

Surviving and Thriving Through the SACS Process

Katherine Rolfes, Director of Library Services, South Louisiana Community College

Whether your library is a candidate for accreditation or up for reaccreditation, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) accreditation process can be daunting. I led South Louisiana Community College library from candidacy to accreditation over a period of four years. My experiences during this time were not always pleasant or smooth. However, I learned a great deal about what SACS reviewers look for in terms of the library. Hopefully my experiences can assist others along a smooth path to accreditation.

General Hints:

- **Collection:** It is important to present a complete picture regarding your library's collection in terms of print and electronic resources. Some degree programs rely more heavily on electronic resources than do other degree programs. Don't rely solely on electronic resources to show that you have sufficient library resources. SACS still wants to see books on the shelves.
- **Evaluation:** The SACS reviewer will look to see that you evaluated the library's collection and services both from a student and a faculty/staff standpoint.

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Also, you must also show that you made changes to the library based upon the feedback from the evaluations.

- **SACS reviewer:** Do not assume that one person reads all of the sections related to the library. Each section should have enough documentation to stand on its own.
- **Layering:** The more pieces of evidence you can use to support a section, the better. For example, to document the qualifications of library professional staff you should provide documentation not only on degrees earned but also relevant work experience and professional development activities. You want the reviewer to read your documentation and not have any doubts that your library is SACS compliant.
- **Documentation:** Put as much documentation as you can in the body of the report. With the exception of large documents

such as the LALINC reciprocal agreement and the collection development policy, try not to put anything in the appendices. You want to make it as easy as possible for the reviewer. The SACS reviewer doesn't want to continually flip back and forth between the body of the report and the appendices.

- **Annual Meeting:** I strongly urge you to attend the SACS annual meeting. There are a couple of sessions related to the library and learning resources. It is helpful to attend these sessions to learn how other libraries approach the SACS process.

For the library, SACS requires compliance in one core requirement and three comprehensive standards. Unfortunately, the core requirement and comprehensive standards do not dictate exactly what must be documented as evidence of SACS compliance. Hopefully, my suggestions below will give you some idea of what SACS reviewers are looking for.

Core requirement 2.9 – This is the heart of SACS documentation for the library. There are four parts to this requirement that you will have to document including: 1. Adequate library collections, 2. Library services, 3. Student and faculty access to the collection and, 4. Other learning/information resources.

Adequate library collections: For this section, you must document the adequacy of the library's collection and how the collection relates to each degree program.

Relate as much of your collection as you can to each degree program. The

following are examples of documentation to include: number of titles in each LC classification, a list of print journals and the degree program that each journal relates to, a list of LALINC databases and the related degree program, a listing of your library's individual database licenses and the related degree program. Also include a separate section for collection sharing statistics including number of LALINC cards issued and the number of ILL items borrowed and loaned. If you have any reciprocal agreements in addition to the LALINC agreement, describe it here. You will also need to provide evidence that you have evaluated your collection. Examples of evidence include: the collection evaluation section from your collection development policy and a collection aging spreadsheet.

Library services: In this section provide statistics regarding provision of library services including: bibliographic instruction (number of students and classes), number of items circulated, number of e-book and database accesses, number of LALINC cards issued, number of ILL items borrowed and loaned.

Student and faculty access to the collection: The SACS reviewer will want to see that your collection is accessed and that your patrons are instructed in how to access the collection. Provide collection access statistics including: circulation statistics, and number of e-book and database accesses.

Also include information about bibliographic instruction here including the number of classes and the number of students. It is important to document that the bibliographic instruction was evaluated and that changes were made based upon the evaluations.

Other learning resources: In this section, provide documentation of additional learning resources located within and outside of the library. These resources include: availability of multi-media equipment within the library, learning labs located outside of the library, writing centers, academic support centers, science labs and tutoring services. Also include documentation that these resources were evaluated and that changes were made based upon the evaluations.

Comprehensive Standard 3.8.1 Facilities and learning/information resources

Although much of the documentation in this section is captured in the documentation for core requirement 2.9, you will still need to capture that information here. Remember, you can't assume that one SACS reviewer will read all of the sections related to the library. Documentation for each section must stand on its own, independent of other sections.

