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New Programs and Accreditations: Meaningful Measurement & Assessment

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Biz of Acq — New Programs and Accreditations: Meaningful Measurement and Assessment

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Column Editor's Note: In my last act as the editor of the Biz of Acq column, I am pleased to present Antje Mays' interesting and informative article on new programs and accreditation. Audrey Fenner will be the new editor of Biz of Acq, beginning with the next issue. I'd like to thank all of the fabulous authors that have written articles for Biz of Acq in the last two years, and especially Audrey Fenner, who consistently provided me with excellent articles that never required any editing at all. — MF

Accreditation visits and library support of newly starting programs need not be daunting, intimidating, or fraught with more questions than answers. Accreditation visits place the entire library operation and measurable performance data under close scrutiny, while libraries must also measure themselves when new programs are started—a task which often requires building an area-supporting collection from scratch when existing materials do not directly

relate to the new program. While the bulk of this article will share some tips for ensuring successful accreditation visits, many of the principles of becoming familiar with program-specific standards and expectations also apply to the task of systematic collection-building for new programs.

I. Preliminary Assessment Before the Site Visit

Academic units and libraries typically undergo a preliminary phase of "self-study" before the formal hosting of accreditation teams and/or higher-education new-program-review teams. During this phase, teaching units take stock of their existing and envisioned courses, areas of faculty expertise, facilities and equipment, the academic units' budgets, and the supporting areas' budgets, such as libraries, computer centers, labs, as well as library resources on hand. Both program-specific and regional accrediting agencies' evaluation criteria include "Library Sections" in which libraries answer specific questions such as collection-develop-

ment policy descriptions and strategies, expenditures, library subscriptions listings (print, microform, electronic), number of volumes supporting each discipline under review, seating capacity, study and technology facilities, reciprocal borrowing agreements, etc.

II. Preparation: Tips for Libraries and for Technical Services

1. The smoothness of routine program support sets a positive stage for working together in high-stakes program-review visits. In working with routine program support, program start-ups, and accreditation visits, never wait passively for the expression of needs to be handed down. Instead, demand a seat at the table:

   a. Arrange to sit in on crucial academic meetings.

   b. Host library-liaison group meetings for demos of new selection tools, information exchange, etc.

c. Have an open door policy and welcome library liaisons and in-house selectors.

2. Take initiative to pick teaching faculties' and library liaisons' brains about program developments and changes (much of this information comes about informally as a result of ongoing consistent working relations).

3. Have streamlined and responsive acquisitions procedures that are customer-friendly to the academic units.

4. Be the businesslike curriculum and budget expert and respect will follow. (The flip-side: *do not* buy the "they're just librarians" mentality).

5. In large libraries, stay abreast of curricular developments and serve as an expert to the Public Services Librarians in order to minimize last-minute no-context requests for data-analysis reports.

d. Demand a place at the table at meetings to determine program intellectual content, and to plan for accreditations and related data needs.

e. Offer customized reporting based on the need at hand, thereby offering your collection-development and data-analysis expertise.

f. Don't passively await requests for reports from Public Services, Library Administration, or academic units. Be a professional presence in the lives of the academics and administration, anticipating and soliciting needs, serving in an expert capacity akin to a consultant.

6. Design a strategy, in collaboration with the teaching units, for determining library needs in support of new programs. For example, A new interdisciplinary program in Environmental Sciences and Studies is planned and goes through the requisite process of internal approval by all teaching departments involved, the university administration, the university's board/regents, the state's higher-education review board, and comparison with the standards and expectations of any applicable professional societies and accreditation agencies:

a. What does the proposed program encompass? This quite inter-disciplinary area of Environmental Sciences & Studies is set up to draw from traditional sciences, history, and social sciences and focus on environmental impact/

assessment and law/policy, economics, sustainable development, globalization, and health-related areas. As such, it draws from the following disciplines: agriculture, anthropology, chemistry, civil engineering (sanitation, water supply, and other infrastructures), ecology, economics, environmental health & medicine, geology, history, human nutrition, health sciences, history, hydrology, law, political science

b. What is already available in-house? In this example, the campus starts out without a formal Environmental Sciences department, but in most cases an infrastructure is already in place, but environment-oriented additions are needed. In a research university, the existing infrastructure could include a law school, an engineering school, and a medical school. In a college, the existing infrastructure could already include departments of Biology (including ecology, agriculture, pre-med), Chemistry (including biochemisty, geology, hydrology), Nutrition Physics (including pre-engineering), Business (including economics, management and international business with a view to at-home and transnational environmental practices), Geography (including sustainable development, land use), History (history of land use and environmental practices), Political Science (including environmental policy & law, water rights, intergovernmental cooperation and treaties, transnational environmental ethics, pre-law studies), Sociology (including globalization, the effect of resources and environmental impacts on human settlements), etc. This type of inventory will bring insights both on which environment-pertinent areas are already taught, what supporting facilities and labs are already on hand, and what library materials the university already has in support of starting this new program.

c. Which needs are not yet filled by available resources? The completed inventory of existing resources is very helpful in identifying collection gaps and knowledge niches unique to the new program. As such, this map can then be used for collection development and cost analysis for the needed materials.

