

Syracuse University School of Information Studies  
**2012 COA BIENNIAL NARRATIVE REPORT: MSLIS PROGRAM**  
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Prepared by Jill Hurst-Wahl, Associate Professor of Practice  
Library and Information Science Program  
Submitted by Elizabeth D. Liddy, Dean

The following biennial narrative report to the COA presents the developments in the Master of Library and Information Science (MSLIS) program since the 2010 biennial report (revised report submitted 26 September 2011). The response received noted two areas for our continued focus, which will be addressed in this report:

- The recruitment and retention of U.S. minority students
- Providing public evidence of assessment and evaluation of student achievement

## **New Leadership**

In fall 2012, Jill Hurst-Wahl, Associate Professor of Practice, assumed the role of program director. Hurst-Wahl joined the iSchool as a visiting instructor in 2001 and remained involved as an adjunct until 2009, when she joined our full-time faculty. A former corporate librarian, Hurst-Wahl is a member of the SLA Board of Directors and the USNY Technology Policy and Practice Council. She just concluded a five-year term on the NYS Regents Advisory Council on Libraries and was active in developing the document “Creating the Future: A 2020 Vision and Plan for Library Service in New York State,” which was accepted by the NYS Board of Regents in April 2012. Hurst-Wahl is known for being responsive to student needs and concerns, and for connecting students to the profession.

In addition, the school has added the role of program manager for each of its degree programs. For the MSLIS program, the program manager is Blythe Bennett. Bennett had been the Assistant Director of the School Media Program since 2006. She received her MLS with School Media certification from the iSchool in 1994. In 1995, Bennett joined the staff of Syracuse University and its

Information Institute, where she managed several projects including K-12 digital reference projects.

## **Standard 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

There have been no changes to the Mission, Goals, or Objectives for the MSLIS program since the last biennial update.

We continue to run a survey of students when they begin the program and again when they graduate to provide one view on how students feel they are meeting the program-level outcomes. In addition, faculty who teach the core classes analyze the performance of students in meeting, failing to meet, or exceeding expectations for each of the program outcomes. While this data has been useful, we are now embarking on a project - the addition of a portfolio exit requirement - that will allow us to collect more actionable information (See Standard 4).

## **Standard 2: Curriculum**

There have been no changes to the core MSLIS program in the last two years.

In fall 2012, the iSchool introduced a new Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) in Data Science. This CAS is available to all of our graduate students, including our MSLIS students. We already have MSLIS students who are taking data science classes toward to the receipt of the CAS. They are anxious to harness, analyze and interpret big data for those organizations in need of this skill.

One result of creating the LIS Advisory Group in 2011 was obtaining input from them on the skills hiring managers want in MSLIS graduates. (A list of members is in Appendix A.) During one-on-one telephone interviews, this group provided information (Appendix B) that is being used by iSchool faculty and staff in student discussions and advising sessions. The school is also investigating how to integrate some of these skills into the curriculum.

### Standard 3: Faculty

The iSchool has added seven (7) full-time faculty since 2010 (Table 1).

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Faculty Full Time	40	45	45	45	52
Faculty Part Time	35	35	35	36	36

**Table 1: Number of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty**

One of the new full-time faculty members is engaged heavily with the MSLIS students: Barbara Stripling, Assistant Professor of Practice. Stripling joined our faculty after leaving her position as the director of school library programs in New York City, which has 1.1 million students and 1700 schools. This year, Stripling was elected to the ALA Board of Directors and will be the Association's president during 2013-2014. The iSchool is releasing her from some of her teaching commitments as she steps into this role. We recognize the importance of the work that she is embarking upon and that she will be able to bring what she is doing and learning into the classroom, thus benefiting our students. Stripling's CV can be found in Appendix C.

In addition to Dr. Stripling, the iSchool hired the following faculty members in 2012, who are teaching primarily non-MSLIS courses:

Name	Title
Yun Huang	Research Assistant Professor
Paul Morarescu	Assistant Professor
Deb Nosky	Assistant Professor of Practice
Marcene Sonneborn	Assistant Professor of Practice
Jenny Stromer-Galley	Associate Professor
Yang Wang	Assistant Professor

Table 2 contains the names and competencies of our new adjunct faculty members (Spring 2011 – Fall 2012), who have taught at least three MSLIS students in their classes.

