

# Emerging Topics, Challenges, and Strategies for Library and Information Science Education

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## ABSTRACT

Library and Information Studies (LIS) has become more multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary with the application of advanced information technologies. It evolves from traditional areas that focus on organizing print materials and providing access services to library patrons to applying technologies to collect, organize, retrieve, and analyze digital information in different formats. In recent years, misinformation, DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusiveness), and generative artificial intelligence (AI) based on large language models and other topics have been popular and important topics that attract the attention of educators and scholars in a variety of disciplines. Collaboration is becoming more and more important for LIS scholars in investigating these challenging topics. Significant research has been conducted to explore these topics. Furthermore, academic departments and programs in LIS have started to reassess and provide up-to-date curricula so our graduates can possess the knowledge and skills required to excel in current complicated information environments. There is a need for LIS schools and programs to share their experiences and learn from others on strategies to deal with new topics for educating leading information professionals.

This panel will discuss the emerging topics that are relevant to LIS, the challenges of teaching these new topics, and possible strategies for LIS education. The panelists are program directors or department chairs who have led the curriculum reassessment in their respective schools or programs. We will share our thoughts with the community and provide our experience and lessons for other LIS programs on strategic planning. Specifically, we will try to address the following questions based on recent literature, curriculum, and the practice of respective LIS schools or programs:

1. What are the new topics or areas that your program or school has added to your curriculum in recent three years? What are the considerations behind the curriculum decisions?

2. What are important topics and/or areas that have not been added? What are the new courses you would recommend LIS programs and schools to offer to master and undergraduate students?
3. Based on graduates' feedback, has your program met the needs of your students? What topics or areas do students need courses or training in?
4. What are the top three challenges for educating future information science professionals?
5. How does the department or information school gain support from the university administration on new programs?

Following the panelists' presentation, the panel will invite the audience to share their answers and experiences. We also welcome questions from the audience related to the panelists' presentations. Then, the whole session may move to discuss the specific topic(s) that most of the audience is interested in. Panelists and the audience will interact actively on these topics to achieve the most benefits of the session.

We believe this panel will attract not only program directors, chairs, and deans but also LIS faculty members and students attending ALISE. The LIS leaders, such as program directors, chairs, and deans, could use this opportunity to share and learn from each other on strategic curriculum planning. Faculty and students will benefit from the discussion on new and important research topics and areas, which will help them to develop their research and instruction plans. The panelists and the audience will learn a great deal in this interactive session.

Below is the general information on the panelists and the outlines of their presentation.

**Moderator and panelist:** Jiangping Chen, Ph.D. Interim Executive Associate Dean & Visiting Professor, School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Dr. Chen was a Regents Professor and Department Chair in the Department of Information Science, College of Information, University of North Texas (UNT). Dr. Chen will introduce the panelists and announce the start of the session. She will present a preliminary study on new concepts of LIS based on a literature review of recent LIS academic conferences. Then, she will present the new courses developed at both UNT and UIUC iSchools over the last three years, and also course revisions by UNT LIS faculty to embrace new topics, challenges, and strategies to meet student learning outcomes.

**Panelist:** Natalie Taylor, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Director, School of Information, University of South Florida. Dr. Taylor will present on the ongoing curriculum development process currently underway in the Master of Library and Information Science program at USF, her perspectives on the above questions, and thoughts as related to how schools and programs can retain and enhance connections between more traditional library curriculum and emerging technologies and job skills.

**Panelist:** Abebe Rorissa, Ph.D. Dr. Rorissa, Professor and Director of the School of Information Sciences and was the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs at the College of Communication and Information, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Dr. Rorissa will present how the University of Tennessee handles academic programs in areas such as AI, Data Science, and Cybersecurity. He is on the leadership Advisory Board for the new college that houses these campus-wide programs.

## **ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS**

Curriculum; Students; Pedagogy; Information security; Artificial intelligence

## **AUTHOR KEYWORDS**

LIS education; Strategic planning; Information technologies; Misinformation; Data Science.

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