



SOLIS

Newsletter

for VSU's Student Organization of LIS



November-December 2025

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Volume 17 Issue 2

SOLIS News

SOLIS Events

SOLIS hosted two events for students during the Fall 2025 semester. The first event on November 12th from 5:00 PM-12:00 AM EST was a virtual study hall, allowing for students to study and body-double. SOLIS' second event was a live virtual Q&A panel with four Library professionals, and this event was hosted on November 17th at 8:00 PM EST! The Q&A panel was recorded and the recording can be accessed from the SOLIS Instagram page.

Stay tuned for future SOLIS events! Events will be advertised on our Instagram and shared within the program.

VSU Foundation SOLIS Account

Currently, VSU Foundation SOLIS account has an ending balance of \$981.88. It is used to fund the SOLIS Internship Reimbursement Award: https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/student-resources/internship_reimburse.php and to support various SOLIS community engagement activities.

The main source of SOLIS account revenue is MLIS T-Shirt sale. You may follow this link to order yours: <https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/solis/t-shirt-order-form.pdf>.

SOLIS Social Medias

SOLIS has social media accounts. On these accounts, SOLIS will be engaging with students within the program, sharing resources, hosting events, and more. Please follow us on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) for the latest SOLIS news.



Both usernames for Instagram and X are solis_vstate

Achievements

Congratulations Rachel Salvatori on being selected for the NEDCC Disaster Prep Workshop! The workshop is hosted by Region 2 of the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM) and the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). Her costs will be covered for the workshop and provide excellent first-hand experience.



Pictured is Rachel Salvatori.

SOLIS loves to celebrate your achievements. Keep sending your news about recently awarded scholarships, a conference presentation, a paid internship opportunity, or other exciting news of your scholarly and/or professional achievements to Dr. Ren at xren@valdosta.edu or the current Communications Officer, Ashley Adamian, at amadamian@valdosta.edu as they happen. Thank you!

Graduation

Congratulations to Fall 2025 graduates! We wish every graduate well in their journeys and a well-deserved break!



Photo taken at VSU's Fall 2025 graduation ceremony.

Alumni Spotlight: Danielle Valenzano



Danielle Valenzano is pictured at her Valdosta State University Graduation in 2018 with Dr. Linda Most, who sadly passed last fall.

BIOGRAPHY:

Danielle works as the solo Young Adult Librarian at the Milford Public Library in Milford, Connecticut, where she has worked for the past 16 years. She also manages the Library's active social media on Facebook and Instagram. Her undergraduate BA degree is from Queens College, City University of NY, in English and Creative Writing. She graduated with her MLIS from Valdosta State University in 2018. Personally, she and her husband Robert also live in Milford with their two girls, Julia (13) and Olivia (11).

1. What drew you to the library field and the MLIS?

As luck would have it, I applied to a municipal job for a City Clerk position and was waitlisted. A few weeks later, I got a call asking me if I'd be interested in working at the Public Library as a Library Assistant job had just opened. I had gotten my BA in English as an undergrad and was the daughter of a Librarian, but I had never considered this as a field! I interviewed and began working for the Public Library – where I have been working ever since in various capacities!

2. What were your favorite classes while in the MLIS program?

I loved all my Youth Services classes with Dr. D. My absolute favorite was my Marketing class with Jewel Suddeth and my Capstone class with Dr. Most (RIP). I also loved my Reference course with Dr. Ren, especially because it brought me super close with my two MLIS besties Christopher Evans and Jennifer Ziegenfuss. 7 years post-graduation and we live in different states, but we still talk all the time!

3. Did you choose an area of interest for your MLIS? If so, what was your interest and why did you choose it?

I chose Youth Services because at the time, I wanted to be a Children's Librarian. I was working as a Library Assistant in the Children's department and knew that if I didn't become a Children's Librarian, I'd want to be a Young Adult Librarian, so I chose to mostly focus on Youth Services electives. I also loved my Marketing class because I think every Librarian should have some Marketing knowledge. We really have to sell ourselves and our programs/services all the time!

4. What was your favorite course project while receiving your MLIS degree? Why did you enjoy it, and what did you learn from it?

It's been awhile, but there are a few that really stand out that I enjoyed and learned a lot from. My Children's (cont...)

