



Up Front

Looking West to GSLIS

From one tiny office, two computers, two professors, and 33 students, the GSLIS West program has grown into a vibrant community in South Hadley. With 75-80 students in the program at any one time (and more enrolling every semester), GSLIS West is a happening and flexible place to take classes.

The GSLIS West program is held on the Mount Holyoke campus in South Hadley, Mass. The program office is located across the street from Mount Holyoke in the Village Commons, a small shopping plaza. Through a combination lock on the front door, students have 24-hour access to a small computer lab, reserve books, a lounge, and a conference room. There is a coffee shop, The Thirsty Mind, next to the office. Classes are held across the street in classrooms in the Mount Holyoke Library and in other nearby buildings. The library has another coffee area (Rao's), flat-screen TVs tuned to CNN, and more than 40 computers in an information commons and a strong liberal arts collection, all of which is available to GSLIS West students with their Mount Holyoke IDs.

GSLIS West classes run all day Saturdays (9:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. and 1:15-4:15 p.m.).

Some students choose the program because it's close to where they live. Others choose it because the part-time schedule allows them to travel once in a week (people come from as far away as Vermont, Connecticut, and New York). Also, students who have families and/or full-time jobs appreciate the part-time schedule. The GSLIS West administration works hard to respond to student needs and requests through many surveys and assessments. As one example, in addition to the Saturday classes, students requested evening courses, so last semester Thursday evening classes were added. The typical age of the incoming student is around 34 — slightly older than in Boston, where the incoming class averages age 28.

Adam Williams, LISSA West president, said that although the GSLIS West community is small, it is diverse. Student interests span all aspects of information science/services: public, academic, archives, school library, children's literature, etc.

"What makes [it] so interesting is that we all get to talk to each other," Williams said. "The smaller class sizes facilitate

interaction between library camps." Another fan of the program is student Kerri-Ann Ruthven: "I have loved the Mount Holyoke experience; the classes have been small and intimate, the classrooms have been great, and all of the professors have been amazing. The food is really yummy and reasonably priced in the student center, and the coffee shop in the library is such a bonus!"

History of the program

The program began in Fall 2001 as one of several strategic initiatives proposed by then dean James Matarazzo '65LS and the GSLIS faculty. Dr. Sheila Intner was the first Program Director. She and Terry Plum were the first faculty. Plum taught Reference/Information Services, and Intner taught Information Organization. The program was guided by the faculty's GSLIS

West committee, and began with a focus on the generalist library science degree.

GSLIS West was immediately successful, exceeding expectations for enrollment in the first two years. The program has expanded

the scope of its offerings to include many of the School Library Teacher Program requirements and all of the required courses for the Archives Management concentration. Plum took over as director of the program when Intner retired several years ago. The program now offers between 12-14 courses in the fall and spring semesters, and 7-8 courses in the summer.

Student life

The most active student group at GSLIS West is LISSA West. There are four officers: Adam Williams (president), Mike Mannheim (vice-president), Anna Duprey (secretary), and Sara Colglazier (treasurer). Together, they brainstorm and plan events for the GSLIS West community.

"One of the things we are trying to accomplish for this academic year is to create a greater sense of community between students, faculty, and professionals in the field," said Williams. "In part, we invite speakers to bring the Mount Holyoke community together with [LIS] professionals. However, a bigger way in which we foster connections is through get-togethers.

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“We [librarians] need to be innovative, be willing to take risks, be willing to make mistakes, and be willing to advocate for the constituencies that we serve.”

Linda Braun is an adjunct GSLIS professor and educational tech consultant. She lives in New York City and teaches at both the Boston and Mount Holyoke campuses. Her courses include Young Adult Programs and Services, Technology in the School Library Media Center, Information Architecture and Web Design, and Young Adult Literature. In this interview, Braun talks about working with students on both campuses, helping teenagers, and having a passion for podcasts.

(Voices of Youth Advocates). This is where I get to write about technology for teens and teen librarians. I’ve also written a few books on technology and/or library services to teens. My most recent book is on podcasting for schools and libraries, and I’m working on one now about how technology can help teen librarians be better leaders and managers.

Q: What similarities and differences have you noticed about teaching at both Simmons campuses?

