A word from the dean...

For the past five years, the College of Computing and Information has been at the forefront of providing students with the theory and skills needed to successfully navigate this Information Age.

The College of Computing and Information – one of the first in the country – was established in 2005. The new blending brings together the departments of Computer Science, Information Studies, and Informatics.

The Information Studies program began offering a Master of Science in Information Science (M.S.I.S.) in the Fall of 2000. The change was a reflection of the department’s mission to provide programs that show students how to use technology and information to best meet the needs of any organization. The Department of Information Studies, which received full accreditation with the American Library Association (ALA) in January, is poised to make many advances under the leadership of its distinguished chair, Dr. Philip Eppard.

Eppard took helm of the department in early 2011 following the retirement of Terry Maxwell, who served the department with great dedication.

Eppard has been a faculty member since 1988. He previously served as dean of the School of Information Science and Policy from 1995 to 2003.

We welcome Eppard back to this leadership role. In addition to his extensive work in the field of archives and manuscripts, he has been instrumental in the department’s reaccreditation process. His leadership will be an integral part of the Department of Information Science as it moves forward.

---- Peter Bloniarz, Ph.D., Dean, College of Computing and Information

Degrees of Difference

By Katherine Hughes '12

A program less well-known within the Information Studies Department is the Bachelor’s of Arts (or sciences)/Master’s of Science in Information Studies combined program that has existed since the 1980s. BA/MSIS allows undergraduate students to take graduate courses and have the opportunity to get a head start on graduate school. “I want to be an archivist and our school has this joint program. It seemed like an opportunity that I shouldn't miss,” says Katherine Demetri ’12, who is majoring in history and a student of the program. Being able to forego some undergraduate courses or have credits go towards both degrees are some of the positives of the program. “It’s a complete ‘win-win-win’ for qualified students. You get to bypass the GRE for graduate admission, earn credits that can be shared between both degrees, and get one semester of graduate study completed at the undergraduate tuition rate,” says Frances Reynolds, assistant dean of the department. About 15 students are participating this fall, through the information studies department. Students do feel grateful for the program’s existence. Students can discover it by searching the Information Studies website or talking to the department advisors. A student can be admitted to the program at the beginning of junior year which will enable them to complete their studies within 10 semesters. The student must have a GPA of 3.2 or higher and apply to graduate school. Once accepted the student must complete five graduate courses, including three required courses. All five courses must be completed before the student can finish their undergraduate degree. Once finished, the student may focus on their Master’s in Information Studies.

The Information Studies department isn’t the only department that offers an option such as this, but is unique in allowing a student to start graduate study with a full 15 credits out of the way. It’s for the highly motivated undergraduate who is interested in Information Studies and advancing their studies early. They have an opportunity that pays off in the end considering after five years of school they can complete two degrees whereas most students will have only one.

Katherine Hughes is a 5th semester student in the BA/MSIS program. She is in the Library and Information Services/ School Media track.

Welcoming the Future

By Laura Greco ’13

As the first person potential students come in contact with as they are applying to the Information Science program, Assistant Dean Frances Reynolds plays an important role in recruiting new students. Her warm and welcoming presence is an honest representation of UAlbany’s commitment to putting the student first. Reynolds’ greatest sense of accomplishment at work comes from making a difference in someone’s life. She says, “What I feel most proud of is when I meet with a prospective student who is really unsure if they can get into the program. I like making people feel comfortable…sometimes the application process can be intimidating but I can be the person who reassures them and gives them the confidence to enroll. I like knowing that they will then go on to get a good job after completing the program.”

One of the most positive aspects of the program, in Reynolds’ opinion, is the required internship, which is a program she oversees. She serves as the contact person for organizations looking for interns, but also does outreach to find new opportunities and follows up leads given to her by students. She feels that maintaining this network is one of the best parts of her job, and that the internship program is a great way to connect the school to the larger world.

Dean Reynolds initially got her BA in Biology from the College of St. Rose and eventually went on to receive a Masters in Information Science from the University of Rhode Island. In 1984 she worked at UAlbany as one of two science librarians. She has also worked in school and a special library settings. With her experience in many different information agencies, she was appointed to her position as Assistant Dean in 1999. Over this time she has been a source of continuity within a dynamic and ever-evolving department.

