

# University of Washington’s LIS Forward Discussion Sessions: Internal Summaries

## Table of Contents

UW Information School Faculty Response to LIS Forward Position Paper .....	2
UW Libraries Forum—Idealism Meets Realism .....	9
Roundtable on Ensuring a Vibrant Future for LIS in the UW iSchool.....	13

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# **UW Information School Faculty Response to LIS Forward Position Paper**

The Center for Advances in Libraries, Museums, and Archives (CALMA) at the University of Washington (UW) Information School facilitated two discussion sessions, on April 19 and May 17, 2024, with a group of five UW iSchool faculty, which included both research and teaching faculty at various stages of their careers from assistant to tenured professor. Below is a summary of perspectives and insights shared during these discussions in response to the LIS Forward position paper, Ensuring a Vibrant Future for LIS in iSchools.

## **Centering LIS Values & the Identity Challenge of LIS in iSchools**

The session began with a robust discussion of the LIS Forward position paper's central proposition:

The iSchool's choices regarding its investments across disciplines and academic programs, will have serious consequences for the field of LIS and the library profession. Grounding our school in LIS values can unite different disciplinary traditions and fortify a vibrant, cross-disciplinary environment to address society's most pressing information challenges. (LIS Forward, 2023)

In discussing LIS values, it was noted how the position paper uses the terms "libraries" and "librarianship" in a holistic sense to encompass libraries, museums, archives, and repositories. However, one faculty member pointed out that libraries, museums, and archives often hold distinct values, and that these values often shift according to different cultural understandings regarding information. For instance, the American Library Association's (ALA) core value of access can be problematic from an Indigenous perspective where certain information is restricted according to cultural protocols. This illustrates how defining and understanding LIS values in a coherent manner poses its own challenges on top of the identity challenge of LIS within iSchools. At the same time, another faculty member noted how many in the LAM (libraries, museums, archives) sphere do share a common set of values and ethics that stems from a human-centered perspective oriented toward social justice. These common values help distinguish LIS from other STEM-oriented disciplines such as computer science and engineering. They also noted how PhD students and faculty who come to iSchools from those disciplines can lack grounding in these values and, in some cases, be woefully behind in conversations around diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion. This same faculty member echoed the fear highlighted in the report that as iSchools become increasingly

dominated by STEM disciplines they are losing their grounding in LIS values and run the risk of adopting less progressive academic standards as a result.

Another faculty member agreed that grounding iSchools in a common set of values is important but was wary of the approach advocated for in the LIS Forward position paper. This faculty member took issue with the pervasive sense that the entire report allied most strongly with the "L" of LIS. Rather than pursue a top-down approach where LIS values are imposed on iSchools, this faculty member advocated for creating a set of collectively held values. They felt it was important to recognize that most iSchool faculty and researchers, even those from STEM disciplines, choose to work in an iSchool over other academic departments and units because they already hold values centered on supporting the social good, caring for users, and making a positive impact—similar to those espoused by ALA's list of core values for librarianship. This faculty member noted how this identity crisis with LIS and iSchools has been a constant throughout their nearly three decades in the field, perpetuated by the unresolved tension between the desire to change and an unwillingness to let go. Rather than figure out something new, "we retreat back to our foundations in the 'L' of libraries," which becomes "the chain that binds us and stops us from becoming something truly new and different." Instead, this faculty member advocated for "creating and identifying a shared set of values together as an iSchool rather than strapping them to librarianship from the start."

At the same time, this faculty member acknowledged the importance of the historical roots of iSchools in LIS, but that this fact should not prevent LIS within iSchools from embracing change. They noted how iSchools tend to attract misfits or those who didn't quite fit into the boxes imposed by their initial disciplines of study, such as human-computer interaction (HCI) scholars originally from computer science and engineering programs. They described this misfit label as a strength of iSchools, where faculty can offer fresh, unbounded perspectives that can lead to innovative solutions to information problems. With this in mind, they iterated their call for the iSchool to "establish our own identity collectively, which will look a little different from data science or HCI or LIS... You cannot be interdisciplinary and remain what you were before."

