

DIRECTORS REPORT TO SCHOOL COUNCIL
SUBMITTED BY SANDRA TOZE AND VIVIAN HOWARD
May 2021

Overview

We would like to begin with a thank you to all within our School of Information Management community. The 2020/2021 Academic year required us to adapt, change, and be flexible in terms of everything we do, from teaching, through research, service, and outreach to our communities. Through the waves of Covid we continued with our key programming, our IM Public Lectures, and our research. We have continued to work with partners within the Faculty of Management, and the University to work through structure options for the SIM and our programs to grow and thrive. These conversations are ongoing, and we look forward to sharing options and plans with all over the next six months. We have exciting human resource updates to share, and awards to our students, staff, and faculty to celebrate.

Program Updates and Changes

Our main priority was to focus on the transition of our courses to online, and to ensure all students had the best possible online experience. Within this context, we did continue to review, expand, and strengthen our Graduate degrees and our courses, our Major within the Bachelor of Management degree, and we are currently proceeding with the first phase of a proposal for a PhD in Information.

MI Program

Our MI degree has been consistently designed and structured to provide a versatile and broad education, giving students the knowledge and skills to work in many sectors and organization. To facilitate those students who want a more specialized learning experience, we launched a suite of six [Certificates](#) this fall, allowing students to concentrate in the following areas: Librarianship; Librarianship: Youth & Children's Services; Archives; User-Centred Design; Information Management & Policy; Data Management. Each certificate requires completion of three elective courses (9 Credits). During their degree, MI students can choose to complete up to two Certificates. We are excited to note that this convocation we will have the 8 students who will be awarded the Archives Certificate, 5 Data Management, 2 Information Management & Policy, 12 Librarianship, 7 Librarianship: Youth & Children's Services, and 1 User Centred Design. While these are currently only open to MI students, we are investigating options for post-graduate certificates as well.

We are embarking on a new curriculum mapping initiative for all courses in the MI program this summer. The result will be an open dataset with a simple web interface which will be a useful tool for students in selecting courses and for faculty/administration in making strategic decisions about new course development and course evaluation. This initiative is being led by P. Mongeon.

MIM Program

As noted last year, and highlighted in our MIM report, L. Spiteri led a review of our MIM program, and has drafted a new set of competencies, a new outline of core courses, and a new outline of elective courses. COVID delayed the timeline on moving this forward. We are in currently the process of reviewing these changes in the context of SIM's overall goals and will be moving forward with changes in the next year.

Bachelor of Management

SIM Faculty are now responsible for teaching 18% of the courses in the Bachelor of Management Program. This year we launched the Data Analytics and Applied Research (MGMT 3001). There are currently 17 students enrolled in our Major and 10 in our Certificate in Managing Data and Information. There are 6 students doing both.

Concept Paper for a PhD in Information

This past year, SIM has begun the process of launching a PhD in Information, by creating a Concept Paper. In doing this we are recognizing that the study of Information is concerned with the discovery, management, organization, analysis, representation, and use of data, information, and knowledge. We feel that a PhD in Information will add a unique and important perspective to the research output of Dalhousie University. As a meta-discipline, Information cuts across traditional disciplines, and connects the University's five information clusters: Sustainable Ocean; Healthy People, Healthy Communities, Healthy Populations; Clean Tech, Energy, the Environment; Culture, Society and Community Development; and Food Security. The School of Information Management (SIM), for example, is playing a key role in Dalhousie's Sustainable Oceans research cluster, working to ensure that ocean data distributed across many varied systems is findable and usable. This involves leveraging information and data systems, as well as examining and changing how people work together to share and use data. Research conducted through a PhD in Information would explore how information, data, access to quality information and data, and information services can help provide innovative solutions within all the key Research Clusters. Furthermore, there is no University within the Atlantic region that provides a PhD focused on the field of Information.

School Council approved our Concept Paper this spring, and it was approved by Faculty Council in April. We have the Provost's approval, and the Concept Paper will be discussed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies Academic Programs and Curriculum Committee next week. Once approval is received, we will begin the full proposal. SIM is very excited about this new initiative and feels it will add significantly to the intellectual output of SIM and Dalhousie.