When asked what she saw for the department in the future, she said that, “Our challenge is not only keeping up with change but trying to lead it. It may sound corny but we really do think about that a lot, and it is a priority.”

Laura Greco is a 3rd semester graduate student enrolled in the dual MSIS Archives and Records Administration/MAIS History program.
Dual Degrees Give an Edge
By Kathleen Broeder ’12

UA Albany is one of six ALA accredited schools to offer a dual degree combining a master’s in History or English with a master’s in Information Studies. The dual program provides real savings and value to students. Credit sharing reduces the total number needed for a dual degree to fifty-nine, compared to seventy-four if done separately. This effectively cuts out an entire semester of coursework.

Only a handful of students take advantage of this exclusive program. Of the average 220 graduate students in the MSIS program, there are approximately twenty History and seven English students in the dual program. This accounts for roughly twelve percent of MSIS students.

Students pursue the dual degree programs for several reasons. Having a second master’s degree gives resumes an added edge required by many academic positions. In addition, students are able to pursue a degree suited to their personal interests and simultaneously get a professional degree which provides a viable career path. Whatever the motive, the results are the same; a wonderful sense of personal satisfaction.

Most students enroll in the dual program at the same time because it makes the application process easier. However, other students join after having started their History or English degree. They may have been unaware of the dual program and were advised by a professor or fellow student to consider the dual program because it would help them find a job after graduate school.

Current History and Information Science student, Nic Soares ’12, commented, “Although I came to UAAlbany to study history, the advice of my professors and my quest for a job is leading me to concentrate more on my MSIS degree.”

Although the Information Studies Department only offers joint degrees with History and English, it is possible to share credits with other masters programs. Students interested in completing a dual degree can get more information at http://www.albany.edu/informationstudies/ist_gradprograms.php.

Kathleen Broeder is a 3rd semester graduate student enrolled in the dual MSIS Library and Information Services/MA History program.

Organization Recognizes Students for Scholastic Achievements
By Matthew Thorenz ’12

Honors societies at U.S. colleges and universities have a long history, from Phi Beta Kappa in 1898 to Beta Phi Mu in 1948. Founded to recognize information studies students who are committed to serving the local and global community, Beta Phi Mu has adopted the motto “Allis inserviendo consumer”; “Consumed in the service of others”. This philosophy is exemplified by the work of 15th century printer Aldus Manutius, known as the inventor of italic text. He believed in providing the average person with the information they desire. His printer’s mark of a dolphin and anchor has been adopted by the society as their official logo.

Students who are inducted into Beta Phi Mu are eligible for five scholarships, six doctoral dissertation scholarships, and an ALA/Beta Phi Mu Award given to outstanding members. In addition to these honors, the society also publishes a monographic series and sponsors distinguished lecture events. Information on these entitlements can be found on Beta Phi Mu’s national website (http://www.beta-phi-mu.org).

Presently, Beta Phi Mu boasts 35,000 members worldwide and 47 chapters in the United States and Puerto Rico; seven of which are in New York State. The University of Albany’s Chapter, Beta Beta Iota, sponsors travel scholarships, special events and helps with graduation and induction ceremonies. The local chapter Secretary/Treasurer is Jane Kessler ’00, a UA librarian, and the Chapter Advisor IST Professor Deborah Andersen.

Each year, a select number of students that complete either “all MA requirements with an overall GPA of at least 3.75 or all full time, advanced study programs for one or more academic years with an overall average of 3.75”, are chosen by members of the IST faculty to be inducted.

For additional information on Beta Beta Iota, questions can be sent to Secretary/Treasurer Jane Kessler JKessler@email.albany.edu or Chapter Advisor Deborah Andersen dla@albany.edu.

Matthew Thorenz is a 3rd semester graduate student enrolled in the dual MSIS Archives and Records Administration/MA History program.

