A Word From The Chair

Congratulations are in order for the class of 2012. Thirty-three Master of Science in Information Science degrees were conferred this May, and another twenty-two students completed their program in August.

The Information Studies Department has a new home, but it is just across the hall from our old home. The College of Computing and Information Dean’s Office moved from the Harriman Campus to the Downtown Campus at the end of May, and they are now occupying the suite of offices in Draper 113. Information Studies moved across the hall to a suite of offices in Draper 116. Our new offices look out on Western Avenue and the steps leading to the Dewey Library. We welcome all our alumni, friends, and supporters to pay us a visit in our new home in Draper Hall.

The other major change in the life of the Information Studies Department this summer was the retirement of Fran Reynolds, who has been with the University for nearly twenty years and has served as our assistant dean for twelve years. As coordinator of our admissions process (as well as many other things), Fran was usually the first person prospective students met as they began considering coming to Albany for their master’s degree. She was in many ways the public face of the department, and she will be sorely missed. I am very pleased, however, to announce that Daphne Jorgensen has been appointed assistant to the chair of the department, and she will be taking over Fran’s many responsibilities.

Daphne is a familiar face to many as she is a graduate of our program and has been a longtime adjunct instructor. Other recent developments that may be of interest to our alums, friends and supporters are the ongoing efforts by IST faculty to develop meaningful partnerships with colleagues across disciplines, institutions, and geographic boundaries.

Professor Abebe Rorissa spent much of the summer in Ethiopia, where he was working to further collaborations with Addis Ababa University Libraries. Professor Deborah Anderson, having spent the 2010-2011 academic year on Fulbright-supported sabbatical in Montreal, Canada and Cholula, Mexico, has continued her research with, among others, Luis Luna-Reyes, a graduate of UAlbany’s Information Science Ph.D. program, publishing several articles and conference papers out of both their NSF grant and work on research methods in System Dynamics.

Finally, our faculty is exploring options to expand the range of our curriculum. As part of this initiative, we have been engaged in conversations with the School of Public Health to develop a joint certificate program in health informatics. We are also developing a new combined master’s program with Public History.

I hope that you will remain connected with the department and that you enjoy receiving occasional up-dates on our activities. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments, or news of your activities. We want to stay connected to you. And if you know of individuals who might be interested in pursuing our M.S. in Information Science degree, please send them our way!

Best Regards,
Phillip Eppard, Professor and Chair
Department of Information Studies
iConnect Contributors of 2012

Top row, L to R: Mara S. Elliott, Professor Frank D’Andraia, and Linnea Moosmann ‘12
Second row, L to R: Vanessa Baron ‘12 and Rachel A. Solomon ‘13
Bottom Row, L to R: Katie Demetri ’13, Melissa McMullen 13, and Pernel Wilfred ‘13
Not pictured, Hope Kramer ’12

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How Much for a Master’s Degree?
Comparing Tuition Costs at Library/Information Schools
By Rachel A. Solomon, ’13

Looking at the tuition costs for selected master’s programs, it is clear that the University at Albany is a great value. The accompanying graphs compare cost of tuition for UAlbany, Long Island University-CW Post, Pratt Institute, Simmons College and Syracuse University. Syracuse’s program consists of 36 credits, and at $1,249 per credit for 2012-2013 this totals $44,964 for the master’s degree. Pratt’s program is also 36 credits, and at $1,126 per credit it amounts to $40,536 for the degree. CW Post is $1,028 per credit, and at 36 credits for the degree this amounts to $37,008. Simmons is $1,129 per credit, and at 36 credits the total cost of the master’s degree is $40,644. For IST graduate students, UAlbany charges $390 per credit ($695 out-of-state). The MSIS program is 42 credits, so the degree costs $16,380 ($29,190 out-of-state). One full-time year (18 credits) at Syracuse, Pratt, Simmons or CW Post costs more than the entire degree (in-state tuition) at UAlbany.

The cost of living in each area varies and should also be taken into consideration. In their sample budgets for graduate students, Syracuse allots $8,390 per year for housing and Pratt suggests $10,600 per year. At Simmons, room and board for graduate students totals $14,720 per year. The median monthly rent in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metro area is $710 (source: Census Bureau’s 2010 American Community Survey). For a prospective student choosing between master’s programs, UAlbany is a great option because of its affordable tuition and opportunities for internships and work experiences in the surrounding area.

