ECU MLS Program Advisory Board
Minutes of the meeting of October 20, 2012
Joyner Library, Room 2409, 12:00

Present: Kristen Johnson, Joanna Gerakios, David Trudeau, John Harer, Kevin Vickers, Keen Gravely, Susan Simpson, Gail Munde
Absent: Marion McLawhorn, Vivian Mott, Becky Callison, Amy Mitchell, Jan Lewis, Rita Van Duinen
Visitors: Lou Sua, Jami Jones, Eleanor Cook (for Jan Lewis)

Harer introduced Dr. Lou Sua as a new faculty member in the Department of Library Science. Dr. Sua was appointed Teaching Assistant Professor as the result of a national search. She has a PhD in Educational Studies (cultural studies), and MLIS from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and has work experience in both public and school libraries. Dr. Sua will teach courses in children’s and young adult literature, and library services for diverse and special populations. Dr. Sua expressed her pleasure in joining the faculty, and with the program in general.

Chair’s Report

Harer presented the chair’s report, and noted the following items of interest:

  GetEducated.com ranks East Carolina University’s Master of Library Science as the most affordable online MLS/MLIS in the United States. Total tuition is $7,371 (in-state residents) and $28,002 (out-of-state residents).

  Gravely noted that being ranked first on the “best buy” list was likely the best advertising a program could garner, given the increasing costs of higher education and record levels of student debt.

- Harer distributed a handout that illustrated enrollment in LIBS 6010 (the first course in the program and a predictor of future course enrollments) across the past three and five years. The graphs illustrate peak course enrollment in 2008 (173) declining in 2009 (151) and 2010 (92) to a low in 2011 (74), then rising in 2012 (97). The recession no doubt accounts in part for the steep decline, but the one-year rise from 2011 to 2012 could indicate the trend has bottomed out.

- Harer reported small progress on merging the Department of Library Science with the Department of Information Technologies Education within the College of Education (COE) into the Department of Information and Library Science. He noted that the COE governance document, its Unit Code of Operations, would have to be revised and approved at several levels up to the Chancellor and he expected this to take one academic
year. The issues of concern for the MLS program are maintaining program autonomy in the areas of leadership, committee structures and curriculum.

- Harer noted that ALA Office for Accreditation and the program were in the process of conflict of interest discovery for potential Evaluation Review Panel (ERP) members and program faculty. This part of the process ensures that there is no conflict of interest between/among ERP site visitors and program faculty and administrators. A complete timeline of steps in the accreditation process is appended to the Plan for Program Presentation included in today’s packet of materials. The site visit is scheduled for October 14-15, 2013 and the chair of the ERP is Dr. Linda Lillard, Associate Professor at Clarion University. Dr. Lillard has also been on the faculty at Emporia State University, the University of Kentucky, and chaired the School Library Media Program at University of Central Missouri.

- Faculty members in the program now number nine FTE, plus one FTE faculty member who is on medical leave through October 31, 2012.

- Harer reported briefly on workforce projections, with job growth predicted to be highest for school librarians, stable for public librarians, and decreasing for academic librarians.

Gravely confirmed that from his current work perspective, openings for school librarians were increasing, and Gerakios agreed. She sees the job situation beginning to reverse from the lowest point of the economy.

Johnson, who is the current President of the ALA Student Chapter, reported that the Chapter has developed a Facebook page and has a gmail account used to promote a sense of student community and to conduct Chapter activities. Trudeau suggested that the Student Chapter could become active in the NCLA New Members Roundtable by cross promoting the Roundtable’s social event at NCLA to Chapter membership. The NCLA biennial conference will be in Winston Salem next October 15-18 at the Benton Convention Center.

- The department has installed a digital sign (flat screen monitor) in the hallway of the Ragsdale Building near the program office, but it has not yet been programmed.

- A grant application has been submitted to the Institute for Museum and Library Services to fund 40 MLS student scholarships as part of a program called Community Oriented Recruitment Scholarships (COLRS). Ten of the scholarships are targeted toward minority participants, with the intent that all 40 would serve in rural library settings. Grant awards will be announced in March 2013, and if successful, recruiting would begin in April 2013 for the fall 2013 semester.

- The department has a redesigned web page available at http://www.ecu.edu/educ/labs/ The COE has adopted a uniform template for all departments in the College, and retains control of some pages, and all aspects of page design. When the new template was overlaid, many of the connected files from the old web page were unlinked, so at present, some links are dead and there are page errors that cannot be correct by program faculty.
Harer emphasized the importance of updating and correcting all errors by the time the ERP membership is finalized, as panel members begin to research their assigned programs immediately.

The Board as a whole wished to go on record to express their extreme concern that the website is not able to be updated quickly and directly by program personnel. Vickers wondered if libraries could add links to the ECU MLS program from their homepages, and suggested that he could do this from his school media center’s webpage.

- Harer outlined recent recruitment activities and noted that he and Sua would be attending a recruitment workshop presented by the Graduate School next week. Harer has attended several graduate school and career days at universities in eastern North Carolina and the Triangle area.

Several suggestions were made for additional recruitment activities. Jones wondered if the program couldn’t offer online information sessions for prospective graduate students as a recruitment tool. Harer mentioned the possibility of the program being included in a newspaper insert as part of an ECU Graduate School effort. Trudeau said that he was on the local arrangements committee for next year’s NCLA conference and encouraged ECU to continue to sponsor an information booth and to consider advertising in the conference program.

