STANDARD IV: STUDENTS

Introduction

Who is the 'typical' School of Library & Information Studies Master's student? While some general statements may be made in answer to this question, overall it is a very diverse group that is also widely dispersed geographically. Although students come to the program with a wide range of skills and abilities, most express a passionate belief in libraries as a public good. They are similar to past groups in that they continue to be largely older (average age 35), about three quarters female, and many have families and/or are already working full time or part time; of those working, many have jobs in libraries and want to further their careers. While they are interested primarily in library jobs, the recent economic downturn and political mood in Florida has made finding employment in libraries more difficult. They take an average of just over six credit hours per semester while in the program, and while two years is the normal time to completion of the degree, some take longer. SLIS and FSU remain committed to our students' education and SLIS faculty and staff work individually with them to provide the flexibility to manage their studies and successfully complete their degrees.

Accomplishments, Challenges, and Responses: An Overview

Over the past seven years, SLIS has experienced continued success in educating students for the information professions. Surveys of current students, alumni, and employers indicate that students are well prepared for success when they leave our program. At the same time, SLIS has experienced a decrease in student enrollments due to a number of external factors but primarily the dramatic downturn in the economy and the resulting cutbacks both to higher education and to the public sector in general, including libraries of all types as well as other kinds of information organizations.

SLIS has initiated a multi-pronged approach to this decrease. We have been given permission by the University to participate in a "Market Rate" pilot program that will allow us to recruit out-of-state students at a tuition rate significantly lower than the regular out-of-state rate. We have developed and implemented (as of fall 2012) a new Master of Science in Information Technology (IT) program, which we expect will both increase our graduate enrollments and enhance our Master of Science in Library and Information Studies program by making more IT-related courses available to all Master's students. And we have enhanced our graduate advising program by re-establishing our earlier practice of assigning individual

faculty advisors to all students (as opposed to one faculty member advising all students), and by tripling the number of staff in Graduate Advising Services. Finally, we have formed a Master's Advisory Board made up of alumni, employers, and other stakeholders for the purpose of providing regular and systematic feedback on curriculum development, student learning outcomes, and challenges and opportunities facing the School, higher education, and the profession.

Our accomplishments, challenges, and responses are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

IV.1 The School formulates recruitment, admission, financial aid, placement, and other academic and administrative policies for students that are consistent with the School's mission and program goals and objectives; the policies reflect the needs and values of the constituencies served by a program. The School has policies to recruit and retain students who reflect the diversity of North America's communities. The composition of the student body is such that it fosters a learning environment consistent with the school's mission and program goals and objectives.

IV.1.1 The School formulates recruitment, admission, financial aid, placement, and other academic and administrative policies for students that are consistent with the School's mission and program goals and objectives; the policies reflect the needs and values of the constituencies served by a program.

Our mission states, "We believe that the access to and use of information technology, services, and products is of profound individual and societal importance. As part of a comprehensive research university, The Florida State University's School of Library & Information Studies promotes excellence and innovation in research, teaching and service in line with this overarching goal." SLIS recruits students at the state, regional and national levels. In line with this mission, information for prospective and current students is provided via the SLIS website. This includes information regarding admission, financial aid, degree requirements and job opportunities. Admission is competitive, and applicants are accepted on a rolling basis for fall,

spring, and summer semesters. For a detailed view of the trends in applications and admissions, see *Appendix IV.1 – Master's Student Summary*.

Applications peaked in academic years 2006–07 and 2007–08 and have declined since. The decline may be partially attributable to the increase in online LIS programs students may choose from and more aggressive recruiting by these programs, including programs that are fully asynchronous, but other factors, such as the loss of out-of-state students because of various internal and external policy changes, doubtless have had a large effect. A major factor affecting enrollments was a change in policy by the University in 2007; prior to that year SLIS had been allowed to grant waivers of the out-of-state portion of tuition to students pursuing the degree online through the Office for Distributed and Distance Learning (ODDL). After the University disallowed this policy, the total number of applicants dropped (SLIS worked with the University to "grandfather" tuition costs for existing out-of-state students, and it took about three years for those remaining students to finish the program). At about the same time, Valdosta State University created an online master's program, which resulted in the state of Georgia discontinuing master's-level certification of Georgia residents for Academic Common Market (ACM) status. The ACM certification program allows students to apply and receive certification granting them temporary in-state residency status for tuition purposes if no comparable program exists at their own state university. Within the last two years, Kentucky and Alabama also discontinued master's level certification for ACM. The removal of ACM certification for Georgia, Kentucky, and Alabama has resulted in a significant drop in out-of-state applicants to the program.

In response to the drop, SLIS was granted permission to offer a reduced tuition program that lowered out-of-state tuition to within approximately $100 of in-state rates to a limited number of out-of-state students. This program was discontinued at the conclusion of the Summer 2011 semester. Effective Fall 2011 semester, the University Board of Trustees granted several FSU departments, including SLIS, approval to offer specific master's degree programs to out-of-state students at "Market Rate." The market rate program is a pilot program with a three-year goal of enrolling an additional 120 or more out-of-state students at a competitive reduced tuition similar to the previous reduced tuition program.

As a result of the merger of the College of Information (CI) into the College of Communication and Information (CCI) in July 2009, the enrollment deficit has been partially balanced at the college level by overall strong CCI graduate enrollments, due to the expansion of online programs in Communication and the addition of an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree between Communication and SLIS. Nevertheless, in a head-count-driven financial environment, these policy changes have presented considerable challenges for SLIS. The loss of out-of-state students has not just been an economic challenge for the school, but it also impacts our ability to present a wider range of ideas and choices facing the profession in class discussions by drawing upon the experiences of students across the country. We value our out-of-state students as they contribute an important intellectual component to our classes, one that we continue to provide but with perhaps less diversity than before.

To address these challenges, Dr. Christie Koontz, Recruitment Coordinator for SLIS, with assistance from the College's Coordinator of Development, Betsy Crawford, has been working diligently to reach more Florida communities. In particular, Dr. Koontz has been working in cooperation with the six state library consortia, other Florida library associations, and Florida school districts. The number of applications from Florida residents has grown slightly in the past year, despite continuing economic issues at the state and national levels. Layoffs and hiring freezes continue to affect libraries in the state, which in turn affect in-state enrollment.

Additional strategies to address reduced enrollment include a targeted focus on recruitment in states where students qualify for ACM certification (Arkansas, Delaware, Louisiana, Virginia, and West Virginia), as well as states that do not currently offer online master's degree programs in Library and Information Studies. During the 2010 and 2011 summer semesters, we utilized Florida's multi-cooperative network system of email lists and held online recruitment sessions yielding 82 contacts the first year and approximately 50 the next. For seven years, we have held joint recruiting sessions with the University of South Florida's School of Information; the joint presentation includes information about the information professions and pertinent points about each program. We also actively recruit for our school library media program. In 2009-2010, recruitment sessions were held at 9 regional conferences and 10 school districts, schools, colleges, and universities. We regularly participate in on-campus graduate recruiting events sponsored by the FSU Career Center, such as the annual spring Education and Library Career Fair and the Graduate School and Professional Exposition (GradExpo). We gather contact information so that we can follow up with program and admissions information. We are now

incorporating social media in our recruiting strategies with the use of Twitter, Facebook (FSULibIT), Skype, and YouTube. While recruiting new students is a primary goal, a secondary goal remains creating a presence among our markets to establish long-term relationships with alumni, key stakeholders, and LIS professionals.

