

## Archives and Records Management Education Goes eGlobal

Today's archivists and records managers are faced with a variety of challenges, including managing records created using emerging technologies and records residing in more than one country. Improper records management can result in monetary fines, administrative sanctions, and costly litigation for the enterprise. Therefore, it is imperative that they understand the basics of good records management, including the importance of audits and compliance checks, as well as best practices, with specific attention to managing electronic records such as e-mail, shared computer drives, websites, text messages and social media tools.

While many archivists and records managers recognize the need for further education to prepare them to meet these challenges, busy work schedules and family commitments present barriers. In response, the San Jose School of Library and Information Science launched a **fully online** Master of Archives and Records Administration (MARA) degree program two years ago. Students can live anywhere as they complete their degree in less than three years using a variety of sophisticated distance learning tools, including web conferencing, wikis, blogs, twitter, and 3D immersive learning environments.

One of the benefits of a fully online program is the flexibility provided to students. MARA students can access course materials asynchronously, from any location, at any time, through the School's learning management system. They can also meet in real-time to talk to professors and other students using web conferencing tools. All incoming students complete a brief emerging technology course, which prepares them for the online learning environment.

### Focused Professional Cohort

MARA students participate in a cohort model, studying with a small group of peers who share the learning journey together. Typically cohort members are individuals who bring a solid background in archives or records management and who want to expand their knowledge and skills while enhancing their career opportunities.

For example, Brande Gex is a member of the MARA program's first cohort. She works for a City Attorney's office, where new federal regulations impact how the office electronically stores records that must be produced during litigation. Her MARA coursework not only helped her respond to these new federal regulations, but has already paid off in a promotion, providing Gex with the knowledge she needed to successfully compete for an open position as a senior legal analyst. She now supervises seven individuals and helps the City Attorney's office develop new records management procedures.

Jesse Wilkins, a former software developer, is now a principal consultant for Access Sciences Corporation, based in Denver. Wilkins serves on the ARMA International board of directors, and he recently earned his Certified Records Manager accreditation from the Institute of Certified

Records Managers. After earning his MARA degree, he intends to teach records management courses.

Deborah Bahn is a public records archivist with the Washington State Archives. She is responsible for managing electronic records transfers from state and local government agencies. She also provides online reference services through the State's digital archives website, which provides online access to more than 80 million digitized documents. Bahn played a significant part in expanding the scope and depth of resources available through the website, and is now adding more records from city and state agencies, including the governor's office.

### **Global Connections with Scholars and Experts in the Field**

MARA students receive instruction and mentoring from faculty and professionals who are award-winning scholars and leaders in their academic and professional communities – and who live around the globe, bringing an international perspective on emerging trends in the field.

Dr. Gillian Oliver lives in New Zealand, where she also teaches archives and records management courses for the School of Information Management at Victoria University. She is actively involved in digital preservation projects in Europe and New Zealand. She introduces students to resources available outside North America and explores the different ways that people from various cultures interact with records.

In addition to MARA faculty, guest lecturers interact with MARA students using the School's web conferencing platform. One of the first guest presenters was Barbara Reed, speaking on the topic of the *Records Continuum* from her home office in Australia. And one of the most recent speakers was Gina Jones from the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, describing how political websites, including social media sites, are captured and archived.

### **Enrollment Open for Third MARA Cohort**

Two cohorts of MARA students are pursuing their degrees. Applications are now being accepted for the third cohort, scheduled to begin classes in August 2010. The deadline to apply is March 30.

Additional information about the MARA program, as well as recorded presentations from MARA guest lecturers, can be found at <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/mara/>. Individuals interested in applying for the MARA program can also contact Dr. Patricia Franks, MARA Program Coordinator, at [pfranks@slis.sjsu.edu](mailto:pfranks@slis.sjsu.edu).

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Patricia C. Franks, Ph.D., CRM, has a doctorate in Organization and Management with an e-business emphasis. Dr. Franks is a member of ARMA International's Standards Development Committee, and she has served on various committees and task forces for both ARMA and AIIM. She is an Associate Professor and MARA program coordinator for the School of Library and Information Science at San Jose State University and an independent consultant in records and information management and business process analysis.