Message from the Director

Friends of SLIS,

These letters come around more frequently than they used to, it seems. Either time is speeding up or our newsletter is going out more often. It seems impossible, but I write on my tenth anniversary as a faculty member at the School of Library and Information Science and in my fifth year as director. I will try to avoid nostalgia. Our field has little room for that.

This fall we welcomed another outstanding group of graduate students to our program. Given the state of the economy, we might think of graduate school as a luxury to be put off for later. However, I think it’s a credit to our dynamic and evolving field that students continue to think of libraries and information organizations as offering careers with a future. We welcomed 25 new students to SLIS this fall. I’m sure I speak for the entire faculty in saying that it continues to be a great privilege to work with these students and to help them find careers and callings. So often, students come to our school with a firm sense of what they intend to do, only to find ideas and opportunities in their courses that spark new interests and take them in unexpected directions. Nothing is more rewarding than being part of this process of discovery.

As you peruse this newsletter, we hope you will see how much is happening in our department. For such a small group, our faculty prides itself on being energetic and productive in teaching, research, and service. We are rapidly maturing as a cohesive group, and each of our colleagues is carving out interesting and original research paths through the field of Library and Information Science.

I invite you to browse the faculty profiles to consider the breadth of this work and the field. Many of our students have joined us in the challenge to publish academic work. The student journal B Sides (http://it.uiowa.edu/bsides/) debuted in spring of 2010. B Sides publishes student papers and class projects as part of the Institutional Repository of the University of Iowa. Please take a look for a sense of what today’s students are doing. Indeed, the various activities around SLIS are too numerous to list in this newsletter. We invite you to check in with us regularly at http://slis.uiowa.edu.

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Continued from cover — Message from the Director

The university in general is a rapidly changing institution. State universities are dealing with radically different budget structures, with more emphasis on strategic initiatives and self-sustaining finances. In the search for focus, many universities have developed a concept called “cluster hires.” Cluster hires allow universities to create strength around initiatives that connect to prior institutional strengths and perceived social and cultural needs. This year, the UI has embarked on a cluster initiative called “Public Humanities in a Digital Age.” Several departments will conduct searches this year, and the resulting hires will coalesce into a group that collectively explores ways new digital technologies might more directly connect humanities scholarship to the public outside the university. As part of the initiative, SLIS will hire a new permanent director who will connect to the digital humanities cluster. In lean budget times, an allocation of resources at this level speaks to the increasing centrality of SLIS to the university’s initiatives. Our advertisement for a director was published in mid-October. Keep on the lookout for announcements of our search as it progresses.

—James Elmborg, SLIS Director

B Sides Journal Showcases Student & Alumni Work

By Katie DeVries Hassman & Julia Skinner

The start of the Spring 2010 semester brought the launch of the School of Library and Information Science’s new student journal, B Sides. Founded by Angela Murillo and Rachel Hall, now alumnae of the program, B Sides, is dedicated to promoting scholarship in the field as well as to participating in conversations regarding the future design of publishing standards. Enlivened by the passion of the founding mothers of B Sides, this next year we hope to promote a greater role for the journal in the local University of Iowa SLIS community as well as the community of LIS professionals at large.

B Sides was given its name in honor of a bygone era in music. In the days of vinyl records, b-side recordings were places for artists to experiment and for unknown artists to make themselves heard. In the same way, B Sides strives to promote the publication of new research topics and formats and to give LIS students a forum in which to discuss their ideas.

Many journals overlook the fact that librarians and students are doing very rigorous and high-quality work as a part of presentations and projects for work or classes. Since our inception last spring, we have published book reviews, finding guides, and PowerPoint presentations. We have showcased scholarship on fourteenth century folios, online feminist communities, public library pedagogy and how to teach comics to seventh graders. By digitally publishing a variety of content and upholding the principles of open access, we can reflect the importance of all the work being done and give current students, alumni and the larger LIS community a better sense of the sophisticated scholarship produced by our field.

We also strive to educate our authors and peer reviewers about the publication process, both to encourage an increase in publication in our student body and to help students and alumni feel more comfortable with the process in general.

This year, the B Sides staff wants to go beyond publishing as well. We plan to organize study groups and peer-review sessions with current SLIS students designed to foster learning in a community environment. These groups will also help students adjust to the rigors of graduate-level scholarship in a supportive environment. We have also decided to expand our scope to include relevant work from departments that work closely with SLIS, including the College of Education and the Center for the Book.
My Time in Prison
ALA conference tour of Jessup Correctional Facility provides insights
By Dawn Schrandt

The tour started with an emptying of the pockets, a walk through a metal detector, and a full pat down by the guard on duty. Then we were ushered into a small glass room where we watched the door slide shut behind us and lock. The tour of the prison had begun.

