EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL REPORT

on

THE MASTER OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES PROGRAM

at

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

by

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Introduction

On 14-17 October 2008, the external review panel (ERP) acting on behalf of the ALA/COA visited the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. Prior to the visit, data in the school’s program presentation (hereinafter referred to as PP) was supplemented with answers to questions posed by the ERP in a response dated 30 September 2008.

The members of the on site ERP arrived on 14 October. A few of those who arrived early were able to tour the campus. The entire on site group met that evening for a coordinating meeting and dinner. On site, the panel examined documentation referenced in the PP and additional data assembled at the panel's request, such as student evaluations of faculty, budget and salary information, and syllabi going back several years.

The bulk of the visit was devoted to numerous meetings with faculty, staff, students, alumni, employers, and other interested parties. Meetings were held with several faculty members (David Lankes, Megan Oakleaf, Ruth Small, Susan Dischiave, Jeff Rubin, Renee Franklin, Jian Qin, Kenneth Lavender, Barbara Kwasnik, and Murali Venkatesh); students (Ph.D. students, local masters students, and distance education masters students); school administration (Jeffrey Stanton, Robert Heckman Blythe Bennett, and Susan Bonzi) including the school Dean, Elizabeth Liddy; local employers; alumni; university librarians; and university administrators (Associate Provost Bruce Kingma and Vice Chancellor and Provost Eric Spina).

Interviews with students were conducted in person for the group of 30 local masters students and 5 Ph.D. students in addition to a conference call with the distance education students. In addition to visiting two on site courses, the panel was able to view the Syracuse distance learning environment prior to the visit through several accounts that provided both faculty and student views of the learning environment. This report notes facts, strengths, and concerns identified by the panel.

The panel was impressed by the level of collegiality and support that administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and employers provided for the panel during their visit in both responding to questions and to requests for information. The panel appreciated the assistance and candor of all those involved and the gracious reception and support afforded the panel during the
The MSLIS program director (Scott Nicholson) and the administrative staff of the school were well organized for the visit and accommodating to the panel’s requests.

**Analysis**

**Standard I. Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

The Syracuse University master of science in library and information science (MSLIS) is one of the five degree programs in the School of Information Studies, an interdisciplinary information school that has been a leader in the i-School movement since the mid-1990s. This program has evolved from over a century of tradition in library education. The program is represented in its various aspects through a wide variety of unique, contextual settings including the school’s goals, “faculty-of-one” model, Faculty Planning Advisory Groups (FPAG), standing committees, research and development centers, collaboration with other schools through the Web-based Information Science Education (WISE) consortium, and its unique mix of on site face-to-face and distance education courses that integrate technology throughout the curriculum.

As a flagship school on campus, the school’s interdisciplinary approach is mirrored in the MSLIS program which is lead by its program directors (Scott Nicholson, and Ruth Small for School Media Program), in concert with the respective faculty via FPAG. The program participates actively in the school’s leadership in the “Faculty of One” context to provide innovative, cutting edge and entrepreneurial opportunities in education across disciplines to students and researchers.

The mission of the MSLIS program shares the vision, values, and goals of the School of Information Studies, which are in turn consistent with the university’s vision statement, “Scholarship in Action.” Within the auspice of “Scholarship in Action,” the mission of the MSLIS program is prominently displayed on the web site and in the printed catalog, and embraces both the university and knowledge as a public good, moving research into engagement with public and the world. The mission of the MSLIS program fosters quality education in support of the culture and mission of the school and the mission of the university. Consistent with the values of the parent institution, the MSLIS program presents its own conceptualization of “educating leaders for the twenty-first century,” realized through five areas that represent the major MSLIS program goals and learning outcomes:

- philosophy, principles, and ethics of librarianship;
• information resources;
• information services;
• librarianship in a broader information society; and
• professional communication and leadership skills.

Prominently displayed on the web site and in the printed catalog is an assessment of the outcomes in these core categories in terms of fostering quality education.

The program outcomes are measured through the outcomes of the core courses, consisting of 19 credit hours in three categories. These courses include the Introductory core (IST 511 and IST 601) category, three courses in the Library services and information resources category (IST 605, IST 613, and IST 616), and two courses in the management and policy core category (618 and 614 or 661 for school library media specialists). A matrix mapping each of the learning outcomes in the core courses to the standards (PP, p. 59) is considered as evidence for matching the MSLIS program outcomes. There are a variety of planning activities including diverse forums involving program FPAG, “Town Hall” meetings with the students, and different advisory groups involving relevant constituencies (individual students, student representatives, outside or external stakeholders, and all full time faculty members). A variety of measurement methods are used to assess the program’s responsiveness to its constituents and its values including core course outcome assessment, student learning-outcome evaluations, alumni input, faculty course evaluation review and revision, internship supervisor evaluations, survey of alumni, student entry and exit surveys, and student course evaluations. Student representatives attend faculty committee meetings, and communication channels are kept open for discussion and decision making. The respective constituencies review the program, and its goals and objectives to determine how and whether they are achieved. In line with the university’s philosophy, the program’s strategic action and activities facilitate continual improvements to the program and enable implementations of opportunities for advancement. The faculty members regularly review the program goals, values, and outcomes assessment to foster quality education through faculty retreats, meetings, and committee activities.

