

MLIS Program Committee Minutes

Thursday, April 5, 2018

Room 2116

In attendance:

- Erin Zerhusen
- Beth St. Jean
- Renee Hill
- Jeff Waters
- Lindsay Sarin
- Paul Jaeger
- Kelsey Diemand
- Suzy Wilson

Erin called the meeting to order at 11:32pm.

1. Application Annual Updates Needed (Erin Zerhusen)
 - a. Do we want to change anything? Deadlines? Essay questions? Requirements?
 - i. *Erin:* We need to submit to the Graduate School if we want to make any changes. They have to be submitted by May 15. We will definitely include Legal Informatics and Intelligence & Analytics as specialization options. Do we want to adjust our supplemental essay? We can't change the Statement of Purpose. And do we think that our application materials give us the information that we need to make informed admissions decisions?
 - ii. *Paul:* Should we reword to make it more clear that the supplemental essay is required?
 - iii. *Erin:* On our admissions page and the graduate admissions page, it lists the supplemental essay as required. I think the problem is the way that the Graduate School talks about the requirements, they split it into Graduate School requirements and program requirements, which causes confusion. I don't think we can change that language in any way.

- iv. *Jeff*: I have the supplementary application prompts. The PDF that pulls up is listed as Supplementary Application and online it is referred to Supplemental Essay.

2017-2018 Supplemental Essay Text “Your statement of purpose tells us about why you want to pursue graduate education at UMD, and what experiences have brought you to this point of wanting an education from the iSchool and the University of Maryland. This supplemental essay looks towards the future. In approximately 500 words, please address: • How does an MLIS degree from the University of Maryland fit into your future career plans? What kinds of jobs do you hope to get after graduate school? • What interests you the most about your chosen specialization? A list of specializations can be found at <https://ischool.umd.edu/mlis-curriculum>. Note: If you have selected the Individualized Program Plan, please go into some detail explaining what expertise you wish to gain through your coursework. • How do you see yourself contributing to the progress of the information field? What do you feel you can contribute to the community of information professionals? Reviewers look for applicants who: • Demonstrate an understanding of the information profession and his/her goals within it; • Are service-oriented and demonstrate the characteristics of adaptability, creativity, and collaboration; • Are comfortable with and eager to learn new technologies; • Have leadership potential; and • Have relatively clear career goals/interests”

- v. *Erin*: In the application, there are slots to upload different materials. That’s probably why we get writing samples because there is a writing sample slot. There is no slot specifically marked Supplemental Essay.
- vi. *Jeff*: Like Erin said we can’t change the statement of purpose but depending on what we want to see in our applications we can change the questions accordingly.
- vii. *Erin*: I do think that the essays were better this year. Considering how many students we offered admissions to we got an incredibly good applicant pool this year, but I also thought there were more people that were focused in on why they wanted to be here. I don’t personally have recommendations for changing the essay.

- viii. *Paul:* I think it worked well. I'm surprised by how many people skip it. But I thought the combination of the two essays gave us a better, more focused, idea about who they are and where they see themselves in our profession.
- ix. *Renee:* Since we don't do interviews, I think the supplemental application is important. If we get people who don't include it, is there a way to reach out to them? I don't want people to not be admitted just because they were confused.
- x. *Jeff:* We reach out to students when they are missing materials. It is up to the program how much leeway they give with late materials after the deadline.
- xi. *Beth:* We could ask them to upload a justification if they choose to upload a writing sample.
- xii. *Jeff:* We can't change the names of the upload slots in the application.
- xiii. *Paul:* That might also encourage people to submit writing samples.
- xiv. *Erin:* So it sounds like no new changes aside besides adding the new specializations.

2. Admissions Update (Erin Zerhusen)

- a. *Erin:* We offered admission to 170 people.
- b. *Jeff:* That is almost as much as the other master's programs all together.
- c. *Lindsay:* It's good, the adjunct pool for LBSC courses is strong.
- d. *Erin:* So far, we have 11 or 12 who have declined and 44-45 that have accepted.
- e. *Beth:* Do they have a deadline?
- f. *Erin:* May 15 is the preferred and international deadline. July 13 is the final deadline for domestic students. Other schools have deadlines in April, so a lot of students have to decide ahead of time. I have been meeting with students I may be reaching out with prospective students requesting to meet with people. Suzy and I have been working on the communication strategies and sending FAQ emails. I will announce the new specializations. If you get a lot of the same

question let me know and we can include it. Caroline will be moving into Suzy's position and she has filled out the FAQ section of the MLIS student page.

