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Apr 6th, 12:00 AM - 2:00 PM

## Science Librarian Internship as a Way to Get Started in E-Science

Wanda Anderson  
*Boston College*

Margaret Cohen  
*Boston College*

Enid Karr  
*Boston College*

Barbara Mento  
*Boston College*

Kate Silfen  
*Boston College*

*See next page for additional authors*

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### Repository Citation

Anderson, W., Cohen, M., Karr, E., Mento, B., Silfen, K., Wyman, S., Holzman, B., & Morales, M. E. (2011). Science Librarian Internship as a Way to Get Started in E-Science. *University of Massachusetts and New England Area Librarian e-Science Symposium*. <https://doi.org/10.13028/zk5y-jn60>. Retrieved from [https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/escience\\_symposium/2011/posters/6](https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/escience_symposium/2011/posters/6)

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**Presenter Information**

Wanda Anderson, Margaret Cohen, Enid Karr, Barbara Mento, Kate Silfen, Sally Wyman, Becky Holzman, and Myrna E. Morales



# Abstract

## Science Internship as a Way to Get Started in E-Science

Boston College Libraries  
Science Bibliographers' Group (Wanda Anderson, Margaret Cohen, Enid Karr, Barbara Mento, Kate Silfen and Sally Wyman; with Becky Holzman, Science Librarian Intern Summer/Fall 2008 and Myrna Morales, Science Librarian Intern Summer 2010)

### Objective

To demonstrate how a science librarian internship program can be used to jumpstart an e-science initiative in a university research library

### Methods

Current library science students were hired, as paid interns, to work with an established Science Librarian Bibliographers' Group. While the position included exposure to the wide variety of activities undertaken by science librarians, the most recent intern, arriving with a strong interest in e-Science, was also tasked with assisting in specific assignments designed to further the Library's understanding of and participation in the area of e-Science. Specifically, the intern was asked to design a brochure about e-Science, develop a faculty survey to gauge interest in library involvement in data management, assist Science Librarians in an environmental scan/best practices review of relevant e-science initiatives, to serve as a roadmap in this area for the Boston College Libraries, and, finally, to further the education of all library staff with a presentation on e-Science.

### Results

Building upon the intern's extensive literature review, draft brochure and PowerPoint presentation/synthesis, the Science Bibliographers' Group has continued work on next steps in e-Science, with the development of a Vision Statement and Action Plans, as well as draft faculty/student/staff survey. The intern was exposed to a wide variety of typical science librarian job functions

### Conclusions

An internship program can provide current knowledge and skills to educate and support a university research library through the early learning stage of developing an e-Science program, while simultaneously providing a valuable hands-on learning experience for a potential science librarian.



# Science Internship as a Way to Get Started in E-Science

Boston College Libraries



Becky DeAngelis Holzman



Myrna Morales

## Goals of the Science Librarian Internship, Boston College Libraries

- Gain added support for collection development and reference activities;
- Hire a candidate who had a clearly demonstrated interest and experience in the sciences;
- Foster interest and excitement in science librarianship as a career path for students pursuing library/information science graduate degrees in the Boston area;
- Raise awareness locally that Boston College is working to enhance its science collections, as its science faculty increase in prominence;
- Promote the idea that BC would be a good place to consider for future employment; and

This first experience was so successful that when funding became available again for Summer 2010, the Group submitted another, similar proposal, but, this time, with e-Science-related activities/tasks featured much more prominently.

## Position Posting - 2010

### Science Librarian Paid Internship, O'Neill Library, part time (10 hours/week)

This is a one semester (summer), 10 hour per week, paid internship for a student currently enrolled in library school with a strong interest in pursuing librarianship in the sciences. The flexible schedule may include day/evening hours. There is some possibility of extension of the position into the fall semester.

**Responsibilities:** The science librarian intern works with and will have direct contact with the science subject specialists to gain experience working with various science collections. The intern will also have an opportunity to work with the science bibliographers' group on projects such as an environmental scan of e-science initiatives having pertinence to Boston College, research related to academic e-book purchasing/subscription options, analysis of electronic journal usage data, weeding of print collections and identification of gaps in specific areas. In addition, the intern will have an opportunity to assist in the development of research guides and other instructional materials. The intern will also gain experience and knowledge of current reference services at the O'Neill Library by training at the reference desk and using electronic resources in a highly technical environment. Other project work will depend on interest and skill level.