In response, another faculty member mused whether new faculty and researchers from non-LIS disciplines come to an iSchool environment with a strong sense of LIS values rather than having to learn them along the way. Others remarked how they appreciate the interdisciplinary nature of iSchools, and how, "I want there to be many voices in the room, but when there's so few of us that have training in information sciences, we're vastly outnumbered or put in the role of educating our

colleagues about the discipline we're all supposed to work in." This burden on LIS faculty of having to educate non-LIS faculty about what they do, is often doubled or tripled for faculty with marginalized identities, especially faculty of color. One faculty member believed this additional labor leaves LIS faculty with less time and space to devote to research in comparison to non-LIS faculty in disciplines such as HCI. Given these interdisciplinary tensions, the faculty group affirmed that as the field grows and adds more subfields and diversity, it will be important to continually find commonalities and foster mutual understanding and respect among the range of disciplinary traditions and professional backgrounds within iSchools. At the same time, the group believed that librarianship will be strengthened by this growing diversity and interdisciplinarity.

Given the importance and difficulty in defining LIS values, one faculty member felt that it was more important to focus on cultivating LIS skills rather than splitting hairs over a discussion of values. Another faculty member shared a similar idea, stating:

Of course I agree that LIS values are integral to the iSchool—and that they genuinely do differentiate us from departments like Computer Science—but I worry that an excessive focus on abstract values will only further diminish the equally integral intellectual core of LIS. For example, during my own time at the UW iSchool and in the UW MLIS program, I have realized that expertise in areas like classification, metadata, curation, preservation, and appraisal is urgently important (and worryingly lacking) in many technical, data-related fields. I think it would be smart to identify a range of LIS-specific intellectual contributions and foundations that we could point to and list out when we are advocating for its significance.

## **LIS Foundations & Priming the Pipeline**

The group strongly affirmed not only the need to preserve LIS foundations but integrate them more holistically within iSchools, especially at the PhD level. The assembled faculty noted how the erasure of LIS foundations and epistemic dismissal of LIS described in the Early Career Faculty Perspectives chapter of the report is happening at the UW as well. For new PhD students with an LIS focus at the UW, they encounter HCI as the dominant culture in the program and either shift in that direction or become increasingly isolated. The group reflected that, as described in the report, the alienation and devaluation of LIS at the doctoral level negatively impacts the faculty pathway at UW iSchool. In particular, they observed a real lack of understanding of the roots and historical foundations of LIS in the PhD program. They noted how significant figures in the LIS field aren't being taught as

the faculty often teaching these core courses usually don't hold an LIS background. One faculty member raised the possibility that if significant figures of LIS aren't properly taught and valued, this foundational knowledge could disappear over time. Another faculty member highlighted how faculty teaching at the PhD level need to understand the importance of valuing LIS and to correct instances in the classroom when students from non-LIS backgrounds may dismiss LIS research and its validity. To this point, the group discussed that a longer onboarding process for new faculty would be beneficial. This onboarding process should introduce and reinforce LIS foundations and emphasize to new faculty that all areas of research within the iSchool, even those that may look quite different from their own, are equally valued and worthy of investment and attention.

Regarding the position paper's first directive of "a primed pipeline," one faculty member described how the term pipeline doesn't sit well from an Indigenous perspective. The term pipeline raises associations with oil pipeline projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline that infringe upon the sovereign rights of Indigenous nations and tribes. It also conjures the concept of school-to-prison pipeline. The term pipeline elicits an image of rigidity and singularity that someone must conform to. They offered *pathways* as a better word choice, as it reflects plurality, openness, and offers a stronger sense of agency to the person charting their path through academia. The group agreed with this suggestion and that the term pipeline is perhaps reflective of the more harmful aspects of academia that make pursuing an LIS-focused PhD less attractive.

In considering how to strengthen some of these PhD and faculty pathways for UW MLIS students, one early career faculty member offered the following ideas:

- More explicit support for directed research with faculty, whether by integrating it into MLIS coursework or by providing dedicated funding (for faculty and/or students) to do so.
- Incorporate more research-focused courses into the MLIS curriculum.
- Start mentorship programs with current iSchool PhD students.
- Offer LIS postdocs.

Beyond the PhD program, the group also noted how LIS is largely absent from the UW's Informatics undergraduate program, which is a missed opportunity given both the program's growth and popularity, and its position in students' potential pathways toward LIS research and graduate programs. The group noted how the undergraduate program would benefit from an introduction to cultural heritage and digital humanities to better balance the technology-focused curriculum. They noted the importance of LIS faculty teaching foundational undergraduate courses

to help introduce LIS intellectual contributions and foundations, which stands in contrast to the perspective shared by the authors of the Early Career Faculty Perspectives chapter.

