



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

THE INFORMATION SCHOOL

December 5, 2006

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Dr. Melissa A. Austin
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Re: Response to the Report of the Information School Program Review

Dear Dean Ortega and Associate Dean Austin:

Thank you for forwarding the report of The Information School Program Review Committee. We appreciate the dedication and hard work of the committee, and the breadth and thoroughness of the review, especially given the unfortunate illness of the review committee chair. We are also grateful for the overall positive tone of the report. The review committee's report highlighted strengths that distinguish The Information School, including:

- Our rapid growth and peer recognition, reflected in enrollments and graduates of our programs, and in the recent 2006 national peer rankings in which the School was rated #4 in Library and Information Science, #1 in Law Librarianship, in the top 5 in Digital Librarianship, Health Librarianship, and Information Systems, and in the top 10 in School Library Media and Services for Children and Youth.
- Successful distance education and fee-based programs.
- Our "School of One" philosophy, ambience, and atmosphere in which everyone is included and valued. This value has generated a strong sense of community with a culture based on trust, engagement, vitality, consensus and transparency, which in turn has sponsored commitment and collegiality amongst our faculty, staff and students.
- Our deliberate efforts to connect and collaborate with numerous and diverse academic and research units across the campus and beyond.
- The flourishing of our research, which has resulted in the iSchool becoming a major player in cross-campus, interdisciplinary research collaborations. The School has also forged quite a significant number of wider, local, regional, national, and international multidisciplinary partnerships.
- A research culture that is a vibrant, collegial, contagious, creative, innovative, collaborative, cohesive, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary high-quality and highly productive. .

- Ph.D. students that demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm for the openness, collegiality, and intellectual richness of the School. A Ph.D. research and teaching practica that serves as an interesting vehicle for engaging with faculty in one-to-one interactions. These practica have also helped Ph.D. students develop a range of teaching and research skills while working with particular faculty.
- An MLIS program that has grown from a respectable library science program serving the Pacific Northwest region to become a national leader in LIS education. .
- The iSchool is a pioneer on the UW campus in online degree program delivery.
- A highly successful directed fieldwork program for MLIS students.
- A BS in Informatics that is founded on a principle of retention and with the explicit goal of helping students who have enrolled to succeed and graduate. Current BS in Informatics students are enthusiastic about the major and their professional opportunities. They report strong and positive associations with the school, the major, the faculty and administrative staff support, connection to industry and to alumni, and are extremely proud of what they are doing.

Below we respond to each of the report's recommendations in order.

1. School

A. Structure

Recommendation #1: Continue the School's current organizational structure as it has evolved to meet current needs stemming from the School's rapid growth, while maintaining flexibility to make appropriate changes as the School continues to move from its start-up to sustainability phase.

iSchool Response: The iSchool is moving from a phase of rapid growth to some level of stability, maturity and sustainability. It seems like a normal growing pain that we are currently reevaluating our organizational structure and adjusting to a level that should be sustainable for more moderate and manageable growth. We plan to carefully evaluate future needs and prioritize these needs against our strategic objectives. Our Strategic Plan will help guide these decisions.

Recommendation #2: Reduce service obligations of the faculty, perhaps by reducing the number of committees and/or the number of people assigned to each committee.

iSchool Response: This recommendation has already been followed. Through internal feedback the iSchool Elected Faculty Council began closely examining service load last academic year. They reduced the number of standing committees in the School and the number of faculty assigned to serve on these committees. The service obligations of the junior faculty have also been reduced to approximately one committee per faculty member.

B. Staff

Recommendation #1: Current staff are outstanding and every effort should be made to retain them and to provide them with professional growth opportunities and training to advance their skills and job satisfaction.

iSchool Response: We agree with this recommendation. The School expanded the staff professional development budget in July 2006, and we actively encourage all staff to engage in professional development activities.

