Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
School of Library and Information Science
Graduate Program in Library and Information Science

AY 2009-2010

Key Assessment Findings

Key Assessment: The Comprehensive Examination Results

The faculty of the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) do an analysis of the comprehensive examination each semester to evaluate the extent to which the students in the Master's of Science in Library Science (MSLS) program demonstrate mastery of the School's six (6) competency areas. The competency areas for the SLIS program are available at: http://slis.cua.edu/res/docs/about/accreditation/documents/sliscompetenciesadopted20080326.pdf . The data on the SLIS pass/fail rate for 2009-2010 is provided below in Table I. The data show that the SLIS pass rate for the comprehensive examination in the AY 2009-2010 is strong at 93.7%. It is slightly lower than that of the previous year which was 96.67%.

The analysis of the pass/fail rate for the comprehensive examination results is one key assessment the School's faculty analyzes to ensure students are mastering the program objectives and to inform curricular improvements for the program in areas where student mastery is less than desired.

Table 1. Comprehensive Exam Results (AY2009-10)

	Fail		Pass		Student Total
	#	%	#	%	
MSLS program	6	6.3%	89	93.7%	95

Key Findings

The analysis of the comprehensive examination data also included an analysis of the questions students answered and an analysis of the areas where student demonstration of mastery of some aspects of the six program objectives was marginal. The faculty's findings regarding student performance were as follows:

- Competency areas which students most often chose to answer the questions (top two) are
  - Professional identity (185)
  - Management (128)

Table 2. Answers by Competency Area (AY 2009-10)

Competency Area	Total Answers
Professional Identity	185
Management	128
Resources	115
Technology	109
Information Organization	69
Services	60

- Competency areas where students' answers were marginal (top two) are
  - Professional identity/management
  - Information organization/technology

Curricular Improvements

The findings from the comprehensive examination analysis support the faculty's initiatives to continuously improve student achievement through the curriculum by enhancing opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of professional identity and management within the SLIS curriculum. There is also a concerted effort to evaluate core courses, especially in the information organization and technology areas, to ensure consistent coverage of subject matters. Changes in curriculum in response to comprehensive examination analysis include:

- The SLIS faculty revised several courses of study for the degree to provide a program of study that now recommends that the management course (LSC 607) in recommended for several courses of study. By highlighting the importance of this course, the faculty hope more students will develop a better understanding of management.
- In fall 2009 SLIS launched a new advanced certificate in Library Leadership and Management, which may be taken after completion of the masters or as an enhancement to the master's degree. This initiative was also designed to provide further educational opportunities for SLIS students to hone their knowledge in management and professional identity.
- The SLIS faculty established the practice of surveying incoming SLIS students with a technology questionnaire to identify students' technology strengths and areas that need improvement. Input from students enabled SLIS to develop technology support resources for students. For example, Blackboard handouts were developed to improve students' ability to

use this learning management system at CUA. Free technology workshops were also offered to prepare students for success in the program. Workshop topics included General Computing, SLIS Computing Environment, Taking a Blended Class, The eSLIS Synchronous Online learning Environment, ALADIN, Cardinal Students Email, Internet, and Webpage Design.

- The SLIS faculty also coordinated the coverage of LSC 551, Organization of Information, across instructors and standardized the assessment of students in key areas, such as thesaurus construction, to ensure students have the competency needed.

The Comprehensive Examination Rubric

The evaluation rubric developed in 2008 was tested in two competency areas at a time by the faculty from summer 2009 to summer 2010. The objective of the tests was to determine how well the traits—knowledge of theoretical principles, Application of theoretical principles to practice, Reflection on the professional values in the LIS field, Use of literature, and Written communication—could be used to assess student performance in the comprehensive examination. On a scale of 3 (3 being exceeding expectations, 2 being meeting expectations, and 1 being below expectations), the scores ranged from 1.85 top 2.8 across the evaluators. The SLIS faculty concluded that the rubric could be a valid tool for assessing student performance and could potentially be linked to program objectives. In the 2010-11 academic year, the faculty will examine the links between the evaluation rubric and the SLIS program objectives more critically and decide what changes are necessary. The results will be presented to the SLIS Curriculum Committee for discussion and approval. The improvements/changes will be added to the SLIS *Working Plan* as a future milestone for the Curriculum Committee to achieve within the SLIS program in library and information science.