

Clarion University of Pennsylvania's Department of Information and Library Science is the only American Library Association-accredited program in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE), though there are two other ALA accredited programs in the commonwealth, one at the University of Pittsburgh and one at Drexel University. Clarion's MSLS program has had continued accreditation from ALA since its initial accreditation in 1973/74. The department and its programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels have been major contributors to the university's success; for instance, as of fall 2016 the university enrolled a total of 5,224 students, of which 424 were in the department of Information and Library Science, representing 1/12 of the university's total enrollment and making it the second largest department on campus after the Department of Education.

Clarion University (the university) is located in the Borough of Clarion, two miles north of Interstate 80 in scenic northwestern Pennsylvania, a rural area characterized by rolling hills, rivers, and old growth forests. Both Cook Forest State Park (<http://www.cookforest.org/>) and the Allegheny National Forest (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/allegheny/>) are nearby and provide both year-round and seasonal recreational opportunities, such as skiing, hiking, fishing, and hunting. The borough has a population of approximately 5,300, down somewhat from the 2000 census (update to 2010 census) reporting of approximately 6,200; the population is predominantly Euro-American (94.5 percent). The university student population stands at approximately 5,400 with an FTE of approximately 4,400. This is down somewhat from the last self-study document which reported the student population as "slightly more than seven thousand;" this downward trend in student numbers reflects the fact that the university is a

predominantly residential institution which draws most of its students from northwestern Pennsylvania, an area of declining population in which it competes with two other state-owned universities (Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania) for a declining number of traditional students.

The university was founded in 1867 as a seminary with connections to the Methodist Church and, over the years, eventuated into a normal school, a teachers' college, a college, and, effective July 1, 1983, a state university. At the time of the last self-study the university's academic offerings were organized into the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, and Education and Human Services; the School of Nursing; and the Division of Academic Affairs; the university's curricula were delivered primarily at the Clarion campus, a branch campus in nearby Oil City, and at several extension sites, notably Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg. In the face of declining student enrollments and shrinking financial support from the Commonwealth, the university was reorganized in 2012 into three colleges, with a number of faculty and staff being laid off in the process. With the reorganization the former College of Education and Human Services (the former administrative home of the Department of Library Science) was dismantled. By administrative decision, the Departments of Education and Special Education were merged into a two-department school and were relocated to the College of Arts and Sciences which was re-named the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education. The branch campus in Oil City had already been re-labeled and re-branded as Venango College of Clarion University and this college became the new administrative home of the Department of Health and Physical Education and the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (both previously in the College of Education and Human

Services); here they joined several existing programs in the college, including the School of Nursing and the School of Allied Health Sciences. [Note: the university website is still showing Venango College as the third academic organizational unit. We will need to update this if and when they make the new college official.] The Department of Computer Information Science, previously in the College of Arts and Sciences, was separated off and placed in the College of Business Administration. The Department of Library Science, alone, was not designated a home by administration but was, instead, directed to investigate all possible administrative locations and to recommend to university administration where it could best be accommodated. Under the leadership of then department chair, Dr. William Buchanan, the deans of the three academic colleges in the re-organized university as well as the dean of libraries were invited to meet with the faculty of the Department of Library Science to discuss the department's needs and where it could best be accommodated to achieve its mission. Pursuant to this process the department voted to align itself with the College of Business Administration; once this alignment was achieved the dean of the College of Business Administration, in consultation with the chairs of the departments of Library Science and Computer Information Science, connected the two schools administratively to form the School of Information Sciences and renamed the college the College of Business Administration and Information Sciences. The department feels that it is very fortunate to have been located in this college because of the college's history and continuing commitment to imaginative and entrepreneurial program development, willingness to provide financial support to faculty research and professional development, and an administrative team (dean, associate dean, administrative assistants) that is highly regarded at the institution, regional, and state system levels. Under their leadership the university has developed

several new concentrations in the MBA program, a new graduate degree in accountancy, and a new interdisciplinary graduate degree in applied data analytics.