At the ALA Annual conference this summer, I was one of 28 attendees who toured Jessup Correctional Facility in Jessup, MD to see a prison library.

The library reminded me of my elementary school library, only the patrons were different. It was the size of two of our SLIS classrooms put together with chest-high metal shelves secured to the two far walls, four tables with chairs in the middle (all occupied by prisoners), and one table right in front that had three computers on top all containing the Lexis Nexis legal database.

A long counter was to our left and the four inmate workers stood behind it—excited to tell us about their jobs in the library. A female guard stood by the closed door keeping watch over everyone.

The two inmate workers I spoke to were happy and anxious to tell us anything and everything about their library clerk duties. They could not believe we were so interested. One explained about issuing library cards and the terms and conditions for borrowing books, while the older inmate patiently answered all my questions about the reference work he does for inmates who cannot get into the library.

It was easy to forget he was a prisoner, especially since he knew so much about his job and I knew so little. In the end, it was easy to see that the prison library was similar to a miniature public library.

The librarian and her staff manage the collection, answer reference questions, provide readers advisory, and hope for increased funding for the next year.

It was both interesting and eye-opening to see a real prison library after having read about them.

I also enjoyed meeting some of the prominent women in the field of prison librarianship and learning from their many combined years of experience.

"It was easy to forget he was a prisoner, especially since he knew so much about his job and I knew so little. In the end, it was easy to see that the prison library was similar to a miniature public library."
First IMLS TL Cohort Graduates May 2010
By Christine Mastalio

Thirty-nine Iowa teachers are benefiting from a grant awarded to SLIS by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The $881,692 grant provided for two cohorts of students to go through a two-year program to become certified teacher librarians.

The first cohort graduated in Spring, 2010 and the second cohort will graduate in Spring, 2011. Districts such as Mid Prairie in Washington County, Regina in Iowa City, and Graettinger in Palo Alto County, along with many others, employ SLIS alumni from the first cohort.

It all started because of a change in Iowa Code. In 1995, the requirement that each Iowa school district have a degreed librarian on staff was “left out” of the code.

In 2006, Iowa First Lady Christie Vilsack was instrumental in lobbying for its inclusion in Section 281.12.3. Now, each district must employ a librarian with a master’s degree and have an articulated, sequential K-12 library curriculum.

SLIS Director Jim Elmborg said well over 100 districts in Iowa did not have a degreed librarian when the code was changed.

“It was clear there was going to be a need for people to fill those positions,” he said. “At the same time, there was a concern that, if there weren’t people to fill those positions, that would be a default way of getting out of compliance.”

The School made an effort to recruit students for the program from districts that did not have at least one degreed librarian. SLIS then selected applicants who had a successful teaching experience and were looking to be leaders in the

implementation of technology.

"We try really hard to make sure we introduce them to people who think creatively about what it means to be a librarian in the 21st century," Elmberg said.

Several challenges went along with administering the grant. Among them was the need to re-examine the school media curriculum, which had not been revised in several years. The Iowa Board of Education approved the curriculum for students pursuing the teacher librarian endorsement.

The School also hired new adjuncts and experimented with distance education technology. In addition, SLIS faculty had to keep spread-out learners connected and committed to the profession.

SLIS now has a videoconferencing room that allows teachers to attend class from their home districts and adjunct professors to teach from as far away as Ames and Davenport.

But the challenges came with benefits; for the state of Iowa and for the school.

"We've got much better connectedness throughout the state in the school media community," Elmberg said. "They are all very professional, polished and just great to work with. I've enjoyed knowing them, it's been a great experience—but challenging."

SLIS does not have continued funding for the program when the grant dries up in 2011. Elmberg said the faculty will have to discuss some hard questions to determine how to proceed from here.

"Do we want to try and stay small and residential? Do we want to try and reach out? How do we do that and keep the things we value?" he said.

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**News of Recent Graduates**

Eun Baik (Fall 2008) lives in Brooklyn, NY, where she is a PhD student in Information Science at Rutgers' School of Communication and Information Science.

Jason Bentgson (Fall 2008) works in Albuquerque, NM as an information services librarian for the Univ. of New Mexico Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center.

Megan Conley (Spring 2010) is Scientific Information Literacy Librarian for Vogel Library at Wartburg.

Nana Diedrichs Holtsnider (Spring 2008) has returned from Tunisia and is now a doctoral student in comparative literature at the Univ. of Chicago.