Alumni Spotlight: Danielle Valenzano (cont.)

Collection Development project was very fun and useful/pertinent to my job at the time. It also gave me a ton of practice using Baker & Taylor (RIP!) since I priced everything out on the site through work. This came in handy for me following graduation when I became an official Librarian and a selector of Youth materials.

I also really loved my Marketing plan with Jewel in the Marketing course. It was very “real time” for me as I used my current Library and applied what I had learn to come up with a useful plan. I was able to share it with my Library Director at the time and several of the aspects I wrote about were things we started doing as a Library team. Lastly, as I mentioned earlier, my Reference class was one of my favorites and my very first Reference interview group project was one that my friends Christopher and Jennifer and I still talk about! It brings back such good memories of graduate school!

5. What is your current library position? Have you held other library positions, and if so, what?

I am currently the sole Young Adult Librarian at the Milford Public Library in Milford, CT. We are the only public library in Milford for a community of 55K and the young adult department is for grades 6-12. I have been in this position since it opened – waiting for it basically since my MLIS graduation (December 2018) until it opened in December 2019! Prior to that, I was a Library Assistant in the Children’s department at the same library from December 2009 through December 2019.

6. What are some of your favorite parts about your position?

I love to do middle school programming. Working with that age group of kids who love to come to programs at the library is my favorite! I also love connecting kids with the right book for them. And I’m very lucky to be able to work in the same community where I live – and both of my kids are in middle school – so getting to have them attend programs with me is the best!

7. How has what you learned while getting your MLIS degree directly affected or been applied to your work?

Getting my MLIS degree helped me build a strong foundation in Library Science – not just doing it in my job but learning the technical aspects. Pairing the foundations and technical aspects through school, plus the practical side of the assignments (along with working in a Library) were the keys to moving forward!

8. Do you have any advice for upcoming graduates on how to navigate the job search and/or the field as a new graduate?

Get as much experience as you can working in a Library prior to graduating. Experience, along with the degree, will always be key. I also highly recommend joining your State Library Association and becoming involved in that way. It allows you to meet so man people and networking is so important! Advice to current graduate students starting out is get the best grades you can get and apply for all the scholarships! Graduating with no debt is priceless, especially as a public librarian!

9. Is there anything else you would like to add?

I am so thankful especially to Dr. Linda Most who advised me for many months before even applying to VSU – about the area, about the school, about the course options, and everything. Spending time with Dr. Most, other professors, and fellow classmates at VSU both during the mandatory orientation (back when that was a thing), along with spending time with many of those same people at the graduation, were some of the most memorable times in my life. Dr. Most is truly missed! May she RIP.

Faculty Spotlight: Tiffany Duck

Tiffany Duck is a lecturer for the department of Library and Information Studies at Valdosta State University.

1. What would you describe as your focus/concentration within the MLIS field?

My primary focus within the MLIS field is public librarianship, particularly in the areas of library management, teen services, and operations such as facilities and circulation. Throughout my career, I have been deeply interested in building strong community partnerships and making the library a hub where leadership, user experience, and responsive service models truly matter. I am especially passionate about creating welcoming environments for teens, supporting staff through effective management practices, and ensuring that the daily operational systems of a library run smoothly so innovative programming and community engagement can thrive.

2. What are some lessons or tips you have learned throughout your career?

One of the biggest lessons I have learned is that librarianship is truly a lifelong learning profession. To stay effective, you must be curious, flexible, and committed to continual growth. Our field is in a time of great and rapid change. Technology, community needs, and service models are evolving quickly due to changes in society, but with great change also comes great opportunity!

I have also learned that this is, at its core, a service-oriented profession. Especially in public libraries, your soft skills matter just as much as your technical abilities. Listening, empathy, communication, and relationship-building will take you far.

Another tip I always give to students is that their career does not have to be linear. For the longest time, we were told that you get your first librarian job and climb the ladder toward management or directorship. That path is valid, but it is not the only one. There are many ways to build a meaningful, fulfilling career in libraries if you follow the work that energizes you and do not be afraid to create your own path. I've had the opportunity to work in all types of libraries, I've done digitization in the back of a museum, I do a lot of work with authors and book awards, I've done great work with publishers, and now I am using some of the same skills that I used in libraries, doing some literacy and nonprofit work.