Recommendation #2: Staff support should grow commensurate with program growth, and some backfilling is necessary, as current staff are stretched too thin to meet current needs. The addition of new additional staff is needed in order to prevent burnout of over-extended current staff. Current undergraduate support, particularly for advising, is outstanding, but beyond the long-term capacity of just one person, given the size of the program. Thus expanding support for undergraduate program (advising) is strongly recommended.

iSchool Response: The school is addressing the workload issues in the Office of Student and Academic Services and most specifically for the undergraduate program through a thorough review of the structure and staffing of the Student Services functions within the School. A temporary Associate Dean for Student Services was appointed in September and additional temporary program support staff has been provided. The School expects to finish the evaluation of the needs of student

services support in December 2006 and implement staffing changes as appropriate during the Winter and Spring of 2007. We have already addressed the concern of overload for the MSIM advisor by making this position 100% dedicated to this program.

In addition to addressing remaining student services staffing concerns, the School has identified the need to more effectively coordinate external relations contacts and outreach. A full evaluation of these needs and development of a plan to address this area will be conducted during the winter of 2007.

At the time of the Graduate School review last February, the school had several vacancies and we were in the process of reorganizing many areas of the school's staffing structure. Since February 2006, the iSchool has made the following staffing changes to address issues of workload overload and burnout:

- *Added a full-time Communications Officer*
- *Added a Systems Administrator in Information Technology*
- *Filled a vacancy in the Dean's Office for a 75% Receptionist*
- *Converted a 50% Human Resources Coordinator position to 100%*
- *Added a 50% Graduate Programs Assistant in Student Services to support the MSIM and PhD programs*
- *Restructured the MSIM advisor position to be 100% in support of the MSIM program (previously this position included 50% time responsibility for cultivating external relationships for the School)*

Outcomes of the current strategic planning process will help guide decisions about changes in staffing resources. The strategic planning process will also help address how we need to adjust expectations and workload demands on staff in areas where we can not commit new resources.

Recommendation #3: Appropriate space needs to be found for staff, particularly student services.

iSchool Response: *It is agreed that space needs are critical for staff, particularly student services. The School is working hard to make the best use of the space we have, and is pursuing a number of options with the Provost.*

Recommendation #4: Provide space for lecturers commensurate with their status and teaching contributions and role in the school.

iSchool Response: *Lecturers and Senior Lecturers are in fact each provided with a dedicated office that is in most cases shared with one other person. The two lecturers sharing an office do need to work together to manage office hours; however, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers also have access to a break-out meeting room with priority use given to those who have shared offices or who work in cubicles.*

Recommendation #5: The IT group may need more help, as they are succeeding through leveraging personnel activities, e.g., by faculty who are spending time teaching as well as providing (part-time) IT support. It is likely that at least one additional FTE is needed to sustain and grow online course activities.

iSchool Response: *A Systems Administrator position has been added to the Information Technology staff since the time of the review. Additionally, the Distance Education Coordinator will be increased from 60% to 100% effective January 1, 2007.*

C. Budget and Resources

Recommendation #1: The iSchool needs to think carefully and develop plans for when course and/or program demand flattens out or declines. This may be of particular import for the self-sustaining, fee-based programs.

iSchool Response: *The iSchool leadership team agrees with these recommendations and the cautionary note on flattening or declining demand for existing fee-based programs. We are in the midst of a Strategic Planning process, and the School is examining ongoing mechanisms to monitor trends that will suggest adjustments to courses and certificate programs that will map to needs and demands in the marketplace. The School is also constantly evaluating methods for innovating course offerings to reach a broader base of students; particularly in relation to distance and global initiatives. In addition, the iSchool strategic planning process will address long-range enrollment demand expectations and contingencies.*

Recommendation #2: Grow research funding. However, care needs to be taken that the resources to do this should not come at the expense of retaining faculty.

iSchool Response: Strategies for growing research funding and support for this activity will be addressed in the school's strategic plan.

Recommendation #3: Continue to emphasize development and community partnerships, building upon the great start made in early efforts.

iSchool Response: We agree with this recommendation and are currently assessing how to more effectively coordinate external relations contacts and outreach. A full evaluation of these needs and development of a plan to address this need will be conducted during the winter of 2007.

D. Governance

Recommendation #1: Preserve the spirit of the iSchool as a "school of one."

iSchool Response: "school of one" comes from the concept of "Faculty-of-one", a bedrock value of the organizational culture of the Information School. It is the source of many of the core values of our community. The notion of a community of shared values has been defined and elaborated in strategic planning discussions related to the vision, mission and values of the iSchool. It has been discussed and documented in the Strategic Planning process and will be preserved as the school moves forward. One way this is evidenced, is the new all-school, faculty and staff meeting formats, which have been developed with agendas for discussion and decision-making appropriate to each of these bodies.

