and the use of technology (*PP.*, p. 74). This includes core courses, higher-level electives and courses that now make more effective use of technology even though they are not technology–centered. Additionally SLIS offers noncredit technology workshops through out the year, and the Information Commons offers a technologically rich learning environment.

To broaden interests among their students the School offers colloquia on various topics promoted to area information professionals and the university community. Special topic courses are added to the course calendar irregularly taking advantage of the research interests of the faculty and suggestions from adjuncts. Additionally, a new annual research symposium initiated January 30, 2009, provides a forum where SLIS faculty and students can present research and participate in a professional conference and meet leaders in the LIS field. This Research Day will be held annually. The course offerings, the content of the courses, the colloquia and the research symposium are all designed to reflect the changing multi-cultural nature of the environment in which they will be working and the evolving societal events that impact the community as a whole and the information profession in particular.

II.3. Decisions made as a result of this thorough program review of the curriculum includes a course of study comprised of four core courses (12 credit hours) that incorporate the above identified six competency areas providing a basic foundation for the students' study of the profession; then students then can select other courses from the course catalog with the advice of their advisor, resulting in a coherent course of study. A matrix (*PP.*, pp. 72-3) has been provided

that ties the courses to the named elements from Standard II. Upon completion of the 36 credit hours, candidates for the MSLS must pass a comprehensive exam that tests a common knowledge base designed to show that students are prepared to be effective information professionals. This exam is held on campus three times a year over two days and is one of several outcomes measures used to determine the program's validity.

Eight objectives designed to support the six competency areas emerged from this comprehensive review process. The School has provided a chart that shows how each of its 62 courses contributes to the program's objectives. (*PP.*, p. 57-60) The four core courses (551,552, 553 and 554) lay the foundation in the six competency areas for students; the midlevel and higher-level courses are designed to provide knowledge and skills applicable in a variety of information environments. In the summer 2008 the faculty revised all course descriptions to reflect current content and the revised course catalog was then posted on the SLIS Web page at <http://slis.cua.edu/courses/courses.cfm>. To ensure that students follow a coherent course of study a *Faculty Advising Handbook* with an advising checklist was developed and distributed at the 2008 faculty meeting to obtain input from adjunct faculty. Students were then apprised of these changes at a briefing session in spring 2009.

II.4. Students have several options of course tracks: school media, generalist, cultural heritage information management, digital libraries, information organization, law librarianship, **information architecture**, and user services. These courses of studies were approved fall 2008. (*PP.*, p. 66)

II.5. To reflect new teaching methodologies the School has in the last three years piloted and implemented four innovations: launching a blended approach for select SLIS courses that includes on-site class meetings with online course enhancements; online-blended format with

two or three in person meetings; the “Weekend College” model for the School media track, and has continued its one-week intensive seminars on select topics during the summer semester to address the needs of part-time students and professionals in the field. This is in addition to using offsite locations (the Library of Congress, sites in Loudon County, Northern Virginia, and Richmond in Virginia). Blackboard and Sakai are being used as their course management tool. The modes of delivery being used to deliver the course content are seen as complementary and reflect the needs of the students. Additional flexibility in course formats is under review at the recommendation of the SLIS Advisory Committee to meet the evolving needs of students.

Designating course co-chairs for these courses ensures consistency in teaching and learning methodology for the core courses. These co-chairs work with all of the instructors for the core courses to ensure the relevancy and currency of the course content, mentor new instructors, coordinate the delivery of the courses at all sites and monitor student learning. Full-time and adjunct faculty can also take advantage of workshops to introduce new technologies to be used for teaching. To further consistency in teaching an adjunct faculty handbook has been posted on the SLIS web site.

II.6. Curriculum review is now performed on a three-year cycle, as stated in the SLIS *Working Plan*. In 2008-2009 the core courses were reviewed. In 2009-2010 the midlevel course review will occur followed in 2010-2011 by a review of upper level courses. One of the emphases in this review process will be the rollout of a three year calendar to show when courses will be offered (Interview, Dean). SLIS offers six joint degree programs; they are in law, history, musicology, biology, English and religious studies showing the School commitment to interdisciplinary studies. The most active program is the one in law (Interview, Dean). Details of these joint programs are readily available from the School’s Web site.

