

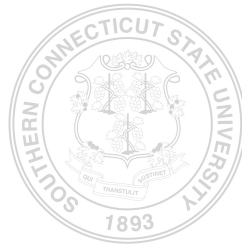
# **Program Presentation**

for the

**Committee on Accreditation  
American Library Association**

## **Master of Library Science**

**Department of Information and Library Science  
Southern Connecticut State University**



**March 15–16, 2010**

## Preface

The 2010 Program Presentation was prepared by the faculty of the Department of Information and Library Science, Southern Connecticut State University: Professors Mary Brown, James Kusack, Jane McGinn, and Josephine Sche; Associate Professors Arlene Bielefield, Nancy Disbrow, Chang Suk Kim, Hak Joon Kim, Yan Quan Liu, Elsie Okobi, and Eino Sierpe; and Assistant Professor Gayle Bogel; and the administrator of the School of Communication, Information and Library Science, Dean Edward Harris.

On November 12, 2009, the ILS faculty voted to approve the initial draft for submission to the ERP chair and OA director. On January 11, 2010, the ILS faculty voted to approve the revised draft for submission to the ERP and COA.

The Program Presentation is divided into eight chapters, an introductory chapter, one chapter covering each of the six Standards, and a concluding chapter.

## Introduction

The Master of Library Science degree program at Southern Connecticut State University provides a well-rounded and balanced education in the professional competencies of librarianship. It does this by emphasizing the values and traditions of library and information service while embracing technologies and strategies that further those values. The program pursues its vision by providing education and training appropriate to the communities it serves; the emphasis is on practical service and real-world solution of problems. The faculty sees the program as being in the mode of traditional or classical library education.

Technology plays a central role in the program's curriculum and course delivery. Web-based systems, database design, and other technologies are integral parts of nearly all courses. Approximately ninety percent of courses are offered online to students in Connecticut, New England, and around the world.

Faculty with a wide range of professional, disciplinary, and institutional backgrounds and experiences teach in the program. Ten of the eleven full time faculty members hold PhD, EdD, or JD degrees. Practicing librarians from Yale and other institutions augment and extend this experience as adjunct faculty for the MLS program.

Adjunct instructors for MLS courses numbered eight or 2.67 FTE, teaching eight courses or 25 percent of 32 course sections in Fall 2009. One faculty member was on Sabbatical Leave Fall 2009 resulting in a temporary spike in adjunct load that semester. Typically, adjuncts teach approximately 20 percent of course sections in a given semester. *(Please see Tables III.2 and III.3 for data on part-time faculty percentage in the department and discussion before Table III-3 for contract language governing part-time faculty percentage.)*

The MLS is the only ALA-accredited library program in Connecticut and one of three in New England. Only one MLS degree is offered; there is no difference between on campus and online courses. The admission process and acceptance standards are identical and the same course outlines and syllabi are used whether a course is taught online or on campus.

Students may take online courses, on campus courses, or hybrid courses as appropriate to their schedules and needs. Decisions on whether a course is offered online, on campus, or as a hybrid integration of the two is primarily market-driven. The nature of the course content and student preference, as determined by registration patterns, influence decisions on the mode of delivery. Approximately 12-18 percent of courses in the MLS program are held on campus, depending upon the semester. Generally, in any one semester, no more than one course is offered as a hybrid. It's not unusual to see students in the Buley

Library on the New Haven campus preparing for courses they are taking online. There is no residency requirement to complete the MLS degree.

Approximately 60 percent of the MLS students are Connecticut residents. The remainder of students takes courses in at least 36 states and countries in North, Central, and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and East and Southeast Asia. Some of the distance students began their studies while living in Connecticut and are finishing after moving out of the state. Some of the distance students are US citizens abroad and some are citizens of the countries in which they reside. In recent years a number of MLS have been attached to the U.S. military at bases around the world. (*Please see Tables IV-2 through IV-5 for demographics of students.*)

### **Brief history of the program**

In 1940, following several years of lobbying from Connecticut's library professionals to make courses available in the State, the first credit courses in library education were offered at Yale University under the auspices of Connecticut's four-year state colleges. This arrangement continued until 1946 when the State Board of Education authorized a comprehensive undergraduate degree program in library science at Southern, then known as New Haven State Teachers College. In 1954, the Board authorized a master's degree program in library science. In 1972, Southern's Master of Library Science program was accredited by the American Library Association.

