
MLIS Committee Meeting, September, 2025

Monday, 9/15/2025, 11am- 12pm

Zoom: <https://umd.zoom.us/j/6902544635?omn=99090822584>

Attendees: Joe Sherren, Ryan O'Grady, Paul Jaeger, Abbie Basile, Amelia Gibson, Belane Ayelwork, Bridgette Comanda, Jeff Waters, Jessica Grimmer, Jieun Yeon, Neil Dhingra, Renee Hill, Richard Marciano, Vedat Diker, Jason Baron


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Notes

Introductions and Committee Charge [Vedat Diker, on behalf of Interim-Dean Doug Oard], 11- 11:10am

- Vedat: First I want to thank all of you who, to my knowledge, are returning members and you have all contributed substantially to the success of the MLIS committee and the program. Looking ahead, the MLIS Committee isn't in much of a different place than all of our other programs- tight budget, governmental and societal headwinds, but on the positive side we are seeing programmatic growth. And you've demonstrated some distinctive successes- for example, rankings, ranked #3 is the highest we've been ranked in the past 30 years, if not ever. Program growth is fantastic, especially in a year like this where many colleges are facing shrinking applications and enrollments. Programmatically, the MLIS is where we have the most stability. So I'm charging you to continue growth in a sustainable, balanced, and meaningful way not jeopardizing the quality of the program and student experience. And prepare for reaccreditation in the coming years, those efforts will start quite soon. And use the new support faculty structure the Dean has employed to the benefit of the program- you have the weight of the full time faculty behind you, try and make good use of their efforts.
- Ryan O'Grady: Round of introductions from the Program Co-Directors (Ryan and Amelia Gibson), the program staff, the faculty members and the student representative (Belane Ayelwork).

Upcoming Application Deadlines, Process, and Current Enrollment [Joe Sherren], 11:10- 11:20am

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- Joe: Fall Application Deadline: September 19, 2025. Which is coming up at the end of the week. Right now there are 38 applications submitted or completed. There are 64 still open as started and I've been holding info sessions, field questions and requests for information in the program email. Typically we have between 70 and 80 applications for the Spring cycle and the last 48 hours are usually hectic with the applications as they come in so I expect to be hitting those numbers, if not be marginally higher than previous years. What this means for most of us is the faculty review- being part of the MLIS Committee is helping with application review. I'll be in touch for the larger group as we get to application review, many of you have been part of the review process within the past academic year where we've done our review on TerpEngage. And that hasn't changed. But you will be receiving the omnibus refresher email within the next week and a half- after applications close on Friday and I can compile all of the completed applications into a resource document. The Spring Application deadline is coming up a little later than normal on January 6, 2026 (MLIS, HiLS, Combined Bachelor's/Master's and international students). Typically we have a couple hundred applications, so if the Spring cycle is the audition, the Fall cycle is the big show. For current enrollment information, the MLIS/HiLS programs are still %50 of the college grad programs. Our incoming class is about 106, which is the highest it's ever been. We will have firmer numbers within the next week or so since the schedule adjustment period is now over. New students are about %30 of enrollment in our program, we also had 14 students total start over the summer. Based on the difference between incoming enrollment for the Summer/ Fall and the May graduates, I would ballpark our current enrollment at 345- 355 students. Overall, we are looking at a healthy program, we have a good number of applications coming in. And we have a couple of important deadlines that I will be in touch about.
 - Joe: Quick additional update: our marketing and recruitment team from Comms are sharing their advertising campaign with us. They are, I believe, looking to work on marketing in the DMV area and they've allocated a portion of their budget for Meta platform advertising, where they've seen more success in the past. That goes hand-in-hand with our regular recruitment strategies including interpersonal relationships between the applicant to admitted student stage- through the Spring and Summer to ensure they have access to myself as a recruitment official, and Neil Dhingra, our academic advisor. Answering their questions, providing a degree of comfort in enrolling in our program. And making sure everybody is administratively compliant and has a course of studies mapped out. Our advertising budget from the Comms team is a little smaller than other programs, I believe in part because of the growth of our program and we have more hands-on opportunities for prospective student to admitted-student interactions.
 - Amelia: To provide some more information, last year we worked on a strategy that focused on increasing the number of acceptances among our admits rather than

increasing the number of applications to the program. We found that we were losing people after we accepted them, so our strategy has been to mitigate this loss. After we do our admissions cycle, we might ask some committee members for help.

