



School of Information and Library Science

Currently ranked number one in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science (SILS) consistently takes a leadership role in today's ever-changing information and library science landscape. After 78 years, SILS continues to tap "the vast reservoir of human knowledge."

Mission

We are here to conduct inquiry devoted to information generation and use to prepare reflective, adaptive information professionals for action in the present and the future, and to transfer to them an uncompromising advocacy for knowledge . . .

SILS seeks to advance the practice of librarianship and information science, to prepare students for careers in the field of information and library science, and to make significant contributions to the study of information. Faculty members further these goals by teaching and advisory work; by research and scholarly publishing; and by service to the school, the university, the state and the professional community.

SILS guides the activities of five principal programs: (1) the instruction of undergraduate students through a major in information science and a minor in information systems, (2) the preparation of master's students for professional information work and library service, (3) the preparation of doctoral students for research and more advanced positions, (4) the opportunity for information and library professionals to engage in individually tailored continuing education, and (5) the generation of new knowledge and new understanding about the use of information and libraries in society through a strong research and publication program.

Setting

The School of Information and Library Science is located within a distinguished university and is supported by the University's resources, which enrich its programs. The University is also a part of the Research Triangle community that includes two other major research universities (Duke University and North Carolina State University) and the research facilities of a number of major corporations located in nearby Research Triangle Park. SILS draws on these resources for internships and field work for additional course provision, the use of collections and facilities, employment opportunities, and expert lecturers and advisers.

Located on the central campus quad, Manning Hall houses the classrooms, offices, computing laboratory and the library of the school. SILS shares the building with the Howard W. Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, which provides access to census data through its statistical consulting services and other demographic sources. Manning Hall is also the home of ibiblio.org, a collaboration of the Center for the Public Domain and UNC at Chapel Hill, which is a conservancy of free information, including software, music, literature, art, history, science, politics and cultural studies.

Accreditation

The American Library Association (ALA) accredits both the master of science in library science degree and the master of science in information science degree. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredits the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Historical Perspective

Although a student could not receive a degree in library science until almost three decades later, library education really began at UNC at Chapel Hill as early as 1904 when Dr. Louis Round Wilson began offering summer school classes.

In 1929, just as the new library building was finished on the UNC campus, Wilson wrote an article on the “Library in Modern Education.” In that article, he said: As part of the program of social welfare now being worked out at Chapel Hill, a library school is needed, where librarians, like lawyers and doctors and teachers, may secure expert professional training. With its magnificent new building as a laboratory for the school, such an institution would not only be in harmony with the program on which the University has embarked, it would offer opportunity through the sending out of trained librarians for the South to tap the vast reservoir of human knowledge.

The School of Library Science opened at Chapel Hill in the fall of 1931, with a class of 37 students and five faculty members, including Dr. Wilson. The Carnegie Corporation offered a grant of \$100,000 to enable the school to operate for three years and make permanent its conditional accreditation from the American Library Association. When it became apparent in 1987 that the study of information use and management was of central importance to society, the faculty of the School of Library Science voted to change the program and the name of the school to include Information Science. The faculty members, already engaged in the research of this emerging discipline, decided that adding this specialized track to the program would complement the school’s focus on librarianship by broadening it to the study of general problems of information management. Currently, approximately 45 percent of the school’s student population is studying information science, and that number continues to grow.

Since its beginning, the school has sent out nearly 4,500 trained information specialists and librarians. Graduates are employed throughout the nation and the world. Through the strong leadership of its deans and the great dedication shown by its faculty and staff over the years, the school stands on a solid foundation that is rooted in a rich past and aimed toward a bright future. In the years since its beginning, the school has changed a great deal, grown in its number of students and faculty, and instituted new programs and degrees. Throughout, its development has been guided by the ideals of excellence that are the tradition of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

New challenges face information and library science education, and UNC at Chapel Hill’s School of Information and Library Science is prepared to continue to meet these challenges. The school is more than the students and the faculty who are here at any one time; it encompasses all the devoted alumni and friends who support it.

Louis Round Wilson’s goal of sending out trained librarians “to tap the vast reservoir of human knowledge” has been and continues to be achieved through the accomplishments of its past, present and future information and library science graduates.

For more information about the School of Information and Library Science, please contact us at 919.962.8366 or visit our Web site at: <http://sils.unc.edu>