By 1974, the college had a new name, Southern Connecticut State College, and library science at Southern underwent a series of changes that broadened its scope in the library, information, and media fields. In that year, a separate degree program in instructional technology was added, followed two years later by joint degree programs combining library science with other disciplines. The first such program was library science and instructional technology. Then, in cooperation with the University of Connecticut, a joint degree program in library science and law was instituted. Other joint degrees soon followed, including programs with history and English. These joint programs never attracted more than a handful of students. The university changed the policy governing joint degrees and required new agreements between departments in 2007, making the joint programs less desirable to ILS students. The Department decided to defer renewing any joint degree program until we could establish there was an interest. Currently, joint degrees with Southern's Women's Studies program and Yale University's Divinity School are being explored, based on interest initiated from those programs.

In 1979, a sixth year program leading to a professional diploma in library-information studies was approved. The sixth year program was designed to serve the needs of returning information professionals who had left the field for a number of years or other information professionals who wanted to brush up on their technical and professional skills. Faculty levels have kept pace with program needs. The ILS gained a faculty

position in 1995 and two additional positions in 2002. See Appendix III.B for an historical overview of faculty growth.

On July 14, 1995, the Connecticut State University Board of Trustees resolved to merge the School of Library Science and Instructional Technology and the undergraduate departments of Computer Science, Communication, and Journalism into the School of Communication, Information and Library Science.

The decision to create an interdisciplinary school focusing on information transfer came as a result of the University's strategic planning initiative. In the words of this plan, the new school was designed to take Southern into the new century by advancing the quality of accessible, inclusive, and responsive public higher education. An important component of this vision was the interdisciplinary school model. Each of the departments of the new School of Communication, Information and Library Science trained students for professions that focus on organizing, processing, accessing, and presenting information in a range of media. At the undergraduate level, the major in library-information service was re-structured into a SCILS-supported program where students could choose electives from all departments within SCILS. This change did not impact the graduate programs in terms of advising, teaching, administrating or curriculum revision.

The strategic qualities of accessible, inclusive and responsive public higher education also played an important role in the department's 1999 entry into web-based distance education. This innovation also helped the goal of accommodating students residing at distances from campus. The ILS department's online offerings originally addressed two issues. First, online offerings replaced faculty travel to remote sites in the state to teach small groups of students who did not want to commute to the New Haven campus and, second, the online offerings permitted low enrollment (and often cancelled\*) courses to be accessible to a wider audience, thereby increasing enrollment and making it possible to regularly offer wider range of courses. A third issue quickly became evident. Students often reported in discussion posts and in comment areas of satisfaction surveys that they learned more online than in a classroom setting. This has been attributed to the shift to the student as a participatory learner, demanded by the nature of online courses. [\*The university sets a minimum enrollment for a course to avoid cancellation. This is a general policy that can be waived under certain conditions. For example, if a minimum enroll is set for 9 a lower enrollment course may a permitted for good cause if the overall average of all courses is at least 15.]

Faculty and the Curriculum Committee are currently exploring a number of opportunities. These include a new continuing education program that better meets the needs of post-MLS practitioners and other initiatives in children's services and public library administration.

This 2010 review begins a new chapter in our history. While we face uncertainty in factors outside our direct control, we proceed with assurance and a rededication to excellence in the education of librarians, school media specialists and other information

professionals in the communities we serve. Despite fiscal downswings, the department has enjoyed continued support including a 30 percent increase in tenure-track positions in the department over the past fifteen years, including an 18 percent increase in 2002. We have had no reduction in tenure-track lines in the department. Online courses are still capped at twenty students; ILS 580 Research in Library and Information Science is capped at twelve students. These are strong indications of the strength of support for the program.

