

History of the Program

Founded as East Carolina Teachers College in 1907, East Carolina became a University in 1968. ECU has evolved from a teachers' training school to a Doctoral/Research-Intensive university with the elective classification for Community Engagement. Since its founding, ECU has provided educational programs to meet the needs of eastern North Carolinians.

Beginning in 1939, the then East Carolina College's Library Science Program, located in the Library Services Division of Joyner Library, was authorized to offer undergraduate courses in library science leading to state certification for school librarians. In 1947, an undergraduate minor in library science was first offered at East Carolina College by the Library Services Division. In 1950, a Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) degree for secondary education was established, and, under this degree, it was possible for students to earn a graduate minor in library science. In 1957, the MAEd was extended to include library science as one of several academic concentrations.

The core program in library science changed very little until September 1966, when administration of the program was removed from the Library Services Division of Joyner Library, and a Department of Library Science (DLS) was created within the College of Arts and Sciences. The DLS, still located in the Joyner Library building, had at that time two full-time faculty members and offered the Bachelor of Science (BS) and MAEd degrees. DLS's graduate program was expanded, and additional graduate courses were added. Graduate assistantships were also made available for the first time. In response to student concerns, the MAEd curriculum was substantially revised in 1969.

In 1970, the Master of Library Science (MLS) degree program was approved at ECU, and the first students were admitted to the program that same year. In 1985, DLS was renamed the Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS). Beginning in 1985, the Department of Foundations, Research, and Media in the School of Education began to develop the MAEd-Instructional Technology Specialist-Computers degree that would also carry with it certification for the North Carolina public schools. The new degree was approved almost two years later, in 1987.

Also, in 1986 and 1987, the MLS curriculum was thoroughly reviewed and updated. After evaluating the market for the MLS degree in eastern North Carolina, the length of the degree program was reduced from 42 to 38 semester hours, and a thesis option was added.

In 1988, the ALA joined with the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the accreditation process, and delegated membership responsibilities to the AASL. The ALA Council defined the first professional degree for school library media specialists as one from either an ALA-accredited program or an NCATE-accredited and AASL-approved program.

In July 1992, the DLIS, keeping its offices in Joyner Library, moved administratively from the College of Arts and Sciences to the School of Education. The technology undergraduate

courses and the MAEd in Instructional Technology moved from the Department of Foundations, Research, and Instructional Technology in the School of Education to the newly renamed Department of Library Science and Educational Technology (LSET). In April 1993, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC/DPI) began to grant various licensures to replace the former certifications.

In 1994, LSET submitted a self-study, which addressed the 1988 national standards for school librarians, to the accreditation officials of the combined AASL and NCATE. In 1995, the teams from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC/DPI) visited ECU. The educational unit, including the School of Education and all teacher education programs residing outside of the School, were accredited by NCATE. Among the licensure programs approved by NC/DPI were library media coordinator, instructional technology specialist-computers, instructional technology specialist-telecommunications, and library media supervisors. In 1996, the MLS degree at ECU was approved by the AASL/NCATE.

In 1998, to reflect the Broadcasting Department's merger with LSET, the department's name was changed to the Department of Broadcasting, Librarianship, and Educational Technology (BLET). In 1999, BLET submitted a request to the University of North Carolina Office of the President to offer the MLS degree online and to plan for the online delivery of the MAEd degree. In 2000, the MAEd in Instructional Technology and the MLS degree programs were approved for online delivery. BLET focused its energies on training school librarians and technology specialists for the public schools. The State Library of North Carolina's Public Library Certification Board also certified LSET's MLS students for positions in North Carolina's public libraries.

During 2001, the Master of Science in Instructional Technology (MS in IT) online degree was approved for students not interested in licensure by the NC/DPI. The MAEd in IT program became the path to licensure and the MS in IT became the non-licensure program. The librarianship component of BLET became an independent department, which was renamed the Department of Librarianship, Educational Technology, and Distance Instruction (LTDI). LTDI was physically housed in the eastern part of the 1996/97-renovated old Joyner Library, then designated Joyner East to avoid confusion with the new Joyner Library, made up of the western part of the old Joyner library and a new addition. Administratively LTDI remained in the then School of Education.

