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SLIS Update

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SLIS Update

By J. Norton, Director

Welcome to the first online issue of *SLIS Connecting* – the journal from the School of Library and Information Science at The University of Southern Mississippi! Our newest faculty member, Dr. Stacy Creel, and a senior faculty member, Dr. Teresa Welsh, advocated for the creation of this journal as just what we need to heighten awareness of the school's program activities, display our students' achievements, and invite alums, employers and friends of the program to contribute. *SLIS Connecting* is about maintaining and creating connections for all of us.

Communication is two way, or if we consider the social media -- multiple exchanges via multiple channels, people talking to people and sharing. But in a complex world with so many opportunities to interact, it can be hard to keep up with everyone we intend to keep in sight. Since Hurricane Katrina, the Gulf Oil Spill, and a variety of other disastrous events, the School of Library and Information Science has not been the first issue in the minds of our constituencies and we would not expect to be. Recovery across the coast and the nation has been slow, especially in these challenging economic times. Library budgets have suffered and as a result so too have the people who work in libraries and the people libraries serve. You have been busy keeping things on track.

We appreciate the many of you across the country that have been providing practicum opportunities to our students, as well as supporting them with professional mentoring. While facing your own challenges you have given us as much time and encouragement as possible and we very much appreciate your commitment!

The School of Library and Information Science at The University of Southern Mississippi has always been the recipient of the good will of the citizens of the state and region. During each of our accreditation reviews our friends and alums have assisted us in addressing various challenges. We had just been notified of our continuing accreditation in July 2005, when Hurricane Katrina caused unspeakable damage across the region in August 2005 and we all stopped

to take stock of a different world, and different priorities.

Six years later, much of the nation may not realize that people living where major weather or pollution disasters have occurred are still in recovery, a slow process made more difficult by economics and recurring bad weather. Though the focus of the news cycle has moved onto other events, people are still working through the damage to rebuild their lives, their libraries, their communities. I have been shy to ask librarians and friends and employers of our graduates to be more engaged with us, because I see the stress of tight budgets, continuing efforts to rebuild and regain. But my hesitation has impaired the communication links among the peoples we serve and the work we perform. *SLIS Connecting* is a portion of our efforts to overcome my shyness and make information about us, about you, and about our profession more accessible and more participative.

SLIS has a Facebook page and many of our alums and friends keep in touch, and we are always delighted to see many of you at the annual Mississippi Library Association Conference. We had the added pleasure of seeing some of you at the American Library Association Conference in New Orleans last year! Nearly one hundred of you responded to our May and December requests for your participation in our Alumni survey, though we believe there are many more of you out there!

We will be posting opportunities and activities we hope you will find useful, both to lisnews and to Facebook. Keeping in touch, with so many of you moving to different states, or even studying from different states and countries, is more complex, but we are after all librarians and we can figure this out. Please send us address updates via email at slis@usm.edu. Also send any job postings or scholarship opportunities to slis@usm.edu and we will distribute them to the lisnews listserver and begin posting links on our web page.

We are looking forward to many opportunities to communicate and hope you will participate!