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From your SOLIS President, Layla A. Zeytouni

Serving as VSU's SOLIS President for the 2023-2024 academic year has been an incredibly rewarding experience. Every person who has served on the SOLIS team this year has offered their unique perspectives and skills to help craft events and leadership changes that we hope will benefit the upcoming classes. We enjoyed meeting members of the MLIS community at the fall coffee hours and we're glad that we were able to raise some funds for donation in the annual winter virtual 5K!

One of our most exciting updates is the spring election cycle change. In the past, SOLIS leaders were elected in the fall, causing faculty to need to lead elections as SOLIS members had often graduated. Instead, spring elections offer MLIS students two opportunities: first, to be aware of and prepare for SOLIS events and meetings through the summer. Instead of rushing to plan fall events after elections, concrete plans can be made to ensure that SOLIS has the opportunity to reach as many students as possible. However, new students will still have the opportunity to participate: even though the officers and some advisory board members will be elected in the spring, spots will be held on the advisory board for fall recruitment to allow the incoming fall class to join the board as well.

While this helps offer longevity and stability to board members, the second beneficial aspect of the election change regards position transition. Currently, the officers do not always have the ability to contact former officers. In the new plan, officers will have a formal transition to share documents and best practices, ask questions, and establish contact between the boards if desired.

We hope that this will help joining SOLIS feel like your greater involvement in the MLIS community comes with stability, assistance, and guidance. Please reach out if you're interested in joining SOLIS this upcoming year: it's a great opportunity to get to know other students, become closer to MLIS faculty and staff, and connect with the greater college community—especially for those of us who live far from the city of Valdosta.

SOLIS Website: <https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/master-of-library-and-information-science/solis/>

From your SOLIS Vice President, Alana Baldwin-Joiner

Hello!

It's bittersweet to be saying farewell, but also a great opportunity to reminisce on what a fun and rewarding process it has been to serve as your SOLIS Vice President for the 2023-2024 academic year!

After serving as an Advisory Board Member in 2022-2023, I was excited to dive further into the SOLIS world for my last year in the Valdosta MLIS program. As an Advisory Board Member I got to help brainstorm, plan, and put on events for my fellow library and information science students alongside really amazing and dedicated SOLIS officers and Board Members, but as Vice President I also had the opportunity to represent the MLIS student body on the Curriculum Committee, hearing proposals for any changes to the courses and program we're all a part of! And work with another great team to put on a variety of student engagement initiatives.

This year it's been so neat to see folks participate in the virtual 5K, join us for our virtual speed-friending coffee hour hang outs, and use the MLIS Village page to find out more about our programs and connect with fellow students! We're also putting on the annual SOLIS t-shirt sale, where we raise funds for the SOLIS scholarship and folks get super soft tees that rep their MLIS program! We also amended the SOLIS bylaws to make the group more accessible to incoming students; I'm so excited to see how future elections go!

Serving alongside your passionate and creative SOLIS team these last two years has been a real treat, and I would definitely encourage any interested folks to run for next year's SOLIS squad! There's a role in SOLIS for any and all interests and specializations, so you can totally find your groove and gain valuable, library-specific leadership experience!

Thank you all for making this year as your SOLIS VP such a great one, and best of luck on the rest of your academic and library journeys!

Alumni Spotlight: Vanessa Claros

Vanessa Claros, earned her Bachelor's of Digital and Broadcast Journalism, cum laude, from the University of Georgia in 2013. She is a 2023 VSU MLIS graduate and a 2023 George Gaumond Award honoree.

She has held positions in various library settings including public, academic, and military. She began her library career in 2013 at Gwinnett County Public Library (GCPL) where she served as a Library Associate at various branches. While at GCPL, she spearheaded diverse programs to serve her community's growing Latinx population. Her interest in serving underserved communities motivated her to begin a series of bilingual adult crafts and a series of bilingual storytimes. During her time at GCPL, Claros wore various hats including being a teen rep and adult programming rep, and was selected to be part of GCPL's Libros En Español committee to help expand GCPL's Spanish collection.



Seeking new opportunities and professional growth, in 2019 she joined Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's (TAMU-CC) Mary and Jeff Bell Library's Resource Management and Discovery team. In her capacity as a Cataloging Specialist, she gained technical experience and ensured catalog records were accurate and accessible to patrons. While at TAMU-CC, she was selected to serve in the library's social media team, where she contributed weekly content to the Library's social media platforms.

After relocating to North Carolina, Claros joined the Marine Warrior Library in 2022. In her role as Library Tech, Claros began a series of bilingual storytimes and seeing a need, she began a series of conversational sessions for patrons of all ages to practice their English and Spanish.

Aside from her professional work, Claros enjoys volunteering in her community and is an active member in supporting the needs of military members and their families. She currently serves as a volunteer for the United Service Organization (USO) and for Marine Corps Air Station - Cherry Point.

Alumni Spotlight: Vanessa Claros

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

VSU's MLIS program offers a wealth of insightful courses, and I gained something from every course I completed, but my favorite courses include Management of Libraries and Information Centers and Community Building. Although Management of Libraries and Information Centers was one of the most challenging courses I took during my time in the program, the course developed a curiosity in me to possibly follow a management track in the long-term. The course taught me about effective ways to lead a diverse team and gave me the necessary tools to lead employees of different generations and communication preferences. Another one of my career interests is outreach and marketing, thus, Community Building was a class that I truly enjoyed. It kept me engrossed and reaffirmed my desire to pursue a role as an outreach or engagement librarian.

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

While taking Library Services for Patrons with Disabilities, I developed a community scan of my area and focused on the disability characteristics of my community. The data that I collected offered me insight about what disabilities affect my community and how I can better serve it.

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

When I signed up for the course Trauma Informed Librarianship, I was working at a military library and taking this course opened my eyes and changed the way I interacted with the military members that I served. Trauma happens to everyone, but military members endure a different kind of trauma that is not experienced by civilians - war. After evaluating the library that I worked for and talking to my colleagues, I realized that it lacked trauma informed support. After taking this course, I am more empathetic, and I reframed my way of thinking. When I encounter a patron that is having a bad day, instead of wondering "What's wrong with them?" I ask myself, "What happened to them?"

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

Advice I'd give to any graduate is use your time in graduate school to also think earnestly about what you like, what give you joy and what setting you want to be in. Although I was qualified to work in many different type libraries, I really liked the impact that libraries have on communities. I also have had a strong appreciation for programs in libraries. I sought a job in a system that prioritizes social impact programming in branches. Don't get frustrated with how long it may take to find your perfect job. It is worth the wait. Professional fulfillment is are worth the wait.

Call for Updates

Please share with us your news about recently awarded scholarships, a conference presentation, a paid internship opportunity, or other exciting news of your scholarly and/or professional achievements.

Please send your news items to xren@valdosta.edu as they happen. Thank you!

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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