# Candidate's Statement of Professional Achievements (SOPA)

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| **Incumbent** | Diana Ascher |
| **Functional Title** | Director, IS Lab |

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| **Effective Dates for Merit & Exceptional Perf Actions** | July 24, 2018 – December 31, 2020 |
| **Effective Dates for Promotion & Career Status Actions** | July 24, 2018 – December 31, 2020 |

**Criterion 1 – Professional Competence & Quality of Service within UCLA Library & the IS Lab**

My management practice centers on data analysis to identify and prioritize stakeholder needs for multiple resources, plan strategic implementation, measure the impact of decisions, and incorporate lessons learned in future decision making. My library practice focuses on continuous improvement in access to resources within an environment that induces creativity and knowledge exchange. Given the extremely small budget and lack of access to financial recordkeeping systems, I have taken an ultra-frugal approach to manifesting my vision for the IS Lab. A key aspect of this orientation is my commitment to repurpose every initiative undertaken in the IS Lab as an opportunity for practical experience for IS students. For example, our accessioning of the Barbara Tillett collection has been incorporated into our Accessioning & Digitization Workshop. Furthermore, each of these projects provides a case suitable for academic publication, which I am cultivating with the IS Lab Staff members.

Following the guidance of the Instructional Services Committee (ISC), I have solicited ongoing input, kept a running log of my activities, and provided periodic updates at weekly department meetings, monthly faculty and committee meetings, and to other stakeholders every three months. Word of rewarding relationships with the IS Lab traveled quickly; I soon began receiving requests for collaboration, meetings, and training sessions from students and faculty in other departments. I also visited library research and instructional technology labs at other institutions to learn what is possible and glean best practices from colleagues. Visits included Duke University (Nov 2018), the World Bank (Nov 2018), and Brown University (Nov 2019). Here at UCLA, I met with colleagues in Ethnomusicology (Dec 2018), Scholarly Innovation Lab (Dec 2018), Lux Lab (Jan 2019), and Audiovisual Preservation units (Jan 2020).

In addition, I drew on my background in leadership, management, and strategy to assist

the department with accreditation, communications, curriculum development, department morale, financial matters, and other managerial tasks outside the scope of my role as the IS Lab Director. Simultaneously, I trained new IS Lab Staff members, created new systems and protocols to facilitate the running of the IS Lab, launched more than two dozen initiatives to enhance the service offerings and facilities of the IS Lab, conducted financial analyses to track down missing funds, oversaw several independent study students, provided instructional support to ladder and adjunct faculty members, and finished off the year under budget with an extremely successful Showcase each academic year.

In the two years following Keri Botello's retirement, the IS Lab lacked a director to oversee recordkeeping and general upkeep of the facility. Thus, my first year as IS Lab Director was devoted to assessment (and cleaning). In addition to several beautification efforts, such as recovering damaged stacks endcaps and introducing succulent plants to the environment, I used surveys, interviews, feedback forms, review of records, and physical inspection to set a baseline from which to improve. For the first several months, I coordinated a team of one half-time programmer analyst and four part-time work-study students to complete a number of initiatives aimed at bringing current holdings under bibliographic control, reconfiguring the IS Lab space to protect collections in danger from environmental damage, and allocating space in a manner that better correlates to the IS Department's curricula. To ensure decisions about collection development and service offerings are data-driven, I implemented a variety of data-collection protocols, including a patron entry sensor; software to monitor use of computer programs; Qualtrics and Office 365 surveys; interviews with faculty, students, and staff; bit.ly URL tracking, and Microsoft Planner in Office 365 Teams. Simultaneously, I did quite a bit of forensic accounting research, through which I discovered more than $8,000 owed to the IS Lab. I built a temporary website for the IS Lab to serve as a resource for students and faculty until the new SE&IS website is rolled out. The website is linked to the department's social media accounts, which I also manage. Another major professional development project was the introduction of a new jobs database and interface, which I launched on the IS Lab's temporary website. It is the most visited of all IS Department website pages.

