



From Your SOLIS President, Matthew Yohn

Let me begin by expressing my thanks for the opportunity to serve as SOLIS President. It has been an honor and a privilege. This was my first time serving in a leadership role and with a complete turnover from the previous year it was the first time for our officers and board members. I'm proud of what we have accomplished and of what we are still working to accomplish. I would like to thank our officers and board members for their hard work and collaboration. None of this would be possible if we didn't have a great team.

In the fall of 2020, we held the 2nd MLIS Annual Virtual 5k. Participants were able to pledge a donation to a charity of their choosing. The event was open to all members of the VSU MLIS community. I'm happy to say we improved on last year's numbers in both total participants and total dollars pledged. We had 16 registered participants and more than \$500 in donation pledges. For our second event we invited the BCALA (Black Caucus American Library Association) President Shauntee Burns Simpson for a virtual Meet and Greet. Despite some technical issues, the event went well, and I think everyone who attended got a lot out of it.

Currently, we are running a t-shirt design competition and have received some impressive designs. I'm looking forward to seeing which one our community picks to be the next MLIS t-shirt. We are also working to set aside money to be used as a SOLIS scholarship. There will be more details released once details have been finalized and approved.

For the next SOLIS President, I recommend keeping in regular contact with your advisor and board members. Because we are in regular contact with each other we've been able to get started on our Spring events before we held our semester meeting. It has helped us to stay on target with our goals.

Once again, I would like to thank my fellow officers and board members. It's been an honor working with all of you. I would also like to thank everyone who's participated in a SOLIS event this year and in previous years. You're the reason we do this. If you can get involved with SOLIS as an officer or board member, you should do it. You won't regret it. I hope that everyone has a great semester!

From Your SOLIS Vice-President, Taryn Mirabello

It has been an honor and joy to serve VSU's MLIS student body as Vice President of SOLIS for the 2020-2021 academic year. Participating in SOLIS has been rewarding in that I have been able to virtually attend faculty curriculum meetings and have witnessed firsthand the amount of time and energy VSU MLIS faculty invest to ensure we receive the highest quality education possible. The faculty are dedicated not only to helping us with our scholarly pursuits but are particularly focused on preparing us to successfully enter the competitive "real world" library workforce. As a Library Branch Manager who (like many of you) works full time and is also a parent (of one-year-old twins!), this dedication to our academic excellence and professional achievement is something I genuinely appreciate.

I have enjoyed participating in the 2nd MLIS Annual SOLIS Virtual 5K, and hope that the event continues to build momentum and create a spirit of collegiality among MLIS students in the years to come.

I am enthusiastic about the new SOLIS T-Shirt Design Contest, and am looking forward to seeing which design the MLIS student body selects as the winner (if you have not already done so, please vote!)

I am very proud to have played a role in the formative stages of creating the first-ever SOLIS scholarship for VSU MLIS students (more details to be announced at a later date.) I look forward to this scholarship enriching the lives of current and future students.

I would like to thank SOLIS's Faculty Advisor Dr. Ren for her ongoing guidance and support, President Matthew Yohn for being an organized, effective leader, my fellow SOLIS officers for their time and energy, and lastly, to you, the student body, without whom SOLIS would cease to exist.

I would like to wrap up this letter with a note of encouragement—if you are reading this, please consider running for a SOLIS officer position in future. It is exceedingly rewarding to get involved, feel a sense of comradery, and witness firsthand the high caliber of Valdosta State University's MLIS program.

Wishing everyone a fruitful semester and sending congratulations to all 2021 VSU MLIS graduates!

Congrats! Interviews with ALA Spectrum Scholarship Winners

Talia Chaves

What motivated you to apply for it?

