

Report of the Task Force to Assess the School of Library and Information Studies

The information world is undergoing fundamental change to which graduate programs in Information and Library Studies must respond. As the importance of information, the needs for information, and communication technologies evolve at incredible rates, the challenge for graduate faculty is to educate and train the next generation of information researchers and practitioners.

Due to the departure of Philip Turner as Dean of SLIS at the end of August 1996, the administration took the opportunity to reflect on the future of SLIS. Provost Nancy Barrett appointed the Task Force and charged it to study and identify ways to strengthen SLIS and its programs. Specifically, Dr. Barrett requested 2 or 3 unranked options for future directions in organizational structure. Advantages and disadvantages of each organizational option were to be identified, as well as resources needed for the option to be successful.

The Task Force discovered several features of SLIS that need to be retained regardless of organization structure:

- ◆ maintain excellence of programs,
- ◆ retain control of curriculum and budget,
- ◆ sustain fund-raising activities,
- ◆ maintain leadership role and visibility in the state, and
- ◆ continue to serve mid-career working mothers who need an option to a residency program.

The attached appendices list the information supplied by SLIS and the dates of the committee meetings. The main body of this report is the following description of three options for SLIS, along with attendant advantages, disadvantages, and needed resources.