

Poster

Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science 2 (WILIS 2): Results from the Recent Graduates Survey

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Abstract

LIS programs have generally lacked the time and resources to systematically survey their graduates. As a result, stakeholders lack an adequate understanding of what happens to graduates. Educators, in particular, do not have ongoing data about the extent to which their programs meet students' expectations, prepare them for the workplace or meet continuing learning needs. The goal of the Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science 2 (WILIS 2) study is to design and test a shared alumni tracking system that all LIS programs can potentially use. This IMLS funded project employs a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach in which LIS program administrators, researchers and other stakeholders jointly engage in all aspects of research process (e.g., survey development, report design, sustainability).

The study includes a web-based survey of recent graduates of up to 44 participating LIS programs. Data collection is currently ongoing, and 61% of ALA accredited programs are participating. The first phase of the WILIS 2 survey of recent graduates (8 programs) had a response rate of 54%. The data collection for the second phase (20 programs) has just been completed with a response rate of 45%. Supplementary funding from IMLS has supported the inclusion of another 14 programs, and their survey will launch in the Spring of 2010. The methodology includes web-based survey with an email invitation and three email reminders. The web-based survey focused on the educational and work histories of the respondents, continuing education needs, satisfaction with LIS as a career, perspectives of recent graduates about their LIS programs and entry into the workforce and demographics.

This poster will present the results of the WILIS 2 survey from all three phases (44 programs). Some key findings from the first and second phases (28 programs) are:

- The vast majority of LIS graduates (89%) are working in jobs that use their LIS skills and knowledge. The three major employers for LIS grads are academic libraries, public libraries and school library media centers.
- Nearly all (91%) LIS graduates are satisfied with LIS as a career and anticipate staying in the field (90%) over the next 3 years.
- LIS graduates are interested in participating in continuing education via traditional modes (workshops and training sessions) as well as online modes (webinars, courses).
- Most graduates (84%) rate their overall LIS program experience as “good” or “excellent.”
- Most graduates (74%) find a job within 3 months after graduation.
- Most common professional activities since graduation are membership in a professional association and conference attendance.

The increased interest of LIS programs in surveying their alumni and the enthusiastic response of the phase 1 programs to the receipt of their datasets and results suggest that sustaining the model and sharing the data are the essential next steps in the program of research. For more information, please visit www.wilis.unc.edu