

## MLS Program Committee Report

February 24, 2016

Submitted by Lindsay Sarin

The MLS Program Committee met on Wednesday, February 24, 2016 to:

- Discuss two new course proposals
- Discuss the ongoing project of unifying field study course syllabi
- Hear announcements regarding upcoming events, sponsorships, and admissions
- Hear an announcement regarding upcoming changes to blogMLS
- Hear announcements regarding planning processes for future recruitment initiatives and the next orientation
- Discuss the MLS Advisory Board Sub-Committee's portfolio proposal
- Discuss the MLS Current Student Survey Report

The Committee explored four main topics during the meeting.

### 1. **Discuss two new course proposals**

- **LBSC728X – Global Archival History and its Value to the Profession:** The committee expressed some concerns over the proposal in its current form. Of primary concern were the core learning outcomes, which the committee believed felt outdated and in need of an update that could introduce concepts of digital archives, archival evolution, and establishing links with other archives with an intentional inclusion of dispersed collections. There were also concerns over some of the assigned work for students. Generally the committee felt that there did not seem to be enough assigned material to constitute a graduate course, and that this could be resolved by extending the length and scope of the research paper. Other assignments, such as the student-led presentation on foreign archives, could be too broad in scope and need to be clarified. The committee also agreed that the course's goals should be better blended into the course work, and that some of the readings were old and bordering on outdated. Ken Heger suggested some alternate readings and proposed updates where he could.
- **LBSCXXX – Information Governance and Managing the Access to Records:** This syllabus represents an attempt to revamp the former e-Discovery course, and is a special topics course that is being put forward as a permanent course proposal. The committee shared immediate concern over the course's name, which they believed was unclear and did not properly advertise the course's content. The committee also expressed concern over a lack of real course outcomes, and found that without these outcomes it is difficult to consider what the course aims to provide for students, and where it fits within the scope and goals of the program. The absence of these outcomes created some confusion about why the course involves litigation work in some of its assignments, and found that a more tangible connection to records management needs to be made. The committee agreed that as students show that they are decreasingly interested in fun electives, and instead seek applicable courses that fit an established course plan, it seems less and less likely that a course without a clear definition of the provisions it offers will receive much attention from students.
- The committee moved not to vote for either of these courses, and instead return the proposals with their notes.

### 2. **Discuss the ongoing project of unifying the Field Study course syllabi**

- Ken, Lindsay, and Rocco met in November to discuss the possibility of creating unified syllabus for field study courses. The previous distinction between archives and non-archives field study courses has blurred to the point where the outcomes can be consolidated and the course syllabi unified. Faculty would be able to tailor their course to their own experience and students' needs. The syllabus that Rocco shared was developed with this unification in mind. The committee expressed some stylistic concerns over a reading list that draws too heavily from libraries and a need to ensure that the learning outcomes are fully measurable, but generally responded favorable to the project. Ken will submit his syllabus to Lindsay, who will attempt to unify his and Rocco's syllabus. This unifying process will be completed by Spring 2017 at the earliest, but in the mean time Ken and Rocco have been attempting to design their own syllabi in a way that works towards unifying the courses.

### 3. **FYI Announcements**

The Committee heard the following updates:

- **Admissions:** Ninety-one new students have been admitted for the coming fall semester. Newly admitted students have until April 15 accept their admissions, though we have heard from twenty-four already, and all but two have accepted. The current pool of admitted students represents a healthy mix of areas of interest, though a significant number indicated that they wish to be Archives and Digital Curation students. The program has been continually

emailing newly admitted students to keep them apprised of what is going on at the iSchool, and will be inviting them to Career Focus events and Americana.

- Internship & Networking Fair: The next fair is on February 29 from 4:30-6:00pm. Attendance has not been as high as hoped for a number of the Career Focus events, and it is likely that after this event the program will return to hosting the fair once per year instead of the current once per semester.
- blogMLS: The program is revamping the blog, adding a new template that will work with the upcoming changes to the program website, and reshaping its focus so that it is more expressly useful for current students. We anticipate that the new blogMLS will launch by the end of the Spring 2016 semester or by early summer.
- School Library: A faculty interview will be held on March 28. The interview is open and the committee is welcome to attend. More information will be circulating very soon.
- Sponsorships: The program is sponsoring Code4Lib, and Johnna and Lindsay are going to the annual conference in Philadelphia this month. They will be using the conference as the launch of the “Why Info...Because” campaign, and will be recruiting for students and promoting the program. In lieu of the usual mixer, the program is also sponsoring the MLA Opening Reception.
- Communications Workshop: The program has partnered with the Communications Department towards hosting a Communications Workshop to discuss networking skills and talking to stranger. The event will be limited to twenty to twenty-five students from all three of the programs. The success of this event could produce similar future events.
- CIDLIS: CIDLIS dates have been announced: Thursday, October 20 – Friday, October 21.
- Course Plans: The 2-Year Course Plans have almost been completed for the years 2016-2018. Schedules are currently completed through 2017. Never in the history of the college has this happened before. The course plans will be posted to the website following a brief review, and with the addition of certificate courses.
- Registration: The Registrar’s calendar has indicated March 31 as the approximate date for Fall 2016 course registration.
- Planning: The program is currently in the early stages of orientation and recruitment planning.

#### 4. **Discuss the Current Student Survey Report**

- The Current Student Survey has been circulated for three years now. Stand-outs for the 2016 report include a lack of diversity for summer course offerings and requests for more courses or greater course variety. This can be difficult to resolve given that faculty are not required to teach in the summer.
- The current variety for online courses is a concern, and there is definite need to develop more courses for online students.
- Students were asked to submit topic areas for courses that they would like to see added for the program. Common course suggestions included programming, cataloging, budgeting, and grants. This was again echoed in popular demands for a more accessible programming course to somehow serve as a “Part 1” to the currently offered Introduction to Programming for Information Professionals course.
- Listserv management also remained an issue, and UMD’s lack of a digest feature makes this difficult to resolve. The program may need to consider alternative listserv services.
- Students widely reported confusion over the roles of advisors and the Program Manager, with many believing Lindsay to be their advisor.
- An addendum survey will be distributed to the students soon to clarify some of their requests around preferred times for events and new course topics.

#### 5. **Discuss the MLS Advisory Board Sub-Committee’s Portfolio Proposal**

- Due to time constraints, this discussion will be held at the next committee meeting.

#### **Actions:**

- There were no committee actions to report at this meeting.