- Harer drew the Board’s attention to two items in the packet of materials. The first was an email dated September 10, 2012 from Danielle Peyton, Accreditation Associate for Program Review, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), asking permission to post ECU’s 2012 program report as one example of a successful report. Other universities would be able to use ECU’s report as a model when developing NCATE reports for their Library Media Specialist programs. The second item was NCATE’s August 2012 evaluative response to the program’s report, and stated that the program had achieved national recognition (NCATE and AASL use the word “recognition” rather than accreditation).

**Items of Business**

**Plan for Program Presentation**

Harer directed the Board’s attention to the copy of the *Plan for Program Presentation* included in the materials packet. This *Plan*, which is an outline of the full *Program Presentation* (self-study), was submitted to the ALA Office for Accreditation on October 15, 2012. Dr. June Lester served as consultant on the project and made many useful comments and suggestion for improvement prior to final revision. He explained that the *Plan* detailed the structure of the report and listed the evidence to be included in ECU’s full *Program Presentation*. Required sections and their primary faculty authors are:

- Introduction (Harer)
- Documentation (Harer)
- Standard I. Mission, Goals and Objectives (Munde)
Munde asked Board members to consider volunteering to serve as readers/reviewers for one of the numbered Standards. Reviewers would be asked to read the first full draft of the Program Presentation and make suggestions to improve the readability and intelligibility of the chosen Standard. Trudeau noted that although Board members could certainly review one of the Standards, it would be better for all reviewers to have access to the entire document. This was generally agreed upon and so noted. The first full draft of the document is anticipated in March 2013, and reviewers would have a relatively short time to read and respond with suggestions.

Gravely emphasized again how important it would be to update the website and for program personnel to have as much control over the content and timeliness of posting as possible. Simpson noted that the Plan indicated that much of the information required in the Program Presentation would be accessible from links provided. Simpson further said that she would be willing to serve as a reviewer, but only if the draft Program Presentation were available online. Trudeau agreed that an updated website would be essential to making our case. Munde noted that some of the longer appendices to the report would be made available to ERP members from a Blackboard course site prior to the visit. Cook suggested the idea of exploring content sharing utilities as a way of being able to provide needed public content while waiting for the web page updates to be addressed.

The following Board members agreed to read and review the Standards, and additional readers were suggested:

**Gravely**: Standard I. Mission, Goals and Objectives  
**Gerakios**: Standard II. Curriculum (Van Duinen suggested as a possible additional reader)  
Standard III. Faculty (Cook, or a member of Joyner faculty suggested as a possible reader)  
**Vickers**: Standard IV. Students (a current program student suggested as a possible reader)  
**Simpson**: Standard V. Administration and Finance  
Standard VI. Physical Resources and Facilities (Lewis suggested as a possible reader)

**Alumni/Employer Survey**

As part of the Program Presentation for Standard I, Munde, Dotson and Yontz had drafted an alumni and employer survey, which was included in the meeting materials packet. The survey would be sent to approximately 297 students graduating in calendar years 2010-2012. In addition to information about current work status, the survey asks 13 questions about how well the program prepared the graduate along 13 dimensions, and asks permission to contact the student’s employer (the supervisor who completes his/her annual performance evaluation) to ask 13 identical questions.
Munde asked if the Board would review the 13 questions and suggest improvements for clarifying the questions, especially for school principals or other non-librarian supervisors. Board members offered the following revisions:

Item 1. Delete “able to” from the item statement, and add “responding to book challenges” to the examples.

Item 6. Add “of library users” at the end of the statement.

Item 8. Reword to read “Instruct diverse user groups to access effectively and efficiently the resources and services available to them in a variety of library settings, both as an individual, and in collaboration with other information professionals/educators.” Delete the word “tutorial” from the examples.

Item 11. Reword to read “Demonstrate flexibility in an environment of rapid change.”

Gravely noted that the response choices seemed unbalanced and could introduce bias, and suggested deleting the word “Somewhat” from the response scale, leaving the choices 1) Not prepared at all, 2) Inadequately prepared, 3) Prepared, 4) Very well prepared, and 5) Don’t know.

Munde expressed her thanks to the Board for their collective suggestions, and said she would see that they were implemented.

*Potential curriculum revisions, school library pathway (Jami Jones)*

Jones, who chairs the program’s Curriculum Committee, reported that the Committee has met once this semester and has discussed the importance of certain dispositions that are useful for librarianship. Dispositions are abilities or potentials such as leadership, problem-solving, collaboration, resourcefulness, adaptability/flexibility, creativity/innovation, etc. that can be learned. Harer suggested that Jones present the results of these discussions, along with any recommendations the Committee might make, at the spring Advisory Board meeting.

This year, the Committee is focusing on the school library pathway, and also looking at instituting an option to LIBS 6042 Technology for Libraries, a required course for all MLS students. Depending on the interests and skill level of students, they would be able to take a course in computer science or information technologies, for example, in place of LIBS 6042. This provides a flexible option for students who may have more specific interests.

Jones further noted that faculty was meeting on Monday October 22 for a workshop on revisioning curriculum. For the school library pathway, the purpose is to create a program that emphasizes the instructional role librarians are being asked to undertake in K-12 schools.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10pm.