Recommendation #2: Consider delegating some decision-making to trusted bodies, e.g., perhaps elected faculty committees.

iSchool Response: Expansion of the roles of the elected faculty council is well under way.

Recommendation #3: Put in place policies and procedures for some shared governance and deliberation.

iSchool Response: Shared governance is a core value of the iSchool community that continues to be refined and documented through policy and procedure. This year Faculty By-laws for the iSchool have been drafted by the Elected Faculty Council. These By-Laws are currently being discussed and revised by the faculty. It is expected that the iSchool will have a newly revised and approved set of By-laws by the end of the 2006.

E. Strategic Planning

Recommendation #1: Continue and enhance strategic planning under way around the move forward from start-up to longer term sustainability.

iSchool Response: Since the time of the review visit, the iSchool has been engaged in a comprehensive strategic planning process. The process involves participation of the iSchool community and external constituencies and is being led by a strategic planning group (faculty and staff) coordinated by a project manager (Mary Clark – Assistant Dean for Planning and Administration) and an external consultant (Bonnie Berk – of Berk and Associates). Environmental scanning (SWOT and trends analysis and benchmarking) for the strategic plan is now complete. A situation analysis in draft form is being reviewed by the planning group, elected faculty council, program chairs and operational leaders in the School. This review will take place in late November and December and lead to drafting of the goals and actions of our strategic plan in January 2007. We expect to have a new 5 to 7-year plan ("Vision in Action") completed by April 2007 with expectations to begin implementing appropriate strategic actions even before the plan is published.

2. Faculty

A. Teaching, Including Workload and Pace

Recommendation #1: Ideally, the overall workload for faculty should not be based on individual negotiations. For example, it would be best to have uniform teaching expectations for faculty in similar ranks in order to create more equitable teaching assignments and loads. This recommendation is made in

light of the fact that this is in many ways difficult to obtain, as exceptions often are made as part of faculty recruitment and retention efforts. It would still likely enhance equity and morale to create some common standards and expectations, even if exceptions are made.

iSchool Response: This is a difficult recommendation to follow in practice because the individual circumstances of faculty do occasionally have to be accommodated and as the review committee states, recruitment and retention issues require some levels of flexibility and judgment. A more practical approach is provided by recommendation 3 – see comment below.

The faculty exhibit strong commitment to and enthusiasm for the School and pride in our achievements. They have continued their active commitment to the School with strong levels of participation in the strategic planning process. These levels of commitment and active participation do come at a cost of workload – particularly for junior faculty. The senior faculty are encouraged to be more active in their leadership roles. The hiring of highly energetic and talented junior faculty has been a strategy for the School and an important component of its success. However, we do not want to burn out our junior faculty. The Dean is working with the Elected Faculty Council on methods for assigning and distributing School service commitments. In addition, the EFC is exploring ways to distribute key events such as faculty review and merit assessment more evenly across the academic year so that there are fewer choke-points of intense service commitment for faculty.

The School must move from a start-up mentality of constant building to one of consolidation and maximization. Equitable distribution of workload is a key to this; both perception and reality. The Associate Dean for Academics, the Academics Administrator and the program chairs are working towards a process that is open, negotiable and accommodates the differential demands and expertise of teaching faculty. A key initiative of the strategic planning process is to find a better mapping of curriculum to faculty expertise, which will provide more opportunity for individual faculty to teach in their areas of research and scholarship.

Recommendation #2: The role and expectations of the elected faculty council needs to be more clearly defined.

iSchool Response: The iSchool Elected Faculty Council met with UW office of faculty governance last Spring to learn more about the role of the EFC in other Schools and Colleges. Since that time the role of the School's EFC has been more clearly defined and new By-Laws have been drafted and are in the process of being approved by the faculty.