SLIS has made a comprehensive effort to involve all of their stakeholders in the review and development of their curriculum. They have put into place a long-term plan to continue this review and to increase the technological components of each course to graduate innovative leaders who will be successful in the broad spectrum of the information profession.

Standard III: Faculty

III.1. The majority of terminal degrees held by faculty members are in the library and information science field. Others include dance, management and technology, computer science, and educational administration. Current searches are underway for an additional tenure-track faculty line as well as an additional clinical track faculty line; interviews are scheduled. Full-time faculty expertise aligns with both the program objectives and curriculum (*PP.*, p. 108-110). Adjunct faculty have noteworthy credentials and hold positions in a variety of agencies such as the Office of the Attorney General, National Geographic, the Fairfax County Public Library, the Library of Congress, the Law Library of John's Hopkins University, and National Public Radio (*PP.*, pp. 112-116). SLIS has over 40 active adjunct faculty members to draw upon for their courses, ten of whom have served for over five years (*PP.*, p. 112). Adjunct faculty are said to be "partners in the School's efforts to deliver a relevant and high-quality education" and play "an essential role in the development, evaluation, and revision of the curriculum" (*PP.*, p. 117). To engage them in these processes, SLIS holds semiannual full faculty meetings (always on Saturdays), and also webcasts these faculty meetings. Adjuncts affirmed a strong sense of inclusiveness as stakeholders, very connected to the School, and asserted that their input as stakeholders was definitely heard and acted upon (Interviews, Adjunct Faculty). They also reported that communication channels with SLIS and the administration, especially under the new dean, had greatly improved in the past few years. Intern supervisors also spoke very highly

of the students in terms of their work ethic, independence, and initiative (Interviews Adjunct Faculty).

III.2. Teaching, research, and service are all considered in tenure decisions, established university policies are followed, and external reviewers (outside SLIS and CUA) are permitted (Interview, Dean of Graduate Studies). All four assistant professors have passed their 2nd year review, one is due for the 4th year review spring of 2009, and the clinical associate professor also passed the 2nd year review (Interview, Dean). The Provost holds six mandatory meetings for first year, non-tenured faculty, to mentor them regarding the tenure process at Catholic University of America (Interview, Provost). Four faculty members have received six CUA Grants-in-Aid within the past three years; each faculty member is entitled to a research assistant for up to 20 hours weekly, although faculty average using about 5-7 hours of an RA's time per week (Interview, Faculty). Faculty have extensive service commitments. The average number of SLIS committee memberships for a faculty member is approximately 9 committees, excluding the dean. After the accreditation process, this committee load within SLIS will be reduced to 5 standing committees. Faculty members report a wide variety of interdisciplinary research interests and activities.

III.3. Publicly stated personnel hiring and promotion policies are available on the CUA website. Fulltime faculty members range in age from 41-60 are comprised of 37% males and 63% females, and include an African American, two Asians with the remaining faculty being Caucasians (*PP.*, p. 127). Recent faculty hires (African American and Asian American) enhance the multidisciplinary opportunities and expand faculty diversity.

III.4. Faculty members, fulltime and part-time, teach in a variety of modes, including online, blended (online and face-to-face), week-long summer institutes, and traditional face-to-

face. Faculty research interests and specializations appear well matched with courses taught. Disciplinary interests include law, diversity studies, computer science, research methods, management, and archives and special collections (*PP.*, p. 119). Faculty are involved in a broad range of professional organizations in a variety of capacities (*PP.*, pp. 133-136).