After a year in the Chicago Historical Museum, Sarah Dorpinghaus (Spring 2009) is project archivist for the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC.

Christopher Ehrman (Fall 2008) took a position this past summer as Digital Newspaper Project Coordinator for the Montana Historical Society in Helena.

Amber Jansen (Fall 2008) has been working as a reference librarian for the Davenport Public Library since June 2009.

Melina Lagios (Spring 2009) lives in Friday Harbor, WA, where she works as the Youth Librarian and Assistant Director of the San Juan Island Library.

Joanna Lee (Fall 2008) is now Digital Repository Services Librarian at George Mason Univ. in Fairfax, VA.

Ian Mason (Fall 2009) has begun work at the Cole Library of Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, IA as Academic Technology Consultant.

San Antonio is now home for Julle McLoone (Spring 2009), a special collections librarian at the Univ. of Texas.

Jane Monson (Spring 2009) is Digital Projects Librarian for Truman State Univ. in Kirksville, Mo.

Angela Murillo (Spring 2010) is a first-year doctoral fellow at the Univ. of North Carolina - Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science.

Elizabeth Nummela (Spring 2009) works for the St. Cloud Public Library in St. Cloud, MN as an adult services librarian.

In July 2010, Leah Osterhaus (Spring 2010) began as medical librarian at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

Rebecca Ramsey (Fall 2009) is the Director of the Lamon Public Library in Lamon, IA.

Roxanna Running (Spring 2010) is employed at Cornell College as Serials/ILL Assistant.

Erin Sehorm (Spring 2008) has returned to Iowa and is the children's librarian for the Kalona Public Library.

Jonathan Shank (Fall 2009) is Electronic Resources Librarian at Northeastern Illinois Univ. in Chicago.

Diana Symons (Spring 2009) is Public Services Librarian, College of St. Benedict and St. John's Univ. in St. Joseph, MN.

Brian Visser (Spring 2009) works as a Librarian Assistant III at the Iowa City Public Library.

Yanhong Wang (Spring 2009) has taken the position of Librarian: Coordinator of Systems at Shepherd University in Shepherdstown, WV.

Nick Wyant (Spring 2008) recently accepted a position at Wichita State Univ. as Ethnic Studies Librarian.

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Faculty Research Update

**André Brock** continues to expand his research with a wider focus on race and ethnicity in electronic environs including software programs, video games, and mobile devices. His paper, “When keeping it real goes wrong: Resident Evil 5, racial representation, and gamers,” was published in Games and Culture in October 2010. Another paper, “Cultural appropriations of technical capital: Black women, weblogs, and the digital divide,” co-authored by Lynette Kvasny and Kayla Hales, was published in *Information, Communication, and Society* in October. Brock also presented “Blogging while Brown: who we are, what it means, why we matter” at the Blogging while Brown Conference in Washington D.C. in June 2010.

**Jennifer Burek Pierce**'s book, *What Adolescents Ought to Know: Sexual Health Texts in Early Twentieth-Century America*, is forthcoming from the University of Massachusetts Press as part of the Press's Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book series. The book addresses the tensions involved with publishing treatises on venereal disease prevention in the early 1900s and tells the “story of how sex education moved from private conversation to purchased text.” In May, Burek Pierce was the Jay and Deborah Last Fellow in Visual Culture at the American Antiquarian Society in Massachusetts. While there, she examined primary sources for her research on historical children’s games and their place in the library. Burek Pierce is also serving on the Winsor Committee of ALA’s Library History Round Table, which honors an outstanding, unpublished piece of research on library history. She also continues to write the *Youth Matters* column for American Libraries magazine.

**Dave Eichmann** is directing the biomedical informatics portion of a National Institute of Health Clinical and Translation Science Award (CTSA) at The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. Iowa is currently one of fifty-five CTSA’s in the country seeking to improve how science gets done—including navigating information overload in biomedical research. Eichmann attended an annual informatics meeting in Washington D.C. in October to present information on a federated search platform for the research profiling tools being developed by CTSA's. The profiling tools could be compared to an in-depth version of LinkedIn for scientists. At another Washington D.C. meeting, Eichmann participated in efforts to connect the NIH model with other organizations such as the Veterans Administration. With his CTSA colleagues, he has published articles about the role of informatics in biomedical research and distinguishing informatics and information technology. In addition, he is working with several alums on e-discovery in legal evidence and, detecting vandalism in Wikipedia materials.