## **Philosophy**

In any undertaking, there is a philosophy that underlies the initiative whether it is explicit or tacit. Understanding the philosophy guiding the self-study is helpful in understanding the Program Presentation. Our philosophy is that our graduates should meet employer needs and expectations; our graduates should be competitive in the job market with other ALA-accredited programs; and our graduates should meet the values and competencies established by our professional organizations. Underlying this philosophy are the values of excellence, access, diversity, student success, life-long learning, and community involvement (see *The Program's Values under Standard I.1 for further discussion*). We tend to express our philosophy as questions:

- *How do our graduates compare to employer needs and expectations?*
- *How do our graduates compare to graduates of other ALA-accredited programs?*
- *How do the values of our graduates compare to values established by professional groups?*

These questions guide our assessments and the answers to these questions drive our program.

The 2003 Program Presentation created a Janus-like perspective: always watching the horizon for changes in the landscape but also looking back to assess when our path achieved our goals and responded to change. We saw technology changing in libraries and integrated those innovations into our courses. We saw an increasing interest in services for children outside of the school media center and expanded electives to cover birth to YA services in the public library. We saw an increasing interest in management functions and made ILS 565 Library Management a required course. We also increased the offering of personnel management and public relations electives. We saw the need to explicitly include other memory organizations in our curriculum and introduced introductory courses in archival and museum work, records management, and development of digital memorials and cultural archives. We also began scheduling on campus one-day workshops offered by NELANET, to provide convenient continuing education alternatives for practitioners and enrichment opportunities for students.

It is with this backward look and assessment that we begin our forward-looking 2010 Program Presentation.

## **The Department's External Environment**

Connecticut is one of 46 states facing budget shortfall. With its close connection to Wall Street, Connecticut has been severely affected by the economic downturn. Governor M. Jodi Rell in her budget address for 2010-2011 declared that all citizens in Connecticut would share the pain: "There is pain and sacrifice in this budget, but it is shared pain and sacrifice. We are in this struggle together, and we will need to work together, to lead together, in deed as well as in word" (<http://www.senatedems.state.ct.us/PDF/Duff-0903-BudgetForum.pdf>). In terms of the university, a retirement incentive was initiated along with a hiring freeze; faculty and staff gave back benefits and took a cut in pay in the form of furlough days and reduced salary increases. ILS had only one faculty retirement and that position is expected to be filled when the hiring freeze is lifted. In order to realize an imposed 10 percent cut in administrative confidential level staff, the School of Communication, Information and Library is to be dissolved and its four departments (computer science, communication, journalism, and information and library science) moved to other units within the university. ILS submitted two papers to the Provost that looked at the location within their universities of other ALA-accredited programs and considered challenges and opportunities of various relocations within the current university structure. After many discussions, in December 2009 the faculty decided to meet with the Dean of the School of Health and Human Services to discuss how ILS and its programs might fit into that school. The decision to meet with the Dean of Health and Human Services was based on the characteristics of other programs in that school: graduate level and nationally accredited professional programs. In the interest of considering all opportunities, meetings were also requested with the deans of the other three schools: Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education. The Provost anticipates that the new organizational outlines, that is, where ILS will be relocated, will be announced by the end of March 2010.

Southern's campus is located near the Westville area in New Haven, Connecticut, on the Amtrak line between New York and Boston. New Haven provides significant cultural life with art, music, theater, and quality ethnic restaurants. New Haven has a fairly stable population of approximately 124,000 people that has grown 0.30 percent over the past decade. In the past year, residential values have fallen just over 9 percent. Unemployment in New Haven is 10.60 percent and jobs have decreased by 0.80 percent. The largest employer in New Haven is Yale University with over 11,000 employees.

New Haven has an ethnically diverse population with approximately 43 percent white, 37 percent black, 21 percent Hispanic or Latino, and 4 percent Asian. Of the adults over 25 years of age less than three-quarters graduated high school while over 27 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. The median household income is less than \$30,000 a year and almost a quarter of the population fall below the poverty level. Over 28 percent of the households speak a language other than English in the home.

