

Annual Status Report on
Precandidacy Activities and Efforts
Master of Library Science (MLS) Program
Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU)
February 15, 2022

Introduction

The past year of operations at the MTSU MLS Program has seen what could be called a maturing of the Program as it works towards candidacy status with the American Library Association (ALA). This maturity has been achieved primarily through the seeking and obtaining of data from constituents outside of the MLS Program and the university to aid MLS Program faculty with the continuous improvement process. The MLS Program collects already considerable amounts of data from its students immediately following graduation, and one year after graduation regarding their employment accomplishments, but we had failed to collect data from practicing information professionals around middle Tennessee who could offer valuable insight about librarianship from their perspective. This issue has been resolved now and it will become a regular activity in our accreditation efforts! In this same spirit, this past year we also collected helpful data from a group of student participants for our first ever student town hall, an event that we will hold on an annual basis going forward. The idea behind this initiative is to collect program improvement data from students at various stages of their education *while* they are MLS students instead of waiting until they graduate. In other words, the MLS Program is attempting to be more proactive rather than being merely reactive for its assessment needs.

How these data have been collected and used, along with other sources of data the MLS Program collects, will form the bulk of this annual report. We hope to demonstrate to ALA's Committee on Accreditation (CoA) that the MLS Program has committed itself to a process of *continuous* self-improvement to aid with its growth and to help it achieve its stated objectives in order to realize our shared vision and mission. Thus, this report addresses not only the details

requested in our last letter from the CoA, but it also reports related progress we have made with the plans outlined in our original precandidacy application.

Finally, although ALA and the COA assesses LIS programs quite rightly based on its own rigorous standards, we would like to share that the MLS Program was ranked just recently as the 4th best out of 46 online MLS Programs by [Intelligent.com](https://www.intelligent.com). We improved considerably over our 2021 ranking of 13th place. We were ranked higher by Intelligent.com than some ALA-accredited library and/or information science schools! The MLS Program received particular attention regarding its field experiences (practicum). We look forward to continuing this trend of quality improvement with Intelligent.com and, most especially, the American Library Association!

Standard I – Missions, Goals, and Objectives

In this section we draw your attention particularly to the progress we are making based on the plans we outlined in our precandidacy application.

I.1 The MLS faculty will refine existing systematic planning processes - The MLS faculty will discuss program goals, data collection, and data analysis at regular semesterly program meetings throughout the year. Minutes from regular program meetings will document discussion of annual goals and evaluation of progress on actions steps. MLS faculty will evaluate minutes from fall and spring semester meetings.

As you will see in appendices 1, 2, 6, and 7, we are collecting meeting data from faculty meetings, our MLS Program Advisory Council (MAC), our student town hall, and our exit and employment surveys. All of these data sources are disseminated or made available on our MLS Program *MS Teams* page by the Program Director to MLS Program faculty, including adjuncts, whereupon the data may be discussed at formal and informal meetings whereupon further planning may occur. Meetings have been held via Zoom and these recorded meetings are being archived on the Program's own Microsoft Teams team page.

I.2.1 The MLS faculty will engage MLS students in robust community dialogue - The MLS faculty will hold the Annual Town Hall Meeting for MLS students. Data from the Annual Town Hall Meeting will feed into the MLS Program Advisory Council processes. The MLS faculty will mine minutes from the Annual Town Hall Meeting to identify themes. The Town Hall Meeting will take place on a webinar platform and will be recorded. The MLS faculty will hold the Annual Town Hall Meeting in September each academic year.

As seen in appendix 2, the MLS Program held its first Town Hall in November 2021. While the number of students participating was small, we hope as we hold more of these, we can improve their attendance in this event. Students offered some quite useful information for MLS Program faculty to consider, including a request for each instructor to create a short video for their respective online course that gives them a quick orientation and overview of the course's content. All instructors have started working on, or have already implemented, these videos.

1.2.2 The MLS faculty will identify alumni perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of MLS' capacity to prepare students for professional life - MLS faculty will survey Program alumni regarding their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the MLS Program's capacity to prepare students for the workforce. Distribution strategy of the MLS survey of alumni will net a 40 to 60 percent return rate of surveys. MLS faculty will distribute a well-designed, well-vetted, short, but detailed survey to alumni about Program quality. MLS faculty will send reminders to prospective survey respondents one to two weeks after the initial survey distribution.

In appendices 7 and 8 you will find reports based on the data collected from exit and employment surveys disseminated during 2021. We ask the MLS Program's Graduate Assistant to write up these reports so that they get practice preparing reports based on primary data, but the text is reviewed by the Program Director. The reports are discussed at the next program faculty meeting. We use all good practices in survey design and dissemination based on the survey literature that has been produced by scholars such as Don Dillman to improve response rate. All surveys are disseminated to all graduates using Qualtrics. The exit survey is disseminated at the end of each semester (three times per year) and the employment survey is disseminated once during the Summer semester.

1.2.3 MLS faculty will develop a steady pipeline of students and prospective students - MLS faculty will distribute handouts/slides to prospective students and employers at state conferences and university graduate program fairs. MLS faculty will document conversations with prospective students and employers through a Customer Relationship Management System (CRM). The CRM records names and email addresses. MLS faculty will use the CRM data to measure the conversion rate of those names entered into the CRM into enrolled students. MLS faculty will collect CRM data at the following events: Tennessee Library Association March-April 2020, Tennessee Association of School Librarians (TAASL) April-May 2020, Tennessee Paraprofessional Meeting April 2020, Tennessee ACRL (TLACRL) April 2020.

We hope that a return to some sort of “normalcy” under Covid will allow us to address this goal more fully. In appendix 8, you will find examples of our efforts to meet goal I.2.3., including efforts to recruit minority students (emails to Tennessee State University and Fisk University). Unfortunately, non-response and scheduling conflicts prevented us attending either institution’s graduate fair this past year. However, the MLS Program was represented at MTSU’s own graduate fair that was held on November 16, 2021. The MLS Program is attempting to be as proactive and regular as possible with student recruitment. Plans in the immediate future include having an exhibitor’s booth at the annual Tennessee Library Association (TLA) conference April 12-14, 2022, and the annual Tennessee Association of School Librarians conference September 8-10, 2022, both of which are discussed in more detail below, where contact information of prospective students will be collected for recruitment efforts.

Standard II-Curriculum

We have made significant progress in areas that are impacted by this part of the standards. In terms of goals the MLS Program communicated to CoA in our precandidacy application,

“II.1 The MLS Program will refine and expand curriculum to ensure students have a variety of experiences across coursework that address the learning outcomes identified for the Program and to grow the Program” and “II.1 MLS faculty will propose new catalog changes to expand course options,”

the MLS Program has two, brand-new courses that have been approved and are currently under development for course content. One course is *Special Libraries and Librarianship*; the other course is *Introduction to Leadership in Libraries*, which will complement our course offerings in library management. Both courses will be 100% online. The course designers, all librarians who possess ALA-accredited masters degrees in LIS, also are willing to serve as adjunct instructors for the courses they have designed when they are offered for student registration. The special libraries course will allow the MLS Program to offer our students a

“complete” education in librarianship, along with our courses in public and academic librarianship that are available already, as this course will also consider medical, legal, and other specialized libraries and librarianship. We also are considering two new courses that will be developed in the future: one is a course in library programming with a particular focus on public libraries; the other course will be marketing and promotion of libraries, their programs, and their collections. The library marketing course was recommended by one of the MLS Program’s Advisory Council (MAC) members, and it will include contemporaneous topics such as the use of virtual marketing through social media, with these topics being suggested also by MAC members.

Regarding precandidacy goal *“III.2 The MLS Program will offer new courses through an MLS/MSW dual degree with Social Work,”* we have moved ahead considerably with planning for this and we are nearing the submission of our proposal for creating this dual degree program, most likely at the end of February 2022. The pandemic slowed discussion on this topic considerably, especially through 2020-21. Regardless, the Associate Dean of our College of Graduate Studies has offered enthusiastic support of this dual degree, especially since this will be the *first* dual Masters degree program at MTSU! (see Appendix 3). Once this dual degree program of study is established, the MLS Program will go down in MTSU’s history as the trailblazers for future dual Masters degree programs at our institution. We hope to report in our next annual report that the combined MLS/MSW was approved by MTSU administration.

Standard III-Faculty

At this point in the MLS Program’s development towards accreditation, we will pause the recruitment of a new faculty member until we meet the criteria articulated in the goal that is described in our precandidacy application:

“III.2 The MLS Program will request a new faculty line(s) and fill the new faculty line(s). As MLS student enrollment increases, MLS faculty will evaluate teaching loads of current and temporary full time and adjunct faculty. When student headcount reaches approximately 100 students, a new faculty line for the MLS Program will be requested.”