**Jim Elmborg** continues to think and write about critical information literacy and libraries as spaces for learning. He published an article in *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* titled “Literacies, Narratives and Adult Learning in Libraries” and an
Haowei Hsieh presented a paper, "Assisting Two-Way Mapping Generation in Hypermedia Workspace," at the Association for Computing Machinery's Hypertext Conference in Toronto in June. Hsieh collaborated on the paper with four authors, including two SLIS graduate students. He has been working as a database consultant for the UNESCO City of Literature iPhone and Mobile Application Development Team for more than a year, directing SLIS students to design and develop database support for the application and related research activities. iPhone/iPad users can download the app to learn about Iowa City's rich heritage of literature and authors. Hsieh is also researching online usage of shared information tools with a colleague at Texas A&M University by coordinating student activities remotely with a visual information tool he helped create. In November, he presented a poster to demonstrate the shared information tool in Washington D.C. during the National Science Digital Library annual meeting.

Patricia Katopol is interested in human information behavior in the workplace. She is looking into collaborative information retrieval and the information behavior of science teams, with an eye toward using Cognitive Work Analysis to aid the design of knowledge management systems.

Katopol's poster titled “Information Anxiety, Information Behavior, and Minority Graduate Students” was presented at the American Society for Information Science and Technology's October conference. She also gave a talk at the Association for Computing Machinery SIG GROUP Workshop in Florida in November titled “Cognitive Work Analysis: A Framework for Research in Collaborative Information Seeking.” She has submitted a paper to the University of Tennessee, College of Communication and Information's 33rd Annual Research Symposium on Human Information Behavior, Knowledge Management Systems, and the Science of Team Science.

Joan Bessman Taylor presented a paper, "Obscenity in Iowa: Locating the Library in the Non-Library Censorship of the 1950s at the Library History Seminar XII: Libraries in the History of Print Culture" in Madison, WI in September. This paper, part of a project funded by a grant from The State Historical Society of Iowa and a Presidential Faculty Fellowship, examines the response of public librarians in Iowa to attempts to censor books and magazines sold by newsstands and drugstores in the early 1950's. The study seeks to inform current debates within Library and Information Science regarding the neutrality and/or social responsibility of librarians and the relationship of professional values to larger social issues. Taylor, with graduate assistant Kalmia Strong and Special Collections Project Librarian Jeremy Brett, continues to examine Amateur Press Associations as reading and writing communities whose practices both predate and portend current virtual environments while still valuing the use of older forms of reproduction and correspondence.
Student’s Passion for Music Crosses into Digital Library Work

By Christine Mastalia

SLIS student Joseph McKinley has a bachelor’s degree in music from The University of Iowa and a master’s degree in music from the New England Conservatory of Music for piano. He and his band The Uniphonics are just finishing up an album titled CRAWL.

Now, McKinley is combining his love of music with his library and information science skills through his work on “the Strad Project,” or Stradivari Digitization Project, part of the Iowa Sounds Digital Collection in the Iowa Digital Library.

“This project is important to the Iowa Digital Library because it is Iowa’s string quartet,” McKinley said. “This quartet was originally called the Iowa String Quartet, and most if not all of the performances in this project are recorded here at UI. It is a history of culture within our community.”

Employed through the Rita Benson Music Library and Digital Media Services, McKinley listens to the music, identifying and verifying pieces and movements. Next, he enters the information into a spreadsheet and works on audio fades and cleanup and finally converts the files.

McKinley hopes to work as a music librarian or use music technology in either an academic or a corporate setting. However, he is also interested in exploring options like e-government services.

“Contributing to the creation of a valuable, enjoyable, cultural, local product is fulfilling. Also, to hear what the last string quartet in residence sounded like is satisfying. I’d never heard them before doing this project,” he said.

WiderNet celebrates ten-year anniversary

Cliff Missen is celebrating the ten-year anniversary of The WiderNet Project, the service program he co-founded in 2000. He presented the eGranary Digital Library and results of a year-long evaluation project, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, this summer in India, Tanzania, and Washington, D.C., as well as at MIT and Yale. Missen also gave a talk on delivering digital information to underserved populations at the Iowa Library Association annual conference in October. In December, he will travel to Botswana for the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL). The project’s focus this year is the development of a disability rights portal for the eGranary Digital Library, thanks to a grant from the United States Agency for International Development. Missen co-presented a paper titled “Where There Is No Internet: Making the Information Age Accessible to People with Disabilities without the Web” at the University of Washington in Seattle in June. In addition, Missen and WiderNet volunteers are working to create an eGranary chip for use in mobile devices.
Conference Helps Students Make Class Connections

By Christine Mastalio

After attending the Rare Book and Manuscript Section (RBMS) at the ALA Preconference in Philadelphia this past June, Johanna Meetz found herself making connections to and from her classes at SLIS.

