

**External Review Panel Report**  
**on the**  
**Master of Library and Information Studies**  
**at the**  
**University of British Columbia**

Mary Ann Berry

Bryan Corbett (Panel Chair)

Edward Erazo

Lynne McKechnie

Annabel Stephens

Edel Toner-Rogala (Canadian Observer)

Leila Wallenius

December 8, 2006

## **Introduction**

Established in 1985, the Master of Library and Information Studies degree was the successor of the Master of Library Science (1971) and the Bachelor of Library Science (1961) Program. In 1998, the Joint Masters of Archival Studies/Master of Library and Informational Studies (MAS/MLIS) was established. In 1984 the School was renamed the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies.

The Program, first accredited, in 1963, has been reaccredited four times, the last one in 1998, using the 1992 ALA Accreditation Standards.

Since its creation in 1961, the School has reported firstly through the Faculty of Arts and Science and lately through the Faculty of Arts. In 1990, for Academic matters, the School's program was also brought under the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Three of the members of the On-site External Review Panel arrived on 14 October and introduced themselves over dinner. Due to travel disruption, the fourth member did not arrive until mid-afternoon on 15 October.

In the morning of 15 October, the three panel members were joined by the Canadian observer and met Edie Rasmussen, Director of the School, for a tour of the facilities. The School had rented a lockable boardroom, equipped with a telephone, computer, printer,

and high speed Internet connectivity. The School provided various documentations additional to its presentation and appendices and web references. This included student evaluations of academic staff, budget and salary information, previous accreditation correspondence, etc.

After the tour, the panel met to finalize the site visit schedule. It then met with the Director for approximately 3 hours during which she answered the questions of the panel members. When the fourth panel member arrived, the schedule for the next three days was reviewed and confirmed.

During the next two days, the various members met with Catherine Quinlan (University Librarian) and Peter Ward (Interim Deputy University Librarian); academic staff Terry Eastwood (Graduate Advisor), Judi Saltman, Alison Taylor-McBryde, Jennifer Campbell-Meier, Joe Tennis (First Nations Curriculum Concentration Coordinator), Mary-Sue Stephenson (MLIS Program Chair and Chair Curriculum Committee), Rick Kopak (Chair, Facilities Committee) and Ann Curry. In addition, interviews and meetings were held with Shirley Lew (the School's Student Services Coordinator), Brian Lee (Financial Director, Faculty of Arts), Graham Riches (Director, School of Social Work and Family Studies), Dean Nancy Gallini (Dean of Arts) and Julie Walchli (Director, Faculty of Arts Co-operative Education Program). Various panel members sat in on various classes and labs. Panelists met with three student leaders and had lunch with approximately 15 students to discuss the program. The lunch meeting was with librarians from UBC (several of whom also serve as adjunct faculty), and this meeting was also

attended by Lynn Copeland, University Librarian and Dean of Library Services from Simon Fraser University.

One evening the panel toured the Vancouver Public Library and joined approximately 27 alumni and employers at a reception hosted by the School. During the course of the visit, the panel held conference calls (3) with the off-site panel members. The visit concluded with an exit interview with Dean Gallini, Anna Kindler, Associate Vice President, Academic Programs and Director Rasmussen.

During the visit, the Panel was able to gather evidence from various sources. The program presentation and hard copy appendices were well written and presented. The School uses its web-site extensively in making program information readily available. Students were sent an e-mail containing questions of interest to the review process. Staff, students, librarians, alumni and employers individually or collectively were either interviewed formally or informally and classes and labs were observed. Two panel members visited the site of the Irving K. Barber Learning Center (IKBLC) the future home of the School.

The panel found all who participated in the review process were pleasant and very forthcoming with the information requested. The Director and her administrative staff were well organized for the visit and accommodating to the panels every request.

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

The stated mission of the SLAIS is found on the general UBC/SLAIS web site about the school ( <http://www.slais.ubc.ca/ABOUT/about.htm> ). The mission is also clearly stated along with detailed goals and objectives on another web page specifically on the mission, goals and objectives ( <http://www.slais.ubc.ca/ABOUT/mission.htm> ). As reported in the Program Presentation, the mission and goals are consistent with the institutional values ( <http://www.ubc.ca/about/mission.html> ) and, more specifically, with UBC's new "Trek 2010: A Global Journey" ( <http://www.trek2000.ubc.ca/index.html> ).

An examination of a random sample of the course descriptions provided on the School's web site ( <http://www.slais.ubc.ca/COURSES/courses-summary.htm> ) revealed clearly stated goals and objectives consistent with the stated mission, goals and objectives.

The School reports that the mission, goals, and objectives are "regularly reviewed through the analyses of the teaching evaluations of the instructors" and the "student input in these evaluations about the relevance of various courses based on the program's goals and objectives" (Program Presentation, p. 10).