The MLS Program attempted to hire a new faculty member in May 2021 as enrollment headcount had swelled just beyond 70 students in Fall 2020, a surprise considering the effect of the Covid pandemic on university student admissions, and headcounts appeared poised to continue rising. While we were able to identify an outstanding candidate and offer her a position with the MLS Program, we were unable to come to an agreement on a number of items of concern both for MTSU and the candidate due to her just receiving promotion and tenure at her own institution, making it very difficult for MTSU to arrive at an agreeable compensation package with the successful candidate. As a result, we have suspended the search for a new faculty member at this point in time, an appropriate action in retrospect considering the uncertainty that the Covid pandemic is causing universities when it comes to new student applications and enrollment as our Fall 2021 enrollment headcount dropped by nearly 10% compared to the year prior. In terms of how this new faculty recruitment decision impacts the daily operation of the MLS Program, we still most definitely have *“a faculty capable of accomplishing [all] program objectives,”* (III.1), with knowledge and expertise in all facets of library and information science as we detailed in our precandidacy application. Our full-time student equivalent-faculty ratio for the 2020-21 academic year is similar to that of other accredited library and/or information science programs have their similar ratios. Our full-time faculty carry full teaching loads with little difficulty. The MLS Program relies on one adjunct faculty instructor continuously for only one course, the Field Experience.

Despite being a small library science program, the MLS Program was very productive this past year as per standards III.1 and III.5. Tenure-track faculty produced the following scholarship this past year: four (4) peer-reviewed research articles; two (2) oral presentations and 1 poster presentation; and, 4 book reviews. We believe that the research efforts of MLS Program faculty, along with that of our other colleagues across the university, have contributed positively to the elevation of MTSU’s Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education classification to R2 status from R3 as of the end of January 2022. These research efforts

contribute also in part to our stated goal of *“III.1 MLS faculty will encourage and foster excellence in teaching, service and research. The MLS Program will encourage faculty to participate in at least one MTSU professional development opportunity.”* Also related to this goal, the Program Director was accepted into the MTSU Faculty Fellow’s Program for 2021-22 as well as the year-long Faculty Learning Community (*Successfully Engaging Students in the Virtual Learning Environment*) in order to develop further his teaching abilities especially in an online environment (appendix 4). This is being done as much for personal professional development as it is to strengthen the Program Director’s leadership skills related to managing the MLS Program as he approaches tenure and promotion.

There were no promotions or granting of tenure to tenure-track faculty during 2020-21; however, Dr. Frank Lambert, the MLS Program’s Director, will be going up for tenure and promotion in September 2022. If the outcome of his evaluation is determined prior to February 15, 2023, then it will be reported in next year’s annual report.

Standard IV-Students

Regarding the following MLS Program’s precandidacy goal:

IV. The MLS faculty and Advisory Board will develop and initiate recruitment, admission, financial aid, and other policies to attract and retain students that reflect the diversity of our communities. The MLS faculty will continue working closely with the College of Graduate Studies to tweak digital marketing content and approaches. Since it has been proven effective, digital marketing will continue to be a key component of the Program’s strategic recruitment. MLS faculty will evaluate the following to determine appeal to diverse prospective applicants: social media touches, program website, informational webinars, broad distribution of brochures, and other materials through attendance at university, state and national venues.

The MLS Program has made a number of efforts towards recruiting additional visible minority students especially this past year. With the Covid pandemic still affecting in-person recruitment activities, these efforts met significant challenges. That being said, the number of minority students registered with the MLS Program in the past year has more than doubled (please see program statistics reporting spreadsheet)! We believe that this is due in large part to word-of-mouth advertising of the MLS Program amongst potential students, but positive reporting about

the MLS Program as I reference below might also have a positive influence on our recruitment efforts. Additionally, when new students inquire about the MLS Program, regardless their minority status, the Program Director ensures that all of these potential students receive an information recruitment email within 24 hours of initial contact that communicates the many benefits that the MLS Program offers (see appendix 5). Our ongoing recruitment efforts include targeting HBCU graduate fairs following the lessening severity of the Covid-19 pandemic to increase the MLS Program's enrollment of visible minority students.

Related to this last topic, one of our MLS students was awarded in November 2021 the *Diversity in School Librarianship Scholarship* sponsored by the Tennessee Association for School Libraries (TASL) (story [here](#), [here](#) (scroll down), and [here](#)). We hope that this helps build more interest in our program with visible minority student candidates particularly since this story was picked up and disseminated by media in Middle Tennessee. Regardless, the MLS Program has made its policy that any and all student accomplishments both within and without of the MLS Program are celebrated with our department and college, and MTSU Online has a media professional who helps write these press releases that we may then use to market the MLS Program further.

With the Covid pandemic easing and professional organizations now making their annual meetings or conference in-person instead of virtual, the MLS Program plans to have an exhibitor's booth at the upcoming Tennessee Library Association (TLA) conference being held in Knoxville April 12-14 and at the annual Tennessee Association of School Librarians (TASL) conference that will be held in Murfreesboro September 8-10. At the time of the writing of this annual report, the MLS Program is waiting to hear about any possible cost-sharing with MTSU Online and the College of Graduate Studies to help defray some of the costs to attend these conferences. Similar cost-sharing requests are pending for the MLS Program to attend HBCU graduate fairs during the 2022 fall semester. Regardless the response from these two units, the

MLS Program will press for funding from our Department Chair to attend these major state-based recruitment opportunities.

Regarding the MLS Program attempting to meet the financial needs of our students, we are happy to report that our first endowed scholarship exclusively for MLS students has been established! The Ms. Leniel Edwards Endowed Scholarship in Library Science has the following eligibility criteria:

- Have an overall minimum **3.0** grade point average on a 4.0 scale at the time of the application.
- Scholarship recipients must have been admitted to the Master of Library Science Program in the College of Education.
- Financial need, as determined by the university, will be considered.
- If a recipient fails to maintain the required level of academic performance or changes to a program outside of those specified, they shall forfeit any unpaid balance of their award.

To date, one student has received the scholarship, valued at \$1,000. This and other scholarships in LIS are made accessible to our students via our [Resources](#) Web page.

We end this section by drawing your attention to appendix 9. While the concern expressed by the MLS student (name redacted for anonymity) in the email presented there does not pertain directly to ALA and its standards, we are including it nonetheless to demonstrate the urgency with which we address any student concerns as it pertains to their education. At the time of the writing of this report, a meeting has been set tentatively on February 16, 2022, with the College of Education's Associate Dean and Executive Director of the Office of Professional Laboratory Experiences, the Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership (the MLS Program's "home" department), and education faculty who are involved with student teaching, including that for school librarians. We hope to create an action plan so that future school librarian students seeking initial licensure do not encounter the same experience as the students referred to in the email in appendix 9. We hope that serves as evidence of the MLS Program's willingness to address *any* shortcomings in student educational experiences *immediately*, regardless whether these shortcomings pertain to ALA standards or not.

Standard V-Administrative and Financial Support

Regarding our precandidacy goal:

V.1 The MLS Program director and the department chair (administrative head) will make full use of available campus resources and relationships that support the Program's goals and mission. The MLS Program will continue to identify campus and other resources related to assessment, technology, leadership training & mentorship, best practices, student support and curriculum design. The strength of this approach will be found in the robustness of the Program's virtual rolodex of university personnel, offices, professional development who can provide support to the faculty and students for the Program with log of contacts. The Program's acquisition of and full use of campus resources will be ongoing.

We believe that we have articulated in a number of areas above how the MLS Program is communicating with other units on campus, both administrative and academic, to help ensure that the MLS Program is able to meet and sustain its goals to help it grow and ensure that the MLS Program is able to meet its objectives. Regular contact is made on a regular basis with three of the MLS Program's most powerful and reliable on-campus partners; MTSU Online, the College of Graduate Studies, and Walker Library. The information professionals who are now a part of our advisory council and who meet with us annually are also now a part of our virtual "rolodex" and are able to offer the MLS Program assistance with any of the related topics (e.g., technology, best practices, etc.) listed above in V.1.

Conclusion

In addition to what has been reported to the COA above, we also would like to inform the Committee that the review of materials submitted by the MLS Program for our accreditation by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and its associated visit in November 2021 by members of CAEP, was, from our perspective, very successful as there were no requests for additional information or clarification regarding the MLS Program's contribution to the accreditation report. While we are confident in our success, we are not celebrating CAEP accreditation yet until we receive official notification in April 2022.

Faculty in the MLS Program feel prepared to continue collecting the data required for evaluation and implementing these data where appropriate for program assessment and improvement for initial accreditation by ALA. We have established a significant number of data sources and procedures for using these data for program improvement. We are collecting data from numerous sources that communicate our Program's ability to meet our own objectives as well as ALA's standards, and we are acting on these data where, when, and if appropriate. We also act on data collected from numerous sources to ensure not only outstanding educational experiences for our students in a challenging online-only environment, but also to help ensure our MLS graduates are attractive candidates for employers in the information professions. We believe that at this point, it is primarily a lack of ALA accreditation that would make employers hesitate to hire our graduates, most especially at academic libraries. We hope that the Committee on Accreditation agrees that the MLS Program is ready to move on to the next phase, but we look forward to your helpful guidance and feedback regardless your decision. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this annual report.

Annual Report Appendices

Appendix 1-MAC Meeting Agenda, Notes, and Minutes

Notes for Sept. 10, 2021, MAC Fall Meeting (11:00-1:00 pm) and MLS Program faculty meeting

MAC meeting

- 1) (Short) Introduction of faculty – include adjuncts such as Leigh if she is available ~5 minutes
- 2) (Short) Introduction of MAC members (name, professional position or educational status for students, institutional affiliation) ~10-15 minutes

Frank, actually choose persons so we may move on. Include students! They are very important too!

