I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS) has a three-fold mission that emphasizes excellence in education, preparing leaders for a diverse, highly technological, knowledge-based global society; research and creative activities that include applied research for the improvement of professional practice and interdisciplinary solutions to information problems; and professional service that addresses information needs of our culturally diverse society. Areas of focus in the goals, programs, and activities of the School are use of information and communications technologies in course content and delivery as well as in support of and as a subject for faculty research; Native American library and information studies education and service; and inclusion of multidisciplinary components in both students’ programs and faculty research. Though revisited and revised by the faculty over the years, the intent of the goals has been articulated in the 1994 CDRP self-study report, the 1999 SLIS Strategic Plan (the last such plan), the 2001 CDRP self-study report, and the 2000 and the 2007 program presentations prepared for the American Library Association (ALA) Committee on Accreditation (COA) review of the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree program. Further, over the years, these goals have guided the School through major changes; program expansions; recruitment of new faculty; development, revision, and implementation of the ever-evolving curriculum; and responses to the School’s internal and external reviews.

Recommendations for the School’s future progress were provided through the 2004 Final Report and Recommendations (CDRP) and the 2007 External Review Panel Report (ALA). Recommendations that have been accomplished through Fall 2007 include faculty teaching load of 2/2, while offering specialty courses necessary for the degree through the use of adjuncts (Final Report and Recommendations 2004, 5), and the replacement and maintenance of previously lost faculty positions (Final Report and Recommendations 2004, 6). Recommendations for which progress has been made are the development of technology-related curriculum offerings (External Review Panel Report 2007, 8); improvement in faculty salaries, especially compression and inversion among professor rank salaries (Final Report and Recommendations 2004, 5); and improvement in the structure and aggregation of data from end-of-program assessments (External Review Panel Report 2007, 9). Recommendations yet to be realized include improvement in faculty salaries to promote retention in the competitive national market (External Review Panel Report 2007, 21); increased constituent representation (External Review Panel Report 2007, 4-5); emphasis on the importance of and support for faculty scholarly productivity (External Review Panel Report 2007, 11); development of a more diverse student population (External Review Panel Report 2007, 14); increase in the number of full-time graduate students although it “is
clearly premature for the School to invest much effort in the development of a Ph.D. program at this time” (Final Report and Recommendations 2004, 6); and administrative support for faculty to teach fall or spring plus summer (Final Report and Recommendations 2004, 6).

Regarding the 2004 recommendation for teaching assignments in fall or spring plus summer, an unforeseen challenge has been that of collegial governance through committee endeavors, already stretched by the faculty’s physical division between Norman and Tulsa campuses. Further separating part of the faculty from the traditional academic year would be yet another factor affecting faculty interactions, especially when sabbaticals and other circumstances require leave time among a small faculty. However, SLIS has kept the possibility of summer sessions as part of a revised academic year on the discussion list. Other challenges for the School have been a combination of factors, including the complexity of supporting multiple degree programs; the availability of out-of-state accredited online programs (Appendix I, I); distributed, often part-time, students with diverse responsibilities; differences in resources and structures between the Norman and Tulsa campuses; and uncertain state assistance to higher education. A distributed faculty, with approximately 25 percent based in Tulsa, is both a strength (e.g., having faculty representation on campus for students) and a challenge (e.g., the faculty’s participation in collegial governance at two sites with different contexts and overlapping administrative structures).

Among the School’s strengths are its systematic planning process with emphases on information communications technologies, cultural diversity, and interdisciplinarity. Integral to the planning process are the ongoing review by the CDRP and the ALA (each entity crediting the strengths and contributions of the other in reports to the School) and the willingness of the faculty to participate in collegial governance, including activities such as the SLIS fall planning day. Other strengths of the School include the unique position of having the only nationally-accredited library and information studies master’s program based in Oklahoma and two contiguous states; the synergy among its three degree programs; the achievement of a 2/2 faculty teaching load; a culturally and academically diverse faculty; a positive organizational climate hospitable to women and underrepresented groups; a close connection with the state professional community that enriches the unit’s research, teaching, and service; national visibility for Native American faculty and activities; the College of Arts and Science’s support for communication technologies and for development and delivery of online courses; and a faculty willing and able to utilize technological innovations to provide broad access to the MLIS, MSKM, and BAIS degree programs, each unique in the state of Oklahoma.

Since the last program review in 2000, the School has successfully completed an external review by the American Library Association for continuing accreditation of the Master of Library and Information Studies; developed goals and objectives for the Master of Science in Knowledge Management and the Bachelor of Arts in Information Studies degree programs; revised the School’s mission, goals, and objectives; restructured the overall curriculum, adding technology courses and
integrating courses for the MLIS and MSKM; approved an online format as an additional delivery option for the MLIS, MSKM, and BAIS degree programs; recruited a well-qualified renewable term faculty member (with primary responsibilities for the BAIS) and seven well qualified, tenure-track faculty members, of whom four continue on the faculty, with three of those now based in Tulsa; improved the technology within the School, including hardware for course delivery and upgrades of the Norman and Tulsa A&S/SLIS technology labs.

The School’s priorities for action include

- Mechanisms to support scholarly productivity through recognition inside and outside the School and through merit awards,
- Expansion of systematic constituent representation by inviting the SLIS advisory boards to campus more frequently to participate in productive and creative engagement with the School,
- Continuing assessments within the Curriculum, Graduate Studies, and Undergraduate Studies Committees regarding the development and review of technology courses,
- Articulation of the structure and aggregation of data from end-of-program assessments with ongoing tracking accessible on the SLIS server,
- Attention to student learning in regard to end-of-program assessments by seeking student and faculty evaluative reflections each semester on comprehensive exams and on thesis and portfolio presentations and defenses,
- University support for the maintenance of 2007-2008 faculty positions through replacements and with additions to the faculty as the School’s student body grows,
- Development of a more diverse student body through scheduled annual recruitment at Langston University, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, and Southeastern State University,
- Improvement in faculty salaries, especially regarding the rank of professor,
- Discussion regarding a Ph.D. program.

