Destination Librarian: Helping Others on the Road to Librarianship

Barbara Rochen Renner¹,², Lee Richardson¹, Jennifer Walker¹, and Michele Clark²

UNC Chapel Hill Health Sciences Library¹
 UNC Chapel Hill School of Medicine²

Introduction

This poster shares experience coordinating non-paid experiences in a Health Sciences Library for students and others considering careers in libraries and shares a library career guide.

Health Sciences librarian with training and experience in mentoring was asked to coordinate requests for non-paid experiential opportunities.

• Point of contact (via website)
• Prompts students for relevant information
• Sends info to relevant units, projects, librarians who can choose to interview
• Facilitates processes and flow of required HR & course forms

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

Mentoring: Experiential Students

All experiential students, paid and unpaid, receive mentoring
Mentoring often continues, even beyond graduation

Mentoring: Others

Others (often with graduate degrees in other areas) contact coordinator for early career exploration; may develop a longer term mentoring relationship.

• Discuss areas of librarianship and future of libraries
• Share pertinent articles, salary information, other items of interest
• Provide info: So You Want to Be a Librarian guide (far right)
• Link with other librarians and libraries for further information and discussion
• Link with UNC School of Library and Information Science
• Provide information on other library and information science programs in the area and online
• Discuss related fields (e.g., data science or health informatics)
• Discuss application strategies
• Promote advantages of experiential opportunities

Special Situations

Students or volunteers with disabilities

• May benefit from consultation with disability office, Vocational Rehabilitation, others
• May benefit from shorter, trial period
• Must be clear about expectations, requirements, necessary skills and abilities

Volunteers: Some (e.g., those contemplating a career change, recent graduates) may not qualify for traditional internships yet may need experience, mentoring, references.

• HR requirements stricter (e.g., can’t do work an employee would do)
• Schedules and time commitment may be more unstable

So You Want to Be a Librarian Guide

• Some (e.g., those contemplating a career change, recent graduates) may not qualify for traditional internships yet may need experience, mentoring, references.
• HR requirements stricter (e.g., can’t do work an employee would do)
• Schedules and time commitment may be more unstable

• Contacted by high school student; interested in libraries
  • Student had limited library experience; wanted to know about academic libraries
  • Organized “career day experience” with 6 librarians in 4 UNC libraries over 3 days
  • After searching for good online resources, created a career guide

• Good resources available, but spread out across internet
• Feedback — good resource for teens, college students and beyond
• Easy to find and to refer others to specific resources

Teens interested in exploring careers

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

• 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

Library Opportunities Paid & Unpaid

Research Assistants
students: paid; up to 4 semesters
Interns/fieldwork
students: unpaid; course credit
Volunteers
paid; length varies
HR process complex

REQUESTORS

• Current Students
• Prospective Students
• Recent Graduates
  (career experience)
• Out-of-State, Online Students
  (recent requests)