Looking at academia at large, the group also noted how current PhD students see the burnout, personal sacrifices, and overwork that current faculty experience, which discourages them from pursuing faculty positions. It was noted how getting hired at an R1 Institution requires higher benchmarks every passing year, especially in comparison to one or two decades ago. The group strongly agreed that current evaluation metrics within iSchools need to better support the differing norms, expectations, and criteria that pervade different disciplines, especially LIS—a perspective shared by the position paper. Ultimately, several of the faculty see academia heading in an unhealthy direction, which will require significant structural and systemic change to address.

### **Research Reciprocity & Evolving the iSchool Body Politic**

In line with the position paper, the group affirmed how the interdisciplinarity of iSchools creates challenges for LIS researchers, as the different disciplines within iSchools hold different criteria, norms, and expectations, especially among STEM, social sciences, and humanities. One faculty member observed that "being in a less-defined environment like an iSchool exacerbates those challenges (say than in a more defined discipline like chemistry)." They noted how in an iSchool these criteria and expectations are often unclear—especially for early career faculty—and based on the priorities and disciplinary backgrounds of those in leadership positions. This same faculty member also noted how "A frustration is that all of us who come from LIS understand how research works in other disciplines encompassed within the iSchool, but that understanding isn't reciprocated—making LIS work feel undervalued." This issue is reflected on the hiring side, where not only are LIS faculty more likely to be hired to teach than conduct research, but that non-LIS folks on the hiring committee are also less likely to see the value in hiring LIS research faculty. In many ways, the discussion around the position and understanding of LIS research in iSchools and the field at large came down to a need for mutual respect among different disciplines and greater understanding of different forms of research.

At the same time, the group affirmed the need for LIS research to cut across multiple disciplines as outlined in the report. One faculty member emphasized the importance of LIS researchers venturing out and participating in new and different conferences beyond LIS to help encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration. In a similar vein, the group noted that within LIS research, the relationship between

researchers and practitioners needs to move beyond a transactional relationship to a more meaningful and collaborative relationship, with practitioners and LAMs being seen as valuable and active research partners.

However, it was also recognized that LIS research must be rigorous within an understanding of the validity of qualitative and community-based research practices. One faculty member who has published in a variety of HCI and LIS journals over the years noted a difference in the quality of reviews from LIS journals in comparison to HCI conferences. They noted how HCI conferences seem to have a more diverse, dynamic and higher-quality review process than LIS journals, which further marginalizes LIS and how it's perceived by other fields. This faculty member called for more intellectual rigor with reviews for LIS journals and raised the question, how can iSchools mentor LIS PhDs to become more rigorous reviewers? At the same time, the group discussed the limited grant funding opportunities for LIS research, which exacerbates this issue of rigor. Supporting LIS faculty with larger start-up packages and more internal funding opportunities were offered as potential solutions alongside a more robust research services department that could work with faculty to help secure new funding sources. Overall, the group agreed that the iSchool's ability to meaningfully incentivize, resource, and support LIS research would be a key method for demonstrating and reinforcing the value of LIS at the iSchool.

In wrapping up the discussion and considering the position of LIS in iSchools, one faculty member noted:

...the LIS Forward argument was most compelling when it was made clear that “libraries” and “librarianship” were being used as holistic terms to describe “libraries, museums, archives, and repositories—the institutions and professions dedicated to information collection, access, and stewardship of knowledge.” It's further notable that this point was foregrounded by the early-career faculty, who represent the future of the field. I think LIS Forward will generate the most power and traction when this fuller range of institutions and professions is consistently named and included. And I might even add “cultural heritage” to the mix. I feel like there's a concern that libraries, specifically, will get lost within this broader mix, but I personally think there's greater strength—and less possibility of denying the significance of the area—when terms are framed more broadly.

Ultimately, the faculty group affirmed that the identity of the iSchool—and what excites them most about being in an iSchool—is *interdisciplinarity*. The ability for iSchools to truly foster an interdisciplinary environment underscores the need for

the iSchool to cultivate a culture of genuine curiosity and connection among and across disciplines, and to dismantle frameworks of governance that create silos and fragmentation. Within the UW iSchool, certain faculty noted how certain governance structures around merit review, affinity groups, and evaluation unintentionally encourage siloing, which weakens a sense of a broad and inclusive community. The faculty group identified that deans have a critical role to play in helping correct the devaluation and marginalization of LIS, but pointed out how deans and those in other high-level positions in iSchools often lack an LIS background. The group also affirmed the importance of knowing what other iSchools are doing, what's working and not working, especially in terms of governance. They noted that holding structured exchanges among iSchools for different groups including students, faculty and deans would be highly beneficial to help share strategies, ideas, and insights. From the discussions, it was clear that LIS in iSchools would benefit from a variety of investments aimed at cultivating a deeper sense of relationality and mutual respect among disciplines.

