FIMS Publications   Information & Media Studies (FIMS) Faculty

1-29-2015

Transitioning & Preparing Library Students: Canadian PD Programs

Amanda R. Kelly
Markham Public Library, akelly@live.ca

Sajni Lacey
Okanagan College, slacey@okanagan.bc.ca

Transitioning & Preparing LIS Students

Amanda R. Kelly
Community Librarian,
Business & Employment
Markham Public Library
@AK4DL
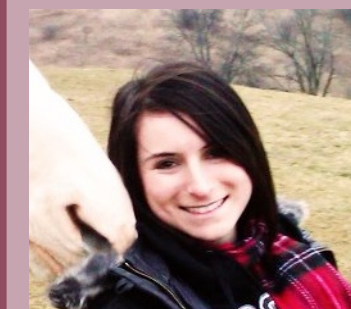
Sajni Lacey
Public Services Librarian,
Lakehead University

A tiered classification of PD programs was established based on findings and additional research[1,2]. PD programs were assessed according to learning objectives (perceived or stated), apparent cognitive impact as per Bloom's Taxonomy, and time commitment required by participants.

Beyond traditional course offerings, professional development (PD) opportunities equip students to secure employment and prepare them for professional longevity and fulfillment. Though basic employment rate remains a central, albeit short-term, success measure for LIS accreditations, graduates have reported feeling ill-prepared for the workforce[3,4,7].

This poster reviews and examines the PD programs available to Canadian Masters-level LIS students, as outlined on institutional websites. PD opportunities are explored, and frameworks for PD evaluation and strategies are proposed.

EVALUATION

Level A: Job Attainment

Min. TIME

Focus on securing a position
• Resume, CV, cover letter how-tos
• Portfolio creation
• Mock interviews

Level B: Professional Culture

Med. TIME

Intro to field practices, structure, expectations
• Job shadowing
• Informational lectures
• Guest speakers
• 'Backpack to briefcase' events
• Career conversations
• Student organization leadership positions

Level C: Career Development

Max. TIME

Generating, applying, testing foundational skills for long-term use
• Co-op placements
• Professional contributions
• Student and professional conferences
• Workshop series (goal-based active learning)
• Portfolio projects

BEYOND ACCREDITATION

• In a rapidly evolving knowledge-economy, ongoing investment in PD is integral to the success of those in the LIS field—at both the individual and institutional level.

• Regular assessment of a student PD strategy may increase graduate employability through timely experience and relevant skills, but also impart the role of PD in long-term career success[8].

• Institutional revaluation of PD programming in technology, leadership, analytics, and communication[2] are likely to result in the transferability of LIS qualifications

• The development of a structural framework for standardized assessment of LIS accreditation would benefit participating institutions, students and the LIS profession

FINDINGS

A review of PD offerings for Canadian LIS students, as promoted on institutional websites; degree awarded; most recent employment rate by institutional survey.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
73% reported 2011 — MLIS
• Capping Program (online publishing)

McGill
83% reported 2012 — MISt
• Practicum elective
• Research project
• Post-accreditation Certificate and Diploma

Université de Montréal
90% reported 2012 — MSI
• Internships
• Employment counsellor
• Topical workshops

uOttawa
93% reported 2012 — MIS (bi-lingual)
• Co-op program
• Independent research
• Peer-2-peer workshops
• Capstone projects

UNIVERSITY TORONTO
63% reported 2013-2014 — MIS
• Career officer & advisor
• Topical workshops & events
• Internships
• Practicum

Western UNIVERSITY · CANADA
78% reported 2010 — MLIS
• Co-op elective
• Independent research
• Topical workshops

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considerations when developing a PD strategy

• Employable competencies as identified by major employers, job boards[2], and labour market trend reports
• Needs of sectors increasingly requiring LIS professionals[1,6]
• Short- and long-term alumni feedback

• Diversifying topics, approaches, learning objectives[6]
• Value of creating custom in-house programs vs. leveraging external offerings
• Existing efforts and potential approaches

STRATEGIZING A PD ECOSYSTEM

A sample holistic approach to programming through coordinated initiatives at each level of the learning experience

Pre-Elective
• Informational sessions for diverse career paths
• Career conversations and counselling

Curricular
• Built-in community partnership project, coordinated by students
• Portfolio projects
• Co-op / internship
• Optional PD Certificate

Extra-Curricular
• PD formalized as a priority for student organizations
• Coordinated access to external opportunities (webinars, conferences)
• Mentoring, workshops, student conferences, networking

Post-Graduation
• Opening many programs to recent alumni

FUTURE RESEARCH

• Comprehensive annual profile of PD offerings by institution—outlining formal and informal programs, embedded experiential learning[5], and efforts of student organizations
• Longitudinal study to assess the correlation between student PD and key outcomes
• Review of student-oriented PD programs beyond post-secondary institutions, by professional organizations and grassroots groups
• Regular analysis of transferable LIS skills and employment trends beyond traditional librarianship[1,2]
• PD best practices in preparation for employment outside academic librarianship

REFERENCES Cited & Consulted

1. San José State University, School of information. (2014). Emerging Career Trends for Information Professional: A Snapshot of Job Titles in Summer 2014.

2. Fraser-Arnott, M. (2013). Library and Information Science (LIS) Transferable Competencies. Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research 8(2), 1-32.

3. Creel, S. L., & Pollicino, E. B. (2012). Practitioners' & LIS students' perceptions on preparedness in the New York metropolitan area. Education For Information, 29(1), 53-69.

4. Singh, V., & Mehra, B. (2013). Strengths and weaknesses of the information technology curriculum in library and information science graduate programs. Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, 45(3), 219-231. doi:10.1177/0961000612448206.

5. Rothbauer, Paulette. Call for Participants for LIS9367 Services for Children and Youth Interview Assignment. Reading Space. Jan 20 2015.

6. Stronski, L.M. (2004). Thinking Outside the Library: Employment Trends of Special Libraries Association Members.

7. Cox, A. M., Al Daoud, M., & Rudd, S. (2013). Information Management graduates' accounts of their employability: A case study from the University of Sheffield. Education For Information, 30(1), 41-61.

8. Leong, J. (2014). Purpose-driven Learning for Library Staff. Australian Library Journal 63(2), 108-117.