School of Library and Information Studies
Strategic Plan
2017-2021
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Image 2: Schusterman Library at OU Tulsa Campus

SLIS Envisioning Committee
June Abbas, Chair
Kelvin White, Co-Chair
Yong-Mi Kim, member
Kyungwon Koh, member

*The Master of Library and Information Studies program at the University of Oklahoma is accredited by the American Library Association Committee on Accreditation, with the status of Continued Accreditation. The next comprehensive review visit is scheduled for Spring 2021.
Executive Summary

The School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) Strategic Planning process began in October 2015 when Director Cecelia Brown asked for volunteers to lead SLIS’s strategic planning process. The Envisioning Committee was tasked with developing a process that would guide SLIS faculty through the strategic planning process, elicit input from faculty, staff, students and alumni, and result in measurable strategic directions and a plan for working towards each.

Activities, Timeline and Data Collection

The Envisioning Committee completed the following activities between October 2015 and November 2017:

- Formed the Envisioning Committee (October 2015)
- Gathered multiple sets of data including: (October 2015-April 2016)
  - Survey of SLIS faculty and staff
  - Library and Information Studies (LIS)/Information Science (IS) Job trends/analysis
  - LIS/IS programs’ strategic plans and Vision, Mission, and Goals (VMGs) statements
  - American Library Association (ALA) 2015 standards
  - College of Arts & Sciences Strategic Plan
  - OU’s strategic initiatives
  - Held a one-day visioning meeting facilitated by Possibilities, a nonprofit organization in OKC Metro – resulting in the new SLIS Vision Statement (February 2016)
- Held a series of meetings with faculty to conduct a SLIS SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) analysis and planning discussions – resulting in a draft of Strategic Directions for SLIS. Faculty met on April 3, 2017 to finalize the strategic directions and discuss activities for each (Spring 2016-April 2017).
- Met with Alumni Association Board of Directors (March 2017)
- Conducted online surveys with bachelor and masters students, alumni, Advisory Board members, and other external stakeholder communities (April-May 2017)
- Held Townhall meeting at the Oklahoma Library Association conference on April 25, 2017
- Revised SLIS Vision statement
- Completed analysis of the data and developed Strategic Planning report (August 2017)
- Debriefed on strategic planning report at SLIS planning meeting (August 2017)
- Drafted Strategic Plan and presented Plan to SLIS faculty (November 13, 2017)

Plan Development

At the conclusion of each set of activities the Envisioning Committee met to discuss analyses and next steps for the process. The strategic directions developed as a result of sharing data and results with the SLIS faculty and debriefing reports transcribed as a result of the SWOT and Envisioning sessions with the faculty. Faculty had opportunities for input throughout each set of activities and their suggestions were incorporated into the documents summarizing the meetings. The findings from the various data sources, including the surveys, informed the information presented to the faculty and guided the SWOT and Envisioning sessions. The final strategic directions developed by SLIS faculty were informed by the documents shared with the faculty, the Envisioning sessions, and feedback from SLIS’ stakeholders.

Plan Dissemination and Implementation

Beginning in March 2017 SLIS began to elicit feedback on the draft strategic directions from Alumni Board members, Oklahoma Library Association (OLA) members and other external stakeholders. The feedback from these groups was discussed by the SLIS faculty in April and changes incorporated into the strategic directions. The draft Strategic Plan was discussed by faculty on November 13, 2017 and adopted December 4, 2017. The Strategic Plan will be disseminated to students, faculty, Alumni and OLA members, external stakeholders, and other interested parties by posting the Plan on the SLIS website, Facebook page, and other appropriate distribution channels. As SLIS is undergoing an exciting period of change, the Strategic Plan will serve as a guide for the next five years as we work to attain the strategic directions outlined in this document.
Strategic Directions

OU Mission
To provide the best possible educational opportunity for our students through excellence in teaching, research and creative activity, and service to the state and society.

College Mission
As the intellectual core of the university, the College of Arts and Sciences supports the discovery and transmission of knowledge across a wide range of disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences to address the challenges of a changing global community. We prepare students for lives of professional accomplishment, civic engagement, personal fulfillment and lifelong learning.

SLIS Vision
SLIS leads in the information field by engaging in rigorous research, advancing educational excellence and making a significant impact on a culturally and technologically changing society.