II. BACKGROUND

The School was established within the Bizzell Library in 1929. Its first degree program, a bachelor’s degree in library science, received provisional accreditation in 1930 by the American Library Association, which two years later granted full accreditation. By 1953 the School had dropped the bachelor’s degree program and added a master’s degree in library science, which received full accreditation by the ALA in 1956, a time when ALA standards recognized the master’s degree as the entry-level degree to the profession. The ALA-accredited master’s degree was the School’s only degree program until the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) approved the Bachelor of Arts in Information Studies (BAIS) in 2001 and the Master of Science in Knowledge Management (MSKM) in 2002.
Since its establishment, the School’s mission, programs, and even its name have evolved to reflect changes in the information needs of society. “The mission of the School of Library and Information Studies is to provide excellence in education, preparing leaders for a diverse, highly technological, knowledge-based global society; to engage in research and creative activities that generate new knowledge and applications for effective practice and that foster interdisciplinary approaches to address information challenges; and to meet the complex information needs of society through public and professional service.” Reflecting the “diverse disciplines” of the College, supporting the “traditions of liberal education,” and contributing to the “advancement of human civilization,” the SLIS mission represents the diversity and unity of the College of Arts & Sciences and its mission “to imbue our students with a working knowledge . . . [of the great traditions of liberal education] and an appreciation of the central role of a liberal education, both in their lives and in the advancement of human civilization.” The SLIS mission also reflects the University’s emphases on diversity and innovation and supports the University’s mission “to provide the best possible educational experience for students through excellence in teaching, research, and service.” An implicit theme within the discipline of library and information studies and the mission statements of the School, the College, and the University, has been articulated by the College of Arts and Sciences as: “a tradition that encourages students to be independent thinkers and lifelong learners.”

The School’s three degrees (MLIS, MSKM, and BAIS) are strengthened and gain recognition from teaching, research, and service learning opportunities available from non-academic units on the Norman, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City campuses. The Tulsa and Oklahoma City campuses, which have library collections that specifically support the field of health sciences, have generously supervised LIS internships and provided GA positions to SLIS students. The OU-Health Science Bird Library director has taught LIS 5133 Biomedical Bibliography and Reference Materials and LIS 5163 Biomedical Databases as a service to the School and provided leadership for research activities by the School’s LIS and KM students. On the Norman campus, SLIS students have had GA positions and internships in specialized collections that provide nationally recognized sites for experiential learning (e.g., The Carl Albert Center, The Western History Collections, The Political Commercial Archives, The History of Science Collection, and the Sam Noble Museum of Natural Science). Within the BAIS degree program, students have had capstone projects, guided by SLIS faculty, in such diverse settings as the OU-IT technology labs and OU Physical Plant.

Since 1930 the School’s MLIS program has been accredited under every iteration of the American Library Association’s (ALA) Standards for Accreditation, attesting to the School’s meeting national norms within the discipline. And, the set of schools with an ALA-accredited program (a total of 57 in Canada and the United States) provide statistical data on their individual programs to the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), which periodically compiles and publishes the data. For OU SLIS, there are few specifically comparable data. For example, within the
Big 12 only two other institutions, the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of Texas at Austin, have ALA-accredited programs. Both of those institutions offer doctoral programs in the discipline and are, therefore, not comparable to OU. The other geographically proximate programs are in Texas (three) and Kansas (one). All four are in institutions that also offer doctoral programs in the discipline and are, therefore, not comparable to OU. Although there is an ALA-accredited MLIS program at the University of Denver, the program offers the single degree by a faculty of six, and ALISE has comparative data only for the program’s second year. There are no instate-based ALA-accredited master’s programs in New Mexico or Arkansas. However, comparative 2004 data (Saye 2008) across the 57 schools provide insight into Canadian and U.S. national averages and ranges regarding faculty, students, funding, and degree programs.

There have been two sources of restructuring within SLIS since the last CDRP report. The first occurred in 2003/2004 when three Tulsa-based, tenure-track faculty positions were provided for the School, creating faculty interactions across a bifurcated administration within the OU Graduate College. The second restructuring was internal to SLIS. With the addition of the BAIS and the MSKM degree programs, the School reorganized its committee governance (in 2005 adding the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee).

III. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
A. Degrees and Programs

At the time of the last CDRP self-study report (2001), the School of Library and Information Studies did not have an undergraduate program although the self-study noted that a proposal for the BAIS had been approved at the College level and forwarded for further approval processes. By Fall 2001, the BAIS had been approved by the OSRHE for delivery on the Norman campus, and the program’s first students had enrolled. The SLIS faculty worked together to create the program and ensure its ongoing cycle of evaluation, planning, and review with support and guidance later from the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Economic factors in the information technology boom and bust cycle at the turn of the century provide a significant context for the development of the School’s undergraduate degree program. The speculative bubble had peaked in the winter of 2000 and burst by 2001. Discussions within SLIS about the development of an undergraduate program occurred among the faculty in the 1999-2000 academic year, beginning as speculation peaked, developing the proposal and having it approved as the downturn continued, and having students admitted during the recession that followed. With the field of information technology under economic stress, enrollment in the program developed slowly, and as fall 2006 began, the BAIS was on the State Regents’ low productivity list. The School reported on the program and the resources directed to its success, and the BAIS was continued by the OSRHE. Departmental Profiles reported for the next year, Fall 2007, that headcount decreased from 45 to 34 but also that a total of 13 degrees (the largest number at that time) were conferred. When compared to the 15
undergraduate programs within schools that also had an ALA-accredited master’s degree, the 2004 SLIS BAIS enrollment of 47 students was within the range of that of the 15 comparable schools (17.1 to 464.2) but attained only 31 percent of the 15 schools’ average enrollment (Saye 2008, 76-77).

