Spark

But now I know that trees blossom in the spring and give their fruits in the summer without any desire for accolades. And they scatter their leaves abroad in the fall and denude themselves in the winter without fear of reproof.
—Khalil Gibran

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings Alumni and Friends,

We write to you at a time when the School of Information Sciences is in transition. When you receive this publication, Diane will have started service as Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs at the University, and Carol will have started as interim director of SIS.

This is a positive transition. Having a member of our faculty serve in the Provost's office speaks volumes about the importance of SIS to this campus. Having one of our most distinguished professors serve as interim director of the School shows how committed we are to maintaining the positive momentum you have helped us build over the past few years.

We know 2020 has been a time of transition for many of you too, and there is still more yet to come. We don't know what the upcoming months or even years will bring, but what we do know is that the information sciences have never been more critical, especially given the complex societal problems we face.

SIS will continue to soar. More than 115 new students will join the MSIS program this fall, which will be our largest entering class on record. There are 30 students who are pursuing the BSIS degree, and that number grows daily. We are continuing to create new educational offerings for students including in the areas of strategic and digital communications with our College partners, and health informatics with our partners in the Colleges of Nursing and Engineering. Faculty, students and alumni continue to generate scholarship, engage communities, contribute to professional meetings and societies, and serve in significant leadership roles. Three new faculty have joined the School, and we have plans to add a few more in the upcoming year.

We hope the stories you find in Spark will bring you at least a little joy during these difficult times, as well as the inspiration and strength to keep moving forward.

Carol Tenopir, SIS Interim Director & Chancellor's Professor

Diane Kelly, SIS Professor & Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Carol Tenopir

Diane Kelly

SUPPORT SIS STUDENTS

Last year, your generous support helped the Bill Robinson Scholarship reach the endowment level. Please consider giving again this year so we can help even more students in need pursue their dreams of becoming information professionals.

Go to **tiny.utk.edu/GivetoSIS** to make a monetary donation to the SIS Enrichment Fund.

Thank you for all that you do!

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ON THE COVER

Our Spark cover this year features art that was displayed in UT's Hodges Library. Assistant Professor Ingrid Ruffin, head of the UT Libraries Learning Commons, regularly creates pieces in the library on a wall; for this piece, she had assistance from library staff member Allie Roberts. It features a quote from Lebanese-American poet and author Khalil Gibran:

"But now I know that trees blossom in the spring and give their fruits in the summer without any desire for accolades. And they scatter their leaves abroad in the fall and denude themselves in the winter without fear of reproof."

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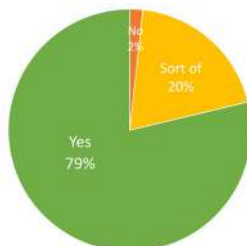
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Yes 79%
Sort of 20%
No 2%

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TLA
TENNESSEE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

UTK-School of Information Sciences @UTKSIS · Oct 7, 2019
Join us for a 10/9 6:30 p.m. follow-up online screening of @ChangeTheSubjct, a documentary about students who confronted anti-immigrant sentiment in their library catalog, which became a flashpoint in the national immigration debate. ➡ tiny.utk.edu/changethesubje...

♡ 1   ⇄ 5   ♡ 9   ⬆

UTK-School of Information Sciences @UTKSIS · Apr 24
Science says pets pets can buffer stress, boost productivity, and keep you healthy while you work or study from home. Here's a few of the WFH buddies from SIS faculty and staff! View the full album >> tiny.utk.edu/petsSIS

♡   ⇄ 4   ♡ 15   ⬆   ⊪

UT School of Information Sciences
May 18 🌐

Today SIS launched our first ever Virtual Hooding Ceremony website for 2020 grads! Alumni, students, and friends of SIS are invited to participate, meet the graduates, explore videos and stories, and leave a congratulatory message. Check your Monday morning SIS newsletter for the URL and login, or DM us for access.

Diane Kelly
Director of the School of Information Sciences
-0.51

▶ 12

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utk_sis   ...

View Insights   Promote

♡ ○ ⊲   🔖

Liked by **katiemillion** and others

utk_sis "I love being a part of the program and I like to stay in touch with my students. I'm really proud of where they've ended up and that I have actually worked with some of them in a... more
January 11

utk_sis   ...

♡ ○ ⊲   🔖

60 likes

utk_sis 2020 SIS grads - did you spend all weekend wearing your regalia? DM us your pics or post them with the hashtag #SISHooding2020 to be featured on our upcoming commemorative hooding website!

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utk_sis
UT College of Communication & Information   ...

♥ ○ ⊲   🔖

Liked by **librarymonk** and 39 others

utk_sis The votes are in and the winner by a narrow margin: hater-blocker wearing llama reindeer sweater! Congratulations Jennifer Heyboer, you are the winner 2019 Ugly Sweater Contest! 🎅

University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences
101 followers
1w · 🌐

Four SIS students have participated in the "Voices Out Loud" project, which is focused on chronicling materials and oral histories of LGBTQ+ people in East Tennessee. Learn more about the project >> tiny.utk.edu/voicesth

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LIBRARIAN IN CHARGE

UT Libraries Dean Steve Smith Serves as Chancellor's Special Assistant

Far right: Dean of UT LIbraries Steve Smith talks with students in Hodges library.

Dean of University of Tennessee Libraries Steve Smith is used to overseeing the many moving pieces of a large academic library that serves a broad array of stakeholders, so it made sense when he was asked to co-chair the Re-Imagining Fall Task Force created by University of Tennessee Chancellor Donde Plowman in April in response to COVID-19.

Smith, and College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences Dean Ellen McIntyre, co-chaired the task force of 82 members. They set out to create a document with three scenarios for returning faculty, staff, and students to campus in the fall, detailing everything each scenario would entail.

"We worked together 24/7 on what turned out to be a 150-page report...We defied the laws of project management and groups by going big with 82 people with a very short deadline, but I think having that short timeline actually really focused us," Smith said.

After the report was completed, Smith was appointed Plowman's special assistant and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the report in the fall. The three scenarios the original task force fleshed out were: returning everyone to campus on Aug. 19 with appropriate safety modifications for the entire fall; returning to campus for fall but going remote again due to a resurgence of cases; and no return to campus and operating remotely for the entire fall semester. At the beginning of summer, the university was following through with the first scenario and phasing in the return of staff and faculty to campus.

While Smith is no stranger to being on high-level committees – he chaired the VolVision 2020 Task Force in 2015 – this new position is a departure from his norm of managing a library staff of 150. In an announcement about Smith's new appointment, Plowman said he was a "natural choice" to fill the role.

"[The library] is the only academic entity on campus that is literally for everybody."
- Dean Steve Smith

"Librarians make good choices because we're perceived as not having a dog in the fight, since a library is essentially for the whole campus. When a librarian serves on a committee, you can depend on a campus-level focus on the greater good," he said. "It's the only academic entity on campus that is literally for everybody, students, faculty, alumni, staff, and community folks."

While Smith serves in this special assistant position until Aug. 31, Senior Associate Dean Holly Mercer is acting dean of university libraries. The UT Libraries was one of the first in the country to transfer its services to be completely remote in the spring of 2020, and to send all of its staff home. Smith said the smooth transition resulted from years of investment in online resources, and his staff's familiarity with providing online services.

Becoming a librarian was a "backup plan that turned into a great career" for Smith, and he said he's looking forward to many more years in the field. He said one of the many positives about being a librarian at the University of Tennessee is sharing a campus with a quality information sciences program. He's chaired the School of Information Sciences Advisory Board, and always encourages collaboration between the school and the library. He's been impressed by many students and alums who have worked for him at Hodges Library, and he hopes to see many more come through the doors as employees.