Dewey Delivers a Fourth Decimal
By Lauren Eson ’12

Every year, many students pursuing their master’s in information studies submit applications for awards and scholarships across New York State. One of these is the NYLA-Dewey Scholarship Award, granted by the New York Library Association (NYLA) and sponsored by the Lake Placid Education Foundation. On September 30th, the dean of the College of Computing and Information receives the application submissions. By December 1st, applicants know the results.

For two long months, applicants await their fate at the seven ALA accredited schools in the New York State. Here at the University at Albany, a student has been recognized for this award every single year since it was established: Allison Hosier ’11, Douglas Moore ’10, Sara Germain ’10, Nancy Goldblatt ’07, Lindsay H. Laczak ’07, and Alanna Moss ’08.

Nancy Goldblatt ’07 found out about the award through word of mouth during her time in the Department of Information Studies, which traces its 1889 origins in the namesake of the award, Melvil Dewey. At the time, Goldblatt “did not know how competitive the award was”, recalling that receiving an award involving four decimal places was a relief when it came to student loans.

The award also provides free attendance to the NYLA Annual Conference, where recipients network with other librarians regarding professional development, management, and leadership experience. Goldblatt recalled that the presentations and technology exhibits by “leaders in the field [were] exciting and inspiring.”

Goldblatt offered this advice for current and future students: “Everybody should apply for [the NYLA-Dewey Scholarship Award], you never know if you might win! Whenever you find out about [these opportunities], do it…. it really helps you stand out.” Also, no matter what, “the act of going through the process, of writing the letters or the essay, is a very good exercise; Stating where you stand, your philosophy, and what is strong about you is great preparation for interviews.”

Lauren Eson is a fifth semester graduate student concentrating in the Library and Information Services/School Media track.

Department’s Online Presence
Do You Know Dewey?
By Elizabeth Anastasi '12

Would it not be appropriate to have the library serving the Library and Information Studies program named after the father of the Dewey Decimal System? That is what many assume. Actually, the Dewey Graduate Library stands in honor of another Dewey, one who greatly shaped the educational and political environment of New York State and the nation in the mid-20th Century: Thomas E. Dewey, Esq. The University At Albany's downtown campus library, was dubbed the Dewey Graduate Library on the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the SUNY system - September 8, 1988.

Unlike Melvil, Thomas Dewey was born in 1902 in a small Michigan town, and after briefly flirting with a professional singing career in college; he trekked to New York to study law. As a young lawyer, Dewey gained acclaim in the New York City District Attorney's Office and later as State Prosecutor, targeting large-scale crime operations, inspiring a popular radio show, “The Gangbuster,” and a hand full of mobster movies.

Campaigning on his anti-crime notoriety, Dewey held the New York State governorship for twelve years, during which he signed the legislation to enact SUNY and increased aid to strengthen the State’s public library systems. Many commuting Information Studies students and alumni may recognize the name Thomas E. Dewey from elsewhere. The New York State Thruway is also named for him in honor of his contributions to the project. Winning the Republican Nomination for President in 1944 and 1948, he became the first presidential candidate to have been born in the Twentieth Century. Although he lost both times, to FDR and Truman, Dewey may recognize the name Thomas E. Dewey from elsewhere.

So what’s with the wedding cake topper pictured above, you must be asking. Apparently Dewey did not have the most approachable reputation during his time. Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, referred to Dewey as “the little man on the wedding cake,” always primly dressed and stiff when approached. But considering his success, his demeanor apparently served him well. Both Deweys became famous in their own right. While Melvil gained notoriety for his organizational and cataloging techniques, the persistent Thomas Deweys became famous in their own right. While Melvil gained notoriety for his organizational and cataloging techniques, the persistent Thomas Deweys became famous in their own right.

Elizabeth Anastasi is a second semester graduate student concentrating in Library and Information Services.

You Are Not Alone
By Kristina Ronald '12

Graduate students have many resources available to help them network and build career support systems. But what happens when they get out into the real world? Are they left to fend for themselves?