I’m always telling people that I’m really impressed with the quality of students who attend Simmons.

That is true for both sides of the state. One slight difference teaching at Mount Holyoke is that more students tend to know each other on the first day of class. That’s because almost all of the students are on campus Saturday for classes. That means on day one, there’s a slightly greater sense of camaraderie among those in the class.

What advice do you have for people who are unsure about taking a class online?

Not everyone is “made” for online learning. If you are considering taking a class online, think about whether or not you like using technology and if you are comfortable communicating virtually — whether that be text-based or VOIP-based (voice-over internet protocol). Think about if you have the discipline to “go to class,” even when it might not be at a set date or time, but instead takes place on your schedule within a set of parameters. Ask the instructor of the class what the online format is all about and ask others who have taken online classes how it worked for them.



Lucy Theeuwes, Braun’s avatar

Tell us about your commute to Simmons.

I rent a car, and with luck, it has a headphone jack. I plug my iPhone into the jack and catch up on the podcasts that I’ve missed listening to over the past week. My commute is the perfect way to catch up on tech, entertainment, and world news. Often I end up making notes while driving — by voice, not writing; that would be dangerous — because I hear something I want to talk about in class that day. Also, there are times when I record class podcasts on my drive between Boston and South Hadley or between South Hadley and Manhattan. These podcasts give me a chance to talk about things we didn’t get to in the face-to-face version of the class, or to cover something a bit more deeply than I had the chance to do in class.

Tell us about your career outside Simmons. What do you do when you’re not teaching?

I consult, train, and write. I work with libraries and other educational organizations to help them figure out how to integrate technology into what they do.

What are some of your professional publications?

Four times a year I write a column, Tag Team Tech, for *VOYA*

What do you do to relax?

Listen to podcasts and watch vodcasts, watch old TV shows, watch teen TV, and go to the movies, go out to dinner.

Tell us about your online life. What are some of your favorite Web sites and technologies?

I’m addicted to Twitter at the moment. It’s become a great way to keep up with friends and students and to post info about topics I’m thinking about. I’ve also found it to be a great way to get questions answered from a diverse group of people, and it’s pretty quickly becoming my RSS reader for news. I’m also very fond of podcasts and vodcasts. These are the primary way in which I “get” news these days. Facebook is becoming more and more a home base for me, as colleagues and friends are using it as a communications tool. And I couldn’t live without text messaging in order to connect with people via Twitter, Facebook, or plain old texting for making plans and appointments.

What are some of your favorite electronic toys?

There’s only one right now, and that’s my iPhone. It really is an almost-perfect, all-in-one device. I find myself using it to surf the Web and Twitter almost constantly. I also find that I’m much more prone to take a picture with my iPhone of something I see on the street that I want to show someone else. And, of course, it means that I can also take podcasts and vodcasts wherever I go.

Who is your avatar?

My Second Life avatar, Lucy Theeuwes, is pretty much just like me. I decided that I wanted to create my virtual persona to reflect my real-life persona. That’s partly because I use the avatar in teaching, but also because I am who I am.

What was your very first job?

Well, my very first job was in high school, when I worked in McDonald’s. My first library job was as children’s librarian at the North Adams Public Library. McDonald’s wasn’t such a great experience, but North Adams was. I had a really good director who wanted me to test things out as much as I wanted to. It was a perfect opportunity to learn and practice.

How did you get interested in LIS?

When I was a senior in college, I took a children’s literature course and realized that my after-college plans were all wrong. I did some research, found out about the world of LIS, and went to Simmons GSLIS right after college.

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Up Front: GSLIS West

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It's a way to interact with colleagues on a different level and form stronger relationships. About 60 percent of the GSLIS West students come from non-library backgrounds, which offers a great diversity of perspectives and enriches the experience of the program."

Many of the GSLIS West programs and events take place after classes on Saturday, when almost everyone is on campus, and they have more time than during the lunch break.

Williams said he thinks that the main strength of GSLIS West is the community. "The faculty are awesome, to say the least," he said. "The professors are just as interested in the content as the students. From what I understand, the majority of faculty are adjunct, which provides a professional perspective on the industry, as well."