"I love SIS. It's a great school, a great program, and they're really innovative. Diane [Kelly] is a great leader and the faculty are leading researchers on campus," he said.

INNOVATOR'S AWARD

Wendy Cornelisen ('13)
Assistant State Librarian,
Library Innovation & Collaboration
Georgia

SIS alum Wendy Cornelisen ('07) is a big picture, out-of-the-box kind of person. This mindset is why her career trajectory took her from a reference librarian position all the way to her current job as Georgia's assistant state librarian for library innovation and collaboration – and it's also why she is the recipient of the 2020 SIS Innovator's Award.

"Honestly, the part of it that I love is every day at my job is different, there's always a new challenge. There is the opportunity to look at the complexity involved and see how things are working and where to make changes to make things more efficient, to streamline the process," she said.

There are definitely days where Cornelisen said she misses some of the everyday work of a reference librarian, but most days she revels in solving problems creatively. She said librarianship allows both her analytical and creative sides to mesh, and also allows her to make an impact on the world. In fact, that desire to be impactful is why she switched careers from history museums to librarianship – and if her career is any indication, she's been successful in that endeavor.

Cornelisen was living in Nashville while she went through the SIS master's program at that time. Right after she graduated she was hired on at Brentwood Library as a reference librarian, and that's when her penchant for library innovation began.

> "I like trying to make things a little bit easier for everyone, whether that's library patrons or for libraries themselves."

"I really just dove right into learning how they ran the databases there, and streamlining the process for magazine renewals – which they were still doing manually by the little subscription renewal notice that would show up every once in a while. I just started making that whole process a lot smoother," she said.

Her boss at the library, Chuck Sherrill, eventually became the state librarian, and it wasn't long before he recruited Cornelisen to fill a position as the Tennessee Electronic Library coordinator. In that role, she managed a group of statewide databases that everyone in Tennessee can use.

"I so appreciated the chance to just really sink my teeth into that complex problem of: we have this set of databases that every library in the state can utilize. How do we promote them? How do we build awareness in the general public about the resources available? How do we get more librarians trained on how to use them, are there any new ones we could add?" she said.

After a few years of employing her visionary talents in that role, Cornelisen stepped into her current position in 2015. With the job came a new state, new rules, new challenges, and new opportunities to be innovative.

"As an intensely curious person it's been fascinating for me to just go in and learn how things work, where the pressure points are, what the needs are for the public libraries across the states," she said.

One of her first projects was to revise the outdated Georgia Public Library Service trustee manual, which had first been distributed in 2006. She revamped it completely and distributed it statewide to public library board members.

Her second large, complex task was creating Georgia's first statewide eBook program, eRead Kids, which launched in August 2019. While some of the state's libraries had created a consortium to purchase eBooks, the majority of libraries were unable to join it and did not have an eBook program. So Cornelisen got to work and created eRead Kids, which is geared mostly toward kindergarten through fourth grade level readers. Its creation came just in the nick of time; when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020 and people were quarantined in their homes, usage of the program increased by 283 percent, she said.

Cornelisen said it's been satisfying to see how she can use her skillset to make a difference in so many lives, and she looks forward to the next problem she gets to solve.

"At the end of the day, I really enjoy the opportunity to find new ways of doing things, and to be able to utilize creative thinking and my analytical nature to come up with new ways of doing things. I like trying to make things a little bit easier for everyone, whether that's library patrons or for libraries themselves," she said. •

Would you like to nominate someone for an alumni award? Go here to nominate someone and see past recipients:
sis.utk.edu/alumni/distinguishedalumni

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

David Johnson ('91)
Director,
Fayetteville Public Library
Arkansas

Fayetteville Public Library has long been the Arkansas city's center, a hot spot for learning, special events, and other communal gatherings. In 2005, it won the Library of the Year award sponsored by Library Journal and Thompson/Gale Publishers – the smallest library ever to earn that accolade, said the library's current director, SIS alum David Johnson ('91). Johnson is the recipient of the 2020 SIS Distinguished Alumni Award, and he received it in part for his work at the library.

Johnson has been steering the library into an 80,000-square-foot expansion that will include a robotics lab, a 700-seat auditorium, a virtual reality lab, a simulation lab, an audio recording studio, and a teaching kitchen.

"We had to grow the space and we had to do it responsibly and not make more space for the sake of more space," Johnson said.

Johnson had already earned an undergraduate and graduate degree in communications from the University of Arkansas when he decided to pursue a degree in library sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. It was a rough transition, initially; he loved Knoxville, with its college sports, proximity to the mountains, and lively music scene. But he was also broke, and struggling. By happenstance, the interim director of the school at the time, Glenn Estes, stopped to talk to Johnson one day and ask him how he was doing.

"I told him I'm broke, I'm trying to live off a dollar and a quarter a day, and I'm hanging in there, doing the best I can," Johnson recounted.

Estes helped Johnson get a scholarship, and with his financial pressures relieved, Johnson began to flourish in the program.

"Everything aligned and the doors opened, and I was there right at the time when the internet and online research was really happening," he said.

Johnson graduated and he and his wife moved back to their hometown of Fayetteville. He started a job as a reference librarian at the public library, but switched gears and started working at Tyson Farms when they decided to start their family.

Johnson said he landed a job at the massive agriculture

> **"It might not be a straight path but ultimately if you keep your passion as a north star and keep pushing towards that, when you get there – and you will – it is such a rewarding feeling."**

corporation by convincing them information sciences fits into every setting – that managing a call center wasn't much different than managing a reference desk.

"I got known as a mess cleaner upper and project manager. They would be implementing a new software package and they would drop me in and I'd add form and structure to the process," he said.

After about 15 years there, the director position at the library opened up, and Johnson told himself it was a "now or never" shot he had to take. He's glad he made the leap.

"The love of the library was enough to make me want to give it up. I was very lucky to get the position. It's one of these jobs where you wake up excited every day to go do what you do, excited to see the smiles on the public patrons' faces and helping them solve problems," Johnson said.

One of the latest problems to solve has been how to operate the library during the COVID-19 pandemic. While some construction is able to go forward unhindered due to the absence of library patrons, other parts of it are stalled, such as delayed furniture and equipment shipments. The renovation unveiling, initially intended for this fall, will likely happen in spring 2021, he said.

"We keep finding new ways to achieve our vision and goals, just with new tactics," he said.

It's that optimism and drive to continue providing information resources to the public that earned Johnson the 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award, and he was stunned when told of the honor. He's served on the SIS Advisory Board in the past, and said he is proud of the school.

"I would tell every student that you'll get every penny back and more in your investment at SIS. Following your passion is key," he said. "It might not be a straight path but ultimately if you keep your passion as a north star and keep pushing towards that, when you get there – and you will – it is such a rewarding feeling. And all other things go away. All those other pieces become less important when you're in that sweet spot in life when you're following your calling." •

GROWING SIS

Undergrad Brooke Bixler Awarded SIS Scholarship

When Brooke Bixler was looking at universities, she was looking for a specific kind of undergraduate computer science program. She took an IT pathway at her Nashville high school, and the computer programming she learned there was something she definitely wanted to do in the future - but she also really enjoyed linguistics and humanities. She wanted a college program that "bridged the gap" between those fields. She chose the University of Tennessee to pursue computer science, but soon discovered that the program she had been looking for did, indeed, exist.

"Two weeks into attending UT I found out about information sciences, and it was like, oh my goodness, this is everything I was looking for," she said. "You have a bit of the programming, but it's only a part of it. I also get to take sociology which gives me some of those human interaction components, like looking at why people do things, specifically user design."

It took one phone call with SIS Director Diane Kelly to convince Bixler to switch majors to information sciences and grow the ranks of the new bachelor of science in information sciences program.

"I started [spring 2020] and I really enjoyed it. It was very critical and problem solving," she said.