Among other projects, we've developed a handful of workshops that adhere to accreditation standards for aligning learning objectives and outcomes, which supplement the MLIS curriculum. Some of these workshops arose in response to faculty requests for research and/or software training, while others were created to support the crucial Internship Program and/or our long-term IS Lab enhancement projects. For example, in the process of bringing the IS Lab's collections under bibliographic control, we opened a portion of our shelf-reading exercise to students who wanted practical experience in the stacks. The cataloging and

barcoding initiative prepared our holdings for circulation for the first time in the history of the IS Lab; when the new library management system (LMS) is implemented across the University of California Libraries, the IS Lab's collections will be integrated.

In addition, we held workshops and one-on-one training sessions on accession and digitization, film handling, and working with the Zone C equipment. This year, we offered a new series of workshops to supplement the informatics specialization, as well. I also delivered several professional development workshops and one-on-one advising sessions (e.g., Resumes & Cover Letters, Interview Preparation) as part of our contribution to the Internship Fair.

To support lessons in our faculty's courses, we hosted faculty- and special-guest-led class sessions in the IS Lab, during which students acquired skills in emergency archival pre-servation techniques, data management, librarianship practices, audio format identification and assessment, and film and video handling and assessment. Importantly, students engaged in stimulating conversation with notable experts employing such skills in the wild.

I also contributed to the student experience through guest lectures and instructional support. For example, I delivered a guest lecture on Personas & Scenarios for IS 272 Human-Computer Interaction (Leah Lievrouw, Winter 2019); several students from this course have come to me for assistance with their class and internship projects as a result of this lecture. For Greg Leazer and Jonathan Furner's courses, I developed workshops on ContentDM, mySQLite, Open Refine, and Oxygen XML to supplement class lessons. I delivered these workshops as part of two guest lectures for IS 464 Metadata (Winter 2019) and on a drop-in basis for IS 260 Description & Access (Fall 2018, 2019, 2020) in the IS Lab.

I provided instructional development and design assistance for IS 289-3 Content Management Systems (Gregg Rugolo, Spring 2019), meeting with the instructor three times in person and once via phone to provide an assessment of his developing course plan and walking him through several suggested teaching activities. I arranged for a facilitated literature review training session with Diane Mizrachi for first-year PhD students in Fall of both 2018 and 2019. After the 2018 session, I held a two-hour discussion on research methods with PhD students in the IS Lab.

Other instructional support activities included procuring course reserves and providing digital versions of required readings to adjunct instructors, developing a corpus of printed course readings for students in the IS Lab, and troubleshooting numerous technical issues with classroom equipment. I also conducted an analysis of all course syllabi for the 2018-2019 academic year to determine what titles needed to be added to our collection. So far, we've added 250 books to ensure students may find any required course reading in the IS Lab. In addition, I often reviewed project proposals for various faculty and administrators. For

example, I consulted with Arif Amlani and Annie Lee on structuring a research lab forum and reviewed their project proposal before its submission to the Dean.

I played an instrumental role in winning a $300,000 grant from the Ahmanson Foundation to fund the expansion of the media archiving equipment and services offered in the IS Lab. Professor Ginny Walter's generous donation of a contemporary collection of multicultural children's literature makes ours one of the most robust in the world.

Prior to the pandemic, we saw increased use of every area of the IS Lab for many different purposes, such as holding classes, workshops, consultations, group meetings, and review sessions. In mid-March, I set up multiple home computers to host virtual spaces for these activities. Our transition was seamless, because we have a remote work policy in place.

In addition to serving on the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies Faculty Executive Committee (GSEISFEC), the Information Studies Faculty Executive Committee (ISFEC), the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC), the Instructional Services Committee (ISC), and the Professional Program Committee (PPC), I also participated actively as a member of the LAUC-LA Programs Committee, LAUC-LA Librarian of the Year Committee, the MLIS Program Coordinator Ad Hoc Search Committee, and the UCLA Library Diversity Committee. Additionally, I served on the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee to develop guiding principles for the IS Department; contributed heavily to our departmental and curriculum-development retreats, Convocation, and Orientation; and performed much of the planning and delivery of the Internship Fair.

