THE NEXT FRONTIER:

**MARA** alumni poised for leadership in information governance

The second group of students to earn their Master of Archives and Records Administration (MARA) from San José State University are eager to leverage their new degrees to pursue career opportunities in information governance.

Some of the 2012 MARA graduates plan to pursue promotions where they already work, now that they have their new degree in hand in a field primed for growth. Others hope to transition to new jobs in corporate, government, and nonprofit institutions. One graduate plans to continue her education by earning a doctoral degree.

Like many of her peers, recent graduate Ember Krumwied chose the MARA program because of its dual focus on records management and archives. She already works in records management and is a certified records manager. She enrolled in the program in order to expand her future career options with a degree that includes both records management and archival coursework.

As Krumwied and the other 2012 graduates pursue career opportunities, current MARA students continue to benefit from a range of activities that will make them more employable after graduation.
MARA students interact with experts in the field via webinars. Recent guest presenters explored privacy issues in records management, the impact of social media on records management practices, and how to develop a realistic and sustainable retention schedule. All presentations are recorded and made freely available via the SLIS website.

MARA alumnus Robert McLaughlin made a guest presentation as part of the 2011-2012 colloquium series, discussing enterprise content management. After earning his MARA degree in Spring 2011, McLaughlin received a promotion and now works as a Records and Information Governance Lead for an oil and gas company based in Canada. He's responsible for the organization's information governance and enterprise content management deployment in North and South America.

MARA students also connect with the professional community through an annual online conference hosted by the SLIS Virtual Center for Archives and Records Administration (VCARA). The center opened in 2009 and provides a virtual space for events, exhibits, meetings, and presentations.

The 2012 VCARA conference focused on career opportunities in the digital age. Speakers and poster sessions explored emerging technologies, such as social media and cloud computing, discussing how these technologies demand a new set of competencies for information professionals.

Dr. Nancy Barnes, a MARA instructor and consultant to ARMA International, believes the future looks promising years, including serving as a records manager and archivist at the Royal Bank of Canada in Toronto. “The wonderful thing about working in the field is that it’s ever-changing. It’s challenging, but it’s also what I find exhilarating about the profession. You have to be at the top of your game, keep current, and be constantly learning.”

MARA students learn both theory and practice of archives and records and information management. The curriculum is customizable with core courses and elective courses, including electives from courses offered in the School’s Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) program.

According to Daulby, who also serves as a MARA student advisor, the ability to take MLIS courses not only expands elective options for MARA students, but also helps students enlarge their professional network, which is important in today’s competitive job market. “As MARA students interact with MLIS students and faculty, they’ll gain a diversity of perspectives that will serve them well in the future,” said Daulby.

“With so many MLIS elective choices available to MARA students, it is easy for students to tailor the program to meet their interests and career goals,” added Daulby. Students can take MLIS electives that explore emerging technology, dive into more in-depth archives and preservation courses, or study new professional trends, such as digitization, information security, the impact of Web 2.0 on records management, and curation of new digital media.