<b>Part-Time Faculty</b>	<b>Competencies / Role</b>
Patrick Fitzgibbons	PhD, associate professor of telecommunications at SUNY Utica/Rome
Angela Ramnarine-Rieks	Ph.D. Student, Former Academic Librarian
Rebecca Shaffer-Mannion	Public Librarian
Jamie Snyder	Post-Doctoral Researcher
Sean Keeley	Author, Screenwriter, Blogger
Mary Grace Flaherty	Ph.D. Student, former public library director
Andrea Wiggins	Ph.D. Student, MS in Information, Worked in AmeriCorps
Robert Brenner	MBA, Program manager for Lockheed Martin
Youngseek Kim	Ph.D. Student
Agnieszka Kwiatkowska	Ph.D. Student
Judith Jerome	Public Library Director, former BOCES School Library System Director
Raed Sharif	Ph.D. Student
Stacy Veeder	iSchool Ph.D. graduate
Beverly Choltco-Devlin	Public Librarian
Gary Maggi, RN, MLS	Medical librarian
Eric Marks	President and CEO of AgilePath Corporation (web services)
Bernice Rocque, MLS	Project Management Certification (PMP)
Sarah Webb	Post-Doctoral Researcher
Nicholas Jullien	Visiting professor from the French Institution Telecom Bretagne, Institute Telecom
S. Bruce Boardman	Network Engineer ; Editor Network Computing Magazine
Glen Wiley	Chief metadata librarian, Cornell University
Keisuke Inoue	Ph.D. Student

**Table 2: Adjunct Faculty and Competencies**

### ***Promotions and Honors***

Since the last biennial report, R. David Lankes was promoted to the rank of full professor and honored as the Dean's Scholar for the New Librarianship in the iSchool. Jill Hurst-Wahl was promoted to associate professor of practice. Barbara Kwasnik has been appointed to Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Marilyn Arnone's course in Digital Content Creation received The Chancellor's Award for Public Engagement and Scholarship in March 2011.

### **Standard 4: Students**

In 2009-2010, the iSchool saw a slight increase in students, as people looked to complete a master's degree in order to be more attractive in a competitive work environment. Since then, the number of students admitted each year has decreased. We recognize that is due the stressed economy and the tuition charged by Syracuse University.

We continue to have more campus than distance students, which is the reverse of a previous trend. We continue to see more students entering our program directly after or within a few years of completing their bachelor's degree. In the last two years, we have looked for new venues for our marketing efforts to bolster our numbers, which includes using social media to promote our program.

Academic Year Matriculated	Main Campus		Distance		Total Campus	Total Distance	Total
	LIS	Sch. Media	LIS	Sch. Media			
2008-2009	36	10	38	18	46	56	102
2009-2010	40	4	45	20	44	65	109
2010-2011	41	10	31	13	51	44	95
2011-2012	38	6	25	10	44	35	79
2012-2013	34	5	27	3	39	30	69

**Table 3: Number of Incoming MSLIS Students**

We continue to monitor the diversity in our programs in age, gender, and ethnic backgrounds. As noted, we are seeing a shift in the age of our students as more students come directly from undergraduate programs (Table 4). We currently have a 79/21 split in female/male students.

Academic Year Matriculated	20's	30's	40's	50's
2008-2009	56.9%	20.6%	16.7%	5.9%
2009-2010	49.5%	31.2%	13.8%	5.5%
2010-2011	60.0%	21.1%	14.7%	4.2%
2011-2012	63.8%	23.8%	10.0%	1.2%
2012-2013	66.7%	27.5%	2.9%	2.9%

**Table 4: Percentage of Incoming Students by Age Group**

Our self-reported ethnic group breakdowns can be found in Table 5. We noted that our diversity has varied since 2002, with the number of ALA minority enrollment ranging from 3 (2004) to 44 (2007). Our current ALA minority enrollment stands at 12. In the past, the iSchool has had grants specifically to train K-12 teachers to become school librarians, which during 2006-2008 increased the

number of ethnically diverse students in the MSLIS program. We recognize that keeping a diverse group of students creates a learning atmosphere that mirrors the real world. We also recognize that library and information professionals need to mirror the communities that they service, especially ethnically. Therefore, we continue to recruit at events and colleges/universities where we can interact with more prospective students of color. (e.g., Joint Conference of Librarians Color, McNair Research Conference, Atlanta Univ. Consortium Graduate School Fair and Virginia Union Univ.).

