

Cultivating Tomorrow's Librarians: From Library Interns to Library Leaders

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Research

Library internships have proven to be an effective way for library school students or recent library school graduates to gain practical experience in a library or information center before they venture out into the working world of information science. Nutefall (2012) states that, "For students wanting to become an instruction or public services librarian, gaining skills, knowledge, and experience in instruction are key, and the internship is one way students can gain these skills" (p. 80).

There are many factors that have an impact on whether or not a student's internship is considered successful. "A successful internship program should be advantageous to both the organization and to the interns" (Sargent, Becker, & Klingberg, 2011, p. 32). The mentoring librarian should provide plentiful opportunities for the intern to perform professional level duties so they are equipped with experience that will empower them to become leaders when they are hired. Opportunities for interns to work on self-guided projects tailored to their own professional goals is a great way of ensuring that the intern is acquiring usable skills for his/her future employment. Providing these great opportunities for professional growth and exploration is a benefit to both the intern and the internship site. Not only will the interns become more readily employable right out of library school, but the internship site will have the opportunity to nurture a new information professional during the early stages of their career into someone they would hire in the future.

Internship Toolkit

Tips for internship site & interns...

- ✓ define roles/expectations of intern and internship site
- ✓ have one internship coordinator/supervisor that will establish one-on-one relationship/mentorship with intern
- ✓ be prepared with professional duties and/or projects for the entire internship period to ensure all hours are spent meaningfully and productively
- ✓ provide opportunities for intern to experience the "real" campus culture, i.e. committee meetings, library events, staff meetings, etc.
- ✓ provide feedback on quality of work throughout internship period
- ✓ demonstrate trust in the intern by assigning duties requiring high responsibility, such as library instruction, reference work, and creating subject guides
- ✓ provide the opportunity and freedom for intern to choose self-guided projects tailored to intern's own goals (be flexible)
- ✓ provide an opportunity for intern to meet with all librarian staff for informal Q & A session

Q & A Session

Opportunities for gaining professional experience were amply provided at the John Spoor Broome Library, CSU Channel Islands. Mentorship was demonstrated most profoundly during a Q & A session with the librarians. The interns were able to ask the librarians anything, in an informal setting. Below are some of the most memorable pieces of advice that we received from the librarians.

"The people who won't make it are the ones who are afraid of things."

"Positive public service is important. Give best service no matter what level it is."

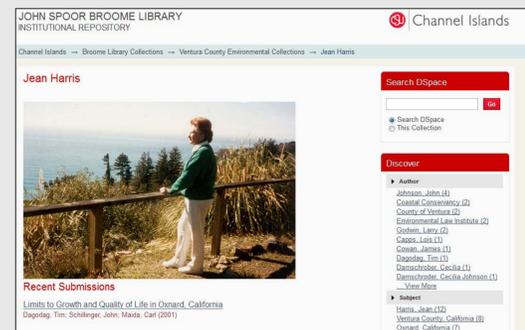
"Watch instruction, see what you do and don't like, and try it yourself. Take library school classes out of your comfort level. Don't get too narrow."

Internship Experience Spring 2011



Performing outreach for the Children's Reading Celebration and Young Author's Fair. With the opportunity created by the Outreach Librarian, I researched and compiled a list of local homeschoolers and private schools, groups that had not been included before in outreach. – Lauren Kelley

Screenshot of the Jean Harris Institutional Repository page. During my internship, one of my duties was to scan, upload and make ADA compliant various types of documents and artifacts in CSU Channel Islands' Institutional Repository. – Linda Carroll



During the Jean Harris Environmental Collection dedication event at the John Spoor Broome Library at CSU Channel Islands. As an intern I was included in the library events and even recognized as one of the contributors to the project during the opening remarks at this event. Inclusion in library events is important for an intern to feel like he/she is truly part of the campus culture, even if it is only for a short period of time. – Linda Carroll (far right)



Creating an event guide for children, parents, and teachers. Using the Library a la Carte interface, this guide promoted the Children's Reading Celebration and Young Author's Fair. With guidelines from the Outreach Librarian, I gained experience with creating guides that I use now in my current position. – Lauren Kelley

Librarians at CSU Channel Islands

Our internship experiences at the CSU Channel Islands Broome Library prepared us for our careers as Reference and Instruction Librarians. By shadowing librarians during reference shifts, library instruction sessions, and event planning we were able to learn first-hand how to handle a variety of responsibilities. Because we started at the same library where we interned, the transition from intern to librarian was extremely smooth.

Current duties/responsibilities include reference work, instruction, maintaining subject guides, collection development, and assisting with campus events. These are all things we gained experience with during our internship program.



The internship prepared me well for my current role of teaching library instruction sessions, because the mentor librarians encouraged me to contribute and assist students during their sessions. – Lauren Kelley



I currently spend a large portion of my weekly hours assisting students, faculty, and community members at the reference desk. The time I spent shadowing librarians at the desk was beneficial in familiarizing me with the different types of questions that I would be answering. – Linda Carroll

References

- Dulock, M. (2011). New cataloger preparedness: Interviews with new professionals in academic libraries. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 49, 65-96.
- Nutefall, J. E. (2012). Structuring a successful instruction internship. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 19, 80-94.
- Sargent, A. R., Becker, B. W., & Klingberg, S. (2011). Incorporating library school interns on academic library subject teams. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 37(1), 28-33.