

## **MLS Program Committee Report**

October 28, 2015

Submitted by Lindsay Sarin

The MLS Program Committee met on Wednesday, October 28, 2015 to:

- Receive quick updates on admissions, GAships, renaming the MLS, and Re-Envisioning
- Discuss new MLS courses
- Discuss the upcoming current student survey
- Discuss students from outside of the iSchool taking iSchool courses
- Discuss Archives & Digital Curation electives

The Committee explored five main topics during the meeting.

### **Action Items**

None

### **Updates**

The Committee heard the following updates:

- Admissions: Currently around fifty total applicants for the Spring semester. Roughly half of these students have submitted their applications so far. Decisions will be made next week, and pending those numbers there may need to be an additional section of core classes to accommodate the new cohort. Ursula will be joining Lindsay, Ken, and Paul in the application review process.
- GAships: A partnership with University Libraries will mean that we are able to connect relevant assistantships to our students during the application process. Students with relevant backgrounds will be informed during the admissions process of assistantships that they have been selected for. This is a marketable recruitment tool.
- MLS Name Change: Lindsay and Ann brought the name change proposal to Graduate PCC immediately prior to the committee meeting. It was passed by Graduate PCC and will move to the Senate PCC on November 6.
- Re-Envisioning the MLS: The Advisory Board went over Re-Envisioning documents during their fall meeting and have taken home some projects for thinking about the findings. Three groups will focus on education, career development, and portfolio requirements for students and will be checking in with us through mid-December.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **Evaluating and re-aligning MLS core courses**

- It has been about five years since the MLS core has been evaluated to ensure that they align with learning outcomes and include up-to-date content.
- For LBSC 602 we will gather the faculty who often teach it to discuss the course.
- LBSC 671 will be similar, and likely will not incur many changes. There have been suggestions of including a programming and technical-focused TA to help with more specific content.
- MIM has approached us to discuss collaboratively developing a new LBSC 631 to offer to

both MLS and MIM students.

- There was concern over such a course interfering with LBSC 660, but that concern dissipated as 660 is not currently taught.
- Suggestion: Should the new class focus on leadership over management? It could be a class on developing activist leaders in communities.
- The committee reached a consensus that leadership is important, but changes to the course should not substitute it for basic management principles. It could aim to incorporate more leadership, however.
- Suggestion: The course could broadly introduce management, and in more advanced classes develop management or leadership within specific organizations and settings.
- The committee reached a consensus that this was worth discussing further, and that it should identify a group of faculty who should be involved in a discussion with MIM to discuss their options. Any changes should include content that is perceived to be missing from 631 currently, such as budgeting.

### **Current student survey**

- The committee was notified that the survey is currently available in ELMS, and that any content suggestions could be included in the survey before it goes out.
- Suggestion: The survey may be a good opportunity to test interest in the upcoming one credit short classes. These could be offered in the summer, over weekends, or as workshops.
- Student Services currently does not have any similar surveys in place, so anything that they find useful could be put into the survey.

### **Discuss non-iSchool students in iSchool classrooms**

- iSchool students have the option to take courses from outside of the iSchool, and can do so by completing the appropriate form. There are new questions about policies for students from outside of the iSchool taking iSchool courses.
- Currently external students can only enroll by permission of iSchool faculty, so iSchool students always receive first pick. There are increasing numbers of external students looking to take iSchool courses, and there are different opinion among faculty. Most of the concern comes from classrooms where a majority of enrolled students were non-iSchool: MIM classes especially can see 60% external students in courses.
- Questions of developing content in directions that are beneficial to both iSchool and external students: Should this practice be encouraged, or is the onus on a student taking a class outside of their focus to do the extra work to make the course relevant?
- The committee identified many areas where the iSchool needs to clarify language around external students in iSchool courses. The timeframe for students submitting appropriate paperwork need to be made explicit, the channels that these requests flow through needs to be made explicit, and requirements and expectations need to be explicit. Ideally there should be a flow chart or comparable visual aid to make the process extremely easy to understand for students.
- The committee reached a consensus that these requirements should be united across in-person and online courses, and that there should not be any restrictions on which faculty are able to grant permission to external students.

- A summary of this discussion will be sent to Trish.

#### **Archives & Digital Curation electives**

- The ADC specialization currently has a single pure elective option. Maintaining the elective list for students is cumbersome, and if a student is interested in a course that is not on the list they must approach Lindsay or Jeff, who then seek approval from Ken. There are currently almost thirty courses on this list: is it worth keeping up?
- Suggestion: Students likely draw from existing career paths in considering their electives. The list itself may be less important given the likelihood that a student makes a single and intentional step away from existing career paths, making a large list for browsing unnecessary.
- Suggestion: It would be much easier for Student Services to handle the outliers who encounter problems with their elective choices on a case-by-case basis than to manage this list. It is easier to advise individual students than to maintain the existing list.