Academic Year	White	Blck/ Afric.	Hawaii / Pacif.	Hispanic / Latin	Puerto Rican	Mex.	Asian	Amer Indian	Unknow n	Not reported	Percent Nonwhite
2008-2009	77	2	1	3	1	0	3	1	9	5	12.50%
2009-2010	88	2	0	1	0	0	2	0	9	7	5.38%
2010-2011	79	2	0	2	0	1	4	1	3	3	11.24%
2011-2012	62	4	0	0	1	1	5	0	4	2	15.9%
2012-2013	55	4	1	1	0	1	3	2	1	4	17.4%

**Table 5: Breakdown of Self-Reported Ethnic Group for Incoming Students**

### *Assessment data*

This year, we have placed information on our iSchool web site about our school media students and how they have been assessed against the competencies of the school media program. (See <http://ischool.syr.edu/documents/schmediaassessment.aspx> )

This fall a working group was formed to investigate adding a portfolio exit requirement for our MSLIS students, in order to obtain assessment data on all of our MSLIS students. Besides the policies and procedures needed for this, the working group is investigating software that could be used. The group recognizes that this mode of assessing student achievement has several constituencies and goals, including providing input that can be used to maintain the quality of our LIS program. The group is currently looking at options that would provide both an external and internal component, with recognition that whatever process is put in place will need ongoing faculty and staff support. The working group includes LIS faculty, iSchool staff and one of our LIS students. As our work on this continues, that student will gather other LIS students to help with software and process evaluation.

## ***Employment***

We improved our survey methodology to obtain more accurate placement results. We gather data using multiple methods, including a survey at commencement, a follow up survey six months after graduation, gathering of individual alumni updates, and researching employment status through various social media tools such as LinkedIn. As Table 6 demonstrates, this improvement in our data gathering helps us to see that our employment numbers are stronger than previously reported and have improved. We are particularly heartened by the number of school media graduates that are finding employment. Our MSLIS graduates are finding employment in a broad range of positions in public, academic and special libraries, library systems vendors, and as analysts with the federal government.

We continue to take extra measures to help our graduates find employment. We work with students during their core classes, in additional career programming and advising, and through hosted networking events to provide students with the skills they need to be successful in their career search. In addition, in the last three years the Employer Relations team has attracted non-library employers who are specifically interested in recruiting our LIS students. In 2011, three of our MSLIS graduates accepted positions with a government agency as analysts, where their LIS skills are highly valued.

<b>Graduation year</b>	<b>MSLIS</b>	<b>School Media</b>
2008	71%	49%
2009	54%	57%
2010	61%	63%
2011	87%	100%

**Table 6. Percentage of Graduates Who Reported Having Employment**

## ***Retention***

Updated data is not available on our retention rates. We rely on Syracuse University for this information, and due to a change in reporting platforms, this data is not currently available. However, a school-wide goal remains to increase retention through improved communication with students. We have recently added formal Program Manager roles, who assist with coordinating communications and implementing activities to increase student engagement and thereby increase retention.

Matriculating Year	Total	Completed	Graduation Rate	SU Masters Rate	Active	Leave of Absence	Discontinued
1993-2006	1018	810	79.6%	83.1%	31	33	143
2007-2008	100	76	76%	69.2%	8	2	13
2008-2009	90	10	9%	29.9%	69	3	8
2009-2010	107				104	1	2

**Table 7: Number of Students and Graduation Rates by Matriculation Year**

## Standard 5: Administration and Financial Support

A continuing challenge has been obtaining grant funds (Table 8), which has an impact on the amount of financial aid we can offer students.

	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Proposals written by iSchool faculty	\$19,097,254	\$28,331,864	\$15,932,970	\$17,825,879	\$19,239,739
Proposals written by MSLIS faculty	\$8,168,689	\$5,452,708	\$6,987,738	\$4,806,433	\$2,318,634
Awards received by iSchool faculty	\$4,382,269	\$3,657,279	\$2,813,485	\$10,115,446	\$4,817,805
Awards received by MSLIS faculty	\$172,867	\$1,155,390	\$28,139	\$1,685,262	\$193,361

**Table 8: Grant Proposals and Awards by iSchool faculty**

As reported in our 2010 biennial report, we have increased our funding offerings to enable more students to attend Syracuse. We continue to fund our Faculty Assistant program, where each faculty member may have two graduate students working 10 hours a week each as assistants to the faculty for teaching, research, or service. This program provides many more students with some funding, and also has enabled more students to get involved with faculty projects. In order to increase financial aid, we have challenged our Assistant Dean for Advancement to locate donors that might fund new LIS scholarships as well as provide funding that will help students with other financial needs. To that end, the school is establishing the Students of Promise Fund. This fund is being establishing initially through charitable gifts from the Board of Advisors and will be used to support students facing financial obstacles in completing their degree, and might include funding to buy

textbooks and required technology; to provide travel stipends; or to overcome some similar type of financial challenge. The short-term goal of the Students of Promise Fund is to secure \$50,000 annually to support iSchool students in need. The Dean will administer the Fund and will report annually to the Board how it has been utilized in the previous year. While this fund is not specifically for our LIS students, we know that the LIS students will benefit from its creation.

