

Introduction

Geographic and Demographic Context

Clarion University (the university) is located in the Borough of Clarion, two miles north of Interstate 80 in scenic northwestern Pennsylvania, a rural area characterized by rolling hills, rivers, and old growth forests. Both Cook Forest State Park (<http://www.cookforest.org/>) and the Allegheny National Forest (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/allegheny/>) are nearby and provide both year-round and seasonal recreational opportunities, such as skiing, hiking, fishing, and hunting. The borough has a population of approximately 5,300, down somewhat from the 2010 census reporting of approximately 6,200; the population is predominantly Euro-American (94.5 percent). The university student population stands at approximately 5,400 with an FTE of approximately 4,400. This is down somewhat from the last self-study document which reported the student population as “slightly more than seven thousand;” this downward trend in student numbers reflects the fact that the university is a predominantly residential institution which draws most of its students from northwestern Pennsylvania, an area of declining population in which it competes with two other state-owned universities (Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania) for a declining number of traditional students.

Historical Context

The university was founded in 1867 as a seminary with connections to the Methodist Church and, over the years, eventuated into a normal school, a teachers’ college, a college, and, effective July 1, 1983, a state university. At the time of the last self-study the university’s academic offerings were organized into the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, and Education and Human Services; the School of Nursing; and the Division of Academic Affairs; the university’s curricula were delivered primarily at the Clarion campus, a branch campus in nearby Oil City, and at several extension sites, notably Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg. In the face of declining student enrollments and shrinking financial support from the Commonwealth, the university was reorganized in 2012 into three colleges, with a number of faculty and staff being laid off in the process. With the reorganization the former College of Education and Human Services (the former administrative home of the Department of Library Science) was dismantled. By administrative decision, the Departments of Education and Special Education were merged into a two-department school and were relocated to the College of Arts and Sciences, which was re-named the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education. The branch campus in Oil City had already been re-labeled and re-branded as Venango College of Clarion University and this college became the new administrative home of the Department of Health and Physical Education and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (both previously in the College of Education and Human Services); here they joined several existing programs in the

college, including the School of Nursing and the School of Allied Health Sciences. Toward the end of this review period, Venango College was gain rebranded and renamed and is now the College of Health and Human Services, reflecting the fact that its programs have a common thread and are located across all university teaching sites, not just at the Venango Campus. The Department of Computer Information Science, previously in the College of Arts and Sciences, was separated off and placed in the College of Business Administration. The Department of Library Science, alone, was not designated a home by administration but was, instead, directed to investigate all possible administrative locations and to recommend to university administration where it could best be accommodated. Under the leadership of then department chair, Dr. William Buchanan, the deans of the three academic colleges in the re-organized university as well as the dean of libraries were invited to meet with the faculty of the Department of Library Science to discuss the department's needs and where it could best be accommodated to achieve its mission. Pursuant to this process the department voted to align itself with the College of Business Administration; once this alignment was achieved the dean of the College of Business Administration, in consultation with the chairs of the departments of Library Science and Computer Information Science, connected the two schools administratively to form the School of Information Sciences and renamed the college the College of Business Administration and Information Sciences. The department feels that it is very fortunate to have been located in this college because of the college's history and continuing commitment to imaginative and entrepreneurial program development, willingness to provide financial support to faculty research and professional development, and an administrative team (dean, associate dean, administrative assistants) that is highly regarded at the institution, regional, and state system levels. Under their leadership the university has developed several new concentrations in the MBA program, a new graduate degree in accountancy, and a new interdisciplinary graduate degree in applied data analytics.

Institutional Context

Clarion University of Pennsylvania's Department of Information and Library Science (DILS) is committed to preparing students for proactive engagement in the information professions by educating students in accessing, evaluating, managing, communicating, creating and adapting the information environment for changing user groups. DILS offers the 36-credit hour Master of Science in Library Science (MSLS) and the MSLS School Library Media accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies with an emphasis in Library Science (BSLS-LS) degree. DILS also offers a post-master's Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Information and Library Science that consists of 12 credit hours. The MSLS is made up of five (6) core courses that focus on an introduction to the profession, organization of information, information sources and services, technology, and administration and management. There is also a capstone course in the core required by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) for which students may choose an apprenticeship or a research paper. The remainder of the 36 credits may be chosen by