Since the last accreditation review in 1998, the faculty have reviewed the mission, goals and objectives during two faculty retreats, one on May 17, 2000 and, more recently, on May 30, 2006. At this recent retreat, the faculty members agreed "the substance and the spirit of the existing SLAIS documents were consistent with the values expressed in these documents from the parent faculty and wider university" (Program Presentation, p. 11).

The School reports that there will be an optimal time to review the mission, goals and objectives again in 2008, when all the courses in the new curriculum will have been offered. Developed under the current mission, goals and objectives, this new SLAIS curriculum, was produced from the curriculum review started in 2004. By 2008, the School also anticipates that the new President will have likely established and published the new mission and goals for UBC. The outcomes of this 2008 review of the School's mission, goals and objectives will be reported "on this re-examination in the *2009 Biennial Report* to the Committee on Accreditation" (Program Presentation, p. 11).

## **Standard II: Curriculum**

The Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) curriculum “strives to produce graduates with a strong foundation in a broad set of generalist knowledge and skills that are applicable to a variety of information professions” (Program Presentation, p. 35). The curriculum is diversified and the faculty, based on the curriculum, have responded to the needs of its students and employers and the advice of its alumni by continuing to update their courses. New topics courses are introduced on a regular basis to respond to newly emerging areas. In all the documents consulted the School demonstrates a thorough awareness of the rapidly changing information environment to which its graduates are called upon to contribute. These changes are reflected in the extensive curriculum changes that have been implemented, or are ready for implementation this Winter 2006 term, since the last review of the MLIS program. The quality of the MLIS curriculum was also confirmed through interviews of alumni and on-site during the visit.

The School offers students several choices of degrees: Master of Library and Information Studies, a joint Master of Library and Information Studies and Master of Archival Studies, Master of Archival Studies, Master of Arts in Children’s Literature, and the PhD in Library and Information Studies. The MLIS requires a minimum of 48 credits for graduation and the joint degree requires 81 credits.

For the MLIS, four courses are designated as core courses: LIBR 500, “Foundations of Information Technology,” LIBR 510, “Foundations of Bibliographic Control,” LIBR 540, “Foundations of Reference and Information Services,” and LIBR 560, “Foundations

of Information-Based Organizations.” Two additional courses for credit are required for all students: LIBR 570, “Management of Libraries and Archives,” and LIBR 590, “Research Methods in Libraries.” Also required is a non-credit, two-week, full-time, supervised field experience, LIBR 595, “Practicum.” These four core courses and three required courses, collectively, provide the foundation necessary to meet the requirements in Standard II, as outlined in the Program Presentation, pp. 20-22.

In addition there are fifty-five electives, twenty of which were offered in the fall of 2005, from a variety of areas for the students to choose. This does not include electives, up to 12 credits, from outside the field which a student may choose to take. This allows for a greater flexibility in a course of study for a student. This is also indicated by UBC in having a strong generalist program. All the elective courses which are part of the regular curriculum, i.e. those which are not “topics” courses which have not gone through a complete UBC approval process, have been offered at least every two years, and many are offered once or twice every year. “Topics” courses (identified by a number and letter) are intended as occasional courses to take advantage of new developments and faculty interests. Those that are intended for more frequent scheduling have been integrated into the curriculum, i.e. assigned a regular course number, as part of the recent curriculum revision. Others were offered to take advantage of special circumstances and are not intended to be integrated into the curriculum. Part of the curriculum review process eliminated courses that were no longer offered from the list of electives.

At the time the Program Presentation was written (2005-06), only one course was offered entirely by web-based delivery and only one other was offered as a “mixed mode strategy of web-delivered content, on-campus meetings, and off-campus tours” (Program Presentation, p. 36). There are plans to create several other web-based versions of courses in the next few years, subject to the same approval process as other courses.

All courses descriptions are found at <http://www.slais.ubc.ca/COURSES/courses-summary.htm>. The chosen program may cover from 16 months to 5 years, An examination of course syllabi demonstrated a sound mix of theory, principles, practice and values necessary for the preparation of librarians and information professionals. The syllabi address all aspects of a course (description, objectives, content, readings, assignments, grading) and show evidence of being produced with much thought and in response to needs. Courses are reviewed and modified via the SLAIS Curriculum Committee and must meet a rigorous standard before they are approved. The curriculum committee includes a student and sometimes an alumnus. When a course is proposed, it is submitted to the co-chairs, then goes to the full committee, to the Director, and then goes before the entire SLAIS faculty where it is voted on. The curriculum is continually being reviewed and all faculty regularly update and modify the content of their courses.