All faculty members, except the dean and assistant dean, have taught at least one core course over the past three years (*PP.*, pp. 129-131). All SLIS faculty use Blackboard or Sakai for course delivery. A SLIS lab manager provides assistance to faculty and students

III.5. The faculty's peer reviewed/high impact articles accomplishments for 2007-2008 include 15 articles among them (*PP.*, pp. 136-139). During that time period, SLIS faculty gave some 30 presentations at conferences. Between 2005 and 2008 two faculty members had books published and four published book chapters in that time period. Six faculty members received grants ranging in amounts from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Three of these were CUA grants, two were from OCLC, and one was from the Special Libraries Association. Some of the grants bought research time or assistants for the recipients (Interviews, Faculty).

III.6. Of nine faculty members, two have University of Maryland doctorates (*PP.*, pp.102-106). Others hold doctorates from a variety of institutions. The SLIS fulltime faculty is involved in a wide variety of planning activities and committees, including the SLIS *Working Plan*, and all chaired at least one recent SLIS committee.

A 2008 survey of SLIS students regarding faculty and course delivery indicates that ratings have improved over those from a 2004 survey (*PP.*, p. 146). Feedback from student and alumni electronic discussion list questionnaires indicated that advising was adequate, that many program tracks (e.g., school library media) were prescriptive, and that advising in some form (often e-mail or from the dean) answered their questions (student and alumni listservs). To

ensure consistency at off campus sites, every full-time faculty member teaches off-campus annually. Also, there are two off-campus coordinators, one in Richmond, Virginia and one at the Library of Congress (*PP.*, p. 146). A few students expressed a desire for cohort coordinators for off campus groups, especially in northern Virginia (Interview, Students).

Std. III.7. Although the university standard teaching load is six courses per year, the SLIS teaching load standard is five. This was reduced in 2007-2009 to four courses to prepare for the accreditation visit and to develop research agendas, provide time for course development, and to ensure that faculty had time for student counseling and advising (*PP.*, p. 149).

III.8. The SLIS Committee on Appointments and Promotions, which reviews tenure-track faculty and the clinical professors, consists of the two SLIS faculty members who are tenured, the dean and the one full professor in the School. Full vitae of full-time faculty members were available onsite for ERP review, as well as the most recent faculty activity reports. All faculty interviewed reported meeting with the dean for annual goal setting sessions and monthly to discuss progress towards accomplishing goals and steps toward tenure where applicable. Non-tenured faculty must pass a 2nd, 4th, and 6th year review, and are then eligible for 5 year contracts. The senior fulltime faculty member reported mentoring and collaborating with two junior tenure track faculty members by cooperating on grant, research and writing projects, resulting in publications and funded grant (Interview, Faculty).

IV. Students

IV.1. The Program seeks to sustain an average student body size of 200 to 250 (*PP.*, p. 159). 2004-2005 enrollment was 251; in 2006-2007 it was 248; in 2007-2008 it was 216 (*PP.*, p. 3). A website, along with printed materials, provides information for prospective students. In addition, a series of open house events are held. (<http://slis.cua.edu/openhouse/index.cfm>). In

onsite discussions, several students and alumni mentioned the open house events as important in their selection. In general, students and alumni mention the potential for individual relationships with faculty and other students as well as the array of libraries in the DC areas as reasons for selecting CUA. Diversity efforts have increased the number of African American students from 19 in Fall 2003 to 20 in Fall 2008; Asian American students from 5 in Fall 2003 to 11 in Fall 2008; and Hispanic American students from 4 in Fall 2003 to 6 in Fall 2008. Total number of students in the program was 217 in Fall 2003 and 216 in Fall 2008. (*PP.*, pp. 166-7). The stated goal of the program related to diversity is “increasing diversity in the SLIS program by at least one student per year” (*PP.*, p. 161). Faculty members noted the progress that has been made and their hopes and plans to build on that success (Interviews, Faculty). Two new faculty hires should enhance recruitment efforts for a more diverse student body.

IV.2 The website of the program (<http://slis.cua.edu/>) is a primary source of information about the Program for students and the general public (*PP.*, p. 169). Separate and easily accessible sections were examined on the website in these areas: program goals, course information (and tracks of study), faculty, admissions requirements, financial aid, and evaluation of student performance (SLIS website.) Additional information could be provided: a curriculum calendar, detailed curricula vitae of faculty members, and student life/placement services. In addition, SLIS support staff take pride in being promptly responsive to inquiries regarding the program (Interview, Staff).