students from a wide variety of electives that are offered to allow students to construct a coherent program of study in a specific area of their choice. A link on the program's website [Careers and Internships](#) details several recommended courses of study that students can follow to develop depth in the areas of information technology, government librarianship or agencies, technical services, academic librarianship, public librarianship, youth services in public libraries, and school library certification. DILS also has an official concentration in Local and Archival Studies. In partnership with two other universities in the PASSHE system, DILS offers several cooperative programs: the MSLS/Juris Doctor with the Widener School of Law and the MSLS/MA in Applied History with Shippensburg University. Each program allows 6 credits from the other program to be counted for the degree. For example, 6 credits from the Widener JD count toward the MSLS and 6 credits from the MSLS count toward the JD.

As of fall of 2017, DILS has 339 graduate students and 71 undergraduate students enrolled in the program with 8 full time faculty members and six (6) part time faculty. Clarion's MSLS program has had continued accreditation from ALA since its initial accreditation in 1973/74. The department and its programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels have been major contributors to the university's success. It is the second largest department on campus after the Department of Education.

A comprehensive multi-purpose university committed to teaching excellence, Clarion offers a broad range of undergraduate programs and master's programs in the following areas: accountancy, applied data analytics, biology, business administration (with two concentrations), education (with six concentrations), library science, mass media arts and journalism, nursing (both masters and doctoral), rehabilitative sciences, special education (with two concentrations), and speech language pathology. The Doctor of Nursing Practice was recently inaugurated in partnership with Edinboro University. The university is also investigating the development of other professional doctorates. The university holds twenty-nine program accreditations – the most of any PASSHE university – a fact of which the university and its staff and faculty are justifiably proud. Clarion University is committed to seeking excellence in all areas of higher education within its mission and to provide an environment that challenges students to develop their talents, to expand their intellectual capacities and interests, to nurture their creative abilities, and to develop a lifelong respect and enthusiasm for learning. The university is dedicated to helping students see in themselves what they may become, assisting them with an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for entrance into a variety of careers and for participation in a free society as enlightened citizens capable of making wise and responsible choices.

To prepare its students to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, the university seeks to admit, retain, and graduate students who are qualified and motivated, and to recruit, retain, and support highly qualified and dedicated faculty and staff. The university seeks diversity in its staff, faculty, and student body and values this diversity as providing richness in the learning process. The state-of-the-art library building – in

which the department is located – and the adjacent bell tower serve as the focal point of the campus, placing library science – as it should be – at the heart of the university.

Faculty members at the university are committed to excellence in teaching and to continuous intellectual and professional development. Faculty at PASSHE institutions are unionized and represented by the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF), one of ten collective bargaining units on campus. The APSCUF collective bargaining agreement requires faculty to:

- Stay current in their academic disciplines through continuing scholarly activity
- Confer with and advise students and advisees
- Evaluate fairly and promptly student achievement
- Participate in deliberations which contribute to the growth and development of the students and university
- Accept reasonable duties assigned within their fields of competence
- Attempt honestly and in good conscience to preserve and defend the goals of the university.

For the first time in the history of the system, university, and faculty union, the administration and the faculty bargaining unit reached an impasse in negotiations in the fall of 2016 and the faculty went out on strike. The strike lasted for only three days but resulted in a satisfactory settlement of a new contract.

In the period following the last review by the Committee on Accreditation the department has made significant and innovative strides both in its ALA-accredited MSLS program as well as in programs that support and feed the MSLS degree.

Since the last accreditation review the department has worked with its constituencies to review and revise its curricula, with particular emphasis on the teaching/research strengths of its faculty. In response to leadership from PASSHE, the department has moved from a 36-credit hour only MSLS degree to a degree that incorporates a required capstone of either an apprenticeship or a research project. Details of these innovations are in the curriculum chapter. The department has also drawn on the strength of its new faculty to develop curricula that support innovations in such areas of archives and social media, all of which are, again, discussed in the curriculum chapter.

At the time of the last accreditation review the department had both face-to-face, fully online, and blended degree options. Because of student demand, the face-to-face degree option has been dropped so that the MSLS degree is available only online. The department continues to offer on-site employment for both graduate and undergraduate students who desire an on-campus experience, even though the actual coursework is fully online. Like the MSLS, the undergraduate degree option (BS in Liberal Studies with a Concentration in Library Science), is also fully online and has proved very popular. Most students who enter this program are interested in completing their undergraduate degrees (typically from remote locations) with the goal of eventually entering the

department's online MSLS program; consequently, it has become an important feeder program for the MSLS program.