The program’s strategic action and activities integrate planning as a natural day-to-day workflow. Two faculty-wide planning sessions per year, one led by the administration and the other led by faculty, assist in continual improvement, development, assessment and advancement. The program uses a strategic action plan based on the Katzer model, a process
modeled on measured growth for very high quality education, where the rule is “don’t do anything we can’t do very well.”

The program is permeated with a commitment to the ethos of interdisciplinary scholarly approaches, distance learning, and deliberation of the program in pioneering and innovative modes with robust technological infrastructure. The integration of this forward looking approach to the MSLIS program is evident in the following comment from a student:

“I chose to come to this program because they were so encouraging and open to different ideas. I think that by allowing the LIS students to choose their own courses and not assign themselves a track, with the exception of School Media, that the program creates stronger and better students and librarians.”

A major strength of the program is shown through the research expertise, reputation, and knowledge of the faculty. The school has high visibility on campus and in the larger professional and academic world, and the faculty appears to recognize representing the school as an ongoing task. The MSLIS program reiterates its commitment to research as a basic component of scholarship as a public good with major outreach activities, providing the students opportunity to engage with the world in a scholarly way.

The program encourages students and faculty to be leaders, modeling their behavior in the ways the school has developed to promote interdisciplinary approaches into a larger information universe than simply viewing things as just libraries or information. Students in the program learn the role librarianship plays by working in groups to develop proposals in conjunction with students from other master degree programs. One benefit of this is that it helps students throughout the school develop respect for disciplines other than their own. Activities such as these, the interdisciplinary curriculum, and the “Faculty of One” model provide students with opportunities to develop their leadership skills and professional values including unique concepts where this learning is contextualized by completion of either an internship or an independent study. In these program completion activities, students are encouraged to create a portfolio and network at professional events and conferences. The program assists in this by providing a yearlong student membership for participation in select professional associations.

The mission, goals and outcomes of the MSLIS program indicate dynamic, creative and flexible responses to change and the school’s evolving efforts appear to sustain its successful
integration into the i-School framework. The program goals and outcomes appear to have identified the core values in preparing students for careers as librarians, information professionals and scholars.

**Standard 2. Curriculum**

The Syracuse i-School approach of distinctive professional programs which are part of an interdisciplinary, interconnected whole is reflected in the MSLIS curriculum. Through this approach, the MSLIS program maintains its library science grounding enhanced by perspectives from other two masters programs. LIS students thus have access to the interdisciplinary strengths and breadth of the curriculum, while at the same time benefiting from the specialized expertise of LIS faculty.

The 36 credit hour program has 19 required credits, comprised of two gateway courses, an LIS resources core, and a management and policy core. The program provides a matrix (PP, p. 59) which maps the program core to the COA standards areas and shows that each standard is covered multiple times, with the exception of preservation, which can be taken as an elective. The “Exit Experience” requirement can be met by a three-credit internship, which is the recommended option, or through an independent study, for students with “significant library experience”. There is no thesis requirement or comprehensive exam.

In constructing their degree programs, students begin with the core curriculum, and tailor the program through their choice of specialized courses, independent study options, and internships. Students are assigned an advisor and noted that the process requires them to be proactive in seeking advice, but that help is given willingly and faculty are very responsive and accommodating to students’ concerns. This is true of all faculty but especially so for the program director. The advising materials available on the web were considered especially useful for distance education students.

The school offers three modes of instruction delivery: traditional on-campus, distance learning, and a summer program of intensive courses. The modes of delivery are seen as complementary and are considered as different ways of delivering the MSLIS curriculum, rather than as self-contained programs. This was reinforced by comments in a teleconference discussion with the distance education students. Both first and second year students were consistent in their enthusiasm for the quality of education they were receiving. Students were most strongly appreciative of the personalized attention they received from instructors. They
liked the various modes of instruction and found these courses to be equally as challenging and rewarding as face to face classes. They also liked the required on site boot camp and the opportunity to mingle with students from their own and other programs, and to meet face to face with the faculty.

On-site and distance education students who met with or talked with the ERP were enthusiastic in their endorsement of the core courses (PP, p. 57). On the whole, they liked the balance of theory and practice, the way in which the courses engaged them with librarians, and the user-centric focus of the courses. Students were also strongly supportive of the interdisciplinary nature of the core, and appreciated the different perspectives offered by the other disciplinary areas. Additionally, experiential opportunities are incorporated into the program through the required three-credit internship experience. Internship supervisors who talked to the ERP stated their enthusiasm for the internship program and how much they appreciated having the students and the ideas they bring to the experience. One measure of approval is the frequency of job offers that follow the experience.

Each of the school’s degree programs maintains its disciplinary and professional integrity through its own program director, faculty program advisory group, and faculty who teach the degree-specific content. In the MSLIS program, this comprises 8 full time tenure-track faculty members and one professor of practice; each has library credentials through degree work or life experience. Students said that they felt the faculty members were well qualified, and that the core courses in particular were taught by experts in the field. At the same time the program also benefits from being situated in an interdisciplinary environment, utilizing the expertise of faculty whose areas complement LIS. Students can draw from this variety of expertise in the common core classes they take with students from the other two masters programs and through the electives across the program which are open to them.