IV.3 The program requires a bachelor’s degree for admission. Admission to the program is based on a variety of other factors, with no stated minimum GPA or GRE score (*PP.*, p. 162 and <http://slis.cua.edu/admissions/faq.cfm>); however, GRE scores are required of applicants with a GPA below 3.0. Details of the admissions policy and instructions for faculty in applying the

admissions standards are included in the Program Presentation (*PP.*, p. 172 & Appendices IV. b and IV.j). This policy focuses on the totality of the individual, including cumulative grade point average, GRE score (if required), patterns of achievement in undergraduate study, strength of references, and strength of personal statement (*PP.* p. 172). Each of 12 student application folders examined on site (selected at random by a panel member) contained the elements described in the policy. Each application examined had been reviewed by at least two faculty members. On a student record with GPA lower than 3.0, the GRE score was present and faculty commented on the strength of the supporting letters of recommendation and on the personal essay (Documentation review onsite).

IV.4. The Program Presentation details courses offered by the program objective (*PP.*, p. 59). Planned programs of study are offered in eight areas: Cultural Heritage Information Management, Digital Libraries, Generalist, Information Architecture, Law Librarianship, Organization of Information, School Library Media, and User Services (<http://slis.cua.edu/MSinLS/coursesStudy.cfm>). Student achievement is measured by grading in courses, by the comprehensive examination, and by awards and scholarships (*PP.*, pp. 176-177). This includes the Rovelstad Scholarship, which provides a \$14,000 award (Budget documentation onsite). In addition, there is a SLIS Student of the Year honor. Full-time faculty serving as advisors provides guidance; counseling is provided by University services (*PP.*, pp. 178-179). Students questioned onsite and electronically indicated that advising was helpful and sufficient. Placement services are indirectly, yet effectively, provided by practica, internships, independent study, and library association activities (*PP.*, pp. 179-180 and conversation with alumni). Alumni were particularly positive about the rich diversity of practica and internships available in the DC area. Students are also directed to University Careers Services (examination

of website). A newly upgraded staff position will be responsible for student life from recruitment through placement (Interview, Program Staff). Students and alumni, including recent alumni, in comments to the panel by email and in person described the ease of developing a plan of study. Several students mentioned the flexibility of the program in meeting needs for specific courses to be offered. One recent graduate compared the program with another professional degree program from which she had graduated by saying, “it was clear to me from the beginning and through the program that the faculty’s goal for me was a profession—not simply a degree.”

IV.5. The Program hosts a student association: Association of Graduate Library and Information Science Students (AGLISS). In addition, there are student chapters of Special Libraries Association and the American Society for Information Science and Technology; a student chapter of the Society of American Archivists is forthcoming. (*PP.*, pp. 180). Bulletin boards in the hallways provide information to students about these chapters and other library organizations including the American Library Association, the Music Library Association, Art Library Association of North America, and others. Students serve on a variety of SLIS committees: Dean Search Committee 2007, Curriculum Standard Committee, Facilities Standard Committee, Student Standard Committee, Failing Grades Committee, and Technology Committee (*PP.*, p. 183). In discussion with students, alumni, and the faculty advisor to two student groups, the panel heard details of student involvement. One student explained that when she was unable to attend a SLIS committee meeting of which she was a member, the faculty members changed the standing time of the meeting to accommodate her schedule.

IV.6. Faculty gather information from students by surveys, course evaluations, and analysis of comprehensive examinations (*PP.*, p. 184, and examined onsite) for assessing student

achievement and program development. The Program has undertaken many changes since the arrival of Dean Kelley; using processes established as part of overall strategic planning here, the effectiveness of these changes will need to be evaluated over time.

Standard V. Administrative and Financial Support.