Administration, faculty, and Graduate Student Services continue discussions on recruitment strategies to ensure that prospective students seeking a high-quality, online degree program will consider FSU as a top option. Accredited since 1953 and highly ranked by *US News & World Report,* our Master's program has been fully online since 1997, one of the earliest schools to offer this. The faculty and the Graduate Student Services staff have strong experience with the technology and pedagogy that support online instruction. Tuition costs are among the lowest of highly ranked and completely online LIS programs.

The Graduate Coordinator is also working with the University Community College Liaison to provide recruitment materials for the upcoming Fall 2012 tour of Florida's community colleges. These institutions are now authorized to award bachelor's degrees and are a source of prospective students. The Graduate Student Services staff is also working on a communications/recruitment plan to include a prospective timeline, as well as scheduling regular online information sessions for prospective students via Skype or Blackboard Collaborate. In 2011, Graduate Student Services implemented centralized customer relationship management software, Talisma, to better manage prospective and current student inquiries. This software has analytics available to review inquiries and develop targeted campaigns to prospective students.

The School is well aligned with FSU President Eric Barron's stated goal of making The Florida State University the most student-centered university in the country. Our policies and procedures detailed in the following sections emphasize the needs of our students and the needs of Florida's diverse population.

IV.1.2 The School has policies to recruit and retain students who reflect the diversity of North America's communities.

Consistent with its mission and the University's expectations, SLIS recruits students from a wide range of nationalities, ethnicities, lifestyles, and socioeconomic statuses. We strive to

contribute not only to classroom and learning diversity, but also ultimately to "a workplace that respects and includes differences, recognizes the unique contributions that individuals with many types of differences can make, maximizing the potential of all people and employees. As a concept, diversity focuses on a broader set of qualities than race and gender"[1]. SLIS continues to recruit, admit, and retain a student body that reflects the diversity of North America. Our recruitment efforts include traveling to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Florida and Georgia, participating in the ALA Ph.D. Diversity Fair, and attending all local career fairs at FSU and at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU, the nation's largest HBCU by enrollment, located in Tallahassee). All recruitment sessions feature information about the ALA Spectrum Scholarship. We have developed printed brochures, advertisements, and posters that feature minorities. Minority status of event attendees is noted so that appropriate funding and scholarship opportunities may be communicated. The Graduate Coordinator is also a member of the Diversity and Graduate Education subcommittee of the University Graduate Enrollment Management Committee, which looks at recruitment of minority students to FSU. Summary data on enrollment by ethnic origin and gender, as reported in the most recent annual ALISE statistical reports for the past five years, is illustrated in Table I.1 and Table I.2 available in Appendix I.4. While direct comparison with Census data is difficult because of the various breakdowns in ethnicity, in 2010 the U.S. Census reported that Florida's population was 75% White and 25% minority [2]. For a detailed semester breakdown of enrolled student data, see *Appendix IV.1—Master's Student Summary*.

IV.1.3 The composition of the student body is such that it fosters a learning environment consistent with the School's mission and program goals and objectives.

In our mission statement, we declare our commitment to students:

> We believe that the access to and use of information technology, services, and products is of profound individual and societal importance. As part of a comprehensive research university, The Florida State University's School of Library & Information Studies promotes excellence and innovation in research, teaching and service in line with this overarching goal (SLIS Mission Statement).

[1] http://hr.fsu.edu/diversity/?page=homepage
[2] http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/population-demographics/2010-census/data/2010DP_Florida.pdf

To enact this mission, we have ensured that our SLIS Program Goals are aligned with our Core Values, as outlined and discussed in Standard I. These goals and values can be summarized by the following key phrases:

1. Vision and imagination
2. Excellence and innovation
3. Recognition and respect
4. Technological competency in solving information problems
5. Engagement and growth

In addition to striving for a faculty (Standard III) and a curriculum (Standard II) that uphold these goals and translate them into meaningful and measurable learning outcomes for students, SLIS also strives to educate a diverse group of students who can respond to and lead in meeting these goals. Our large online learning program has enabled many people who would not have had access to graduate education to gain an advanced degree and better employment prospects. We often hear from our students that earning an advanced degree would not have been possible for them if it had not been for our online program.

Our admissions process is truly a holistic assessment of multiple characteristics and abilities as represented in the application instructions, which require submission of a current résumé and letters of reference from a recent supervisor or instructor. While we hold to the minimum standards for admission required by the University (see Section IV.3), we also take other factors into account, such as previous academic preparation or degrees; whether the applicant is currently working in a library; unique talents; the sense of commitment the individual communicates; and the individual's overall state of readiness for graduate work as evidenced in his or her application portfolio. The University gives us the ability to be flexible with a limited percentage of admissions. Special consideration is given to minority or disadvantaged applicants. Many of our applicants are already working in libraries and have realized that to further themselves in their jobs they need the ALA accredited Master's degree. While many admissions are routine in that the applicant meets or exceeds all requirements, the Graduate Coordinator and the Graduate Program Director work very closely to ensure that we are giving applicants from a very wide range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds an opportunity to further themselves through advanced education. While admission requires an undergraduate degree, there is no specific subject specialty that is a prerequisite to our program; this also promotes a student body with a wide range of background knowledge and

abilities that can contribute in many ways to the learning objectives of the program (see *Appendix IV.2–Fall 2011 Admitted/Enrolled Students: Highest Degree Held and Previous Work Experience*).

IV.2 Current, accurate, and easily accessible information on the School and its program is available to students and the general public. This information includes announcements of program goals and objectives, descriptions of curricula, information on faculty, admission requirements, availability of financial aid, criteria for evaluating student performance, assistance with placement, and other policies and procedures. The School demonstrates that it has procedures to support these policies.

IV.2.1 Current, accurate, and easily accessible information on the School and its program is available to students and the general public.

