

2015

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the SLIS Graduate Program

Matthew Griffis Ph.D.

University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting>



Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#), [Collection Development and Management Commons](#), [Information Literacy Commons](#), [Scholarly Communication Commons](#), and the [Scholarly Publishing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Griffis, Matthew Ph.D. (2015) "Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the SLIS Graduate Program," *SLIS Connecting*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

DOI: 10.18785/slis.0401.02

Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting/vol4/iss1/2>

This Column is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in SLIS Connecting by an authorized editor of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the SLIS Graduate Program

By Dr. Matthew Griffis

(reprinted with permission from the Spring 2015 issue of *LISSA Links*

https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/school-library-and-information-science/pdf/lissa_spring_2015_newsletter.pdf)

This fall will mark the 50th anniversary of the graduate program in library science at the University of Southern Mississippi. SLIS will be commemorating the occasion with a number of events, bringing together past and present faculty as well as alumni. The event will be of interest to countless library and archives professionals across the southeastern United States since The University of Southern Mississippi's library science program is the only fully ALA-accredited program in the state, and one of just a few nationally-recognized library programs in The South.

Library training dates back to ancient times. Ever since the Hellenistic period, with the organization and construction of the Library of Alexandria, caretakers of libraries have been expected to possess special skills and competencies, among them a high degree of literacy and scholarly knowledge as well as administrative and organizational abilities. Although some of the earliest modern examples date back to 1820s France, librarian training courses did not emerge in the West until the late 19th century, about ten years after the American Library Association formed in 1876, when Melvil Dewey initiated library science classes at Columbia College in the mid-1880s. Similar library education programs emerged in Canada, Germany, China, and England. The University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, founded in 1928, marked the first graduate program in library science offered in North America.

Library training courses were first offered at Southern Miss as far back as 1926, when the school was known as the Mississippi State Teacher's College. In the late 1950s, after the school been renamed Mississippi Southern College, the library science program became part of the College of Education and Psychology. The first master's program in library science at Southern Miss was introduced in 1965, and

became fully accredited by ALA in 1978-79. The department was officially named the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) in 1993.

Today SLIS is in the College of Education and Psychology and offers a Bachelor of Science in LIS; an MLIS; a supplemental school library media specialist endorsement; a graduate certificate in archives and special collections; a graduate certificate in youth services and literature; and dual master's degree programs in history, anthropology, and political science. SLIS offered its first hybrid library training courses the mid-90s and, several years later, offered one of the first online MLIS programs. This is now a fully online MLIS program, and is one of only a few offered in the United States.

SLIS will be commemorating the occasion with a number of events, including a special presentation at the fall meeting of the Mississippi Library Association. SLIS is also planning a special commemorative issue of *SLIS Connecting*, the department's indexed journal. An article about the history of the department will be submitted to *Mississippi Libraries*. The department is also preparing a Web page that will include an illustrated timeline.

LISSA and the Southern Miss Student Archivists' Association (SMSA) will also be preparing an on-campus display commemorating the event. The display will include items relating to the history of the university's library and information science courses, the campus libraries, and the history of modern librarianship in general. The display will include many pieces from Dr. Griffis' personal collection of artifacts relating to library history; among his rarest pieces are copies of manuals and textbooks from some of the first American library schools, ca. 1880s-90s.

You are invited to contribute suggestions and ideas for other events. Please contact Dr. Griffis (matthew.griffis@usm.edu) or Dr. Welsh (teresa.welsh@usm.edu) for details.



online 40 graduate credit hour program does not require physical residence in Mississippi, but each course does have required real-time virtual meetings. Currently students enrolled in Southern Mississippi online programs pay in-state tuition.

For undergraduate students, SLIS offers the bachelor's degree in library and information science (B.A.), which can be used to obtain a variety of paraprofessional positions in libraries and other information environments. The B.A. in library and information science may be used to become certified as a school library media specialist. If you hold a teaching credential you may complete our 21 credit hour supplemental endorsement to be 'highly qualified' as a certified school library media specialist. The 21 credit hour supplemental endorsement is available entirely online, with real-time required chat meetings. The bachelor's degree in library and information science can be obtained entirely online through Southern Miss and the Mississippi Virtual Community College network.

For more information about SLIS, please visit our webpage at www.usm.edu/slis or contact us at If you are interested in either program email slis@usm.edu, or call 601-266-4228.



Library science classes at Southern Miss, ca. mid-1980s.

Credit: The University of Southern Mississippi. (Note: If you can identify any of the students or instructors in these images, please contact Drs. Griffis or Welsh.)

More About SLIS

The mission of the master's of library and information science program is to prepare qualified individuals for professional roles in libraries and other information environments with appropriate knowledge and skills to serve the information needs of their communities.

SLIS is an American Library Association accredited Master of Library Science program. The completely

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

School of Library and Information Science

Navigation: About Us, Academics, Admissions, Arts, Athletics, Community, News, Research, Student Life

Contact Information:
 School of Library and Information Science
 Cook Library, 206
 118 College Drive, #5145
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406
 Phone: 601.266.4228
 Fax: 601.266.5774
 Contact Us
 Find Building on Map

Connect With Us: Facebook, Twitter

Additional Resources:
 Graduate Certificate in Archives and Special Collections
 Graduate Certificate in Youth Services and Literatures
 School Library Media Specialist Endorsement
 Disaster Preparedness

Featured Events:
 Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival
 British Studies: Study abroad with LIS! Students