Curating student employees in academic libraries:
Developing workforce skills for their future

Nora Bird, Kathryn Crowe, Michael Crumpton, David Gwynn
12 April 2019  |  ACRL 2019  |  Cleveland, Ohio
Agenda

• Theoretical approach – Nora Bird
• UNC Greensboro organization – Michael Crumpton
• Student employee professional development – Kathryn Crowe
• A case study in the digital collections unit – David Gwynn
Theoretical approach

Nora Bird,
UNC Greensboro Department of Library and Information Studies
Why?

• The rapidly evolving LIS workplace requires workers who are continuously learning
• Education is static but the workplace is dynamic
• A learning organization incorporates changes as they happen
• Learning is best done in context with experiential components
Who?

• Volunteers of all ages and status within the organization
• MLS Students
• Other Students – College, high school, doctoral
• Staff:
  • Grant-funded
  • Project oriented
  • Residents
  • Fellows
Methods: Experiential learning

• Described best by David A. Kolb.
• Most education is built on assimilative knowledge — learning from second-hand knowledge sources like books and other texts.
• Divergent knowledge acquisition promotes personal growth.
Knowledge Acquisition Methods

- Assimilative
- Accommodative
- Convergent
- Divergent
Creating divergent knowledge: An example

• A supervisor or peer mentor works with a new volunteer to shelve a book.
• Have the new person reflect on the difficulty of that experience.
• Have them offer alternatives to the standard practice and reflect on whether that is a better method.
• Often, it isn’t but it provides a way for the person to learn why things are done in that way.
• Maybe there is a better way.
Experience changes the brain

• MRI imagery has determined that permanent changes to the brain are made when a person works in a hands-on situation rather than simply hearing about it.
• The changes are physical and permanent
Other learning forms and techniques

• Collaborative learning – well designed group learning can be beneficial (Student workers as teams)
• Reflection – an essential piece of experiential learning is for the participants to reflect on the concrete experiences.
• Organizations must be designed around and prioritize learning
• Learning communities that incorporate the wider library community
Credit-bearing experiences in libraries

• Course related projects
  • Library can learn if the project results are shared with library staff.

• Service learning
  • Library can gain insight into the communities that may be future customers or benefactors
    • teens, community members, local college students who participate in service learning projects

• Practica or internships
  • Projects can benefit the library by being completed.
  • Library staff can learn about new theories and skills taught in MLS programs

• Student Jobs – more on this
Designing a good experience

• Create institutional connections with multiple educational programs
  • MLS students may be living in your town
• Create a job description
• Designate a supervisor or someone who will solve problems for volunteers and present staff
Grant funded staff

• Understand the grant and institutional limitations
• Write a strong position description
  • Strengthening skills possessed by the current staff or needing different (updated) skills
• Prepare for integration with permanent staff and for learning opportunities to take place.
UNC Greensboro organization

Michael Crumpton
UNC Greensboro University Libraries
Libraries’ Strategic Plan 2016-17

• Examine service desk models and student employment options
  • Examine job descriptions
  • Revise and update student payroll matrix
  • Enhance professional development opportunities for student workers
Beginnings

• Each department assigned a supervisor and back-up
• Supervisors hire and trains, keeps track of time
• Administrative office keys in time and payroll data
• Each department has a budget and work study allocation
• Payroll matrix developed for consistency throughout library departments
Student Worker Supervisors
May 22, 2008 (revised)

Proposed pay rate matrix:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>8.05</td>
<td>8.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>7.75</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>9.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>9.15</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>10.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure/Guidelines
- Consistency/Competitive
- Work study = 61 same as last year
- Expense Budget = same as last year / discussion

Action items:
- Write job descriptions that match the categories and responsibilities,
- Place returning/existing students into matrix,
- Students should be ID with their category,
- Based on scheduling, develop an AHR for keeping track of budget,
  - Project out remainder of each semester
- Manage your budget:
  - You determine need, not students working when they can,
  - Send folks home when not busy or no work.
An Important Partnership!
Student Worker Orientation
August 12, 2018
THE OUTSTANDING STUDENT LIBRARY WORKER AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Nomination Deadline:
Wednesday,
March 31, 2019
DUE TO ROBIN PASCHAL
robin_paschal@uncg.edu