- Ryan: I would also take a moment to thank faculty for applications and application review, we know this is a big lift for everybody. I ask that you please be prepared to set aside some time to review applications because we will be asking you to submit by a deadline– it's not really our deadline, it's the deadline for the Graduate School. So it's pretty firm and we need to work within those parameters. And this is a really cool way of connecting with potentially incoming students, finding out what they're interest in, how we can connect with them– bring them on as researchers, potential students. Things like that.

Special Topics Course Proposals and Individual Dual-Degree Programs [Jeff Waters], 11:20- 11:40am

- Jeff: Two items, one is more of a heads up around Special Topics Courses: PCC voted and approved of a measure for all of our undergrad and graduate programs to not approve new special topics courses late in the semester. So when we approve special topics in December or January for the Spring, most students have their schedules set. So we are looking to have our students have a little more forewarning for Special Topics courses and have them set in September, October, and early November at the latest for Spring semester. The date we want to tell people is going to be the first week of November. The spirit of it is that we're not doing Special Topics requests in December or January. A similar timeline will be implemented for Spring, new topics can come in February, March, and early April. But we want to maintain having the schedule as set as possible once registration opens. Individualized Dual Degree Programs– we have an existing program with the Dept. of History and Jess Grimmer is working on one with the Dept. of Music– these are Maryland-approved and are official programs you can apply for them on the application. And there is another route that the Grad School offers: an Individualized Dual Degree Program and it's outside of the carved tracks of HiLS and the MuLS. I would love to have a set of programs we know we would always say yes to– and other requests would then go to the co-directors and perhaps Committee. But I would also like to address the philosophical question: do folks feel strongly about a second graduate program being inherently, obviously related to the MLIS Program– like MLIS and English– or if somebody wants to do something like the MLIS and something completely different. Should we make the determination that there should be curricular cohesion to be paired and approved?
 - Jess: I wanted to bring up that we have a couple, I think 2 just now, students who are doing dual degrees between Music Performance and the MLIS. The


Program I'm working on is Musicology and the MLIS- Musicology has more seminar-like courses and Music Performance isn't necessarily brought into that umbrella. Because Music Performance's credits come from lessons and ensemble work, which doesn't lend itself to the same seminar or academic rigor with a more traditional class structure than Musicology.


- Jeff: Really what I'm trying to settle a policy and process that we can use to help Neil work with the other program's advisor, do the forms, and get the approval from co-directors.
- Jess, via Chat: I'll note that I've had a couple students that are interested in medical or STEM-types of librarianship or archives. Maybe something is there?
- Abbie Basile, via Chat: +1 Jessica. As a long time STEM librarian, there's a need for specialized info for folks who chose those subject areas, but it won't be huge number.
- Jason Baron, via Chat: My 2 cents is that the every master's degree on campus is arguably related to the MLIS degree: information is fundamental to everything, and I would support any student's interest as long as they have the ability to do it.
 - Amelia: A logistical question: when we are creating a standing dual degree program, we're saying we'll be offering courses they need at least once every other year. And the thing we've been working on is to ensure that our curriculum is offering electives every other year for that- so what I don't want to see is that one or two instructors are fully tied up in elective courses geared supporting specific programs. My concern is that we could end up sequestering faculty to teach in specific dual degree programs and relying too heavily on them in that specific program, should they go on sabbatical or leave, we don't have instructors to teach those electives and further, those instructors won't be available to teach in Core Courses or support the program in a similar way.
- Jeff: The individualized dual degree doesn't necessarily function that way- the students lists all the MLIS Course they want to take and all of the courses in the other program they want to take. And then both programs have to agree to that, but we're not guaranteeing that we will offer courses that are sort of bridge courses between those two things for the individual programs. What I want by the end of this academic year is to have a policy document that outlines this process. So students from these programs, we'll always accept but programs outside of those programs will need co-director or Committee approval. We won't necessarily going to be offering courses that are bridging those two programs for Individualized Dual Degrees, we're essentially allowing someone to do two programs at the same time.
- Amelia: One thing I also want to bring up could be the possible administrative burden. At what point does this put excess work on Neil- we don't have a student ambassador anymore to help with administrative tasks. So we're reallocating work. How much of this are we structurally supporting?