Recommendation #3: If possible, efforts should be made to reduce and more equitably distribute course loads. This might be accomplished by considering weighting assignment by size, credits, enrollments and centrality to curriculum/research. A more equitable course distribution could have favorable effects by reducing course preps, particularly for untenured faculty, and lead to more balanced class size/numbers.

iSchool Response: This is an important recommendation and one that the iSchool will pursue. There is differential workload attached to teaching courses in terms of size, level, credit hours, etc., and these differences need to be formulated into the expectations of faculty load. The need to reduce new course preparations particularly for untenured faculty is noted. It is also important to increase the number of repeat classes and to better map faculty expertise to teaching areas. Work is being done in these areas particularly for the Ph.D. program.

Recommendation #4: If distance instruction is appropriate for a particular course or program, the School needs to ensure that adequate support is provided before asking faculty to deliver the course or program online.

iSchool Response: We agree. The School has a very good record of providing summer funding and extra support for faculty who are developing courses for online instruction. We will continue this practice, and continue to look for new ways to provide adequate support.

B. Help to Grow Research

Recommendation #1: Engage private industry funding, capitalizing on local opportunities.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation. One way we are implementing this idea already is with the relatively new Institute for Innovation in Information Management (I3M), established with the support of private companies participating in research goals and projects.

Recommendation #2: Continue successful partnering with UW friends in pursuing funding opportunities, specifically the Biomedical and Health Informatics (BHI) Program in the Department of Medical Education and Biomedical Informatics, Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Technical Communications (TC), and others.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation. The iSchool currently participates with the Business School and the Department of Computer Science and Engineering in the annual Seattle Innovation Symposium, which involves businesses and builds relationships particularly with local technical firms. We will continue to look for new ways to partner with UW collaborators.

Recommendation #3: Consider pursuing other new opportunities, such as GIS, Human Computer Interaction, Gaming/Interactive multi-media, and other areas.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation. The iSchool's weekly "Research Conversation" series has been used to build awareness of opportunities in human computer interaction and gaming, both of which offer opportunities for multi-unit expanded collaboration at the university-wide level. We will continue to pursue new opportunities in other areas.

Recommendation #4: There is a need to rapidly build out research infrastructure, some of which is generic to UW as a whole, with specific import for the iSchool). This includes expanding a) current staff support with expertise in grant writing and b) resources to support the time it takes to write grants. At a University level, streamlining the process and speed of both human subjects approval and intellectual property agreements would be of immense help. University efforts to ease the inter-unit collaborative research/grant process is also critical, as these relationships are central to iSchool scholarship.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation. We continually look for ways to facilitate the workflow of proposal preparation and submission, reducing the effort and stress for faculty and staff. We have established and are conducting a new faculty and new PhD orientation that provides baseline knowledge about policies, procedures, and best practices on such issues as intellectual property, proposal assistance, human subjects applications, etc.

Additional resources to support the preparation of grants, both at the School and University levels, would be helpful. We agree that University efforts to ease the inter-unit collaborative grant process is critical; the disciplinary and departmental structure of University governance and fiscal accountability creates substantial barriers to true collaboration among and between units.

3. Recommendations: Programs

A. The Student Experience

Recommendation #1: Continue to make explicit that the value of high-quality education and attention to each student's progress toward completion are central tenets of this school.

iSchool Response: We agree with this recommendation, and will continue our current practice. .

Recommendation #2: If group work is to be a central component of class work, no matter the degree program, then the concepts and practices of working in groups need additional formal support. For example, this could take the form of a formal orientation or workshop on group process, group work, and group management for MSIM and MLIS students. It may be worth considering some in-class time for group work in courses with high group-work demands. This provides students a chance to meet and plan without putting the burden solely on them to find convenient out-of-class times. This in-class group time also allows the instructor to meet with and observe the groups. The former may help students to speed up their collective learning; the latter may help the instructor to intercede in or guide poor-performing groups. A third possibility is to consider adding credit to some group-work intensive courses to provide the 'group lab time.' Thus a three-credit group-work-intensive course might be turned into a four-credit course to provide the extra time for group work and for doing some of this work during class time. In the case of dMLIS students, some guidance should be provided in performing group work as members of virtual teams.

iSchool Response: Yes, there is some emphasis placed on group work in our professional programs. The work of an information specialist is characteristically one of project and team management. To assist us with the challenges of dealing

with group work in the classroom the iSchool has sought the expertise of the Center for Instructional Development and Research. CIDR consultants have done presentations on group projects/work in the School, participated in iWelcome Week, and visited a number of MSIM classes. The school also had an expert in group processes conduct 3 workshops for incoming students in the fall quarter 2006.