NOMINEE INFORMATION

*Student Name__________________________________________________________

Phone__________________________E-mail__________________________

Classification: __Undergraduate  __Graduate

Office Use Only
Good Academic Standing  YES ☐  NO ☐

Local Address
Street________________________________________Street________________________________________
Street________________________________________Street________________________________________

City, State, Zip________________________City, State, Zip________________________

*Department________________________

*Job Title________________________Date hired________________________

*Job Duties________________________________________
The need for short-term hiring

- Economics dictate flexible arrangements
- Project based worked
- Broader array of resources
- Library specialization
- Skills and talent not currently present
- Ability to react quickly
- Expanding knowledge base
Virtual experiences

• Trend to expand use of interns
• Aligns with technologies
• Supports new service models
• Requires attention to detail, supervision, etc.
• Considerations of software and tech support
• Ability to assess performance
Academic libraries

• Practicum – working for class credit only. Usually project driven and goals satisfy curriculum

• Internships – student workers paid by the hour and task driven. Additional training and experience are provided by librarians.

• Graduate assistantship – Stipend plus tuition, work for the department as research assistants, etc.

• Part of multiple departments
## Real Learning Connections

### Projects that Matter

#### Faculty gains:
- Modification of curriculum
- Reconnection with practitioner functions
- Scholarships generated
- Adjunct expertise involved

#### Student Gains:
- Presentation/publishing opportunities
- Committee work in practice
- Professional exposure
- Real application of skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liberty Department</th>
<th>Special Collections</th>
<th>University Archives</th>
<th>Electronic Resources and Information Technology</th>
<th>Special Collections</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Library Resources and Information Technology</th>
<th>Special Collections</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Library Resources and Information Technology</th>
<th>Special Collections</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Library Resources and Information Technology</th>
<th>Special Collections</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Library Resources and Information Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>University archives processing and reference</td>
<td>Instructional Technology</td>
<td>Projected for librarians</td>
<td>Oral history collection</td>
<td>Digital Collection</td>
<td>Library Commons</td>
<td>Digital Media Commons</td>
<td>Library Commons</td>
<td>Digital Media Commons</td>
<td>Library Commons</td>
<td>Digital Media Commons</td>
<td>Library Commons</td>
<td>Digital Media Commons</td>
<td>Library Commons</td>
<td>Digital Media Commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Participant Focus</td>
<td>Collection Management</td>
<td>Information Sources and Services</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
<td>Library Resources and Information Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Faculty gains:
- Refresh skills
- Learn new technologies
- Collaborative partners
- Refresh of broader professional view

### Student Gains:
- Presentation/publishing opportunities
- Committee work in practice
- Professional exposure
- Real application of skills
Student professional development

Kathryn Crowe
UNC Greensboro University Libraries
Professional development for student employees

• Appointed team in 2017 with the charge:

The Student Employee Professional Development Team (SEPD) is responsible for developing educational opportunities for the Libraries' student employees in order to prepare them for future careers.
Team goals

• Taking the lead for fall Student Worker Orientation
• Developing online training modules for both job requirements and future career/life skills
• Offering face-to-face workshops to include a variety of skills useful for any career
Process timeline

- **Fall 2017**: Appointed team, Conducted survey
- **Spring 2018**: Held workshops, Began revising Customer Service LibGuide
- **Fall 2018**: Evaluated workshops, Revised fall orientation
- **Fall 2018**: Continued workshops, Completed Customer Service LibGuide
- **Spring 2019**: Continued workshops
Revised fall orientation

• Updated slide presentation
• Introduced new Customer Service LibGuide
• Made session more interactive
Updated customer service LibGuide

Training videos from Libraries’ streaming subscriptions

- Basic customer service skills
- Specific customer service skills
- General success skills

Library Information

- Customer Service Values
- Library videos to provide general information
- [http://go.uncg.edu/customerservice
guide](http://go.uncg.edu/customerservice
guide)
Workshop topic survey