The “Faculty of One” concept was reinforced in discussions with students, graduates, faculty, employers, staff and the university administration. Students frequently mentioned that the concept allowed them to benefit from courses offered in other areas of the programs; they felt comfortable and welcome in taking courses in these areas. A faculty member outside the MSLIS program who taught a course with large numbers of LIS students explained how he stressed the importance of skills centered on both the human as well as technical areas, and the contributions that LIS students can bring from their own experiences. Graduates said that the interdisciplinary
balance and the integration of LIS with other disciplines was successfully achieved. A number of students commented that it was this feature of the program which attracted them to the program. They appreciated the opportunity to work together with students from the other program areas, and in some cases, were provided insights into other information professions.

Through the access that students have to courses in the other masters programs, there is a wide array of interdisciplinary course offerings. There are also formal dual degree programs with the School of Management and the School of Public Communications. In addition, it was explained that the curriculum allows other cooperative degree programs, although these are not formally spelled out.

The school has developed a curriculum planning process in which outcomes-based assessment plays a critical role (PP, p. 78). The instructors of individual courses and the FPAG group work to develop a set of measurable outcomes, with core courses mapped to program outcomes. The program outcomes are used as a tool to review progress by the individual instructors, the FPAG, students, and alumni. During the ERP site visit, we talked to instructors about how the planning process works, and they gave examples from their courses. The learning outcomes are made available on the school’s website, catalog, and program handbooks.

A source of practitioner input is the outcomes assessment from the supervisors of student internships. Students provide input through the course evaluations completed at the end of each term. In addition, student representatives to the FPAG gather input from their peers and submit this input to the FPAG meeting. An MSLIS “Town Hall” meeting and an MSLIS wiki offer other opportunities for student input. An alumni survey has been used to identify areas of improvement, and information on how the program is meeting its objectives. Over the years, input from faculty, practitioners and alumni have been used to reshape the content of the core to reflect changes in the profession.

The school has recently created the position of director of instructional quality. The director’s responsibilities include working with Ph.D. students to enhance teaching, leading a discussion forum for faculty on pedagogical issues, leading the planning for curriculum mapping, and implementing pre- and post-testing instruments for courses.

The faculty’s strength in research provides a rich opportunity to incorporate research into class work, as well as opportunities for master degree students to gain first-hand experience in research as research assistants. For example, research assistant positions give some school media
students direct exposure to research projects, and faculty also have an opportunity to incorporate research into directed field experiences and coursework. The program does not have a masters degree thesis requirement or option. An research course, which is scheduled every few years, is offered at the masters level. Some students and faculty recommended that a thesis option be added to the curriculum; the program director indicated they were actively considering this issue.

In all the discussions with students, no significant concerns emerged regarding the curriculum. Students expressed satisfaction and frequently enthusiasm for the content of the curriculum and felt that they were being well prepared for the workplace. A consistent theme was the personalized attention that students received from instructors, both in the online and on site programs. There were a few suggestions for improvement such as the recommendation of courses, or minor changes in the advising process. Also, students felt that when they did have problems or suggestions, that these were promptly attended to by the program director.

**Standard 3. Faculty**

As the School of Information Studies is not based on a traditional conception of individual departments, assignment of faculty to the MSLIS program is more fluid than might be found in other programs. Faculty organization at the school is firmly rooted in the “Faculty of One” concept. This organizational model takes a holistic view of the school, its faculty, and its students as is operationalized by seeking out faculty members who can teach across boundaries within the school. As the dean and many faculty members mentioned, the school looks for the best person when hiring; hiring is not rigidly based on who can teach what but rather on what the faculty member can contribute to the school as a whole.

Instruction in all of the specialized degree programs, including the MSLIS program, draws upon the specialized faculty aligned with the program but at the same time draws from expertise in other degree programs. This aligns with a guiding principle in the “Faculty of One” model which is that both students and faculty benefit from broad exposure to the information professions as this exposure provides greater opportunities to both extend and enhance specific areas of interest. The validity of this approach was attested to by students, alumni, employers, and faculty repeatedly throughout the visit and demonstrated by the obvious respect that the faculty from the various degree programs have for each other. This is a distinct achievement and one that comes only from a clear vision and hard work.
Within the school, full time faculty may be classified as tenure/tenure-track, professors of practice, or research professors. Faculty in the tenure/tenure-track category balance teaching, research, and service. Professors of practice focus primarily on teaching and service and are expected to remain actively connected to the profession. Research professors typically work with the research centers and occasionally teach and serve on applicable committees. In the last academic year, 65% (26 members) of the faculty was tenured/tenure-track, 25% (10 members) were professors of practice, and 10% (4) were research professors (PP. p. 83).

Faculty members align themselves along broad areas of interest through the FPAGs that are associated with each of the five major programs in the school (PP, p. 84). Membership in the FPAGs in the school is open and fluid, so any interested faculty member may participate in an FPAG at the level which is most appropriate for their individual circumstances. As the time of our visit, nine faculty members were regular attendees of the FPAG for the MSLIS program. This group accounts for approximately 23% of the full time faculty in the school. Approximately 20% of the credits within the school are for students in the MSLIS program. Within the MSLIS FPAG faculty, 56% are female and 22% are from traditionally underrepresented groups.