Jamison Hedin, who has taken classes on both campuses, agreed, "GSLIS West students and faculty both tend to be part of GSLIS on a part-time basis. Most work at least part time, if not full time, in the library field (or something related) already, so class discussion tends to be more practical and less theoretical."

Some advice from out West

Some GSLIS West students get a little overwhelmed when they journey to the Boston campus for classes. One student remarked, "I felt a bit lost in Boston at first... it's a bit of discovery learning. Each week gets easier—especially with the parking." However, many GSLIS West students were happy to give some friendly advice to GSLIS Boston students thinking of heading west to take classes.

Kerri-Ann Ruthven said, "Mount Holyoke is a beautiful campus; it feels like we have it to ourselves on Saturdays! One word of caution for students considering a summer course there: the library hours are very limited, which can make logistics difficult if you plan on getting work done during down time. The GSLIS office is a great place to hang out and get work/printing done!"

Hedin added, "It's very important keep an eye on listserv emails and the GSLIS website to help keep track of [everything]. Word of mouth isn't always an effective way to know what's going on. As a GSLIS West student, you can't forget that Boston faculty and staff are resources for you, even if you've never met them face to face."

Campus rivalry?

The administration is looking to strengthen the bonds between the Boston and South Hadley GSLIS programs. There is the possibility of a shuttle bus in the spring that would leave the Boston campus early enough on Saturday mornings to arrive in South Hadley by the 9:15 a.m. class, and leave after the afternoon class.

However, students know the real truth about the rivalry between the campuses: the infamous bowling challenge is still alive and

well! (To read more about the GSLIS West Bowling Prowess, see <http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/about/news/#bowl2>.) The GSLIS West team has already held its first practice session of the year, and had its first match against the UMass-Amherst archivists. LISSA West is working with LISSA Boston to set up a date for the inter-campus bowling match.



Above: GSLIS West students and faculty at a panel discussion; Below: Bowling match.



Williams noted, "We look forward to bowling against the Boston campus and winning, of course." Jeremy Smith agreed, "We're ready! You name the time and place and we'll be there with our bowling shoes—and our t-shirts!"

Note to Bostonians: Terry Plum says he hasn't been bowling in more than 40 years... but according to student Jeremy Smith, Plum was "hitting strikes and spares like nobody's business." A not-so-secret weapon in the GSLIS West bowling arsenal? Only time will tell. GSLIS West also has a student who took bowling as a college physical education requirement. Enthusiastic bowler Dean Michèle Cloonan may have to choose sides in the GSLIS East vs. West match.

Article by Elisabeth Zimmer

For more information...

Check out *InfoLink's* online supplement at (<http://web.simmons.edu/~lislive/infolink>)

Snapshot: Linda Braun

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What do you like best about your work?

The opportunity to do lots of different things. Since I teach, train, and consult, I really get the chance to vary what I do, often daily. Some libraries ask me to work with teens, either to help set up teen advisory groups or to talk tech with teens. I love that I have the chance to work with teenagers as well as adults.

What are you passionate about professionally?

I feel strongly that librarians need to pay attention to the lives of their users and be aware of a tendency to focus internally rather than externally. We need to look outward and not inward. We need to be innovative, be willing to take risks, be willing to make mistakes, and be willing to advocate for the constituencies that we serve. I'm passionate about the need to treat teens as real-life human beings and not dangerous beings of whom one needs to be afraid. Teens need adults in order to grow up successfully. We need to be role models for teens. I'm always joking with my husband that we need to adopt all these teenagers I see or hear about having horrendous lives. I can't do that, but I can help educate people — librarians, teachers, and the general public — about the importance of helping teens grow up to be successful adults.

With which fictional character do you most identify?

Harriet the Spy.

What was the last book you read?

Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan.

Interview by Elisabeth Zimmer

October—November Events

October 25, Thursday, Digital Commonwealth Conference and Vendor Fair. More information is available at: http://www.nmrls.org/digitalcommonwealth/Digital_Commonwealth_Conference.htm. College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

November 8, Thursday, World Usability Day New England. The Usability Professionals Organization is organizing World Usability Day to promote ease of use in design. For more information, please see <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~wud/>. Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

November 12, Monday, Veteran's Day Holiday.