III. The Formal Site Visit

The site visit is a culmination of all the preparation. Each site visit varies and can involve anything from a brief tour of the library to in-depth meetings of the accreditation/program-review team with the library director and all involved in the collection-development and acquisitions process. While the review teams typically do not look for details such as acquisitions files, some do ask those in acquisitions and collection-development a variety of questions (some direct, others roundabout) in order to glean an impression of the library buyers' level of understanding of the disciplines' needs and the spirit of cooperation between the library and the teaching unit. And the interactions vary from formal meetings to asking questions on-the-spot during departmental walk-throughs. Differences in the accreditation visits' structure are governed by factors such as the itinerary set by the university, the review requests made by the visiting teams, the collaborative style of the teaching department being reviewed, the management style of the library director, the degree of initiative residing in acquisitions and collection development, and discipline-specific standards driving reviewers' interest in certain university components. No two site visits are alike.

1. Who is involved?
   a. Academic units.
   b. College & university administrations.
   c. Students.
   d. Accreditation agencies/program-review teams.
   e. The library.

2. What external reviewers love to see:
   a. Evidence of systematic curriculum-related collaboration between academic units and the library.
   b. Systematic collection-development strategies rather than "spur of the moment reaction" to the upcoming needs of the moment.
   c. A collection policy that grows and adapts with new, growing, and evolving programs.
   d. Approval plans with profiles that reflect the library's understanding of discipline-specific curricular needs.
   e. Frequent, consistent, and strategic interaction between the library and academic units.
   f. A diverse range of selection sources from which to choose program-appropriate library materials.
   g. Consistent funding.

IV. Tools and Websites
In-House Tools

While almost too obvious to state so, it is *crucial* to have repeatedly needed collection-related and financial data at one's fingertips. The beauty of assessment and measurement in today's environment is that current business technology provides many facets of pertinent analysis.

1. Collection statistics and financial data provide good, meaningful management information. This requires useful data-analysis software, both in a good library system and desktop software.

   a. Business suite's spreadsheet and database software with good financial-data-analysis capability.

   b. Electronically maintained year-end budget-summary reports (makes gathering multi-year analyses a snap).

   c. Enrollment statistics.

   d. Allocation formula and pattern of academic units' actual library-materials expenditures.

   e. Library-system-enabled search capabilities to determine resources the library already has on hand in support of a program that is to be newly implemented.

   f. Library-system-enabled database searching to identify available resources and new acquisitions in support of programs coming up for accreditation.

   g. Electronic gate-count: a database to access statistics to track use by discipline.

   h. Circulation statistics.

   i. Physical gate-count and proxy-server statistics tracking off-campus access to library resources, by discipline wherever technically possible.

Online Assessment and Comparison Toolkits

These online assessment tools and links to accreditation agencies provide a treasure trove of information for libraries aiming to understand beforehand what the visiting teams will be looking for. To determine one's own standing among the library-peer group, the US Department of Education's library comparison tool puts data-gathering and comparison quickly at your fingertips. Other agencies, such as program-specific and regional bodies, list their library expectations among accreditation criteria.

1. Library comparison tool for academic libraries. From US Dept of Education's National Center for Education Statistics: *http://www. nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/ academicpeer/* Online database and peer-group comparison report builder. Data are compiled every two years and three years behind the actual calendar year. As of late 2003, the data are from fiscal year 2000. FY2002 statistics will be available in 2005.

2. List of approved accrediting agencies. From US Department of Education's *Closed School Fact Sheet: http:// www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/Students/ closedschool/accred.html.* The name "closed school fact sheet" is a misnomer for this site, as it lists approved accrediting bodies that are very much alive and operational.

3. Council on Higher Education Accreditation: *http://www.chea.org.*

4. Educause: *http://www.educause.edu/.*

5. UNESCO: *http://www.unesco.org.*

6. More information about accrediting bodies, regional, national, international, program-specific, scams and standards for programs (both online and traditional): *http://www.degree.net/ guides/accreditation.html.*

Program-Specific Accreditation Agencies

1. American Chemical Society: *www.acs.org* or *www.chemistry.org.* American Chemical Society's Committee on Professional Training (CPT). Type "CPT" into the search box to see accreditation requirements.