Recommendation #3: The School's faculty, staff, students and administrators should continue to explore a variety of mechanisms to bring students together. This academic social time will likely foster more interactions across programs and particularly foster interactions within programs (for instance, between the day and executive students of the MSIM and between the distance and residential MLIS students).

iSchool Response: We agree that bringing students together across programs is important. It is part of our core belief in the value of community. We do emphasize student interactions across academic programs but need to do more. In our current review of the Office of Student and Academic Services we are specifically looking at event planning and marketing to increase opportunities for students to interact across programs.

There are a number of iSchool student organizations and participation in these organizations is extremely strong. In addition to these student-run clubs, we (faculty, staff and students) are planning a social event which will occur in Winter 2007 between the Day and Executive MSIM students in an attempt to bring these two groups closer together.

B. Ph.D. Program

Recommendation #1: Maintain the current size of the Ph.D. program (of four-to-five new admits per year). Any growth (to perhaps six-to-eight (+) admits per year) must follow from increased funding via research appointments, teaching assistantships or fellowship support.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation, which will be followed up by the Ph.D. program chair and program committee.

Recommendation #2: Put in place a process that increases the transparency of teaching and research support, so that faculty and students are aware of the opportunities and arrangements.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation, which will be followed up by the Ph.D. program chair and program committee.

Recommendation #3: Continue to fund site-visits for Ph.D. recruiting. Having potential Ph.D. students visit the school and university appears to be a contributing factor to high yield rates and high-quality students.

iSchool Response: We agree that site visits are important for Ph.D. student recruiting. This practice will continue.

Recommendation #4: Resolve any remaining gaps in communication among the Ph.D. program committee and Ph.D. advisors relative to communicating the status and progress of students through the program. The policy in place regarding student progress through the Ph.D. program is sound; the communication gaps among the Ph.D. program committee and Ph.D. student advisors needs to be resolved so that students (and advisors) are not surprised. This is likely to occur naturally as this newly implemented process becomes more routine, expected, and transparent.

iSchool Response: The surprise following our warning letters was noted and the policies and procedures have been rewritten with a clearer set of objective criteria for the Office of Student and Academic Services and subjective criteria for the student's advisor and committee. The Ph.D. program chair and student services administrator also met with the Ph.D. students to discuss this policy. We are committed to making this process more transparent in the future.

Recommendation #5: The Ph.D. program committee, in consultation with the faculty, are encouraged to develop and share several nominal plans (“roadmaps”) regarding different and viable approaches to making successful progress through the Ph.D. program. This will be helpful in reaffirming the espoused desire to recognize the value of allowing different disciplinary paths and time-frames through the Ph.D. program.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation, which will be followed up by the Ph.D. program chair and program committee.

Recommendation #6: Put in place some form of seminar or series of workshops early in the Ph.D. student’s program experience to help the students make better use of their practicum. This would provide more guidance on the value and best uses of these experiences to benefit both students and faculty. It may be useful to delay practicum experiences until the third quarter of the student’s first year to provide time to develop such guidance and better leverage these experiences.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation, which will be followed up by the Ph.D. program chair and program committee.

Recommendation #7: Take a leadership position on how to help PhD students identify and secure their GSR. This appears to be a university-wide issue reflecting changes in policy. Given the large number of inter-disciplinary projects in which Ph.D. students at the Information School engage, a more robust mechanism to support students in seeking their GSR is likely to be very valuable.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent recommendation, which will be followed up by the Ph.D. program chair and program committee.

C. MLIS, dMLIS, and MLIS in Law Librarianship

Recommendation #1: Ensure adequate staff support for students and faculty, especially in the dMLIS option. Enrollment should not grow beyond current levels without a careful assessment of the resources needed to sustain a quality program. The planned increase in % time for the distance education coordinator should be implemented as soon as possible. Feedback from faculty and students participating in the dMLIS option should be gathered on a regular basis to be sure that instructional technology, information technology, and advising support is adequate. Certain practices already in place (e.g., having information technology staff involved in teaching LIS 541 Internet Technologies and Applications to the distance students to enhance their ability to be effective online students) are an efficient use of available resources to enhance the experience of dMLIS students. The structure and content of residencies should also be examined to determine how they can support not only the goals of specific courses, but also professional development opportunities for students and opportunities for them to engage in the life of the School.

iSchool Response: Increasing the percent time for the distance education coordinator is our highest priority; her role will be expanded to a full time position. A thorough review of the distance residency program has already been conducted, and new guidelines have been set in place to help faculty create a more effective learning experience for their students.