November 14, Wednesday, The Writing of Fantasy Roundtable Discussion. Join Roger Sutton, editor in chief of The Horn Book Magazine, Susan Cooper (*The Dark is Rising*) and Gregory Maguire (*Wicked*). Tickets are free and required for this event. For details visit the GSLIS events page (see link below).

November 14, Wednesday, Unriddling the World: Fantasy and Children. Cambridge Forum presents a talk by award-winning author Susan Cooper. First Parish, Cambridge, MA, 7:30 p.m.

November 15-18, Thursday – Sunday, Books to Blogs & Back. For more information visit <http://www.museums10.org/BookMarks/>. Pioneer Valley, MA.

More information about these and other events can be found at <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/calendars/events.shtml>.

Petitions to Graduate

Students who intend to complete the GSLIS program in May 2008 must submit the petition to graduate to the GSLIS Administrative Office (room P111) by **Friday, November 30, 2007**.

You may also fax the form to 617-521-3192 or mail it to: Simmons College GSLIS, 300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 01225, Attn: Graduation. The petition to graduate can be downloaded at: <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/student-info/graduation.shtml>.

Those who are unsure of their graduation plans should submit the petition with their anticipated term of completion. If your graduation date changes, please submit a new petition with the new graduation date. If you have already submitted a petition and received confirmation, you do not need to submit another one.

Upcoming GSLISCE Workshops

Where the Teens Are: Using Technology to Get Your Message Out to Adolescents by Linda Braun. March 1-31, 2008, online.

Open Access and Free Scholarly Resources: What Are They and How Can You Find Them? By Stephanie Willen Brown and Terry Plum. Sunday, November 4, 2007, at GSLIS West Office, Mount Holyoke College.

Is it Ours? Museum Archives as Records of Ownership and Authenticity by Bernadette Callery. Saturday, November 17, 2007, at Simmons College.

RSS Feeds and Podcasts for Library Services by Shaoping Moss. Sunday, November 18, 2007, at GSLIS West Office, Mount Holyoke College.

For the full list of upcoming workshops, see <http://www.simmons.edu/gslis/continuinged/workshops/>

Folks on the Move

Congratulations to Caryn Anderson (GSLIS Doctoral Studies Program Manager), who has been named Chapter Member of the Year, a national award given by the American Society for Information Science & Technology. Way to go Caryn!

Professor Ching-chih Chen gave an invited speech at the University San Luis Potosi and the SLP Humanities Council in June 2007 in Mexico on Global Memory Net and World Heritage Memory Net (in partnership with UNESCO World Heritage Center, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/326>). She gave a keynote speech at the NDAP Workshop on Collection Internationalization and International Collaboration Program, Academia Sinica, Taipei, July 23, 2007. On August 20, 2007, she presented 3 papers at 3 Divisional Meetings (Art Libraries, Multimedia and Resource Sharing, and Government Libraries) of the IFLA Meeting in Durban, South Africa. Then, she was the key speaker at the Leadership Program on IT and Economic Development in Mbabani, organized by the American Embassy in Swaziland.

Alma Ramos-McDermott has been selected to receive the AASL travel award to attend the AASL conference in October. AASL offered four stipends of \$750 each to eligible Spectrum Scholars to attend this conference.

This year's ALA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, featured poster sessions by recent alums and current students. Two recent alums, Ellen Wilson and Jennifer Lege, joined current student Alison Cody to present "Emerging Technologies, Emerging Teachers: Collaborative Workshops at Simmons GSLIS." Their poster focused on the growth and success of the Emerging Technologies Workshop Series co-sponsored by ASIS&T@Simmons and the GSLIS Technology Group. Current student David Dwiggin presented a poster session with Jane Mirandette, Director of the San Juan del Sur Public Library in Nicaragua. Their session was entitled "Bridging the Communication Abyss in Rural Nicaragua: The San Juan del Sur Biblioteca Movil as an Information Conduit."

The GSLIS Information Architecture group presented the first phase of their research to faculty and staff in early October. The next presentation is scheduled for **Thursday, November 8, 1-2 p.m., P207**. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to attend.

InfoLink

InfoLink is the monthly newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. Its purpose is to provide school- and career-related information and to foster community among the many diverse people who make up the school.

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