September/ October 2026 | Volume 19, Issue 1

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY'S SOLIS NEWSLETTER



We are so excited to build our MLIS community with you!

SOLIS Events

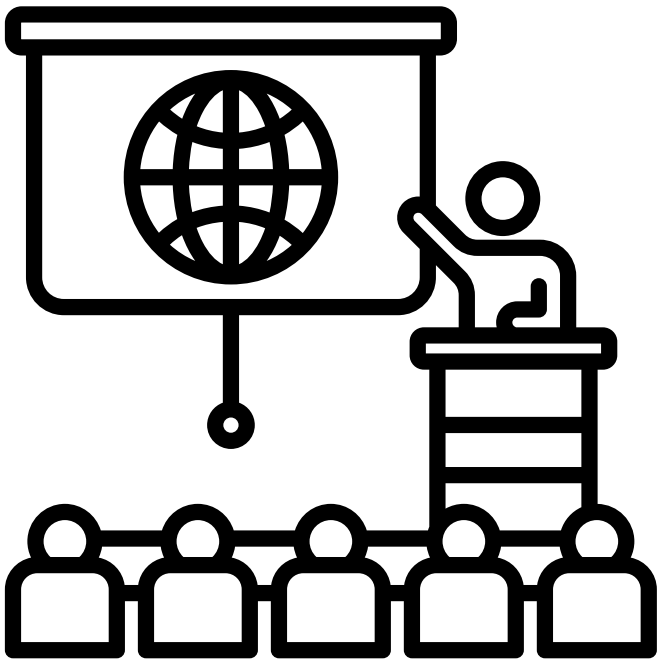
The SOLIS team is proud to offer our peers a monthly **Sunday Social** (Right: Flier.) We do hope you'll join us in this community building offering!

Our SOLIS board is offering an online, synchronous **panel discussion** on **Wednesday, October 28th from 6:30-7:30pm EST**. We will have panelists from various LIS fields including: academic libraries, special libraries and public libraries. The focus will be on understanding how to flesh-out resumes and CVs while in our MLIS program, along with what hiring committees are looking for from early career librarians joining their teams.



LIS COLLEGIATE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Hosted by University of Iowa



When

April 17th

Where

Wherever you have internet connection. It's virtual!

About

SOLIS chapters from MLIS programs all over the country have collaborated to host a virtual symposium that will allow students in the library science and information fields to present their research in a supportive environment made up of their peers. This will be an excellent opportunity to present for the first time (or not the first time!), network with other LIS students, and learn about the topics that emerging professionals find important. If there are any projects you have worked on throughout your coursework at VSU, now is the time to let it shine! All students are encouraged to attend!



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline

January 29th

Requirements

There are no thematic restrictions; any topic related to libraries or the information science field is welcome. Submissions are open to presentations, posters, papers, or any other format you wish to present your work in. You will have the opportunity to do a presentation and a Q&A with your peers. Please reach out to SOLIS members for submission details or any other questions!

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Debra Carruth

SOLIS' New Faculty Advisor

Biography

I was born in the 1900's. We didn't have cell phones, but we did have TVs, so it wasn't so bad. I hated high school but loved college so much I never left! It took me a long time to decide my path – my undergraduate degree was in "Liberal Studies," which essentially meant I never actually chose a major.

I've had lots and lots of awesome jobs. My first formative work experience was as paid full-time staff at a volunteer suicide hotline. This is where my love of trauma-informed care was born, although we didn't call it that back then. Another favorite work experience was as Assistant Director of the Honors Program at Florida State University, where I worked directly with students, faculty, and administration. I basically knew everyone on campus and it made me feel super important. 😉 While I was in graduate school at FSU, teaching undergraduates and graduate students, I was also working at Barnes & Noble, conducting storytimes, planning events, and performing customer service and merchandising. I continued working at B&N for 15 years – the number of books I own will attest to that! (And I never stopped teaching!)