Facilities: Include a space utilization spreadsheet that shows total library square footage and how it is used by stack, patron seating, and library staff work space.

Learning/Information Resources: Provide information about your collection including: number of titles by LC classification, a list of print journals and the related degree programs, and a list of databases and the related degree programs.

It is also important to include documentation that your learning resources were evaluated. This can be in the form of faculty and student evaluations or graduate exit surveys. Also, document that changes were made

based upon feedback from the evaluations.

Comprehensive Standard 3.8.2 – Bibliographic instruction

For this section provide data regarding bibliographic instruction. For example, for each semester over the past two years include the number of sessions and the number of attendees. A description of the type of bibliographic instruction that is offered is also helpful. Is the instruction an orientation for all first time freshmen or is the instruction related to a particular course?

Additionally, SACS reviewers will be looking to see that the bibliographic sessions were evaluated. One way to do this is by issuing an evaluation form at the end of each session and compiling the results. You also must demonstrate to the reviewer that you have made changes to the instruction based upon feedback from students.

Comprehensive Standard 3.8.3 – Library Staff:

For this section, the SACS reviewer will look for documentation that the library staff is qualified in terms of education and experience. Provide the staff members' names, educational background, current position and work experience relevant to their current position. Also include a chart of professional development activities library staff has participated in over the past two years.

While the SACS process can be overwhelming, it is manageable. Hopefully, my suggestions above will help you, whether you are a candidate for accreditation or up for reaccreditation.

Message from the President-Elect

Michael Matthews, Watson Memorial Library, Northwestern State University of Louisiana

I am pleased and relieved to say that this October we will have our first orderly and by-the-book election in over four years.

Now let me put that pronouncement in perspective: When Kevin and I took office two years ago, the president-elect and secretary-treasurer had left the state. Several colleges and universities along the Coast were destroyed. The future of the chapter, and for all Louisiana librarians, looked especially bleak. Northwestern State University's operating fund was cut by 75% in January 2006. In six months, our "New Books" section was reduced to empty shelf ranges. We spent many hours squeezing a few dollars from one fund or another, trying to cover our database bills and prior traveling expenses.

Rumors of mass layoffs spread throughout the state employment system. For many of our colleagues along the Gulf Coast those rumors were in fact true. The University of New Orleans, Southern University at New Orleans, Dillard, Xavier, Loyola, and Tulane declared financial exigency and terminated many faculty, even permanently dissolving whole departments and divisions. The American Association of University Professors published a particularly condemnatory report this past May that closely details the intense and heartbreaking trials of these faculty who are now dispersed across the United

States. We needn't ask if they will be coming back to Louisiana.

Two years later, the academic librarians of Louisiana have much to be proud of. We have seen our collections drowned, our funds slashed, and vacant positions left unfilled. But we have witnessed a restoration, like that of New Orleans—one which is slow, difficult and burdensome. After a long interregnum which has sorely tested our spirits, we now find ourselves enjoying a state-wide budget surplus. The governor signed a law which has provided pay increases and special earmarks for libraries and research. Such sudden and inexplicable generosity is like a rain of bread falling from the heavens.

Let us not be lulled into contentment. Instead, let us work together to advocate for increased funding and staffing for our libraries. Let us challenge the popular and simple notion that faster technology can replace the wealth of expertise that each librarian carries within. Let us teach the students *and the professors* that the library is not only the heart of the university, it is its brain as well.

To do this we must first demonstrate to our university administrations that library services are essential to student learning, retention, and post-matriculation success. Second, we must use this information to strengthen and broaden the academic library mission on a comprehensive and systemic level. Third, we must work to form partnerships and coalitions that significantly expand our influence on our respective institution's missions, as well as on Louisiana's higher education priorities.

As a member of ACRL-LA, I invite you to participate in our plan of action by attending these upcoming events: On October 10th, we will be sponsoring the workshop “Assessment of Academic Library Effectiveness”. On January 24th 2008, we will host a panel discussion starring current ACRL president Julie Todaro, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Thomas F. Armstrong (LSU-A), and Vice-President of Institutional Development Mr. John T. Landry (UL-Lafayette). The working topic is, “Strategic Management and the Academic Library”. Please stay tuned to the LALINC listserv for more details.