Table 9 shows the amount of financial aid that the school has provided for the MSLIS program [table omitted].

Table 10 shows the iSchool's expenditures and income [table omitted]. Since the school is not organized by departments, there is no discrete MSLIS budget.

## **Standard 6: Physical Resources and Facilities**

We have been in our current building, renovated specifically for the iSchool, since 2007. With an increase in the overall iSchool faculty and staff, and changes in technology, we have embarked on updating our space. New offices are being constructed and conference rooms are being renovated to include new technologies.

In order to accommodate our growing faculty, we have implemented specific office space for those faculty members who are on leave or who are working from a distance. This space, known as the iSpace, provides workspace and support services that they may use when on-site in the iSchool.

During this 2012-2013 academic year, we are acquiring additional space on our ground floor. In addition, we are investigating ideas to add onto the building, as another way of satisfying our space needs without relocating services to other campus buildings.

Classroom and computer lab space on campus is at a premium, therefore, we are changing some class times to take advantage of space when it is available (e.g., earlier or later in the day). We are using laptops in the classroom to complement our three full size computer labs, which are used heavily by our classes with technology components. We currently have 30 laptops available for in-

class use. And finally, because of the increased demand on access to lab resources, we are completing a pilot project that allows students to login to a virtual lab environment, making our labs both location and time independent. The v-Lab is currently at 14 machines with plans to increase to 24.

## **Conclusion**

In the face of continued economic stress, the MSLIS program at Syracuse University remains strong. The iSchool has continued to hire faculty and staff who are focused on engaging the students and molding them into the information professionals that our libraries and information organizations desire. The new Certificate in Advance Studies in Data Science demonstrates the school's desire to add courses and concentrations that will improve the marketability of our students. The school's initiative to implement a portfolio requirement will help our students demonstrate their knowledge to future employers and provide information that we can use to continue to strengthen our program. We recognize that the measure of success that our students use is their ability to locate a position after graduation, and we are pleased at the success that they are having.

## Appendix A

In 2011, the iSchool created the LIS Advisory Group, which is comprised of members of the information profession. This group has been interacting online and by phone with the MSLIS program director to provide information that can be used to improve the program.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Institution</b>
Joseph Ryan	Humanities Research Associate iSchool Alumnus, MLIS '07	ITS Research Computing, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Eli Neiburger	Associate Director, IT and Production	Ann Arbor District Library, MI
Beck Tench	Director for Innovation and Digital Engagement	Museum of Life and Science (Durham, NC)
Carol Desch	Coordinator of Statewide Library Services	New York State Library
Anne Craig	Director	Illinois State Library
Nettie Seaberry	Director of the Minority Business Information Center	National Minority Supplier Development Council, NY
Laura Soto-Barra	Senior Librarian	National Public Radio (NPR)
Henry Raine	Director of Digital Programs and Library Technical Services	New-York Historic Society
Jenica Rogers	Director of Libraries	SUNY Potsdam

## Appendix B

During the summer 2012, the LIS Advisory Group was asked to answer two questions:

- What 3-5 professional or business skills do you expect a MS/MA graduate to have?
- What soft skills do you expect a graduate to have?

Comments from group members were receiving during one-on-one telephone calls. Their information correlated with input received at meetings hosted by the New York Library Association with MSLIS program deans/chairs/directors and library directors from across New York State. This information has been disseminated to the MSLIS students in a number of ways and made available to others in the iSchool. We continue to seek ways of integrating a number of these skills into our curriculum, recognizing that some are learned through experience, while others would be learned outside of the MSLIS program.

The skills desired include: (not in priority order)

- Leadership
- Project management & project planning
- Technical (technology) skills
- Continuous learning
- Assessment and outcome-based evaluation
- Ability to interact with the community
- Ability to teach either one-on-one and group/class
- An understanding of finance including budgeting, project costing, grant writing
- Flexibility
- Ability to see and understand the big picture
- Communication and presentation skills

- Marketing and advocacy skills
- Data collection and analysis
- Understand how to transfer skills
- Understand organizational politics
- Ability and willingness to see a problem and propose a solution
- Ability to see concerns/problems from multiple points of view
- Conversant with databases
- Ability to see how non-library competitors are solving library problems
- Ability to understand metadata
- Understand how to collaborate and create partnerships
- Time management
- Ability to read and write a foreign language