Faculty within the school meet the hiring policies of Syracuse University and represent a wide variety of backgrounds and research interests from the “traditional” areas of library science to emerging areas such as bibliomining, participatory librarianship, and gaming in libraries. The school does not have a separate review of qualifications for graduate faculty. That is, all faculty appointed are by default graduate faculty. While faculty may concentrate their teaching in certain areas or levels, most full time faculty teach courses at all levels in the program from undergraduate to doctoral level as well as in the certificate programs (PP. p. 87).

In general, the core curriculum of the MSLIS program, whether in face-to-face mode or through distance learning, is delivered by full time faculty in the school. In the last four academic years (2003-2007) 128 sections of core courses were taught by full time faculty, which represents 78.5% of all core course sections. In addition to teaching the majority of courses in the core, full time faculty members also teach elective courses when the course subject matter falls within the area of expertise of a full time faculty member. Part-time faculty members are mainly used in the MSLIS program as complements to the areas of strength of full time faculty members. In the 2007 school year, approximately 24 part-time faculty members were used to
Teach primarily elective courses such as Copyright Law in the Digital Age, Grant Writing and Fund Development, and Digital Information Retrieval Services.

The processes for hiring, promotion, and tenure at Syracuse (PP, Appendix R) are similar to those of other schools within Syracuse as well as other LIS and i-Schools in general. Teaching, research, and service activities are expected of all faculty members, although these requirements do vary depending on the particular category of faculty member (tenure/tenure-track, professor of practice, or research professor).

The school works proactively to ensure faculty success. All faculty members participate in a comprehensive program of constructive feedback and assessment. Junior faculty members also receive a third year review. Since the last ALA accreditation visit, eight faculty members have come up for tenure and all eight were successful. Additionally, four faculty members have been promoted to full professor since the last review. In the last 22 years, all faculty members who successfully made it through the third year review were granted tenure at year six. While several faculty members have left in the period since the last review, these departures were almost all related to personal reasons and not other factors.

Several faculty members mentioned the support the school provides for developing research agendas. Support for faculty travel ranges from 90% for junior faculty and 70% for tenured faculty for conferences where their papers are accepted. The travel funding model is flexible so that changes can be made midyear should a significant opportunity present itself.

Interaction and collaboration among faculty members was reported as well. A university-wide first year faculty program helps new faculty address common issues such as how to prepare for working with students and dealing with unexpected events in the classroom. While grant funded project proposals are encouraged, faculty are not required to obtain grant funding. Support for grant writing and application is provided at both the university level through the Office of Sponsored Research and within the school itself.

Given the nature of the school, there is a strong collaborative model throughout the program among faculty as well as between faculty and students. There are many opportunities for interaction that are facilitated by monthly brown-bag lunches, support for faculty travel, regular speaker series, once a semester faculty planning retreats, as well as others. The overall environment for faculty can be best summed up by a statement from a junior faculty member which was echoed in various ways by all the faculty members we spoke with – “people here are..."
genuinely interested in your success.” Based on our observations, we would concur with this statement.

The university’s employment policies related to anti-discrimination and anti-harassment are similar to those found in other universities. The school strives to achieve a diverse faculty, but ethnic diversity within the faculty is not at as high a level as the school would prefer it to be. Approximately one-third of the faculty members are from countries other than the US representing Canada, India, Korea, Mexico, and China. Faculty members spend sabbaticals and research time outside the US which helps promote an environment for bring multicultural perspectives into the classroom.

MSLIS faculty qualifications in designated teaching areas are demonstrated by their prior graduate level courses work (at both the masters and doctoral level), active research in areas related to librarianship and the information professions, as well as engagement with the library community through membership and active participation in professional groups such as American Library Association, Association of College and Research Libraries, Association for Library and Information Science Education, American Society for Information Science and Technology, International Association of School Librarians, Society of American Archivists, and Special Library Association (PP, Appendix T).

The faculty overall have a record of sustained accomplishment in research and other appropriate scholarship. Since the last review, the school has been awarded 172 external grants for sponsored research worth approximately $26 million (PP, p. 100). The faculty has an extensive record of engagement through scholarship which has been demonstrated in multiple ways: peer-reviewed articles, books and book chapters, articles oriented toward the practitioner, conference papers, as well as serving as peer-reviewers for various journals and conferences.

Within the MSLIS FPAG, the majority of the faculty members have an ALA-accredited master degree in library studies. Additionally, the majority of the members of this faculty group hold a terminal degree in library and information science or a closely aligned area such as information transfer and instructional design. Within the school overall, a broad range of disciplines are represented which provides an interdisciplinary environment for both students and faculty.

Academic planning is a school wide endeavor. Most programmatic and course changes begin at the program level. In most cases, a faculty member proposes a new course to the FPAG.
After deliberation, the idea goes to the school curriculum committee and is then referred to the school’s faculty as a whole. After this, the idea is forwarded to the University Senate curriculum committee and finally the Senate for approval. The process ensures that all of the faculty members are involved with the programs throughout the school.

The school has recently appointed a Director of Instructional Quality who coordinates the yearly program review that all core courses go through. Instructional quality is further developed through training of all instructors in outcomes assessment, working with Ph.D. students to enhance their teaching abilities, and the “syllabus club” where faculty can discuss issues related to course development.

Faculty assignment follows a model typical at most institutions. Teaching preferences are solicited from each faculty member and these are taken into account when planning course schedules. Faculty report that it is a rare occurrence that they are required to teach a course they would prefer not to. Adjunct faculty members are called upon as needed to teach specialty areas not represented within the expertise of the full time faculty.