Employers and alumni also had an opportunity to provide their comments on the curriculum at the SLAIS Forum on Curriculum held on January 28, 2005. One of the

most important outcomes from this forum was the comment that “they wanted management skills of SLAIS graduates strengthened” (Program Presentation, p. 11).

In 2005, the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies (SLAIS) began participating in the WISE (Web-based Information Science Education) Consortium which allows students to take up to six credits from any of the other universities that are part of the consortium. This allows students flexibility for getting classes, which might otherwise not be available in a particular term (p.16). As noted in the Presentation, the WISE courses are selected to complement, not duplicate, SLAIS courses (p. 16). They are not intended to substitute for SLAIS courses in a particular term, but to add specialized topics which are not offered at all. One must note that except for these provisions, only the core courses in the MLIS program are offered via methods other than face-to-face. This is about to change as contracts have been written for additional Web-based courses.

Technology itself is incorporated within the curriculum. It is presented in theory as well as application. While only one of the required core courses, “Foundations of Information Technology,” has technology as its main theme, technology is integrated in virtually all courses, required and elective. Students wishing to specialize in information systems and technology have a range of electives available, on topics such as database design, electronic text, digital libraries, digital collections, etc. (Presentation, p. 24).

As a complement to the program, SLAIS co-sponsored a Summer Institute that provided practical knowledge and skills related to organizing and preserving information in a variety of formats, began offering short topics which could be taken as continuing education or one credit hour courses within the MLS workshops, and also offered a Certificate of Advanced Study in various areas.

Students are assigned an academic advisor to guide them throughout their program. Students are also encouraged, and given the opportunity, to be active in their chosen professional organizations. The extent of student involvement is shown at various students' websites (Program Presentation, p. 27),

<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/PEOPLE/students/student-groups.htm>

Students are also involved with professors in a series of colloquium presentations (Program Presentation, p. 28).

In 2004, the faculty began a comprehensive review of the curriculum. A Curriculum Event was held in January 2005, followed by more meetings in April and May 2005 (Program Presentation, p. 39). This process ultimately resulted in the new SLAIS curriculum, implemented in September 2006. By 2008, all the courses in the new curriculum will have been offered.

The curriculum ties in with their mission statement (p. 20). The SLAIS' curriculum objectives and each course that addresses that objective are described. Many courses are offered which address one particular objective.

SLAIS is to be commended in following a systematic planning process as it relates to the curriculum.

### **Standard III: Faculty**

An examination of curriculum vitae indicates full time regular faculty have diverse interests, professional experience and research expertise that cover most of the MLIS curriculum. While a search is underway for new faculty to cover the specific areas of reference and management and to expand in youth services—an area of concentration for the SLAIS program—full-time faculty with term appointments are currently addressing these areas of the curriculum. Perusal of the course offerings for this academic year and discussions with several part time instructors indicate that highly qualified, experienced professionals are teaching courses which complement those given by full time faculty. Adjunct faculty are recruited for their expertise in specific areas such as Collection Management, Legal Bibliography, Digital Collections, Cataloguing Special Materials, etc. For example, among others: Simon Neame, a librarian at the UBC Library with extensive experience in collection development, is teaching LISR 580 Collection Management; Linda Woodcock, a cataloguer with the Vancouver Public Library, is teaching LIBR 513 Cataloguing Special and Non-book Materials; and Douglas Bringham, a librarian in the UBC Library Systems, is teaching LIBR 544 Database Design.

Appointment and promotion and tenure practices as well as working conditions, evaluation and remuneration are governed by the Collective Agreement between UBC and its faculty, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all. New faculty benefit from reduced teaching loads (three instead of four courses) in the first two years of their appointment and an extensive mentoring program within SLAIS. For example, Joe

Tennis reported meeting frequently with Edie Rasmussen (his mentor) and receiving assistance with preparation of grant applications from other faculty. While Canadian MLIS programs are not allowed to collect data on ethnicity, age or gender, Canadian law expressly prohibits discrimination and SLAIS has an “Employment Equity Plan” that supports this.

Teaching competence is evident in the high course and teaching evaluation scores summarized in Table III.B (Program Presentation, p. 56), individual assessments examined during the site visit (all courses for last three academic years) and major teaching awards won by several faculty (e.g., Curry, Killam Teaching Award 2004, ALISE Award for Teaching Excellence 2005; Saltman, Killam Teaching Award 2003; Stephensen, Killam Teaching Award 1992). Particularly notable are the Killam prizes as it is highly unusual for a faculty to have three winners of this prestigious university-wide award. SLAIS is careful to map teaching assignments onto areas of research and professional expertise as indicated in Table III.A (pp. 47-51) and verified by cross-checking against resumes.

All full time faculty are active in service at school, faculty and university levels.