To top it off, Bixler was awarded the SIS Scholarship for the 2020 fall semester, which she said was so unexpected and exciting.

Bixler doesn't know yet what kind of job she'll aim for after she graduates with her BSIS, but she does know that the degree gives her a lot of options. In high school she participated in the IT Girls Mentorship Program, which paired her with women working in the IT field. "It was encouraging just seeing women in some component of IT, and a lot of them were not programmers and were in management; but that solidified that I wanted to be in this field and it helped me see there were a lot of different positions."

New Educational Programs

SIS is partnering with several units across the UT campus, including those within the College of Communication and Information, to offer two unique educational programs starting fall 2020. "These collaborations allow us to expand the types of educational experiences we offer students. SIS students can take online courses from College experts in strategic and digital communications, and also pair their MSIS with a health informatics certificate," said SIS Professor and Director Diane Kelly.

Strategic & Digital Communication

CCI already offers a Master's degree in Communication and Information (MCI) and the four Schools in the College – Advertising and Public Relations, Communications, Information Sciences, and Journalism and Electronic Media – have teamed-up to create a new online concentration in Strategic and Digital Communication.

"Communication makes such a huge difference in behaviors and outcomes. There's going to be industry shifts and career shifts that will make this a great program for both career starters and career advancers," said Program Manager Alexis Anderson.

SIS will be offering classes through the program including: social informatics, web design, and information architecture.

The program doesn't require applicants to take the GRE or to complete a capstone project, making it more accessible to working professionals, Anderson said. All the classes are asynchronous, allowing students flexibility. Strategic Communication Management and Digital Content Creation are the first two classes being offered this fall, and two more classes will be offered every semester; students are being accepted into the program up until the first day of fall classes. •

Health Informatics Certificate

A vast amount of information is produced in healthcare settings, and that will continue to grow as medical technology advances. Health informatics is the practice of organizing, managing, and utilizing that information, which includes data from: electronic records, vital signs, digital X-rays, hospital statistics, Bluetooth instruments, and much more.

UT is now offering an online Health Informatics Graduate Certificate through the joint efforts of three units: the College of Nursing, the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, and the School of Information Sciences.

"I think one of the things that makes our program unique and stronger than others is we do have experts from different colleges," said Tom Berg, assistant professor and coordinator of the Health Informatics Certificate.

Expert practitioners participate as key lecturers in the classes, so students can hear first-hand how health informatics is used in the field. The certificate program is open to any individual who has completed an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution, including current graduate students, or those already with a graduate degree. •

LEARN MORE ONLINE
cci.utk.edu/online-masters-strategic-and-digital-communication
sis.utk.edu/exploreprograms/health-informatics-certificate

New Faces at SIS

Assistant Professor Jiangen He

Jiangen He said his new position at SIS is ideal for him, both in the description and location, and he couldn't be more thrilled to start in the fall.

"I learned a lot about the research footprint of the different [SIS] faculty members and I feel there is some connection between my research and the faculty members' research," he said. "At the same time, I feel my research is a little bit different than the existing research contributed by faculty members, and that I can give new contributions, but there are connections."

He comes to SIS from a research assistant position at Drexel University College of Computing and Informatics. His research focuses on visual analytics, data-driven predictions, and critical information measurement in science of science, and studies of how social factors in artificial intelligence affect people's information and decision-making behavior. He is also the winner of the 2019 Eugene Garfield Doctoral Dissertation Scholarship from the International Society for Scientometrics and Informetrics and the winner of the 2020 Eugene Garfield Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from Beta Phi Mu International Honor Society. He is interested in teaching information visualization to students, and eager to help develop the SIS undergraduate major.

"I worked in that industry for two years and I've worked in academia for many years, so I know both. I feel I can teach students how to use information technology and implement their ideas whether they're research-oriented or industry-oriented," he said.

Assistant Professor Ben Horne

Ben Horne has combined his background in computer sciences and information sciences to focus his research on safety in online spaces – particularly as it pertains to news and information consumption.

He hopes to give students at SIS an opportunity to learn computational skills they can apply to information jobs without having to have an extensive background in computation.

"This includes not only extracting rich information from data, but also interpreting that extracted information in light of both the computational method used and the applicable concepts in information science," he said. "I am also excited to loop many timely topics into the classroom, such as misinformation and a wide variety of examples and concepts from current social media."

Horne has a professional background in information technology, and is coming to SIS after graduating with his doctorate degree at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he was also a research assistant.

One reason he wanted to work at UT is the broad opportunity to do interdisciplinary work. He plans to continue his research, which ranges from discovering disinformation tactics in news data, to analyzing the spread of conspiracy theories across online platforms. He said another reason he found SIS appealing is the diverse backgrounds of students and faculty.

"I have long thought that the best research and learning environments are highly interdisciplinary, with many different educational and cultural backgrounds having a voice," he said.

Clinical Assistant Professor Ericka Patillo

Ericka Patillo has been both an administrator and teacher of information sciences, and will be serving in both capacities at SIS as she takes on the role of Director of Graduate Studies.

"I think my combined experiences have equipped me for moving out of the practice and into an arena where I can make contributions to the information professions broadly writ," she said.

Patillo earned both her doctorate and her master of science in library science from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She comes to SIS from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, where she served as a User Experience Librarian and prior to that, the University Libraries' associate dean for public services and engagement. As associate dean, she oversaw the development of the University Libraries Diversity & Inclusion Plan, which became a campus-wide model.

"I think cultural competence is a very important skill that all of our students and graduates need to have, and our faculty, too. Especially because, for me, it's not all about diversity and your numbers, it's about inclusion and cultural competence," she said.

Patillo said she's excited to make a return to teaching and to broaden her experience in online teaching.

"I have missed being in the classroom, even if we are talking about a virtual space. I'm really looking forward to learning more about online collaboration and honing my skills," she said.

RISING TO THE ⌄Rocky TOP

MSIS STUDENTS LAND UT FELLOWSHIPS

James Spears

James Spears watched his fiancé go through the MSIS program at the University of Tennessee, and as he learned more about information sciences, he saw the field fit his career goals.

"I realized it lined up with what I'm interested in. I was interested in education and I really always enjoyed the aspect of my program where I helped people learn new things and work through their questions, and that's something I saw in SIS," he said.

His passion for education is making him lean towards the school librarian pathway, where Spears says he can really influence young people by teaching information literacy.

"For me, I think education is very important, and I think people learn better when they learn outside of the box outside of the typical classroom situation," he said.

Spears' UT undergraduate degree is in history, and while earning it, he also had the opportunity to work on the Voices Out Loud project, which archives the history of LGBTQIA+ history in East Tennessee. That also influenced his decision to pursue information sciences, as it married his love of history with making information accessible to the public.

He was so excited about starting the program, the news of being awarded the J. Wallace and Katie Dean Graduate Endowment fellowship took him totally by surprise, and made him all the more enthusiastic.

"From my perspective, seeing my fiancé go through the program for two years, I was excited for my own turn and have my chance to learn and grow myself through SIS," he said.

Elisha Jewell

Elisha Jewell is someone who loves staying busy with a good project or two, as evidenced by all the extracurricular work she did while earning her undergraduate degree in music at LeMoyne-Owen College in Memphis. Her accomplishments include:

- Interning at Stark Music Academy in Memphis.
- Being a student worker at her college library.
- Completing a Harvard University preservation and conservation internship.
- Starting an HBCU Library Alliance-backed project at her college library to rehouse its archives and special collections.
- Creating the Saxon-Price Reading and Reference Library inside her dorm, which she said was to increase student reading, literacy, and vocabulary by giving them easy access to fiction and non-fiction materials.