Southern Connecticut State University and the Department of Information and Library Science find themselves in an environment of great cultural opportunities and great social and economic needs. Our philosophy that ILS graduates meet employer needs, are competitive in the job market, and meet established professional competencies combine with our values of excellence, access, diversity, student success, life-long learning, and community involvement to produce leaders who can help empower citizens and organizations through the appropriate acquisition, organization, and use of information.

## **Campus Overview**

Southern began as New Haven State Normal School in 1893. It later became New Haven State Teachers College (1937), Southern Connecticut State College (1959), and then, in 1983, Southern Connecticut State University. Additional changes came in 1959: the college moved to its current location on Crescent Street and the curriculum was expanded beyond teacher-training to include liberal arts degrees. In 1983, Southern also became part of the four-campus (Central, Eastern, Southern, Western) Connecticut State University (CSU) System. Southern is currently undergoing a \$260 million construction program that will add three more academic buildings that will help change the face of campus. One architectural feature reflects the changing campus attitude: where buildings once looked inward to the heart of campus, they will now be designed to look outward into the community and world. In addition to the main campus, Southern maintains for instruction the Outer Island, a five-acre island located in the Thimble Islands group in Long Island Sound just off Branford, Connecticut. Southern also rents space in several off-campus locations.

The campus is located on 164 acres with 144 acres in northwest New Haven and just over 17 acres in adjacent Hamden. A parking garage was constructed in 2000 to ease a previous shortage of parking close to academic buildings and additional parking garages are slated to be built over the next ten years. Campus police has increased over 30 percent. Five officers patrol campus on bicycles, making areas previously difficult to observe more accessible to police supervision. Shuttle buses operate from 7:30 am to midnight; between midnight and 3 am, student needing an escort can call campus police.

Southern is said to be virtually bursting at the seams. Enrollment exceeds classroom capacity. To help alleviate scheduling challenges, programs are encouraged to use non-traditional meeting times (such as weekend classes) and incorporate online classes. Surveys indicate both faculty (72%) and administrators (50%) view academic space on campus as inadequate. Program chairpersons and coordinators (90%) also feel office, clinical, and laboratory spaces are inadequate, Technology deployment has resulted in conversion of several classrooms to computer labs, reducing flexibility in scheduling classes. Evolving expectation for faculty scholarship also generate needs for laboratory, studio, exhibit, library, and office space. Space pressures are expected to increase for the foreseeable future. Current delays in planned construction add to the frustration.

Prior to June 2000, tuition revenues were allocated to each of the four campuses by a distribution formula related to the size of the several institutions. Southern continually subsidized the smaller institutions. A new Board of Trustees policy now allows each institution to retain tuition funds collected from its students with the exception of some funds earmarked for CSU initiatives. The budget process at Southern is “bottom up”: deans prepare requests and after review and coordination, the administration forwards recommendation to the Office of Finance and Administration, which prepares a spending plan for the University. The final version of the spending plan constitutes the budget for each department. The financial condition of the University is sound and stable, not withstanding the current national fiscal crisis. The University has installed the Banner Information System to improve budgetary analysis.

Southern is considered the flagship of the CSU System in terms of graduate programs. Southern’s School of Graduate Studies is also one of the largest graduate schools in New England and includes approximately 3,200 students in over 55 areas of study. The mission of the Graduate School is to promote excellence in all aspects of graduate programs. To this end, each graduate program must go through a review by Graduate Council every five years. In preparation for this review, each program prepares a self-study following published Graduate Program Review Guidelines, including prescribed surveys of students, alumni, faculty, and employers. The Academic Standards Committee also reviews all course and program changes and recommends approval to the Graduate Council.

It is within this climate of limited campus facilities, an annual fixed budget, and the charge of excellence that ILS operates. Where the CSU System once supported an innovative exploration of online courses through release time, development funds, and technology support (laptops, servers, and training), today the University recognizes and appreciates the ability to continue and grow course offerings in a venue that does not exacerbate classroom shortage. Before online courses became a classroom option of necessity, ILS faculty made online courses a center of quality instruction for increased access to the MLS degree. The ILS students then established them as a classroom option of choice. (See Appendix IV.B for history of ILS’ involvement with online learning.)