- Jeff: Well, these are for students who are already MLIS student, they're saying "I would like to also do this program in addition to the MLIS. So Neil's advising caseload wouldn't necessarily change that much because he would still be providing MLIS advising to MLIS students. I also just don't see the number of students taking this course to be very large.
 - Neil: One thing would be to establish some pre-formed templates for programs. But the question also leads to two questions: one are we good with some courses dual counting or when do we think they might dilute the curriculum? Second when a student wants a dual degree we'll see that we do allow courses to come towards the MLIS from other colleges and programs, and we have to decide whether to count upper-level electives towards the MLIS degree.
- Ryan: I fully support a consolidated policy. And I'll be honest with you, I don't have expertise in other areas and when a student is taking %75 of courses in the MLIS but I don't have an expertise to weigh in on whether a course in another program would be an adequate replacement for a 3-credit course.
- Jeff: So what I've done is put together a sample workflow and I'll say by November, I'll have a workflow and concrete examples to speak on for the Committee.
- Jess, via Chat: Don't want to take up time—maybe we could take the initiative to develop contacts in other colleges so we have experts to go to when we get a new request.
 - Jeff: I don't have those specific contacts for some programs, so I'm all for that approach.
 - Jess, via Chat: Me either, but we can make a list!

Other Business [Anyone], 11:40am- 12pm

- Ryan: So I want to set the state for the last part of our agenda- it's going to be an open part each meeting. We often have a little bit of time at the end of the meeting and I think we can use this time to address other business. Things that'll go here would be something to put on our radar as a team, as a director for Amelia or I. ANYthing that's going to affect course planning, anything affecting teaching, ideas for upcoming talks or events. This includes annual talks like the ALA President's talk. Including CIDLIS
 - Amelia: One thing to add would also be if you want to give us a heads up before things happen. So we can chat about anything along the way.
- Abbie Basile: Last year, the Committee did a lot of work on developing 1-credit courses and I wanted to see if we have a process in place to assess them, see how they're performing and whether they should be retired or further developed. In the Spring/ Summer, a couple I did were dropped because they didn't meet the minimum enrollment.. So I would like to revisit how to review these courses.

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- Ryan: I think one of the things to help at least slow down the number of courses cancelled because of enrollment will be getting the timeline down for Special Topics Courses that Jeff mentioned earlier. Getting these courses on student's radars earlier in the semester, open for registration, and advertised. But I hear you about the process of reviewing those and that's something we'll talk more about.
 - Neil, via Chat: One potential issue with one-credit courses is that graduate assistants get tuition remission for ten credits, which creates space for a one-credit course. I think there are fewer GAs these days.
 - Abbie, via Chat: That's good to know, Neil. I just wonder if they're viable going forward, even though we may like the idea. We did them as "pilots" I believe. So, thought review might be good.
 - Amelia: I have a question: do you all have, individually, a cycle of courses you all expect to be teaching, are there cycles that you see yourself teaching over a 2-year period?
 - Renee: I usually teach INST620 and LBSC602, but when the survey comes out I typically teach those but I do put my name in for other courses that I would be interested in teaching
 - Paul: For me, something like the INfo and Human Rights course, I teach every fall and depend on teaching it every fall. There are certain things I plan around that help to build the year. I have taught many different courses over the years and I've adjusted some expectations for the things I would be teaching based on new faculty coming on, etc. I certainly appreciate having consistency in what I'm teaching.
 - Jess, via Chat: Starting to get a rhythm!
 - Amelia: I saw your comment, Jess. If nobody else has additional thoughts I just wanted to know as we're having conversations as directors about how to assign teaching. So thank you all for your feedback.
 - Jason Baron: Process for requesting the updating of learning outcomes/course titles in courses taught. I want to make sure that for a couple of courses of mine, that there is consideration for updating learning outcomes or, in one case (INST726), the title of the course should be changed (from Information Governance to Fundamentals of Information Governance). I think the Committee should provide a schedule to submit modest changes for learning outcomes, testudo writeups, or title changes.. So you're not locked in for the next year or semester teaching the topic as it is. How to change the title, learning outcomes, and the Testudo description.
 - Jeff: Changes, small or large, would need to come to the Program Committee and then moved to PCC. So if you would like to propose any changes, it would come to the Committee first and then go to PCC. The request does have to go through a level of checks-
 - Amelia: Is there a schedule or best timing?

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- Jeff: We can make the changes any time. But there will need to be enough lead time to get those updates done.
 - Vedat: The way I approach the timeline, which seems like the most important process. The process isn't too draconian, you send the changes to the Committee (to Joe, who collects agenda items) and that'll be for title, learning outcomes, and catalog description (Testudo description). The rest of the syllabus is yours to change, you can make changes to the content and assessments you feel will be best use to meet the learning outcomes stated. If you want it to happen for Spring, you have to count back from going to Campus-Level approval– first level is this Committee, then it goes to College PCC, and then it goes to VPAC. There are timing considerations, VPAC meetings are the second Friday of the month (the last meeting you can catch is December 12 this year.) Which means you need to get to our PCC before that, likely the November PCC. Which means you need to hit the October MLIS Meeting for Spring 2026. The first half of the semester is basically a sure bet for this.