Additionally, all serve professional organizations and scholarship with many holding leadership positions. For example, Ann Curry chaired the BC Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee in 2004/05 and is currently Vice-President of the BC Civil Liberties Association, and Director Edie Rasmussen is 2006-2007 President for the

American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST), arguably the most prominent LIS scholarly association.

All full time faculty hold or have held research grants, ranging from large Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Standard Research Grants (e.g., Curry - 2003 - 2006, \$148,797; Kopak - 2003 - 2006, \$87,995) through UBC internal grants (e.g., Tennis - 2005, \$10,000) to small travel grants (e.g., Saltman - 2004, \$1200). Examination of curriculum vitae indicates that faculty holding research appointments are publishing and communicating the results of their work in reputable, peer-reviewed venues.

Faculty recruitment and retention presents a significant challenge for SLAIS. Three of the nine positions associated with the MLIS program are currently filled by full time faculty in term positions—the Dean made funding available to fill these positions on an interim basis. The school was unable to fill two of these (Youth services, Management) in the 2005/06 hiring cycle; the third (Reference) arose from the resignation of Martin Dowding effective July 1, 2006. Further, a current faculty member is under review for promotion and tenure. Since the last accreditation review, three faculty members (Crooks, Hopkins and Lighthall) retired, two (Haycock and Dowding) left for other positions, and one (Marton) left SLAIS after three years. This unusual amount of turnover (six of eight positions - the youth services position is new - within six years) has exacerbated the problem by creating an imbalance between junior, mid-career and senior faculty within SLAIS. The Correspondence Log (Office of Accreditation, ALA, September 18, 2006)

indicates that this problem is not new as COA requested a special report (March 15, 2001) to address faculty recruitment and development as well as asking for information in letters dated November 17, 1999 and June 28, 1999.

An examination of the program presentation and discussions with Director Edie Rasmussen, Faculty of Arts Dean Nancy Gallini and senior faculty Ann Curry and Judi Saltman uncovered a number of reasons for the faculty recruitment and retention problem. First, the high cost of living in Vancouver is a significant barrier. Second, the number of positions in LIS programs in general is greater than the number of candidates available to fill them so recruitment is very competitive. Third, UBC is one of Canada's leading research intensive universities and as such has very high standards for research productivity, valuing actual scholarly publication/communication over research promise when selecting new faculty. For a discipline like LIS where the master's degree is professional rather than scholarly, this is particularly problematic as publication frequently does not begin until after completion of the PhD. SLAIS is addressing this problem in a number of ways. The school received funding for and filled two limited term appointments at the Instructor level for the 2006/07 academic year. They have permission from the Faculty of Arts to fill all three vacant positions and the advertisements for these have recently been distributed through appropriate channels. In our meeting on October 17, Dean Gallini and Associate Vice President Kindler showed an understanding of scholarly communication patterns characteristic of LIS scholars, the highly competitive nature of recruitment within LIS and the need to consider filling some of the vacancies at the Associate Professor level to mitigate the imbalance between ranks

within the school. While resources are a challenge, it was apparent that both Dr. Gallini and Dr. Kindler are open to flexible solutions to address this problem in an otherwise strong graduate program at UBC. While the strategy of hiring limited term instructors has addressed this problem in the short term (2006-2007 academic year), and the posting of all three positions as full time, tenure track openings to be filled for the 2007-2008 academic year indicates that SLAIS is attempting to address the problem in the long term, this situation continues to need attention.

#### **Standard IV: Students**

The policies with regard to student recruitment and admissions are clearly stated and systematic. In Canada because of legislation it is unable to determine the multicultural nature of the student body.

In order to attract qualified applicants to the program the School attends recruitment fairs. The School is active at public events, colloquia, professional association meetings and conferences thus promoting the program. Perhaps because of these activities the program does have more applications from qualified students for every session than they can accommodate.

All program information is available on the website at the following address, <http://www/slais.ubc.ca/ADMISSIONS/admissions-mlis.htm>. Included on the site is the information for financial aid and awards for students in the program. The student awards for the MLIS students and the joint program students are limited through provincial funding. However within its limited resources UBC makes some funding available to SLAIS for Graduate Entrance Scholarships. The program has made great strides in funding program specific awards. (See Appendix IV.A. Complete List of SLAIS Awards.)

The School uses e-mail as the major mode of communication with students; however, provisions are made for face-to-face meeting when necessary. Students can also drop in

on faculty or the Administration offices. The student feedback indicates that students are very satisfied with the flexibility in access to the School.

There are several different electronic discussion lists within the school that facilitate communication between faculty, students or administration. All this serves to strengthen the links between the school and the students. The students can view a full list of discussion lists, and have instructions on how to subscribe to them on the School's website (<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/RECOURCES/itlab/itlab-discussion.htm>).

