Planning for Learning and Assessment
School of Library & Information Science
2009/2010

What general outcomes are you seeking?

The School has identified the following goals and related objectives for students who complete the Master of Library Science (MLS) program:

1. **Assist and Educate Users of Libraries and Information Centers**
   - Analyze and identify information needs that represent a variety of age, academic, economic, and social groups and apply appropriate search strategies for effective and efficient information retrieval in each situation.
   - Educate users and potential users of information systems to locate and evaluate information resources.
   - Analyze and evaluate the provision of information systems and services in a variety of library and information settings.

2. **Develop and Manage Library Collections**
   - Prepare and apply policies and procedures that support the selection and acquisition of information resources, which will meet the information needs of an organization, institution, or community.
   - Manage, evaluate and preserve collections of information resources.

3. **Organize and Represent Information Resources**
   - Understand and effectively apply principles of representation and systems of organization to provide access to resources in a variety of library and information environments.

4. **Apply Management and Leadership Skills**
   - Understand a wide range of organizational structures and management and leadership styles; demonstrate positive attitudes and constructive actions that characterize innovative leadership.
   - Recognize the value of collaborative planning and project management.
   - Apply the interpersonal and organizational skills necessary to manage and evaluate projects and personnel successfully.
   - Work effectively within and across a variety of organizational structures.
   - Communicate an organization's values and contributions, and identify sources that will support the organization's activities.

5. **Conduct and Analyze Research**
   - Understand and apply research and evaluation methods to investigate questions related to the acquisition, representation, organization, use and/or dissemination of information.
   - Analyze and interpret findings of such research and evaluation.

6. **Demonstrate Basic Technical Expertise**
   - Understand the basic applications of modern technology in today's libraries and other information environments.

7. **Approach Professional Issues with Understanding**
   - Comprehend the social, political, and legal aspects of information creation, access, and ownership.
Engage in continued learning in professional organizations in library and information science.

How would you know it if you saw it?

These learning outcomes have been mapped to the desired competencies that the American Library Association has developed for individuals entering the library profession. Additionally, the School of Library and Information Science has been working on an ePortfolio for students to populate with artifacts demonstrating their understanding and skills in each of these outcome areas.

How will you help students learn it?

The program has a set of required courses for all Master of Library Science students in the program that corresponds with the first five outcome areas. Technical expertise and understanding of professional issues are woven throughout the curriculum in the required and elective courses.

How could you measure each of the desired behaviors listed in #2?

A number of direct and indirect measures are employed to assess learning outcomes. As students complete the program, they are sent an exit survey designed to gather information about the quality of the program. The School's alumni board is consulted on an ongoing basis to determine whether our teaching is relevant and adequate for current practice. Anecdotal information is also received from graduates during alumni gatherings to ascertain whether the program adequately prepared them to acquire a professional position and meet the demands of that position. Finally, the ePortfolio is designed to assess the program as a whole to determine areas that may need improvement.

What are the assessment findings?

The most frequent concern expressed is an indirect student outcome: a desire for better advising. Although all students in the program are assigned a faculty member as their advisor, they would like better advising. As a direct indicator of student learning outcomes, the data from the pilot study of the ePortfolio indicates that the program may be focusing too much attention on one system of organizing information without demonstrating other options and not enough attention, for some, on technology applications.

What improvements have been made based on assessment findings?

Faculty members have been informed of all of these findings. Advisors have been reminded of their role, and training has been provided on the various available systems to help them better access information about their advisees. Those whose teaching relates to the organization and representation of knowledge and information were made aware of the results of the ePortfolio pilot study, and modifications are being made in those courses. Finally, a number of faculty members have added technology applications to their assignments (development of blogs, wikis, etc.) rather than traditional print-based papers. Ongoing assessment will determine whether these changes have improved student outcomes.