<u>Complete Advisory Board Focus Group Responses</u>

The items listed below are based on ongoing process to collect valuable feedback from members of our Alumni, Employer and Community Advisory Board on needed skills, strengths and weaknesses of new employees that we can use to inform our systematic planning and guide the continuing growth and future directions of the GSLIS.

Items are listed in priority order based on how many Advisory Board respondents selected this choice as among their top five via email. Each sub-group in the Advisory Board voted on the top five choices for their own set of questions.

This prioritized list of responses was compiled from the larger list gathered during the Advisory Board Focus Group breakout sessions, and from written comments submitted by those unable to attend in person. (All questions had been provided to Advisory Group members the week prior to the session). There were seventeen on-site attendees in the Experienced Group and six in the More Recent Graduates Group. At least one member in each sub-group of the Advisory Board represents an area of concentration from among the list recently specified by the American Library Association, ranging from academic librarianship, to organization of information, to reference and user services, through to special/corporate libraries (see http://www.ala.org/Template.cfm?Section=lisdirb&Template=/cfapps/lisdir/index.cfm)

Given the wide range and large number of responses, we have listed the top seven choices for each question. (The longer lists are available upon request). Note that other valuable comments mentioned both in written submissions and at the Focus Groups sessions for better preparing our students included such topics as dealing with Senior Citizens, basic conceptual understanding of technology foundations (including automation, cataloging and metadata), search skills, learning coping skills for shifting priorities, and simply helping students to develop the critical thinking skills that will help them to be life-long learners in their chosen profession.

<u>Experienced Group (numbers mean how many selected this issue)</u>

1. What are the strengths and weakness you are seeing in new employees?

Strengths:
1. Eager to serve - 12
2. Digital/Technology – 10
3. Open to innovation - 10
4. Energy level - 9
5. Collaborative - 7
6. Willingness to change direction - 5
7. Good knowledge of their specialization - 4

Weaknesses:
1. Understanding of where the library fits into the broader world of information –the sociological and organizational aspects of libraries in the larger environment - 8
2. Oral and written communication skills (too verbose at times) – 8
3. How to stay active & involved and continue to push oneself intellectually - 7
4. Marketing the library - 7
5. Lack of realistic expectations of bureaucracy and political issues - 7
6. Collection development skills - 5
7. Leadership abilities, roles as change agents - 5

2. What skill sets would you like to see in new employees?

1. Strong interpersonal, collaboration, networking, advocacy & public relations skills - 13
2. Technology skills – applications, school library media, blogs, basic Excel, smartboards, e-readers, IM, text, social network, and the use of mobile devices—and where they fit into the information landscape; able to adapt to new technologies - 12
3. Basic communication skills – not just MS office but effective writing & presentation skills (not just "reading" PPT slides; being able to engage others; ability to articulate the issues) - 7
4. Grant writing skills & project management - 7
5. Customer service training – cultures, attitudes, problem people - 5
6. Flexibility in "how to be a librarian" (e.g. be a roving librarian rather than behind the desk, kiosks outside the library) - 5
7. Broad ideas about where they may be working—the transformation of the concepts of information management, new models of reference service, what an information specialist might be in the future - 5

3. How can we better prepare our students to meet the needs of 21st century information professionals?

1. Update 21st c. curriculum; build the use of technology and digital resources into every class, so that they become facile and flexible in their integration of technology into the library learning environment - 13
2. More creative thinking assignments; push thinking outside the box - 11
3. Awareness of developments in the field; instill a professional attitude of continuous learning, so that they read and change their practice based on new research studies, professional journal articles, and technology updates; connect with peers in communities of practice – for support and to create new products - 10
4. Can't have enough assignments on writing/presentation/papers; greater emphasis on publication (especially for future academic librarians) - 6
5. But, internships are essential! Increased communication between GSLIS and internship site supervisors would be helpful - 6

6. Go beyond asking them to work in groups to having them simultaneously analyze the collaborative process, so that they develop the ability to collaborate with a wide variety of colleagues - 4
7. GSLIS/LIB(QC) and other library settings– teaching Lib experimental learning— (like the "Teaching Archives"); expand practical learning opportunities, not just the internship; library as teaching laboratory - 4

More Recent Graduate Group (numbers mean how many selected this issue)

1. **What were the most important things you learned at the QC GSLIS?**
   1. Exposure to all aspects of librarianship - 8
   2. Broad overview of current state of the field - 7
   3. Learning from practitioners - 6
   4. How to do a reference interview - 6
   5. Practical experience, in class and internship - 5
   6. Socialization into the field - 4
   7. Mentoring from professors - 4
   8. How to handle reference sources - 4
   9. Writing grants - 4

(More than 7 responses are listed above since 4 items were chosen by 4 people).

2. **What could we have done to make your education more meaningful/valuable?**
   1. More active career placement - 6
   2. Hands on experience (different internships, shadowing?) - 6
   3. More technology - 5
   4. Career skills workshop - 5
   5. Archives Technology- XML, EAD, AT - 4
   6. Use QC library - 4
   7. Right level of technology - 4

3. **What skills did you learn at QC GSLIS that help you in your current position?**
   1. Writing, analysis and research skills - 10
   2. Presentation skills (practice, emphasis as skill) - 8
   3. Professionalism - 7
   4. Ethical librarianship - 7
   5. Preservation - 4
   6. Public speaking - 4
   7. Pedagogy/instruction - 3