“One of the highlights was seeing people who had written articles that I’d read in classes,” she said.

Meetz, who is interested in special collections and archives (particularly rare books), said it was helpful to hear practitioners talk about controversial issues in a field that she had discussed in classes at Iowa. Since her return, she has been able to reference preconference sessions in class discussions and presentations.

“I could picture myself in a career more because I was around people in the field.”

Meetz received a full-attendance scholarship, which gave her conference and travel funding. A great side benefit of her trip was being able to explore a large city that offers a variety of libraries and archives.

Also in June, Meetz had the opportunity for more hands-on archival experience through a two-week internship at the Iowa State University Special Collections and University Archives. The internship, which grew out of a recent tour of the ISU archives, partly entailed cataloging objects connected to the history of University, such as a plastic cup, a flyswatter, a brick, and a 1930s-era debate team uniform.

Meetz said she felt an immediate emotional connection with the objects and noted that the object collection is a valuable part of documenting Iowa State's past, even though cataloging the objects often proved to be a challenging experience.

“How do I describe this red plastic flyswatter? [By] reading the fine print to find out who made this? Where did it come from?”

At the conference, it was helpful to Meetz to hear practitioners talk about controversial issues in a field that she had discussed in classes at Iowa.

Since her return, she has been able to reference preconference sessions in class discussions and presentations. “I could picture myself in a career more because I was around people in the field.”
Donor Spotlight
Paul D. Healey
By Christine Mastalio

Why Libraries
Healey practiced law for seven years and wanted a career change. “I spent a lot of time at the public library looking over career information when I suddenly realized that, having always loved libraries, that was where I wanted to work.”

Highlights of SLIS
“Reference, Bibliography, and Advanced Bibliography were my favorite classes. I was also heartily encouraged to pursue my interest in research and writing and actually wrote my first article while in library school…”

Career path after Iowa
Healey worked at William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was an instructional services librarian. In 2000, he became Head of Public Services at Albert E. Jenner Law Library at the University of Illinois. Five years later, he took over running a new legal research course program there. Now he teaches courses in basic and advanced legal research, supervises other legal research teachers, helps reference staff, and occasionally teaches for Illinois’ LIS program.

The Decision to Give
“Coming from an academic family, I believe strongly in supporting an educational program that has helped me have a career and earn a living.”

Publishing Success
Healey is the author of Professional Issues for the Library and Information Professional (2003), which is part of the Neal-Schuman “Legal Adviser for Librarians” series. In it, he suggests that most libraries have less potential for liability than previous literature had implied. “Since the liability book came out it has been very well received. I have since been approached by ALA Editions to write a book for non-law librarians on answering legal reference questions, and by Libraries Unlimited for a case book on legal and ethical issues in the library. I am writing those now, and both should come out sometime in 2011.”

Favorite Parts of the Job
“I love both reference and teaching. I always have and I always will. Both are fun and challenging, and I never get tired of doing either.”

Challenges Facing Librarians Today
“In law librarianship we are trying to keep up not only with new forms of legal information, but how this information is changing how lawyers do research and find and use information.”

SLIS would like to take this opportunity to thank Paul Healey and all donors for their continued support of the department and programs here at Iowa.
Alumnus Credits SLIS with Providing a Base for Professionalism

Spencer Jardine spends much of his time as a librarian teaching. As the Coordinator of Instruction and an assistant professor at Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho, Jardine creates and updates tutorials, conducts one-shot sessions on library research skills, and coordinates instruction requests from faculty.

The 2007 graduate also works the reference desk and is the bibliographer for political science, military science, philosophy and religion. He said his MLIS education at Iowa gave him a broad background to work with.

“It really introduced me to a lot of ideas about organizing things—about being a professional,” Jardine said. “It really helped in lots of ways.”

At SLIS, Jardine was exposed to a wide range of ideas and theories. He said this was useful, because every library has different technologies, rules, and procedures. “If you understand the theory behind it, it’s really quite helpful,” he said. A thorough knowledge of theory “teaches you how to approach things as a professional.”

Jardine had a bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the humanities when he came to SLIS and found that libraries were a good fit for him. “I really like helping researchers at the reference desk,” he said. “It can be fun and exciting to work with students [in the classroom].”

Jardine’s advice to students is to discuss the ideas of librarianship with one another and with faculty to practice articulating their positions.

“I think that really pays dividends,” he said.
REMINDEERS

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