



From Your SOLIS President Roxanne A Williamson

I want to take this opportunity to say that it has been an honor and a joy to serve as VSU's SOLIS President for the 2022-2023 academic year. The position of president has been far more rewarding than I would have ever expected. It was not without a slight feeling of hesitation, on my part, that I accepted this assignment to lead a group of SOLIS officers and advisors in furthering the reach of our organization and be representatives of our diverse body of MLIS students. I am so proud to have worked with such a dynamic group of people—all with the same goal in mind—as we worked hard to create events and activities geared towards the interests of our peers. I would like to personally thank everyone who served in any capacity to make this year a success. I could not have asked for a better team of people. Please know that I was successful because of you!

In the fall of 2022, we began our journey together with the 4th annual MLIS Virtual 5k where students were given the options to run, walk, or jog. Participants were able to pledge a donation to a charity of their choosing, with the winning participants receiving either a SOLIS t-shirt or a \$20 Amazon gift card. This event was open to all members of the VSU MLIS community. For our second event, we held an author talk with self-published author and current MLIS student, Lauren Hallstrom! This event gave students the opportunity to learn more about the author, her journey to authorship, and why she felt that librarianship was the next logical step. Additionally, she fielded questions from participants regarding the publishing process, artwork selection, and sources of funding for self-publication.

For our current semester, spring 2023, we are in the process of getting things ready for our SOLIS t-shirt sale which is another popular event from past years. We decided to keep this as it is, as it has been a great source of generating funding for the SOLIS scholarship. The sale will run for the duration of the spring semester. We hope the same trend of the t-shirt sale will continue, along with the addition of other possible items in the future. We had a virtual hangout event open to all MLIS students in late February. This is a way for the entire student body to come together, welcome new students, share stories, or talk. Finally, we are planning a trivia night where participants submit their answers to questions from a variety of topic areas. The winner will be awarded a book of their choice courtesy of SOLIS.

All these activities and events were made possible because of the dedication and selflessness of the entire SOLIS team. They came together to brainstorm and use their creativity to make all this happen. We were so fortunate to have such strong and open communication, which allowed us to be able to plan for events far in advance of what was expected. I commend you all!

I encourage anyone looking to build leadership skills that are applicable to your career in libraries to get involved with SOLIS! Dive in! Make it what you want it to be! With a strong team by your side, you will be surprised just how far you can go.

I wish you all the best as you make your way through your courses!

From Your SOLIS Vice-President Sussan V Ayala Rodriguez

I was at first very hesitant to run for Vice-President because I wasn't sure I would be able to do as good a job as my predecessors. In the end, I'm glad I did run and I want to thank you all for trusting that I could help other officers lead SOLIS.

I think we have had a very successful year and have been able to provide more opportunities for MLIS students to engage with each other. Hopefully, you were able to participate in our Virtual 5k, and congratulations to our winners! We had a great virtual book talk with Lauren Hallstrom, one of our very own students who published her own books. And we hope that having a virtual hangout gave students the possibility of meeting some of their classmates in a more informal setting.

Working on the MLIS Curriculum Committee as student representative was a great experience, as it afforded me with an opportunity to see some of the considerations that go into making changes to the curriculum. Thank you to Dr. Choi, Dr. Yang, Dr. Carruth, and Dr. Alemanne for being so welcoming and giving me a chance to keep them updated on SOLIS and the student perspective.

I also encourage you all to think about running for SOLIS, either as an officer or a member of the advisory board. It will give you the opportunity to engage with the faculty and learn more about our program. Thank you to Dr. Ren for always being there to answer our questions and supporting the group when running our ideas by you. And lastly, thank you to all my fellow SOLIS members for your dedication and input. Best of luck to the next crew!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the spring 2023 MLIS Merit Scholarship winner: **Esmeralda G Rodgers!** Esmeralda's career goal is to obtain a Reference and Literacy Instruction Librarian position in an academic library.

The MLIS Scholarship and Awards Committee just finished reviewing the summer/fall 2023 applications. If you are interested in the future scholarship opportunities, check out the **MLIS Awards & Scholarships information webpage:** <https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/student-resources/scholarships.php> and be on the lookout for the announcements on the MLIS Village, the SOLIS Newsletter, and the VSU MLIS Facebook group page.

SOLIS Spring 2023 Events and Activities

Spring Semester Hangout

SOLIS hosted its first virtual hangout on February 25th, 2023 at 7:00PM (ET) in Collaborate Ultra for MLIS students to chat with their peers about career goals, favorite courses, pets, or anything that they want to share.

SOLIS Spring T-shirt Sale

The SOLIS T-Shirt Sale event is now underway! T-Shirt sales help fund SOLIS Internship Reimbursement Award and grant our students the opportunity to participate in enriching events. Order yours here: <https://tinyurl.com/solis-tshirt>

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF VIRTUAL CONVERSATION & CAMARADERIE!

