



2023-2024 SOLIS Officers Nominees

Nominee for SOLIS President:

Bio: Layla Zeitouni is an Associate Professor of English in Boston, Massachusetts. She is pursuing her MLIS in hopes of increasing understanding of collaboration between academic departments and for her long-term dream of working as a children's librarian in her future. She spends her free time reading and writing children's literature, taking her dog and rabbit on walks, working with children at summer programs, and serving as Chair of her Greek organization's local advisory board. Her interests include the representation of Middle Eastern and North African diaspora in youth literature and the preservation of oral traditions and original folk tales.

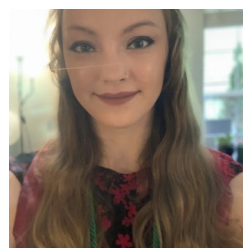


Election Statement: Student organizations are such an important part of our mental health and well-being—especially as graduate students in a virtual environment. As President, I'd love to help SOLIS encourage involvement from as many members of the MLIS program as possible to provide a support system, especially for students far from VSU, through collaboration with MLIS faculty and SOLIS officers.

Nominee for Communications Officer:

Bio: Kieren (Ren) Fox holds a Bachelor of Arts in Literature from SUNY Purchase. They are in their sixth semester in the MLIS program. They currently work as a Library Assistant in the Technical Services department at Iona University, though their previous experience is in public libraries. In their free time, Kieren has been enjoying long walks with good audiobooks.

Election Statement: I am interested in running for the Communications Officer position because I have extensive editing and social media experience, including running the newsletter for a student-led organization as an undergraduate. I would also love the opportunity to challenge myself with non-academic endeavors at VSU. Additionally, being a SOLIS officer is a great way to bridge the gap between myself and the rest of my classmates, due to the fully online nature of the program.



Nominee for SOLIS Vice President:

Bio: Alana Baldwin-Joiner currently works in circulation at the Lake Oswego Public Library in Oregon and is going into her second year as a student in the Valdosta State MLIS program with a focus on Adult Services and Administration. In the 2022-23 school year, she served as a SOLIS advisory board member, where she had the exciting opportunity to assist in brainstorming and planning for programs to create community amongst MLIS students. After completing her Master's degree, she is planning on enrolling in the Doctorate in Public Administration program at Valdosta State with the goal of becoming a Library Director in the future. Alana is very passionate about the resources, support, community engagement, and information services that libraries provide, and loves being a part of such a valuable service in her community and getting to know all of the wonderful individuals who work in libraries of all kinds.

Election Statement: As a fellow MLIS student at Valdosta, I am passionate and committed to advocating for the needs of the student body when curriculum changes are being discussed, and I am very excited to become more involved with SOLIS after my year as a board member and aide our incoming president to support and represent MLIS students!



2023-2024 SOLIS Officers Nominees

Nominee for Secretary:

Bio: **Cara Mikaelian** currently lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan and works at the Flat River Community Library as a circulation clerk. Her interests include archival science, cultural heritage preservation, intellectual freedom, media literacy, and outreach. She received her B.S. in Information and Library Science from the University of Maine at Augusta in 2022.

Election Statement: It can be challenging to make connections with other students outside of academics—especially in a virtual program—and serving as SOLIS Secretary in the 2023/2024 academic year would be a great opportunity to foster a stronger sense of community and support the future of VSU’s MLIS program. I would love to use the organizational skills I have gained through my experience with records management to help SOLIS thrive, as well as create new connections with my peers.



SOLIS Advisory Board Member Nominees



Bio: Hey, I’m **Will Wood** and I work full time as a library associate in coastal Georgia. I earned my MA in History with a Public History focus in 2018 and am getting my MLIS for a career in archives and to better help the public I serve.

Election Statement: I’m running for the advisory board because I want to support the officers in all their endeavors and foster a sense of camaradery among our remote learning student body. If chosen as a board member, my emails are always open to listen to activity ideas that help us better connect with each other.

Bio: I am **William K. Wallace** and I live in Salisbury, MD. I have worked at the Wicomico Public Library, Pittsville Branch, since 2019 as a dedicated library professional. I am currently in the penultimate semester of my MLIS journey. My personal areas of interest in library-related pursuits involve making the library a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive public service and workplace. I received my bachelor’s degree in history from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore (UMES) in 2011. While at UMES, I served as the President of the Drama Society. I am also currently on the EDI Panel of the Maryland Library Association, the steering committee of the Wicomico County Truth & Reconciliation Commission, and hold a board membership in the Salisbury Chapter of PFLAG.



Election Statement: I am running for the advisory board because I believe it is essential to have people of color represented in the process. While librarianship remains a largely white-dominated profession, the service communities are growing browner. I bring my lived experience as a Black gay person, both as a patron and as a staff member, which has provided me with unique insights and frustrations. Additionally, I have the benefit of engaging in meaningful conversations with colleagues of color, thanks to my work experience and participation in the Black Caucus of the Maryland Library Association and the American Library Association. My commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, along with my ability to collaborate and problem-solve, makes me a valuable candidate for this role, and I believe these qualities would be an asset to our organization.

Alumni Spotlight: Kimberly R. Basso



Kimberly graduated in summer 2023 from VSU MLIS. After working in communications for 20 years, I decided to indulge a lifelong love and pursue a career in libraries. I currently work full-time in Serials/e-Resources at Francis Marion University's library, where I find myself both challenged and rewarded, but I also wanted the fulfillment of working with students. Earning my MLIS degree from Valdosta gave me that opportunity. I recently accepted a position as an Adjunct Professor of Library Science at Coker University, where I will teach LIB 101 "Introduction to Library Resources." I am also studying for a second master's degree, M. Ed. in Teaching and Learning, and expect to graduate in December of 2024.

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

I enjoyed all my reference courses, both because I felt like I learned valuable information about research and because Dr. Ren was a fair and informative teacher. The course that surprised me the most was management. I didn't think I had any interest in it, but I loved the case studies and was invested in the outcome of my management consultancy project.

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

I had several I enjoyed, like a paper on ChatGPT I did for 7510 Technologies, but if I had to pick a favorite it was the Client Research Report I did for 7110 Online Searching. I was apprehensive because we had to partner up and it can be difficult to schedule just because everyone is so busy, but my partner was wonderful to work with. We were able to pick our own topics, and she wanted to know about the effects of microdosing psychedelics as a therapeutic treatment for anxiety and depression. I admit to having some preconceived ideas about psychedelics that were repudiated by my research. The assignment itself was a nice rehearsal for an actual reference appointment, and the topic was fascinating.

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

Making videos and giving presentations was something I found time-consuming and not necessarily enjoyable during my classes but thank goodness I was made to do them! Previously, I had a rudimentary knowledge of PowerPoint and Canva, but wasn't really skilled in making engaging presentations, slideshows, or videos. I had to learn how to do it for many different assignments, and I got better each time. It was all worth it because the class I am teaching is online and making videos is an absolutely essential part of my new job.

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

First, don't be afraid to ask your Valdosta professors to be a reference or write you a reference. I was anxious about it, but when applying for jobs and programs I was often asked for several professional references, and I needed/wanted more than just the few trusted coworkers I have. Our Valdosta professors work, teach, and live in the library "world," so they know what recruiters and managers are looking for. I couldn't have asked for better references than the ones I got. Second, don't be afraid to take an alternate route to your goals. My goal was to be an instruction librarian, and I am one, despite not originally having plans to be an adjunct. Even though it is not full-time (yet) I am actually happy that I can ease into it and see if I like it without being overwhelmed.

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