Junior faculty members are shielded from extensive committee work and are encouraged to participate in other service activities at a modest level during their first few years. After the third-year review, tenure-track faculty members are eligible to take a research leave.

The typical tenured/tenure-track faculty member’s course load is to teach five courses a year – three in one semester and two in another; however, research faculty teach a 2/2 load. Opportunities to teach in the summer session are available and many faculty members use this as a mechanism for testing new course ideas and structures.

As previously mentioned, all faculty members participate in a formal, comprehensive assessment program every year. Every year, untenured and full time non-tenure track faculty members participate in a planning and evaluation session with the school’s personnel committee where teaching, research, and service activities are reviewed and constructively critiqued.

New faculty members are initially appointed for a three year period. During their first year, faculty members are assigned a formal mentor if they so desire. The process of mentoring and the role of the mentor in the first year are well defined. While the junior faculty we spoke with appreciated having this available, the majority of first year faculty choose a more informal mentoring process that evolves as collaborations and partnerships with more senior faculty develop. During the faculty member’s third year, the school’s personnel committee conducts a
review of the faculty member and provides a recommendation regarding reappointment to the Dean. The review panel members include all tenured faculty members, a representative of the non-tenured faculty, and a doctoral student representative.

Teaching effectiveness is evaluated via end-of-course student evaluations and, for junior faculty, peer visitation of class sessions. Student evaluations are considered during the tenure and promotion evaluation processes. For reappointment, tenure, and promotion reviews external evidence, such as recommendations from former students now in practice as well as external peer review, is used in making promotion and retention decisions.

**Standard 4. Students**

Evidence was gathered from the program presentation, appendices and interviews with both on- and off-campus students on October 15 and 16 respectively. Additionally, the panel reviewed the admission files for students currently enrolled in the program to ensure that policies and procedures are followed equitably.

The school uses several methods to recruit students (PP, p. 113) though the primary method is through the school’s website (http://ischool.syr.edu). Inquiries about the program are accepted via email, phone, and the web. By analyzing how students are discovering and inquiring about the program, the school is continuously modifying the techniques they use for recruitment.

The school follows the university policies on admissions. The school evaluates all candidates on their academic, intellectual and personal characteristics that would indicate success in the profession. The admissions process is well documented (http://ischool.syr.edu/prospective/graduate/graddeadlines.aspx) with a clearly stated calendar (http://ischool.syr.edu/prospective/graduate/admitdeadlines.aspx) for admission actions.

The program curriculum allows students to follow a program of study suited to their interest. The exception to this is students enrolled in the school media program, who do not have flexibility in their curriculum due to curriculum requirements of the state of New York. Additionally, as is the case in many other states, school media students must complete 100 hours of fieldwork and 300 hours of practica in order to graduate from the program. Students not specializing in school library media must complete an internship. The internship Supervisor provides an evaluation of the student which is used as a basis for determining the student’s grade; however, these internships are reviewed and evaluated by a faculty member as well.
Approximately two thirds of the student body is in the school’s distance education program, which is an integral part of the MSLIS program. Distance education students are integrated into the program by various technologies. For example, on site presentations at the school are streamed and archived through WebCT for later viewing or review. Given the demands of keeping a disbursed student body informed, distance education students rely on the website and its associated blogs, wikis, and listserves to stay informed about the program. While there is print material available, this is primarily used at library conferences, trade shows, alumni receptions, and school events. Students stay current with the program through the school’s discussion list as well as use the wiki and blog. Specifically, the wiki is used to disseminate faculty decisions on policy, provides a question and answer area for and by the students and contains an advising guide for those interested in the program, while the blog is used to communicate informational updates such as the program director’s video each semester that previews the next term’s electives.

While the school attempts to maintain a diverse student body, the number of minority students is approximately 15% of the total student population. The school is working on achieving greater diversity (PP, p. 116) but even at its current level, diversity at the school is relatively consistent with levels found in similar programs.

As noted, there is limited financial assistance available in the school, but the school does have several awards and programs for students with diverse backgrounds. For example, the school has obtained funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to support the PLUS (Preparing Librarians for Urban Schools) program (PP, p. 117) to train school media specialists. One of the goals of this program is to increase diversity in the profession, specifically in school library media. The students in this program are typically experienced teachers; approximately 75% of them have six or more years of teaching experience. Once they complete the program, these students are eligible to become qualified librarians in the urban schools of New York. Furthermore, there is a scholarship, the Milstein Scholarship, specifically for New York City teachers who want to become librarians.

Guidance, counseling and placement assistance are available to students both through the school and Syracuse University’s Center for Career Services. These services are equivalent to services offered at comparable programs.
The school uses several methods to solicit student input into the school and its programs both through formal and informal means. An example of formal input is that students have a representative on the MSLIS program advisory group. In addition, students serve on several other standing committees within the school. In talking with the students, they overwhelming felt that this involvement helps ensure they are involved in the working of the school and that their experience at the school is a satisfying and productive experience.