Alumni Sarah Clark ’03 resoundingly says NO! After blazing through the program eight years ago, Clark learned that her UAlbany support system, which she cultivated through classes and her MSIS internship, would always be there for her: She would never be without the support of her SUNY connections or the support of other like-minded professionals. “I didn’t think that I would be alone in the work-world”, says Clark.

Clark was on the school media track when she decided that she wanted to be “where things were happening”. For her internship, she was placed in the Voorheesville Central School District under the care of Carol Kadamus ’70 a school media specialist and UA alumni. Her experience with Kadamus was authentic and rewarding, and Clark loved working with her students. After graduation, Clark had a tough time in her first job as a school media specialist, but she never lost touch with her Albany contacts or with her mentor from Voorheesville. “The Capital Region has a very close-knit group of librarians”, observes Clark. Wherever she goes, Clark feels as though an atmosphere of camaraderie pervades among each library professional that she meets.

Clark can’t imagine having a more positive and valuable learning experience than her internship. “It was good to see all the pieces come together”, said Clark. “Seeing things in action” helped Clark better apply what she had learned in the program to real-life situations.

In addition to the internship, Clark used her time at UAlbany to visit Albany Public Library’s main branch often so she could meet professionals, and attended community advisory meetings to be involved in decisions regarding the library. “Make a strong connection with your internship supervisor”, recommends Clark, “and return to him or her with real life questions”. Maintaining these connections eventually landed her a job at Albany Public Library, where she works as Head of Reader Services today.

Truly, Albany graduates are not alone.

Kristina Ronald is a third semester graduate student and she is in the Library and Information Services/School Media track.

Oh, the Places You’ll Go!
By Adam Lisbon '12

For nearly a decade, UAlbany’s Department of Information Studies has made the hands-on experience of interning mandatory for graduation. Today’s job market is competitive, and the students from this American Library Association accredited program have leveraged their internships to stand out from the crowd. As one IST professor observed, “Libraries increasingly want to see experience in the new grads they hire.” The internship requirement is unique to UAlbany and a few other select institutions. Some graduate programs, for example those affiliated with the University of Arizona, University of Michigan, and C.W. Post offer, but do not stipulate students must complete an internship.

Assistant Dean Frances Reynolds, who coordinates the internship program, maintains over 100 potential sites on file in the Capital District alone. Feedback from institutions have been overwhelmingly positive, and many locations welcome succeeding interns from the program. Site mentors share their professional knowledge and guide their interns through projects. Students shadow their mentors and gain valuable field knowledge and experience about library operations and services. Other attractive elements of the UA internship program include earning college credits, increasing student confidence levels, and assisting students to build their resume.

Lastly, the internship experience provides students with a unique benefit; whether students stay or leave the area, internship mentors frequently serve as a key reference concerning job performance and suitability for employment.

Each year there are approximately 100 active internships. Students often intern in the area’s schools, libraries, and government agencies. However, many go on to some surprising places including West Point Military Academy, NYU’s academic Library, the National Baseball Hall of Fame, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library. Perhaps the most adventurous intern was a student who went to Everglades National Park in Florida. The park was established in 1934, but it was one of UAlbany’s Information Studies graduates who first started archiving the Park’s near-century of history. And if you have ever experienced a winter in upstate New York, this student is clearly one of our brightest.

Adam Lisbon is a 4th semester graduate student concentrating in Library & Information Services.
What is iConnect?

iConnect is an electronic update sent to IST (or UAlbany Department of Information Studies, IST) alumni and friends. It is an irregular publication that provides summaries and links to news, announcements and other information of interest to IST alumni and friends. This edition of iConnect was written and produced by Elizabeth Anastasi ’12, Kathleen Broeder ’12, Lauren Eson ’12, Laura Greco ’13, Katherine Hughes ’12, Adam Lisbon ’12, Kristina Ronald ’12, and Matthew Thorenz ’12, students in IST 666, Advancement, Marketing, and Public Relations for Academic and Public Libraries, 2011 summer session. And special thanks to Kun Lin, 10 for his work on preparing the issue for electronic distribution. Advancement, Marketing and Public Relations for Academic and Public Libraries, 2011 summer session was taught by Professor Frank D’Andraia.

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Thank you!