SLIS Strategic Directions
The following strategic directions were identified through the strategic planning process. Each builds on the current strengths of SLIS and the emerging skill sets of information professionals, but also illustrates our plans for the future growth of the School. Further, these strategic directions are aligned with both the University of Oklahoma and the College of Arts & Sciences goals and signature initiatives. We plan to build capacity for these directions by leveraging existing resources of SLIS, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the University of Oklahoma, seeking new funding opportunities through grant development, and building upon stakeholder relationships within the state and beyond.

Reaffirm our continued commitment to excellence in education for libraries and archives
The MLIS program has long been the flagship program at SLIS and we must maintain its reputation and quality into the future. It is essential to the quality of the program that regular curriculum revision be conducted so that this degree program continues to prepare the most promising students for leadership roles in libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions.

Strengthen and expand our focus on Information/data science
Today’s information professionals need a variety of skills to be competitive and successful. To stay relevant in the constantly changing field SLIS will continue to expand our curriculum and research into strategic areas that align with the needs of the profession but also with College, OU, and our constituents in OK and surrounding states.

Expand our community engagement initiatives through research, teaching, and practice
Community engagement is essential to understanding the needs of the communities our graduates serve, but it also informs the research SLIS faculty engage in and collaborations we enjoy. Expanding this engagement enriches our curriculum and research endeavors.

Become an iSchool by 2025
To attain our goals of excellence in library and information science becoming an iSchool provides recognition by our peers in other LIS/Programs. SLIS is taking steps to qualify to join the iSchool consortium.
Strategic Direction 1: Reaffirm our continued commitment to excellence in education for libraries and archives

The MLIS program has long been the flagship program at SLIS and we must maintain its reputation and quality into the future. In fall 2017 there are 180 MLIS students enrolled and we would like to maintain or gradually increase this number over the coming years. It is essential to the quality of the program that regular curriculum revision be conducted so that this degree program continues to prepare the most promising students for leadership roles in libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions. We also value the feedback from our stakeholders and have acted on ways to not only meet expectations for skills and competences required for today’s information professional, but are developing new courses and focus areas to provide relevant, cutting edge courses our students require.

Strengths and Challenges:
SLIS has many strengths, as identified in the SWOT analysis we conducted at the beginning of the strategic planning process. Our main strengths under this Strategic Direction include:

- Only LIS program in Oklahoma with continued ALA accreditation*
- Recognized, established, active faculty --- impactful publications, leadership roles at the international levels of professional conferences and associations, earned reputation as experts in the field
- Diverse faculty and student body
- Two campuses with unique environments
- Quality graduate teaching delivered using multiple methods of course delivery
- Focus in LIS, Archives, and Information Studies with master’s degree and certificates in Archives and Digital Humanities
- Interdisciplinary collaboration within and outside university.
- Well respected by constituents and strong relationship with the alumni and community
- Excellent library support

SLIS does, however, have several challenges to address:

- Retaining ALA accreditation as SLIS strengthens and expands focus in information and data science
- Lack of support for hiring of full time tenure track faculty, renewable term faculty and adjuncts
- Increasingly antiquated videoconferencing facilities and lack of support for faculty and student travel between campuses for non-instructional activities
- Lack of awareness by administration and visibility on campuses
- Decreased diversity of course offerings as a result of fewer faculty members
- Staff shortage – more recruitment, development support; staff in Tulsa
- Lack of funding support for doctoral program
- Inadequate tech support from OU Information Technology
- University limitations on how courses are structured and offered

SLIS plans to address these challenges in the following ways:

- Enhance the MLIS program by developing a strong assessment plan to evaluate and measure student learning outcomes for ALA accreditation and OU assessment
- Submit competitive requests for faculty hires aligned with OU and College strategic initiatives and our strategic directions (Data Science, Indigenous Populations, and Digital Youth)
- Request renewable term faculty positions
- Leverage College and University development resources to promote, recruit, and increase monetary support
- Develop new courses relevant to all of our current students (MLIS, BAIS) but also the expanding market in LIS/IS and data science
- Develop and teach new course offerings of interest to SLIS students but that can also be cross listed across the University
- Develop certificate programs (e.g. Data Science for Information Professionals)
- Explore alternate models for course offerings (e.g. shorter internships, embedding more practical experience into courses, mini courses for lower credit hours, etc.)
Strategic Direction 2: Strengthen and expand our focus on Information/Data Science

Today's information professionals need a variety of skills to be competitive and successful. To stay relevant in the constantly changing field SLIS will continue to expand our curriculum and research into strategic areas that align with the needs of the profession but also with College, OU, and our constituents in OK and surrounding states. One such area identified as strategic direction 2 is within information science, in particular data science. SLIS plans to increase enrollment and course offerings in the Bachelors of Arts in Information Studies (BAIS) program. Currently we enroll 59 BAIS students, having increased this enrollment by 16% from Fall 2016. We are also developing a new undergraduate program, the Bachelors of Science in Information Science and Technology (BSIST).