An examination of the admission files demonstrated a consistent approach to the admission of students. The quality of candidates was and is exceptional. Some students, who are not admitted into the program, ask for advice on how to improve their standing and may be counselled by the Student Services Coordinator on possible actions, such as taking graduate level courses to improve their GPA. From the files that were examined, there was an indication that the applicants who were determined to become librarians would be the ones that pursued further studies to improve their position in the application process.

The position of Student Services Coordinator has liberated faculty from the admissions and placement for practicum, Co-op and Professional Experience programs. This position plays an essential role for the School. However, it is still on soft funding and as such could be lost. Every effort should be made to ensure that this position becomes a hard funded permanent position in order to continue to improve the Co-op and

Professional experience components of the program, as well as to continue to do the majority of admissions work with input from faculty, staff, students and alumni representatives.

In order to ensure that students follow a coherent program all students are assigned an advisor. The advisor's role is to assist students in course selection and to be a resource for the students. Courses for the program are offered often enough to meet the demands of the students. From the student perspective advisors were excellent. The students felt that the flexibility in outreach was ideal. Students could choose to interact as frequently as needed.

There was some concern brought forward from practicum and professional experience employers that students should get a better foundation in human resources and project management. As the School has restructured its curriculum, these issues have or will be addressed in the new curriculum.

Comments received from students, directly either from the student leadership, the lunch meeting with students and via e-mail directly from the students, were overall very positive with only relatively minor comments most of which were beyond the competency of the School to rectify.

The program requires all students to do a two week practicum. The students can also choose to do a 120-hour non-paid work-study course, LIBR 596 Professional experience,

or a paid Co-op term for either four or eight months. All three of these programs allow students to gain valuable practical experience during their studies. The practicum is valued so much by the students that some suggested extending its length.

Students participate in a variety of committees in the School, as well as, student organizations such as BCLA/CLA, LASSA (student association), SLA and ASIST. LASSA's major involvement is in the formulation, modification and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs. LASSA conducts an annual survey of students to evaluate the SLAIS programs and recommendations that come out the PEP (Program Evaluation Project) survey are reviewed at the annual faculty retreat. The PEP survey results are available at [http://www.slais.ubc.ca/people/students/student-groups/lassa/PEP\\_Summaries.html](http://www.slais.ubc.ca/people/students/student-groups/lassa/PEP_Summaries.html).

Student achievement is a key indicator for the School's programs and policies. Student achievement is evaluated through marks, awards, publications, conference presentations, involvement in professional associations, and placement rates. These are all reviewed on an ongoing basis. The results of the grade analysis are used to determine which students are eligible for awards. There are no specific benchmarks for publication, conference presentations and professional involvement. The School has increased its support of students attending conferences. It is hoped through this increased funding that there will be a concomitant increase in student involvement. The student involvement has been active and is to be commended.



## **Standard V: Administration and Financial Support**

SLAIS is one of four schools within the Faculty of Arts; the others are Journalism, Music, and Social Work and Family Studies. The Faculty of Arts also includes seventeen Schools and twenty-five programs. The Director attends monthly meetings of unit heads chaired by the President and monthly meetings within the Faculty of Arts. The School has a faculty representative on the Graduate Council (Program Presentation, p. 107).

As explained in its program presentation and corroborated by the panel through discussion and observation, the School's role in program development, selection of students, and hiring and promotion of faculty is equal to that of other academic units within the Faculty of Arts and within the University .

The School makes personnel recommendations to the Dean and faculty-level committees; these are then taken to the Senior Appointments Committee, which advises the President. The School's recommendations are usually accepted at each level of the process.

Although curricula revision is rather complex as both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Graduate Studies committees monitor curricular change, the School can use a "topics" designation for a course's first two years before seeking its official addition to the curriculum. The School can decide how many students to admit, and it recommends acceptance of potential students to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (Program Presentation, p. 108).

Financial support is obtained from the Faculty of Arts; the School now has an autonomous budget overseen by its director and managed by its administrator.

Decentralized for the last few years, the operating budget is used for supplies and services plus travel, adjunct and sessional teaching, and teaching assistants (Program Presentation, p. 108).

As corroborated by faculty C.V.s, SLAIS faculty are members of presidential, senate, and faculty level committees, including the Graduate Council and the Senate Library Committee. The director and staff are on appropriate committees; students serve on university, Faculty of Arts, and Faculty of Graduate Studies committees through membership in the Graduate Student Society (Program Presentation, p. 109).