- 3) Frank - Short presentation about the MLS Program; where we have been, where we are now, and where we will be hopefully in the near future ~15-20 minutes

Start with MLS Program's change from M.Ed., Administration and Leadership, to MLS degree in August 2016. I joined that month. Our enrollment then was 41 students. Kathy submitted for precandidacy twice. Both times were unsuccessful. I took over from Kathy in May 2017. Hired Holly Fall 2017, became tenure track for Fall 2018. Needed to diversify and update course offerings for precandidacy chance. Show the Library Science Handbook. Took two years to make changes to courses, curriculum, etc., before we completed and submitted our next precandidacy application. We also revised our mission and vision statements (show for commentary, thoughts).

First priority is ALA candidacy that will lead to accreditation. Working on other initiatives too, including a combined MSW-MLS degree option, hopefully to have it outlined by the end of this year. Another priority is our work for CAEP/AASL accreditation, which we are working on just now (site visit Nov. 7-9). A third priority is growing the MLS Program's enrollment, with the two prior priorities being a helpful tool too; Fall 2020 enrollment, our very highest so far, was 71 students; this year, we are at about 65. Enrollment can vary semester to semester depending on the student's plans (e.g. Spring 2021 we had 65, Summer 2021 47)

- 4) Discussion – trends in librarianship seen in school, public, and academic libraries; inform MLS Program of trends “on the ground” found in libraries across Tennessee ~20-30 minutes

Given what the MLS Program's current status based on what you know about it through our presentation and the materials that you might have accessed and read through our Web site, what are some parts of an MLS student's education that could use some more attention from us? Are there any trends, new or established, in professional practice that we should either prepare for or that we should adjust for in terms of our curriculum and content? What skills would you like to see from MLS Program graduates? As you provide some examples, either I and/or my faculty colleagues will either speak to whether we have started to address any of these trends in our classes. I ask you this too because a lot of these trends in professional practice do not make it necessarily into our discipline's literature, so your input on this particular topic is very, very important to us.

- 5) Discussion – the MLS Program field experience ~15 minutes

TTU asked myself and other MLS Coordinators across the state: Will your program continue to stay with 200 hours of practicum experience, even though the state has not listed that as a requirement for quite a few years? Why/why not? Some schools have stayed at 200 hours. Others have switched to just 100 hours. How important is it to our MAC members that a library science preparatory program such as ours have a practicum/internship/field experience? How many hours of such a practicum is “enough?” Kent State required that ONE 150 hour field experience be completed. Here, we require 200 hours; 120 hours is hands on, 80 hours is observation in at least three different types of libraries. What is the right balance, and what would you expect from our students or LIS students generally? What do our current students feel is the right amount of time for a field experience?

6) Open forum guided by Frank ~time as needed

MLS Advisory Council Meeting

September 10, 2021

Zoom meeting 11:00 am

Attendees:

Frank Lambert – MLS Program Coordinator

DeAnne Luck – MLS Faculty

Leigh Watson – MLS Faculty

Anne Lehue - Ingram

Shanda Hall – MLS Student

Brandon Owens – Fisk Library

Stephanie Bandel –John Bragg College of Media and Entertainment at MTSU

Jessica Freeman – MLS Graduate Assistant and student

Courtney Zeitler – Sewanee: The University of the South

Kathleen Schmand – Dean of Walker Library at MTSU

Lindsey Kimery –MNPS

Holly Hebert – MLS Faculty

Marcie Leeman – Rutherford County Schools

Frank opened the meeting at 11:05 am. Introductions were made.

Frank gave an overview and history of the program.

Discussion: Trends in Librarianship

Courtney -Students have an overabundance of information and lack of critical thinking skills. We need to address this.

Holly - LIBS 6000 and Information Literacy modules.

DeAnne - Has modules on information literacy. Is revising the reference class to include more on information literacy.

Anne - Do the core courses include cataloging, electronic searching classes, librarianship?

Frank - LIBS 6030 includes how search engines work and searching.

Stephanie – Marketing, SWOT analysis, programming, social media. Photoshop, Canva.

Stephanie - I think a marketing library services and social media / program planning course would be helpful.

Kathleen - I need to leave for another appointment but would offer that a course that focuses on data management and assessment would be valuable for library professionals across all types of organizations. We are seeing the need to collect new assessment data as we evaluate where we need to develop or adjust programs, spaces, and services.

Marcia - I agree with Kathleen on the data management and assessment needs. Budgeting is always a necessity in course work.

Lindsey - I think it's important to prepare students for school library advocacy at the local, state, national level; working with, serving, selecting materials for all students in a school (SPED, EL, etc); strong knowledge of curriculum and how to design instruction that supports curriculum.

Ann - Would love to see a business class or an option for students to take a business course as an elective. Leadership is important to address.

Leigh - School library students teach 3 lessons in their field experiences.

Discussion: Field Experience

Frank – State criteria requiring 200 hours of field experience for school librarians has been dropped.

Shanda - Hasn't done a field experience yet. Doesn't have a definite opinion on it.

Anne - 200 hours seems like a lot and would be difficult for the library and the students to achieve. (Anne was notified that students may split up the 200 hours of FE between two separate semesters)

Leigh - The field experiences are varied between work, observation, and webinars in several different kinds of libraries and areas.

Brandon - Worked and observed at both public and academic libraries and thought it was very helpful. It helped him decide which type of librarian he wanted to be. Perhaps give the flexibility for students to do the hours in one or two semesters.

Lindsey - Hands on experience is so important. Lindsey has 3 spots right now that she needs to fill. She wouldn't want field experience hours to get in the way of graduating.

Brandon - Fisk is happy to have our internship students.

Courtney -The field experience was a lot of stress. Working full-time while doing the field experience was extremely hard. Thinks maybe self-directed research would have allowed her more flexibility and applicability to her situation.

Ann- During her experience, she had to borrow more money and get more daycare as a single mother. She is in favor of an alternative option for hardships.

Leigh – How do we provide this experience to students who are worried about completing the hours and get them to the other side where they appreciate it.

Open Forum:

Frank showed the MLS website, handbooks, and vision and mission.

Shanda – Is there is anything MAC can do to help with ALA accreditation?

Frank – The MAC is helping with ALA accreditation. Also, the exit and employment surveys are incorporated into the report.

Stephanie – Have a student record a video about the field experience for other students so they won't be so nervous about it.

Courtney volunteered to share her exitPortfolio with the committee.

Frank ended the meeting at 12:58 pm.

Appendix 2-Student Town Hall Minutes

MLS Program Town Hall Meeting

11/17/21 at 7:00 pm

In attendance:

Faculty:

Frank Lambert

Holly Hebert

DeAnne Luck

Students:

Heather Newman

Joe Scardina

Patti Daunais

Tip Souksanh

Advising:

Tip: When I started the program, Dr. Lambert, guided her using what she wanted to map out the courses and how many to take a semester. Dr. Lambert is very responsive and helpful. She was happy to get some information and go with it.

Joe: When he first joined in 2020, online learning was new to him. He feels the documentation was self-explanatory.

Patti: Advising has been done all through email. It has all been a positive experience. The responses have been very thorough.

Heather: It's her first year. She emailed Dr. Lambert at the beginning of the semester and his emails were easy to understand. She has been able to register the next semester on her own.

Master of Library Science as an online only program:

Heather: She thinks it depends on the person. She loves virtual. UTK wasn't very welcoming, so she's glad she switched to MTSU. It has a good feel to it. DeAnne luck helped her get into the program. UTK was very black and white – no gray. She accidentally called a Professor Miss instead of Dr. and got blasted at UTK.

Patti: She is pleasantly surprised. She wasn't sure what to expect. She appreciates our program.

Joe: This is all totally new to me. It's been a good experience so far. The discussion boards are his favorite. He likes the group projects. He would like to see the other student's work when possible. For instance, sharing the websites we make in 6030.

Tip: It was overwhelming at first and it takes a lot of time management. Formed their own study group online to kind of have a cohort.

Curriculum and Course Content:

Joe: There are a good variety of courses. He had a question about switching from being a public adult librarian to a children's public librarian.

Heather: She likes that the general classes cover all types of librarianship. She likes that it broadens her experience.

Patti: Wanted to know if everyone has different undergraduate backgrounds. The answer is yes.

Field Experience:

Tip: She thinks it's great hands-on experience. Her field experience was in middle school and elementary school over the summer. She had avoided the middle school level in the past, but it ended up being her favorite. She completed her 200 hours over the summer. She recommends taking them one at a time so that you have more time to focus on them. She completed observation hours at public libraries and interviewed a librarian on a military post, visited libraries while traveling, and talked to several librarians via Zoom. She enjoyed seeing librarians serve the community they were in.

Heather: How did you do an internship during the summer? Tip answered that she did a special program for summer school during the summer. Is the field experience two semester? Dr. Lambert explained that you can do it either way. It's up to you and your schedule. If she wants to get teacher licensure then that is a different thing. Heather and Dr. Lambert will meet separately and talk about her situation.