As of Fall 2007, the program’s notable strength is its unique status as the only program of its kind within the state. Its status is centered in a curriculum that offers diversity and interdisciplinarity and a focus on technical solutions to human problems. Further the program’s curriculum has ongoing review within the Curriculum Committee and the Undergraduate Studies Committee. The delivery format often favored by teachers and students within the program is the online format, making increased access another significant program strength. The challenge for the BAIS is to grow to a scale where enrollment can support the rotation of required and elective courses, especially courses that would allow ample technology options for students. The BAIS program has SLIS faculty and specialized adjunct faculty in teaching roles and SLIS faculty in advising roles.

The BAIS degree program consists of 18 required semester hours in the information studies core and 21 additional semester hours in information studies and cognate disciplines. Within the 18 hours are a required internship and a capstone course (approved by the general education committee in 2005/2006) that includes an in-depth project in which students work in teams to find a technical solution to a real-world problem, communicate their solution to decision makers, and provide instructions for its application by employees with diverse levels of technical skills. The product of their endeavors has digital and paper components that demand verbal and written communication skills capable of addressing general and technical audiences. The combination of liberal arts and technical skills prepares graduates for the changes to be expected across a lifetime of multiple careers and for entry-level positions, especially in specialized environments that require flexibility and adaptability.

Since the implementation of the BAIS degree program, its basic structure has been unchanged. The program’s courses have been delivered on the Norman campus in face-to-face (f2f), online, and hybrid formats within SLIS, although most other departments have delivered the courses in the program in a traditional classroom environment. In 2006 the State Regents approved the SLIS proposal for the BAIS to be offered in an online format, and that proposal is now under consideration by the North Central Association. SLIS has found that the BAIS students typically choose (when given the option) to enroll in online LIS courses. Thus, statewide access to an asynchronous online BAIS program will expand this unique and versatile program to include those who see online education as a preferred mode and those who may otherwise be place bound for economic, geographic, family, or health reasons. The College and the School now have in place nearly complete support for the 120-hour online BAIS degree program, and the School is completing the transformation of two courses through the facilitation of new (and widely available) communications technologies.

B. Students
Regarding academic preparedness, comparative ACT data for BAIS students for the last two years indicate the scores varied considerably: 26 in 2006 followed by 24 in 2007 (Departmental Profiles, 2-5). Data from 2007 were based upon two reported respondents (Departmental Profiles 2008, 2-4). Although the BAIS students’ overall ACT scores were among the lowest in the University, their reading scores tied with those of Letters students for the highest reading scores in the University. Average GPAs of all students in the BAIS program in Spring semesters from 2002 through 2007 ranged from 2.37 to 2.58.

The BAIS program has had a more diverse student body than the typical Norman undergraduate program. Specifically, OU undergraduate Norman campus enrollment of white students has been steady at 74-75 percent for 2002-2007 while the BAIS program has had a smaller percentage of white students in each of those years except for 2007. During those six years, BAIS white student enrollment ranged from 51-79 percent; Black, 3-14 percent; Hispanic, 0-12 percent; Asian, 5-13 percent; American Indian, 4-16 percent; and NR Alien, 0-6 percent. Although these data may suggest that the BAIS student population is not notably stable, especially with the white population swinging from 62 to 79 percent in the last year, the data also suggest that the program has had a remarkably diverse student population. For the 2,542 undergraduate students enrolled (2004) in 15 schools that had an ALA-accredited master’s degree program, the school with the greatest percentage of American Indian or Alaskan Native students is OU SLIS (Saye 2008, 61).

The BAIS program has minimum scholastic requirements that do not differ from College or University standards. Working with College and University advisors and with special efforts from a three-year term appointment dedicated to the BAIS program, the School has developed promotional material and recruited on and off campus for talented students. The School revised the assessment of the BAIS program in Spring 2005, and in Spring 2008 SLIS revised the program’s objectives and revised the student survey instrument as part of the program assessment.

Among 36 BAIS graduates, six have been admitted to SLIS graduate programs, three in the MLIS program and three in the MSKM; three of those six have completed a master’s and three are still enrolled in a master’s degree program. Two BAIS students have been admitted to law school. And, those who have entered the workforce have had good placements (e.g. Conoco Phillips, Metavante, and OG&E).

The Departmental Profile data for student satisfaction surveys suggest a positive trend over the last five years although the return rate on the surveys has been consistently low, ranging from 0 percent to 12 percent from 2003-2007 with the highest return rate in 2007. However, overall trends are positive. The 2007 the annual scores exceeded the combined scores (2003-2007) on 14 of 17 items (82 percent of the items). Five of the 14 items had scores at least .5 higher than the combined scores: (6) variety of courses offered by this college, (7) class size relative to type of course, (9) availability of advisor, (12) classroom facilities, and (16) academic calendar for this college. In comparison of the 2007 scores to the
combined scores, the School notes that its endeavors to develop more course options and facilitate advising appear to have contributed to improvements for items 6 (+.83) and 7 (+.60); however, one item has more often than not had a low score: (11) preparation you are receiving for your future occupation, suggesting that discussions among faculty and students should address students’ employment and graduate education opportunities and ways to market the strengths inherent in a broad-based liberal arts program with an emphasis in information studies.

IV. GRADUATE PROGRAM

A. Degrees and Programs

The School of Library and Information Studies offers the Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) and the Master of Science in Knowledge Management (MSKM), each a 36-credit-hour program that includes a thesis and a non-thesis option, with the latter selected by the overwhelming majority of students. For the MLIS degree, the non-thesis option can be either a presentation and defense of a student portfolio (a new option first implemented in Fall 2007) or a comprehensive examination. For the MSKM, the non-thesis option is the comprehensive examination. Both degree programs have the same four required cross-listed courses (12 hours), a reduction from 21 required hours in place for the MLIS at the time of the previous self-study. There is also a new requirement of 15 hours to be selected from five sets of guided electives; the nine remaining hours in each program can be selected from guided or general electives. The degrees are delivered on Norman and Tulsa campuses in face-to-face, video, hybrid, and online formats. The MLIS degree has been approved by the State Regents for delivery in online format; the MSKM proposal for delivery in an online format is on the September 2008 docket of the State Regents. And, there is an MLIS online delivery proposal awaiting a final decision by the North Central Association. In addition to being two degree programs unique to the state, they are also unique to individual students in that they do not require a specific undergraduate background but rather draw students with undergraduate degrees across widely diverse disciplines.