Awards and Highlights since the Directors Report last May include:

- Rachel Moylan was awarded the 2020 Stephanie Downs Memorial Award
- Dr. Philippe Mongeon joined SIM as Assistant Professor in July 2020
- Alison Brown (MLIS '17) was appointed as the Faculty of Management Research Ethics Officer
- Katie Kehoe (MLIS '21) was awarded the 2020 Margaret Williams Trust Fund Award
- Samantha Adema (MLIS '19) was appointed Dalhousie's Indigenous Services Librarian
- Dr. Mike Smit is PI on a successful SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis grant application. This project is entitled "Individual Perspectives on Data Sharing: Human Factors Impacting the Digital Economy"
- Siobhan Wiggins was chosen as the 2020 recipient of the Dalhousie-Horrocks National Leadership Fund
- Dr. Philippe Mongeon and Dr. Colin Conrad were awarded Dean's Collaborative Grants for the following projects: *The mental health crisis in academia: tracking mental health signals from academics' tweets* – Philippe Mongeon (SIM), Anika Cloutier (Rowe School of Business) and Colin Conrad (SIM) and *Muzzled no more? Perceptions of Canadian environmental scientists' abilities to communicate and conduct research without interference* – Alana Westwood (SRES) and Philippe Mongeon (SIM)

- Dr. S. Toze is on Academic Leave for the 2021 calendar year. Dr. Vivian Howard is Acting Director, and Dr. Keith Lawson was appointed as Associate Director
- Dr. Gene Anne Joseph was chosen to give the 2021 Dalhousie-Horrocks National Leadership Lecture: Reflections of a First Nations librarian from the 1970s to the present
- Dr. Louise Spiteri was appointed to the Association for Library and Information Science (ALISE) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Taskforce
- SIM students hosted their annual conference, Information Without Borders, virtually on February 8 and 9. The theme was Information as Power and keynote speakers included Dr. Charmaine Nelson (NSCAD University) and Dr. Heidi Julien (University at Buffalo)
- Janet Music was the recipient of the FoM 2020 - Impact award for supporting students: Awarded to a staff member who demonstrates excellence and professionalism, actively pursuing opportunities to expand knowledge and skills in the field of student service.
- Dr. Mike Smit was promoted to Full Professor
- Jennifer Grek Martin (SIM lecturer and alumni) has received a Faculty of Management Award for Facilitating Excellence in Student Learning in Exceptional Times
- Dr. Louise Spiteri has been elected Interim Chair of Dalhousie Senate for 2021-22
- SIM will be announcing our first Professional in Residence (PIR) soon. We were overwhelmed with the applications for the position and look forward to launching this initiative next year.
- MIM student Jason Swinamer has won a national competition sponsored by the Canadian Evaluation Society Education Fund (part of the Canadian Evaluation Society). He is the first Dalhousie student to win this competition. Jason won for his paper entitled "Inclusion and Diversity in Evaluation Design" (MGMT 5006: Program Evaluation).

IM Public Lecture Series - 2020-2021 Lectures

FALL 2020

- Vulnerabilities exposed and the opportunity to respond: Reflections on public libraries in the time of COVID-19 (Åsa Kachan)
- Killer Info: Big Data, the Fallacy of Homicide Stats, and Disrupting the Murder Industry (Dr. Michael Arntfield)

WINTER 2021

- Dalhousie-Horrocks National Leadership Lecture: Reflections of a First Nations librarian from the 1970s to the present (Dr. Gene Anne Joseph)
- On the Never-Ending Serial Crisis and the Need to Re-Think Scholarly Publishing (Dr. Philippe Mongeon)

Below is a snapshot of our progress toward our **Strategic Goals**.

1. Grow Programs and Advance Information Management

1.1 Achieve Enrolment Targets in All programs

- Enrolment in our MLIS/MI remained steady for the 20/21 academic year.
- Early statistics for the MI program 2021/22 are looking strong, despite Covid.
- MIM statistics remain steady but underperforming. Consideration of the program review and recruitment and marketing will be a priority for next year.
- SIM continues to exceed its target of having of 3-4 Interdisciplinary PhD students supervised through SIM Faculty.

- We are excited by the BMgmt students enrolling in our Major and Certificate.

1.2 Explore Options for new IM credit offerings

- SIM launched a Certificate related to Public Management for Environmental Readiness this past year
- SIM is continuing to work with the Master of Digital Innovation (MDI) to offer courses within this program, and to create a major around data.
- SIM continues to work with Computer Science, and the Rowe School of Business to examine a Digital Foundation Year, and other combined options.
- SIM is exploring a university-wide Minor in Digital Literacy/Digital Citizenship at the undergraduate level.