Spring SEMESTER HANGOUT

Hosted by SOLIS



<p>Saturday, February 25th at 7:00 PM</p>	<p>Get to know your peers and chat about school & life!</p>
	<p>Call in: +1-571-392-7650 PIN: 173 071 7765 HTTP://BIT.LY/3Y3KY2U</p>



Help us raise funds for scholarships!

SOLIS T-Shirt Sale

ORDER HERE: [BIT.LY/3YBWBCW](http://bit.ly/3YBWBCW)

SOLIS 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!

Twitter: https://twitter.com/SOLIS_VState

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/solis_vstate/

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/136986118569>

Alumni Spotlight – Wendy Wilmoth



I was a paraprofessional at Georgia State University for eight years and then left libraries for a while to manage a rape crisis center. I enrolled in the VSU MLIS program in 2003 and graduated in 2006. It took me 18 months to find my first professional position as the Director of Library and Media Services at Griffin Technical College (now Southern Crescent Technical College). After moving to Kansas in 2010, I taught college-level political science and history for a year, then accepted the position of Director of Library Services at Fort Scott Community College. In 2014 I returned to Georgia and accepted my current position as Director of Library Services at Georgia Piedmont Technical College. I completed my doctorate in Public Administration at VSU in 2013.

What were your favorite classes while in the MLIS program?

I fell in love with cataloging at VSU because of Dr. Elaine Yontz. From the core cataloging class on to the Advanced Classification, the classes were challenging but when I finished one successfully, I had a real sense of accomplishment.

What was your favorite course project while receiving your MLIS degree?

I think my favorite project was also the silliest. At the start of the Research Methods class taught by Dr. Ondrusek, we were asked to quasi-experimentally measure something, anything, as an introduction to research. I remember that I tested my mother's old adage that towels and clothes should not be washed together because the washing machine is more likely to go off balance. It turns out that she was right! My favorite actual library-related project was my capstone on smart card use in libraries. It was well-received, won an award, and was published. Of course, it's totally out of date now!

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

Everything is applicable, even now, seventeen years later. As a director, I'm constantly drawing on the leadership lessons from the Management course, and the Research Methods course has been instrumental in assessment here at GPTC.

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

Be as tech-savvy as you can. The field is changing rapidly. Largely due to the brilliant way libraries nationwide stepped up to the challenge of the pandemic lockdowns, the loss of valuable square footage is accelerating, and, we are being forced to go mostly or entirely into the online world, not just as librarians but as information specialists and educators. The loss of space cannot be controlled, unfortunately, but we can see it as a challenge to innovate and demonstrate our continuing value every day.

Alumni Spotlight – Brandon K. Gipson



Brandon K. Gipson graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts in History from the University of North Georgia (UNG) in 2009. In 2010, he volunteered for the University of North Carolina in Asheville in their Special Collections. In 2011, he served as a Library Assistant before he was soon promoted to the Supervisor of Nights & Weekends. He completed his MLIS in 2013 and a month later started a civilian position working for the Army as a Public Services Librarian at Fort Campbell, KY. In 2016, he served as a Library Director overseas for the Air Force at Kunsan AB, South Korea. After that tour, he transferred back to the states and worked as the Chief of Acquisitions at Air University Library which is the second largest federal library. In 2020, he accepted a position at Altus AFB Library, OK as the Library Director where he

works today. He married fellow librarian Lauren Zemaitis-Gipson in 2022 and they had their first child Eleanor Ruth last December. They plan to settle into Oklahoma for the next 5 to 10 years before going back overseas to Europe, then retiring.

What were your favorite classes while in the MLIS program?

My favorite classes were the Foundations class, Management of Libraries and Information Centers, and Leadership in Libraries and Information Centers. The Foundations class provided a theoretical framework upon which to build more knowledge and skill sets. The management and leadership classes introduced managerial and leadership best practices which have been invaluable as I have progressed through my career and held a variety of supervisory positions.

What was your favorite course project while receiving your MLIS degree?

Though technical skills are important, the soft skills I learned concerning managing and leading others have been the most useful. A majority of the work I accomplish involves communicating to leadership about the library's accomplishments and needs. Another part of my position is directing my staff and hearing what they need to accomplish their goals.

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

You need to love people. As director, the most important part of my job is building enduring relationships with the Airmen and their Families. Though statistics are important; what people think of your organization and how you make them feel is much more impactful. One of the Air Force's core values is service before self and it is easier to accomplish this if you love people.

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

I recommend getting as much experience as possible before you graduate. It is a tough career to get your foot in the door. This is especially true if you are tied to a geographic area. Also, you need to have a longrange plan of what you want to accomplish. Then reflect on the steps you are going to need to take to get there. Progress is made from small continuous incremental steps over a long period of time. If you are interested in serving as a military or federal librarian, then feel free to contact at: Brandon.Gipson@US.AF.mil with any questions.