Joe: Do you need permission to do a specific field experience? Dr. Lambert answered that question.

The ExitPortfolio:

Joe: Had a question about the rubric about either the censorship assignment or the exitPortfolio rubric.

Patti: The tutorial videos are helpful.

Orientation Videos:

Tip and Patti say that videos and tutorials are helpful.

Open Ended Comments or Questions:

Joe: He likes the Walker Library and thinks they are very helpful. He especially appreciates the chat help feature.

Heather: Loves the writing center. They are very helpful for online sessions.

Joe: Is the summer semester shorter? Just by a week or two.

Appendix 3 – Communication with MTSU Associate Dean of
Graduate Studies re. Support of Proposed Combined
Master of Social Work/Master of Library Science
Dual Degree Program

From: Dawn McCormack

Sent: Wednesday, November 17, 2021 3:27 PM

To: Frank Lambert <Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu>

Cc: Vickie Harden <Vickie.Harden@mtsu.edu>; Cathy McElderry <Cathy.McElderry@mtsu.edu>; Andrea D. Smith <Andrea.Smith@mtsu.edu>

Subject: RE: Question about Dual Masters Degrees at MTSU

Hi Frank *et al.*:

I have some questions about some details of how the program will work, and then I can figure out what the steps will be. Could we please set up a Zoom or in-person meeting with all of you and me? Andrea can help us find a time. I think this is very exciting, and I look forward to working with you on it.



Dr. Dawn McCormack

Associate Dean, College of Graduate Studies

Interim Co-Director, Office of Research & Sponsored Programs

MTSU Box 42

Ingram 1st Floor (ING 123B)

615-494-8603

Appendix 4 – Professional Development of

MLS Program Faculty

From: d2lhelp@mtsu.edu <d2lhelp@mtsu.edu>

Sent: Friday, September 3, 2021 4:20 PM

To: Frank Lambert <Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FF2122 - LT&ITC Faculty Fellows Program - 2021-2022: Enrollment

Hi Frank,

You have been enrolled in **FF2122 - LT&ITC Faculty Fellows Program - 2021-2022** for Middle Tennessee State University.

To access FF2122 - LT&ITC Faculty Fellows Program - 2021-2022, [log into Middle Tennessee State University](#) using your username **flambert** and password, then select LT&ITC Faculty Fellows Program - 2021-2022 from your list of courses.

Select [reset password](#) if you have forgotten your password.

Sent: Friday, September 3, 2021 4:20 PM CDT

LT&ITC Academy of Teaching Excellence Faculty Fellows Program – Main Components and Explanatory Notes



(1) Attend at least four **LT&ITC workshops** and write a brief 1-1/2-page **reflection paper** on each

- Workshop options include live presentations, sessions that have been videotaped and archived on the Center site, and occasional webinars.
- The Center offers as many as 25-30 workshops every semester, so there are plenty of opportunities to meet this requirement. Although the Center has an online registration form for all sessions, it is a good idea to keep track of the workshops you attend.
- Of course, you'll want to choose those workshops that best meet your particular needs, situation, and plan rather than attending things just to meet this requirement.
- The reflection papers should address what you learned from the workshop and how you envision utilizing some of those lessons learned into your current/future teaching practice.
- Certain of the FITC (Faculty Instructional Technology Center) workshops can also be used to meet this requirement. Check with the Director of Faculty Development if you would like to count one of these or some other workshops.

(2) Construct a **Teaching Philosophy Statement**

- What is your approach to teaching? A teaching philosophy statement is an articulation of your general approach to teaching your students (e.g., methods, philosophy, goals, and experiences).

It is often a requirement when applying for an academic job or when re-applying for a renewal of a teaching contract.

- For this program, we suggest that faculty design (or revise) their teaching philosophy statement so that it is something that they would communicate to or share with their students. For example, consider your target audience to be your students rather than a hiring or promotion and tenure committee. Consider including this statement on your syllabi or your website?
- We typically offer a live version of the TPS workshop in both fall and spring semesters. There is an archived version of this presentation as well in our video archive.
- The Center will consult with faculty on their teaching philosophy statements. This includes reading and reviewing the document with the faculty member.

(3) Create a formal **Faculty Development Plan** and discuss your plan with the Director of Faculty Development

- The Faculty Development Plan (FDP) concept involves (a) assessing one's strengths, weaknesses, and areas of growth/improvement with the domains of teaching, research, or service; (b) determining short- and long-term goals related to that domain; (c) specifying plans to achieve those goals; and (d) assessing whether those goals were met at the end of the time period.
- There are two versions of this plan. This is a decision you will need to address. The Teaching Development Plan is more appropriate for teaching faculty (i.e., instructors, lecturers, FTTs, or adjuncts) who do not have research or service requirements or expectations. It is also appropriate for tenure-track or tenured faculty who want to focus only on their teaching activities and responsibilities with their participation in this program.
- The full Faculty Development Plan is more appropriate for tenure-track or tenured faculty, who must balance teaching, research, and service. It is particularly appropriate for those who are new, who will going up for promotion and tenure soon, or who want to press the "reset" button on their careers now that they have been tenured and/or promoted.
- The Center provides participants with a presentation—usually during the spring term—on their preferred plan (teaching or full), along with a template to use for generating one's plan. Once a plan has been developed, we recommend that faculty review it with their department chair, supervisor, or a colleague before discussing it with the Director of Faculty Development.

(4) Consult with a faculty **Teaching Mentor/Center's Instructional Support Team**

- This is another decision you will need to make. Do you prefer to work with a teaching mentor (e.g., to work on your classroom teaching, presentation style, ways to engage your students better, etc.)? Choose this option if (a) your department does not already offer teaching mentors who meet with you and visit your classroom; (b) you want to focus on your teaching activities and/or improve your student evaluations; or (c) you simply would like to reinvigorate your overall teaching. We will send out a survey link so you can indicate your interest in this option.
- Do you prefer to work with the Center's Instructional Support Team? This allows you to devote attention to revising or redesigning specific courses. Choose this option if you (a) want to focus your efforts on improving one or more of your courses, (b) are in the process of developing a new course or (c) are changing an existing course to a new mode of delivery.

- Even if you work with a teaching mentor, we recommend that you also consider consulting with our Instructional Support Team.

(5) Write a final **Reflection Document** on your teaching and professional development experiences during the program

- This is your opportunity to reflect upon how the program helped you to meet your particular needs, given your specific situation/status.
- We do collect this document, in part so that we can assess what you got out of the program and if there are ways that we can improve it.
- There will also be a brief evaluation survey that we will send to you after the program ends. Your frank and honest feedback on that survey will be a great help to us.

To contact the Center (348 Walker Library) and our Instructional Support Team:

Tom.Brinthaupt@mtsu.edu; 494-7676; Director of Faculty Development

Sheila.Otto@mtsu.edu; 494-7671; Director of Teaching Excellence

Scott.Haupt@mtsu.edu; 494-7671; Instructional Design Specialist

Invitation to Participate in the MTSU Faculty Learning Community
For “Successfully Engaging Students in the Virtual Learning Environment”
September 20, 2021

Dear Dr. Frank Lambert:

Congratulations! You have been selected to participate in the MTSU Faculty Learning Community (FLC) **“Successfully Engaging Students in the Virtual Learning Environment.”** There was a great deal of interest in this FLC which is a cooperative venture of the Office of the Provost and the Learning, Teaching, Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC), and MTSU Online. We would like to formally invite you to become a member.

As you may know, an FLC is a group of interdisciplinary faculty who engage in an active, collaborative, year-long program. The program includes a curriculum about enhancing faculty development with regularly-scheduled meetings and activities that provide participants with opportunities pertaining to the FLC’s major focus. Once the FLC begins, participants will attend monthly Zoom meetings that will include teaching and learning activities, development and training opportunities, and community building.

The purpose of the FLC, **“Successfully Engaging Students in the Virtual Learning Environment,”** for which I will serve as facilitator, will be to gain knowledge of and practice the available tools to engage students in the virtual learning environment, share ideas about successful active learning strategies, and ultimately, design and incorporate our own innovative active learning strategies to our courses, whether large or small with undergraduate or graduate students. Another goal is to build community with each other. Our spirit of encouragement and collaboration is intended to help us adapt as we encounter frequently-changing software tools necessary for virtual teaching. Finally, we will keep in mind the scholarship of teaching and learning as we read the relevant literature in the design of our individual or small group projects. This will aid in the assessment and evaluation of our efforts, suitable for presentation or publication in a professional journal.

Please consider your membership and participation in the FLC an honor. It is an opportunity for you to engage in learning through scholarly exploration, conversation, and innovation with a small, select group (6-8) of your peers. We will have our initial Zoom meeting this week or next, followed by 1-2 meetings a month during the fall and spring semesters. Finally, as a token of appreciation for your participation in the FLC, the university will pay you a stipend of \$500 at its conclusion.

Based on your application and interests, I believe you will make a strong contribution to our interdisciplinary group of colleagues! **In order to confirm your participation in this FLC, please complete and sign the attached Signature Sheet below.** Then scan and email it to me by **Wednesday, 9/22/21** (or by the date of our first meeting). Please note that (purely for informational purposes) you should let your department chair know about your participation in this FLC. Permission of you Chair or Dean is not

required for your participation in an FLC.