1.3 Create and Deliver Non-Credit Revenue Generating Programs

- Given the shift to online teaching, SIM is working to investigate options to offer modules from courses for professional development, and to consider how we can bridge non-traditional students into our degree
- SIM along with FoM is exploring options for Micro-credentialing.

1.4 Advance Information Management Education

- SIM is moving forward with a Concept Paper, and then a full proposal for a PhD Program in Information
- SIM is exploring how we can use our online course material to offer professional development courses and/or certificates
- SIM as noted, has had good uptake to our Major and Certificate in the Bachelor of Management Program.

1.5 Increase Scholarship Funding

- **SIM launched the Promise Scholar Program** in 2021 to align with Dalhousie's commitment to admit, engage, support, and graduate a more diverse student body, with attention to enhancing access and success of historically underrepresented students and especially Black and Indigenous Students.
 - Promise Scholar program for Black and Indigenous students: The Promise Scholar program for a student in the Master of Information (MI) program provides students with a \$1,000 scholarship.
 - Our promise to support your potential: In addition to financial support, our advisors will provide academic and career support, including assistance in finding paid work during the program should you choose and career mentors to support your long-term career aspirations.
 - Criteria: The sole awarding criteria for the Promise Scholar will be an Indigenous or Black Canadian student, with priority given to Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian students.
- The **Diversifying Libraries Award** was launched in 2021 to align with Nova Scotia Library Association's commitment to action toward racial justice. In offering the scholarship, we hope to contribute to the diversification of the library field within Nova Scotia through supporting access and success of students who are Black, Indigenous, or People of Colour. The Diversifying Libraries Award provides one incoming student in the Master of Information program at Dalhousie University or the Library and Information Technology at Nova Scotia Community College with:

- an entrance scholarship, amount to be determined annually (minimum, \$500; in 2021, the amount is \$1000)
- an award certificate
- one-year NSLA membership
- one-year NSLA conference registration
- Criteria: The sole awarding criteria for the Diversifying Libraries Award will be self-identification as an incoming student who is Indigenous, Black or a Person of Colour, with priority given to Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian students.

2. Strengthen Research Impact

2.1 Increase Research Capacity

- Increase in numbers of SIM Faculty supervising PhD students
- Increased numbers of MI students choosing the Thesis option

2.2 Increase Scholarly Output and Impact

- SIM Faculty are continuing to publish their research across a broad range of scholarly journals to ensure our research is broadly disseminated
- SIM Faculty continue to work with a range of information and data management associations
Reading Course descriptions have been changed to highlight this as a channel for publications
- There has been an increase in the number of MI students choosing the Thesis Option, and who presented their work-in-progress at our SIM Research Day
- This year SIM's Research Day also included a MIM student, as well as SIM Alumni presentations. We plan to continue this trend.

3. Engage with Community

3.1 Broaden Work Experience Opportunities for Students

- As per the Practicum report, SIM is working to expand opportunities for students
- We have been actively promoting our students' skills within Dalhousie, which has resulted in a number of new research assistantships

3.2 Increase our Community Engagement

- SIM faculty participated in the FoM-led [Reimagine Nova Scotia](#) – the Learn and Work report.
- SIM continues to work with our library, archives, and museum communities locally and nationally
- SIM is working with ARMA to connect with regional branches
- S. Toze is meeting with Social Work and Planning to discuss ways our programs can work together.

4. Increase Diversity and Inclusion

4.1 Increase the Diversity of Prospective Students

- New Scholarships announced above

4.2 Increase Diversity of Faculty and Staff

- EDI is embedded in all our hiring processes and is a hiring priority

4.3 Embed Diversity and Inclusion Across the Curricula

- To assist with embedding EDI across our curriculum, a SIM student was hired to work with all SIM faculty in the 2020/21 year, to update course content.
- SIM continues to work with Library and Information Programs across Canada to create competencies related to Traditional Knowledge
- Dr. Louise Spiteri has been appointed to the Association for Library and Information Science (ALISE) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Taskforce
- SIMSA-organized Brown Bag Lunch series included a presentation by Shauntee Burns Simpson, President of the Black Caucus of the American Library Association