Announcements
From The Department:

UA’s 2012 Burton lecture honored one of our alumnae, Susan Hildreth ’73, as CCI’s Distinguished Public Service award recipient. Ms. Hildreth serves as the director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. She was appointed by President Obama and unanimously confirmed by the US Senate. Her term in office ends January 2015. Prior to coming to IMLS she was, she was the former librarian of the Seattle Public Library and the former state librarian of California. She also served as president of the Public Library Association in 2006. She graduated cum laude from Syracuse University and holds a master’s degree in business from Rutgers University and a master’s degree in Library Science from the University at Albany, class of 1973.

2012 Department of Information Studies Commencement Awards:

Excellence in Community Partnerships: Hilda Cioffi, Katelynn Ingham, NoahJon Marshall, Kim Nemeth and Shannon Thompson;

Excellence in Service to the College of Computing and Information and/or the University Community: Amber D’Ambrosio, Adam Lisbon, Alison Starkey, and Daniel Vitale II;

Academic Excellence (Graduate): Vicki Jo Beighley, Allen Chestoski, Amber D’Ambrosio, Tor Loney, Sarah Morse, Kimberley Nemeth, and Jocelyn Ireland

By Rachel A. Solomon, ’13

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Internship Required? What’s the point?

By Pernel Wilfred, ’13

The field of Information Science is reinventing itself and UAlbany is taking a lead in teaching the changes and technologies. Due to the competitive nature of job markets in the field, our ALA accredited Master of Science in Information Science (MSIS) program opens doors for its students by having an internship as a core requirement.

Adam Lisbon, BA ‘04 and MSIS ’12, completed three internships before finishing his MSIS degree. Adam interned at NYU Libraries where he cataloged Japanese Language materials, UAlbany’s University Libraries in User Education, and the North American Coordinating Council of Japanese Library Resources (NCC) where he was offered a full time position and has worked remotely for a year as their Program Associate. Also, he teaches a course in Japanese Studies in UAlbany’s East Asian Studies Department.

Adam was an undergraduate of UAlbany’s East Asian Studies Department and recognized the need for information professionals who are proficient in East Asian languages. When asked if the internship requirement helped him decide on an MSIS program he answered, “Actually, the internship requirement was one of the major reasons I came to Albany for my master’s. I know my learning style, and that is through doing. I appreciate spending time studying and focusing on theory, but if I can’t apply what I learn I usually can’t turn it into knowledge.”

The Information Studies Department prides itself on the internship connections it has cultivated over the years. Students of the program acquire 150 hours of hands-on experience in their chosen field before receiving their degree. Although the faculty encourages the students to think of their internship interests ahead of time, there are many organizations that are eager to take on UAlbany’s freshly educated minds.

Three sites that accept the most students are the Upper Hudson Library System with its 36 member libraries, the New York State Archives, and SUNY’s Center for Technology in Government which helps develop and test government used technology. From the Baseball Hall of Fame to NCC, the United Nations, the USS Slater Destroyer Escort Historical Museum, SUNY Press and General Electric, UAlbany’s MSIS students can be exceedingly creative in the unique interests they decide to pursue.

For more information about our internship process you can follow this link:
http://www.albany.edu/informationstudies/ist_internships.php

“Students of the program acquire 150 hours of hands-on experience in their chosen field before receiving their degree.”

SLM Program Offers its Students Fat Opportunities

By Vanessa Baron, ’12

It is no secret that many recent college graduates are facing stiff competition for jobs as they enter the workforce during a time when budget cuts are numerous and opportunities are lean. The School Library Media (SLM) program of the MSIS program in the Information Studies Department continually strives to be on the cutting edge and offer its students a program that provides them with the knowledge, skills, and most importantly, the experience, to head the competition.

So, what makes this program more attractive than similar programs offered at other universities? Associate Professor Dr. Joette Stefl-Mabry, the Coordinator of School Library Media Education, believes that the integration of theory learned in the classroom into real-world practice guided by continuous reflection is what sets the program apart from others. Students of the SLM program are encouraged “not to focus on the completion of a project and/or paper but to examine the science of teaching and learning and come away from the experience more reflective as teachers and learners.” SLM graduates complete the program suited with contemporary information and fully prepared to begin their career.
When professors Barbara Via an Adjunct Professor and Deborah Anderson an Associate Professor sat down to talk about reframing Information Studies class 605, Information Sources and Services, they knew they had a ready information source of their own at hand - the many UAlbany alumni now doing reference work in libraries. “They’re in the field on a daily basis doing what I’m teaching” said professor Anderson, who herself worked reference at the New York State Library before joining the UAlbany faculty. Constant changes in the profession call upon faculty to respond with changes and updates to course material. In order to tap the expertise of the UAlbany community, a survey was posted on the IST-L listservs. The listserv, which has a subscription of approximately 600, is used for contact with current students and alumni. The survey asked alumni currently practicing in a variety of library environments to respond with their advice on how librarians handle reference today.