Priorities for Training

- Communication Skills: Very important
- Working with diverse abilities: Very important
- Problem solving skills: Very important
- Customer service skills: Very important
- Working with diverse cultures: Very important

- Somewhat Important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not Important
Workshops offered

Topics
• Customer Service/Communication
• Working with Diverse Customers
• Resume/Cover Letter
• Interviewing

Strategies
• Partnered with Career Services
• Partnered with Department of Specialized Educational Services
• Each workshop offered twice
• Students were paid
• Students received co-curricular credit on their transcript
The content of the workshop will be useful in my job at the Libraries

More confident in my ability to "use listening time" when communicating with others

More confident in my ability to communicate successfully with Library customers

The content of the workshop will be useful in my future career

The content of the workshop will be useful in my job at the Libraries
Going forward

• Examine scheduling
• Enhance marketing for better appeal to students
• Consider online options
• Explore additional partnerships
Recommendations

• Collaborate with campus partners
• Work with student supervisors
• Offer no more than 2 per semester
• Hold them early in the semester
• Send frequent reminders!
• Pay if you can
• Offer co-curricular credit if you can
A case study in the digital collections unit

David Gwynn
UNC Greensboro University Libraries
Student workers (background)

• Big component of projects since the beginning
• Tasks include:
  • Scanning
  • Metadata creation
  • Oral history transcription and abstracting
  • Contextual essays
  • Field work
In the field
Explore all ads

By date... ▼
By county of residence... ▼

Show me everything!

The North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements project provides online access to all known runaway slave advertisements (more than 2300 items) published in North Carolina newspapers from 1751 to 1840. These brief ads provide a glimpse into the social, economic, and cultural world of the American slave system and the specific experience within North Carolina. Working from microfilmed copies of these rare publications, the project team scanned the ads to provide digital images, create full-text transcripts and descriptive metadata, and develop a searchable database. The NCRSA website includes digital scans of the ads, contextual essays to address their historical research value, full text transcripts, an annotated bibliography to aid researchers, and a searchable database.
AND committed to the Jail of Cumberland county, on Friday the 28th of January last, a NEGRO MAN who says his name is SIMON, and belongs to John Lipscomb of South Carolina. Said negro is well known about this place, he was carried off by Mr Thomas L. Whitlock. Simon is about five feet and a half high, dark complexion. The owner of said slave is hereby notified to come forward, prove property, pay charges and take him away, or he will be dealt with as the law directs.

W. L. CALLAIS, Jailor.
February 2, 1842.--154--tf
Trends in the runaway slave advertisements

By Olivia Carlisle

The North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements project team has digitized over two thousand advertisements for fugitive slaves from newspapers across the state published between 1751 and 1840. The digitization of these advertisements allows researchers access to a different kind of primary source material that will prove valuable to a number of research areas. The advertisements will be useful to anyone researching genealogy, the culture of the antebellum American South, and the language and terminology of the era, among other subjects. This essay lists a few suggested areas of research which piqued the interest of the project team. These advertisements offer unique insight into slaveholders’ view of their chattel through the descriptions they offer. The similarities and trends among the ads can provide researchers with a wealth of demographic data and information about antebellum culture.

Fugitive slave ads in newspapers shared certain similarities in structure and content. Generally, each included the slave’s name, age, height, and skin color, description of clothing, physical description, and personality traits. Additional information was often provided to aid in the slave’s capture. Those placing ads sometimes mention family members in other locations and list previous owners, as these might have provided clues as to the slave’s whereabouts. The majority of ads that suggest a destination mention a slave’s propensity to aim for free states or the coast, where they were more likely to find help from free blacks or abolitionist whites. A few were suspected to have gone to Georgia or Virginia, often to return to a former home. Some ads also noted the possibility that the slave in question may have headed west.

