More than just a degree
Preparing Graduate Library Students for their future

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Abstract

The Graduate Library Assistant (GLA) program at the University of North Texas (UNT) Libraries is a pioneering example of how open libraries can facilitate open opportunities for UNT's Library and Information Science graduate students. A recent restructuring of this program created a new paradigm for training and mentoring, with an emphasis on cross-training, professional development, and providing outreach opportunities. The focus on career development is particularly important for non-traditional GLAs. This poster will provide valuable insight into this program, with input from two sides— supervisor and non-traditional GLA. Both can speak to the means by which GLAs are provided with learning and teaching opportunities which position and empower them to achieve their immediate and long-term career goals.

Current Program

Training and Cross-training

Professional Experience
- Reference & instruction
- Access Services & circulation
- Outreach
- LibGuides & projects

Professional Development
- Networking & mentoring

Non-Traditional GLAs

Challenges

Open Opportunities

Challenges	Open Opportunities
Shortage of time due to other job and personal commitments	• Mentoring & networking • Supportive manager
Gap between previous experiences and the library job expectations	• Training • Career development • Projects
Adapting to the new work environment	• Personalized training • Clear policy & procedures • Manuals

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Conclusion

The program's emphasis on professional and career development, specifically molded for the different career paths of each student's choice, has a direct and positive impact on non-traditional graduate students. By providing valuable personalized training, special projects, outreach opportunities, and mentorship, the program facilitates a smoother transition into a new career in librarianship for non-traditional students. The program is a model for other academic libraries interested in creating a training program for graduate library students.

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