If you have any questions about this invitation, please don't hesitate to give **me** a call or send me an email. Also, please look for a separate email from me shortly with a poll to identify our initial meeting time possibilities.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Benson', written in a cursive style.

Sandra ("Sandy") S. Benson, J.D.
Professor, Business Law
Department of Accounting
MTSU, Box 50
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
Phone: (615) 898-2348

**Signature Sheet for Membership in the
2021-2022 MTSU “Successfully Engaging Students in the Virtual Learning
Environment”
Faculty Learning Community**

The “Successfully Engaging Students in the Virtual Learning Environment” Faculty Learning Community (FLC) is a cooperative venture of the Office of the Provost, the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC), MT Engage, and MTSU Online. An FLC is a group of interdisciplinary faculty who engage in an active, collaborative, year-long program. The program includes a curriculum about examining how to successfully engage students in the virtual learning environment with regularly-scheduled meetings and activities that provide participants with opportunities pertaining to the FLC’s major focus. You have been invited to participate in this year’s FLC. As a token of appreciation for your participation, you will receive a stipend of \$500.

Your Name: Frank Lambert

Department: Educational Leadership

Rank/Status: Assistant Professor

Your signature below indicates that you understand the nature and conditions of your participation in this FLC, including that the stipend will be paid once the FLC has finished.

 (please check, if applicable) I have consulted with my chair, and (s)he is aware of my participation in this FLC. [optional]

Your signature

Date

**Please return this sheet as soon as possible via email to
sandy.benson@mtsu.edu (or via campus mail to Sandy Benson, Box 50)**

Appendix 5 – Recruitment Email

Sent to all Potential New MLS Students

Hello (student name). Thank you for your interest in the MLS Program. I would encourage you to peruse our [Web site](#) please at your earliest convenience as there is a lot of information there that you would find most helpful. However, I am very happy to give you some highlights here that I hope will address your inquiry.

We offer an NCATE-accredited/CAEP eligible MLS degree (36 credit hours) or the MLS + initial licensure (39 credit hours) if you want to be a school librarian and you do not have your teaching licence already. All coursework is 100% online and asynchronous, meaning you may view lectures and engage in assessments at times that are convenient to you. Our classes are offered through the D2L learning management software. Each course has its own shell that contains the whole semester's content including recorded video lectures, discussions, assessments, tests, etc. There is usually one or more assignments due every week of each class on average. Our past emphasis in the Program has been oriented primarily towards school librarianship. However, with the introduction of a series of new courses, we are now putting considerably more emphasis on educating our students in public and academic librarianship to help us attain American Library Association (ALA) accreditation (we are in the pre-candidacy phase) while educating high-quality school librarians still as exemplified by our 97%+ pass rate on the Praxis Library Media Specialist subject assessment. We also were ranked just recently as the 4th best out of 46 online library science Programs by [Intelligent.com](https://www.intelligent.com), a significant improvement from 13th place for 2021. We ranked higher than some ALA-accredited library and/or information science schools such as Kent State University and Texas Women's University.

Besides the coursework, the MLS requires 200 hours of field experience split over two semesters in libraries in your area. The field experience comprises six credit hours of the MLS. You may complete one 100 hour field experience during one semester and the other in another semester if that is better for your schedule. Each field experience is divided into 60 hours of hands-on work and 40 hours of observation in at least three different types of libraries to expose you to a breadth of library experiences. We also allow students, if they request it, to start accumulating their field experience hours up to four weeks prior to the semester in which they are officially registered for their field experience. Even though it is rarely an issue, this helps take off some of the pressure of trying to get all of your hours completed in the 13 weeks of the semester.

All students must complete an exitPortfolio as a culminating project prior to graduation.

A chart for tuition and fees may be found [here](#). If you are pursuing the full MLS (36 credit hours), you are looking at a total cost of approximately \$21,700 (subject to change; approx. \$1,900 more for the licensure option). Financial aid information for MTSU may be found [here](#). Our [Web site](#) lists a number of national scholarships for which you may apply, including a just new scholarship we have started awarding. You need to take a minimum of two courses per semester (six credit hours) to qualify for financial aid. At that rate, it would take you six semesters or two calendar years to complete the MLS. Students who also work full time typically complete two courses per semester. You are, of course, welcome to take more than two courses per semester if that suits your schedule or only one course per semester if financial aid is not a concern. All admission criteria, including requirements, and application procedures may be found [here](#). More detailed information resources about the program, including curriculum and course work, may be found in our *Library Science Handbook* available under "[Resources](#)"

on our Web site. We are accepting applications for Summer and Fall semesters, with April 1st being the date for premium processing of your application materials.

I hope that this information proves helpful. If, after reviewing our Web site, you have additional inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone. I would be happy to meet also via video using Zoom or Skype or in my office. I am happy to answer any prospective or current student's questions!

Kind regards,

Frank Lambert, Ph.D., MLIS

orcid.org/0000-0002-1446-2957

Assistant Professor & Program Coordinator

Master of Library Science Program

(NCATE accredited, and CAEP eligible, through 6/30/2022;
accepted for ALA precandidacy for accreditation 6/27/2020)

Womack Educational Leadership Department

College of Education

Middle Tennessee State University

1301 E. Main Street

P.O. Box 91

Murfreesboro, TN 37132

615-898-2583-office

Frank.Lambert@MTSU.edu

The WHY Method for Source Evaluation

"Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad."~Brian O'Driscoll

"What can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence."~C. Hitchens

"We need to know our past to understand our present and anticipate wisely our future."~F.P. Lambert

Appendix 6 – Results from all Exit Surveys 2020-21

Exit Survey Report

This is a report of the information gained through the Exit Survey that was given to former students of the MLS Program at MTSU in order to obtain an overview of their experience within the program itself. The Exit Survey was given to fourteen respondents who entered their responses between February and August of 2021. Beginning with the question of their primary area of study within the MLS program, 93% said School Librarianship (K-12), and 7% said Generalist Librarian (public and academic libraries) coupled with School Librarianship (K-12).

Part 1 of the Exit Survey is then comprised of questions concerning the students and their experiences with academic advising within the MLS Program. When asked how frequently did you confer with your advisor, including substantive phone calls and email as well as in-person meetings, nine respondents said once a semester, while four respondents said once a month, and one respondent said once a year. The respondents went on to rate their agreement with the statement “My academic advisor was available when needed,” with 64% saying that they Strongly Agree, while 29% said that they Agree, and the last 7% said that they Neither Agree nor Disagree. A similar percentage was found when agreeing with the statement “My academic advisor was approachable.” 72% said that they Strongly Agree, 21% said that they Agree, and 7% said that they Neither Agree Nor Disagree. Going on to ask how the respondents agree with the statement “My academic advisor understood student needs,” 64% said they Strongly Agree, 29% said that they Agree, and 7% said that they Neither Agree Nor Disagree. The statement “My academic advisor was interested in my academic and

professional success” was met with similar responses: 64% said they Strongly Agree, 29% said they Agree, and 7% said they Neither Agree Nor Disagree. The last question in Part 1 of the Exit Survey asks the respondents to rate their agreement with the statement “My academic advisor was influential in helping me select a coordinated course of study.” The responses are as follows: 50% said they Strongly Agree, 29% said they Agree, 14% said they Neither Agree Nor Disagree, and 7% said they Disagree. When given the opportunity to provide any additional comments about their experiences with academic/program advising while they were in the MLS program, the responses were:

- Great Dude!
- Professor Lambert always emailed back in the most timely manner!

Moving on to Part 2 of the Exit Survey, this section concerns questions regarding the curriculum of the MLS Program and again, these responses are based on a rating of agreement with a particular statement. When rating the statement “It was easy to establish a logical sequence of core and elective courses,” 43% said they Strongly Agree, another 43% said that they Agree, 7% said they Neither Agree Nor Disagree, and the final 7% said they Disagree. The next statement was: “Opportunities were provided to take courses in other programs, schools, or colleges,” with 7% of respondents having said that they Strongly Agree, another 7% said they Agree, 57% said that they Neither Agree Nor Disagree, and 14% said that they Disagree. Continuing on to the statement “There were opportunities to explore and evaluate library and information science research,” 64% said they Strongly Agree, 29% said they Agree, and the final 7% said they Neither Agree Nor Disagree. When asked to rate the statement:

“Courses provided a variety of learning experiences (lecture, reading, videos, virtual interaction, hands-on activities, collaborative work, problem-based learning, etc.)”, nearly 57% said they Strongly Agree, 36% said they Agree, and 7% said they Neither Agree Nor Disagree. The next statement to rate read as follows: “The curriculum as a whole helped prepare me to work with the needs of unserved and underserved populations,” and the responses are in the list below.

- 57% Strongly Agree
- 36% Agree
- 7% Neither Agree Nor Disagree

When asked to rate the statement, “The curriculum as a whole helped prepare me to be a strong advocate in providing information services in the future,” nearly 79% said that they Strongly Agree, 14% said that they Agree, and 7% said they Neither Agree Nor Disagree. The next statement read: “The program’s curriculum helped me develop stronger problem solving skills,” to which the answers were as follows: 64% said they Strongly Agree, and 36% said that they Agree. The same percentages were found for the next statement that read, “In general, the curriculum prepared me well for a career in the information professions.” While 64% said that they Strongly Agree with the statement, the remaining 36% said that they Agree. In a yes or no format, the next question asked was, “Was there a topic you would have liked to study more that was not represented in this curriculum?” Only 36% said Yes, while the other 64% said No.