The SLIS website is the primary means of making information about our School and its programs accessible. The results of our recent survey of students demonstrate that it is also the primary means by which people seek information about our Master's program (see *Appendix I.3–2012 COA Student Survey Results 0411*). Nearly 100% of students responding find it easy to find information about our program, and 100% find it easy to find information on financial aid. On our recent SLIS student survey, over 90% agreed or strongly agreed it was easy to find information about the program. Additional links are given in the sources of evidence below. We also distribute brochures for each degree option, certificates, and school library media certification; handouts for the ALA Spectrum Scholarship and the McKnight Doctoral Fellowship; job profiles (downloaded from LibGig, http://www.libgig.com); and FSU information about financial aid (http://financialaid.fsu.edu). Conference program advertisements, exhibit announcements, and messages regarding all events and other news items appear on our website, are sent to email lists, and are mirrored on Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/pages/FSUlibIT/208771023918) and Twitter (http://twitter.com/FSUlibIT). We spend a modest amount on bookmarks with a unique FSU graphic designed by a former SLIS faculty member, coasters, and garnet ballpoint pens with our SLIS website URL for distribution to conference attendees. We do not pass out 'heavy' paper as most people simply do not desire it, preferring instead transportable artifacts with the website URL inscribed. We continually try to improve our website information. Faculty, staff and students are currently engaged in redesigning our website include more student-oriented

information. This approach facilitates not only recruitment, but also provision of consistent and current information to students and alums.

> ***IV.2.2 This information includes announcements of program goals and objectives, descriptions of curricula, information on faculty, admission requirements, availability of financial aid, criteria for evaluating student performance, assistance with placement, and other policies and procedures.***

All of these categories of information are available on the public SLIS website (http://slis.fsu.edu), as electronic documents are often the preferred source of information for students. Selected segments are available in our print materials, depending on the intended audience. Individual links are provided below.

Program goals and objectives; M.S. program degree requirements:
http://slis.fsu.edu/About-The-School/Mission-and-Vision

Curricula and course information:
http://slis.fsu.edu/Graduate-Program/Master-of-Science-Degree

Faculty (faculty profiles are currently accessed through our Directory information):
http://directory.cci.fsu.edu/slis-directory/

Master's program admission requirements:
http://slis.fsu.edu/Admissions

Master's program financial aid information:
http://slis.fsu.edu/Admissions/Financial-Aid

The FSU Career Center:
http://career.fsu.edu/

The SLIS website also includes links to information about our other programs and degrees, faculty research, contact information, links to the Goldstein Library and the Help Desk, SLIS on

the Road (recruitment), SLIS news, SLIS Events, SLIS Distinguished Alumni, student organizations and newsletters. Student policies and procedures for current students are primarily found on our SLIS Graduate Student Services Blackboard site (password-restricted access; access provided during the on-site visit).

The Graduate Student Services staff is another source of information for students, and many students appreciate the opportunity to have personal contact when seeking information. Staff members are available in person, by phone, by email and other social media; some also use Skype to communicate with students. Most business is conducted through electronic means such as email, social media, and fax, with some use of regular mail services.

In our recent student survey, more than half of students seeking employment while in school agreed that "it is easy to find information about student employment opportunities" (*see Appendix I.3-2012 COA Student Survey Results 0411*). It is hard to judge the meaning of the 37% in the "neutral" category, as these students may not have been looking for employment opportunities while in school. Job vacancy announcements are posted on the SLIS website, on Facebook and as announcements on the SLIS Graduate Student Services advising Blackboard organization site.

Dr. Christie Koontz has assumed an unofficial position as "SLIS Ambassador" on her recruiting trips around Florida and in other states. She has created a network of alums who are now interested in staying in touch with SLIS and who also operate (informally) as high-caliber representatives of SLIS around the state. With the recent reorganization, plans are being made to extend this ambassadorship to include other faculty, and to develop student and alumni ambassador programs modeled on Project Athena, the multi-institutional program for doctoral student recruitment that was funded through two IMLS grants between 2002-2006.

Student evaluation takes place within each course in the curriculum, and the evaluation criteria must be clearly explained in each course syllabus. We encourage faculty to use a "syllabus template" (*Appendix II.1–SLIS Course Syllabus Template*), which presents essential information in a standardized format for ease of understanding course requirements and student learning outcomes. Syllabi contain not only course objectives but also the grade scale used in the course and any other policies that may affect evaluation, as required by the university.

SLIS also offers scholarships and awards (discussed below), and we offer Beta Phi Mu Honor Society membership to the established percentage of graduate students allowed by Beta Phi Mu (BPM). The Gamma Chapter is the second oldest chapter of BPM in the nation. The national organization's office was housed at FSU from 1995 to 2012. This strong presence and engagement in BPM demonstrates that there is regard for and understanding of scholarship among our students.

Scholarships

SLIS currently has fourteen scholarship funding sources. This year, 31 scholarships were offered ranging from $900 to $2500. The scholarships are available via application to all Master's students. Some specialty scholarships, as prescribed by the original donors, are intended for students in certain sub-specialties, such as youth services, school media, and law librarianship; or in particular geographic locations, such as Broward County. Students are made aware of the scholarships through the School website, email list, and SLIS social media. These are offered on an annual basis prior to the fall semester. A scholarship committee comprising five people is appointed each year. The competitive criteria for scholarships include the ten factors below:

1. Status of student in school (each is screened by SLIS GradAdvising)
2. GPA (no set GPA but review of GPA)
3. Specialty criteria as may be prescribed by the donor
4. Time in school/time until intended graduation
5. Financial need
6. Receipt of other funds or scholarships (SLIS or non-SLIS)
7. Academic and professional awards
8. Personal statement
9. Current employment status
10. Leadership potential in LIS field

Awards

Master's students are eligible for several leadership awards. These include the F. William Summers Award, the SLIS/CCI Leadership Award, and the FSU University Leadership Award. These are awarded in the spring at the College's annual awards ceremony. Candidates are reviewed for:

- Major accomplishments at FSU including extracurricular activities, honors and awards;
- Contributions to the university, inside and out of the classroom;
- Potential for leadership success;
- Additional information that supports the nomination of the student.

Award ceremonies are webcast in order to facilitate acceptance of awards by our distance students and enhance their sense of belonging to the FSU community.

IV.2.3 The School demonstrates that it has procedures to support these policies.

In SLIS, policies are developed primarily by standing committees established in the Bylaws (academic program committees, Promotion and Tenure Committee, Faculty Evaluation and Review Committee, and the Personnel Committee), and are voted on by the faculty as a whole at faculty meetings. They are recorded in the meeting minutes (available on the SLIS Blackboard site). Procedures for carrying out policies may be determined primarily within the committee and in accordance with University policies (for instance, in the Promotion and Tenure Committee), or may be determined jointly by committees and administrative staff. Our SLIS Organization Blackboard site has largely replaced the printed procedures manual of earlier years. There is a printed procedures manual to support the daily operations of the graduate students and staff who perform reception responsibilities, such as answering the phones and handling the mail.

IV.3 Standards for admission are applied consistently. Students admitted to a program have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; the policies and procedures for waiving any admission standard or academic prerequisite are stated clearly and applied consistently. Assessment of an application is based on a combined evaluation of academic, intellectual, and other qualifications as they relate to the constituencies served by a program, a program's goals and objectives, and the career objectives of the individual. Within the framework of institutional policy and program, the admission policy for a program ensures that applicants possess sufficient interest, aptitude, and qualifications to enable successful completion of a program and subsequent contribution to the field.