Strengths and Challenges:
The majority of the current SLIS faculty teach and conduct research in Information Science. Several of the SLIS faculty have strengths which fit with our desire to strengthen and expand our focus on Information Science but also to grow into the area of data science. Our main strengths under this Strategic Direction include:

- A growing undergraduate program (BAIS)
- Faculty who teach in Information Science and Data Science
- Faculty whose research is based on rigorous machine learning techniques, text analytics and information retrieval who publish in top LIS or informatics research journals
- History of research and other collaborations with other faculty on campus
- History of research collaborations with non-OU affiliated faculty
- Data Science for Information Professionals certificate being developed

SLIS does, however, have several challenges to address:

- Strengthen and expand undergraduate programs
- Need more faculty who can teach the skills required for information science and data science jobs
- Limited recognition at OU and in College that SLIS can contribute to these areas and is not “just a library school”
- Marketing and branding of the SLIS as a “library school”
- Securing resources to support this expanding direction
- Alumni perceptions and fears that SLIS will move away from traditional library science courses and skills

SLIS plans to address these challenges in the following ways:

- Request hires of 1) data science and 2) indigenous knowledge faculty, which align with the College’s strategic initiatives and SLIS’s strategic directions
- Develop new courses to support both BAIS and MLIS students interested in information and data science careers
- Develop the Data Analytics for Information Professionals certificate
- Change the name of the School to “School of Information Studies”
- Develop a robust and far reaching marketing/branding strategy with assistance from OU and College resources
- Build collaboration/alignment with other OU units, College
- Promote and facilitate the conduct of ground breaking research
- Collaborate with faculty within the university and at other LIS/IS and iSchools
- Enrich and cultivate student opportunities and SLIS support by expanding the diversity and scope of our stakeholders to include other information professions, industry, and technology interests
- Be an active participant in OU’s Data Scholarship Program and collaborate with faculty who share common research and teaching interests
Strategic Direction 3: Expand our community engagement initiatives through research, teaching, and practice.

Community engagement is essential to understanding the needs of the communities our graduates serve, but it also informs the research SLIS faculty engage in and collaborations we enjoy. Expanding SLIS’ engagement enriches our curriculum and research endeavors as well as brings new knowledge to the profession and information and data science, about the real world challenges and problems encountered in local, regional, and global communities. SLIS values social justice, equity of access to information, and having a positive presence and impact on our communities.

Strengths and Challenges:
The majority of the SLIS faculty are engaged in multiple communities in various ways. The SLIS faculty have strengths which fit with our desire to expand our community engagement initiatives. Our main strengths under this Strategic Direction include:

- Faculty who actively engage with the community through innovative and engaging research and service activities
- Curriculum that includes service learning opportunities
- An experienced faculty who successfully integrate community engagement opportunities into their research and teaching
- The College’s new Community Engagement Initiative and resources to support increased community engagement
- Strong relationship with the alumni and community

SLIS does, however, have several challenges to address:

- External challenges such as budgetary concerns within the State of Oklahoma; critical economic, health and literacy-related issues of Oklahomans and adjacent states
- More engagement and involvement with the Oklahoma Library Association and related organizations to raise visibility of SLIS’ faculty’s research and teaching strengths
- Few classes that Integrate service learning
- Rigid internship requirements
- Lack of teaching or research relationships with indigenous communities, Native American, ALL communities
- Ineffective communication tools and channels

SLIS plans to address these challenges in the following ways:

- Cultivate relationships with existing and new collaborators to provide community engagement opportunities for students and faculty
- Leverage resources of OU, the College, and specifically Center for Research Program Development and Enrichment (CRPDE) to develop research opportunities and collaborations that will have a positive impact on health and literacy concerns within diverse Oklahoma and Regional communities
- Involve alumni and potential collaborators in classes, SLIS and student events
- Explore ways to integrate service learning into courses leveraging resources of the College
- Develop an internship database of diverse internship opportunities for MLIS and BAIS students
- Teach Dream courses partnered with other units that are open to the community
- Improve and expand communication marketing and channels soliciting internship and service learning opportunities for students
- Cultivate relationship with OU’s School of Social Work and explore ways for teaching, research, and community outreach
Strategic Direction 4: Become an iSchool by 2025

To attain our goals of excellence in library and information science becoming an iSchool provides recognition by our peers in other LIS/Programs. SLIS is taking steps to qualify to join the iSchool consortium. This is a new direction for SLIS but one we think we can attain as we begin SLIS’ newly approved doctoral program, increase our research funding, productivity and outreach, and continue to develop a diverse, cutting edge curriculum.