In the case of a participant responding with a Yes to the previous statement, an opportunity was given for the respondent to provide the topic or topics that were not

represented in the curriculum that respondents would have liked to have studied more.

These comments are as follows:

- Collection development; Finding grant money
- Student lesson development with access to standards
- Legal matters in terms of censorship and copyright/ Grant writing
- Pedagogy/ teaching strategies and skills. I don't necessarily expect this to be offered by the MLS program, but I think I would have benefitted greatly by taking one or a couple of basic education courses prior to starting student teaching. I think it would be beneficial to initial licensure students to take a couple of additional courses relating to teaching.
- Aligning lessons to meet ELA and other academic standards.

When next given the opportunity to provide any additional comments about the courses or curriculum in general, the respondents provided these answers:

- Overall, I was very pleased with the curriculum. I learned a great deal. I had one course covering collection development, but would have liked to do more. I have found it is such an important part of my job as a school librarian.
- A few classes had changed course numbers and students were not notified. I was able to take the class, however, I would have graduated a semester later in the class was offered as it usually is, which is only once a year.

Part 3 of the Exit Survey covers questions generally based on the respondents' Field Experiences. This section also has statements so that the respondents are able to rate their agreement. When asked whether or not they felt that the program's coursework adequately prepared them for field experiences, eight respondents said that

they Strongly Agree, while three respondents said that they Agree, and the remaining three did not answer. The next question states “Deadlines and procedures for the field experiences were logical and well-publicized,” while the responses are as follows: five respondents Strongly Agree, four respondents Agree, two respondents Disagree, and three respondents gave no answer. Moving on to the next statement about whether the students’ MLS field experience instructor/advisor was available when needed, we find that of those who responded, 45% said that they Strongly Agree, while another 45% said that they Agree, and the last 10% said that they Disagree. Next in the Field Experience section is a statement that reads “My MLS field experience instructor/advisor had the knowledge and skills needed to help me carry out my field experiences.” The answers given by the respondents were 55% Strongly Agree, 36% Agree, and the last 9% said that they Disagree with the statement. When the respondents were asked about their agreement to the statement “The field experiences were valuable practical experiences,” 64% said that they Strongly Agree, while only 18% said they Agree. The remainder of the answers came in the form of 9% having said that they Neither Agree Nor Disagree, and another 9% having said that they Disagree. The last statement in this section of the Exit Survey states: “The field experiences enabled me to apply concepts covered in my coursework in a professional environment.” In response to this statement, 64% said that they Strongly Agree, another 27% said that they Agree, and the final 9% reported that they Neither Agree Nor Disagree.

When the survey participants were asked to provide any additional comments about their field experiences, they responded with these answers:

- My field experiences were very valuable in helping prepare me for my profession. Professor Watson was very patient and willing to address my many questions. I could tell it was important to her that I gain valuable and relevant experience.
- COVID protocols lent to the disservice of adequate field experience.
- My first field experience was full of confusion due to the manner in which requirements and assignments were worded. When I sought help from the FE coordinator, she was scattered and provided unclear answers or expectations. My second FE was better because I had been through it once before, and not because the coordinator communicated more clearly.
- I did not do the traditional field experiences but I did have a positive experience with my student teaching practicum. I had an excellent mentor and supervisor from the Department of Education.
- I did a job embedded position, so I did not participate in field experience.

Part 4 of the Exit Survey focuses on MTSU and its physical facilities. The first question in this section asks the participants whether or not they were able to take advantage of any of MTSU's physical facilities including classrooms, computers, labs, and/or the library during the course of their studies? Out of the fourteen respondents, five said Yes, and nine said No. The next set of questions in this section again focuses on how the respondents would rate their agreement with particular statements concerning the physical facilities of the program. When asked how they rate their agreement to the statement, "Classroom facilities were amenable to effective learning," one participant said they Strongly Agree, one participant said they Agree, and the remaining twelve respondents gave no answer to this particular statement. In response

to the statement “Computer laboratory facilities were accessible during the hours when they were needed most,” one respondent said they Strongly Agree, two respondents said that they Agree, and eleven of the respondents gave no answer. When asked to consider whether the computer hardware was up to date, one former student said that they Strongly Agree, three said that they Agree, and ten gave no answer. The next statement in the survey is as follows: “Appropriate and up-to-date software was available,” and in response to this, one person said that they Strongly Agree, three people said that they Agree, and again, ten people gave no answer. When asked to rate their agreement when considering if school offices were accessible during the hours when they were needed most, the same answers were received as the previous question: one person said that they Strongly Agree, three people said that they Agree, and ten gave no answer. The next statement is one that reads: “Walker Library provided the resources I needed to complete assignments, regardless of whether it was in-person or online,” and while four people said that they Strongly Agree and one person said that they Agree, the remaining nine participants did not give an answer.

The 5th Part of the Exit Survey is about the Administrative and Support Staff within the MLS Program. The first statement that the participants needed to rate their agreement with was one that said: “Support staff I encountered were friendly and willing to help me out.” In response to this statement, 50% of respondents said that they Strongly Agree, while 21% said that they Agree, and the final 29% did not give an answer. The next statement in this section said, “Support staff were knowledgeable and able to help me,” and 57% said that they Strongly Agree and 14% said that they Agree. The remaining 29% did not respond with an answer. Next, when considering whether or

not their questions to support staff were answered completely and in a timely manner, 57% said that they Strongly Agree, while 14% said that they Agree, and 29% did not answer.

This 5th Part of the survey continues on in asking the participants to rate their agreement to a particular statement. The next statement in this section reads: "Systems specialists (computer-related: D2L, PipelineMT, etc.) were knowledgeable and able to help me out," to which 29% said that they Strongly Agree, 21% said that they Agree and 50% of respondents gave no answer. When asked about the helpfulness of computer lab assistants and whether or not they were helpful and knowledgeable, 14% said that they Strongly Agree, while the remaining 86% did not provide an answer. The next question in this section consider whether or not the Program Director or other designated representative was available and approachable, and in response to this, 36% said that they Strongly Agree, 29% said that they Agree, 7% reported that they Neither Agree Nor Disagree, and the final 29% gave no answer. In the final question in Part 5, the respondents were given an opportunity to provide any additional comments concerning the administrative and support staff, and 0% of the respondents provided comments for this section.

The next three questions in the Exit Survey are about how the respondents agree or disagree with statements about the MLS Program as a whole. When the respondents were asked whether or not they felt that MTSU's MLS Program is a high quality, online graduate program, 79% said that they Strongly Agree, and 21% said that they Agree. When considering how they felt about whether or not MTSU's MLS Program has prepared them well for a career as an information professional, the same percentages

as the previous question apply: 79% said that they Strongly Agree, while 21% said that they Agree. Lastly in this section. the respondents are asked if they feel that MTSU's MLS Program is a good value considering what they paid for their education, and again the same responses apply: 79% said that they Strongly Agree, and 21% said that they Agree.

The remaining questions in the Exit Survey allowed the participants to provide their own comments on certain topics. When asked what the ONE best thing about the MLS Program is, the responses were as follows:

- The professors were incredibly knowledgeable and helpful.
- ELearn provides an excellent online learning platform that is flexible and accommodating to working adults who want to further their career.
- Holly Hebert's courses and feedback
- The classes. They were well aligned and rigorous.
- The feeling of family.
- The one best thing about the MLS Program is Holly Hebert. She made me feel as if she genuinely cared about my life circumstances and personal and professional success.
- The professors are knowledgeable and approachable. They all seem to genuinely care about their students and have lots of experience in various facets of librarianship, and they were always willing to offer assistance.
- One best thing about the MLS Program is how most of the faculty seem to genuinely want to prepare you to be a great librarian, and they are great to work with.

- The ability to work and still complete the program was wonderful. Its truly designed for working adults.
- Knowledgeable instructors.
- The ability to do the program online allowed me to work full time while pursuing my degree.
- The choice of courses
- The best thing is the community formed within classes that allow collaborative learning and real life connections.

The next question in this section asked the respondents what ONE thing they would change about the MLS Program, and their responses are as follows:

- The field experiences are incredibly difficult to work into the schedule of a person who has a full-time job.
- One aspect I would change is to have an additional academic advisor specifically for those wanting to be a school librarian.
- Add more instructors! There are a great deal of classes and I think adding an additional professor or two would be helpful.
- I would change the field experience coordinator.
- More preparation for initial teaching licensure, there was a steep learning curve when starting student teaching and I felt unprepared for the teaching aspect (especially the edTPA.) It all worked out just fine, but I would have preferred more preparation.
- The requirement for field experience for working librarians.

- Nothing
- The option for a once a month in person Saturday class would have been great to gain camaraderie.
- To make sure the handbook is updated so that the core courses and electives are as current as possible.
- I think a seminar or intro to information literacy at the beginning of the program would be beneficial.