Though enrollment is down since the last visit, reaching a high of 509 in 2011 and a low of 325 in 2015, it is beginning to rebound and has increased since the low in 2015. It has also remained relatively steady since 2014.

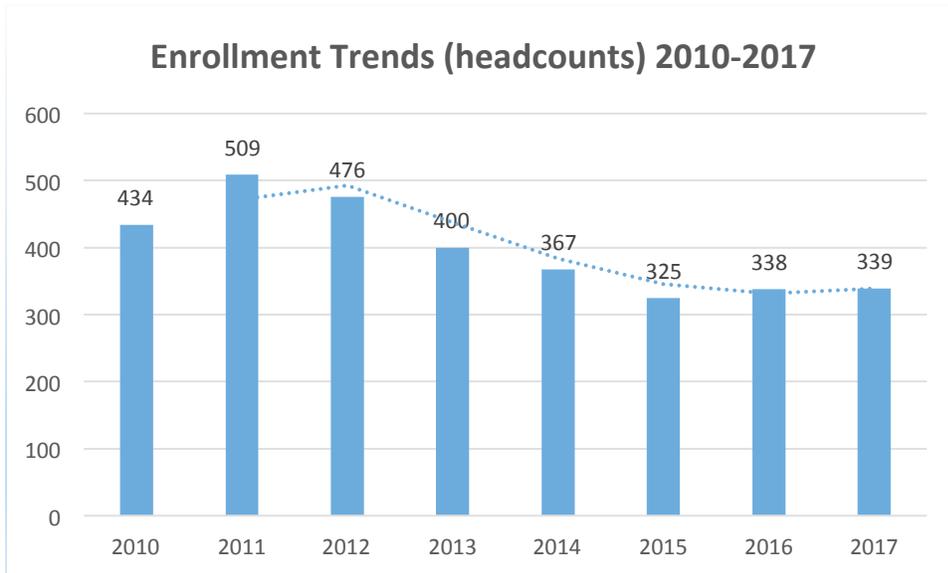


Figure Intro.1. MSLS Student Enrollment Trends 2010-2017

Compared to the rest of the university and the College of Business Administration and Information Sciences DILS programs (graduate and undergraduate) have strong enrollment, putting the department in an enviable position on a campus where many other degree programs are struggling to remain viable due to the university's overall decline in student enrollment. As a result, the department is looking forward to the development of new programs, the maintenance and strengthening of its existing programs, and a bright and strong future.

COBAIS Enrollment by Major As of Fall semester

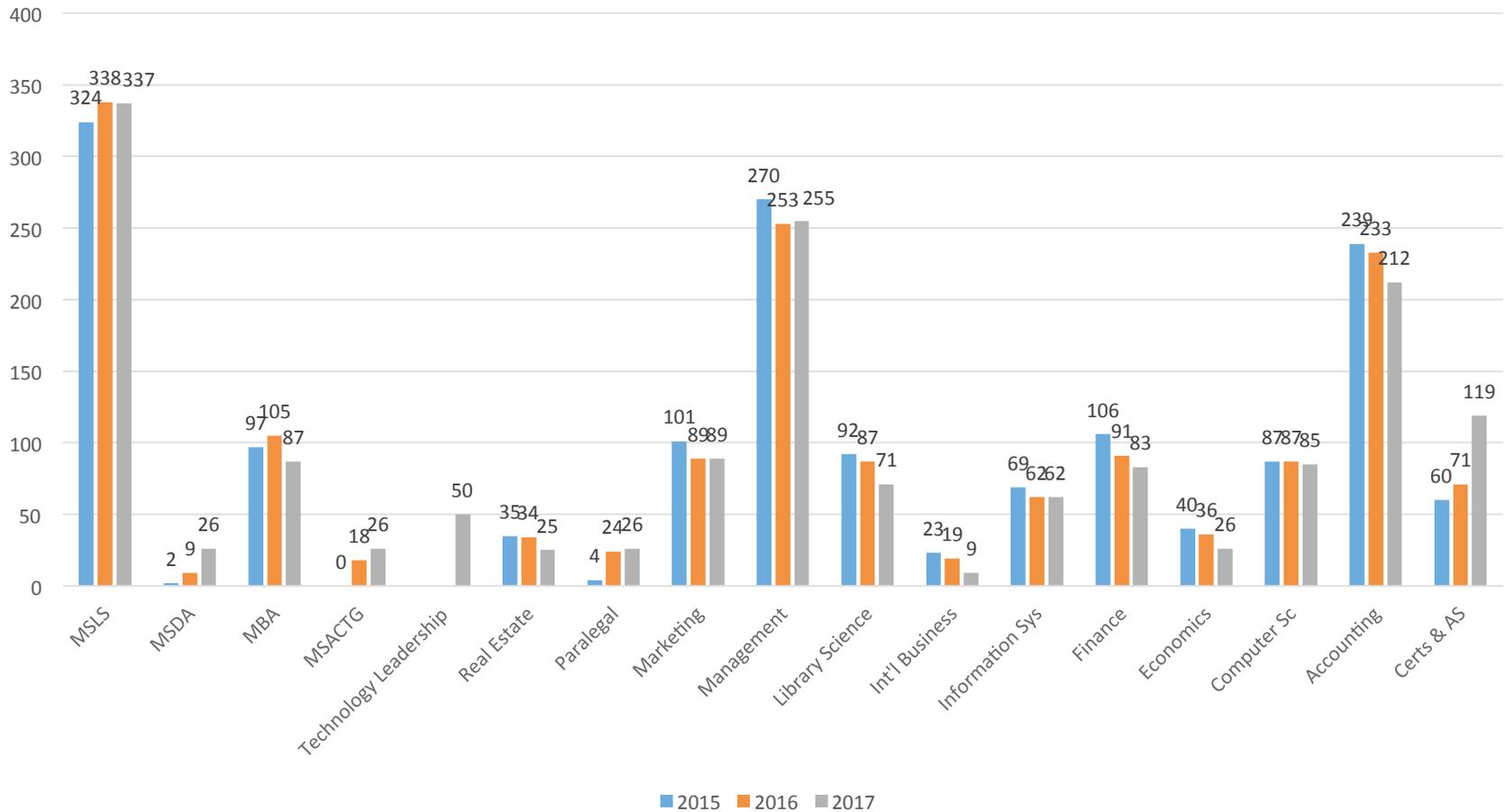


Figure Intro.2 COBAIS Enrollment by Major as of Fall 2017

Table Intro.1 University Enrollments 2010-2016

Year	Total University Enrollment	Total Graduate Enrollment	Total MSLS Enrollment	MSLS % of Total University Enrollment	MSLS % of Total of Graduate Enrollment
2010	7315	1090	435	5.94%	39.9%
2011	6991	1096	508	7.26%	46.4%
2012	6520	996	475	7.28%	47.6%
2013	6080	881	400	6.57%	45.4%
2014	5712	779	367	6.42%	47.1%
2015	5368	683	325	6.05%	49.0%
2016	5224	894	339	6.47%	37.8%

Layout of the Self Study

The Program Presentation follows the 2015 Standards. The document will be submitted in print format and will also be available in electronic format. Documents used as evidence in the Program Presentation are available either on-site or as appendices in the electronic version. The program presentation and many of the appendices will be available on the Department of Information and Library Science web site.

The Program Presentation covers the academic years of 2010 through 2017 and describes and provides evidence of how the Program meets the American Library Association's 2015 Standards for Accreditation.

University and Program Changes

Many changes have taken place since the 2010 ERP visit. With the dissolution of the College of Education and Human Services, the Department of Library Science moved to the College of Business and Information Sciences (CoBAIS). With this move, the Department was housed within the School of Information Sciences created within the college along with the Department of Computer Information Science, and we changed the name of our department to Department of Information and Library Science (DILS). A search for a new university president is underway, as is the search for a new provost. Interims are serving in both positions at the present time. The BSED in Library Science is in moratorium.

Finances

The State of Pennsylvania faces budget constraints every year and support from the state for the universities in the PASSHE system continues to decrease. Much of our planning efforts are focused on being an integral part to the mission of the University as we build new courses and programs to enhance Clarion's new emphasis on health related programs. Our undergraduate degree (BSLS-Library Science) enhances our program and provides a pathway into the MSLS degree with the newly added

accelerated bachelors to masters feature. DILS believes this option will be instrumental in recruiting students to the MSLS program, especially from Clarion undergraduate majors other than our own.

Preparation of the Self-Study

The preparation of this self-study began at the Spring 2016 planning retreat. At that time it was decided that even though DILS works as a Committee of the whole for planning purposes, a committee would be formed to cover each of the five standards and that one faculty member would be the lead for each standard. First of all, an Accreditation Advisory Committee was established to guide the development of the Self-Study. The Accreditation Advisory Committee was made up of the following members:

- Faculty: Dr. Linda Lillard (Department Chairperson), Dr. William Buchanan, Dr. James Maccaferri, Dr. Marilyn Harhai, Dr. Janice Krueger, Dr. Rhonda Clark, Dr. YooJin Ha, and Dr. Simon Ariteguieta-Trillos.
- Staff: Mrs. Wenda Strickenberger
- Dean of the University Libraries, Dr. Terry Latour
- Alumni Representative: Elizabeth Cromer
- Presidents of the Library Student Organizations: Amber Morgan-Opitz and Tonya Shaffer

Smaller working committees were formed that reported back to the Accreditation Advisory Committee. The Working Committees were made up of the chair/program director, the seven other full-time faculty, the administrative staff, and graduate assistants. Each standard was assigned to a committee and each committee was led by a member of the faculty as indicated below. All full time faculty members in the Department are tenured. The assignments are as follows:

Standard I: Systematic Planning

Dr. Linda Lillard (Professor and Department Chair, Lead), Dr. Rhonda Clark (Associate Professor, Lead), Dr. Simon Aristeguieta-Trillos (Assistant Professor), Dr. David Hartley, (Associate Dean, COBAIS) Amber Morgan-Opitz, (Graduate Student)

Standard II: Curriculum

Dr. William Buchanan (Professor, Lead), Dr. Janice Krueger (Associate Professor), Tonya Shaffer, (Graduate Student)

Standard III: Faculty

Dr. YooJin Ha (Associate Professor, Lead), Dr. Linda Lillard (Professor and Department Chair), Alison Lashinsky (Graduate Student)

Standard IV: Students

Dr. Rhonda Clark (Associate Professor, Lead), Dr. Simon Aristeguieta-Trillos (Assistant Professor), Amber Morgan-Opitz (Graduate Student)

Standard V: Administration, Finances, and Resources

Dr. Linda Lillard (Professor and Department Chair, Lead), Dr. William Buchanan (Professor), Dr. David Hartley (Associate Dean, COBAIS), Alison Lashinsky (Graduate Student).

Dr. Harhai and Dr. Krueger began the process by providing a brief outline of each chapter for the self-study including links to some of the resources that would be cited in the chapters. Standard leads picked up from there and constructed each chapter and the corresponding links and appendices. These groups worked through summer 2016 and fall 2016 until preparations began for a strike by the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculty (APSCUF) union. The strike resulted from the lack of ability to reach a contract agreement after working without a contract for several years. At this time, because of the loss of the ability to focus on the self study because of strike involvement and the after effects, DILS asked for and received a one semester delay in the External Review Panel (ERP) visit. Consequently, the visit scheduled for Fall of 2017 was rescheduled to Spring of 2018.

With renewed vigor, initial drafts of the self study were completed in early spring 2017. Other faculty members on each committee served as the second reader and then each chapter was brought to available members of the Accreditation Advisory Committee for comment. Weekly meetings took place throughout March, April and May 2017 where available members of the Accreditation Advisory Committee examined each chapter in depth and provided input. Chapters were edited based on these comments and then each chapter was sent to the consultant team of Dr. Daniel O'Connor and Dr. Philip Mulvaney, both of whom served on the Committee on Accreditation (COA) and who were hired to advise DILS through re-accreditation process.

The Standards Committees worked throughout the summer of 2017 to incorporate the recommendations of the consultants and an updated complete draft was presented to the consultants and the accreditation advisory board on September 29. The available members of the Accreditation Advisory Board met on October 12 to consider the recommendations of the consultants and the Standards Committees developed another draft based on these comments. This draft was placed on the website so that constituents can access and provide feedback. Drs. Lillard, Ha, and Aristeguieta-Trillos also provided a link to the website to the Pennsylvania Library Association Conference held October 15-18, 2017, so that current students, alumni, and employers could be directed to the document and provide feedback. All collected feedback was incorporated into the final draft due to the ERP and the Office of Accreditation on December 11, 2017.