## **UW Libraries Forum—Idealism Meets Realism**

On January 28, 2025, CALMA hosted an in-person forum with seven University of Washington (UW) Libraries leaders to elicit their perspectives on the LIS Forward position paper, “Ensuring a Vibrant Future for LIS in iSchools.” The participants included:

- Simon Neame, Dean of University Libraries
- Denise Pan, Senior Associate Dean of University Libraries for Collections and Strategic Partnerships
- Lauren Pressley, Senior Associate Dean of University Libraries for Research and Learning Services
- Richard S. Lewis, Associate Dean of University Libraries, UW Bothell & Cascadia College
- Julie Tanaka, Associate Dean of University Libraries for Distinctive Collections
- Kimanthi Warren, Assistant Dean of University Libraries for Organizational Development and Inclusion
- Jenny Muilenburg, Senior Director, Health Sciences Library
- Siôn Romaine, Director of Acquisitions & Rapid Cataloging Services
- Sharon Streams, Director of Strategy & Operations, CALMA (as discussion facilitator)

The conversation touched upon the evolving nature of iSchools and library and information science (LIS), the value of the MLIS degree to the library profession, the skills and preparedness of recent graduates, and opportunities for closer collaboration between the UW iSchool and UW Libraries to support student success. The following is a summary of the discussion.

### **The Nature and Impact of iSchool Research**

Forum participants reflected on the research, innovations, and programs emerging from iSchools that have impacted their work or the broader field. One speaker noted that their current role, heavily focused on crisis management, has shifted their attention more toward research synthesis documents, such as those produced by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), Scholarly Kitchen, and OCLC. They observed that these synthesis pieces often cite LIS research, so there is an indirect influence of iSchool research on their strategic thinking.

Another point raised is that valuable insights coming from iSchools are increasingly from other disciplines, such as human-computer interaction (HCI). Areas like research analytics, research impact, data management, data integrity, institutional attribution for research, intellectual property, and artificial intelligence (AI) are highlighted as domains where libraries are increasingly involved and where expertise from across the iSchool spectrum is beneficial.

These allied fields contribute significantly to understanding the broader research lifecycle and how research libraries engage with and support it.

This trend leads to a critical question raised by one speaker and echoed by colleagues: whether research libraries should continue prioritizing hiring MLIS graduates or seek more individuals from other parts of the iSchool or even entirely different disciplines. This reflects a perceived gap between the skills traditionally associated with an MLIS and the evolving needs of research libraries.

### **Interdisciplinary Nature and Silos**

The discussion underscored the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of research relevant to library work. One participant with a background in philosophy of technology, media and communications highlighted the challenge of fitting interdisciplinary research within traditional academic structures and departmental silos. This mirrors the broader experience within iSchools, where despite being inherently interdisciplinary, there can be perceived divides and a lack of collaboration across different disciplinary areas such as LIS, information systems, HCI, and data science. This siloing is seen as a potential hindrance to the program's evolution and the interdisciplinary perspective of its graduates.

### **The Evolving MLIS Degree**

The value and relevance of the MLIS degree was central to the conversation. While some participants expressed a strong appreciation for the MLIS degree and its importance in socializing individuals into the profession and establishing shared values like intellectual freedom, there's a concern that MLIS programs may be shifting away from this foundational aspect towards a more purely academic stance.

Several participants note a disconnect between the theoretical knowledge imparted in some MLIS programs and the practical skills required for day-to-day work in libraries. Graduates may be well-versed in theory but struggle to apply it in real-world research library settings. There is a perceived need for graduates to possess

more practical skills, such as comfort with APIs, fluency in Excel for data manipulation, and a general understanding of systems thinking.

The conversation touched on the idea that the research agenda within LIS programs needs to be strong and relevant to justify the degree's continued importance. There's a concern that current research may be overly focused on emerging technologies and less on core library science principles or the practical challenges faced by library professionals. It's suggested that research from PhD students alone may not adequately serve the needs and relevance of MLIS programs.