Although both programs have unique qualities, they are, nevertheless, tightly integrated by the foundational principles and theories of information studies concentrated in the four required, cross-listed courses. The faculty conceptualized the curriculum in 2000-2003, through stages that included reviewing educational competencies or standards of professional organizations, grouping concepts, and identifying five core areas of knowledge for SLIS graduate students: (1) creation and representation of knowledge; (2) organization of information; (3) use of information by individuals; (4) facilitation/mediation between information systems and individuals; and (5) the context of information in society. These activities led to the development of the shared conceptual core for the two programs and to the structure of the guided electives. Led by the SLIS Curriculum Committee, the curriculum revision was a systematic process that developed from the School’s mission, goals, and objectives and that involved students, alumni, and employers.
Ongoing assessment of the curriculum includes data gathering from student self evaluations of their progress, which are forwarded to advisors who provide the student an annual evaluation of progress; surveys of alumni and employers; and exit interviews completed by graduates each semester and compiled by the Coordinator of Student Services. Although the School has long offered LIS 5333 Multicultural Librarianship, it also seeks to integrate and track issues of cultural diversity across the curriculum by the faculty’s completion of a multicultural key concept survey. There are also an interdisciplinary key concept survey and an integration of technology key concept survey (Appendix V, F). Faculty members typically complete each of these three surveys for newly developed or newly revised courses. The Curriculum Committee has also developed a tracking system (Appendix V, C) to identify the various types of learning activities provided in graduate courses.

As the only ALA-accredited program in Oklahoma, the MLIS degree has been generalist in nature, providing preparation for a broad range of positions that provide information services and products. And, the curriculum has long been designed to serve a wide range of student career goals by offering broadly conceived courses with options for individualized foci. Since the last self-study, a set of courses, tailored to the administration of specific types of libraries (public, academic, and special), has been developed in addition to the school library administration course, which has consistently been offered to support the school library media certification program for students who plan to work in Oklahoma public schools. The MSKM program has also had specialized courses added to the curriculum, including KM Tools and Technologies, Knowledge Management Design Project, and Organizational Learning and Learning Organizations. Further, for both graduate degrees, information technology courses have been added to provide more depth in the area, to support developments within the field, and to address recommendations from the ALA accreditation review panel. The School recognizes that the number of possible sections managed and taught by current regular faculty is limited to approximately 42 per year. The 10 faculty members who teach 2/2 loads can accommodate 40 sections per year; with two graduate sections taught by the renewable term instructor and two by the director, the total would be 44. Accounting for sabbatical leaves reduces the estimate to approximately 42 per year. Therefore, current and future elective courses should have broad appeal and usefulness whenever possible. The constraints on elective courses and a schedule that will support online delivery of the two programs will be addressed during the revision of the SLIS graduate course rotation in 2008/2009.

A notable changing context of the OU campus today is that the University is investing in merging information and communications technologies that are capable of providing interactive video and multiple other functions to regular high-speed Internet users. This new technology is important to the School because of its continued use of multiple strategies to accommodate a dispersed faculty and an even more dispersed student body. All faculty are expected to deliver instruction to both campuses and across both graduate degree programs, and they have multiple format options to accomplish those ends.
Further, courses are scheduled to accommodate the largely part-time student body; and enrollment figures for Fall 2007, as reported to the Association for Library and Information Science Education, show 82.8 percent part-time and 17.1 percent full-time master’s students, many of whom are already employed in information positions. Of the 65 course sections that were offered in the 2007 calendar year, 24 (37 percent) were delivered by video; 17 (26 percent) in person (i.e., face-to-face); 18 (28 percent) online; six (9 percent) were hybrid (i.e., delivered in a combination of at least two formats). Online courses (a new development since the previous CDRP self-study report) were asynchronous; video and face-to-face deliveries were scheduled in the afternoon/evening and on weekends in Norman or Tulsa. These multiple delivery strategies do tax faculty time and energy; however, the use of communications technologies, the flexibility of the faculty in regard to teaching modes, and the content integration of the two programs continue to reduce the need for Norman/Tulsa travel. In addition to the accommodation of a part-time graduate student body and of a dispersed faculty and graduate student body, another issue is that in Fall 2006 the 12-member regular faculty to graduate student ratio was 1:17, high by University standards and by ALA standards (ALA Accreditation Review Panel 2007, 9).

Overall, the School’s faculty carry an extraordinary responsibility for the SLIS graduate program, and they and the students need access to up-to-date and flexible information communications technologies.

B. Students
Representing an increase of 43 percent over the 2002 enrollment of 147 graduate students, 210 graduate students were enrolled in the MLIS and MSKM programs in 2007 with 121 (58 percent) in Norman and 89 (42 percent) in Tulsa. The total graduate students represented 12 percent of the graduate enrollment within the College of Arts and Sciences. The 89 Tulsa students comprised 16 percent of the graduate enrollment generated by Norman Campus programs delivered to OU-Tulsa. In Fall 2007, the School had 13 full-time faculty members (including one renewable term appointment), teaching across its three programs (BAIS, MSKM, and the MLIS degrees), with 16.1 graduate students per faculty member. With a SLIS total of 244 graduate and undergraduate students, there were 18.8 students per faculty member. Of the 210 graduate students, 91 percent were enrolled in the MLIS degree program. Of the 244 total students enrolled in SLIS programs, 22 percent were in programs (BAIS and MSKM) created since the last CDRP self-study report. Over the years, as noted in the 2001 self-study, approximately 40 percent of the OU SLIS graduate students are enrolled primarily in courses offered in Tulsa.