We will implement a review of pedagogy in the distance program to assess its current effectiveness, potential areas of improvement, and environmental scanning to identify best practices in graduate distance curriculum in other fields.

The structure and content of residencies have recently been re-evaluated and the distance residency mission (<http://www.ischool.washington.edu/mlis/resourcesdmlis.aspx>) has been published on the iSchool website and made well-known to the faculty and students. Residencies will now be offered for 3-5 days during the first week of each academic quarter and will include a combination of class meetings as well as workshops such as group work strategies, technology resources, and resume workshops/career development, to name a few.

Recommendation #2: Examine the process of assigning MLIS students to faculty advisors and ensure that students are aware of the options open to them for changing to a faculty advisor better matched to their evolving career goals as they proceed through their program of study.

iSchool Response: We agree that this communication is important and will make sure it happens in the future. Advisers in the Office of Student and Academic Services work hard to match students to faculty advisors by re-reading the applications of all entering students and striving to find a match based on common interests - both academic and personal, if possible. Some students do seek out new advisors for various reasons. The iSchool facilitates this change of advisor. The aim is always to meet the student's needs. A Change-of-Advisor form is available online as well as guidelines for changing advisors and students can also consult with Student Services for guidance.

Recommendation #3: Ongoing review of courses in the MLIS curriculum and the MLIS curriculum as a whole should address emerging roles in libraries that graduates seek to fill and how new knowledge and skills can be integrated into the curriculum. One possibility is opening up selected day-student MSIM courses as electives to interested MLIS students rather than duplicating content in courses specifically designed for MLIS students. Efforts under way to track placements of graduates through exit surveys and other means should also provide valuable data to inform further development of the curriculum.

iSchool Response: As recommended, we are in the process of identifying courses in the MSIM program that would enable MLIS students to acquire needed skills in the area of technology and management.

Recommendation #4: With nearly four years of experience delivering courses online, faculty and staff could benefit from a review of how well the pedagogical model is working. In particular, questions such as the following could be considered. Is asynchronous delivery using the Microsoft Producer tool effective in presenting course content? What types of assignments work well online? What are the criteria for deciding whether a course should have a required residency? To the extent that on-campus students are enrolling in dMLIS courses, how can they best be prepared to function effectively in this different mode of learning?

iSchool Response: These questions are good ones, and will be made a part of our on-going review of our dMLIS program.

Recommendation #5: Given the value placed by students on directed fieldwork, information about available opportunities should be made readily available to students. Advisors may need to provide special assistance to dMLIS students seeking placements in locations where no prior placements have been arranged.

iSchool Response: We will continue to monitor this program; however, we feel our current management of this program is quite good. The iSchool has 200+ Directed Fieldwork host site contacts. When students express interest in a Directed Fieldwork they attend an on-campus information session (offered each quarter and also during distance residency) and then meet with/chat with via email or phone the MLIS Academic Advisor, who provides students with contacts and advises them on setting up a Directed Fieldwork. The database of 200+ host sites is not made public so that the MLIS Academic Advisor can advise students if a host site is available or if another student is pursuing it at that time. This helps to maintain good relations with our community and it saves the host site from being bombarded with requests. It also prevents the student from getting frustrated by pursuing a host site that is not available. Students also receive weekly emails advising them of Directed Fieldwork opportunities and are able to take it upon themselves to pursue these.

Recommendation #6: Work to ensure that faculty advising students on preparation of their portfolios and evaluating the contents of portfolios have a shared understanding of what qualifies as evidence in each area and the relationship of the portfolio to work completed toward the degree. A 63 quarter course credit requirement already represents a substantial investment of time in earning the degree. If the portfolio is to be in excess of that, then consideration should be given to having projects and experiences completed as part of coursework that could fulfill the goals of portfolio experiences.

iSchool Response: Clear expectations for the portfolio requirement will be communicated to both faculty and students. In particular, the integration of coursework and directed fieldwork experiences in the portfolio will be articulated. The portfolio does not represent an extensive commitment of effort beyond the 63 credit requirement. It is a natural culmination of effort

that engaged students demonstrate in the classroom and the professional community during the years they spend in the degree program.