Administration

V.1. The governance of the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS), like all academic units at the University, is guided by university policies for faculty and staff compensation and admission standards. The School has autonomy for curriculum, selection and promotion of faculty, fiscal management, and selection of students within parameters set by the university (*PP.*, p. 189). These parameters apply consistently to all schools within the university. (*PP.*, p. 188)

V.2. The Dean and one faculty member serve on the Faculty Senate; representation is relative to faculty size (*PP.*, p. 189). In recent years, one SLIS faculty member has served a term on the university's Committee on Appointments and Promotion for Graduate Studies (Interview, Dean of Graduate Studies). Interdisciplinary cooperation is manifested in the School's joint degree offerings with six departments on campus (*PP.*, p. 200).

V.3. SLIS is administered by Dean and Associate Provost Kimberly Kelley. Dean Kelley began her tenure in 2007 and in 2008 was appointed Associate Provost for University Libraries in addition to her faculty-leadership role in the School. Dean Kelley is an experienced administrator who previously had served as Vice Provost and Dean of Academic Resources and Services at University of Maryland University College. The Dean reports to the University Provost and is a member of the provost's leadership team as a result of her appointment as Associate Provost of Libraries (*PP.*, p. 203). This appointment is characterized as a leadership

role to provide vision and strategic planning for the library; the management of the library is the responsibility of the interim director (Interview, Interim Library Director). The Provost expressed his ambition to see the library transformed into an environment that will better serve undergraduate students as well as becoming a “21st century” research library. This has been a more expensive alternative than merely appointing a new University Librarian. (Interview, Provost) One intention of appointing the Dean to the Vice Provost position is to for the library to benefit from the expertise available in the SLIS faculty as well as to provide the SLIS faculty with opportunities for experimentation (Interview, Provost). A senior SLIS faculty member describes the new relationship between SLIS and the library as facilitating the library becoming something of a “sandbox” for SLIS faculty, for student projects and research (Interview, Faculty).

The university administration, including the President, the Provost, and the Dean of Graduate Studies all spoke highly of the dean of SLIS and identified her leadership as exemplary. Further, the ERP observed that all university chief administrators demonstrated knowledge of the SLIS faculty and their research, the SLIS curriculum, and potential directions for future development in both curriculum and research, especially in such areas as health informatics, legal information and information systems (Interviews, President, Provost, Dean of Graduate Studies). All three senior administrators described the renewal of SLIS as the university’s exemplar for its graduate programs, especially Nursing and Social Work.

The School’s Advisory Committee members cited several examples of direct input to the program. Examples included the development of a “Career Day,” recommendations related to the description and title of courses in the legal librarianship specialization, improvement of bandwidth and installation of wireless access in Marist Hall, and discussion of a recent proposal

for a post master's certificate in library human resource management (Interview, Advisory Committee representatives). Members of the advisory committee, prior to their appointment to the advisory committee by the School, reported that they were involved intensively in the search for the new dean and expressed satisfaction that their voices were heard in the process. Among several examples of the dean's initiatives toward enhancing the intellectual environment of the School are the SLIS Colloquium series and a new annual research day. Attendance at these sessions has ranged from seven to 110 (email communication, Dean). The School's *Working Plan* identifies milestones for additional continuing education program development by 2010 as well as implementation of a mentoring plan for faculty scheduled for implementation in Fall 2009 (*Working Plan*, p. 18). . The Dean provides mentoring for junior faculty through monthly meetings to discuss progress toward specific goals. (Interview, Faculty Members).

V. 4. Four permanent full-time staff whose roles and responsibilities address the academic schedule, recruitment, student services including financial aid, assist the Dean. In addition, one temporary staff and a .25 FTE student employee provide administrative office support (*PP.*, p.210). The program is guided by the work of 16 committees (*PP.*, p. 200). Six SLIS committees have been *ad hoc* related to preparation of the self-study for accreditation (Interview, Dean).

Financial Support.