3. What were some unexpected challenges you faced throughout your career?

Many of the most significant challenges in my career came not from the work itself, but from life. As a wife and mother, I sometimes found that the traditional structures and schedules of public libraries did not always align with my family's needs. That tension pushed me to explore new avenues within the field, and I am so grateful it did. I often say I have had a fun and varied career in libraries because those challenges helped open doors I had not originally imagined.

Another unexpected challenge was finding a library environment that was truly the right fit. Libraries can be wonderfully stable institutions, but that also means some are slow to adapt or reluctant to try innovative approaches. If you are someone who is constantly learning, experimenting, and paying attention to evolving community needs, you may need to seek out the systems where that mindset is supported. Sometimes the challenge is not the work itself, but the organizational culture or leadership. Over the years, navigating those dynamics taught me a great deal about change management, leadership, and creating environments where staff and ideas can flourish. These lessons/ challenges have deeply shaped my teaching and professional perspective.

Faculty Spotlight: Tiffany Duck

4. What are some resources you recommend for professionals within the MLIS field?

The resources I recommend really depend on your interests, because the MLIS field is huge! I would start with your state library or association. They may offer conferences, committees, webinars, and communities of practice that can help you understand the landscape and connect with others in your area. If there are no groups that meet your needs, this may be a good time to start one!

I would encourage professionals to join practical listservs or discussion groups related to their specific interests. There are so many groups available such as library programming, management, special collections, technology, whatever they are exploring. For example, I am in a Facebook group about library programming. I am a part of CORE, a division of ALA because I am very interested in management. I find that these are the places where real problem-solving, idea-sharing, and community support happen.

I am continually active in some national organizations like ALA and BCALA. I know that is not for everyone especially starting out. However, I do feel that if you really use it, there can be some great networking opportunities. In addition, I would follow thought leaders, library blogs, and professional journals that align with your focus. The idea is to build a network of resources that helps you stay informed, engaged, and connected with parts of librarianship that matter most to you.

5. Do you have any advice for upcoming graduates on how to navigate the job search and/or enter the field as a new graduate?

- 1. Be open and flexible.** Your first job may not look exactly like you pictured, and that is okay. Openness can lead you to unexpected and meaningful opportunities.
- 2. Get experience before you graduate if you can.** Internships, part-time positions, special projects, and committee work all help you build real skills and make you more competitive.
- 3. Get active in the field early.** Join committees, attend meetings, and start building your network. Also... show up, follow through, and develop a reputation as someone who contributes.
- 4. Explore all avenues of the field.** Libraries are just one part of the information ecosystem. If you are open to it, consider archives, nonprofits, tech companies, government agencies, and other information-centered roles.
- 5. Hang in there.** The job market is challenging right now across many fields. Keep applying, keep learning, and keep showing up. Your persistence, combined with your growing skills, will pay off.

Support the Student Organization of Library and Information Science (SOLIS) by ordering your own T-shirt with the VSU and MLIS insignias!

Proceeds of sales in years have funded ALA conference registrations for students, travel reimbursements for SOLIS officers representing SOLIS at GLA conferences, a reception for the travelling rare books exhibit on loan from the Remnant Trust, a 15th anniversary celebration in downtown Valdosta, and many SOLIS activities such as virtual 5k, and t-shirt design contest. The proceeds of sales will be the main funding source for a newly created SOLIS scholarship starting from Fall 2021. Shirts are sold at \$10 each at face-to-face events such as GLA conferences and previous New Student Orientations.

SOLIS T-Shirt Order Form

Yes, I want to support SOLIS! Please send me _____ (number) of shirts.

Please fill in the oval next to your preferred t-shirt **design**:



Please indicate the **quantity** for each size:

Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ X-Large _____ 2X-Large* _____ 3X-Large* _____
**sizes not available for white t-shirt*

Order of one (1) shirt is \$20 (includes processing and shipping via USPS). Order of 2 or more shirts is \$15 per shirt (processing and shipping included)

Total enclosed: _____

Check payment only. Make check payable to **MLIS Foundation**. Allow two to four weeks to receive your t-shirt(s).
 Your shipping address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Please mail this form with your check to:

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