Strengths and Challenges:

The majority of the current SLIS faculty teach and conduct research in Information Science and other areas that align with iSchools nationally and internationally. Our second strategic direction of expanding our offerings in Information Science and Data Science strengthen our desire to become an iSchool. Several of the SLIS faculty have strengths in this area. Our main strengths under this Strategic Direction include:

- Faculty who teach and conduct research in Information Science and related areas
- Recognized, established, active faculty --- impactful publications, leadership roles at the international levels of professional conferences and associations, earned reputation as experts in the field
- History of research collaborations with non-OU affiliated faculty, many of which are iSchool faculty
- Increased research funding and productivity
- New PhD program in Information Studies approved and will accept students in Fall 2018

SLIS does, however, have several challenges to address:

- Lack of funding for faculty and student travel limits opportunities
- More faculty who can teach the skills required for information science students in BAIS, masters and PhD programs
- Build a culture of research within SLIS, especially important with new PhD program beginning
- Secure resources to support this expanding direction within SLIS
- Marketing and branding of the SLIS as a “library school”
- Alumni perceptions and fears that SLIS will move away from traditional library science courses and skills if SLIS becomes an iSchool
- iSchool membership requirements changing

SLIS plans to address these challenges in the following ways:

- Request hires of 1) data science, 2) indigenous knowledge faculty and 3) digital youth, which align with the College’s strategic initiatives and SLIS’s strategic directions
- Secure more funding from national granting agencies and foundations. Leverage OU resources to strengthen SLIS faculty research proposals and agendas
- Building culture – Leverage College and OU resources to support faculty in developing research, making connections with funders and interested communities, and grant writing
- Change the name of the School to “School of Information Studies”
- Develop a robust and far reaching marketing/branding strategy with assistance from OU and COLLEGE resources
- Design new courses and certificates to support BAIS, MLIS, and PhD students interested in information science
- Foster and promote ground breaking research
- Collaborate with faculty at other LIS/IS and iSchools
- Foster an “awards” culture within SLIS and actively submit faculty for recognition of national and international research and teaching awards.
- Be an active participant in OU’s Data Scholarship Program and collaborate with faculty who share common research and teaching interests
- Be an active participant in OU’s Center for Early Childhood Development and collaborate with faculty who share common research and teaching interests
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<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>In Process</th>
<th>Projected Completion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Propose new undergraduate program BSIST and revamp BAIS program</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>April 2018 submit for faculty approval. Full approval June 2019</td>
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<td>Develop new courses for undergraduate and graduate programs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Admit and graduate students into PhD program</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>First admissions Fall 2018</td>
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<td>Assessment</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Projected Completion</td>
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<td>Develop rubrics for core courses</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
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<td>Implement rubrics in course courses</td>
<td>Spring 2016-Fall 2018</td>
<td>Beginning in January 2019 this will be a yearly activity in each course</td>
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<td>Revise pilot rubric for End of Program Assessment and test</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
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<td>Review and update core course Student Learning Outcomes, map to ALA Standards, identify measurable activities to assess SLOs in each core course</td>
<td>Core course teams will begin in Spring 2018</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review SLIS Vision, Mission, Goals</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
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<td>Evaluate/revise assessment plan using results of rubrics and other activities</td>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>Ongoing/yearly</td>
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<td>Resources</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Projected Completion</td>
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<td>Request 3 new faculty hires</td>
<td>April 2018 submit RFRAs to College Dean</td>
<td>August 2019 new hires at OU</td>
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<td>Request new Administrative Assistant hire</td>
<td>December 2017 request to College Dean</td>
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<td>Hire Renewable Term Faculty</td>
<td>New RTF begins Spring 2018</td>
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<td>Develop/implement robust marketing and branding strategies</td>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
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<td>Research Culture</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>Projected Completion</td>
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<td>Increase grant submissions</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<td>Develop monthly/quarterly research colloquium series</td>
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<td>Expand research collaborations with OU and non-OU researchers</td>
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<td>Strategic Collaborations</td>
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<td>OU Libraries-possible RTF joint hire</td>
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<td>Data Scholarship Program—Affiliated faculty</td>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
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<td>Early Childhood Research Center</td>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
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<td>SLIS alums and other communities</td>
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