The school explicitly fosters active participation in the profession by providing students with a no cost membership in either ALA/NYLA or SLA during their first year of study. Within the school, there are several organizations in which students can participate (PP, p. 124) all of which help develop a sense of community and professional connections. Some of the groups include: ALA/SLA student group, ISTGO (School of Information Studies Graduate Organization), Black and Latino Information Studies Support (BLISTS), Women in Information Technology (WIT), as well as student participation in the accreditation review process. It was clearly evident the school encourages student involvement in on- and off-campus social and educational events.

**Standard V. Administration and Finance**

The school has maintained its autonomy as a stand-alone unit within the 13 schools and colleges of the university after more than 100 years. Furthermore, its move to the newly renovated Hinds Hall, located on the main quad of the university indicates its importance as an integral unit within the university. The Responsibility Center Management (RCM) budget model used by the university means that each school receives the majority of its income, other than grant funding and income from endowed funds, from the tuition dollars generated where 25% of the tuition monies go to the unit of enrollment and 75% go to the unit of instruction. In this model, the school pays its share of university-wide expenses. According to Vice Chancellor Eric Spina, this model rewards entrepreneurial behavior and the school is the poster child for how this process works to a school’s advantage. According to Dean Liddy, the school believes this RCM budgeting model orchestrates their autonomy. She demonstrated this by citing the example that they need not go to the Provost for permission to hire a new faculty member. Discussions with the faculty and with Dean Liddy and the presentation of policies for the creation and modification of its curriculum, faculty selection and promotion, and student recruitment and
selection further demonstrate the school’s autonomy in these important decision making processes.

Appendix AA (the school’s organizational chart), Appendix BB (relevant staff position descriptions), and Appendix CC (the school’s budget) in the program presentation provide evidence that adequate resources and administrative support are provided. Support staff positions were described in additional documentation available on site and discussions with support staff indicated the breadth and depth of the assistance provided to faculty and administration.

All members of the school have opportunities for representation and participation on university advisory and policy making bodies. Several examples are cited. Evidence in the form of a listing of faculty participation in university service is detailed in Appendices E and S (PP). The various student organizations and groups formed in the school are described in the Students (PP, Part III, Chapter 4) chapter and it is also stated that students were active in development of the program presentation for accreditation. While students do unpaid internships as their exit requirements, and many campus-based students do these internships in one of the libraries on campus or in the museum, evidence of student participation outside of the school in university-wide service and organizations is minimal. Support staff are very active on university wide committees: one staff member serves on the College Relation Council, which is responsible for undergraduate recruitment and admissions and the Graduate Council which reviews all issues related to Graduate School programs; another staff member serves on the NCATE Assessment Council; and yet another staff member serves on the Blackboard Steering Committee, the SU-Wide Collaboration Committee, The Elluminate Live! Pilot Project, the WorkLife Committee and the SU Learning Management Committee.

Interdisciplinary interaction is repeatedly mentioned by faculty and students in the program in terms of collaboration with other units on campus. A new project that will involve students from the school with students from the College of Visual and Performing Arts to redesign the visual appeal of some areas within the school was described. Furthermore, university wide participation was high in the quilt project that commemorated the move of the school to its new building and the contributions of former dean Ray von Dran, and the faculty was pleased with the connections with other schools that resulted from this project.
There is a strong administrative relationship with the other academic units on campus being forged as out of a total of thirteen deans on campus, five are new this year. Dean Liddy indicated that they frequently “hang out” together. The RCM budget model removes the competition for scarce resources from these relationships allowing collaborative efforts to move to the forefront. Furthermore, Syracuse University has been working with JP Morgan Chase, who is planning to invest 30 million dollars over the next ten years to fund interdisciplinary collaborative research and curriculum development efforts at the University. These investments have already begun to promote new initiatives and relationships with other Schools and Colleges in the University.

It is evident that the school’s executive officer has title, status, and authority comparable to heads of similar units at the parent institution. The CV of the dean, (PP, supplemental electronic material) provides evidence of the Dean’s academic qualifications, their similarity to those required of faculty, and that she has the background and experience to fulfill the responsibilities of the position. Conversations with Dean Liddy revealed her leadership skills and administrative abilities in addition to her strong knowledge of the field. Examples of the nurturing of the intellectual environment created by Dean Liddy were provided. She stays in tune with what everyone is doing and works hard to assure that the load is being carried equally. She tries to make sure that opportunities won’t tax the same faculty over and over, but if somebody really wants to do something, she will let them. She encourages them to know when to say no. She is very careful to set things up to avoid faculty burnout, for example, two directors were appointed and were given a course buyout rather than doing yet a few more things by committee.

The school is actively involved in many projects with community institutions including public libraries, and students can be a part of these projects. Students are socialized into the field by participating in these projects and also through involvement in research and class projects and internships. Local employers and internship supervisors are eager to have interns from the school and many times these internships result in a permanent position for the student.

The Organization Chart shown in Appendix AA (PP), the staff position descriptions shown in Appendix BB (PP), as well as additional descriptions provided on site detail administrative and staff support for the executive officer and the faculty of the school. In total, this information provides evidence that the staff contributes to fulfillment of the school’s
mission, program goals, and objectives. The support staff is very much supportive of the “Faculty of One” model stating that it is really true: this really happens and that it spills over into the program and students are able to see how everything operates hand in hand. The support staff is very excited to be working with the school and happily describe how their work supports the administration, faculty, and students. There is very much a connection between all areas of the school and it is evident that all are working together to support the school’s mission, goals, and objectives.