The Director of SLAIS collaborates with the Director of Social Work and Family Studies on policy development. According to the Director of the School of Social Work and Family Studies, these units have always had a good relationship and share the challenge of being professional schools within a large unit with many academic disciplines. SLAIS and the heads of other units in the Faculty of Arts sponsor events together. A key collaborative effort is the multidisciplinary Master of Arts in Children's Literature supported by SLAIS, Language & Literacy Education, the School of Theatre, Film & Creative Writing and the School of English. The First Nations Curriculum Concentration also includes work in programs outside such as Anthropology, History, Law, Fine Arts, Linguistics, and Political Science (<http://www.slais.ubc.ca/PROGRAMS/first-nations.htm>).

The library employs many SLAIS students, co-sponsors a Distinguished Speaker Colloquium Series, and has recently become a site for the School's Co-op program. SLAIS has recently begun talking with the new Acting Deputy Librarian about additional areas of collaboration (Program Presentation, p. 109). According to the university librarian, SLAIS' inclusion in the highly coveted space within the new Barber Learning Center will position the School for new and exciting collaborative ventures.

The title of the School's director equals that of the Faculty of Arts' other schools (department heads are called "heads"). The University Librarian and the Director of the School of Social Work and Family Studies, both members of the selection committee for SLAIS's current director, revealed that she was considered well-qualified because of her strong research background and impressive national and international reputation and that she had had a great deal of support from faculty and students. The University Librarian praised her for continuing the drive for SLAIS to become more research-based, and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts described the director's leadership of SLAIS as "perfect."

The Director attempts to involve students in administration by holding "director's forums" each term. Although only 9.6% of those responding to the most recent PEP survey reported having attended a forum, (2006 PEP Survey Results) leaders of student organizations mentioned their own attendance to panel members and characterized the forums as "very helpful."

She conducts monthly faculty meetings and an annual retreat and has advisory committees for administrative issues and faculty review. Full-time tenured faculty chair both the MLIS and MA/MLIS programs. Student organizations receive an annual grant plus money for specific events; student travel is also supported.

SLAIS committees have student and alumni representation, and the committee and decision-making structure are described in the School's Policy and Procedures Manual. The decision-making structure is reviewed each year during faculty retreats (Program Presentation, pp.110-112).

Staffing levels are consistent with those of similar units, and staff titles and grades are equivalent (Program Presentation, Appendix V.A). The office is managed by an administrator; there are full-time admissions and graduate secretaries and a part-time clerk for general office support. The director supervises the Student Services Coordinator, a new position that has so far proved highly successful. Although Masters students can assist in the computer labs, they are not actually allowed to teach, so there are few "teaching assistants."

Faculty and administrative staff are part of bargaining units, and salaries and benefits are established through collective bargaining. Although annual salary agreements are based on formulae established within the collective agreement, there are also opportunities for merit increases, and the director can also make recommendations for Performance Salary Adjustments. When hiring, the Faculty of Arts provides salary ranges, and the School

has been able to hire assistant professors at the higher end of the range. New faculty also receive a start up grant from the university and additional funds from the school due to the high cost of the technology. Faculty receive funds for research and can compete for funds within the university, and funds are available for faculty retention (Program Presentation, pp. 111-115).

According to the Faculty of Arts Financial Director, the School's operating budget is based on metrics such as the number of faculty, their teaching load, the number of students, and the number of courses taught. Additional funds are received from student fees and Distance Education tuition. Half of the funding for the new Student Services Coordinator position was awarded from the Faculty of Arts for the first three years; the other half was taken from current budget lines. At the end of this period the position will be evaluated to determine whether the Faculty of Arts will need to continue to contribute to its funding. So far, all indications are that this position has enabled the faculty to devote more time to their research and teaching. The Faculty of Arts funding will remain crucial, especially in light of the recent budget cuts discussed in the following paragraph.

Although funding has been considered as adequate for the School's needs for the last few years, the university instituted a campus-wide budget cut this year. According to the Faculty of Arts Financial Director, the Dean protected the School by absorbing the cut this year. He explained that the Dean determines how much each department and school will be cut, and that she rewards excellence. The Dean acknowledged that some schools

have had positions taken away, but that SLAIS got to keep theirs, including the three that are expected to be filled with the current search.

The Director does not expect the university-wide budget cut to be a problem for the school and is currently involved in planning for it. She intends to take two-thirds of the School's cut from the amount usually budgeted for sessional (temporary) instructors and the other third from the teaching assistant line, which is typically under spent. She also plans to offer three courses in a distance mode funded through the Distance Education Unit, which will actually offset much of the cut (email message from director, October 19, 2006).

Planning and evaluation are conducted through student evaluations, annual faculty and staff reviews, the PEP survey, an annual faculty retreat, and monthly faculty meetings. The director reports on budgetary and other matters to faculty at the retreat and at faculty meetings, which are used for appraisal and planning. During each annual retreat the director and faculty review the results of the most recent PEP survey and identify outcomes and action items for faculty meetings and committee charges for the coming year (Program Presentation, pp. 116-117).

