

The business information management and library and information management programs for the future: a partnership between Fuji Xerox, the State Library of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, and the University of South Australia

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Newly qualified librarians in the 21st century need to be familiar with standards and technologies for information management and also require mature capabilities to collaborate across allied professions, such as archives, information systems and records management, as well as the diverse cultures of business and public service. Ideally they will also bring experience from the workplace. Moreover, understandings of change and innovation management, human resource management, organizational learning and project management are becoming ‘table stakes’ for all knowledge workers. Hence, postgraduate education for librarians must augment the core curricula necessary for ALIA accreditation with key knowledge from multiple disciplines and also encourage networking and teamwork with fellow professionals. Further, due to the rate of change in processes and technologies, it should foster skills for lifelong learning and continuing professional development. The problem is that providing such a range of knowledge and experience is beyond the capability of a single institution. So, the collaborative capability

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that we seek to foster needs to be a fundamental part of designing, delivering and improving such educational offerings.

In response to pressure from employers and rapid technological change, a new suite of postgraduate programs in Business Information Management (BIM) and Library and Information Management (LIM) have been developed in partnership with Fuji Xerox, State Library of South Australia, State Records of South Australia, the University of South Australia (UniSA) Library and the School of Computer and Information Science at UniSA. The partnership was originally led by Professor Paula Swatman. The goal is to educate archivists, information systems professionals, internet and intranet coordinators, knowledge managers, librarians and record managers who are highly knowledgeable and skilled in their core disciplines, regard disciplinary boundaries as permeable and are capable of integrating cross-disciplinary knowledge into their professional practice. The partnership also want to produce graduates who understand the limits of their own knowledge and are not afraid to ask for help from those with complementary knowledge or skills. The program design was heavily influenced by the sentiments expressed in *The Big Bang: Creating the New Library Universe* (National and State Libraries Australasia, 2007). The partners hope that this program addresses many of the issues raised in the documentation for this summit and will proceed to integrate any outstanding issues into the continuous improvement of the program.

There are various modes of entry to the BIM and LIM programs for those with TAFE qualifications (this is currently being formalised), undergraduate or postgraduate degrees and rigorously verified professional experience. The programs currently provide a continuous path of learning from the Graduate Certificate in BIM through to a Graduate Diploma in BIM or LIM and a Masters qualification in LIM. The Graduate Certificate in BIM currently consists of eight specializations (or 'silos'), which include library management. Each specialization in the certificate contains four mandatory courses. The Graduate Diploma in BIM condenses the specializations into three groups, corporate information management, preservation and archival management and records management. The library management specialization runs separate to the other courses as a Graduate Diploma in LIM. At the Graduate Diploma level each specialization has a series of core courses and a wide range of electives where students can cross silos. The

Graduate Diploma is intended the main entry qualification from the program to library management. The Masters qualification reunites all students offering a choice between a thesis project, which is ideally work-based, or four electives to complete a Masters by coursework. Both routes are intended as a more advanced entry qualification or as continuing professional development for existing professionals. The thesis option is an ideal precursor to a professional doctorate. Indeed current plans are for a Masters by research to integrate with a professional doctorate, which is being developed at UniSA with input from academic, industrial and professional partners and is currently undergoing approval by the university.

The lecturers on the BIM and LIM programs are a cross-disciplinary team of academics with industrial and professional experience and practicing professionals from the range of disciplines and professions within the program. For example, staff from the State Library of South Australia and the library of UniSA library staff are convening and teaching component courses and are inviting guest lectures from specialists across the profession. Learning materials are also developed by the members of the partnership to promote a blend of academic and professional knowledge. Similarly, courses are taught in a variety of modes and locations: from the traditional lecture theatre to classes in the State Library and on the internet.

Access to the work-place offers our learners opportunities to build informal networks and to gain tacit knowledge. These experiences are enhanced by opportunities to volunteer for library work which were organised via the program and enthusiastically taken up by the current cohort of students. Online teamwork prepares students for membership of virtual project groups, which are a reality of the globalized economy. Finally, we have already found that industrial and institutional employers appreciate the mixed mode or study, as well as work-based projects, and are keen to support it during continuing professional development delivered via the program.

The program has already attracted a significant proportion of high flying students with excellent qualifications and work experience. As we enter our second year, we have a 100% rate of re-enrolment. We believe that the combination of comprehensive access, innovative teaching and assessment, interdisciplinary opportunities and progression

towards a Masters or a Doctorate will help to attract the ‘best and brightest’ students that ALIA would like to encourage into the profession.

Now that the program has run for a year, the partners have reviewed feedback from a range of stakeholders and are revisiting the program structure. We aim to further reduce disciplinary silos within the program by adapting teaching and assessment practices and materials to include more cross-disciplinary team work, experiential, problem-based (see Browne and Shurville, 2007) and work-based learning and online components. As mentioned above, we are motivated to deliver ever more practical experiential learning to develop relevant knowledge and skills for the workplace.

One significant change to the program is that of program director. Professor Paula Swatman, professor of information systems and co-director of the Information Systems Research Laboratory (InSyL), was appointed as State Records of South Australia/Fuji Xerox/State Library of South Australia Chair of Business Information Management to develop two suites of graduate degree programs: Business Information Management and Library and Information Management – and, during the last year of this limited-term position, was also the inaugural program director for both these suites of programs. Recently, however, she has taken on an exciting new role at UniSA. Following the election of the new federal government with its focus on the central importance of the Digital Economy as an enabler of business growth and government efficiency, Paula will now be spearheading research and academic leadership into the Digital Economy for the School of Computer and Information Science, with the aim of developing key capabilities to enable Australian businesses increase their share of emerging global markets. Professor Swatman has also been nominated by both the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, as well as UniSA’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Høj, to the Federal Government’s forthcoming Australia 2020 Summit. In light of these major new commitments Paula has handed over the program directorship over to UniSA newcomer Dr Simon Shurville.

New program director Dr Simon Shurville has a strong background in information technology driven change management, knowledge management and online learning, gained at various UK universities including Cranfield University, the University of Brighton, the University of Oxford and Sussex University. Simon is currently assistant

editor of the international journal *Campus-Wide Information Systems*. He will work with representatives from the partnership to develop the online version of the program which will enhance access for existing overseas students and the wealth of potential international students who would like to study for an Australian postgraduate qualification. Aligning the program with international qualifications and accreditations is an equally important factor in attracting such students and will no doubt also contribute to quality benchmarking, which is a continuous process.

The program director's first priority, however, is to work with a special interest group of stakeholders from the partnership and beyond to earn ALIA accreditation for the program. He is especially keen to receive feedback from delegates at this summit on the needs of 21st century librarians and their employers as well as the structure of the program. He can be contacted at simon.shurville@unisa.edu.au.

References

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