ALA-accredited master’s degree programs reported an average of 50.1 percent of enrollment (2004 FTE) was part-time; comparatively, the SLIS MLIS program had an average of 62.2 percent part-time enrollment (FTE) (Saye 2008, 73). The percent of SLIS part-time students enrolled from 2001 to 2006 ranged from 76 percent to 86 percent. The typical graduate student in the OU School of Library and Information Studies is female and white. In 2002, Tulsa-based SLIS graduate students were 90 percent white; Norman-based graduate students were 84 percent white. And, there was little change in
2007, when Tulsa-based SLIS graduate students were 89 percent white, and Norman-based graduate students were 88 percent white. The most comparable national data (Saye 2008, 150-155) are for Fall 2004 when ALA-accredited master’s programs were 72 percent white and the OU SLIS graduate programs were 91 percent white. As recommended by the ALA accreditation review panel in 2007 and as represented in its mission, SLIS has a responsibility to increase ethnic diversity, to strengthen student interactions across ethnicities, and to prepare diverse graduates for positions as information professionals. Reaching for a specific goal and having scholarships for underserved populations are important recruitment factors; however, they do not ensure the recruitment of a diverse student population. Studies among SLIS faculty have shown that achieving diversity is a long-term challenge that includes establishing relationships with potential students and ensuring a supportive network for them after their admission. Regarding gender, ALISE data (Saye 2004, 150-155) show the master’s programs were 79 percent female in comparison to OU SLIS at 78 percent. Fall 2002 enrollment was 86 percent female; Fall 2007 SLIS enrollment was 71 percent female, suggesting a trend not common in contemporary higher education.

SLIS graduate students are admitted to the program under the guidance of the director and the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee, composed of two SLIS faculty members, the Coordinator of Student Services, and one graduate student. Applicants provide the following items for the Committee’s consideration: an application, transcripts, a statement of career objectives and the reasons for choosing library and information studies, a professional resume, three completed reference forms, and scores on the Graduate Record Examination (with exceptions for students who have completed graduate degrees with a 3.2 GPA).

The minimum SLIS requirement that differs from the Graduate College standard is that applicants must have a 3.2 GPA (compared to the Graduate College 3.0 requirement). Average GPAs of SLIS graduate students in spring semesters from 2002-2006 ranged from 3.66-3.81 The School could increase the quality of SLIS graduate students by increasing the number of assistantships and fellowships that are competitive regionally or nationally and by successfully recruiting targeted candidates within the state.

Regarding the appointments of GAs, the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee makes recommendations that are reviewed by the School’s director, who may request an interview with the candidate and consult with faculty. GAs are assured of two years of support, if they are fulfilling responsibilities.

The graduate student satisfaction survey included data for 2005-2007. For the survey questions 1-15, which could be rated (1) poor, (2) below average, (3) average, (4) above average, or (5) or excellent, SLIS graduate students rated each item for each year as above average or excellent. Survey items included overall learning environment, satisfaction with committee members, assistance in search for a job, and courses offered. For item 21, a minority of graduate students identified concerns that
included amount of current/accurate material, communication/presentation of material, and testing and grading. One item that challenges the School’s commitment to recruit and admit graduates from diverse backgrounds is the response that 52 percent of SLIS graduate students noted they had never had meaningful interactions with people from different cultures or ethnic backgrounds. Seventy-three percent had developed a close relationship with at least one faculty or staff member, and 52 percent had developed two or three such relationships. Results from the survey confirmed that SLIS should be aggressively recruiting for ethnic diversity.

Recent graduates often are finding positions in the libraries where they have worked while pursuing a master’s degree. As Appendix VI illustrates, graduates tend to accept professional positions in Oklahoma and regional libraries, especially in school libraries, which are nationally recognized to have a dearth of professional applicants for advertised positions. Recent graduates typify career paths that move toward leadership in the profession. One recent graduate is entering a Ph.D. program in LIS. Another has been nationally recognized by Library Journal as a “mover and shaker”; she is employed in the Pioneer Library System. And, two school library media specialists were honored as teacher of the year in their Oklahoma City districts.

V. FACULTY
A. Teaching

As reported in the previous self-study, all full-time tenured/track-track faculty have Graduate Faculty status and teach on Norman and Tulsa campuses. However, in 2007 they taught not only MLIS courses but also MSKM and BAIS courses; and since 2001/02 the faculty have consistently had a 2/2 teaching load (recommended by the CDRP in 2004). Summer has long been an integral part of the graduate program, and 75 percent of the 2007 SLIS faculty have taught at least one regular summer course since 2002, with the number teaching each year varying from three to six (thus, contributing to uncertainties in summer scheduling).

Regarding the quality of teaching within the unit, there is a core of tenured, experienced teachers whose student teaching evaluations are traditionally high, and among these teachers is one who has been nationally recognized for teaching excellence. On student satisfaction surveys, 93 percent of graduate students rate the “overall learning environment” at average or above, with 40.9 percent rating the learning environment as above average and 20.9 percent rating it as excellent. Undergraduate students ranked “instruction in your major field” as neutral (25 percent) or as satisfied (75 percent). For Fall 2007, student teaching evaluations ranked regular SLIS faculty at “good” or above for “overall teaching effectiveness” 30 percent of the time and ranked SLIS faculty at “very good” or “excellent” 70 percent of the time of the time. Further, SLIS faculty have a tradition of being teaching mentors by sharing teaching data, syllabi, and approaches to course development and design.

The size of the SLIS faculty and the use of adjunct instruction have increased in specialized elective courses, especially in Norman, (in accordance with the 2004 CDRP recommendations). Thus, it
seems that SLIS resources are being used to their maximum and that graduate elective courses need monitoring to ensure that each has a reasonable rotation and contributes to learning goals and objectives. The 2004 CDRP recommendation to use graduate students as teachers has not had traction because, being master’s students, they cannot teach in the MLIS or MSKM programs, most are part-time students, and few arrive with the specialized technology skills to teach the upper-level technology courses in the BAIS program. Seventy-six percent of course sections in Norman and Tulsa have had instruction delivered by regular SLIS faculty (fall semesters, 2001-2007). Assessments of teaching within the School suggest that the School is providing adequately for its educational programs; however, the faculty /student ratios indicate that the faculty are carrying teaching responsibilities that consume a larger percentage of their professional endeavors than other OU faculty.