### **Bridging the Gap: Collaboration and Practical Experience**

Several suggestions were offered to bridge the gap between iSchool education and the realities of library practice. These include:

- More strategic and intentional collaboration between libraries and iSchools, going beyond traditional internships.
- Developing a "buddy system" or shadowing opportunities for iSchool students within the library.
- Encouraging co-authorship between iSchool faculty/students and practicing librarians to connect theory and practice.
- Treating the library as a "lab" for iSchool research, facilitating observation-based studies and service evaluations.
- Increased involvement of practitioners as guest lecturers or co-teachers in MLIS courses to provide real-world perspectives and practical insights. This is seen as particularly valuable in illustrating the gap between theoretical ideals and practical limitations.
- Focusing research and curriculum on systems thinking and management to equip graduates with a more holistic understanding of library operations, administration, and decision-making.
- Creating more intentional overlap and communication between the library and iSchool worlds through hallway conversations, information sharing, and joint events.
- Analyzing library job postings to better understand the required skills and experience needed to inform curriculum development and student preparation.
- Centers or common spaces (such as CALMA) are seen as a potential facilitator for these connections and collaborations.

## Challenges and Future Directions

The discussion also acknowledged several challenges:

- Constraints of time and capacity for libraries to engage in extensive collaborative efforts.
- Working with the tension between idealistic visions of library service and the pragmatic realities of budget limitations and resource allocation. This is characterized as "idealism meets realism."
- How to foster interdisciplinary thinking and interconnection with other fields, while retaining the lens and values of LIS.
- The evolving definition of "iSchool" and the diverse foci of different programs within such schools, which makes it challenging to generalize about their research scope and impact.
- The economic realities of MLIS education and entry-level salaries, particularly in high-cost-of-living areas, which can influence career choices.
- The need to balance the desire to hire local graduates with the value of gaining experience in diverse library environments.
- Difficulties in establishing consistent and meaningful engagement between library staff and iSchool faculty/students despite mutual interest.

Looking ahead, the participants emphasize the need for iSchools and libraries to be more intentional and strategic in their collaborations to ensure that MLIS education remains relevant and that graduates are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the profession. This includes fostering a greater understanding of the practical realities of library work within iSchool curricula and research agendas, and creating more opportunities for interaction and shared learning between the academic and practice-based communities. The conversation also touched on broader issues such as accreditation and the future of professional associations, recognizing their interconnectedness with the curriculum and the value of the MLIS degree.

*Note: This discussion summary was drawn from a transcript of the forum. An initial summary was drawn from the transcript using Google Notebook LM, which was reviewed and refined by CALMA's Sharon Streams and David Strand. The final draft was reviewed by the forum participants.*

## Roundtable on Ensuring a Vibrant Future for LIS in the UW iSchool

On April 23, 2025, CALMA hosted a roundtable event for University of Washington (UW) iSchool faculty, research scientists, staff, and PhD students to discuss the question: “What does our iSchool community need to do to ensure a vibrant future for LIS in our school?”

The roundtable represented a culminating event for [LIS Forward](#), a UW-led initiative that engaged thirteen of our peer iSchools over three years in a series of conversations that generated two manuscripts—a [position paper](#) authored by faculty in seven iSchools, and a volume of [responses to the position paper](#) consisting of submissions from a wide range of iSchool deans, faculty groups, and thought leaders—along with numerous conference panel discussions and workshops.

The roundtable featured a range of UW faculty and leaders who had contributed to the initiative since its inception in 2021:

- Cindy Aden, Teaching Professor, MLIS Program Chair
- Marika Cifor, Associate Professor
- Lorcan Dempsey, Professor of Practice and Distinguished Practitioner in Residence
- Anind Dey, Dean and Professor
- Tracie Hall, Professor of Practice and Distinguished Practitioner in Residence
- Sandy Littletree, Assistant Professor
- Michelle Martin, Beverly Cleary Professor for Children and Youth Services
- Simon Neame, Dean of University Libraries
- Melanie Walsh, Assistant Professor

Sharon Streams introduced the session, and LIS Forward co-chairs, Carole Palmer and Chris Coward, provided contextual background. Each panelist presented a brief response to the framing question: “What does our iSchool community need to do to ensure a vibrant future for LIS in our school?” The panelists’ remarks were followed by an open discussion with attendees, and the session closed with a final lightning round of responses by the panelists to the prompt: “What is one thing we can take action on now?” The discussion surfaced perspectives and opportunities along three central themes: LIS values, LIS curricula, and LIS pathways for students, faculty & professionals.