## Criterion 2 – Professional Activity Outside the Library

I've served as an ad hoc reviewer for three academic journals, *International Journal of Communication*, *Harvard Misinformation Review,* and *Policy Sciences.* I've also contributed as a reviewer of submissions for four conferences: 2019 Annual Meeting of The Association for Information Science & Technology, Melbourne, Australia; iConference 2018: Transforming Digital Worlds, Sheffield, UK; and the 2019 and 2020 Society of Policy Scientists Annual Institutes, which I also convened as president.

In July 2019, the GSE&IS Dean solicited nominations for a new development training pilot, asking the Chairs of Education and Information Studies to provide the names of "the most promising candidate" from each department. The Chair nominated me for this opportunity for "motivated faculty who are committed to making the development process work better for everyone." I was awarded the Dean's Diversity Student Support Initiative grant to pursue a research project that will benefit MLIS students. In addition, outreach to LA Philharmonic resulted in a donation of ~$60,000 in audio equipment, and we recently received another

donation from a television station for video transfer equipment of about the same value. Thus, Zone C has benefited from an infusion of more than $100,000 in equipment in addition to purchases drawing on the IS Lab's budget.

Though not a core responsibility of my position, my work was instrumental to the department's ALA accreditation efforts. I created an index of all of the department's records of meeting minutes, aggregated data from multiple campus and external sources, analyzed and visualized the data to meet new reporting requirements, and contributed to the writing of the final report. I also suggested, created, and distributed a press release when we received ALA accreditation. The data collection, analysis, and visualization that was instrumental to our accreditation efforts will be enhanced by our participation in Slate-managed admissions, for which I advocated as a member of an informal ad hoc committee. I anticipate great progress in this work in the coming academic year, especially with the progress I am making with an undergraduate independent study project based on my long-term research on the intellectual and professional paths of individuals in the iSchools ecosystem. The aim of this project is to enable improved alignment among curriculum development, measurement of achievement, and market demand for our graduates.

Another significant contribution arose when our MLIS Program Director left the department. I was assigned by the Chair to teach the Internship Course and manage our relationships with Internship Sites until a replacement was hired. I overhauled and taught the course in Summer 2019, creating a detailed CCLE site and new class activities for the Fall 2019 offering. The course comprises three class sessions, which I developed. I also created a series of forms that enable electronic assignment submission via CCLE to build a digital database of and for the Internship Program. This innovation removes the burden of having to scan and run through optical character recognition all of the internship reflection essays that are a valuable, yet underutilized, resource generated by the course. We now have Dee Winn in the position of MLIS Program Manager. I've provided Dee with data and forms support as she acclimated.

I also worked concertedly to strengthen our relationships with existing and potential Internship Sites. For example, I worked with the Los Angeles Fire Department to propose a long-term collaboration to overhaul their library, which will provide paid internships for our students and serve as a model for strengthening our ties to the community through sponsored research and experiential learning opportunities. LAFD adopted the proposal, creating a new Senior Librarian position to implement the recommended course of action in concert with our Internship Program. Similarly, I met with the director of the LA Law Library to discuss the development of a series of workshops on special librarianship. As I worked to develop the series, I corresponded with several leaders at special libraries, such as Cedars-Sinai and St. Mary

Medical Center-Long Beach, as well as relevant associations, such as the Special Library Association, and the Southern California Association of Law Librarians. I also spoke with several UCLA Librarians who expressed an interest and/or willingness to contribute to the series.

**Criterion 3 – University and Public Service**

There have been numerous other accomplishments, which are less visible, but, perhaps, even more important. Many of these deal with strengthening our ties and relationships in the UC Libraries ecosystem and/or across units at UCLA. Most of these also involve time- and labor-intensive bureaucratic navigation. Several examples follow.