Recommendation #7: Because lecturers teach a large number of MLIS courses, they should be given ongoing support for professional development.

iSchool Response: Excellent suggestion. All lecturers currently have funds set aside, which they can use for travel and conferences or workshop fees. We will look into other ways we might encourage and support them to take part in other kinds of professional development.

Recommendation #8: The MLIS admissions process should involve Penny Hazelton to ensure that the target number of students for the MLIS in Law Librarianship program is achieved each year. More marketing of the program can ensure an adequate pool of prospective students to select from and enhance the visibility of the iSchool's leadership position in education for law librarianship. Funding for students enrolled in the law librarianship program could also be one focus for the iSchool's development efforts.

iSchool Response: The MLIS Chair and Admission Committee chair will meet with faculty teaching the law librarianship program to discuss ongoing admissions procedures. These meetings have been arranged.

D. MS in Information Management

Recommendation #1: The introduction of the Day MSIM option will place greater demands on capstone supervision, new demands for internship placement, and new challenges to the curriculum in accommodating students who are likely to lack the technology and management foundations that the Executive MSIM students bring to their studies. It is unlikely that Mike Crandall will be able to supervise all capstones, so some additional qualified faculty need to be allocated to that role. The staffing levels required to support internship placement and oversight need to be monitored. While the curriculum for the Day MSIM program has already been expanded beyond the Executive MSIM to provide selected "pre-core" courses, the need for additional modifications should be monitored as experience is gained.

iSchool Response: Since the writing of this report, the iSchool has hired Kathy Wong to serve full time in the position of MSIM Academic Adviser. Responsibility for employer relations/ internship and development has been distributed to all academic advising positions and is currently coordinated through the position of acting associate dean for student services. A report recommending next actions in terms of the roles of external relationship building, management and co-ordination is currently being prepared in conjunction with the review of the Office of Student and Academic Services referred to earlier.

Twenty of the twenty-two Day MSIM students were successfully placed into internships. The remaining two students had personal difficulties that prevented them from obtaining a position, but intend to start their internships in Winter quarter.

Additional electives have been added to the MSIM program this year, providing an opportunity for students to explore more areas in information management. In addition, the pre-core courses have been modified in response to student and faculty input.

Other faculty (Karine Barzilai-Nabon) have taught the Executive MSIM capstone (2005) and will be doing so again this year.

Recommendation #2: The appropriate balance between required and elective courses in both the Executive and Day MSIM programs should continue to be monitored based on feedback from both students and employers. There is a tradeoff between preserving a cohort and allowing some individualization of curriculum to accommodate student background and career goals. Another area to monitor as the Day MSIM program matures will be the relationship between this degree program and both the BS in Informatics and the PhD in Information Science.

iSchool Response: Beginning this academic year (2006-2007), the Executive MSIM program has three electives offered in the second year of study, and experience to date has revealed that the students are very happy with this change. Many are taking electives offered in the MSIM program, but others are exploring courses offered by other departments on campus and

bringing these experiences back to their core classes. This has fostered better relations with units on campus such as Technical Communications and the Evans School.

Recommendation #3: To ensure the continuing viability of the Executive MSIM, ongoing recruitment efforts are needed. Involvement of the Advisory Board and program graduates in that effort may be helpful. Support for post-graduation placement of Day MSIM students will also need to be developed, as internships will not necessarily lead to permanent jobs and graduates may seek placements outside the Seattle area.

iSchool Response: This is part of a larger need that the iSchool has to engage the broader community as part of our support base. It includes establishing good tracking mechanisms for contact with businesses, non-profits and government organizations through our research, teaching and service activities, building an effective alumni tracking and engagement program, and working closely with our Advisory board and other outreach organizations to build recognition and support for the program in all areas.