## LIS Values

### Perspectives

- The iSchool needs to hold tight to its values: its social justice mission, its focus on open and transparent information access, mis/disinformation, and those who are most marginalized and impacted by information disparities. – Anind Dey
- Libraries and iSchools need to respond to the information needs of Black people. Step into fuller accountability and reparative actions within LIS and its evolution to iSchools in relation to the Black information future. –Tracie Hall
- We should not remove the practitioner perspective from the research. “Information” is multifaceted exploration—how it is used, how people are or are not represented by it, how they use it, and how they even know it is there. It’s hard to separate the institutions from the work. The idea of “library” is where the passion is, but there has been a set expectation of what a library is. The historic value of “library’ is separate from what a community-centered resource can do for people. –Cindy Aden
- As the LIS Forward report noted, the informational disciplines and the iSchool have an interesting history. The iSchool itself is potentially a fertile place for the library element to thrive because of the dynamic range of disciplines in the iSchool. This is especially so given the continued evolution from a transactional/collections view of the library to a relational/community view. There is strong cross-LAM alignment in this regard (cross lamination’). Despite important differences between the curatorial traditions and their institutional manifestations, they are all service organizations which institutionalize social attention to memory, evidence and knowledge. –Lorcan Dempsey
- There is strength in a more expansive definition of “L” to LAMs or knowledge organizations even more broadly. Expertise in LIS is helpful in technical fields, and it is important to recognize the intellectual contributions of LIS and LAMs. –Melanie Walsh
- A further underscore of University of Maryland’s response to the LIS Forward position paper, in which they commented on LIS tying its identity to institutions that have problematic foundations or community relationships that are in disrepair. –Sandy Littletree

- Next wave of automation is coming and will make fundamental changes to research libraries as driven by user needs and behaviors, especially the desire for speed, efficiency and convenience. –Simon Neame
- We rely on the public trust of libraries, but that trust is eroding. People outside the inner-LAMs circle are not standing up for funding or fully understanding what libraries do. –Sandy Littletree

## **Opportunities**

- Focus on: What is the school we want to be in the ‘aftertimes’. –Anind Dey
- Define what LIS is here at the iSchool and then build it up from there. Even in a LAMinated school, the specifics of “library” can be preserved. –Lorcan Dempsey
- Examine how LIS/iSchools support or address information disparities, racialized information systems/disparities etc. How do iSchools support the Black information future in light of these systemic disparities? –Tracie Hall.
- Students would be interested in programs around history of information, etc. In certain classes where AI has created efficiencies for students, more class time could be turned to ethics and other LIS value areas. –Unattributed
- How do we have a core of thinking that unites us beyond the separations among programs and disciplines? Can there be more openness across campus and to more undergrads? For example, the Indigenous Systems of Knowledge course receives a lot of interest from non-LIS students across campus. –Sandy Littletree

## **LIS Curricula**

### **Perspectives**

- There is value in the UW MLIS being a high-touch program, which includes mentoring (iSTAMP program), faculty staying connected to the field, and alumni working in the profession who come back and connect with current students. Maintaining and extending this network is critical. –Michelle Martin
- The school should provide a stronger LIS foundation for all its doctoral students, not just those with LAM research focus areas. Also, there would be great value in securing resources that would provide doctoral fellowships for LIS students finishing their dissertations. –Marika Cifor
- LIS should continue to embrace data and the contextualized significance of what LIS does with data. There are opportunities in this area: what MLIS

students learn in core LIS courses are really important for technical and data-related fields, and these skills and knowledge are currently under-recognized and underutilized. –Melanie Walsh

- So called ‘soft skills’ are very important to LAM organizations, but those skills are not central to the MLIS curriculum here. Soft skills in addition to technical skills are important for career preparation. –Lorcan Dempsey
- LIS needs to address the outsize impact of technology for academic and research libraries, both on operations and on student information access behavior and researcher support needs. Print is not dead, but there isn’t a lot of action/innovation in the longform monograph overall and print use by students continues to go down (accelerated by COVID). A next wave of automation is coming, and research libraries are already thinking about how to use AI ethically and for learning/research support. –Simon Neame