**Requirements:** Enrollment in an ALA-accredited library and information science program of study and a letter from a faculty member at that institution recommending candidate for the internship. The intern must have completed at least one reference course and have an interest in exploring science librarianship. Ability to work effectively in a service-oriented environment and a familiarity with bibliographic databases, particularly in the sciences, experience with Excel or Access, are also desired.

Boston College is a leading Jesuit, Catholic university that enrolls 14,300 students and annually awards more than 4000 undergraduate and graduate and professional degrees, Boston College, in concert with its Jesuit, Catholic mission, is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer. The Library is a member of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL).

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Please send cover letter, resume and contact information for two references to: Sally Wyman, Collection Services Librarian, sally.wyman@bc.edu

## Remarks from Interns and Librarians

### From Interns:

"culminating activities such as the eBook Bibliography, Video Tutorial and E-Science presentation allowed me to appropriately assess my strengths and identified my areas of improvements."

"this experience has been solidifying, gratifying and above all, electrifying! Who knew science librarianship could be so exciting? Apparently, you all did."  
"Working with such a diverse group of librarians offered exposure to a wide range of perspectives, and I was able to see what different roles librarians can play in an academic library. I feel much better prepared than I did before the internship to undertake the search for my first professional library position. I had an excellent experience as an intern at the Boston College Libraries this summer, and it reinforced my decision to pursue academic science librarianship."

### From a Librarian:

"We have been extremely lucky in finding two terrific interns who wanted to come and share their very current learning in library school on a whole host of topics, including e-science. They, in turn, got a quick introduction to a variety of ways of "doing" science librarianship across a range of disciplines in working closely with each of us."

## What Did Intern Gain?

- A better understanding of the role of science librarians, particularly in an academic setting
- Experience in working with different supervisory styles and different disciplines in the sciences
- Exposure to the variety of tasks and concerns that form a science librarian's day
- A wealth of experience to bring to their future job-hunting through in-depth work in e-Science, journal collection analysis, budget allocation issues and other areas

## What Did the Boston College Libraries Gain?

- Invaluable insight into current thinking in library school, especially in e-Science and technology
- Significant, long-lasting contributions to the everyday work of each of the bibliographers
- Measurable advancements in the e-Science agenda
- Draft for an e-Science brochure for Boston College
- A well-attended PowerPoint presentation for Library staff on e-Science trends and potential for Boston College Libraries

## What's Happened Since (Fall 2010)?

Following up on Myrna's work, the Science Bibliographers' Group created a draft Vision Statement and Action Items for next steps.

### February 2011

Met with Library Administration (University Librarian, Associate University Librarians, Heads of Reference/Instruction and Collections and Scholarly Communication Librarian), to present draft Vision Statement/Action Items, and draft brochure and survey, to request support for moving ahead.

### The Future

The meeting ended with the University Librarian's voicing strong support. Initial follow-up discussions included plan for possible "data summit" meeting later in the spring, bringing together key stakeholder campus offices for brainstorming with the Librarians in this effort. More recently, this thinking has evolved to a short-term focus on high-profile educational efforts featuring outside invited speakers engaged in e-Science, coupled with possible site visits. Additionally, a "scholarly communication" survey for faculty is now underway, collecting feedback on data support needs.

## Structure and Tasks of Internships (2008 and 2010)

Intern worked closely with each member of the Group through the internship, with each group member supervising hands-on work of particular interest to that member, and a single member serving as "point person" for overall scheduling and logistics. Desired tasks were a combination of specific tasks and "running" tasks. Specific tasks had clearly-defined endpoints, while running tasks were those that could be worked on throughout, and not requiring immediate supervision. Running communication, as well as periodic check-in meetings with the whole group, kept things on track and allowed feedback on work load. Google Calendar used to assign "contact person" librarian for each day.

## Internship Proposals Evolution

### Spring 2008 Internship Proposal

The Science Group proposed a paid internship position to foster interest and excitement in science librarianship as a career path for students pursuing library/information science graduate degrees in the Boston area. Specific tasks supervised by members of the Science Group.

