

Experiential Learning: Voices of Librarians-to-Be

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Library Opportunities, Paid and Unpaid

- Research Assistants: students; paid; up to 4 semesters
- Internships and fieldwork: students: unpaid: course credit
 - Prospective and current students and recent graduates
- Volunteers: unpaid, length varies, HR process complex
- Students from UNC-CH, NCCU, UNCG and beyond

Mentoring

- Applicants for unpaid positions require mentoring to present themselves and their credentials appropriately for consideration
- All experiential students, paid and unpaid, receive mentoring on a variety of topics
- Mentoring often continues, even beyond graduation

Challenges

- Current openings or available work may not match requests, especially for trendy topics
- HR requirements (e.g., paperwork, background checks)
- Students from different universities have different requirements
- Students requesting online experiences present special challenges
- Connecting a request with the right librarian in a large library system

Michele Clark - Introduction

- MLS in academic and digital librarianship
- PhD in musicology and other graduate music degrees
- Internships at UNC, Duke University, and State Library of NC
- Learned about internships through professional connections

Collaboration with HSL

- Currently working in UNC Department of Radiology
- Relationship with HSL librarian led to project to deposit Radiology materials in UNC institutional repository
 - Radiology supportive of Michele playing a role in gathering materials as well as describing them
 - Opportunity to gain experience with subject analysis, controlled vocabularies, and metadata

Internships: Vital for Professional Development

- Acquire skills and training beyond limits of a 2-year MLS program
- “MLS World” vs. real library environment
- Open doors to other avenues of professional growth
- Build crucial, lasting professional connections
- Challenges after MLS program

Shannon Delaney - Introduction

- **UNC SILS** for MSLS; graduating May 2020
- Clinical, Academic, and Research Engagement (CARE)/User Services department Graduate Research Assistant; Sept. 2018 - present
 - Found out about position through the SILS student listserv
 - Hiring process: application and interview
 - Paid plus tuition stipend and student health insurance
- **Prior to SILS:** worked as a copywriter/editor at marketing companies for 3 years
- BA in Classical Studies and Philosophy; intended to go to law school

Responsibilities and Projects as RA in CARE

- Basic reference (chat, AskUs submitted questions)
- Consultations and scheduled classes for citation managers: EndNote, Mendeley, F1000 (Hadn't used these prior)
- Editing LibGuides
- Archives project for Allied Health Sciences – investigating a department's history
- Working with [Impact Measurement and Visualization](#) group
- Assisting with other projects as needed – finding articles, performing basic searches, etc.

Value of Working in a Special Library

- First library job - critical for students who have switched career paths
 - Builds confidence
 - Helps define strengths & weaknesses
- Specialized experience isn't necessary to make valuable contributions; both library and student can benefit
 - Strong interest in the specialized area isn't even necessary!
- Observing “real life” librarianship is valuable: teaching classes, preparing for consults, conducting interviews, joining department meetings, etc.

Natalie Dwigans, MLIS

- About

- Recent MLIS graduate of UNC Greensboro's online program
- HSL Metadata and Cataloging Unpaid Internship
 - For Credit Practicum Experience

- Practicum Goals

- Develop a deeper understanding and knowledge of metadata & cataloging practices
- Expand on knowledge and practice of subject analysis
- Gain knowledge of librarian professions in an academic library

Opportunities

- Networking
 - Meetings held with other academic professionals and para-professionals
- Professional Development
 - Information about hiring/interview processes in academic libraries
 - Feedback on CV
 - Conference presentations
- Future
 - Applying for professional librarian positions
 - Confidence in application/hiring processes for academic positions
 - Excited to be able to apply methods learned from this experience in a future position incorporating cataloging or metadata

Amanda Haddock - Introduction

- MSIS, graduated May 2019
- Clinical, Academic, and Research Engagement (CARE)/User Services Graduate Research Assistant, Aug 2017-July 2018
- Impact Measurement and Visualization (IMV) Assistant, August 2018 – present
- Currently working as a temp for both IMV and CARE departments

Clinical, Academic, and Research Engagement RA

- Found Opportunity through SILS student listserv
- Was in this role for a year, typically RAs stay for 2 years
- Paid plus tuition stipend and student health insurance
- Responsibilities and Projects
 - Chat and reference
 - Taught EndNote class
 - Developed Full-Text Gathering service for Systematic Reviews

Impact Measurement and Visualization (IMV) Assistant

- Member of IMV team first year while working in CARE
- New position was created within IMV based on my skills and interests; was asked to become solely IMV RA.
- Paid plus tuition stipend and student health insurance
- Projects
 - Bibliometric Analysis
 - Research network visualizations

Impact on Professional Development

- Integration with coursework
 - Master's Paper: Bibliometric analysis of UNC-CH Opioid Publications
- Real world skills built on academic work
 - Use of Python skills learned in classes in analysis work
 - Used skills learned in Systems Analysis to build Full-Text Service for Systematic Reviews
- Finalist for NCSU Library Fellows Program
- Opportunities to work with library and information professionals
 - STELLA Unconference Committee Member
 - Poster presented at 2018 MAC (Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the Medical Library Association) conference

So You Want to Be a Librarian? Guide

- Created in response to requests from prospective librarians, especially teens and college students
- Our experiential learners have also found it to be useful as they consider career choices

<https://guides.lib.unc.edu/wanna-be-librarian>

For more...

Main, L. R. (2011, July). *Field Experience in Library Science Education and the Health Sciences: A Survey*. (Master thesis). University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

- Good overview
- Open access in UNC Institutional Repository (Carolina Digital Repository): https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/concern/masters_papers/cv43p141t?locale=en

Small body of literature:

- Discoverable in LIS databases (e.g., Library & Information Science Source and Library and Information Science Abstracts/LISA)

Thank You!

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