V. 5. The School's reported actual expenditures for 2004-2007 were stable at a total expenditure of approximately \$1.4 million per year (*PP.*, p. 194). 2007-08 expenditures show an increase of more than \$100 K for a total of approximately \$1.56 million (Dean, e-mail correspondence March 6, 2009). Note: this figure updates information provided in the self-study that did not include the entire fiscal year. The increase in salaries and wages from 2006-07 to 2007-08 was nearly \$175 K. A modest decline in actual operating expenditures in the same time

frame was attributed to negotiations that resulted in a reduction in costs for classroom space in northern Virginia (Interview, Dean). Budget projections for the coming year suggest a stable budget—based on an assumption of a stable enrollment (Interview, Dean; Interview, Provost).

The base budget for the School is derived primarily from tuition revenues (*PP.*, p. 191). Approximately 68% of the university's budget is tuition-based. (*PP.*, p. 192), rather than endowment-driven as many private institutions are. In addition, the School is allowed to generate revenue through off-campus and summer programs. This funding stream accounts for approximately 45% of the School's budget (Interview, Dean). The School also has a "reserve account" for funds provided through revenue-sharing with the university from donations and gifts. (*PP.*, p. 217). Finally, the Dean has authority to shift resources between the libraries and the School (*PP.*, p. 217).

V.6. Median faculty salaries at \$61,801 compare equitably to others within the university and compare favorably to those in the School's ALISE geographic region (Dean e-mail correspondence, February 26, 2009).

Students receive financial aid on the same basis as students from other units; discount rates for LIS students are in line with discount rates for other graduate programs at the university (*PP.*, p. 193). For 2008, the program provided a total of \$1,758,308 in aid. (*PP.*, p. 223). The average award for full-time students was just under \$30K. The School has entered into agreements with area school districts to provide reduced tuition for students becoming school librarians. An IMLS grant has supported **employees** from the Washington DC school district for educating school librarians.

V.7. Travel funds for faculty have trended upward since 2005 from a total of \$10,000 to a total of \$29,300 for 2008. For 2008, these funds were distributed equitably among faculty

ranging from \$3,800 to \$4,300 per faculty member (Dean e-mail correspondence February 26, 2009)

V.8. The School's *Working Plan* sets milestones to be met and provides timelines for meeting them. The Strategic Planning Committee (*Working Plan*, pp. 26-29) is responsible for monitoring activity and progress in such areas as entrepreneurial strategies for financing; supporting distance education and expanding delivery modalities; enhancing financial support for students; ensuring that student records are incorporated into the university's records center; continuing the enhancement of the intellectual environment of the School.

Standard VI: Physical Resources and Facilities

VI.1. Physical resources include facilities for classes, meetings, faculty offices, production, group work, and other activities common to campus life. Similar facilities are available for off-campus students at many sites and through web-based access. A significant IT infrastructure supplies online capabilities through wifi access, web sites, email, etc. This enhances the increased use of blended courses that combine online capabilities with classroom experiences. The LIS program is housed primarily in Marist Hall, a multi-story historic building with classrooms, offices and computer labs. The program also has equitable use of other campus facilities for classrooms as well as the campus library. A major school asset is the Information Commons, a multipurpose facility key for a wide variety of IT functions including multimedia and media production, as well as access to digital and web based resources, and for its accessibility for differently-abled persons. Off campus classrooms are more limited, as might be expected, though the six examples described in Table VI.3 (*PP.*, p. 232), offer acceptable technological capability and accessibility (Interviews, Students).

VI.2. On campus and off, the result of these resources and facilities is an acceptable

learning and research environment for students and faculty. Of special note, the Information Commons has significant meeting and presentation capabilities as well as access to essential library services including digital collections, interlibrary loan, and access to campus computer labs. Indeed, one lab is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week (*PP.*, p. 241), while a portable electronic cart” (*PP.*, p. 230) provides still more functionality, including loan of laptops (Interview, Program Staff). Technical support for this environment is provided by the Center for Planning and Information Technology (CPIT). Business operations are managed via four PeopleSoft systems.