Alumni Spotlight — Marissa Guidara



Marissa Guidara was admitted into the VSU MLIS program in 2016 and graduated in 2018.

Marissa Guidara is the Youth Services District Consultant for the Reading Library District in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Prior to that, she was the Children's Library Manager at the Reading Public Library (PA), a 2018 National Medal for Museum and Library Service award winner.

She is currently an advisor for the ALA Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Libraries initiative, served on the ALSC Summer and Out-of-School-Time Taskforce and was a recipient of ALSC's Bound-to-Stay-Bound Books scholarship.

Her research and writing on coding and computational thinking has been published in the journal "Pennsylvania Libraries: Research & Practice" and the ALA publication, "60 Ready-to-Use Coding Projects." She has won several Best Practices awards for her innovative youth programming from the Pennsylvania Library Association (PLA), including the David J. Roberts EXCEL award for early literacy programming. In 2020, she was awarded a Certificate of Merit from the PLA for "empowering others to take leadership positions, further education and bring brave ideas to fruition."

What were your favorite classes while in the MLIS program?

I'm biased because I was already working in a children's library when I started my degree, so the youth services courses with Dr. Drouillard were my favorites, especially programming focused ones. Many of my classmates were also working in libraries, so it was really fun to take what we were learning and apply it immediately to our everyday work lives and report back to the class on our progress and successes.

What was your favorite course project while receiving your MLIS degree?

For my final collection development project, I focused on creating a collection of graphic memoirs for adult readers. I had so much fun researching this, and learning about concepts like medical humanities and the underground comic movement. And I got to spend several weeks reading great comics as part of my homework, which was a bonus!

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

Obviously, so much of the classwork became the theoretical groundwork that I use every single day. But more than that, I learned so much about how the wider profession works, as opposed to just my little corner of library land. VSU really opened my eyes to all kinds of possibilities in librarianship, and gave me the foundation, confidence, and professionalization to go for them.

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

I think this is a profession where it's valuable to have BOTH the degree and work experience. Take advantage of internships/supervised fieldwork, volunteer for opportunities at your state association or ALA and its divisions, apply for positions that might help you get your foot in the door, and don't be timid about reaching out and networking with fellow students and colleagues (we all get it and want to help!). Get work experience so you're ready for other opportunities when they come calling.

Alumni Spotlight – Caroline Evergreen

Caroline graduated from Dalton State College in 2018 with a Bachelor's of Science in Organizational Leadership while working as an accountant at a local bank. After some encouragement from friends and family, Caroline revisited her childhood dream of librarianship and discovered Valdosta State's MLIS program. While enrolled in the MLIS program, Caroline obtained a job as a Library Associate at Georgia Highlands College, and then a Reference and Instruction Librarian position at Georgia Highlands College after graduating in Spring of 2021. Recently, Caroline and her family relocated to the west coast where she is now a faculty librarian at Olympic College in Bremerton, WA and has a special focus on Open Educational Resources for her community.

What were your favorite classes while in the MLIS program?

The classes at VSU really prepared me for my career, and I still reference several of my textbooks regularly. Overall I think my two favorite classes were Community Building which I remember for its impactful assignments, and Research Methods which I remember for helping to fix some citation and research misconceptions I'd had for many years!

What was your favorite course project while receiving your MLIS degree?

There were so many great ones! I think my favorite course project would have to be either my Community Building Plan where I planned an entire library's outreach and programming for a fictional town, or an accessibility assessment study I completed for my Research Methods course.

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

When I was first beginning my MLIS, I was nervous because I didn't have a job in a library yet and it seemed like all of my classmates did. I spoke with several of my professors and they all told me to find a way to get involved with the profession even if I wasn't yet working in it- this was tremendously important advice. I ended up joining the Georgia Library Association, the Atlanta Emerging Librarians group, and even reaching out to different librarians to do informational interviewing and figure where I might fit in the field. The idea of "getting involved" is sometimes hard for me as an introvert and a shy person, but I think it has helped shape the direction my career has taken; I have looked for ways to "get involved" at every job I've had and have found it is a great way to become familiar with a community and a new workplace.

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

My biggest pieces of advice for upcoming graduates would be to find your people, and on the dark days, hold on to them and those moments of library magic that made you pursue this career. Whether you get involved with a state-level library association, join a library group specific to your region, or find ways to volunteer with the ALA, try not to lose that wide-eyed perspective and love for librarianship. The most meaningful projects I've been able to work on, events I've hosted, and research I've done has not been what I have done alone or in a vacuum- it has been the work of my colleagues and I to build something together. The job opportunities, research, and even many of my hobbies have formed as a result of the connections made in our shared career field. In this vocation we are sometimes known for being an introverted and quiet bunch, but I think that is why it is so important that when we do speak up we use our voices to advocate for each other and the magic of libraries in a community.



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 - \$250 Internship Reimbursement Annual Award 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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