

SOLIS Newsletter

Student Organization
of Library
& Information
Science



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VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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SOLIS News

Interested in Joining SOLIS Team?

SOLIS currently has openings for a **secretary/treasurer** and **advisory board positions** for the 2024-2025 academic year. Serving on SOLIS is an excellent opportunity to become more involved with the Department of Library and Information Studies, connect with your fellow students, and provide insight into the program. Becoming a member of the SOLIS leadership team will look great on an academic and professional resume.

To learn more about the secretary/treasurer and advisory board positions or nominate yourself or a student, please use the [SOLIS nominations form](#).

For any questions, please contact Jules Ray, current SOLIS president, at juray@valdosta.edu.

VSU Foundation SOLIS Account

Currently, VSU Foundation SOLIS account has an ending balance of \$814.08. 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>.

Congratulations!!

Congratulations to Kaylyn Miller-Benson who has been awarded the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM) [Region 2 Library Student Development Award](#) in June 2024.

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 xren@valdosta.edu as they happen. Thank you!

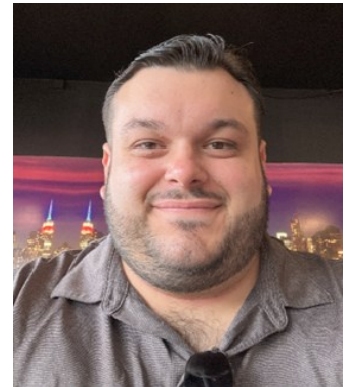
Alumni Spotlight: Michael Kennedy

Michael Kennedy has held various positions within public libraries since 2012 beginning with the Lee County Public Library in his home town of Leesburg, Georgia. He began his career as a Library Assistant working part-time before beginning work on his MLIS in 2014. While at the Lee County Library, he initiated outreach programs for underserved low-income families in local housing authorities, planned and implemented special needs programming for school-aged children of differing abilities, and spearheaded various grant proposals gaining multiple thousands of dollars for the library system to purchase materials, fund additional programs, and directly impact the lives of the patrons in his service area. He functioned for a few years as a Branch Services Librarian overseeing two branches and a service outlet and gained valuable insight into working with a management team.

During his eleven-year tenure with the Lee County Public Library, he explored other areas of librarianship and a few areas outside the norm for a public librarian. His abilities grew and expanded after completing the Library Financial Management Certification Program. Gaining new insights into the business of running a library not only presented a unique challenge personally, but also provided an avenue to expand into library management, leadership roles, human resource development and training, accounting, and records management. In 2021, he accepted the position of Assistant Director for the Lee County Library. Kennedy began developing more non-traditional skills by managing the Library's event venue and conference center, balancing the rigors of business transactions with customers, supply and demand management, and the customer service excellence needed to effectively operate an event venue.

After experiencing a single-county library for many years, he accepted the position of Assistant Director for the Kinchafoonee Regional Library in Dawson, GA in 2024. While only being in his new position for a little over a month, he has already reinvigorated the KRLS social media and marketing campaigns, initiated a staff development and onboarding project, embraced cataloging and metadata management as the new Head of Technical Services, and expanded his knowledge of regional library systems.

Aside from professional endeavors, Kennedy served on the Lee County Family Connection Board from 2021-2024 and served about a year as Chair. He currently lives in Leesburg, Georgia and enjoys spending time with his wife, Haley, and his daughter, Caroline.



Michael Kennedy earned his Bachelors of English Language and Literature, summa cum laude, from Valdosta State University in 2012. He is a 2016 VSU MLIS graduate, a 2014 Charles E. Beard Scholarship Award Winner, a 2016 Leadership Lee and Georgia Academy for Economic Development graduate, and a graduating member of the 2021-2022 PINNACLE leadership class provided through the Georgia Public Library Service for emerging leaders.

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

While attending VSU pursuing my MLIS degree, I wanted to experience as many different perspectives and avenues of librarianship as possible. While I greatly enjoyed the Management of Libraries and Introduction to Public Libraries courses, I felt a strong affinity early on towards the Children's Literature and Youth Programming courses available through the MLIS program. All of my courses helped color parts of what I would later learn was a wide and diverse fabric of librarianship that would become like a second skin or tool belt as I grew into each new role. I took many of the lessons I was learning on the job at the time starting out in the public library world and brought them to the classroom and many lessons from the classroom I tried implementing in the real world. Learning to navigate the challenges of managing a diverse group of employees was made so much more accessible after going through the MLIS program and gaining the confidence needed to push through those uncomfortable conversations that need to take place with co-workers and direct reports from time to time.

Alumni Spotlight: Michael Kennedy (cont.)

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

One of the most rewarding projects I was able to participate in and implement through the MLIS program was building and showcasing one of the special needs programs and then seeing the hard work of planning be fully executed in the real world and impact the lives of children in the library. I believe the project was for an outreach course and involved planning and implementation of a program from start to finish. I chose to focus on an interactive experience featuring the theme BUGS that I had never tried before with special needs children with differing abilities. The program incorporated a dimly-lit story time environment with accessible lighting and touch-assistive fidget toys for focus and had after-play activities including sensory bags with items simulating real bugs in the wild as well as sights and sounds to imitate the natural world. I will always remember the smiles on each child's face and the engagement of the teachers who assisted me.

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

When I began taking the Library Management course, I was still working as a Library Assistant but gradually gained more supervisory roles as I progressed in my studies and in my role with the Lee County Library. Many of the scenarios discussed as part of the course became to make even more sense as I applied those lessons to real life. Management of employees, creation of work schedules, evaluations, and time-off requests were all new to me at the time and building a relationship with the staff who you supervise is a big part of navigating the library world especially as you move up the ladder into leadership roles. Learning about the diverse nature of evaluating employees and building talent effectively was a huge aspect from the courses that I applied to my own work. I began to pivot from thinking of each individual problem that could arise and focused more on the big-picture functions of the library and ensuring that each person is properly placed and they have the tools to succeed even when the supervisor is not present.

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

While I used to not take my own advice, I am proud to say I'm in a new position in my career thanks to my own willingness to take that leap! I would encourage every new graduate to push past your insecurities, fear of failure, doubt in your abilities, or anything that may hold you back and JUMP! Jump into new opportunities even if you think you may not be perfectly suited for it, apply to the job you think you're not qualified for, take all the interview experience you can even if you're not hired right away and build your skillset even while waiting for a job to come open. Often what surprises you most are the things you would normally ignore. After working for many years in an environment that no longer served me, I can certainly say that taking a leap of faith is just as poignant and important for those of us who have been in the field for a while as those who are just entering. Choose the journey, invest in yourself, take the leap, and JUMP!

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:

Dr. Xiaoi Ren
Department of Library and Information Studies
Valdosta State University
1500 N. Patterson St.
Valdosta, GA 31698