Due to the pandemic, I'm unfortunately in the boat of MLIS students who won't get to attend in-person conferences or networking opportunities while I'm still a student. By the time these opportunities open up again, my program will be over! Since I'm also someone who is just beginning my career as a librarian, I was terrified of losing this time as a 'newbie' without having developed any connections. These thoughts pushed and motivated me to apply for the Spectrum Scholarship. I knew the scholarship had a community-building component that could last even after I graduated from my program. While there are a lot of great scholarships out there, the Spectrum Scholarship program goes beyond financial assistance by also providing leadership development resources, and plenty of opportunities to connect with fellow Spectrum scholars and alumni from the program. As a Latina, it was also incredibly important to me that the scholarship community was inclusive and committed to supporting BIPOC library workers.



What advice or encouragement would you give to another student who is thinking about applying?

I say, "Go for it"! The benefits of this scholarship are unmatched, and it can't hurt to try. A judging panel will be reading your personal essay to determine how well it lines up with their prompt, so make sure you use the prompt as you develop your essay. Your application should show how you plan to support the Spectrum community—having examples of what you've completed in the past that demonstrate your abilities to support their mission will go a long way. Don't overthink it, and try to make sure your voice and character shine through. You can do it!



Charles Pratt

How did you hear about the scholarship?

I heard about the Spectrum Scholarship after doing a Google search for "MLIS Scholarships". I was familiar with the American Library Association, but didn't know they had scholarship opportunities until I discovered their page.

What motivated you to apply for it?

The Spectrum Scholarship focuses on increasing the number of minority librarians and equal access to library services for underrepresented populations. When I read more about their mission and network of library professionals, I knew it was something that aligned with my passion for serving my community.

What advice or encouragement would you give to another student who is thinking about applying?

Do it! Social justice is an issue that requires a lot of conversation, listening, and understanding. The Spectrum Scholarship provides a great foundation for us to tackle this work through library services.

Congrats! Interviews with ALA Spectrum Scholarship Winners

Sarah Rodgers

How did you hear about the scholarship?

I heard about the Spectrum Scholarship mainly through word of mouth.

What motivated you to apply for it?

When I first began grad school, I knew that obtaining financial aid to offset the cost of the program would be essential. I was also very interested in the professional development opportunities that the Spectrum Scholarship offers.

What advice or encouragement would you give to another student who is thinking about applying?

Try, try again! I won the award the third time that I applied—I was too stubborn to give up on it. I would also encourage people to go ahead and think about who they want to use as references. Ensuring that I was able to 1) select the right people to write letters of recommendation and 2) remind those people about the timeline for the scholarship was key. Finally, I would advise preparing ahead of time to ensure that transcripts and other paperwork will arrive on time.

If you have any further questions about the ALA Spectrum Scholarship, Sarah invites further conversation via email at srodgers@oglethorpe.edu.

More Congratulations!!

Baker Family Foundation Scholarship:

- Greg McNamara (Summer 2021)

Merryll Penson Scholarships:

- Don Giacomini – Summer -2021
- Mikayla Kittilstved – Fall 2021
- Ella B. Wilson – Summer 2021

George Gaumond Award:

- Mathew Yohn

Student Accomplishments:

Kristina S. Lang co-presented a panel presentation, “Resurrecting the Archives: Bringing Forgotten Collections Back to Life!” at the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Society of Georgia Archivists on Friday, November 13, 2020.



T-Shirt Design Contest

SOLIS presented a t-shirt design contest for students during the 2021 spring semester! The contest requested that fellow MLIS students create a design that may be featured on the next VSU MLIS program t-shirt! Turnout was great and many creative designs were featured for voting. Stay tuned to find out which design won the contest!

Call for updates: Please share your news about recently awarded scholarships, a conference presentation, a paid internship opportunity, or other exciting news of your scholarly and/or professional achievements by sending them to xren@valdosta.edu as they happen. Thank you!

We're on 



Issue Editor:
Melissa N. Thompson



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 past have funded ALA conference registrations for several 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, and a 15th anniversary celebration in downtown Valdosta.

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 indicate the quantity for each size:

Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ X-Large _____

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 :

Dr. Xiaoai Ren
 Department of Library and Information Studies
 Valdosta State University
 Valdosta, GA 31698