The School appears to be well-situated within the Faculty of Arts where it operates with sufficient autonomy yet benefits from a dean who is very supportive of the School and its programs.

## **Standard VI – Physical Resources and Facilities**

The physical resources and facilities can best be described as in transition. Between 1999 and 2003 the School had space in the Main Library at the University of British Columbia. Due to renovations in the Library in 2003 the School moved to the Technology Enterprise Facility (TEFIII). In the summer of 2007 the School will go into permanent space in the new Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (IKBLC). This new facility will provide not only more space for the School (up by approx. 17%) but it will also be more efficient useable space (Presentation p. 119) (<http://www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca/index.html>)

A review of the Centre's building plans and discussion with the SLAIS Chair of the Facilities Committee and the Centre's facilities coordinator, Simon Neame, confirmed that the new space promises to be state of the art both pedagogically and technologically. It promises to enable the School to further develop its outreach and community involvement programs. Because of this move, it is more difficult to assess this Standard.

The School was fortunate to have had its existing temporary space in the TEF III specifically designed to meet its needs. It is new and relatively spacious and includes working, laboratory and social space. However 2 classrooms and labs are located outside the main School facilities. Any such inconvenience that this may have caused in the past or may currently cause can be expected to be rectified within a year in the new IKBLC.

The current space in the TEFIII facility is quit adequate in meeting the objectives of the Program. However, some students voiced concerns about the distance between the

School and some of its classrooms (some as much as a 15-minute walk) and consequently difficulty in joining in some School social and academic activities. Any such inconvenience can be expected to be rectified within a year in the new IKBLC.

The School's current location at the edge of campus makes for a lack of visibility to the campus as whole. The Director confirmed that the new building will go a long way to rectify this situation. In addition, four years in temporary space has challenged the School philosophy of a culture of "student-faculty presence and interaction" (Presentation p. 131). The School has addressed this challenge through an increased emphasis on colloquia and social events. It is the School's opinion, confirmed by the Director, the University Librarian and the Interim Deputy Librarian, that its new facility will further enhance this culture and will enable it to develop new synergies with the other university units which will share this facility.

The existing facilities meet the needs of a functional learning environment through a combination of classrooms of various sizes, computer labs and space for social activities. Students in doing assignments can access additional lab space in the Arts Computer labs (Presentation p 124). Doctoral students and adjunct faculty have access to computer work stations and telephones. While the space dedicated to administration is somewhat cramped and there is limited space for research, the new facility will dedicate more space to these critical functions.

The faculty and students have over 250 core scholarship titles from the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts Database and several web-based resources at their disposal to meet their research and study needs (Program Presentation, pp. 122-123). There are many other titles available in related fields. University supported resources are available and used by the faculty to develop web based courses. Audio-visual resources, while not available within the current SLAIS space, are available within a short distance from the School. It was observed that the School has adapted well to its temporary location in meeting the needs for independent study space through flexible scheduling of lab and lounge space. The University provides start up funding for new faculty to purchase computer hardware and other items needed for their position. The School has been successful in obtaining university funding to maintain the School's computing infrastructure. According to the librarians interviewed, the School has worked well with the University library system to ensure that library services are adequate to meet the School's needs. However, the Interim Deputy Librarian suggested that, in the future, there was a need for the University Librarians to work more collaboratively with the School's faculty on a joint research projects. Both he and the librarian, at a working lunch, felt that this would be more possible in the new IKBLC. The School points with pride to their extensive experience in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. Access to the facilities for persons with disabilities was observed during the tour.

The School has an Environment and Resources Committee, which has amongst its terms of reference, responsibilities to maintain and plan for safe and secure physical and social environment, prioritization of equipment needs, developing priorities for upgrading

existing facilities and planning for new facilities. The Chair of the Committee and the students and staff confirmed that faculty, staff and students are involved with this committee. Consequently, the School has been able to meet its computer upgrade needs and has been able to have its needs in the IKBLC met.

All in all, since the last accreditation review, the School has been able to make the necessary adjustments to its temporary quarters to meet its physical resources and facilities needs without compromising its pedagogical and technological programming needs. It has provided a functional learning environment maintaining the opportunities for research, teaching and service and promoting effective and efficient administration. It's instructional and research facilities and services have met the needs of students and faculty through access to information resources and technologies. The School has the staff resources to meet the technology training needs of the students. Its current facilities meet the access needs of persons with disabilities. The new facility will address these needs as well. And finally SLAIS's planning and evaluation process has been critical in the development of its new facilities in the IKBLC. Within the competing needs of the units which will occupy the new Learning Centre, the School is satisfied that their physical resources and facility needs were addressed by the Centre's planning process. This new facility will address shortcomings of the School's current quarters and promises to meet its future needs for physical resources and facilities.

