

## **PEP Report 2006 Survey Recommendations**

### **Summary of Findings:**

A total of 114 students responded to this year's PEP Survey; of these, 76 were MLIS students, 19 were MAS students, 17 were Joint MLIS/MAS students, and 1 was a PhD student.

- ◆ Students noted disappointment with the core courses in both programs, disappointment with instructors, and a heavy workload.
- ◆ Several students noted frustration with the scheduling of summer courses, and would like to see a greater variety offered; some students would like to see required courses offered in the summer terms.
- ◆ Many students were concerned about the quality of instruction at SLAIS, noting that some instructors seemed disorganized, were using old material, and assigned inappropriate amounts of reading and/or assignments. Students also felt there is a lack of support for new faculty.
- ◆ The majority of students, 77.3 %, were satisfied with the effectiveness of communication between students and faculty, and 78.7 % of were satisfied with their level of communication with administration.
- ◆ 89.2 % of students believe that LASSA adequately meets their needs, although only 52.3 % feel that they have sufficient opportunity to participate in events; the majority of students cited their heavy workloads as preventing them from participating in these events.
- ◆ 71.4 % of students attend the potlucks at the start and end of terms, and 81.1 % of students appreciated orientation.
- ◆ 61.1 % of respondents reported that they are currently in debt from being at SLAIS.

### **General Recommendations:**

- ◆ Ensure that students understand the practical application of theory and of course materials/assignments. Many students did not see the value in their course readings or assignments, and therefore felt frustrated and discouraged.
- ◆ Offer more management and technology courses, for students in all programs. Many students noted their appreciation of the recent introduction of the Perl course and the up-coming Project Management course.
- ◆ Offer a greater number and variety of courses in the summer, for students in all programs, and especially the required MLIS courses (Management and Research Methods). Several students noted frustration with having to pay tuition over the summer, and feeling that there are no courses available to them (i.e. wait lists for most courses within an hour after registration opened).
- ◆ Allow for more opportunity for in-class discussions; students need to feel that doing the readings is worthwhile.
- ◆ Students in both programs expressed a concern that new faculty are not provided with adequate support from the school; they feel this is reflected in the quality of teaching they receive.

## **Recommendations - MLIS Students**

- ◆ The survey responses demonstrated a very widespread concern amongst students regarding MLIS core courses. Students noted particular concern with LIBR 510, feeling that the workload was too heavy for the 12 weeks of courses, and that the connection between theory and “real-world” skills was unapparent; students also complained that some faculty in the other core courses seemed to be teaching from out-of-date material.
- ◆ Students felt that the high level of reading expected of students is not profitable; they complained that there are few, if any, opportunities for discussion of the material. Students felt that this made their hard work feel meaningless, and admitted readings were the first part of course requirements that they dropped when the term gets busy.
- ◆ Students request that faculty review the amount of group work required. Several individuals argued that in the “real-world”, professionals do not usually work on 3 or 4 group projects at one time. They also noted that group work is challenging because of logistical/organizational issues, as getting 6 to 8 students together outside of class is often very difficult.
- ◆ Many students want to have more courses with emphasis on academic or special libraries (such as legal or medical libraries). The legal bibliography course was very well received by students.

## **Recommendations – MAS Students**

- ◆ Courses that fell below the expectations of the MAS students were those in which students felt that the professors were lacking in sufficient professional or teaching experience to adequately teach the course content. Specific courses that were mentioned are: ARST 593A and ARST 516. Students expected that both classes would be more practical and applicable to jobs they presently have or will have in the future. For ARST 516, students did not expect so much theory, and felt that the lack of professional experience of the professor affected their teaching of the subject, and that they were unable to answer the questions students asked.
- ◆ Overall, MAS students requested that more technology-related courses be added to course offerings, such as a course on EDMS/ERMS. A number of students also requested that more seats be available to MAS students in the summer Database Design class.
- ◆ If possible, it would be helpful to students if professors consulted each other to gauge when major assignments are due so that students can keep up with readings and extra class work through the term. Students also commented that course readings were repetitive and bulky.

## **Recommendations – Joint Students**

- ◆ JOINT students requested more practical assignments and less group work. Students commented that some of the assignments felt like “busy work”, rather than real assignments that were applicable to what they may be doing when they graduated.
- ◆ Students commented that they felt that their professors seemed overworked and were sometimes not prepared for class.
- ◆ Students expressed interest in more courses related to Project Management and practical courses that address budgeting, hiring etc.
- ◆ Students requested more summer courses.

- ◆ Students requested that more of the classes concentrate on discussions, instead of assigning readings and not discussing them in class at all. The bulk of the readings assigned were often cited as the reason for students not becoming involved in extra-curricular activities. Many students felt that getting involved is important for professional development.
- ◆ In general, the majority of the respondents commented that they would like more summer courses to be offered, since they are paying tuition and do not feel that money is going to good use. Specific courses include: collection management, research methods, indexing and management.

### **Recommendations – LASSA**

- ◆ Try to make students more aware of what LASSA is and what it does for them. Students appreciate the small things that LASSA has done this past year, such as requesting a heater in FNS 40, and these actions may elevate the exposure of LASSA at SLAIS in the future.
- ◆ Students felt that there should be more activities that bring together library and archival students.
- ◆ Activities should be offered more so at the beginning of the term when students have more time to attend.

### **Recommendations – PEP Survey**

- ◆ Students felt that allowing for answers beyond Yes/No would be more reflective of their opinions. Choices, such as, Somewhat, Agree, Disagree etc. should be included.
- ◆ More than one option for participation in student organizations.
- ◆ Students voiced their concern about how faculty evaluates the recommendations from the PEP survey. A follow-up email or report from the faculty retreat regarding any discussion about the survey may be helpful to the students who took the time to fill out the survey.