Though she earned her degree in music and will always love music, Jewell knew by her junior year her heart was in library work. Libraries always appealed to her, and it all began at her hometown in Laurel, Delaware, where she volunteered at the local library. She started working there and oversaw a summer page program, became a circulation assistant, and then a youth services assistant. After all this time in libraries – nine years total of experience – Jewell is looking forward to taking her first step toward a professional library career by starting at SIS this fall. She said she was considering a small pool of graduate schools, and the Access and Diversity Fellowship she was awarded by UT sealed the deal for her. "I'm just excited to start, it's a new chapter," she said.

Kelsey Badger

For the past five years, Kelsey Badger has handled data produced by the Early Childhood Project in Chicago, Illinois. The project is a collaboration between the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Erikson Institute, and focuses on developmental assessments and mental health consults for children in the care of IDCFS.

"I was involved in an administrative capacity and then over time became involved in managing most of our data and transformed what we were able to do with it," she says.

Badger has worked to make the most of previously underutilized data for purposes such as policy advocacy, and to improve services to families.

"All of that led me to want to look in a more focused way at how information is shared between different organizations," she said.

Badger said the J. Wallace and Katie Dean Graduate Endowment fellowship offer came at a pivotal moment in her decision-making, though UT was already at the top of her list. She appreciates that the University of Tennessee's MSIS program isn't solely data-focused, but includes components on how organizations communicate, and cross-institutional research. She's in the IMLS-funded Collaborative Analysis Liaison Librarians (CALL) program at SIS, which lets students do advanced research with scientists, and teaches them to build bridges between libraries and scientists. She is eager to learn new skills she can apply to real-world problems in a meaningful way.

"There's a lot of underlying information with potential if people could just figure out how to use it better," she said.

Anna Sturgill

Anna Sturgill has experienced various aspects of information sciences work while earning her undergraduate degree at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, where she majored in English literature and minored in classical civilizations. She interned at the Emory Law Library her sophomore year, and it was there that she found her calling to librarianship.

"I didn't have much experience with information and library sciences but I absolutely loved the internship," she said.

Sturgill particularly enjoys research, and another internship at the Carter Center allowed her to explore that during the summer of her junior year. There, she helped the sole librarian with reference and research questions. Her senior year she worked at her college library as an archive student assistant, where she fielded reference questions, worked with the catalogs and collections, and created library guides.

"I'm leaning towards academic librarianship but I'm excited to take classes and see what else is out there," she said.

She chose UT in part because she is from Tennessee and lives in Clinton, but also because of the J. Wallace and Katie Dean Graduate Endowment fellowship offer, and a graduate teaching assistantship. One thing that really drew her eye to the program was the variety of practicums SIS offers.

"I looked through all the different practicum opportunities at UT, and the different institutions they've partnered with," she said. "I am really excited about all those opportunities."

Courtney Wombles

Courtney Wombles initially wanted to go into medicine when she started her undergraduate education at the University of Tennessee, but that dream changed after a stint as a student reference assistant at Preston Medical Library at UT Medical Center her sophomore year.

"That's where I got passionate about health information literacy and I wanted to shift my focus into medical librarianship and health education," she said.

She then became a Haslam Scholar and College Scholar and designed her own major to study the intersections between art and science, and studied biomedical visualization and health literacy. Along with the J. Wallace and Katie Dean Graduate Fellowship, Wombles also has an assistantship at Preston Medical Library.

"I knew I always wanted to work in education growing up, but I always had a passion for medical sciences. Now I can really combine my interests in education and the medical sciences," she said.

Wombles is a native of Loudon, Tenn., and plans to move to Knoxville in the fall. Even though she'll be near campus, she said the program's distance education was another draw and appreciates the SIS faculty's familiarity with online teaching. She said SIS faculty met with her frequently as she considered her options, and to discuss opportunities such as the fellowship and the assistantship, which also boosted her opinion of the program.

"I was very excited about the fellowship, I didn't expect it at all. I believe someone emailed me and said that it's rare for information sciences students get it, and I think it's great [UT is] contributing to library sciences and information sciences," she said.
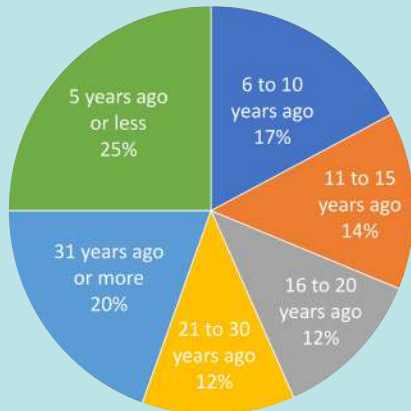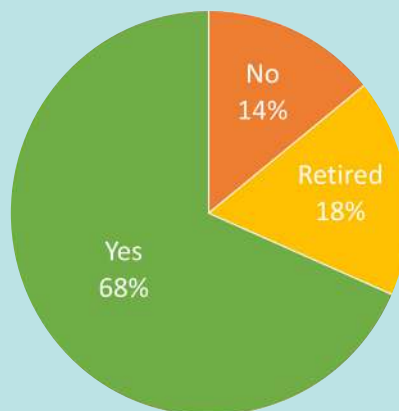
Alumni Survey Results

Last fall, we asked you to complete an anonymous online survey about your experiences since earning your master's degree from SIS. We were overwhelmed that 256 of you responded and were pleased at how positive the results were (well, in truth, we know our alumni are awesome!).
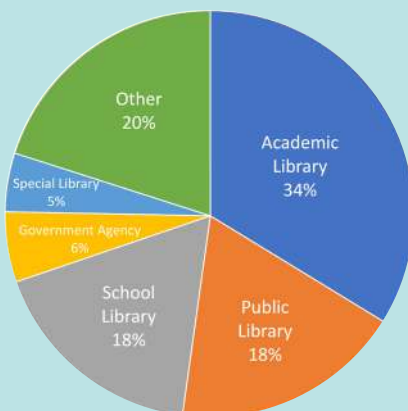
ABOUT YOU

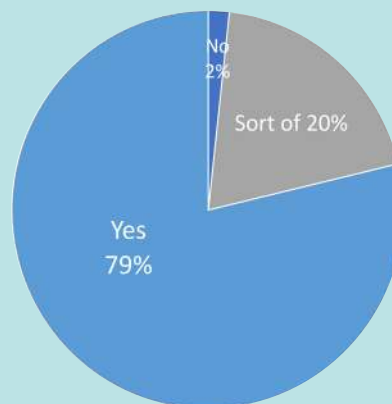### Time since finishing degree

- 6 to 10 years ago 17%
- 11 to 15 years ago 14%
- 16 to 20 years ago 12%
- 21 to 30 years ago 12%
- 31 years ago or more 20%
- 5 years ago or less 25%

Currently employed?

- No 14%
- Retired 18%
- Yes 68%

Type of organization

- Academic Library 34%
- Public Library 18%
- School Library 18%
- Government Agency 6%
- Special Library 5%
- Other 20%

Satisfied with position?

- No 2%
- Sort of 20%
- Yes 79%

Region

89% of you are primarily employed in the Southern region of the United States.

Areas of Service

The most frequent job assignments/functions you reported being responsible for in your position were: Reference and Information Services (48%); Training, Teaching, and Instruction (46%); Collection Development and Acquisitions (37%), Outreach and Engagement (30%) and Administration (29%).

Program Status

63% of respondents started the program as on-campus students.

Salary

44% of respondents reported income betwen $50,001 and $70,000.

How well did your degree prepare you for the following tasks?