The school exercises a decision making process in which the executive officer and faculty exercise collaborative efforts. Decisions pass through various committees, eventually ending up presented at the monthly faculty meeting which is evidence of an evaluative process. The FPAGs open up to solicit advice from interested faculty and staff across the school. The committee structure of the school shows interlinked relationships which enhance the evaluative process.

Appendix CC (school’s fiscal year 2007 operating budget) shows sufficient support to develop and maintain LIS education. The school is in a healthy budget position in that it uses an RCM model to finance its various units. As noted elsewhere, in the RCM model schools keep the income they generate. The school had a surplus of 3.1 million dollars this year which was the highest carryover of any school on campus. This was due to increased enrollment as a result of aggressive marketing and providing support to prospective students. The school has about three million dollars in endowed accounts. There are four persons working with financials and the budget person does modeling and works out different scenarios for planning purposes.

The salaries of the executive officer, faculty, and other staff are equitable and sufficient to attract, support and retain personnel. Faculty salaries within the school are well above the university averages when compared on a rank-by-rank basis.

Research funding is generated through faculty initiative and external sources. The school’s travel policy is very well detailed and information is provided in Appendix DD and in Table 19 (PP, p. 136). Leaves with pay are available in accordance with university guidelines and the school’s personnel policy. Student financial aid is funded through the school’s RCM budget process according to the program presentation.

The school maintains a collaborative planning process and both administration and faculty take responsibility for planning activities for the twice-yearly planning days. This
process is guided by the Chancellor’s “Scholarship in Action” vision plan (http://www.syracuse.edu/chancellor/vision/index.html). From this it can be seen that the university as a whole is involved in planning, and is thinking strategically, but in ways that are different from the traditional kinds of “strategic planning.” Instead, Chancellor Cantor’s focus for the university is on action-oriented goals that help make a practical difference in promoting the public good. It is clear the school’s planning process is consistent with that vision. Consequently, students are involved in the planning groups and the school staff is also very involved in all aspects of the school including serving on many school committees, as previously discussed.

**Standard VI. Physical Resources & Facilities**

The School of Information Studies now occupies newly renovated Hinds Hall located in the university’s main quad. The decision to locate the school in the heart of the campus seems to have been very deliberate and in line with its status as one of the university’s signature schools. The May 2008 opening of this new facility provides the school with a facility of 46,000 assignable square feet of space to meet instructional, research and service programs for its residential and distance students. Space assignments include offices for faculty members, classrooms of various sizes with differing levels of technological capabilities, research space, graduate student and student services support spaces, and an area for information-technology support staff. Except for the infrequent class of more than 50 people, all MSLIS classes can be accommodated in Hinds Hall. Maintenance funds for building were deemed adequate and are allocated in the same way as for all other colleges.

The school has worked on its own and in cooperation with the university to ensure that regardless of the location in which classes are taught, that technology needed to support MSLIS instruction is available. Non-standard equipment needed to support classroom instruction is handled by the school. As noted in the Instructional Technology Strategic Plan Core Beliefs document, “The school, through the distance/IT committee, continually plans for the acquisition of its own technology” (PP, Appendix FF).

The MSLIS program has focused on building technology-enabled curricular environments through the creation of virtual environments and physical facilities. Blackboard (WebCT6), the i-School Learning Management System (iLMS), is used to facilitate distance learning as well as to enhance the school’s on-campus courses. Faculty are assisted in preparing
to teach in a pedagogically sound way in the virtual environment through an online training program and are further supported in course content design by the director of instructional design/iLMS administrator. In addition to all online courses and the enhancement of on-campus courses supported by the iLMS, it is also used to facilitate faculty research projects, Ph.D. research and collaboration, student organizations, and wide variety of collaborative activities and discussion. A 2007 survey of LIS Alumni indicated that respondents agreed—but not strongly agreed—that faculty used the iLMS effectively and, in general, used technology effectively (PP, Appendix H). Classrooms in Hinds Hall have been equipped with technology that supports curricular and specific pedagogical needs and training is provided to faculty throughout the year on the use of this technology. Included in the renovated facilities in Hinds Hall are new computing facilities that include four laboratories that can be scheduled for class use and have free times in which students can access them for completing assignments or exploring technology independently.

The MSLIS program relies on a substantial and continued investment in technology to complete and enrich students’ experience in the MSLIS program and to support faculty members’ teaching, research, and service. School resources for students include five technology clusters as well as wired and wireless network services. Results of the 2007 LIS Alumni Survey show that while the equipment in the school’s labs and the hours of availability of labs met their needs, the scores were among the lowest recorded in the survey; however, based on the observations of the panel, the new labs in Hinds Hall have addressed the concerns in this area. Students also have access to university resources provided through Information and Technology Services (ITS) that include Academic Applications and Support Centers, Learning Environments and Media Production as well as help desks, university libraries’ computing, and other campus computing laboratories. All technology resources available to students through the school and the university are also available to faculty. The school negotiates personal computing resources with new faculty and has worked with the university to provide new personal computers to faculty members on a three-year replacement schedule. University technology resources available to school faculty include the University-Wide Instructional Digital-Image Database, the Video Production Unit, and multimedia classrooms around campus. Disaster recovery plans for all school servers and the iLMS have been developed with university ITS. If there is a
catastrophic failure, recovery is still a manual process; however, the school is working with ITS to automate this process.