Replies came in right away, eventually numbering over 40. Several themes emerged, most centering on the need to teach students how to effectively guide patrons to find and evaluate information from among the vast varieties of possibilities available today. Professor Via, who worked as a reference librarian at UAlbany and Hudson Valley Community College, had been teaching 605 for several years. She found that technology has been changing the face of reference, as Google, e-books and other media replaced the traditional role of the reference librarian. In order to respond to the changing face of reference services she pushed for a revamping of the class. Traditional reference services have been in decline at academic and public libraries, but the skills that enable a librarian to help a patron search for information remain necessary. “How do we teach the skills we need to help the users get the info they need?” Anderson asked. “I don’t think those skills are going to go away.”

The redesigned 605 will debut this fall. Professor Anderson plans to use the tips she gleaned from the survey results to help shape the class. The textbook will give students a good view of the changing world of reference; it includes an online site where current news and issues can be shared.

SCALA: Tackling Issues Beyond the Classroom
By Hope Kramer, ‘12

Copyright is often an intimidating and confusing topic to broach. Jennifer Collins, president of the UAlbany Student Chapter of the American Library Association (SCALA) believes this is why it is so important to get information science students thinking about it before graduation. “People think copyright is something that belongs in law schools but we’re dealing with information and policies governing it every day. How can we do our job effectively without familiarity with copyright law?”

SCALA connected with Lorre Smith, one of the bibliographers at the University Libraries, to offer a series of copyright workshops during the past spring semester. Jennifer talked about the importance of the ever-changing field of copyright and the need for information science students to stay informed. “I’m really concerned with copyright because it affects patron rights as internet and information users. During the copyright group, we covered basic copyright but also open access and some e-reader policies. It’s a developing issue and SCALA has the privilege to talk with Lorre Smith, who has made copyright knowledge accessible to students.”

At each workshop, feedback was collected to better gear the next session towards student interest. It was a great success and was the most attended event that SCALA hosted this past semester. There are plans to hold further sessions this fall, keep an eye on this and other events at their website: http://www.albany.edu/scala/index.html.

Looking for other ways to get involved? Check out some of the other student groups!

- Information Studies Student Association (ISSA)
- Student Chapter of the Society of American Archivists (SCSAA)
- Student Chapter of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)

All of the organizations can be found on the student resources page at: http://www.albany.edu/informationstudies/ist_resources.php

Resources for Reference:
UAlbany faculty turn to alumni for helping in redesigning class on research skills
By Mara Elliott ’13

When professors Barbara Via an Adjunct Professor and Deborah Anderson an Associate Professor sat down to talk about reframing Information Studies class 605, Information Sources and Services, they knew they had a ready information source of their own at hand - the many UAlbany alumni now doing reference work in libraries. “They’re in the field on a daily basis doing what I’m teaching” said professor Anderson, who herself worked reference at the New York State Library before joining the UAlbany faculty. Constant changes in the profession call upon faculty to respond with changes and updates to course material. In order to tap the expertise of the UAlbany community, a survey was posted on the IST-L listservs. The listserv, which has a subscription of approximately 600, is used for contact with current students and alumni. The survey asked alumni currently practicing in a variety of library environments to respond with their advice on how librarians handle reference today.

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Success is a Matter of Engagement
By Linnea Moosmann, ’12
Alison Starkey ’12 came to the UAlbany MSIS program with two goals; to challenge herself and to take advantage of new opportunities. This was also her reasoning when she volunteered for the role of President of the Student Chapter of the Special Libraries Association (SLA). During her term as an officer, Alison worked with community members, professors and students to plan fundraisers, arrange field trips and host social events. In late 2011, Alison’s work was recognized by SLA who presented her with the Special Libraries Association Student Merit Award. Alison was also acknowledged at graduation with an award for excellence in service. Having graduated this past spring, Alison remains an active part of the library community. In a short interview, Alison spoke about her involvement in the UAlbany Chapter of the SLA and her experiences as a student.

What benefits/experiences are available to students who become active members of the Student SLA?
Do you have any advice for students?