The School is working with UWEO on additional ways to recruit internationally and domestically for the Day MSIM, as well as to provide a better market assessment locally for the Executive MSIM. This will be a continuing challenge and any support the University might be able to offer would be appreciated. The School uses the MSIM Advisory Board and the research institute, IBM, as methods for both recruitment and placement, but we need to continue to look for ways to increase this exposure to the outside community.

E. BS in Informatics

Recommendation #1: Continue to focus on improving quality of admits and not growing the number. This demands additional resources be put into marketing and recruiting.

iSchool Response: Recruitment of high quality students to the informatics program is a top priority goal for the coming year. Additional resources have been allocated to help with this marketing effort. The school's communications officer and various student services staff are also supporting this goal.

Recommendation #2: In pursuit of recommendation #1, continue to expand the resources engaged in redressing diversity imbalance (e.g. under-representation of women and other populations). This is a significant problem across many IT-oriented undergraduate programs, and only significant attention to thoughtful marketing practices, focused (and often 'high-touch') recruiting activities will lead to significant results.

iSchool Response: We aim to recruit and admit a diverse set of students and we have developed a marketing plan that seeks to nearly double the number of applications we are currently receiving. In addition to the staff mentioned above, we have a diversity committee seeking ways to redress this imbalance.

We have taken steps to enhance the recruitment of women and minority students to the program. Specifically, we have altered prerequisites that have likely led these students to think that Informatics was not for them. We have removed CSE 143, Programming II as a prerequisite to the program and instead made it a program requirement. We believe that by removing this course as a prerequisite, students will be less likely to perceive Informatics as a degree that is focused on software development only.

Recommendation #3: Continue providing tutoring to redress the differential levels of preparation regarding key technological skills for incoming students. This is particularly important for classes in the first part of the junior year and for many of the students from under-represented populations. Doing this also reaffirms the "graduate all" philosophy that underlies this program.

iSchool Response: We agree, and will make sure that tutoring for our incoming students continues. In addition, we hope that by making CSE 143 a program requirement, we will be able to offer additional tutoring and support to students that have difficulty with the class.

Recommendation #4: Increase staff resources for student advising and marketing the program. This is important to meet the recommendations laid out above. Moreover, the current staff is over-committed and the successful operations of the program cannot continue to be based on the idiosyncratic hyper-

performances of the exemplary staff. As additional resources are provided, there should be attention from administration to develop career path opportunities to support staff professional growth and support staff retention.

iSchool Response: We agree that advising and marketing are very important aspects of the program to support, and will address the addition of resources to this area. A report recommending next actions in terms of the roles of external relationship building, management and co-ordination is currently being prepared in conjunction with the review of the Office of Student and Academic Services.

Recommendation #5: Improve coordination of material across the sequence of “people” courses to improve relevance, coherence, and coverage, while removing or limiting repetition of topics and material. This is an important evolutionary step and appears to require more communication and coordination among the faculty teaching in this area.

iSchool Response: This is an important recommendation, and one we will address as we go forward with the Informatics program.

Recommendation #6: Be prudent regarding expanding undergraduate offerings to support both other students and any general education courses. This should not be considered until after extensive analysis regarding potential impacts to the school, demands from the university, and resource needs. If there is a multilateral decision to proceed on one or both of these expansion activities, the expansion should come after the resources have been provided.

iSchool Response: This is an excellent suggestion, and we will follow the advice to be prudent in expanding or undergraduate offerings until after our review of the Office of Student and Academic Services is complete, and not before additional resources have been found.

The findings of the committee mirror our own internal review and results. The committee has identified what the iSchool considers to be the strengths and the challenges for the Bachelor of Science in Informatics program.

In closing, we would like to say that we value the opportunity that the self-study provides us to evaluate the work that we do at The Information School. The review committee’s recognition of our strengths and recommendations for continued improvement are important contributions to our on-going strategic planning activities, which will help to shape the School’s future directions. We will take all of these excellent recommendations under serious consideration as we move forward. Although we already have a strong School that is distinguished regionally and nationally, we will take every opportunity to strengthen our presence and influence in the information field.

We have done our best to ensure that this response addresses the committee’s recommendations. We look forward to working with the Provost on the budgetary issues that underlie many of the recommendations in this report, and in our strategic planning efforts.

Sincerely,



Harry Bruce
Dean and Professor
The Information School