Legend:
- Very Well
- Moderately Well
- Somewhat well
- Not well at all

- Understand professional and/or ethical responsibilities
- Work collaboratively with others
- Provide information services to a variety of patrons
- Acquire and/or adopt new skills and tools as needed
- Communicate in written forms
- Acquire new information to keep up with current practices
- Understand technical language in my information practice
- Think critically and/or logically about information problems
- Make a meaningful contribution to society
- Understand and/or address prevalent problems and/or emerging issues
- Evolve with and/or adapt to changes within the field
- Function in multidisciplanary and/or cross-functional teams
- Use contemporary techniques, skills and/or tools
- Communicate in oral forms
- Evaluate services and/or systems
- Manage projects
- Function in culturally and/or ethically diverse environments
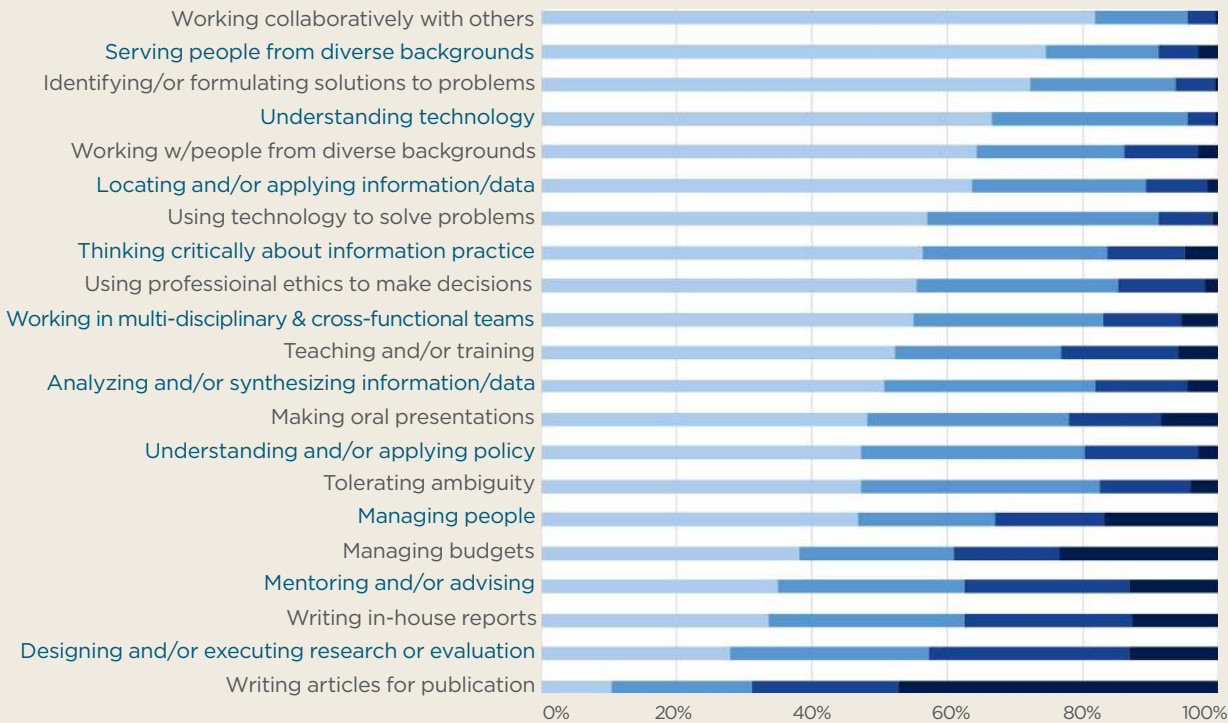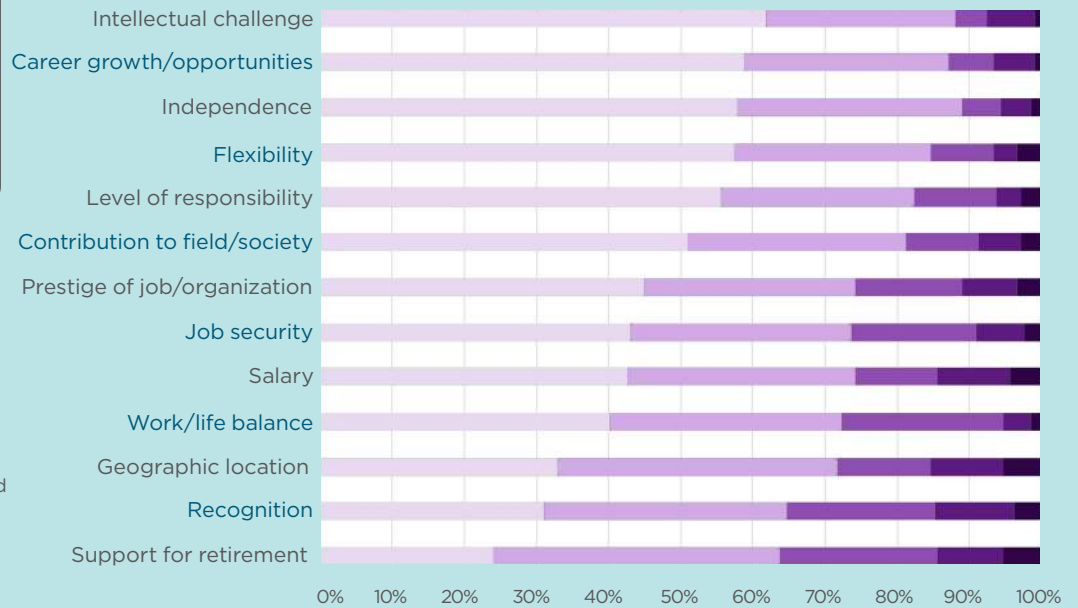- Exercise leadership skills
- Design systems, components, and/or processes to meet desired needs

(chart axis: 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, 100%)

How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your career?

Legend:
- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

Categories (top to bottom):
- Intellectual challenge
- Career growth/opportunities
- Independence
- Flexibility
- Level of responsibility
- Contribution to field/society
- Prestige of job/organization
- Job security
- Salary
- Work/life balance
- Geographic location
- Recognition
- Support for retirement

X-axis: 0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

How important are the following skills & abilities?

Categories (top to bottom):
- Working collaboratively with others
- Serving people from diverse backgrounds
- Identifying/or formulating solutions to problems
- Understanding technology
- Working w/people from diverse backgrounds
- Locating and/or applying information/data
- Using technology to solve problems
- Thinking critically about information practice
- Using professioinal ethics to make decisions
- Working in multi-disciplinary & cross-functional teams
- Teaching and/or training
- Analyzing and/or synthesizing information/data
- Making oral presentations
- Understanding and/or applying policy
- Tolerating ambiguity
- Managing people
- Managing budgets
- Mentoring and/or advising
- Writing in-house reports
- Designing and/or executing research or evaluation
- Writing articles for publication

Legend:
- Very Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

X-axis: 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

OVERALL

The vast majority of you felt your degree prepared you very well or moderately well for your career. A full 60% of you stated you would definitely choose to earn your graduate degree from SIS if you had it to do over again.

Pie chart 1:
- Very well 52%
- Moderately well 33%
- Somewhat well 14%
- Not well at all 1%

Pie chart 2:
- Definitely would 60%
- Probably would 26%
- Not sure 8%
- Probably not 3%
- Definitely not 2%
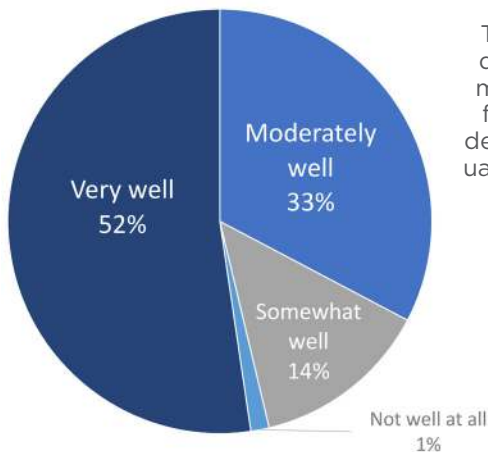
THANK YOU!