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Admission to the master's degree program requires approval of both the University and SLIS. The minimum requirements for University admission are:

1. An earned bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution, or a comparable degree from an international institution, with a minimum 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) grade point average (GPA) in all work attempted while registered as an upper-division undergraduate student working towards a bachelor's degree; or
2. A graduate degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution, or a comparable degree from an international institution; and
3. Test scores from a nationally standardized graduate admission test which is acceptable for the program to which the applicant is applying; and
4. An English proficiency exam for those applicants whose native language is not English.

As summarized on the SLIS website (http://slis.fsu.edu/Admissions/Graduate-US/Master-Degree), to be considered for admission to SLIS, students must:

1. Possess a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university; and
2. Present proof of an earned minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in all work attempted while registered as an upper-division undergraduate student working toward a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution; or an earned minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) on a completed master's degree from a regionally accredited institution; and
3. Present official test results from a nationally standardized graduate admission test, such as the General Test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT), or the Miller Analogies Test (MAT). On August 1, 2011, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) implemented a revised form of the GRE with a different scoring mechanism than the previous GRE. To accommodate these changes and ensure comparability between old and new versions of the GRE, the School will consider and evaluate the percentiles associated with applicants' reported GRE scores in making admission decisions. As a guide, the School looks for applicants to have a GRE percentile of at least 50 on each of the verbal and quantitative portions of the test. Based on the ETS estimates, we prefer quantitative scores of at least 149 (on tests taken August 1, 2011, or later) or 630 (on tests taken prior to August 1, 2011), and verbal scores of at least 150 (on tests taken August 1, 2011, or later) or 450 (on tests taken prior to August 1, 2011) and a writing score of 4.0 (for all GRE testing dates).

Effective June 2009, the University Office of Admissions changed its graduate admissions policy regarding the GRE and allowed Schools and Colleges to begin accepting alternate graduate admissions entrance exams such as the Miller Analogies Test (MAT), the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT for non-business applicants), and the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT for non-law applicants). This has allowed students who have previously taken the MAT, GMAT or LSAT to use these test scores to accompany an application rather than having to take the GRE to supplement the application.

International students whose native language is not English must demonstrate English-language proficiency by achieving the specified minimum score(s) on one of the following assessments [3]

- Paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): 585 total / 61 writing
- The Internet-based TOEFL (IBT): 94 total / 24 writing
- The International English Language Testing System (IELTS): 6.5

The School gives preference to students who meet the minimum standards for the requisite entrance grade point average and who achieve the minimum score (50% percentile or higher) on a standardized graduate admission test. Each application is considered on its own merits and is reviewed holistically: upper-division undergraduate grade point average, and personal statement of goals, resume, letters of recommendation, official transcripts, and graduate admission entrance exam scores. If an applicant does not meet one or more of the admission requirements, the application file is reviewed by the Graduate Coordinator and the SLIS Director who take into consideration the strength of the letters of recommendation as well as stated career goals to determine if they are closely aligned with the School's curriculum and will be a good fit with the program. The Graduate Program Director will now take over the Director's review. Ninety seven percent of students surveyed in Spring 2012 agree (47%) or strongly agree (52%) that "the admissions process was generally straightforward." (see *Appendix I.3–2012 Student Survey Results 0411*).

IV.3.2 Assessment of an application is based on a combined evaluation of academic, intellectual, and other qualifications as they relate to the constituencies served by a program, a program's goals and objectives, and the career objectives of the individual.

Students are accepted to the Master's program, on a rolling basis for the fall, spring, and summer semesters. All applications are processed and reviewed by the Graduate Student Services staff and applications that do not meet minimum criteria are carefully reviewed by the Graduate Coordinator and the Director of SLIS (and, as of fall 2012, the Graduate Program Director). Applicants are evaluated on the basis of whether they meet the University's stated

[3] http://slis.fsu.edu/Admissions/International-Admission-Requirements

criteria for admission, the strength of their letters of recommendation (discussed below) and the degree to which their career goals, as described in their supplemental application, relate to the Master's program curriculum and objectives. Students may be admitted in one of three categories:

1. As a *regular* degree-seeking student with no provisions or conditions;
2. As a *provisional* admit if the application credentials do not meet the minimum University criteria (see Section IV.3.2) or departmental criteria. SLIS also has the option to use provisional admission for students who have not yet completed an approved graduate entrance examination, which allows the student to enroll for up to one semester allotting time to complete the required exam. Provisional admission is good for one semester and prior to the start of the subsequent semester, the application portfolio is reviewed and a determination made whether or not to formally admit.
3. As an admission *exception*, for students who do not meet the University's minimum grade point average entrance requirement of 3.0. The University allows "conditional admission" for applicants who are completing the baccalaureate degree just prior to entering the master's program. Students who are conditionally accepted by the University are required to submit proof of completion of the bachelor's degree via an official transcript with the degree posted within 6 weeks of the first semester of enrollment.

IV.3.3 Within the framework of institutional policy and program, the admission policy for a program ensures that applicants possess sufficient interest, aptitude, and qualifications to enable successful completion of a program and subsequent contribution to the field.

In addition to completing The Florida State University's online graduate application[4], applicants also must submit the SLIS Supplemental Application[5] as well as a current resume and two letters of recommendation–one professional and one academic. The professional letter should be from a current or past employer and the academic letter from a current or past instructor. Both letters should address the applicant's intellectual ability, communication skills, analytical skills, ability to work independently and collaboratively, emotional maturity and potential for the

[4] https://admissions.fsu.edu/gradapp/
[5] https://fsuslis.wufoo.com/forms/fsu-slis-supplemental-application/

profession[6]. Along with the letter, the recommender is required to complete a standard online evaluation form included in the online portal.

Students' supplemental applications, resumes, and reference letters are reviewed by the Graduate Student Services staff as well as the Graduate Coordinator, and the Director of SLIS (and, as of fall 2012, the Graduate Program Director) to ensure that students' interests, aptitude, and qualifications are such that they are likely to be successful in the SLIS graduate program.

The admissions process, while guided by large amounts of data and carefully honed procedures, remains as much an artful process as a decision-making process. Although our overall retention rates are excellent, our program occasionally encounters students who have excellent applications, but often due to life circumstances, have difficulty completing the program. We offer these students as much support as we can and every opportunity for success, yet some do not complete the program. At other times, we take a chance on a student who may not have a strong application and they succeed well beyond our highest expectations. Our overall grade point average for students in fall 2011 was 3.8; the average across all semesters from spring 2007 through fall 2011 was 3.78.

We receive gratifying evidence that our graduates are not only thriving in their jobs, but also are contributing in outstanding ways to the profession in ways that are recognized by others as well. For instance, there have been a number of *Library Journal* (*LJ*) "Movers and Shakers" among our graduates. Most recently, *LJ* recognized four SLIS graduates with this honor: Christian Zabriskie, founder of NYC's Urban Librarians Unite; Andrew Coulon and Mathew Moyer of Jacksonville Public Library, and Paul "Library Guy" Clark (http://www.thelibraryguy.com/), who devoted large amounts of personal and vacation time to informing state legislators of the need for librarians.