We are now integrated into the UCLA Library website and other internal systems where we previously had no presence. In addition, the IS Lab now has access to instrumental library systems and resources, which were previously inaccessible, such as an allocation for deposits to the Southern Regional Library Facility (SRLF), a presence on the Confluence/Jira network, library software via Citrix, barcodes within the UCLA series, LibGuides, UCLA Library Data Lake, our own instance of ArchivesSpace, and Voyager and Connexion access.

We now have representation on the Library Collections Council, as well as the Digital Research Consortium. We have restored representation in LAUC-LA through my participation on committees and attendance at relevant events. I have forged new relationships with the UCLA affiliate librarians, which has contributed to an increase in opportunities for our students throughout the UC Libraries, in addition to enhanced exchange of best practices. Hosting the UCLA Library Grand Tour—another first—also has enhanced the visibility of the IS Lab.

I reached out to Marty Brennan to discuss the potential for the IS Department to serve as a guinea pig for a project aimed at bringing departments into full compliance with the UC Open Access Policy. At the November 2019 IS department faculty meeting, Marty and I introduced the pilot project. We worked with all current IS faculty to get the entire department up to full compliance with the UC Open Access Policy by the end of February 2020.

I recognized another opportunity to improve the visibility and impact of the IS Department when I received an email about UCLA Volunteer Day. I knew that Anne Gilliland was planning for her students to process materials in storage at the VA Psychiatric Hospital in the Fall 2019 term. I pitched the idea that we could kick off the project on UCLA Volunteer Day, and get the materials in some sort of order in preparation for her course. Anne lauded the event in an email to the Chair: "I think we got a lot of positive attention for the department, and more importantly, we got a great start to the planning and development work…to establish an archives for the Veterans."

In addition, I delivered an orientation session on behalf of Graduate Division for all

incoming PhD students in 2018 and 2019, a Personal Branding Workshop for Graduate Students in the Social Sciences and Humanities in 2018, and have provided assistance to many patrons outside the UCLA Library and the Department of Information Studies.

In my capacity as Senior Advisor on Data Ethics to the Enterprise Data Management Council (EDMC), I delivered two keynote addresses to members at the annual briefing in New York. I have developed a series of online courses in data ethics that will launch on the EDMC platform this Spring. I also hosted a webinar on ethical pitfalls in AI. I also sit on the Steering Committee of the Data Science Foundation and serve as President of the Society of Policy Scientists. Presiding over the Society of Policy Scientists Annual Institute last year, I conducted a Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon to improve public knowledge of the Policy Sciences. This year I presided over the Institute again, in its first virtual iteration.

As Founder of the Information Ethics & Equity Institute, I provide evidence-based research and training to foster social justice and diversity among data and information workers. The curricula I develop for this non-profit, public-benefit organization is accredited by the International Association for Continuing Education & Training (IACET). In 2018, I hosted a webinar for IACET on data ethics for continuing education and training organizations.

## Criterion 4 – Research or Other Creative Activity

By virtue of a Dean's Diversity Student Support Initiative grant, I worked on a pilot study of co-authorship in LIS in which we examine the effects of heterogenous co-authorship on diversity goals. An article on our findings is in process. I've also been working with Shawn VanCour and Helen Magid on three community archives initiatives in which the IS Lab plays a central role. We submitted grant proposals to IMLS and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which were not funded. However, our proposal to the Ahmanson Foundation was successfully funded for $300,000. I completed a large project ($113,000) funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on the evaluation of technology aimed at improving post-secondary school student success.

I published a book chapter entitled, "Unmasking hate on Twitter: Disrupting anonymity by tracking trolls," based on my network analysis research on Southern California neo-nazis. A book based on my dissertation, *New Yellow Journalism,* is awaiting revision and resubmission to MIT Press. I'm also working on an article entitled, "Inculcating data ethics among the world's most powerful organizations: Enhancing data governance in the DCAM Framework." I also published a thought piece on LinkedIn, entitled "Contextualizing Cambridge Analytica."

I have been interviewed for a handful of popular and business media pieces on data ethics, and occasionally provide expert declarations on new media and journalism ethics.