Your feedback has been incredibly helpful to us as we continue to evaluate, update, and refine the MSIS program. We welcome your input and ideas at any time of the year.
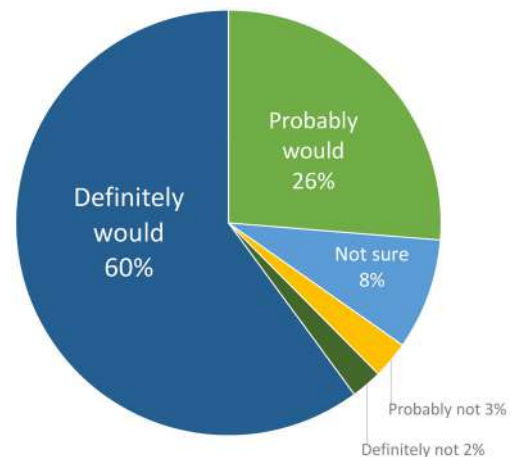
WEATHERING THE STORM

ALUM SAM CRAWFORD ISN'T AFRAID TO DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LIFE, LOVE, AND TO FULFILL HIS DREAMS

Music has long been a driving force for Sam Crawford ('14), but in his pursuit of a career, he has found more than one new passion in his life. It's been, at times, tumultuous, as he searched for the right job, faced literal storms, and now works as a librarian at an academic institution during a pandemic. But throughout it all, his devotion to music, the information sciences, and his husband, have helped him weather the storms and compose a beautiful opus to a life he'd never imagined.

Beginnings

Crawford, a Kingsport, Tenn. native, earned his bachelor's in vocal music education from East Tennessee State University and his master's in music composition and theory from New York University. While at ETSU, he was given a music scholarship for voice and toured various national and international venues, including Germany, France, and Spain, with the choral program. While he loved singing, he felt limited by solo performances and wanted to create something "bigger, or better, with the help of many people's talents and strengths," which led him to pursue composi-

tion. After he earned his master's degree, Crawford was faced with some of the challenges typical of a starving artist.

"I became a composer - quote unquote - then realized that [in] being a composer, there's not a carved-out career path. It's like being an actor, you have to 'make it all yourself' and claw your way through a murky professional landscape," he said. "I didn't have the energy for it, but more importantly, I didn't have the money for it. So I started rethinking, 'where do I really fit into the music world?,' and then I started thinking about how I had always been interested in things like libraries, museums…"

He moved from New York to live with his parents in Tennessee, just outside of Knoxville, and began researching museum and library jobs. It became apparent he'd need yet another degree to work in that environment, and Crawford was pleasantly surprised to discover the master's program at the University of Tennessee School of Information Sciences.

"I realized it wasn't just any school, when I saw what its ranking was nationally," he said, noting he knew a fellow graduate of the ETSU music program who had gone

Above: CalArts students listen to Sam Crawford and his colleague, Marisa Méndez-Brady, during an interactive instruction section.
On opposing page, from right: Sam Crawford with his husband, Ken Furukawa, at the Santa Monica Pier.

through the SIS program who enthusiastically endorsed it. "I trusted her opinion. If she was endorsing the program, then it must be pretty good. Seeing a musician who had taken a similar path as me educationally was another encouraging stamp of approval."

After he graduated in 2014 with his MSIS degree, Crawford worked his way through a variety of interim jobs. He completed a practicum with the Knoxville Museum of Art while earning his degree, and was offered a more permanent position as a visitor services representative. But it wasn't full-time, and he kept looking for the right fit. He even ended up taking a job doing piano restoration, which he found fascinating. All the while, he was still looking for a position that would be the right fit for his skillset.

"This was a period about me keeping an open mind and continually searching for that next big thing, because I knew it would eventually come," he said.

What followed included a summer working as a cataloger/data curator for Information International Associates in Oak Ridge, and then as an interim instructional librarian at the University School of Nashville. It was in Nashville that Crawford leaned into being an instructor, and also where his supervisor introduced him to "The Traveling Librarian," a blog about working abroad.

The Mariana Islands

That blog connected Crawford to an academic librarian position at Northern Marianas College, in Saipan, a part of the Mariana Islands. He was stunned by the beauty of the islands, and enthralled with the idea of living and working outside of the United States. The Mariana Islands comprise a U.S. Territory about 5,000 miles west of California, 1,000 miles south of Japan, and 100 miles north of Guam. While it is heavily influenced by its Asian neighbors, Crawford said most of the inhabitants speak English, American currency is used, and there's a melding of cultures.

Despite the beauty of the islands, living there meant dealing with a shortage of food, occasional days without

Student artwork is featured all over the CalArts campus, including the library, and is one of many things Crawford loves about the school.

running water, and the absence of other basic amenities he previously took for granted.

"I knew I wanted to go somewhere that would be out of the ordinary, for the specific reason that I thought it might teach me something. I wanted to go somewhere that would challenge me, somewhere unfamiliar completely, so I could learn about myself and another part of the world," Crawford said.

The true challenge came when a super typhoon tore through the islands in the fall of 2018, with sustained winds of more than 200 mph battering the area for up to eight hours. Thousands lost their homes, most of Saipan was without water or electricity, and resources became scarce.

One place spared the storm's fury was the library at the college, even though much of the rest of the college was damaged. It became a place where the community's needs could be met. Crawford and other colleagues worked with the college's technology department to salvage all the working computers and set them up in the library for people to use. They ran a generator for power and managed to establish an internet connection that allowed residents to sign up for services and aid. It was a difficult time, but it created a lot of opportunities for Crawford to serve and innovate.

Love & Curiosity

There's another important event that occurred during Crawford's time in Guam: when he was moving to Saipan, he stopped in Japan as part of the trip, and logged into a dating app. That's when he met Ken, who would eventually become his husband. They didn't get to meet at that time, but messaged each other over the next six months before getting a chance to see each other face-to-face.

"Ken, my husband, is actually deaf. And he'd mentioned that in one of the first messages he sent, but of course when you're texting someone, it doesn't come into play. When I met him for the first time, I'd forgotten that he'd told me that," Crawford said.

Crawford, who as a musician has a deep relationship with sound, considered how that would affect their relationship. In the end, the curiosity and open-mindedness that has steered many of his decisions pushed him to keep seeing Ken.

"I have fallen deeper and deeper in love as a person with Ken, not just for his heart, but what he has shown me, something outside of myself. There have been challenges and also joys. We have been through a very hard first year of marriage, we endured this typhoon together and Ken has been going through the immigration process, and he's now a US permanent resident," Crawford said.

That aforementioned curiosity, the attribute that made Crawford want to be an information professional and to live and work in another country, is a product of his upbringing. He credits both of his parents with instilling a thirst to learn more about the world and to venture outside his bubble.

"I was raised in a way where I was always encouraged to respect and be curious about other cultures, and I think that was one of the reasons I developed a love of language," he said. "Both my parents really encouraged my brother and I to be curious and learn as much as you can from as many types of people as possible."

The three-and-a-half years in Saipan certainly expanded Crawford's horizon, but he eventually felt the itch to move on to the next chapter of his life. He left the college knowing he had reinforced the information literacy instruction program there, and worked with faculty to make literacy instruction a larger part of a regular classroom setting.

"I felt like I wrung the job out for what it was worth and I think it was time to move on," he said.

> ## "I always say: Lean into the weirdness, and the opportunities."
> ## - Samuel Crawford

It didn't hurt that his desire to move on coincided with an open position for a performing arts librarian at the California Institute of the Arts, known as CalArts, in Los Angeles.