[6] http://slis.fsu.edu/Admissions/Supporting-Documents/Master-s-Degree

IV.4 Students construct coherent programs of study that allow individual needs, goals, and aspirations to be met within the context of program requirements established by the School. Students receive systematic, multifaceted evaluation of their achievements. Students have access to continuing opportunities for guidance, counseling, and placement assistance.

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Orientation

Students are strongly encouraged to being planning their programs of study at orientation. Orientation is considered an important bridge between the admission process and the student's beginning coursework. All students are required to complete the University's Online Orientation for Graduate Students and the SLIS mandatory Online Orientation, located on the FSU Blackboard website. Students who come to the Tallahassee main campus are also required to attend a University campus orientation and the SLIS on-campus orientation during the week prior to the start of fall semester. The orientation sessions are designed to familiarize students with general policies and procedures of the University, as well as specific policies and procedures, program components, and technology recommendations of the School of Library & Information Studies. In the SLIS mandatory Online Orientation, students are introduced to the many opportunities of the information professions. The orientation discusses program requirements, provides an overview of both required courses and electives, describes the various areas of specialization, explains the advising process and describes the registration process. Additional information, such as completing a certificate, undertaking an internship and/or participating in service learning activities as part of their program of study are also included. Both the University online orientation and the SLIS mandatory Online Orientation are administered through Blackboard, and students are sent a detailed instructional email notification within several days of being accepted to the program.

Prior to the start of a semester, synchronous online advising sessions administered using Blackboard Collaborate are coordinated by Graduate Student Services. Moderators include faculty and Graduate Student Services staff members and are held several nights over a week with each night focusing on certain specializations. The purpose of these sessions is to give

students a more detailed overview of the specializations and their relationship to various career opportunities. These sessions also allow for interaction among faculty and students, as students are encouraged to ask questions. These are typically the first time that students 'meet' the faculty, and as such they provide an effective ice-breaker and establish a friendly atmosphere prior to the beginning of classes.

An open house and welcome is held for local students, giving them an opportunity to meet faculty and staff in person and tour the School's and University's facilities. They have an opportunity to meet with faculty for program advice. They also receive a welcome packet with information about Tallahassee and FSU and attend an information session with members of the Graduate Student Services staff coordinated by the Graduate Coordinator. The day concludes with a Welcome Reception.

The online faculty advising sessions during orientation are strongly encouraged but not required; approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they had attended one or more of those sessions (see *Appendix I.3–2012 Student Survey Results 0411*). Of those who did attend, 43.7% agreed and 28.7% strongly agreed that the faculty advising sessions during orientation were helpful. Because orientation is such an important part of the process of beginning graduate study, the Graduate Student Services staff in collaboration with the Master's and Specialist Committee continually reviews and revises the online orientation to address the needs of incoming students.

Advising

Graduate student advising at SLIS is accomplished through a two-pronged approach. The Graduate Student Services staff, under the supervision of the Graduate Coordinator, provides advising services from prospective student inquiry through graduation. The Graduate Coordinator offers more specialized advice and strategies for success, especially if a student is encountering difficulties. Each student is also assigned a faculty advisor whose role is to provide academic and career guidance based on the student's stated academic interests and career goals as submitted on the Supplemental Application. The role of the faculty advisor is to provide content-specific advice and career advice and to assist students in planning their programs of study. For example, students may have questions about which courses to take if they are interested in working in a particular kind of information setting. Students may interact with faculty and Graduate Student Services staff members via the FSU School of Library &

Information Studies – Graduate Advising Facebook page[7], the SLIS Graduate Student Services advising site in Blackboard, email, telephone, Skype, and in person. School library media students are assigned to one of three full-time faculty members who specialize in that area.

Though students are assigned a particular faculty member as their faculty advisor, they are encouraged to contact any faculty member if they have questions or need advice related to their academic work and/or career goals. As students often change their minds about their career path after they have begun the program, they are free to request a change of faculty advisor or a specific faculty advisor. Students may also request a change in faculty advisor if they have established a particularly productive mentor-mentee relationship with another faculty member.

The students surveyed this spring (see *Appendix I.3–2012 COA Student Survey Results 0411*) agreed (32%) and strongly agreed (22%) that faculty provided "quality academic advising," while they agreed (23%) and strongly agreed (25%) that the Graduate Student Services staff provided "quality academic advising." In addition, they agreed (37%) and strongly agreed (28%) that it was clear "where to go for advising." We feel these numbers should be higher and are not necessarily reflective of the job we normally do. We have taken two important steps in an attempt to increase student satisfaction with advising, both of which involve providing access to more advisors. First, we have recently changed our advising strategy so that we assign students individual faculty advisors. Prior to this, one faculty member was responsible for advising and used an extensive Blackboard advising site. Second, we have filled two vacant positions in Graduate Student Services. Prior to that, for the last two years we have effectively had only one person in Graduate Student Services. We expect things will rapidly improve, and we are now making sure to explain the advising process to students both during orientation and in individual advising sessions.

Graduate Student Services has seen a complete reorganization over the last year and a half after a detailed review of the services being provided to students and faculty. Two Academic Support Assistant positions have been reclassified to Academic Program Specialist positions. These positions now have higher educational qualifications and require more specialized and advanced technical skills. Both positions were filled in April/May 2012. A part-time Student Services Assistant position completes the team. The Graduate Student Services staff have already begun implementation of improved procedures to provide more comprehensive and

[7] http://www.facebook.com/groups/166845516708844/

timely customer service to students. A communications plan is being developed, and training continues with the newer staff members. Additional improvements have been made, and with a full staff in place, we are now able to move forward to continue to evaluate and improve existing services and plan for new services.

Students also have access to internship coordinators for advice about setting up internships within different kinds of information organizations. The School Library Media Internship Coordinator (previously Dr. Linda Swaine, and now Sylvia Norton), assists students in establishing and completing internships in school libraries. The other internship coordinator (Dr. Christie Koontz) works with all other students who are interested in completing general internships. Again, communication can occur via email, telephone, or in person.

IV.4.2 Students receive systematic, multifaceted evaluation of their achievements.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are provided with systematic feedback and evaluation through various mechanisms. They receive grades and constructive feedback from their instructors on both individual and group course assignments. In addition, some classes incorporate peer feedback, particularly in the assessment of group activities, not only as a way of providing students with additional feedback from an audience other than the instructor, but also to encourage them to develop a critical sense in evaluating both their own and other people's work. The syllabi of individual courses reflect the wide variety of assignments and evaluation methods used in the program. Students completing internships receive feedback in the form of written comments and grades from the internship coordinator and written evaluations from their site supervisors.

School library media students must also maintain an electronic portfolio of specific assignments in select courses, as required by the Florida Department of Education's Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPS)[8] and the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE)[9]. These assignments are posted to Chalk & Wire,™ an electronic portfolio tool selected by the FSU College of Education. Assessment includes written feedback and a numerical score that are recorded within the portfolio, in addition to a grade.

