LIS Faculty Retreat
29 August 2014
Rich’s house

Attending: Noriko Asato (via Halawai), Rich Gazan (facilitator), Vi Harada, Vanessa Irvin Morris (via Halawai), Peter Jacso, Luz Quiroga, Rae-Anne Montague, Andrew Wertheimer

Goal: To share actionable visions for the future of the LIS program. We’ll use this as input to a larger strategic planning meeting involving all our stakeholders later in the semester.

Prep: Each faculty member responded to the following:
• Identify one significant change to the program that you would volunteer to lead. You should feel strongly enough about its importance that you would take on more work to make it happen. The change need not be restricted to the curriculum, so think as broadly as you like.
• Why does the change need to happen? (ideally backed with data, but anecdotes are fine)
• How has a similar change been implemented elsewhere? (summarize one example, either successful or unsuccessful)
• How would we do it here? (brief outline of resources, stakeholders and process)
• How would it support or change our SLOs and strategic plan?

Agenda
• 9:00-9:15 Setup and settling in
• 9:15-9:20 Intro (Rich)
• 9:20-10:30 Faculty present individual proposals (~10 min each)
• 10:30-10:45 Break
• 10:45-noon Discussion and integration of proposals, process and impact
Notes from retreat presentations and discussion (recorded by RG)

Common themes in **bold**

To increase student interest in the thesis option, Noriko proposed that all LIS faculty work together to develop and **team-teach the existing LIS research methods course**. Every faculty member would present two sessions per semester, accumulating fractional credit toward regular teaching load. The course would be presented every semester or every other as a seminar, and both students and faculty would become more familiar with the range of the research happening in the program. Faculty discussed whether non-LIS faculty and students would be involved, and whether students who were not interested in developing a thesis proposal should be encouraged to enroll. The course could also serve as a social hub of the program, and might be offered on Fridays when student organizations meet.

Rich proposed a **flexible informatics specialization**, which immediately led to discussion about the need to clarify what we mean by informatics. Rich’s pilot course in Spring 2014 operationalized it as **social and technical pathways to information**, but the term has a more technical connotation that may not represent students who would wish to undertake a specialization in indigenous librarianship or community engagement. In any form, an LIS specialization must have some coherence with the program as a whole, and Rich’s sketch of the core informatics course as a gentle introduction to informatics and data science, and **requiring courses outside the LIS Program** makes it even more important to articulate clearly how the specialization would relate to LIS.

Vi emphasized the need for us to **define terms clearly**, not just informatics but community, data science and indigenous librarianship. We have made advances in indigenous areas, but we should **build a conceptual map** of what we’re doing. **What do students experience via our indigenous strengths?** How do we market it and how do we recruit students? Importance of collaborations across campus, Rae did poster at ALA about indigenous librarianship and had good response.

Luz suggested that **cross-campus collaborations** and would be made easier if we **created a knowledge map of our program** within and across our specializations. It would help those outside our program understand what we do, and help students see connections as well. It would illustrate a deeper level of detail than course titles; and focus on which parts of courses are related and support one another. This could also help us as a faculty identify which concepts are (or should be) part of every specialization, and considered as we evolve the core.

Vanessa suggested two areas we might focus on in the future: **global/international issues** and **areas of identity**, i.e. how students see themselves in a program and profession. The reflective aspect of the latter area dovetails well with our Student Learning Outcomes, and the requirement that students will personalize their responses in the oral exam. Faculty saw a link between Vanessa’s ideas and **community engagement/informatics** as well, and figuring out how the program can extend our strengths in **local/indigenous knowledge** and global/international issues are two areas in which we could **create a unique identity as a program**.

To assist with student advising, Peter proposed the **creation of a visual curriculum map** showing course prerequisites and co-requisites, so both students and faculty can see how
all the courses help them build/manage their own knowledge. The course title words are important, but cannot encompass all of what is taught. Also, we encourage students to take some courses outside the LIS Program, but we do not keep track of descriptions for those courses and this works against effective advising. We need to shift the burden from staff and faculty and paper files, and allow students to view pathways to degree progress.

Faculty discussed how much of this information is available in the Academic Journey printouts students are already supposed to bring to advising sessions (though some do not). There may be such an app available through UH, but it is not updated and authoritative. This led to discussion about whether a template for students to fill out would be effective, but all agreed about the need to improve advising tools, especially online (though FERPA issues must be addressed), and possibly tie this in with student e-portfolios and a program knowledge map.

Rae suggested we consider whether there is an ideal number of students per course, or average students taught per faculty member, to use for program evaluation. We should anticipate that we will be assessed on this and similar measures, and we should track and share this information now for program planning purposes as well. For program outreach, Rae manages the twitter account, but perhaps students could also post items of interest. Marketing and recruitment should be driven by the unique experiences students have while in the program. Faculty linked Rae’s suggestion with Vanessa’s proposal to focus on areas of identity. The Hawaiian Librarianship Symposium is a good example of how LIS crosses over with areas of identity, and a unique student experience. More generally, we need to communicate clearly to students and prospective students what can and can’t be done online, and where we offer unique courses and experiences.

Toward the goal of more cross-campus collaboration, Luz reported that when she renamed her course to Creating Digital Libraries, she drew more students from outside LIS. Luz also mentioned the Digital Humanities Initiative, being led in the History Department, as an example of an interdisciplinary effort LIS could be more involved with, and connections with Journalism and Communications are increasingly possible as well. Vi emphasized that someone must take ownership of collaboration, if it just happens ad hoc it’s not an essential part of the program, and it would need to be specifically articulated in the same way as the proposed flexible informatics specialization.

Andrew suggested creating an Asia-Pacific Research Center within LIS that would attract international students and build our international research reputation. He reported that some international universities have funds available to send their students abroad, and we might have an opportunity to provide students a richer international experience.

Common themes, to be used as input for Strategic Planning:

- Areas of identity/Indigenous librarianship/Community engagement
- Identify and articulate unique student experiences
- Build global/international reputation
- Create visual knowledge map of program/curriculum
- Increase opportunities for flexible/cross-campus specializations
- Informatics as diverse pathways to information
- Build research reputation
- Clearly define terms