Although taking on the responsibility of becoming an officer may appear daunting, given the academic workload and life outside of school, I found that officers of other student organizations were open and eager to collaborate on the planning and execution of joint student trips and fundraisers. Serving as an officer is the perfect opportunity to try out your creative ideas, further your people skills and network with the wider library community.

What did your time in the Student SLA Association mean to you?

More than anything, I found it an invaluable experience to take on a responsible role and to provide service to fellow students. I can’t say enough about the experience of stepping over the line from member to officer. It may push you out of your comfort zone but the rewards are numerous.

What was your favorite SLA event?

Our student visit to the New York State Small Business Development Center in Albany. It was a great example of a special library devoted to the information needs of a particular community.

For more information about the SLA visit their website: http://www.sla.org/

Q: How do you think the MSIS program has prepared you for the “real world”?

The academic and extra-curricular opportunities available at UAlbany were available at every turn. Looking back, I realize my success was a matter of deciding to engage with the extensive offerings that came down the pipeline.

Firstly, UAlbany professors support the activities for the publication of student papers. Secondly, the department gives students interested in getting active in student organizations many ways to participate and lead. Thirdly, the work opportunities for UAlbany students to gain experience in their field or build related skills through campus employment or with partners like the New York State Library are a huge bonus to the graduate experience.
GRADUATE BLUES, NO MORE: INTERVIEW WITH MARK WOLFE, MLS/MA ‘03
By Melissa McMullen, ’13

A recent 2003 graduate of the MLS program has been busy in the Capital District. Ohio native Mark Wolfe, Curator of Digital Collections at the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives has agreed to be interviewed about his experiences post-graduation. When asked about the immediate benefits of the program and its courses at the University at Albany Wolfe stated “Beyond the obvious importance of coursework, I benefited a lot from the field trips I made and organized with the student run SAA [Society of American Archivists] organization. Through meeting librarians face to face, and seeing where they worked and what they did, it helped me visualize what kind of librarian I wanted to be.” Wolfe’s personal scholarship has had many highlights as of late “I recently published an article with a colleague in the Journal of Archival Organization. The article deals with the problems archives face in collecting born digital photographs. I am an active member and board member of New York Archives Conference (NYAC). …revamped its website last year (www.nyarchivists.org), and now we are hoping to expand some of website’s functionality to include an online payment system for future conferences. NYAC has been an important place for me to network with fellow librarians and archivists.” Mark Wolfe offered some advice for prospective students looking into the MSIS program and students already in the program, “try to get involved in a student organization in the program or possibly a professional one on a regional or national level. There are so many opportunities to get involved, to meet new people, and learn about the library profession.” Fall ’12 Mark will be teaching the course Fundamentals of XML, just another part of his ongoing contribution to the University. Just one of the University’s many success stories!

For a look at some of the Digital Collections: http://library.albany.edu/speccoll/photocollection/welcome.htm

Kudos

Associate Professor Hemalata IYER is elected to the Executive Board of the International Society for Organization of Knowledge (ISKO). Founded in 1989, ISKO is the leading international society in the area of knowledge organization. ISKO’s mission is to advance conceptual work in knowledge organization in all kinds of forms, and for all kinds of purposes. It works to promote research, development and applications of knowledge organization systems that advance the philosophical, psychological and semantic approaches for ordering knowledge. Iyer’s four year term begins in August 2012.

Assistant Professor ÖZLEM UZUNER has received a $100,00 grant sponsored by National Libraries of Medicine, National Institutes of Health for “Challenges in Natural Language Processing for Clinical Narratives.” Under the terms of the grant, Professor Uzuner is able to provide funding for student participation (in the form of subsidies for registration) for annual workshops organized by Uzuner.

“There are so many opportunities to get involved, to meet new people, and learn about the library profession.”
The Global Commuter: Özlem Uzuner

By Katherine Demetri, ‘13

Özlem Uzuner has been an Assistant Professor of Information Studies at UAlbany since 2006. Professor Uzuner hails from the island of Cyprus and is trilingual. Professor Uzuner received her BS in Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at MIT, as well as her PhD in Technology, Management, and Policy. She advises students and oversees doctoral dissertations while researching medical informatics, information retrieval, and clinical language processing. She agreed to an interview about her research:

What are you currently researching?

I am working on building computer systems that can convert narrative electronic health records into structured databases. Databases are easier to access, use, and manipulate than narrative records. They respond quickly to queries posed by humans. Narratives are harder to use in the same way. But by converting them into a database format, we make them more accessible. The information in the narrative electronic health records can be important for patient diagnosis and treatment, as well as for clinical research. Therefore making this information accessible can benefit healthcare and the public in general.