### Summer/Fall 2008 Internship

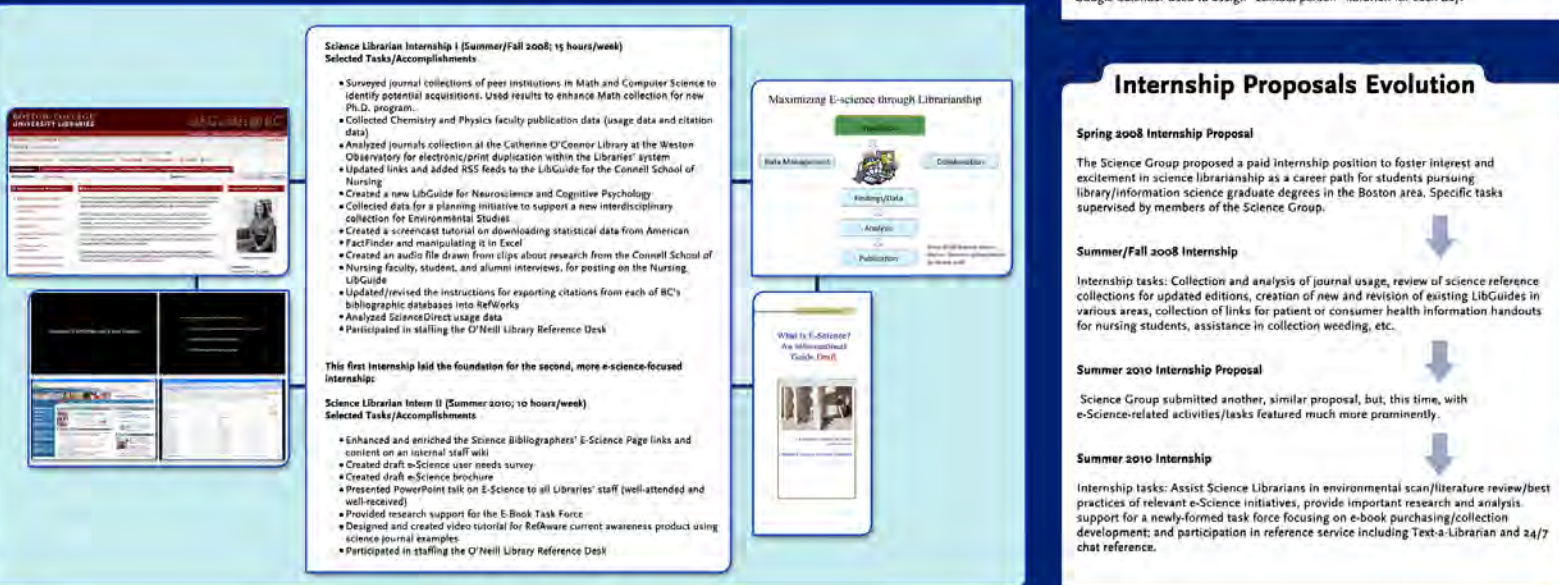
Internship tasks: Collection and analysis of journal usage, review of science reference collections for updated editions, creation of new and revision of existing LIBGuides in various areas, collection of links for patient or consumer health information handouts for nursing students, assistance in collection weeding, etc.

### Summer 2010 Internship Proposal

Science Group submitted another, similar proposal, but, this time, with e-Science-related activities/tasks featured much more prominently.

### Summer 2010 Internship

Internship tasks: Assist Science Librarians in environmental scan/literature review/best practices of relevant e-Science initiatives, provide important research and analysis support for a newly-formed task force focusing on e-book purchasing/collection development; and participation in reference service including Text-a-Librarian and 24/7 chat reference.



## Boston College Libraries E-Science Vision Statement Draft; Rev 1-14-2011

The Boston College Libraries will be recognized as an important partner and collaborator with scientists across the disciplines and other university departments in the education, development and establishment of best practices in data discovery, curation, management and sharing across campus. This new area of emphasis augments the Library's long-standing and continuing commitment to discovery, curation and management of publications data. The Libraries will place a particular emphasis on excellence of service to users in increasing open access and discovery for both existing and newly-created data, in combination with long-term stewardship. Equal emphasis will be placed on building a robust infrastructure to support these efforts. The Libraries, with their strong subject liaison relationships, and bridge-building role, are well-positioned to support these central elements in achieving the University's strategic initiatives in the natural sciences, and supporting expanded dissemination and sharing of the scientific achievements and scholarship of Boston College.