Lastly, the final question that invites the respondents to share their own comments states for the respondents to please feel free to provide any additional comments about the Master's in Library Science program. The comments given by the respondents were:

- Overall, I had a positive experience with the MLS program at MTSU. All my professors were very knowledgeable, specifically Professor Hebert's teaching style and presentation of content were very helpful.
- I enjoyed the program very much and I'm glad I did it!

The final question of the Exit Survey asked the participants to share which degree they graduated with upon the completion of the program and the responses showed that 21% of respondents graduated with an MLS + K-12 Initial Licensure, while the remaining 79% of respondents graduated with an MLS only.

Appendix 7 – Results from MLS Program

Employment Survey 2021

Employment Survey Report

This report is a summarized version of the data received from the Employment Survey. This survey was given to former students of the MLS program at MTSU in order to obtain information on their current employment status. The Employment Survey was answered by five alumni in August of 2021. Of those five alumni, three graduated during the Fall semester, one in the Spring semester, and one in the Summer semester, with all five graduating in the year 2020. Two of the respondents received an MLS degree (36 credit hours); another received an MLS degree plus a K-12 initial teaching licensure (39 credit hours); and the last two respondents received an add on endorsement of Library Media Specialist to a current teaching license (24 credits hours). When asked if their current employment was in the library and information science field, 80% of the respondents said Yes, while 20% of the respondents answered No. Those that answered No were then directed to continue on in the survey by skipping forward to question 20. The rest of the survey pertains only to those four respondents who answered Yes to currently working in the library and information science field.

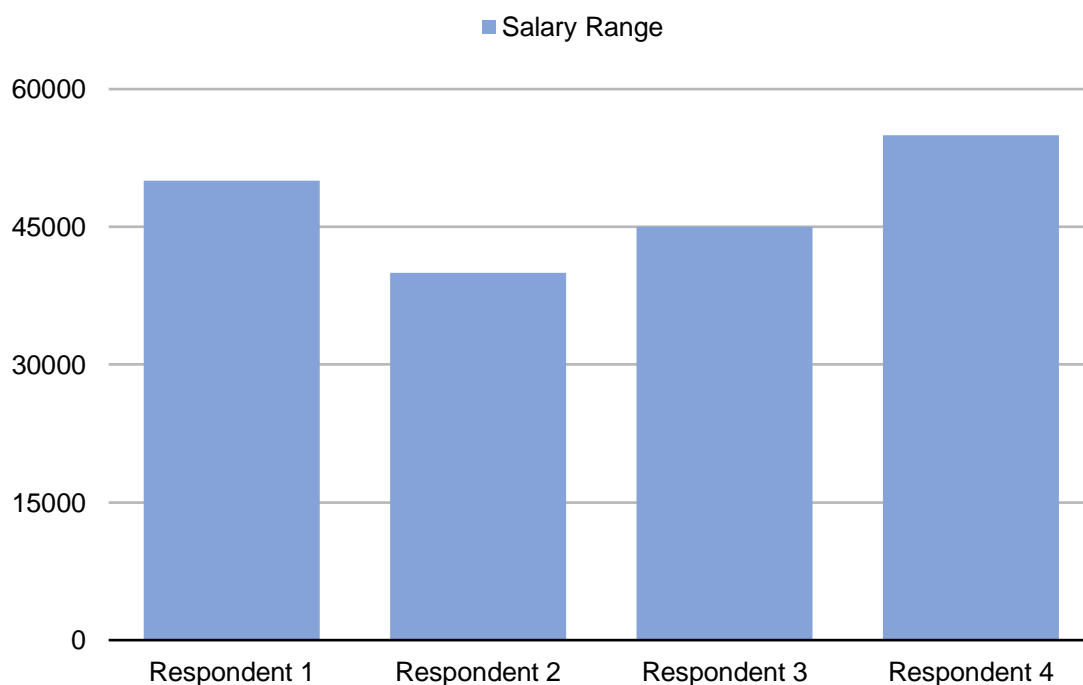
Of those who are currently working in library and information science, 100% are working in an elementary or secondary school environment. The setting in which these respondents are currently employed is as follows: 50% of respondents are employed as a School Library Media Specialist, while 25% are employed in Children's Services/ Circulation/ Digital Libraries and Digital Preservation, and the last 25% are employed in Acquisitions/ Administration/ Cataloging and Classification/ Metadata/ Children's Services/ Circulation/ Collection Development/ Library Management/ School Library

Media Specialist/ Solo Librarian. When asked of the category of their current employment, 100% of respondents said that they are employed as full-time professionals, and 0% work part time. The institutions and locations where these respondents are employed are as follows:

- Kingston Springs Elementary - Kingston Springs, TN
- Mountain View School - Etowah, TN
- Manley Elementary School - Hamblen County, TN
- Cane Ridge High School - Metro Nashville Public Schools - Nashville, TN

When asked whether or not a change in their primary residence was necessary when hired into their current position, 100% of respondents replied No, and in response to a question about their professional/ paraprofessional title, the answers were as follows: two School Library Media Specialist, one Librarian, and one School Librarian.

For the question considering salary ranges, each respondent replied with a different answer: 25% said their salary was between \$40,000 - \$44,999; another 25% said their salary was between \$45,000 - \$49,999; a third 25% reported their salary



between \$50,000 - \$54,999; and finally the last 25% reported their salary as between \$55,000 - \$59,999. The range of their current salaries is shown in the chart below:

The timeline of the respondents being hired into their current information professional position is as follows: 50% said while they were enrolled as an MLS/endorsement seeking student; 25% said in the semester after they graduated/completed requirements from the MLS Program; and the last 25% said more than 6 (six) months after they graduated/completed requirements from the MLS Program. When considering the question about their salary before obtaining their current employment as an information professional, 50% of respondents did not provide an answer, while 25% said that their salary before becoming an information professional was \$40,000 - \$44,999, while the remaining 25% said \$45,000 - \$49,999. Speaking as to how they learned of their current position, 75% of respondents said they are currently employed there, and 25% said they learned of the open position through a website. The next questions asks whether or not the alumni held any other positions in library and information science before their current positions, and 100% of respondents said No.

When asked the question: "Based on feedback and other pertinent information (like job performance reviews) I have received from my supervisor at my place of employment, I would say the skills I learned from my graduate studies in the MLS Program has made me an effective information professional," 75% of respondents said that they "Strongly Agree," while 25% of respondents said that they "Agree." Secondly, when asked "Based on feedback and other pertinent information (like job performance reviews) I have received from my supervisor at my place of employment, I would say what I learned in my graduate education in library science is helping me make a

difference in serving the patrons in my work community,” again 75% said that they “Strongly Agree” and 25% said that they “Agree.” Lastly, when asked “Based on feedback and other pertinent information (like job performance reviews) I have received from my supervisor at my place of employment, I would say what I learned in my graduate education in library science helps my colleagues succeed as a result of my own work efforts,” 75% again said that they “Strongly Agree” and 25% said that they “Agree.”

The second to last question in the Employment Survey asks respondents to feel free to add pertinent text in the box below pertaining to your employer's or job interviewers' impression of your abilities as an information professional and based on feedback you received, are there any skills or abilities that your employer or a job interviewer identified that might be lacking based on your professional or interview performance that you feel could have been addressed by your studies in the MLS Program? Conversely, are there any skills or abilities you learned via your studies for the MLS that your employer or a job interviewer identified that seems to set you apart from your peers? To these questions, 100% of respondents said No.

At the very end of the Employment Survey, the respondents were asked: “As part of the MLS Program's accreditation efforts with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the American Library Association (ALA), we would like to survey your employer to ask them if our curriculum has educated you sufficiently for your current position. Please provide us the name and email address for your immediate supervisor, and we will survey them.” The responses to this last question are as follows:

- Lucas Winstead - lucas.winstead@ccstn.org
- Angie Miller - amiller@mcmminnschools.com
- lindsey.kimery@mnps.org

Appendix 8 – Evidence Pertaining to Goal 1.2.3.

From: Caitlyn Haley <Caitlyn.Haley@tn.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 10:47 AM
To: Frank Lambert <Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu>
Cc: Liz Schreck <Liz.Schreck@tn.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] TLA Exhibits

Hi Frank,

I received your email from Cathy Farley about MTSU's MLS Program's interest in renting a booth at our conference. We are planning on having an exhibitor's hall. We don't yet have the exhibitor registration form up or the costs of renting a booth worked out yet, but when we do, I'll make sure to email you and let you know.

Best,

Caitlyn Haley

Co-Chair, Exhibits Committee

TLA 2022 Annual Conference

(931) 645-0694

Good afternoon,

Thank you for reaching out to me. I will send the requested information about recruitment efforts at TSU.

Sincerely,

Dr. Millet

Marcia Millet, Ed.D. (*she/her/hers*)
 Assistant Dean – Graduate School
 Professor of Teaching and Learning
 Tennessee State University
 Avon Williams Downtown Center – Suite C 402
 330 10th Ave. South
 Nashville, TN 37203
 Email: mmillet@tnstate.edu
 Phone: (615) 963-6943

From: Frank Lambert <Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu>
Date: Monday, November 15, 2021 at 9:43 AM

To: "Millet, Marcia (mmillet)" <mmillet@tnstate.edu>

Subject: TSU Graduate Fair

Caution! This E-mail originated from outside the university. Please use caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding to requests.