Last, but most important: A warm welcome to our new and returning members. Thanks for keeping the faith.

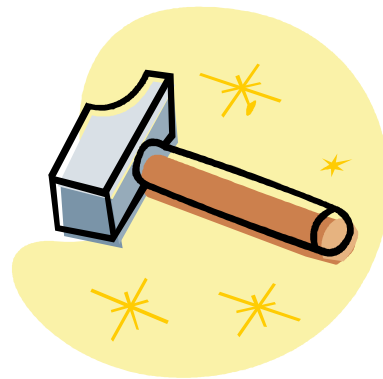
Presentation Focuses on Importance of Information Literacy to Accreditation

*Debra Rollins, Library Services,
LSU—Alexandria*

The LALINC Information Literacy Committee is charged with articulating learning outcomes and suggesting assessment measures for the Louisiana Board of Regents information literacy requirement. One of its most recent activities was a presentation at the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges 2007 Leadership Day conference. Members of the committee—Debra Rollins, Jessica Hutchings, Tony Fonseca, Mike Matthews, and Kathy Kerdolff—provided an explanation of information literacy and discussed its importance to Louisiana's students. Attendees had an opportunity to learn about what SACS and visiting teams would look for in documents prepared for reaffirmation and the importance of

aligning information literacy program initiatives with each institution's General Education programs. Three committee members shared "SACS Success Stories" and answered specific questions from attendees. The presentation also provided an opportunity for Mike Matthews, as ACRL President-elect, to promote the connection between the Information Literacy focused content of this presentation and the October workshop on Assessment of Academic Library Effectiveness: Using the ACRL Standards for Continuous Evaluation.

A substantial part of the content of this LCTCS presentation will be repeated on Thursday, Oct. 11 during the committee's 10:30 session at LUC.



Nelson-Fernekes Seminar on Applying ACRL Standards to be Held at LSU

The Louisiana Chapter of ACRL will host William Nelson's and Robert Fernekes's workshop, *Practical Library Assessment: Applying the ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* at Louisiana State University—Baton Rouge on October the 10th 2007.

According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, sixteen institutions of higher learning in Louisiana will undergo the re-accreditation process in the next three years. Many of these institutions are located along the coastline, whose communities are still coping with the catastrophic impact of Katrina and Rita.

“After the storms all travel budgets were wiped out, but continuing education is an absolute necessity”, said Michael Matthews, President-Elect of the Louisiana Chapter. “Therefore, we offer this all-day workshop by these two eminent gentlemen at a significant discount.” Registration will cost ACRL members \$75.00, and non-members \$90.00. Participants from out-of-state institutions can register for a limited number of slots for \$120.00. Registration will open the first week of August.

The workshop, which will begin at 9:00 a.m. after a breakfast sponsored by Thomson-Gale, will provide participants with a concise and rigorous overview of the *ACRL Standards*. Participants will learn how to develop evaluation and assessment strategies that stress outcomes-based learning, and how to

create a framework that establishes continuous assessments at their home institutions. The workshop will conclude at 4:30 p.m., and participants will receive a certificate of completion.

“This workshop would not be possible without the sponsorships of SirsiDynix and Proquest-CSA who are contributing meals and materials”, said Kevin Merriman current chapter President. “LSU's School of Library and Information Science is kindly paying for the presenters lodgings at the Lod-Cook Center, which is on par with the Hilton.”

The workshop will be in the offices of the LOUIS Consortium in the Frey Computing Center. Ralph Boe, the Executive Director of LOUIS, has generously provided the necessary space and “saved (the chapter) a considerable amount of money that would have been spent on a comparable hotel meeting venue,” Merriman said.

Librarians interested in attending should contact the workshop planner, Michael Matthews at 1-888-540-9657, and check the chapter website for updates (<http://www.mcneese.edu/acrl>)

Renew today!

Our membership year begins in July. It's time for everyone to renew! For more information and to renew, see our website:

http://library.mcneese.edu/acrl_membership_form.asp

Thanks!

Who? What? Where?