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<th>Fall ’02 Percent</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate-T</td>
<td>86% (6/7)</td>
<td>83% (5/6)</td>
<td>70% (7/10)</td>
<td>86% (7/9)</td>
<td>58% (7/12)</td>
<td>75% (9/12)</td>
<td>80% (8/10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Scholarly and Creative Activity

The School faces challenges in regard to its scholarly and creative activity. Although the ALA External Review Panel Report acknowledged the School’s scholarly collaboration and wide dissemination of scholarship through journals, annual reviews of literature, key papers, textbooks, editorships, and keynote speeches (2007, 10), the report also stated that “Since peaking in 2000, the number of refereed publications has deceased substantially” (11). The judgment is also reflected in the faculty satisfaction survey where scholarly and creative activity showed the highest levels of faculty dissatisfaction (40 percent for the item “appropriate environment for faculty research/creative activity”), providing a general and individual voice to the conviction that SLIS faculty value research and desire to be more productive. Comparable evidence of what can be accomplished by this School in this setting is the 2001 Departmental Self-Study documentation (12) of a time when SLIS faculty had a solid record of published refereed articles and averaged one to two notable works per year.

In reflecting on the current SLIS research record, the context and history of the past seven or eight years provide some understanding though neither the context nor history is an excuse. Since 2000, the School has invested much time and effort recruiting, then losing faculty: one new tenure-track hire and one visiting instructor in 2000; a tenure-track assistant professor and a visiting professor in 2001; a new tenure-track professor in 2002; one visiting instructor in 2004; and two assistant professors in 2005. There were also retirements in 2000, 2001, and 2003. Newly hired faculty members who left stayed no
longer than two years, and the School has searched for at least one position almost every year since the last self-study. Since 2000 the School conducted its first third-year review in 2007. This cycle has been costly to the School’s time, energy, and focus and has changed the School’s base of experienced and productive researchers. Additionally, the thread of research investment and productivity has been broken with each resignation and retirement, leaving SLIS an anonymous contributor to any future productivity from projects planned and implemented at OU by researchers such as Ron Day, Claire McInerney, and Wallace Koehler. The faculty should re-establish a research culture through support mechanisms within the School and individual determination that research endeavors will be the focus of 40 percent of faculty time, no less—regardless of the pressures of service and teaching.

Issues of research are also linked to those of the School’s stated foci on diversity and interdisciplinarity. This link is clearly identified in the faculty satisfaction survey: 40 percent of the faculty indicated dissatisfaction with “faculty interdisciplinary research/creative activity accommodated.” This dissatisfaction occurs within a faculty who are remarkably diverse in cultures, ethnicity, and national origin and who hold an array of graduate and undergraduate degrees in the humanities, physical sciences, social sciences, professional schools, and multiple interdisciplinary programs. Further, the School explicitly articulates in its mission statement a commitment “to engage in research and creative activities that generate new knowledge and applications for effective practice and that foster interdisciplinary approaches to address information challenges.” The concept is an element in formal SLIS planning documents as well as the School’s position announcements, and the concept has been retained through ten revisions in the School’s vision, mission, goals, and objectives over the past 14 years. Discipline identity is a significant source of otherness in academia, and an ongoing discussion of what is perceived in the survey item seems to be a first step in coming to a shared understanding. Such a discussion could support an expanded description of research in the School’s goals and objectives.

C. Work environment

Faculty satisfaction survey data indicate an average of 61.0 percent of the faculty responses were in the range of satisfied to very satisfied and that 19.6 percent were in the range of dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. At least 50 percent of the faculty indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with all the items (except for “good attitudes and relations between faculty and undergraduate students”).

The diversity of the faculty, which has included both Comanche and Choctaw faculty since 1993, is in accord with the School’s and the University’s strategic plans to focus on a Native American agenda. The School has consistently sought to recruit American Indian and African American faculty. All faculty searches include national advertising in professional association ethnic caucuses’ newsletters.

In Fall 2002, the School had nine faculty members, two men and seven women. One assistant professor (from Peru) taught one year and then accepted a comparable position at the university where he had earned his Ph.D. A visiting assistant professor, whose national origin was Korean, stayed two years (2003-2004); he was not rehired for a third year. During 2003, a tenured associate professor retired; she
had been with the School for eight years. A spousal couple joined the faculty in Fall 2003; the husband’s national origin was Mexican, and the wife’s national origin was Chinese. Because the husband had emigration difficulties with Mexico, the couple moved to Singapore. At the close of the Fall 2007 semester, the School had 12 faculty members, nine women and three men. The faculty included one Palestinian who holds a green card; two Koreans (who earned green cards the following semester); two American Indians, one a tenured associate professor and the other a tenured professor; and one tenured professor whose national origin is Canadian and who holds US citizenship.

The School has made a considerable effort to recruit and retain a diverse faculty. Junior faculty are assigned a mentor (policy in Appendix X, C), and all junior faculty members meet annually with Committee A to discuss issues of teaching, research, and progress toward tenure. Junior faculty are encouraged to protect their research from time-consuming service endeavors; and they are provided a one-section reduction in teaching during their first semester at SLIS. All SLIS faculty members are evaluated annually by Committee A, who follow published policies and procedures. Junior faculty have been successful in earning two or three summer research fellowships, and they have had a minimum of ten hours per week of graduate assistant support.

In regard to the work environment, faculty salaries (Fall 2007) deserve attention. The average SLIS assistant professor’s salary was 93 percent of the University’s average; the associate professor’s salary was 89 percent of the University average; the average SLIS professor salary was 74 percent of the University average. A cost efficient way to lift the University average in comparison to the Big 8 would be to lift the bottom salaries toward the mean. Such an adjustment should also improve faculty satisfaction within SLIS.

VI. STAFF

The administrative staff of the School includes a Coordinator for Admissions/Academic and Student Support, an Administrative Secretary, a Secretary I, a part-time lab manager, a half-time work study student, and 1.675 FTE students employed as lab monitors.