### **Opportunities**

- Practitioner perspectives are key for career preparation for students. Set up strong feedback loops from professionals for guidance on what skills are needed and should be taught in MLIS programs. Shoutout to CALMA for being part of this effort. –Simon Neame
- Provide modes for LIS students to meaningfully engage with new and emerging technologies. Expose students who are interested in research librarianship to real-world applications of data management, data analytics, and programming. Offer practicums and internships for students to work inside research libraries. Build stronger partnerships between research libraries and iSchools, so that MLIS graduates are ready for work in those institutions. –Simon Neame
- The LIS program should continue to create space for critical assessment of and engagement with LAMs and embed this practice into the curriculum. Ensure Indigenous and other marginalized scholars are included in the critical assessment of LAM histories and practices. –Sandy Littletree
- Embark on a coordinated redesign of LIS curricula to ensure that the next generation of librarians and library leaders have the training necessary to effectively respond to the sociocultural information contexts, information needs, and information retrieval behaviors of Black people and other people of color. –Tracie Hall
- How we recruit and mentor guest faculty is an area that could be improved. –Michelle Martin

- A much stronger LAM focus is more relatable than LIS. Introduce a MAMAL (Master of Museums, Archives, Libraries) degree that looks holistically across LAMs while preserving distinctions among the professions. Address the big surge in students' interest in archival studies. Perhaps offer museum or archival certificates to MLIS students, or Library to Museology, etc. Explore developing an Archives master's program. –Lorcan Dempsey
- Youth services and archives areas are of high interest among students applying to the MLIS program, but there is less internally here for them. This is an area that needs to be strengthened. –Michelle Martin

## **LIS Pathways for Students, Faculty & Professionals**

### **Perspectives**

- Toward the goal of diversifying the profession, structuring cohorts of students who come through the program together will help libraries better serve their communities. Provide support to junior faculty that keeps them from leaving—a cohort model can work for them too. Work toward increasing LAM-focused PhD students. –Michelle Martin
- I'd like to stress the value of the cohort experience for students and new faculty, especially for BIPOC and first-generation students/faculty who are navigating academia. –Sandy Littletree
- There is a missed opportunity to attract INFO students to MLIS and increase the presence of cultural heritage and LAMs in the INFO program. Having someone from LIS in a chair/leadership position in INFO could help. –Marika Cifor
- There is a strong LIS-to-digital humanities connection that can be further developed and formalized (the Textual Studies certificate is one example). Digital humanities offers another pathway to introduce more undergrads to LIS. –Melanie Walsh
- How can we get K-12 students into the “river” that might lead to LIS? Summer librarian camp? –Itza Carbajal
- An example from Clemson University, which offered an [Emerging Scholars](#) program for high school students to spend some time on campus during each summer after their freshman, sophomore, and junior years of high school led to improved graduation rates and a very high rate of college attendance. –Michelle Martin

- We want midcareer faculty to become leaders in the school and continue to do research—how might we better support and cultivate them? –Marika Cifor
- LIS Forward aligns with concurrent conversations happening within research libraries around the value of the MLIS degree and credentialing for their professional workforce. Many research libraries, including UW Libraries, are having trouble recruiting candidates who can fulfill the needs of its positions. We are more open to considering graduates of other disciplines, despite our desire to hire MLIS graduates. –Simon Neame

## **Opportunities**

- Need to introduce on-ramps to MLIS degree from undergrad programs. And, offer certificates/programs tailored to rural and small libraries. Demand remains high for an MLIS degree from UW. –Cindy Aden
- Develop joint degrees and satellite programs with HBCUs to create and accelerate pathways for Black librarianship –Tracie Hall
- Seconding the idea of cohort of students, these could go beyond the program itself to include the experience of job seeking in the LAM professions. –Unattributed
- Offer an online “underground library school” to introduce more potential students to MLIS program –Tracie Hall
- Mid-career certifications in public administration, policy, technology, management, etc. –Lorcan Dempsey
- Ensure Indigenous and other marginalized scholars are hired, welcomed, and given space to be critical of the history and practices of LAMs. –Sandy Littletree
- Add an undergraduate arm to ALISS. –Marika Cifor
- Continue to build affinities with Textual Studies to build pathways for undergrads. –Melanie Walsh
- There is a new affinity group within the Association for Research Libraries for library deans of R1 institutions with iSchool deans to look at the intersections and opportunities for partnerships and ways to address the challenges in hiring pools. –Simon Neame