My dissertation was on youth information behavior related to their hobbies. When I first joined the faculty here at VSU, my interests were solely youth-related (programming, collections, services, etc.). As I have gained experience, though, my interests have expanded to include adult services, public libraries, community-building, and trauma-informed care in libraries. I love the variety of courses I get to teach!
Truly, I am a fortunate human. I work with students who are passionate about their careers, who embrace their responsibilities (with great power comes great responsibility), and who are curious, clever, and driven.

When y'all get out into the world, find your people. Join and be active in ALA or your local equivalent. Work with people who are wonderful to make mischief with. Challenge your administration to adhere to the Code of Ethics of our profession, even when it's hard and funding is tied to pushing it under the rug. And never, ever, ever forget to take care of yourself. Take breaks, take vacations, leave work for lunch, fill your soul with creating beauty in whatever form that takes. These are not optional, for 'when you have time.' They are essential.

2026-2027 SOLIS Board



Shelby Whittet

President

Biography

Shelby Whittet stepped into the President role after initially being elected as Vice President. Moving into this role, Shelby hopes to support her peers in building community during their MLIS degree experience with VSU.

See an extended bio and election statement here.

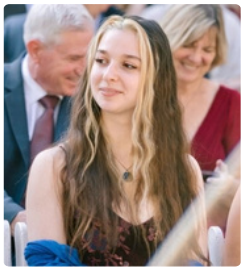


Melba Abrahim

Vice-President

Biography

Melba Abrahim is in her third semester at VSU's MLIS program. She holds a B.A. in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is currently working in the circulation department of an academic law library. Melba's professional interests include archives and special collections for art and fashion materials, as well as critical librarianship. Her hobbies outside of work and school include DIY fashion projects, cafe hopping, and enjoying DJ sets on Youtube.



Rebecca Giesecke

Communications Officer

Biography

Rebecca Giesecke is a first-year MLIS student at VSU. She holds a B.A. in Religion & Culture from Virginia Tech and has professional experience in public and special libraries, higher education, and program management. Currently based in Atlanta, GA, Rebecca's interests include rare books, special collections, and information organization. Outside of work and school, she likes yoga, rock climbing, and traveling.

Election Statement

Throughout my professional experience in libraries, higher education, and communications, I've developed a strong appreciation for creating accessible resources and bringing people together! I would be honored to serve as the SOLIS Communications Officer by strengthening communication between SOLIS and the student body, highlighting opportunities for professional development and involvement, and fostering a welcoming, engaged community for students at every stage of the MLIS program here at VSU.

2026-2027 SOLIS Board

Mandy Decker
Advisory Board Member



Biography

Mandy Decker is in her second year of the MLIS program at VSU. Her undergraduate degree from VSU is in Organizational Leadership and Public Administration. She is a theatre wunderkind turned library outreach powerhouse. Her passion for community engagement and collaboration is illustrated through her effort to make the world more equitable and humane through passionate civil service and thoughtful arts education. Hoopla recognized her out-of-the-box approach to library services and invited her to join the IDEA Squad.

Join the SOLIS Board!

Build your resume, build community, have fun!

SOLIS Needs You!

SOLIS has openings, and we hope you'll join our board! We need advisory board members. If you are interested in learning more please reach out to faculty advisor, Dr. Carruth or email SOLIS president Shelby.



Achievements

SOLIS loves celebrating our peers! Please let us know about your awarded scholarships, conference presentations, internships, or other exciting news of your scholarly and/or professional achievements.
You can email our faculty advisor Dr. Carruth at dlcarruth@valdosta.edu

Thank you!



SOLIS_VSTATE

Stay Connected

SOLIS Website
Facebook

Follow us on Social, and check-out or SOLIS landing page to stay up to date on what we're up to. With regular monthly socials for our peers, we hope you'll join us as we strengthen our peer community through opportunities to socialize, learn, and engage in professional development together. Always feel free to reach out!