A New Chapter

Crawford began his new job at CalArts in the fall of 2019. He dove in and learned about the library, and what he could do to better serve the students and faculty there. He looked at the collection to see where there were gaps, and began exploring what was popular and desirable in terms of composers and artists.

"I'm seeing this whole year as a listening year, so it's less about me making big changes right away, and more getting a sense of what the current landscape is," he said in an interview in October 2019.

He spoke of using the instant messaging system "Slack" as a reference desk tool, which allows patrons to message the librarian on call, and how he thoroughly enjoys being so accessible to those who need help.

"It also removes the big imposing desk element and brings students and faculty closer to the librarian in a way, literally, physically removing that big desk," he said.

Another aspect of his job is to conduct outreach, and be an advocate for the library. Crawford was settling into this new role, and launching some larger scale projects, at the beginning of 2020. He was working on a redesign of the library's music-listening area, including a new furniture set-up, and new technology such as a CD burning station for LPs.

"All of that came to a halt March 11. After taking a personal day, I came back to work and the entire tone of the school had changed. Everyone was in rapid-fire motion to put systems in place...then three days later, we were

Left: The library at CalArts features these white, columnar structures lining the stacks, which are "pistons" that underpin and control CalArts' main performance space, directly above: the Walt Disney Modular Theater. The theater's variable architecture allows for an unlimited range of stage and seating configurations, so the pistons have been an element of the library's design since its early days.
Below: Music listening equipment/tech in the CalArts Music Listening Area – and a sliver of its 17,000-large LP collection in the background.

working from home," he said, referring to changes made due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the changes brought opportunity for Crawford to flex his creativity in order to continue meeting the needs of stakeholders. He and his colleagues began centralizing the library-centric information into one place, and translating everything to an online environment – every reference to the library's physical space was removed from the website.

Additionally, the librarians updated nine LibGuides, and the views on those increased from 500 per semester to 3,000 in a few weeks. They also maintained digital reference requests with an eChat platform that allows anyone to ask questions between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Some of the references are handled through chat or email, but video chat was also employed. This includes online video instruction sessions the librarians led in classrooms to explain the library's online resources.

"Obviously our community is leaning on this resource, among others, much more heavily," he said.

When Crawford was interviewed pre-pandemic, he spoke of the wonder of going into a grocery store in Los Angeles and being surrounded by a never-ending selection of food – something he had missed during his time in Saipan. So the irony that food availability had decreased, and shop-

ping for basic necessities had to be strategized, was not lost on him.

"I guess it's been really interesting psychologically for me working through this. I think that sometimes my experiences in Saipan, especially with the typhoon that hit us, better prepared me for crisis," he said. "It's been interesting to consider it from both sides. That I've sort of been through a work-related crisis before and that I can't believe this is happening again. Overall I'm doing fine, I'm lucky to have a roof over my head, food, and a job. And for all of those, I'm incredibly grateful."

While there is still much uncertainty at CalArts, as with much of the world, Crawford is focused on what he can do for the library and those who use it. He's reaching out to other music librarians, and they're sharing resources when they can – something that is linking together people who otherwise might not have connected.

While he may be tired and worried behind the scenes, Crawford said he makes a point of staying positive for others, which in turn helps him maintain a bright outlook. While the circumstances are particularly unusual, his approach to the unknown has remained consistent over the years: "I always say: Lean into the weirdness, and the opportunities." •

CELEBRATING SIS HONORS

CCI Awards

CCI 2020 Big Orange Award
Coordinator of Student Services
Tanya Arnold

CCI 2020 Volunteer Spirit Award
Administrative Specialist II
Pamela Durban

CCI Graduate Student Teaching Award
PhD Student and SIS GTA Kevin Mallary

CCI Faculty Teaching Award
Associate Professor Devendra Potnis

CCI Part-Time Lecturer Award
Lecturer Scot Smith

**CCI Non-Tenure Track Faculty
Service/Outreach Award**
Clinical Associate Professor
Cindy Welch

SIS Awards

Gary Purcell Award
Sarah Gonzalez

**CCI Outstanding Information Sciences
Graduate Award**
Lisa Curtin

Outstanding Service Award
Kristen McBee

Academic Achievement Award
Megg Doolin

Academic Achievement Award
Albert Salatka

Best Thesis
Scott Shumate

Best Paper Award
Lisa Curtin

Best Project Award
Leah Cannon & Hannah Gunderman

Best Project Award
Hannah Gunderman, Erin Elizabeth
Whitaker, Katie Hill, Sarah Holt, Nathan
Worthington, Ronnie Green

**Gloria and Dave Sharrar Faculty
Research Fund Award**
Associate Professor Devendra Potnis

**SIS Bonnie Carroll and Roy Cooper
Faculty Enrichment Award**
Associate Professor Awa Zhu

ALISE & ALA

AWARDS
ALISE Excellence in Teaching Award
Associate Professor Rachel Fleming-May

Doctoral Student ALISE Grant
Joseph Winberry

APPOINTMENTS
ALISE representative, ALA Committee for Accreditation
SIS Professor and Director Diane Kelly

Member, ALA Committee for Accreditation
SIS alum and CCI Board of Visitors member Shali Zhang ('88)

SPECTRUM SCHOLAR

MSIS student Kay P Maye was awarded the 2020 Spectrum Scholarship from the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services. The scholarship provides him with funding as well as an opportunity to attend a summer leadership institute with other Spectrum Scholars. Maye said he's very excited and looks forward to meeting, "more people who were interested in library science who look like me."

Since starting at SIS in the fall, he's become passionate about data and research and plans to start researching why the information sciences workforce is not more diverse, and how that can be remedied. As a former high school English teacher, Maye initially thought he'd be a school or public librarian, but his newly developed interests are pulling him towards academic librarianship, data management, and research management.

"I know that no matter what I do with this degree, I'll be fulfilled," he said.

For more information about our graduates and SIS award winners, go to our online graduation site: sis.utk.edu/hooding2020. Username "circlepark" and password "SmokeyRules!"

18 2020

FACULTY NEWS

a selection of SIS faculty achievements

SUZIE ALLARD, CHANCELLOR'S PROFESSOR

Allard developed and led the SCI Summit-DC: Scientific Cyberinfrastructure in 2019. She completed the final year of NSF funding for DataOne. She continues work in disinformation, include leading a cohort of scholars, and as co-principal investigator on an external disinformation project with the Office of Naval Research.

DANIA BILAL, PROFESSOR

Bilal was appointed to the Advisory Board of the International Conference on Education, Research, and Innovation (ICERI), and presented a paper at ICERI 2019 conference in Spain. She wrapped up three years of service as the outgoing ASIST Director-at-Large in 2019.

WADE BISHOP, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Bishop, with colleagues Allard and Tenopir, welcomed eight new students for Collaborative Analysis Liaison Librarians IMLS project's second cohort. With Hank and students, he received ASIS&T Best Long Paper at the 2019 Annual Meeting and published other articles in Portal and Data Science Journal.

BRIAN DOBRESKI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Dobreski enjoyed his first year at SIS. He has been engaged in several research projects with SIS students, and will present a paper co-authored with MSIS student Cassidy Thompson at this year's ASIS&T conference.

RACHEL FLEMING-MAY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Fleming-May completed another successful year as SIS director of graduate studies overseeing one of the largest enrollment growths on record. As chair of the SIS Master's Program Committee she guided several significant curriculum changes, including a revision to the required courses and the creation of several new courses and pathways.

CAROLYN HANK, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Hank, Bishop and students received a best paper award at ASIS&T. Hank introduced a new core course. When the University moved classes online, she held workshops and consultations for colleagues who transitioned to online teaching. She led Diversity, Equity & Inclusion efforts at SIS.