In 2004, the School of Education became the College of Education. Later, that same year, LTDI was renamed the Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology (LSIT). The main reason that LSIT chose to develop an online program after years of offering face-to-face instruction, was to meet the changing needs of students for an efficient, affordable, largely asynchronous learning environment. Since the 1970s, the State of North Carolina had required that school librarians and technology specialists have master's degrees in library science and thus qualify for various NC/DPI licensures.

Although the LSIT faculty debated the issue of online versus face-to-face learning quite passionately, the fact remained that our traditional student base, school librarians and technology facilitators in the making, was already beginning to seek out master's degree programs that had the convenience of being online and readily accessible in even remote areas. LSIT took on the challenge not only of going fully online, but also of providing one of the best online programs available. LSIT, by incorporating the positives of face-to-face instruction into its online delivery system, offers a user-friendly course of instruction by incorporating into every course in its extensive curriculum avenues for student and faculty interaction, peer to peer interaction, and online community interaction. LSIT's programs were the first in North Carolina to be totally online.

As a corollary to its decision to offer a totally Internet-based environment for learning, LSIT began to attract not only students from eastern North Carolina wanting to pursue licensure as school librarians and technology specialists, but also students in remote areas in over twenty other states who needed the same credentials to teach in their communities. In addition, LSIT began to receive inquiries from students in eastern North Carolina and remote areas who were interested in pursuing positions in academic and public libraries that required an MLS from an ALA-accredited program.

In April 2005, the MLS program of DLS was granted pre-candidacy status for American Library Association (ALA) accreditation. That same academic year, LSIT was granted authority by the ALA to start an ALA student chapter. LSIT's ALA student chapter was the first in the nation at an NCATE/AASL approved program. Since that time the MLS program has submitted annual status reports to the ALA Committee on Accreditation. In 2008, the MLS program was granted a three-year extension of its pre-candidacy status.

In 2009, LSIT changed its name to the Department of Library Science (DLS) in recognition of the fact that is an autonomous department within the College of Education. The MLS program is the only program sponsored by DLS. The fact that the MLS degree program is 100% online makes it possible to expand our mission from serving rural populations in eastern North Carolina, to serving students in remote areas throughout North Carolina, from the mountains to the coast. Our students consistently tell us that our online programs fit their diverse needs and give them the freedom to continue to progress in their jobs.

Recent History of the Program

In spring 2008, Department of Library Science (DLS) faculty requested permission from the College of Education (COE) to become a free-standing department within the COE. Prior to this, the MLS program was one of several degree programs within the Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology. Permission to establish a free-standing Department of Library Science was granted, and became effective July 1, 2008, the first day of the new fiscal year.

DLS faculty began a series of meetings to 1) review and revise the mission, goals and objectives of the program, 2) structure the sequence of program courses to better align with

program objectives, and 3) gather input on the proposed outcomes from current, potential and former students. Figure I.1 illustrates the initial approach to planning for the first task, a review and revision of the mission, goals and objectives. In August 2008, DLS faculty met for a day-long retreat to propose revisions to mission, goals and objectives, and after slight adjustments, these were approved in proposal form in September 2008.

In October 2008 and March 2009, two meetings with current, potential and former students were held in Fayetteville and Greenville, NC, to discuss the new mission, goals and objectives and gather student input. Responses were largely positive, and the new mission, goals and objectives were posted to the DLS website, with the request for additional comment.

In fall 2009, the revised mission, goals and objectives were finalized and implemented. Students entering in fall 2009 were subject to the new set of program objectives.

As part of ECU's and COE's directed planning process, faculty met for a day-long retreat in August 2010 to assess the alignment of program mission, goals and objectives to the ECU document, [*ECU Tomorrow: Strategic Action Plan 2010*](#) and report the DLS's contribution to the [*COE Strategic Action Plan*](#).