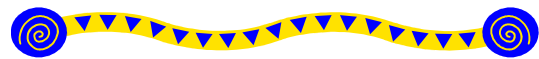
at ULL

On April 30, Dupré Library celebrated the acquisition of its millionth volume. *The Nature of Things at Lake Martin: Exploring the Wonder of Cypress Island Preserve in Southern Louisiana* by Nancy Camel (Acadian House, 2006) was prominently displayed as the millionth volume. A new portrait of Edith Garland Dupré, founder of the library, was unveiled. **Dr. Bruce Turner**, Head of Special Collections, mounted an exhibit about Dupré in the library stairwell. Several pieces of Dupré's furniture, donated to the library by family members, were also on display. Speakers were **Dr. Charles W. Triche, III**, Director of University Libraries; **Dr. Ray Authement**, President of the University; **Della Bonnette**, Vice President of Information and Technology; **Dr. Donald Pavy**, representing the Dupré family; and **Janine Collins**, the artist who created the Dupré portrait. Music and refreshments added to the festivities.

Sandy Himel, Government Documents Librarian, is the recipient of the Drs. Gloria S. and Robert W. Cline/BORSF Endowed Professorship for the next three years. Himel is project coordinator for a BORSF grant and a Grammy Foundation Program grant used to establish and catalog a Cajun and Creole Music Collection (CCMC) at Dupré Library. The CCMC includes both analog and digital media: 78rpm, 45rpm, and LP (33 1/3rpm) records, 8-track tapes, audio-cassette tapes, compact discs, VHS tapes and DVDs. The expanding collection also contains

books, periodicals, photographs, artifacts, and ephemera.

The library will open for the fall semester with a new 3M V-4 SelfCheck™ System provided by STEP, the Student Technology Enhancement Program. **Beate Kukainis**, Head of Technical Services, submitted the grant proposal for the system.



Leadership Recruitment and Nomination Process Revisions

Mary Ellen Davis, ACRL Executive Director

I am pleased to inform you that the ACRL Board of Directors, at its June 26, 2007, meeting in Washington, DC, approved the following revisions to the Leadership Recruitment and Nomination process for selecting candidates for the ACRL Board of Directors.

1. Changed the composition of the Leadership Recruitment and Nomination Committee for a four-year pilot period beginning with the 2009 election cycle. The committee will be composed of the Leadership Recruitment and Nomination Committee chair (the previous year's committee vice-chair), vice-chair (appointed by the ACRL vice-president/president-elect), one member from the University Libraries Section, one member from the College Libraries Section, one member from Community and Junior College Libraries Section, one member from Section Council, one member from Chapters Council and one

at-large member. The type-of-library Sections and the two Councils would each determine the process for naming their RNC member. The vice-president/president-elect of ACRL would appoint the at-large member. Terms of the LRNC would be staggered to ensure continuity on the committee. The ACRL Board will appoint a task force to begin an assessment of the pilot in Year 3.

2007-2008 Board Members

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 SLIS Representative Alma Dawson
 SLIS Student Liaison.....Elizabeth West

SAVE THE DATE!
January 24th, 2008
at the UL-Lafayette Research Park
Strategic Management and the Academic Library
A Panel Discussion
Featuring current national ACRL president
Dr. Julie Todaro

The dean of Library Services of the Austin Community College in Austin, Texas. She has presented more than 150 workshops on organizational development, staff development and other management issues, including the LAMA 1997 Institute of the Year, "Staffing Issues of the Year 2000: Managing and Working in the Libraries of Tomorrow" and the regional institute "Integrating Learning with Work: Designing the 21st Century Learning Library." She holds a master's degree in library science from the University of Texas at Austin and a doctorate in library service from Columbia University in New York City.

Our eminent panelists also include:

LSU-Alexandria's Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dr. Thomas Armstrong
 Who is active in the work of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, having chaired more than 20 visiting teams and having made presentations to each of the last several annual meetings. In 1999, Dr. Armstrong chaired the program committee for the annual meeting. In Louisiana, Vice Chancellor Armstrong is working closely with the Board of Regents on a number of initiatives for the benefit of Central Louisiana.

UL-Lafayette's Vice-President of Institutional Development, Mr. John T. Landry
 The First Gentleman of Louisiana, Mr. Landry is a Certified Fund Raising Executive, and serves on the board of directors for the Louisiana Recovery Authority. He is a member of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, the National Committee on Planned Giving, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), and served as president of the Planned Giving Council of Acadiana (PGCA).