Collaboration amongst (L)IS Schools in South Africa

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Overview

- Introduction
- RETIG of LIASA
- SAQA
- LIS programmes in SA
  - Model
  - Typical content
    - Undergraduate
  - Extensions
- Teaching collaboration
- Masters initiative
- Research collaboration
- Conclusion

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Introduction

➢ 12 (L)IS schools

➢ New names and realignment

➢ Articulation of LIS schools and academic programmes

➢ Limited training in Library Science

➢ Expansion of broader Information Science and other topics

➢ Information literacy

RETIG

- Opportunity for educators to meet on a regular basis
  - At LIASA conference
  - At host universities
- Issues
  - Teaching model
  - Typical content and focus
  - Funding
  - Challenges and opportunities
  - General networking
- Niche areas

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SAQA

- South African Qualifications Authority
- Unit standards
  - Compiled by mostly LIS faculty
  - Standardisation of course content
  - Minimum standards
  - Very slow process
- Checks and balances
  - SGB vs ETQA
- NQF levels
  - Currently standards only for some paraprofessionals

Teaching model

- Two models:
  - Undergraduate 3 or 4 year degree in LIS
  - General first degree followed by postgraduate diploma
- Followed by
  - Honours
  - Masters (coursework or research)
  - DPhil / PhD

Typical content

- Information and knowledge management
- Information seeking, searching and retrieval
- Knowledge organization and representation
- Management
- User studies
- Information literacy
- ICTs
- Ethical, legal and economic aspects of information
- The information / knowledge society and globalisation
- Besides other academic courses

Extensions

➢ Within (L)IS programmes
  ➢ Focus on (Information and) Knowledge Management
  ➢ Computer trouble shooting skills
  ➢ Multimedia and web development
  ➢ Media and Publishing Studies
  ➢ ICTs
  ➢ Records management
  ➢ Archival studies
➢ As new programmes
  ➢ Multimedia
  ➢ Publishing studies
  ➢ Archival studies

Challenges

➢ Student numbers

➢ Career opportunities

➢ Status and salaries of LIS professionals

➢ Funding of LIS schools

➢ Technology infrastructures at LIS schools

➢ Lack of funding for public libraries

Opportunities

➢ Perceived needs of the country / the developing world

➢ Industry requirements

➢ Indigenous knowledge

➢ Opportunities for (relevant) research

➢ Continuing education for LIS workers / professionals

➢ Continuing education for faculty members

➢ Information & development (society/poverty)

Collaboration

- Very little at the formal teaching level
  - Guest lecturers on *ad hoc* basis
  - Module presentation
  - Slightly more at post-graduate level
- External examiners / moderation
  - At all exit level modules
    - Final year undergraduate
    - Post graduate
- External evaluation / peer review

Reasons for lack of collaboration

➢ Staff have their own teaching programmes
➢ Different programmes
➢ Different content / focus within programmes
➢ Development of niche areas / local expertise
➢ Logistical problems
➢ IT support
➢ Funding
➢ Competitive edge
➢ General lack of inter-university cooperation

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Possible solutions

- Guest lectures through IT support
  - Video-conferencing
  - WebCT, listservers, etc.
  - Requires more bandwidth and working infrastructures
- Co-presented modules
  - Full or partial module
  - Technology support
  - Student interaction
  - Requires champion AND efficient IT support

Masters initiative

➢ International collaboration between
  ➢ UWM and UP
  ➢ Various other USA (L)IS schools
➢ Coursework Masters aimed at library managers in Africa
➢ Lectures in SA and USA
➢ Fully funded programme
➢ Grant-writing stage

Content

➤ Management concepts and techniques for library leaders

➤ Leadership in libraries and information organisations

➤ E-trends in the library and information business

➤ Global perspectives on the information and knowledge society

➤ Knowledge management

➤ Mini-dissertation

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Research collaboration

- Individual researchers on an *ad hoc* basis
  - Co-authored papers
    - Statistics in Prof Ocholla's presentation
  - Staff at Masters / doctoral level
- Very few large inter-university projects in (L)IS
  - Nature of the research?
  - Funding?

Conclusion

➢ Limited collaboration at teaching level
  ➢ No single curriculum
  ➢ Individuals on an *ad hoc* basis
➢ Limited collaboration at research level
  ➢ Individual researchers
➢ Much room for improvement!

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Thank you!

Questions?
Comments?