The office work-study student provides assistance with routine responses to inquiries about the School’s programs and other general support such as data entry, photocopying, filing, and materials delivery. The lab manager provides general coordination and support for the information technology lab, works with faculty and staff to solve technology problems, and assists in planning for information technology development. The lab monitors provide general assistance to students, faculty, and staff in using information technology, especially in the lab. Held by students, these positions have a predictably high turn-over rates.

The Coordinator for Admissions/Academic and Student Support has held the position since 1996, having been employed at the University for the previous 17 years; she oversees the School’s recruitment, admissions, academic progress assessment, student records maintenance, scholarships and assistantships, and related operations; manages the information technology lab; and is an active
participant in support of planning and program implementation activities. The Administrative Secretary has been with the School since Summer 2006, having had previous fiscal responsibility and management. She is responsible for budget, purchasing, and expense reports; personnel appointments and files; faculty travel and reimbursement; and support for the director. The Secretary I provides assistance with admissions and student records; provides general office support, including reception, maintenance of office supplies, and mail distribution; and provides coordination with other academic and administrative units. She accepted a position in the School in 1999, having 17 years of experience within the College. The Coordinator, Secretary I, and the Administrative Secretary have detailed job descriptions; however, in practice they are cross-trained and provide a fully integrated approach to staffing the School. All three perform at a high level of quality and quantity and are well qualified for their respective positions. External constituencies often comment to the director on the professional and helpful responses received from the office staff.

Since the last Campus Departmental Review, OU-Tulsa made the 2002 transition to the Schusterman Center, and that change restructured several administrative functions within SLIS. One of the most favorable outcomes has been the College of Arts and Sciences Computing Services Team’s direct support for SLIS teaching and learning in Tulsa. However, in 2003, three new faculty members were based in Tulsa, and the SLIS staff responded to meet their needs. For the Secretary I, there were expected complications (e.g., committee meetings, faculty meetings, student thesis defenses, and interviews with faculty candidates required scheduling a conference room at each site and alerting the appropriate technology team about the need for technical support). For the Administrative Assistant, there were new office routines to be established; for example, how should Tulsa-based faculty provide a signature for their travel reimbursements? Simultaneously, the Coordinator for Admissions/Academic and Student Support was responsible for students in not one but three programs as the BAIS and the MSKM were brought forward. She then maintained three advising lists; communicated new courses, new course numbers, and new course descriptions to additional SLIS students; and prepared separate admissions packets for Tulsa and for Norman as well as for the MLIS and MSKM programs. Thus, the SLIS staff have addressed many changes; however, despite their willingness, their abilities, and their good use of technology, each position has more responsibilities and duties than it did at the time of the last CDRP review.

In part the College has provided a counter-balance to the new demands on the SLIS staff by providing support staff in Tulsa; however, Tulsa staff are not expected to address the details of teaching and learning within SLIS. A direct and positive counter-balance to the changing responsibilities of SLIS staff has been the hiring of a three-year renewable term instructor who also provides advising support for the BAIS program and its students. However, close monitoring of the well-being and the capacities of the staff will be critical as further changes develop within the School’s programs and among its faculty.

VII. ADMINISTRATION
The School is administered by a director and Committee A. The director has a twelve-month appointment and is serving the third year of a four-year term. The director provides general administrative and academic leadership for the School and is specifically responsible for academic planning, budgeting, and faculty development. The director schedules regular faculty meetings monthly as well as special meetings as needed. Students are represented at regular faculty meetings by the officers of the student association.

Committee A, consisting of the director and two elected faculty members serving two-year staggered terms, functions as an executive committee and assumes the duties and responsibilities specified in the OU Faculty Handbook. The Committee reviews and advises on course scheduling, faculty assignments, and budget planning. In addition, it has responsibility to review and propose needed revisions of the School’s mission, goals and objectives; strategic plan; tenure and promotion guidelines; criteria for graduate faculty membership; and other policy documents of the School.

Within the SLIS office, the School’s Coordinator of Admissions/Academic & Student Support Services manages student-focused endeavors, including the coordination of admissions; management of financial and student data for the scholarship program; supervision of computer lab personnel; management of communications with students; organization and administration of the comprehensive examination; coordination of student orientations; and aggregation and reporting academic and student data to internal and external constituencies.

The five standing committees in the School are (1) Admissions and Financial Aid, (2) Curriculum, (3) Infrastructure, (4) Undergraduate Studies Committee, and (5) Graduate Studies Committee (Appendix X). Committee assignments are made by Committee A with considerations of experience, workload, and faculty preferences. These five committees include student members, and where needed for adequate representation, graduate and undergraduate students and students from Norman and Tulsa campuses are included. Liaison appointments include sponsors for the student association (OLISSA), for Beta Phi Mu (professional honorary society); representatives to the Education Professions Division and on the Public School Library Media Specialist Committee; and liaisons to the Graduate College and to the University Libraries. The faculty satisfaction survey responses to the item “faculty involved in departmental governance” indicated that 70 percent of the faculty were satisfied or very satisfied with their involvement in governance.

VIII. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Over the past six years, support for the School’s programs has come from the University’s E&G budget; from support of the Tulsa delivery of the master’s programs; from federal grant funds (Institute of Museums and Library Services); from online teaching, especially through service courses taught by adjunct faculty; and from OU Foundation funds built through alumni support and other private donations. In addition, course fees have helped to support the instructional support services and
materials provided through information technology labs in Norman and Tulsa. The following table demonstrates the relative budgeted E&G support compared to total E&G expenditure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Budget as % of Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>$685,567</td>
<td>$722,734</td>
<td>(37,167.00)</td>
<td>94.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>$616,548</td>
<td>$707,141</td>
<td>(90,593.00)</td>
<td>87.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>$569,619</td>
<td>$739,752</td>
<td>(170,133.00)</td>
<td>77.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>$904,410</td>
<td>$871,002</td>
<td>33,408.00</td>
<td>103.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>$1,023,918</td>
<td>$1,111,436</td>
<td>(87,518.00)</td>
<td>92.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>$1,090,508</td>
<td>$1,104,808</td>
<td>(14,300.00)</td>
<td>98.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tables 1c and 2a Departmental Profile, Library & Information Studies, Prepared by Institutional Research

The 57 schools with an ALA-accredited master’s degree had a mean average income of $3,437,582 in 2003-2004, the most recent year for which comparative data are available (Saye 2008, 325). “Funding for the schools ranged from a high of $18,963,882 to a low of $573,667. The median income of the 57 schools was $2,125,419 . . .” (325). ALISE data for 2003-2004 are not ranked by individual schools; however, aggregated data place the total income of SLIS within the range of the 48th to the 56th school (326). For 2003-2004, OU SLIS total income was 45 percent of the national average for master’s level (no Ph.D.) schools; for the same year and schools, OU SLIS income from the parent institution was 50 percent of the national average (329).