Greetings Dr. Millet. I am Frank Lambert, an Assistant Professor and Program Director for the Master of Library Science (MLS) Program at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). As part of my program's student recruitment efforts for the specific goal of increasing the diversity of students in our program and, by extension, increasing the diversity of professional practicing librarians, I am attempting to get the MLS Program more involved in recruiting potential students from Tennessee HBCUs. I believe that the MTSU MLS Program might prove to be an appealing graduate program for your institution's graduating baccalaureate students to consider. As a result, I was hoping you would be able to share any information you might have about upcoming graduate fairs that you might be holding at Tennessee State University. If you could please let me know if or when TSU will be holding a graduate fair, and if other universities may attend this fair, I would appreciate it very much.

I would encourage you to please click on the linked text in my signature below that will lead you to more information online about myself and the MLS Program. If you have any questions about me and the MLS Program and our goals, please do not hesitate to ask. I hope that I can make our participation in your future graduate fairs a part of our regular recruitment efforts to help your students realize their own graduate education goals and dreams.

Thank you for considering my request detailed in this email, and I look forward to making your acquaintance. Take care and stay well.

Kind regards,

Frank Lambert, Ph.D., MLIS

orcid.org/0000-0002-1446-2957

Assistant Professor & Program Coordinator

Master of Library Science Program

(NCATE accredited, and CAEP eligible, through 6/30/2022;
accepted for ALA precandidacy for accreditation 6/27/2020)

Womack Educational Leadership Department

College of Education

Middle Tennessee State University

1301 E. Main Street

P.O. Box 91

Murfreesboro, TN 37132

615-898-2583-office

Frank.Lambert@MTSU.edu

The WHY Method for Source Evaluation

"Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad."~Brian O'Driscoll

"We need to know our past to understand our present and anticipate wisely our future."~F.P. Lambert

From: careerplanning=fisk.edu@mailpurplebriefcase.com
 <careerplanning=fisk.edu@mailpurplebriefcase.com> **On Behalf Of** careerplanning@fisk.edu
Sent: Friday, October 8, 2021 9:45 AM
To: Frank Lambert <Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fisk University's Virtual Career

Fisk University

Information about an upcoming event: 2021 Virtual Career Expo

Link [2021 Virtual Career Expo](#)
 Date Oct 13, 2021 @ 2:00 PM
 Duration 14 days
 Location Zoom
 Host Fisk University
 Description This year our Career Expo and Graduate School Expo will be virtual and through Zoom. Students, please register for your respective major and/or the industry you are interested in. Employers, please register for your respective industries. After you have registered and paid, I will send the correct Zoom link for you to register through, and receive your confirmation link. Each representative will need to register separately.

Dear Employer/University,

Fisk University is hosting two [Career Expos](#) during the month of October.

Expos were moved from in-person to virtual fairs. If your company is interested in connecting with our students, please check out one of the Career Expos below. You will find the dates and targeted majors.

The cost per expo:

Employers: \$200.00, Universities/Colleges: \$150 Non-profits: \$100.00. There is a discount if your company prefers to attend both days. Please reach out to our office to receive the discount. If you want to have additional representatives (more than 2) an additional \$25.00 is required per representative.

Wednesday, October 13, 2021 (2-5 pm): School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Business; Graduate Schools

- Targeted Majors include: Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science, Data Science, Business: Accounting, Financial Economics, Management, and International Business

Wednesday, October 20, 2021 (2-5 pm): School of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences; Graduate Schools

- Targeted Majors: Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, History, English, Arts, and Languages, Criminal Justice, and Homeland Security

Registration Link for both expos: <https://app.purplebriefcase.com/pb/account/login?s=Fisk>.

If your company/organization would like to sponsor a career expo or provide in-kind support, please see the OCPD Sponsorship Packet You may also reach out to our office to learn more.

Lastly, the Office of Career Planning and Development would like to learn more about your company's recruitment efforts during the year.

Please complete the link for the Recruitment Questionnaire <https://forms.gle/fd3WA8gQ3xWUyjt7> so that our office will know your needs.

If you have questions or need more information, please email careerplanning@fisk.edu or call 615-329-8504. Thanks again and we look forward to partnering this year.

From: Frank Lambert

Sent: Thursday, September 23, 2021 8:18 PM

To: lgriffin@fisk.edu

Subject: Participating in the Fisk University Graduate Fair

Greetings Ms. Griffin. I am Frank Lambert, an Assistant Professor and the Program Director of the Master of Library Science (MLS) Program at Middle Tennessee State University. Thanks to some information you passed on to Dr. Brandon Owens, one of our outstanding graduates, I am aware that you will be holding a virtual graduate fair for your students on October 27, 2021, from 2:00-4:00 pm. I am writing you to see if I and/or my program colleagues could please participate in this graduate fair on behalf of the MLS Program. Our desire to participate in your graduate fair is part of an honest and conscientious effort to recruit more visible minority students not only into our Masters program, but also to help educate more visible minority students to become librarians, a profession that lacks definite ethnic diversity. Fisk University seems like an excellent choice for the MTSU MLS Program to start this effort, and our experience will help inform us as we pursue outstanding graduate school candidates at other HBCUs in Tennessee first and then possibly in other neighbouring states as our enrollment needs evolve. In fact, if you know the names and contact information for any of your colleagues in positions similar to yours at the other six Tennessee HBCUs and would be willing to share this information with me, I would appreciate it very much please as I would like to make similar inquiries with them too.

Could I please trouble you to send me any related instructions regarding our being able to participate in your graduate fair? I am not sure if there are costs associated with this or if you need any sort of specific or special registration information about the MLS Program or the college with which we are affiliated, the College of Education. In fact, if you do not mind, I will share the information about your graduate fair with my Program Director colleagues within the College of Education so that they could join us should they wish to do so.

I appreciate very much you taking the time to read this request. If you have any questions about the MLS Program at all, please do not hesitate to ask me as we are an open book. Also, we have a lot of pertinent information about the MLS Program available on our [Web site](#) if you wish to make inquiries on your own. Thank you in advance for any assistance you may render.

Kind regards,

Frank Lambert, Ph.D., MLIS

orcid.org/0000-0002-1446-2957

Assistant Professor & Program Coordinator

Master of Library Science Program

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<https://www.mtsu.edu/programs/library-science-mls/>

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"Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad."~Brian O'Driscoll

"Ratio ante passio."~P.E. Trudeau, trans.

"We need to know our past to understand our present and anticipate wisely our future."~F.P. Lambert

Appendix 9 – Addressing Student Concerns Promptly

From: Frank Lambert
Sent: Friday, February 4, 2022 10:53 PM
To: [student email address]
Subject: RE: MLIS Program

Hello [student name]. Thank you so very much for sharing this with me.

I am really sorry that you and your fellow students have had such a tough go of Residency 2. To be completely open with you, you are the first student to write me about this. Students have neither written me nor have alluded to any sort of negative experience in our program exit survey. I thought everything was going just swimmingly for students who are seeking licensure while working on their MLS. However, they are apparently not!

Can you and your fellow students put together a more detailed report of what challenges you are facing in Residency 2 and perhaps a couple of solutions or things that all of you would like to see done for our future initial licensure MLS students? Each of you may have had different challenges, and I would like to know the whole range of those that all of you encountered. I will take your comments and speak to our MLS Program faculty, Dr. Hooser, and possibly Dr. Snead to see what we can do in Educational Leadership to ensure that future initial licensure MLS students who need to complete Residency 2 are better prepared with the basics before plunging in to teaching.

I *really* appreciate you bringing this to my attention, [student name]. Like I wrote earlier, I had no idea there were issues with MLS students and Residency 2. Thanks to you though, I hope that we can make changes soon in the MLS Program to make our initial licensure students' experiences much better. Thanks again, and I will look forward to reading your and your fellow students' comments. Take care, and have a good weekend.

Dr. Lambert

From: [student email address]
Sent: Friday, February 4, 2022 6:15 PM
To: Frank Lambert <Frank.Lambert@mtsu.edu>
Subject: MLIS Program

Good evening Dr. Lambert,

I wanted to email about my current experiences while student teaching. I am currently completing my student teaching practicum in the library at LaVergne High School. It's a really great school and my mentor is extremely helpful. However, there is a program called edTPA that we have to complete that all student teachers have to complete during Residency 2, which is the one that I and a few other library students were placed in because we are graduate students. Other education students have to take Residency 1, which is where they get a deep dive into the background and the specifics of edTPA. Since we did not have to take Residency 1, we did not know about edTPA, and our facilitator was surprised that we had never heard of the program and that we did not really have any background knowledge in education.

My fellow library science students and I agree that we were not fully prepared to take on this student teaching role since we did not have any courses that primarily focused on pedagogy, lesson planning, and teaching in general. I don't want this to sound like that I am negatively criticizing the MLIS program because I want to make these things known to you if they weren't already. If you would like, I can go into more detail, and what I think would be beneficial for future students who are wanting to become a school librarian and don't have that background in education.

Thank you,
[student name]