[8] http://www. fldoe.org/profdev/FEAPs/
[9] http://www.ncate.org/Default.aspx

Currently, there is no formally collected data on student satisfaction with the quality of the feedback they receive from instructors. The University's standard SPOT/SUSSAI student evaluation form does not contain a question related specifically to that issue. In revising and refining the SLIS student survey, the School intends to add such a question.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

University policy governs the consequences for students who do not perform well academically. As stated in the *FSU Graduate Bulletin*[10]:

> Graduate students whose cumulative grade point average for courses taken at Florida State University falls below 3.0 at the end of a term (not counting courses for which "S" or "U" grades may be given) are considered not in good standing by the University and placed on academic probation. If a 3.0 cumulative grade point average is not attained by the end of the next full term of enrollment, the student will not be permitted to register for graduate study, including registering as a non-degree seeking student.

Students placed on academic probation are sent an email notification warning of the consequences of a second consecutive unsuccessful semester and are strongly encouraged to seek support assistance and appropriately select courses to ensure success in the next semester. Students who are placed on academic dismissal who wish to be reinstated must submit a letter of request detailing the circumstances that contributed to the unsuccessful completion of courses and subsequent dismissal, along with any relevant documentation in support of the request. Students are instructed to include information about how their circumstances have changed and what steps they will take to ensure that they will be successful in the future should reinstatement be granted.

In making decisions about reinstatements, a number of factors are considered, including the student's circumstances, course load and overall academic record and grade point deficiency. Students who have medical or mental health issues are referred to Thagard Student Health Center or the University Counseling Center to explore additional options. Each petition request is carefully reviewed by the Director and the Graduate Coordinator to determine if reinstatement is in the best interest of the student and whether or not the student can successfully continue

[10] http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/info/acad_regs.htm

the program. The new Graduate Program Director will take over the Director's review. Students who are granted reinstatement are notified by email, which includes the specific conditions of the reinstatement, as well as recommended support resources that may assist the student in achieving academic success. Students must acknowledge receipt of the reinstatement conditions and send notification of acceptance to the Graduate Coordinator by email. As part of the student services review, the Graduate Coordinator is working on additional retention support for students in academic difficulty and carefully monitors a student's progress after reinstatement.

Student Records

Student records provide documentation of students' coursework and other academic experiences. Official student records are maintained in the University's online student records database. Additional documentation related to students is maintained in individual student files in Graduate Student Services in the School's administrative suite in locked cabinets. All faculty have access to student records but must maintain confidentiality and adhere to the privacy requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Students have access to their electronic records through the SecureApps section of the University's Blackboard portal and may request access to the additional documentation kept on file by the School.

Student Honors and Awards

Outstanding student achievement is recognized publicly through two primary means. One is the F. William Summers Outstanding Graduate Student Award, given annually to the student who has made a significant contribution to the School, the profession and/or the community. The Summers Award is given during the CCI Awards and Honors Ceremony, usually held during the spring semester (see *Appendix IV.3–Summers Award Selection Process*). The Master's and Specialist Committee is discussing establishing additional student awards in order to more effectively recognize the diversity of our students' accomplishments. The committee is considering, for example, awards for outstanding distance-learning student, outstanding local student, outstanding school library media student and outstanding graduate assistant.

The other means of recognizing student achievement is through invitations to membership in the Gamma Chapter of Beta Phi Mu, the national honor society for library and information studies. Each semester, students who are academically eligible (those graduating with a cumulative FSU GPA of 3.75 or higher) are nominated by faculty to be invited to join Beta Phi

Mu. Per stipulation in Beta Phi Mu's national bylaws, up to 25% of a graduating class may be nominated for BPM membership. Students may join as soon as they receive their invitations. The induction ceremony is held each year during the College's Convocation, which coincides with Homecoming weekend.

IV.4.3 Students have access to continuing opportunities for guidance, counseling, and placement assistance.

As discussed above, advising is provided to students using a two-pronged approach. Students receive guidance from the Graduate Student Services staff for procedural information related to School and University requirements, registration and withdrawal procedures, information about financial aid, and all other aspects of enrollment. The team regularly pushes important and timely information to students via the FSU School of Library & Information Studies Graduate Advising Facebook page, via the student email list, and via announcements posted through the SLIS Graduate Student Services advising site in Blackboard. Students beginning internships, both general and school library media, participate in an online orientation where expectations for a successful internship are discussed. Faculty provide academic and career guidance. The Director and Graduate Program Director hold open, online chats with students each semester, during which a variety of topics may be addressed. The Director and Graduate Program Director are available to meet with individual students using the means most convenient for the student when requested.

Counseling Services

The University Counseling Center at FSU provides individual, couples, and group counseling; crisis intervention; alcohol and drug evaluations; consultations; and referrals (http://counseling.fsu.edu/). All FSU students, including distance-learning students, are eligible to access these services free of charge. The Graduate Coordinator also works closely with the case manager in the University Dean of Students Office to provide support and resources.

Retention reports are run following grade posting each semester and students on academic probation and dismissal are identified by the Graduate Coordinator. Options for the student are discussed with the Director and a meeting is arranged when necessary. The Graduate Program Director will now conduct these discussions. In extreme circumstances, the Graduate Coordinator will accompany students to the Counseling Center in cases where support is

needed immediately. In addition to individual counseling, the FSU Office of the Dean of Students has assembled a working "Crisis Committee" that is ready to assist students if notified by an academic unit of a problem. They provide a wide range of referrals and can provide direct support, such as food or an emergency loan, if needed.

Placement

SLIS does not have its own placement officer; however, the University offers career counseling through the Career Center at the Dunlap Success Center. The FSU Career Center (http://career.fsu.edu/) provides comprehensive career services to students, alumni, employers, faculty, staff, and other members of the FSU community. The Career Center provides four general services: Career Advising and Information, Internship and Cooperative Education, Employment and Post-Graduate Education, Research and Development. The Match Majors to Occupations guide[11] published by the FSU Career Center provides information about work possibilities available in the information professions. The FSU Career Portfolio[12] prepares students for the world of work through planning, reflection, skill development, and portfolio documentation. In addition to counseling, the Center conducts workshops, holds mock interviews and provides career resources through its in-house library. All FSU students, including distance learners, have access to the services of the Career Center. Internally, the Internship Coordinator and the School Library Media Internship Coordinator maintain a list of potential job contacts, and it is not unusual for a successful internship to lead to a paid position. The School posts job vacancy notices on the Graduate Program section of the SLIS website and on the announcements board in the SLIS Graduate Student Services advising site in Blackboard. Faculty also provide career advice and identify opportunities specific to the students they advise.