VI.4. Staff and Services are available and accessible. For example the library collection of 1.3 million items is open 101.5 hours every week and is staffed with a dedicated library science librarian. A wide range of IT and multimedia resources are provided for the program as a part of the university. According to the Director of the CUA Center for Information Technology and Policy, this includes individualized training for faculty. The director also discussed the program’s current contract with BlackBoard, and membership in NITLE (National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education). NITLE supports Marratech, a web based teleconferencing system used, for example, to access speakers for classes virtually and offers professional development for faculty and staff (Interviews, Program Staff). Workshops are also offered for students (Interview, Information Commons Staff and on-site materials). The Information Commons on the 1st floor of Marist Hall is open every afternoon, and for four days, until 9 PM. The availability, nature and accessibility of this center are particularly important as a source of assistive technology and as a meeting facility because the upper floors of Marist hall lack elevator access. Accessibility issues caused by this situation are addressed with a mixture of other fully accessible spaces, scheduling classes or meetings in buildings that are accessible

(observed on class visit to LSC555), and administrative accommodation.

VI.5. Planning and evaluation processes reveal a broad-based systematic approach. The School has a Facilities Committee and a Technology Committee. The university utilizes a Technology Strategic Plan as well as Scheduling Workgroup that created a Classroom Space Technology Support Plan. These actions along with student surveys executed in 2008 (*PP*, p.185 & 238) reveal a process that has more than one approach to planning and evaluation, and these approaches are open to the input of various interested parties. For example, “The *Technology Strategic Plan* was developed and refined with input from students, staff, and full-time and adjunct faculty. It incorporates results of the SLIS Technology Survey (of current students and alumni)...” (*PP.*, p. 267). Similarly, the SLIS Technology Committee includes faculty, staff and students (*PP.*, p. 265) Student survey results suggested some concern about Internet access at off-campus sites (*PP.*, p. 264), but interviews with of-campus students indicated satisfaction with facilities and the resources overall. Similarly, the survey shows satisfaction with the Information Commons (*PP.*, p.238).

The School encourages faculty (full-time and adjuncts) to integrate technology into their courses. It has an established procedure, through the School’s Technology Committee for soliciting faculty needs and suggestions twice a year and a web-based request form that faculty can use at any time to request new technology.

~~A needs analysis survey from Associate Clinical Professor David Shumaker addresses faculty technology needs twice annually.~~ Finally, the process addressing physical resources and facilities needs has grown into a comprehensive one involving the Technology Committee, the Facilities Planning Committee, CPIT, surveys, and needs assessment instruments. Despite all this and the great strides taken to address accessibility in the program, the possibility of addressing

accessibility for the 2nd floor of Marist Hall remains a long-term possibility (*PP.*, p. 262). Indeed the Facilities Planning Committee will begin to address long-term changes this semester at what may be a fortuitous moment as conversations with the president and provost indicated there are options on the horizon for physically moving the program to a new campus location.

Summary

SLIS has engaged in an intensive planning process that is tied to the university's mission. This resulted in a new statement of goals and program objectives, complete with educational outcomes that are revisited in the rubric for the required comprehensive examination. All constituencies have been engaged in this planning activity, and university administrators are well informed and supportive of the School's direction. In short, this is a substantively renewed program. Attendance and participation in site visit events by faculty, university administration, alumni, employers, advisory board members, and students evidence engagement of all constituencies in the School. The curriculum has been carefully assessed for its alignment with the standards and with the competencies of eleven major professional societies. Further, a process is in place to continue review of the curriculum including the development of a three-year calendar for its delivery. While largely a young faculty, they are well qualified and show appropriate progress through the university's tenure process, having succeeded at the benchmarks for review at first, second and fourth years, respectively. It will be important to ensure that they have the time and support to continue toward tenure for the sake of stability in the School. The Program hosts open houses, seeks partnerships among employers and agencies in the area, and uses its web presence to recruit students and demonstrates creativity in assisting students in identifying financial aid. Discount rates are consistent with those across the university's graduate programs. Financial support, largely tuition-driven, from the University is

stable; salaries are competitive in the region, based on ALISE data. The challenges of historic Marist Hall have been addressed creatively with the investment in the Information Commons as well as class scheduling and use of blended course formats. University administrators indicate that relocation of the School is high on the list of priorities on space planning, and several scenarios have been proposed.