In more recent years, OU data show the School functioning at higher levels of institutional support; however, having received a federal grant ($569,552) in 2005, the School began making fellowship awards, January 2006, to support 30 graduates students in the MLIS program (books, fees, tuition, and professional development). Because students entered the program as cohorts of ten in each of the three 2006 semesters, final data for 2007 should show more external support for SLIS.

The 1994 and the 2001 self-studies addressed the difficulty posed by the separate construction of the summer budget. From the perspective of 2008, the level of financial support for summer budgets seems to vary widely, and the challenges may be more clearly viewed as those of one-time instructional support, which in 2007/2008 began to require minimum graduate class sizes of 15 students, which is 50 percent higher than the University average of 10 graduate students per class, excluding Law (Profiles of the University of Oklahoma 2008, 2-48). Applying the recent principle of one-time instructional support to fall, spring, and summer classes complicates life for SLIS graduate students who, typically attending part time, find that a variety of courses in each semester is a critical component of their individual abilities to complete the degree in a timely manner. Further, the principle does not facilitate the 2004
CDRP (5) recommendation for SLIS to use adjuncts and teaching assistants to offer specialty courses that are required by its degree programs. (NOTE: For example, in spring 2008, SLIS combined LIS 5193 in Norman (14 students) and Tulsa (11 students) for video delivery by an adjunct instructor to 25 graduate students and cancelled LIS 5503 Information Literacy and Instruction. Under previous procedures with a minimum of 10 graduate students per section, SLIS would have been funded to support adjunct instructors for LIS 5193 and LIS 5503 in Norman and Tulsa with an average class size of 12.62 graduate students.)

IX. CONCLUSIONS

The School of Library and Information Studies is one of the largest graduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and is home to the MLIS degree program, the only nationally accredited graduate program of library and information studies in the state of Oklahoma and two contiguous states, as well as the MSKM and BAIS programs. As long-stated in its mission, School considers the whole state to be its primary service delivery area. The current areas of focus and attention of the School are information and communications technologies, Native American library and information studies education and service, and multidisciplinary program components. To accomplish its mission the School has three programs, two of which are enabled because of the stability and strength of the MLIS. Being tightly integrated within information studies, the three programs strengthen each other through a synergy that maximizes teaching resources and supports specializations among the faculty.

The School is competitive within the state although it faces challenges from regional state universities in regard to the preparation of school library media specialists as well as national challenges from the proliferating national online programs that have ALA accreditation (Appendix I, I). The tuition costs of online information studies degree programs are factors in competitiveness, especially for accredited programs. The School can be nationally competitive in specialized areas (e.g., diversity with a focus on Native Americans) if it joins or creates strong consortia that can share individualized special strengths of its graduate programs. Reasonable expectations for the BAIS online degree program are that it can be highly competitive within the state and that it will contribute to the state’s growing technology infrastructure.

The following recommendations are summaries of action items detailed in the previous pages, review panel reports and recommendations, and SLIS planning documents.

Mission, Goals, and Objectives

- Expand the School goal related to research to be more clearly articulated.

Undergraduate Program

- Offer, advertise, and promote the online BAIS degree program on campus and throughout the state.
- Improve the academic quality and diversity of the undergraduate students by increasing the pool of qualified candidates for the program.
- Improve assessment of learning.

**Graduate Programs**

- Improve on the diversity of the student body by concentrating recruitment on the ready constituency within Oklahoma (especially at Langston University, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, and Southeastern Oklahoma State University) as well as New Mexico and Arkansas, two states which lack an ALA-accredited master’s degree.
- Explore cooperative efforts with other graduate library and information studies programs and with other OU units in order to facilitate expansion of the curriculum. These efforts will focus on the application of information communications technologies.
- Develop proposals for further outside funding for the support of students in the master’s degree programs.
- Define better procedures for incorporating end-of-program assessment into program improvement.
- Improve assessment of learning.
- Review the development, delivery, and need for additional or revised technology courses across all programs.
- Set benchmarks for consideration of a Ph.D. program.

**Faculty**

- Advocate for equitable salaries within OU and in comparison with peer institutions, especially among the upper ranks where inversion and compression are significant problems (from previous CDRP recommendations).
- Maintain strong research agendas, specifically by developing research agendas that are revised annually, planning tenure-building activities in annual meetings with Committee A, and bolstering the reward structure to encourage research productivity.
- Continue to facilitate quality teaching through faculty development and peer evaluation.
- Sustain the School’s high-profile service role within the profession, both at the state and national levels by recognizing professional activities.
- Expand interdisciplinary, interdepartmental activities.

**Financial Support**

- Work with the revised advisory board structure to identify outside funding opportunities.
- Undertake an alumni fund-raising drive during Spring 2009.
- Campaign for predictable and stable funding to support summer course offerings necessary for the largely part-time, commuting SLIS graduate student population.
- Advocate for expanded software capabilities for web development and for information communications technologies that especially have the capacity to support highly interactive dispersed learning.
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Departmental Profiles. 2008. (Appendix XII)


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Saye, Jerry, ed. 2008. Library and Information Science Education. Chicago: Association for Library and Information Science Education.