Students also have ample opportunities to meet SLIS alumni and graduates of other institutions in the profession. Each year, the School participates in the College's Convocation Ceremony, held the Saturday of Homecoming weekend. Many alumni return to Tallahassee and a number of them attend the Convocation Ceremony. The breakfast held prior to the ceremony is an excellent opportunity for students to establish contacts that might lead to mentorships and even job offers. The same is true of the College's Annual Awards and Honors Ceremony, held each

[11] http://career.fsu.edu/img/pdf/mm/information-studies.pdf
[12] http://career.fsu.edu/portfolio

spring semester. Our annual Distinguished Alumnus/Alumna Award Winners include a roster of accomplished and committed library professionals:

2011: Christie Koontz
2010: Warrick Dunn
2009: Tom W. Sloan
2008: Sol Hirsch
2007: Charles E. Parker
2006: Mary Jane Little
2005: Laurence Miller
2004: Lorraine Dey Summers
2003: Anna H. Perrault
2002: Jacqueline D. Montgomery

The Student Chapter of the American Library Association also provides a number of opportunities for current students to connect with alumni and others in the information professions, as does the Gamma Chapter of Beta Phi Mu, which holds its annual business meeting on the Friday before Convocation.

IV.5 The School provides an environment that fosters student participation in the definition and determination of the total learning experience. Students are provided with opportunities to form student organizations and to participate in the formulation, modification, and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs.

IV.5.1 The School provides an environment that fosters student participation in the definition and determination of the total learning experience.

Master's students are encouraged to take leadership roles within the School to provide input to curriculum goals and to provide feedback on optimal learning environments and professional growth needs. Student membership on our academic committees is written into the SLIS Bylaws, and participation in student organizations and contributions to school governance through committee membership achieve this.

Master's students have the opportunity each year to participate as representatives on the Master's and Specialist Committee. The committee has one on-campus representative and one distance-learning student representative, who participates via conference call, Blackboard Collaborate, or Skype. Student representatives participate in discussion of curricular matters and other school activities and events, and contribute to the decision-making process of the committee. The CCI Leadership Board also includes at least one SLIS Master's student representative; the president of the SLIS ALA Student Chapter addressed the Leadership Board at the last board meeting in Tampa. The Director held, and now the Graduate Program Director will hold, "Chat with the Director" sessions once a semester. Students share concerns and appreciation in online chats on a regular basis, with feedback going to the faculty and staff. The goal is to increase the opportunity for students to provide direct feedback to the administration. The survey of students conducted in Spring 2012 [see *Appendix I.3--2012 COA Student Survey Results 0411*] will be repeated annually.

IV.5.2 Students are provided with opportunities to form student organizations and to participate in the formulation, modification, and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs.

SLIS has a strong ALA Student Chapter; over the past five years it has grown from just a few members to over 100. Based on its evidence of activities, the chapter won the ALA Student Chapter Award for 2012. Dr. Christie Koontz, the chapter faculty advisor, offers guidance and support; however, the students themselves plan and carry out the activities, which they promote through the chapter's website (http://ala.ci.fsu.edu), email lists, an online newsletter (http://ala.ci.fsu.edu/newsletter.html), and social media. Chapter members provide feedback on the program and any issues that need to be addressed to the faculty. Officers' meetings are held every first Friday of the month and general meetings are held every third Friday of the month. The general meetings are a combination of students participating in person and via webcast. Students are notified of meetings via email, via the ALA Student Chapter at Florida State University Facebook page[13], and via the FSU School of Library & Information Studies Graduate Advising Facebook page. The chapter sponsors lectures, workshops, off-campus field trips, service projects and social events. The chapter supports and encourages all students to participate in national and regional conferences. In 2009 and 2012 a contingent of funded

[13] http://www.facebook.com/groups/27825566855/

students travelled to the Florida Library Association conference to participate and to facilitate recruitment and alumni activity. When the ALA Annual Conference is held in the southeast, chapter students also receive funding for travel to it. Students receiving honors are funded to attend the ALA Annual Conference, and officers of the ALA Student Chapter attended this year's conference to receive the Chapter of the Year Award.

Women in IT Sharing Experiences (WISE) is a peer mentoring initiative funded by the National Science Foundation-funded STARS Alliance, a project designed to increase the participation of women and minorities in computing-related fields. The CCI merger has helped WISE by increasing communication among female students in SLIS and the other two schools of the College, and SLIS student participation is just beginning to grow. With the new SLIS Master of Science in Information Technology (MSIT) program, we anticipate that SLIS students will become more aware of this organization. Since the new MSIT program will include online offerings, we hope to develop online activities for distance-learning students through WISE.

IV.6 The School applies the results of evaluation of student achievement to program development. Procedures are established for systematic evaluation of the degree to which a program's academic and administrative policies and activities regarding students are accomplishing its objectives. Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, staff, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

IV.6.1 The School applies the results of evaluation of student achievement to program development.

The ultimate goal of the Master's program is to insure that students successfully graduate in a timely fashion with a degree that will meet their professional and personal goals. To that end, the Master's and Specialist Committee is kept apprised of data relevant to curriculum planning, such as grade distributions, student retention figures, graduation statistics (see *Appendix IV.4–Graduated Master's Student Summary – Spring 2006 through Fall 2011*), and the number of students completing internships or registering for new or special-topics courses. The committee uses these data to assess program outcomes and to shape curriculum development.

The University has required formal program goals for each SLIS program and degree (undergraduate, master's, specialist, and doctoral) since 2004 to comply with the Southern

Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation requirements. Goals have been identified by SLIS and are included in the University's Institutional Effectiveness Portal; the goals must be approved by a University monitoring committee. Yearly data gathering and evaluation with the results used for program planning and development are required; results must be reported by October 15 every year (see *Appendix IV.5–Institutional Effectiveness Portal Documents*). If changes are needed, budgetary implications must also be addressed. With the upcoming 2013 University SACS review, SLIS will be reviewing and updating its program and learning outcomes to better fit current best practices.

IV.6.2 Procedures are established for systematic evaluation of the degree to which a program's academic and administrative policies and activities regarding students are accomplishing its objectives.

To date, planning and evaluation of the Master's program has taken place primarily through the Master's and Specialist Committee, with limited support from Graduate Student Services. At the end of each academic year, the chair of each academic committee writes a final report of the year's activities, describing the issues addressed and those that are still in progress (see *Appendix IV.6–MSC Annual Report 2011-2012*). The Director takes these annual reports as input to the charges created for the committees' business the following year. The recent appointment of Dr. Linda Swaine as Director of Articulation and Assessment will facilitate a more holistic approach to planning and evaluation across all of our degree programs. We plan to hire an additional half-time staff member to assist in designing and implementing outcomes-based student learning assessment across our program.