Why does it interest you?

I am inspired by the idea of making a contribution to the society and making a difference in people's lives. Applications of technology to electronic health records allows me to make progress in this direction.

What made you think to research it?

The needs of the society in this regard have gained much attention in the recent years. I saw that the knowledge I acquired during my graduate studies could directly be applied to this topic.

What research has been the most telling/interesting to you?

Electronic health records contain information about medications, their uses, and their effects. Medications need to go through clinical trials to be evaluated and tested. Electronic health record information can supplement clinical trials: these records document the effects of medications in their real uses and can provide valuable information which is commonly observed but may not come up in clinical trials.

Assistant Professor Uzuner teaches Fundamentals of Information Technology (523) and Information Storage and Retrieval (533). If you would like to read more about Professor Uzuner and her research, follow the link: http://people.csail.mit.edu/ozlem/research.html
It could be said that Jessica Scheuler, '09 has worked her way around the world. In her two and a half years as a librarian for Holland America Line (HAL), Jess has traveled on six ships. “This has been the best way to travel and to see what I have seen,” says Jess aboard the MS Prinsendam.

Holland America’s libraries are in each ship’s Explorations Café. Organizationally, the librarians and the Explorations Café are part of each ship’s Entertainment Department. The café on the MS Prinsendam is a busy place. Passengers are at workstations sending email. Passengers browse the bookshelves for relaxing reading while other passengers consult the wide array of travel guides for upcoming ports of call. The daily trivia quiz open to all is handed in at the librarian’s desk. On the MS Prinsendam, Jess is in charge of running the book club as well. Holland America offers book clubs on longer voyages, providing guests with copies of the book and holding discussion meetings throughout the cruise. She notes that, for the most part, the ship board collections are rotating, although she has on occasion added a book donated by a guest. A tech manager assists with onboard internet accounts, however, the librarian also receives many inquiries about how to login to email accounts, particularly when working on a series of seven day voyages.

Jess works seven days a week and the hours fluctuate depending on whether she is in port or at sea. Jess notes that duties vary from ship to ship. On some ships she has assisted with disembarkation, assisted at bingo and on special theme nights she is expected to socialize with onboard guests. As a member of the entertainment staff, she has performed in first-night variety shows as a harlequin and a pirate. The sea days are long. Port leave fluctuates ship by ship, although she says she has been able to get off the ship most of the times she wanted to do so. “It’s a lot of working hours and all shipboard crew and staff must know safety functions and participate in drills. I am CPR certified.”

Are you interested in becoming a shipboard librarian? Jess’s advice: “HAL looks for customer service experience. You must be a ‘people person,’ a team player and able to take direction well. You will have a roommate and will be in close quarters all the time. Anyone that is interested can apply through Holland America’s website.” Jess says it is very difficult to get onto the MS Prinsendam, which prides itself on personalized service on longer voyages. “You really get know the guests on a 68 day voyage.”

*Carole Lee Anderson is an Associate Librarian at the UA Libraries.
David Ferriero (middle row center right), the 10th Archivist of the United States, visited the UA campus on October 21, 2012, where he met with students and IST faculty. David Ferriero was Director of the New York Public Library; and before that, he was the University Librarian and Vice Provost for Library Affairs at Duke University. Prior to his tenure at Duke, he worked for 31 years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology libraries. Ferriero is the first librarian to serve as Archivist of the United States. His visit with IST students sponsored by the Student Chapter of American Society of Archivists, Kate Morris President.

Susan Hildreth M.L.S. ’73, Director of the United States Institute of Museum and Library Services with Phil Eppard, Professor and Chair, Department of Information Studies.

Ms. Hildreth was on campus in September to meet with IST faculty and students and to receive UA’s 2012 Distinguished Public Service Award.
iConnect is an electronic update distributed to Department of Information Studies alumni and friends. iConnect is an annual 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 Vanessa Baron ’12, Katie Demetri ’13, Mara S. Elliott ’13, Hope Kramer ’12, Melissa McMullen ‘13, Linnea Moosmann ‘12, Rachel A. Solomon ’13, and Pernel Wilfred ’13. All were students in IST 666, Advancement, Marketing, and Public Relations for Libraries, 2012 summer session. And special thanks to Seth Shapiro ‘12 for his work on preparing the 2012 issue for electronic distribution. Advancement, Marketing and Public Relations for Libraries, 2012 was taught by Service Professor Frank D’Andraia.