## Next Steps

The Science Group is now at work on a proposal to offer the Science Internship again in Summer 2011, to assist in moving ahead with e-Science initiatives. Follow-up with faculty on results of data needs survey (included in March/April 2011 scholarly communication survey). Work with University Librarian on campus e-Science educational efforts.

## Description of the nature of the internship. What will the intern do? How does this work reflect the strategic direction of the Libraries?

### Science Intern

This internship provides added support for collection development and reference instruction for the sciences, an area widely recognized as being of strategic importance for Boston College and the Libraries. A variety of tasks listed here will, additionally, assist in advancing science initiatives at Boston College. This science internship position is very similar to an earlier and very successful science internship position supported by the Libraries in Commonwealth and, as such, has many of the same functions. In addition to direct support of collection and reference/instruction work, having awareness locally that BC is working hard on science collections and promoting the idea that BC would be a good place to consider for future employment, providing a very visible sign to support professional development activities focused on attracting more librarians to the sciences, and "spring boarding" the profession, by offering an experience that we hope would persuade this young individual candidate that science librarianship would be an exciting career choice.

Here is a brief list of specific tasks we would like you complete during the internship, with the most exciting starting with and benefiting from the ongoing Librarian's experience and subject knowledge, expertise relevant skills and newer technologies:

- Assist in the preparation of environmental scan/best practices analysis of relevant science initiatives based on existing a roadmap in this area for the Boston College Libraries.
- Assess inventory of science science collections, including Weebly and O'Neill Reference
- Identification of science journal/newly distribution possibilities
- Assess the Project - compilation of survey results, faculty analysis
- Assess - as the Libraries seek to move more aggressively to acquisition of e-books, this person will be able to provide department support for research and analysis of new platforms/versions/technology
- Participation in preparation of instructional materials and in instruction, where opportunities are available
- Work on new LIBGuides, updating of the LIBGuide created for use within the Reference Desk/Text-a-Librarian/24/7 service participation
- Budget allocation analysis support

### A. Required prerequisite courses:

Library 2510, LIS 404 Literature of Science and Technology (or equivalent from another library school program)

### B. Interest Qualifications:

The successful candidate should bring, first, a clear and demonstrated background and interest in the sciences, and have an equally strong interest in science librarianship in all of its dimensions. Many of the projects provided have a scientific focus, but we would also like this person to appreciate and have aptitude in working on library instruction materials and participating in instruction development, where opportunities will come throughout the summer. This person should also have a strong career orientation and interest in working with people, we would like to include O'Neill Reference Desk service as part of the weekly routine. A good candidate will also have a strong technical bent, bring to their knowledge of the latest technology systems present in the library school studies and bring their knowledge and skill with the Science Group and the rest of BCSD. Finally, the candidate should be highly self-motivated, and able to work well with a variety of supervisors (Science Group members) and the larger BCSD group.

### C. Proposed weekly schedule/number of hours requested:

We request support for 15 hours/week. We are flexible in how these hours would be arranged through the week

### D. Learning outcomes for intern and expected outcomes for library:

For Intern: The intern will gain "real-life" working experience in the field, dealing with issues and decision-making that science librarians encounter on a regular basis, collections weeding (culling of many kinds), journal cancellations/purchases (online and related titles), gift giving, faculty consultations, publisher offerings, attendances (conferences), and, as well, a more in-depth understanding of new technologies, creation of instructional materials, including LIBGuides (collection of appropriate resources, presentation and delivery choices), and experience in both traditional and newer reference service methods. And, in working with the science librarians, the intern will come away with a valuable knowledge of how libraries are working on better service alternatives for the E-Science future.

For Library: The library will benefit from the work of an enthusiastic, science-focused library school student who comes equipped to share with us the latest knowledge in technology solutions applied to collections and reference/instruction tasks described above.

### E. Evaluation process/formats:

Just as we did with our earlier interns, we would like evaluation to be a fundamental and ongoing aspect of this internship. And, as well, we would like you to have a clear timeline and clear expectations, with feedback provided in their direction. At the end of the internship and as a final assignment, we would ask the intern to write up an evaluation of the internship and an assessment of what he/she has learned, for a follow-up discussion and participation of the Group writing a final report for library administration.