Regular reporting of statistics collected by the Graduate Coordinator and for the annual ALISE Statistical Report also contribute to the evaluation of academic and administrative policies. The Biennial Report and interim statistical reports also afford opportunities for ongoing evaluation. Our students actively communicate with SLIS faculty and staff when they perceive problems or issues. Our recent surveys of students, employers and alumni indicate we are largely succeeding in educating the library and information professionals of the future [see *Appendix I.1 - 2012 COA Alumni Survey Results 0419; Appendix I.2 - 2012 COA Employer Survey Results 0424; and Appendix I.3 - 2012 COA Student Survey Results 0411*]
For the last few years, the Master's and Specialist Committee and faculty discussions have largely focused on enrollment targets set by the University's higher administration and the

School's inability to meet these goals. It should be noted that many other units at FSU are also unable to meet their targets. The University is mandated to meet a 2% increase in enrollment every year. As described earlier, we not only had record numbers of applicants in 2006–2008, we also had an unusually high enrollment rate from these applicants. Our high enrollments were followed by internal policy changes at FSU, decreasing our ability to attract out-of-state students and our loss of ACM students from Georgia, Kentucky, and Alabama (see Section IV.1.1). Our enrollment targets have been based on a 'blip' increase in our enrollments in 2007–2008, and we maintain that this higher level is unsustainable if we are to preserve a quality program with the decrease in faculty brought about by funding cuts. While we think we are beginning to see some improvement in our enrollments from increased recruiting activities, we are aware that more creative recruitment strategies are required. One strategy is to attract students, including those pursuing the new MSIT degree, to the technology-focused course offerings that are most consistently under-enrolled. Another strategy with faculty and student support is the training and deployment of faculty, student, and alumni ambassadors to provide better reach to target populations within Florida and in other states where few options to obtain master's degrees in the field exist. Finally, concurrent with our recent reorganization, we have begun to discuss the development of special emphases and professional development programs to focus on our strengths in digital libraries, leadership, social informatics, and school library education.

Remotely located distance learning students encounter obstacles when trying to accomplish many routine logistical and administrative tasks at FSU. The Graduate Student Services staff is working to develop new and innovative ways to make sure that distance learning students feel connected to the University community. The challenge is to incorporate the use of "high tech" services without losing the "high touch" welcoming feel of FSU. The faculty and staff are working with the University to ensure that the wealth of valuable workshops and activities that are currently available to on-campus students can be shared with our predominantly off-campus distance learning student population. As pioneers of online learning in the University, we continue to educate University administrators and coordinators about the benefits of online student engagement and participation.

IV.6.3 Within applicable institutional policies, faculty, students, staff, and others are involved in the evaluation process.

Students in the program have several different means by which they can provide evaluation of the program. Every course administers a student course assessment, available online (for online and face-to face courses) or in paper form (for face-to-face courses only). These assessments are typically administered during the last two weeks of the semester, are anonymous, and, in the case of face-to-face classes, are proctored by someone other than the instructor. Instructors do not see the results of the course assessments until after final grades have been submitted. The standardized assessment form asks students to rate instruction on the following variables: description of course objectives and assignments, communication of ideas and information, expression of expectations for performance in class, availability to assist students in or out of class, respect and concern for students, stimulation of interest in the course, facilitation of learning and overall assessment of instructor. It is the School's policy that all courses are evaluated, including courses taught in the summer. The summary results of course assessment are made available to students and faculty[14], and detailed course assessments are available to faculty teaching the course, and to the Director and Graduate Program Director.

Students also have the opportunity to provide feedback via "Chat with the Director" (soon to become the "Chat with the Graduate Program Director") sessions conducted each semester in Blackboard Collaborate. Recordings of these sessions are available on the School's Blackboard site. Student feedback is also solicited through an online survey. The results of the Spring 2012 survey are located in *Appendix I.3–2012 COA Student Survey Results 0411*. Feedback from the "Chat with the Director" sessions and the survey is shared with the Master's and Specialist Committee so that student suggestions and concerns can be addressed. When student concerns center on the teaching performance of an instructor, the Director may initiate discussion with the faculty involved, consider discontinuing the employment of an adjunct, or implement a teaching improvement plan. While we may receive suggestions from individual students regarding courses they would like us to offer, students as a whole rarely offer overall curriculum suggestions. One student recently suggested more programming coursework, and after we clarified that the student was talking about "program planning" in libraries, not computer programming, this feedback was passed on to the Master's and Specialist Committee.

Faculty and staff help shape curriculum and policies through participation on the Master's and Specialist Committee. Curriculum changes proposed by the committee are discussed and voted

[14] http://cat.fsu.edu/courseevaluations/tools/index.cfm

on at faculty meetings, thus giving all faculty input into the curriculum development process. The faculty at large are welcome to initiate discussion of curriculum or other suggestions in faculty meetings.

Feedback from additional constituents is solicited on a regular basis. Alumni are surveyed to determine their satisfaction with their academic preparation, as well as to gather information about their current employment status. The results of the Spring 2012 alumni survey (see *Appendix I.1–2012 COA Alumni Survey Results 0419*) indicated that SLIS is succeeding in providing quality education for future library professionals. Of alumni surveyed this spring, 50% felt their education in SLIS prepared them very well for employment; 40% felt it prepared them moderately well. Of these same alumni, 60% reported that at the time of their graduation they were very satisfied with their education; 50% reported they are very satisfied now.

Employers of our graduates are surveyed to gather information about their satisfaction with the work performance of our graduates and their suggestions for curriculum development. The results of the 2012 survey are located in *Appendix I.2–2012 COA Employer Survey Results 0424*. Of the employers surveyed this spring, 38% rated SLIS's ability to prepare information professionals "one of the best," while 54% rated it "above average." Twenty-six percent rated SLIS's responsiveness to their organization's employment needs as "one of the best;" 53% rated it "above average."

The newly created Master's Advisory Board, made up of alumni, employers and other stakeholders, will provide additional feedback about curriculum development, student learning outcomes (see Standard II chapter and *Appendix IV.5 – Institutional Effectiveness Portal Documents*), and will provide a forum for discussing the challenges and opportunities facing the School, higher education, and the profession in general. Though the Board has not yet been convened, it is the School's intention to convene a meeting this fall and at least once, and preferably twice, each academic year.

Summary

SLIS students, while representing a student body that is predominantly older and female, also reflect the economic and racial diversity of Florida's and the nation's population. Florida and FSU have faced economic challenges for several years, and these challenges have affected both citizens' ability to pursue higher education and/or career changes. One response to

these challenges took place in 2009 with the merger of CI into a larger college and the establishment of the School of Library & Information Studies. Since the merger, we have actively investigated many aspects of how to continue to deliver a quality education in the face of declining resources, and have looked to improve many different facets of our operations. We have also maintained our commitment to delivering a quality online program to those who could not otherwise attain a graduate education. While we still have many areas in which we would like to improve, we are gratified that our ALA Student Chapter was chosen as Student Chapter of the Year (2012), in part because of their efforts to reach out to and involve more distance students. Our survey results show that SLIS students feel that we are preparing them well for the information professions, and employers and alumni share this perspective. We are well situated to continue to build on our successes, with a stronger Graduate Student Services staff and an accomplished, committed and caring faculty, and through effective planning and communication to ensure that our students achieve success, both within our program and within the profession.