DEVENDRA POTNIS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Potnis researched: innovations for serving disabled academic library patrons; gatekeeping and message forwarding on social media; social innovations in public libraries; and increasing mobile, financial, and information literacy of over 200 million poor in India. He is chair-elect for SIG-III, ASIS&T.

VANDANA SINGH, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Singh was showcased by the National Center for Institutional Diversity. She served a third consecutive year on the organizing committee for the Open Source Track at the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing, and she continues publishing research on women of open source software.

CAROL TENOPIR, CHANCELLOR'S PROFESSOR

Tenopir has been finishing up papers for several grants, including studies of research data management for NSF DataOne, how engineers use scholarly information for the Engineering Information Foundation, and international scholarly reading from her Fulbright in Finland. She conducted a webinar for grant tips for mid-career ischool women faculty.

PEILING WANG, PROFESSOR

Wang published two open access articles in Scientometrics. One was focused on F1000Faculty expert recommended research publications and was co-authored with an SIS student Joshua Williams. Another was focused on promoting transparency in peer review and was a collaboration with Dietmar Wolfram (UWM) and Adam Hembree (SIS student).

CINDY WELCH, CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Welch was appointed a UT Tennessee Teaching & Learning Innovation (TLI) Faculty Innovator, and in this role contributed to a handbook of best practices for inclusive online teaching, co-designed a training for faculty new to distance learning for nontraditional students, and created short audio teaching tips.

XIAOHUA (AWA) ZHU, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Zhu has been conducting research on ownership rights of digital media content, open government data, access to justice, and academic library public relations. She will take a professional development leave in the fall of 2020 and complete several projects in those areas.

Putting the Volunteer in

![TLA - TENNESSEE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION]

SIS Alumni Share Why TLA Involvement Makes an Impact

Erika Long ('16)

Current TLA role: President
Past TLA roles: School Library Committee chair, TLA president-elect
Current job: School Librarian at Thurgood Marshall Middle School
Location: Antioch

"Initially, my goal in becoming a member was to put myself in a situation where I could network and learn from other librarians, and that meant people outside of school librarianship. I'm preparing my students for life, not to just to make it through my school or whatever grade they're in. I want them to be able to navigate a library in any realm, whether that be school, academic, or public. It's extremely beneficial to have relationships with people in other types of libraries so I know what their patrons or students might need in terms of skills – either because they didn't have them before, or maybe just the landscape is changing. The goal in being a part of TLA is to always listen, but also to bring a voice. Because hopefully other librarians are doing the same thing, and that can benefit patrons, as well."

Jodie Gambill ('07)

Current TLA role: Co-web manager
Current Job: Librarian for Digital Projects, Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries, Vanderbilt University
Location: Nashville

"I've been involved in TLA since 2008, shortly after graduating from UTK-SIS. It was important to me to be a part of an organization that gives back to our profession. I've participated in countless committees, the Board of Directors, conferences, and more. I've met and worked with some of the most amazing library workers in our state through TLA! These colleagues really care about our libraries and our users, and it's just great to be connected with them. TLA has also given me very valuable experience in association work which has allowed me to pursue committee and leadership opportunities at the national level. It's so easy to get involved in TLA, and I would recommend it to everyone working in Tennessee libraries!"

Courtney Fuson ('03)

Current TLA Role: Co-web manager
Current job: Asset Management Librarian, Belmont University
Location: Nashville

"It's a little more approachable to be part of TLA because the conferences are smaller than national ones, and you have a chance to meet people who would put you on committees, and express your interest in volunteering and have it get to the right ears. I graduated from SIS in December 2003, and I have been a member of TLA pretty much ever since then. I think it's important because it's a good way to meet other folks who are doing library work here in Tennessee, and to talk to them. ALA and other organizations, and Twitter and Facebook, are great for talking to other librarians around the country, but sometimes there are local practices or feelings that aren't reflected by a librarian in another state."

Dwight Hunter ('16)

Current TLA role: Bylaws and Procedure Committee Chair; Membership Division Representative for the Advisory Council
Current Job: Assistant Librarian, Chattanooga State Community College
Location: Chattanooga

"One thing about TLA is, it covers a lot of different libraries. I'm academic, but there's also public, school, special libraries, and of course trying to connect all those different library professions together is important to do. For me, it's been a great learning experience. I joined TLA when I was a student at UT, which was not that long ago...and I'm a little biased but I think every SIS student should take advantage of that. You get involved in roundtables, and on the ALA level and Tennessee level you get to network with people, and you can't put a price on that. At SIS, you don't get to see your classmates, you hear their voices. But when you go to TLA conferences and SIS has those gatherings, you can meet people and say hey, I recognize your voice, and it makes personal contact, you've been in class together and struggled together."

Jennifer Sharp ('13)

Current TLA role: Committee member
Past roles in TLA: Liaison between TLA and Tennessee Association of School Librarians (TASL)
Current job: School Librarian at John Overton High School, Metro Nashville Public Schools
Location: Nashville

"Every conference I've been to, whether it's state or national, TLA or TASL, there's just such a spirit of collaboration and teamwork and that we're all in this together. You're professional organization can speak for you, advocate for you, and impact your everyday life at your job and in your career. I think having a seat at that table is so important and empowering. Hopefully we're encouraging people to be lifelong library users, from school library to academic, or to their public library. Just so much of what we do is connected, and tied to the same principles and goals."

SIS is proud of all its alumni who have contributed to the greater good by participating in TLA and other professional organizations!

SIS@ a glance

We want to know what you're up to! Make sure you update your information in our Alumni Directory at sis.utk.edu/alumni-update.

If you have a great alumni story to share, contact communications specialist Hillary Tune at htune1@utk.edu.

If you want to read more about the people and events featured here, visit our website at sis.utk.edu.

1.

Inaugural CALL Cohort

FEATURED ALUMNI

2.

3.

4.

6.

7.

5.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

1. The first cohort of the Collaborative Analysis Librarians Liaison project, fall 2019. Back from left: Associate Professor Wade Bishop, Chancellor's Professor Carol Tenopir, Interim Assistant Director of CICS Amy Forrester, Chancellor's Professor Suzie Allard; UT Librarian Peter Fernandez. Front row from left, MSIS students: Shafer Powell, Ashley Orehek, Erika Fitzpatrick, and Hannah Armendarez **2.** Jess Newman ('17) presents at the 2020 Empirical Librarians Conference. **3.** Kenneth Wise ('89) leads the Great Smoky Mountains Regional Project at the UT Libraries' special collections. **4.** Brooke Olson's ('19) SIS practicum experience led to a job as an instructional librarian at South College in Nashville **5.** An SIS practicum with USGS led to more opportunities for recent grad Amanda Liford ('19). **6.** Alexa Carter champions science and student success as a librarian at North Carolina State University. **7.** Seattle Public Library, led by SIS Alum Marcellus Turner, was awarded the 2020 Gale/Library Journal Library of the Year Award. **8.** Kristy Cunningham shared about being a non-traditional student with an established career and an MBA. **9.** Julia Proctor and Drew Edwards at an SIS-sponsored speaker presentation. **10.** Jessica Giles created a public map to track people's movements during the pandemic. **11.** Young Adult author, and lawyer, Jeff Zentner started at SIS in 2019. **12.** Yasmin Stoss is combining her tech skills with information sciences to provide better access to information. **13.** Dylan Miller helped sponsor her library's first-ever Pride event. **14.** USMC veteran Will Biggs is fulfilling his dreams of becoming a librarian and a Vol. **15.** Rachael Murphy conducted a "kindness audit" as part of an assistantship at UT Hodges Library.

T SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

SIS ALUMNI WEBINAR SERIES

Coming soon! Stay tuned for updates on our online events.

Learn more at sis.utk.edu/alumweb