2. Accrediting Board for Education in Technology (ABET): Civil and Electrical Engineering: *http://www. abet.org/.*

3. Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC): *http://www.ku.edu/ ~acejmc/.*

4. Commission on Accreditation of Dietetics Education (Formerly Commission on Accredited /Approved Dietetics Education (CAADE)): *www.eatright.org/cade.*

5. Association for Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Also known as "International Association for Management Education:" *www.aacsb.edu*.

6. Computing Accreditation (now under Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. Formerly "Computing Science Accreditation Board" (CSAB)): *http://www.abet.org/cac1.html*.

7. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP): *www.counseling.org/cacrep*.

8. Commission on Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP): *www.caahep.org*.

9. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE): *www.cswe.org*.

10. Foundation for Interior Design Education Research (FIDER): *www.fider.org*.

11. National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC): *www.naeyc.org*.

12. National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD): *www.arts-accredit.org/nasad*.

13. National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD): *www.arts-accredit.org/nasd*.

14. National Association of Schools of Music (NASM): *www.arts-accredit.org/nasm*.

15. National Association of School Psychologists (NASP): *http://www.nasponline.org*.

16. National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST): *www.arts-accredit.org/nast*.

17. National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE): *www.ncate.org*.

Regional accrediting bodies

1. **Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.** *www.css-msa.org*. Regional accrediting jurisdiction for: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands.

2. **New England Association of Schools and Colleges.** *www.neasc.org*. Regional accrediting jurisdiction for: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.

3. **North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.** *www.ncacihe.org*. Regional accrediting jurisdiction for: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

4. **Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.** *http://www2.boise state.edu/nasc/*. Regional accrediting jurisdiction for: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington

5. **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.** *www.sacs.org*. Regional accrediting jurisdiction for: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia.

6. **Western Association of Colleges and Schools.** *www.wascweb.org*. Regional accrediting jurisdiction for: California, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Trust Territory of the Pacific.

International accrediting bodies

1. **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.** *www.unesco.org*. UNESCO's guiding "Generally Accepted Accreditation Principles" provide overarching standards for program approval and recognition around the world. Every country and region of the world has its own accrediting bodies with autonomy within their own countries. Often these accrediting bodies operate under the auspices of Royal Charters and/or Ministries of Education respectively and never actually use the term "accreditation."

2. UNESCO's search engine: A simple search of the UNESCO portal for "accreditation" (limited to "Education" among search options) will yield a vast range of documents about international standards and individual countries' accreditation standards.

III. Pulling it all together

Armed with these strategies and assessment tools mentioned above, any library can be "on the campus map" when accreditation visits loom and new academic programs are started. Through open collaboration across campus and innovative enlistment of technology and project-specific Websites and materials-selection tools, establishing library collections for new programs and supporting accreditation needs can be positive, unintimidating, and enjoyable.

Lost in Austin

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My first **Charleston Conference** was in 1981 and until this month (I am writing this in November 2003), my most recent was in 1996. The conference has grown and changed over the years, but if you want to meet and converse with colleagues (librarians, booksellers, publishers, and their ilk) who are engaged in their profession, it is still the place to be in the fall of each year.

I remember how small the gathering was in 1981 and how much of the talk was about rare books and special collections and someone was even pricing out-of-print (or at least old) books and my talk was special collections. I don't remember who was pricing the books. Was it **Jake Chernofsky** of *AB Bookman's Weekly* fame? He was there, I remember quite well because he kindly agreed to publish my paper, one that was fun to write and that reflected my appreciation for special collections in libraries.

Twenty-two years later, I was back and again involved in a very bookish aspect of librarianship, out-of-print procurement. The thread that connects the two meetings and my involvement in them is that the programs involved what used to be called bookmen, a term that wasn't even accurate back then. Women have long been involved in the used and antiquarian book trade both as buyers and sellers.

Jack Walsdorf and I shared the stage during our late morning program. Jack had convinced me that the program's proximity to lunch and a similar topic for the Lively Lunch session that immediately followed us in time and place, and half of the presenters, guaranteed that we would have no more than two or three people in the audience. He was wrong, of course, and glad of it. We filled the room with more than two dozen people wanting to know more about acquiring out-of-print books. As it turned out, **Narda** and **Peter Tafuri**, the other half of the Lively Lunch panel, were in the audience and the others were also inclined to stay longer to extend our discussion about rare and out-of-print books in general, pausing to go fetch the box lunches.

What a great time. We each had our own experiences with Narda and I from the acquisitions librarian side of the fence, **Peter** from the book seller side, and **Jack** representing bookseller and collector, but what made it such a great time was the talk about books, condition, price, and value.

The best was yet to come. That evening about