- g. *Jeff*: Every year we have the challenge of students not knowing who to go to with questions. People go to Erin when they shouldn't, so we are trying really hard to clarify these rolls and having Jasbir viewed as the primary advisor.

3. MLIS Core Revision (Beth St. Jean)

- a. *Beth*: April 10, 11-noon we are going to be talking about staffing for this new proposed core.
- b. *Kelsey*: I feel like Information Organization is more helpful for archives folks and Information Access is more relevant for everyone.
- c. *Paul*: The goal is to just expose you to all of these concepts.
- d. *Lindsay*: I think we should move Intellectual Property/Copyright from Information Organization to Information Access. Records Management should move to Information Organization.
- e. *Paul*: What you are saying is completely valid there is an infinite number of possible solutions.
- f. *Lindsay*: We have government and information services as a key topic. Since this is an overview class do we want to keep it?
- g. *Paul*: Yes, that kept coming up in our discussions.
- h. *Kelsey*: You could maybe put assessment and evaluation in Information Access as part of User Experience.
- i. *Suzy*: What is we put assessment in the All category since the modes and methods depend on the context?
- j. *Kelsey*: I definitely think working the career prep into the field study class is a good idea.
- k. *Paul*: So many people found the 791 career prep work this semester helpful, I think it is something we need to make permanent.
- l. *Beth*: I would love to have our own career services.

- m. *Paul*: With the undergraduate program it will have to happen.
 - n. *Kelsey*: ARHU has a satellite liaison from the career center. If the undergrad program gets big enough
 - o. *Beth*: April 10 11-noon in room 4113.
4. *Renee*: I sent out a message to my classes letting them know about the ADA seminar and the person mistook what I wrote and thought the iSchool was sponsoring this. He said he was very frustrated that online students don't get the same experience. Is this a pervasive issue? Is it that they are actually being left out or are their expectations not being addressed from the start? They feel like if you are an online student you are sort of an afterthought. This can be a future discussion on how to address it.
 5. *Jeff*: Renee and I talked about this yesterday, from my perspective in Student Services, I want all students to feel that they have access to the iSchool community which is challenging for online students. Also, they're in graduate education and there are not as many graduate students that are concerned with feeling part of the culture, like maybe you would in undergrad. Graduate school is a little bit different. That said, I want to incorporate whatever solutions we can. But we also offer things all the time that people just don't show up to. We also need to be mindful of our resources.
 6. *Erin*: I do agree, there is not a lot that has been live streamed or recorded. We as a program have seriously cut down on the things we were running because people were not showing up. There have been simply fewer opportunities offered by the program. It has made me realize that the student orgs need to be aware of the online community. I can speak to the two specialization events last week. One of them the woman isn't willing to be recorded. Also, they are both in person specializations, so we made the decision to not record them.
 7. *Renee*: Is it that we are not communicating expectations enough? Do we tell them not everything is going to be available as an online student?
 8. *Erin*: I think we do but maybe we need to do better. It is tricky because online students have flexibility and can work. Realistically, you can't have every opportunity.

9. *Renee*: Maybe we need to send a reminder or just be more transparent about the decisions we make. Also, do we invite students to the committee meeting or solicit student input?
10. *Erin*: No
11. *Renee*: Maybe we should do that. I think people, especially online students, want to be heard
12. *Erin*: So, we do the Current Student Survey each year and we do pull things from that. We can't follow up with concerns through that method. Some students don't want to put their names on complaints. We used the online comment box this semester. It had too much access for us to be comfortable with that tool. I'm interested in having something like that again.
13. *Jeff*: We could try once a semester to let people know about the committee and encourage them to talk to student reps.
14. *Suzy*: Could we recreate the comment box in Qualtrics to fix the access problem?
15. *Jeff*: Yeah that's a good idea

Erin called the meeting at 12:34pm.