Staff to support technology services within the school is organized under the direction of the Assistant Dean for Technology. Day-to-day responsibility for technology integration and utility is carried out by the Director of ITS, who budgets and manages the technology needs for the school as well as supervising four other full time technology administrators and managers and three to four student interns each semester. The school’s technology services personnel also can draw upon the expertise of university ITS personnel for technical solutions and support. Operational, instructional and research computing is supported equally with full time staff on call 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday and students in labs available to cover the remaining service hours (until midnight during the week, until 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and 10:00 p.m. on Sundays). The previously mentioned Alumni Survey indicates that, while still a positive rating, support from the school’s IT staff received the lowest overall satisfaction rating from recent MSLIS graduates (PP, Appendix H). Faculty members are generally positive about these services. To ensure access to technology for all school students and faculty, the school works with the university’s Office of Disability Services to assist disabled students with adaptive technology. The school’s faculty development program provides mandatory training to assist faculty in addressing different learning modalities available through the iLMS and through other instructional resources to meet the needs of the entire MSLIS student population.

The Syracuse University Library, consisting of six units, plays an active role in supporting the MSLIS program. In addition, three separately administered libraries sharing borrowing privileges and a union catalog also are available for use by school students and faculty. A member of the Association of Research Libraries, the Syracuse University Library holdings consist of approximately three million volumes and access to 20,000 journals and serials. Within the field of library and information studies, the collection comprises approximately 45,000 volumes and 175 serials subscriptions. The library spends approximately $61,000 annually or .94 percent of its most recent ARL-reported materials budget on materials for the school (Association of Research Libraries Statistical Survey 2006-2007, Washington DC: ARL, 2008). The SU Library provides access to many specialized databases, e-book collections, and educational resources. In order to provide equitable access to on-campus and distance students, resources are acquired in electronic format whenever possible; an extended loan period
of 28 weeks is available to distance students when an electronic version of a resource is not available. Additionally, materials loaned from the SU Library are delivered on an expedited basis by FedEx.

Faculty and students were positive about the relationship between the school and the SU Library. A subject librarian designated as the liaison with the School of Information Studies provides specialized reference services, instructional support, and collection development. The SU Library regularly provides internship opportunities to MSLIS students and librarians work with MSLIS faculty to extend learning from the classroom through hands-on experiences that support coursework and assignments. Recently, interns have worked in reference, technical services, instruction, web development, and special collections. The SU Library also hosts “mock” poster sessions for school students to assist them with their professional presentation skills. Suzanne Thorin, University Librarian and Dean of Libraries, co-teaches a course in digital librarianship with school faculty, and joint luncheons focusing on new directions between the SU Library and the school have been initiated to further communication and collaboration. MSLIS students with an interest in special collections benefit from technology-enhanced instructional opportunities in the SU Library’s Lemke Seminar Room where rare materials may be examined and handled in a classroom setting.

Within the university’s system of continuous planning, ongoing planning and evaluation of physical resources and facilities is shared by the faculty and staff. The lead role in this process is handled by the school’s Distance Education and Instructional Technology Committee, which has responsibility for strategic and tactical technology planning as well as regular review of operational performance. Their work is guided by a statement of Information Technology Strategic Planning Core Beliefs (Appendix FF). Communication with the Distance/IT Committee is channeled through the MSLIS FPAG. Student and administrative staff members attend the MSLIS FPAG and provide input which is passed on to the Distance/IT Committee. This Committee works with the Assistant Dean of Technology to prioritize requests and allocation decisions. The Assistant Dean, in turn, works with university ITS to ensure that faculty, student, and staff requests are duly considered.
Summary

The MSLIS program at Syracuse University is characterized by its strong interdisciplinarity, the “Faculty of One” concept, and strong student performance in all course delivery options. The faculty members in the program demonstrate innovation and creativity while being responsive to student interests and concerns. The school has an excellent record related to research and external grant funding, yet faculty did not report being pressured to “produce” grants.

The school is well integrated into the core of the university, being, as the Provost said, “a signature school on campus.” Faculty and students are engaged both on and off-campus with service and learning projects that foster interdisciplinarity and involvement in the life and governance of the university.

The program is flexible and provides students options that allow them to create a program of study that meets their individual needs and interests. The online program, which is the bulk of the student enrolled in the program, is a completely integral part of the program and provides enhanced learning opportunities to traditional on-campus students through the expanded use of instructional technology.

The school recently moved into a completely gut-rehabbed building on the main quad of the university. This new building provides state-of-the-art facilities for students, faculty, and researchers and provides options for future growth.

The panel witnessed a high level of collegiality and cooperation throughout the school. One of the characteristics especially notable was the genuine pleasure taken by faculty, students, researchers, alumni with being affiliated with the school. Several times, students used the program at Syracuse as an exemplar of good practice in relationship to other programs they had either applied to or had previously studied in.

The challenges faced by the MSLIS program have been identified by the school in the program presentation. A concern raised on site by students was related to advising; however, opinions among students on this issue were mixed. Local students mentioned that while advising was fundamentally sound, it should be more pro-active. However, distance education students, when asked about this issue, did not view it as a concern. Given this, the external review panel has no specific concerns related to the program to report.