A comprehensive multi-purpose university committed to teaching excellence, Clarion offers a broad range of undergraduate programs and master's programs in the following areas: accountancy, applied data analytics, biology, business administration (with two concentrations), education (with six concentrations), library science, mass media arts and journalism, nursing (both masters and doctoral), rehabilitative sciences, special education (with two concentrations), and speech language pathology. The university recently inaugurated a Doctor of Nursing Practice in partnership with Edinboro University and is investigating the development of other professional doctorates. The university holds twenty-nine program accreditations – the most of any PASSHE university – a fact of which the university and its staff and faculty are justifiably proud. Clarion University is committed to seeking excellence in all areas of higher education within its mission and to provide an environment that challenges students to develop their talents, to expand their intellectual capacities and interests, to nurture their creative abilities, and to develop a lifelong respect and enthusiasm for learning. The university is dedicated to helping students see in themselves what they may become, assisting them with an opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for entrance into a variety of careers and for participation in a free society as enlightened citizens capable of making wise and responsible choices.

To prepare its students to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, the university seeks to admit, retain, and graduate students who are qualified and motivated, and to recruit, retain, and support highly qualified and dedicated faculty and staff. The

university seeks diversity in its staff, faculty, and student body and values this diversity as providing richness in the learning process. The state-of-the-art library building – in which the department is located – and the adjacent bell tower serve as the focal point of the campus, placing library science – as it should be – at the heart of the university.

Faculty members at the university are committed to excellence in teaching and to continuous intellectual and professional development. Faculty at PASSHE institutions are unionized and represented by the Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Faculties (APSCUF), one of ten collective bargaining units on campus. The APSCUF collective bargaining agreement requires faculty to:

- Stay current in their academic disciplines through continuing scholarly activity
- Confer with and advise students and advisees
- Evaluate fairly and promptly student achievement
- Participate in deliberations which contribute to the growth and development of the students and university
- Accept reasonable duties assigned within their fields of competence
- Attempt honestly and in good conscience to preserve and defend the goals of the university.

For the first time in the history of the system, university, and faculty union, the administration and the faculty bargaining unit reached an impasse in negotiations in the fall of 2016 and the faculty went out on strike. The strike lasted for only three days but resulted in a satisfactory settlement of a new contract.

In the period following the last review by the Committee on Accreditation the department has made significant and innovative

strides both in its ALA-accredited MSLS program as well as in programs that support and feed the MSLS degree.

Since the last accreditation review the department has worked with its constituencies to review and revise its curricula, with particular emphasis on the teaching/research strengths of its faculty. In response to leadership from PASSHE, the department has moved from a 36-credit hour only MSLS degree to a degree that incorporates a required capstone of either an internship or a research project. Details of these innovations are in the curriculum chapter. The department has also drawn on the strength of its new faculty to develop curricula that support innovations in such areas of archives and social media, all of which are, again, discussed in the curriculum chapter.

At the time of the last accreditation review the department had both face-to-face, fully online, and blended degree options. Because of student demand, the face-to-face degree option has been dropped so that the MSLS degree is available fully online. The department continues to offer on-site employment for both graduate and undergraduate students who desire an on-campus experience, even though the actual coursework is fully online. The department also has developed a fully online undergraduate degree option (BS in Liberal Studies with a Concentration in Library Science) which has proved very popular. Most students who enter this program are interested in completing their undergraduate degrees (typically from remote locations) with the goal of eventually entering the department's online MSLS program; consequently, it has become an important feeder program for the MSLS program.

The department's programs (graduate and undergraduate) continue to have strong enrollment, putting it in an enviable position on a campus where many other degree programs are struggling to remain viable due to the university's overall decline

in student enrollment as discussed above. As a result, the department is looking forward to the development of new programs, the maintenance and strengthening of its existing programs, and a bright and strong future.