## **Summary**

The Program has clearly stated mission, goals and objectives. These are consistent with the institutional values of its parent Faculty of Arts and the University of British Columbia as a whole. Course goals and objectives are consistent with those of the School.

The School has established a regular review process to ensure the effectiveness of the courses in relation to its mission, goals and objectives. Faculty, students, employers and alumni have been involved in this review process. The most recent review, started in 2004, is reflected in the revised curriculum currently being implemented.

The curriculum is diversified and responds to the needs of students. New courses are instituted on a regular basis to ensure that the curriculum remains current and dynamic.

The program offers several choices of degrees reflecting the broadness of the library and information studies field. Four core courses and two required courses are supplement by 55 electives and a non-credit, two-week, full time field experience. Besides the two-week practicum, regular courses are supplemented with various practical experiences including a Summer Institute, workshops and a series of colloquium presentations. While only one course is currently offered via web-based delivery, others are planned. All electives have been offered at least once in the last five years. Courses offered the sound mix of theory, principles and practices to prepare students for a career in librarianship and information sciences. Course syllabi show evidence of much thought and response to needs.

Technology, both in theory and practice, is incorporated into the curriculum. The

comprehensive revisions to the curriculum begin in 2004 will be fully implemented by 2008.

The full time regular faculty has diverse interests, professional experience and research expertise. These are supplemented by part time instructors with extensive practical experience. The collective agreement covers appointment, promotion and tenure practices as well as evaluation and remuneration thus ensuring fair treatment. The Program has an “Employment Equity Plan” in place to prevent discrimination. Teaching competence was confirmed through an examination of teaching and course evaluations. Full time faculty are active in community and professional service and all hold or have held research grants. While faculty recruitment and retention poses a significant challenge, steps are being taken to ensure that positions are filled.

The School attracts more qualified candidates for admission than they can accommodate. The program has made great strides in funding specific student awards. Students are regularly communicated with through use of e-mail and printed announcements. There are several electronic discussion lists. Admission files indicated a consistent approach to admission. A soft-funded Student Services Coordinator facilitates student admission and placements for practicum, Co-op and professional experience programs. Students are assigned advisors to ensure they follow a coherent program. They find this an excellent process. Students seem very pleased with all aspects of the program including their participation in committee work, students associations, school policy development and curriculum development. Student achievement is reviewed on an on-going basis.

The School's role in program development, selection of students, and hiring and promotion is equal to that of other schools at UBC. The School has an autonomous budget and in the last year was protected from budget cuts by the Dean of Arts. Next year cuts seemingly can be absorbed by the School.

Faculty members are members of presidential, senate and faculty committees. Students are also involved as appropriate in various school and university committees. The School co-operates with other programs including the University Library to sponsor events and share experiences. The Director involves students in the administration of the School by holding "director's forums" each term. Monthly faculty meetings, an annual retreat, and advisory committees advise the program on administrative issues. Alumni and students are involved in a variety of decision making structures. Faculty and administrative staff are part of bargaining units through which salaries and benefits are negotiated. The School has been able to hire assistant professors at the higher end of the salary range. New faculty is supported by University start up grants and supplementary grants from the School.

For several years, the School has been in temporary quarters away from the centre of academic life on the edge of campus. The School and the University have been effective in reducing the impact of this situation. For example, computer labs are available in the School and in the nearby Arts Computer Labs. Doctoral students and adjuncts have good research and office space. Students have access to 250 scholarly titles from the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts Database, several web-based resources and audio-visual resources and many other related resources to meet their research and study

needs. The School's Environment and Resources Committee, involving students, staff and faculty, has been successful in getting university funding to meet the School's computing needs.

The School's physical resources and facility needs will be addressed in the new state-of-the-art Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. Faculty and Staff are very excited about this wonderful facility and the new synergies which it will offer.

In summary, the Panel commends the School for its programme, activities and plans especially

- its Program Presentation which thoroughly addressed the accreditation standards,
- the solid nature of its goals and objectives which are regularly reviewed,
- the level of its admission standards which exceed those of the Faculty of Graduate Studies,
- the solid nature of its curriculum resulting from its on-going systematic planning process,
- its strength in the children's area and its First Nations Concentration,
- its outstanding faculty and adjuncts with their successful teaching, research and publication record,
- its effective and efficient administration,
- its standing within the larger University,
- its plans to offer more well-based courses,

- bits development of a strategy for faculty recruitment and retention,
- its outreach to the various communities to promote the program,
- its practicum activities, and
- its successful efforts in meeting its needs in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre.