IFLA Building Strong LIS Education (BSLISE) Working Group
2019-20 Annual Report

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Website: bslise.org

In the year 2019-20 the IFLA Building Strong Library and Information Science Education (BSLISE) Working Group has grown and continued its productivity. The BSLISE is a working group devoted to strengthening the international quality of library and information science education (LIS), and consequently, the excellence of LIS professional practice. It emerged from deliberations at the 2016 IFLA Satellite Meeting on "International Quality Assessment of LIS Education Programs" (Dublin, Ohio, USA), hosted by the IFLA Section on Education and Training and the Section on Library Theory and Research. The BSLISE is made up of members from across the globe and is an initiative of the IFLA Section on Education and Training (SET), LIS Education in Developing Countries SIG, and Section on Library Theory and Research (LTR).

Since the inception of the BSLISE, the membership of the group has been dynamic. We have members who continue to be engaged, some who have left, and others who are new. At the moment the group is composed of 35 members who are from all 5 IFLA regions, representing 19 countries and 18 languages (see website for member information).

Membership growth (numbers and global diversity)
July 2019: 5 IFLA regions :: 14 countries :: 14 languages :: 27 members
August 2020: 5 IFLA regions :: 19 countries :: 18 languages :: 35 members

While the BSLISE has grown over the last year, we have experienced the loss of Flavia Renon (12 November 1963-19 March 2019), a valued and co-founding member. Flavia was active in IFLA as a member of the Standing Committee on Library Theory and Research and its newsletter editor. BSLISE member Anna Maria Tammaro wrote a "Memoriam for Flavia Renon,"in the *Library Theory and Research Newsletter*, February 2020; p. 5.

Three graduate student assistants, from the Department of Library and Information Studies at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG), undertook internships with the BSLISE. Lenny Tran (August-December 2019), Alexandra Voorhees (January-May 2020), and Amanda Thompson (June-July 2020) managed and enhanced our online and social media presence, including developing guidelines for our varied communication channels and projects. They are students interested in experiential learning for web/social media projects, supervised by BSLISE member and UNCG Associate Professor Anthony Chow. The students are members of the iLab, a hands-on learning laboratory where UNCG graduate students in instructional technology and library and information science support organizations through the application of web site design, social media coordination and curation, and various applications of instructional technology.

The BSLISE activities from September 2019 to August 2020 are reported below, and additional information on the group can be found on the BSLISE website: bslise.org.

POST-WHITE PAPER ACTIVITIES

IFLA BSLISE Working Group (2018). *Building Strong LIS Education: A Call to Global and Local Action – An IFLA BSLISE Working Group White Paper*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Libraries. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.15641/0-7992-2542-6 (29th August 2018)

The White Paper, published by the BSLISE on August 2018, presented an action plan arising from the 6 key findings of an international survey to learn the differing qualification requirements (education, certification, individual credentialing system) for library and information "professional" practice in order to

develop a better understanding of the equivalence of credentials and the role of LIS education. To plan and determine its 2019-20 agenda, BSLISE members, who serve on the standing committees of SET and LTR, coordinated with SET and LTR to advance BSLISE work on three of the six recommended White Paper action areas (#1, 2, 4), as part of the 2019-20 SET action plan and LTR action plan. The specific activities were integrated within Focus 2 of each Section's action plan (see table below) and an additional column has been added to the table in order to report on the progress of each activity. Items with an asterisk (*) represents work to be continued in the following year.

Focus Area 2
Advance the profession through understanding best practices in library and information science (LIS) education.

IFLA Strategic Direction
SD 2.3 – Develop standards, guidelines, and other materials that foster best professional practice.

Key Initiatives	
1	Develop an international resource that identifies local structures
2	Develop a draft international framework for the assessment of quality standards in LIS education
3	Identify core and other competencies for transferability and reciprocity
4	Work collaboratively with the leadership of the BSLISE Working Group to address the recommendations of the BSLISE White Paper (2018). doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.15641/0-7992-2542-6

Funding Needed	Projects/Activities	Tasks & Responsibility	Timeframe	Progress (2020-8-24)
☒	1a) Build on the existing databases of LIS programs worldwide to develop a regularly updated, international database and asset map, capturing information about LIS schools and programs and local structures, organizations, and procedures that address the issues of professional qualifications, accreditation, certification, and registration for professional practice. [**Survey and Mapping Project – Funding proposal requesting student assistance was declined -** BSLISE was asked to use its own volunteers, obtain student volunteers and collaborate with the IFLA Library Map	BSLISE Group A	August 2019- July 2020	-Survey was conducted with 156 LIS schools responding from 67 different countries. 89% of the respondents indicated there is a qualification requirement (e.g., accredited degree, certification) to work as a "professional librarian."

	of the World project. Funding proposal had indicated that the BSLISE was already using the above resources. After consultation with IFLA HQ and consideration of technology differences, it was decided that IFLA would link to the BSLISE map.]			*The map from the data is under development and will be available next year (2021).
☐	2a) Engage the IFLA leadership and constituents to address the need for this framework (or related mechanism) and its role in developing and managing this assessment mechanism.	BSLISE Working Group and Group B	August 2019-December 2019	- 2019 IFLA WLIC session; 10 associations worldwide were surveyed; Library Map of the World collaboration; meeting with IFLA President, Oct 2019
	2b) Develop a draft international framework for the assessment of quality standards in LIS education	BSLISE Working Group	August 2019-July 2020	-Guidelines and standards were considered; current IFLA guidelines dated 2012. -New guidelines are being developed and the proposal is being submitted to the IFLA Standards Committee. They will introduce the foundational knowledge areas (FKAs), developed by the BSLISE. * Guidelines to be completed in 2020-21
	3a) Refine core and other competencies for transferability and reciprocity	BSLISE Working Group and BSLISE Group C	August 2019-July 2020	-New LIS definition has been created -Foundation knowledge areas (FKAs) have been developed rather than core

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				competencies in LIS. The 8 areas are defined as foundational because LIS professionals will build on them to enhance their professional knowledge and skills.
☐	4a) Work with IFLA SET, LIS Education in Developing Countries SIG, other units and IFLA leadership, as appropriate, to address the recommendations of the BSLISE White Paper (2018). doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.15641/0-7992-2542-6	BSLISE Working Group	August 2019-July 2020	All the above work has been conducted in communication with SET, LTR and LISEDC SIG members. * Guidelines will include broad consultation with relevant stakeholders to be carried out in 2020-2021.

How will you communicate your activities and results?

The Building Strong LIS Education (BSLISE) Working Group utilizes email lists (e.g., IFLA-L, JESSE, ALISE, ASIS&T, iSchool, etc.), social media https://www.facebook.com/bslise and a website https://bslise.org/ to communicate activities and achievements to its members, IFLA SET, LTR, the Developing Countries SIG, and the LIS community worldwide. Presentations, publications and webinars will be other forms to communicate the work resulting from these initiatives which are carried out by the BSLISE, of which SET SC members play key roles, as well as LTR and other IFLA members.

How will you measure the impact of your activities?

· Use of the work by LIS professionals, educators, researchers, stakeholders internationally (including local and regional professional associations, higher education institutions, and government higher educational quality assurance bodies);
· its dissemination through presentations, webinars, publications, website, social media among other forms to LIS professionals, educators, stakeholders worldwide in diverse languages; application of the findings and resources by LIS institutions and associations locally and regionally; and
· consideration of a proposed international framework for the assessment of quality standards in LIS education by IFLA leadership.

Identify other Unit(s) which may be interested in this Focus Area, or with which you could collaborate on projects/activities.
LTR, Statistics & Evaluation, Division 5 (Regions), National Libraries and IFLA leadership, LIS Education in Developing Countries SIG

NEW PROJECTS

The following projects were proposed as BSLISE activities during the year. At the September 2020 BSLISE retreat/planning meeting project leaders would indicate the feasibility of the proposed projects for the BSLISE 2020-2021 agenda.

1. LIS program in international ranking systems - Review of world ranking systems in order to understand how external international systems assess the quality of LIS education (Project leader: Virginia Ortiz)
2. Study of how other cognate fields address professional qualifications internationally (Project leader: Anna Maria Tammaro)

PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS, PUBLICATIONS, AND ONLINE PRESENCE

Presentations (4)

BSLISE juried panel presentation: "Embracing diversity: what it means for new LIS professionals and the organizations that hire them," ALISE 2019 Conference, September 26, 2019, Knoxville, Tennessee (USA). Panelists: Wanda Brown, Anthony Chow, Dick Kawooya, Fatih Oguz, Jaya Raju.

Presentation as part of a panel and discussion session on "Information Science Education and Library and Information Studies Education: Transnational Conversations," ASIS&T 2019 Conference, October 21, 2019, Melbourne (Australia). Panelists: Clara M. Chu, Sandra Hirsh, Heidi Julien, Mary Anne Kennan, Diane L. Velasquez, Bhuva Narayan.

Cancelled: 2-hour LTR Open Session at the IFLA WLIC 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Title: Working together to develop an international framework for quality assessment and qualification in the library and information profession: Engagement, connections, pathways and hurdles
Goal: Engage the IFLA leadership and constituents in reviewing the draft international framework for quality assessment and qualification in the library and information profession, and exploring solutions for implementation.

Postponed: Paper originally accepted for the XII Encuentro de la Asociación de Educación e Investigación en Ciencia de la Información de Iberoamérica y el Caribe (EDICIC, November 10-12, 2020; San José, Costa Rica), which has been postponed to XII Encuentro EDICIC, September 21-24, 2021 http://www.ebci.ucr.ac.cr/edicic2020/. Paper and presentation will be prepared for 2021.
Clara M. Chu, Ana María Talavera Ibarra, Virginia Ortiz Repiso. "Marco internacional para la formación profesional en Bibliotecología y Ciencias de la Información (BCI): oportunidades y retos para la educación en Iberoamérica" (International framework for professional education in Library and Information Science (LIS): opportunities and challenges for education in Latin America).

Publications (3)

Oguz, Fatih. "An International Library and Information Science Schools Survey by the IFLA BSLISE Working Group," *IFLA SET Bulletin*, 21(1), January 2020; p. 15.

Shibaeva, Ekaterina. "BSLISE Working Group Session: Photo Gallery," *IFLA SET Bulletin, 21(1)*, January 2020; pp. 7-14

- Photos from: Albright, Kendra, Chu, Clara M., Raju, Jaya, and Tammaro, Anna Maria. "International Framework for the Assessment of Quality Standards in LIS Education: the Role of Associations, Higher Education and the Professional Community," Library Theory and Research Section Open Session, 2019 World Library and Information Congress, 27th August 2019; Athens.

Thompson, Amanda. "The Student Spotlight: A BSLISE Project Profiling LIS Students Worldwide," *IFLA SET Bulletin, 21(2)*, July 2020, pp. 22-28.

Online Presence (4)

The BSLISE website is at bslise.org
Its social media presence was initiated in 2019 on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/bslise. This year students from around the world are being featured on our Facebook account as part of the **Student Spotlight Project** started in 2020, and we've added Twitter https://twitter.com/BSLISE_ifla and Instagram https://www.instagram.com/bslise_ifla/ accounts.

Future Activities

On September 8, 2021, the BSLISE will hold a retreat to plan its 2020-21 activities, which will then be integrated into the SET and LTR action plans for 2020-21. It is expected that the activities noted with an asterisk in the table above will be part of activities for the following year. As well, the BSLISE will update its LTR Open Session (2-hour) which had been schedule for the cancelled 2020 IFLA World Library and Information Congress, and propose a 3-hour LTR-SET Open Session for IFLA WLIC 2021 (2 hours from LTR and 1 hour from SET, and additional co-sponsorship by CPDWL).