Other ads comment on the circumstances of escape. It appears that slaves commonly ran away while they or their owner were traveling. Some escaped on horseback, either from the plantation or while on the road; these ads often include a separator--and often higher--reward for the stolen horse than for the slave. In a few instances, slaves are suspected of having run off with a white woman whom the slaveholder believes will pose as the slave’s owner in order to smuggle him to safety in a free state.
2018: Strategic seed grant

- Internal grant designed to bridge disciplines
- Classroom and research components
- Library, LIS, History
Scanning and transcription (classroom)

• Undergraduate students in HIS scanned ads, transcribed, parsed fields
• Graduate LIS student performed quality control
• Issues
Scanning and transcription (library)

• Hired some students from classroom component
• More oversight, much better results
• HIS and LIS students involved
Projects and exhibits
Colson Whitehead event
History symposium

North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements
Supplementary Collection
Supporting Information Needs of Middle and High School Students and Teachers
Allison Cruse, Nole Fritz, Mitchell Shores – Department of Library and Information Studies

What we built...
A supplementary collection for teaching the topic of fugitive slaves aimed at:
- Middle School Students
- High School Students
- History Teachers

- Accessible via a LibGuide
- Annotations describe the value of each source
- 20 sources for each group

What we acquired...
High-quality materials professionally reviewed through authors from:
- School Library Journal
- American Library Association
- New York Times
- Subject Journals...

- Diverse Sources: Paid & Free
- Websites, Blogs, Books, Journals, DVDs, Audiobooks, Magazines, Videos...

Materials we considered appropriate:
- Considered different age groups
- Met school standards
- Met the standards of the NC Department of Public Instruction

What it looks like...
A Librarian Can Help You!

Teaching a Challenging Topic?
What we advocate for:
- A balanced collection
- Different viewpoints
- Intellectual freedom

- Advocacy project: Extra funding to plan a field trip to UNCG libraries → Enhance students’ understanding & value of primary resources
History symposium

The North Carolina Runaway Slave Advertisements project will provide online access to all known runaway slave advertisements (currently consisting of more than 3200 items) published in North Carolina newspapers between 1753 and 1865. The initial phase of the project, completed in 2015-2016, combined scanning and correcting ads dating from 1840 and earlier using several test resources.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, students from the UNC Greensboro Department of Library and Information Studies collaborated on a second phase of digitization, related projects, and classroom instruction related to the project. This phase was significantly more challenging than the initial one as it involved examining microfilm and digital access to identify the actual ads rather than relying on an existing print version.

The project, funded through a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is administered by the UNC Greensboro Office of Research and Engagement.

http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/slavesads/
What did we learn?

• More oversight of the classroom project
• More standardization so instructor could have an easier time “grading”
• Maybe not assume that we would be able to use classroom scans in production
• More focus on projects/research, and more of a limited digitization “exercise”. Scanning and transcription were a little nebulous.
What do students get from the bargain?

- Work experience
- Resume fodder
- Presentation practice
- Contacts
Resume fodder

University Libraries, UNCG; Greensboro, NC; Practicum
- Leading a digitalization project on UNCG student newspapers from 1919-1930
- Producing customer service training videos for new library employees

University Libraries, UNCG; Greensboro, NC; Digitalization Intern
- Processed the UNCG 1919-1930 student newspapers into individual issues
- Ran quality checks and edited metadata on digital projects

University Libraries, UNCG; Greensboro, NC; Digitalization Intern
- Converted historical University Library documents to be optical character recognition (OCR) PDFs
- Cataloged metadata into CONTENTdm
- Selected photos for the library’s social media project on Flickr
- Summarized a Women Veterans transcription
Resume fodder

The University of North Carolina-Greensboro – Jackson Library, Digital Projects Unit

**Student Worker**

- Worked on the grant funded digitization of Runaway Slave Ads of North Carolina
  - digitized microfilm newspaper ads
  - created original metadata and performed quality control checks on co-workers’ items
- Collated digital copies of school newspaper, *The Carolinian*
- Scanned and digitized university scrapbooks
- Worked on Women Veterans Historical Collection
  - digitized veteran scrapbooks
  - created original metadata for various collection items
Resume fodder

**Digital Projects Unit, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University Libraries, Greensboro, NC**

**Student Assistant for Digitization and Metadata**

- Assisted with the development and building of university digital library collections.
- Made decisions concerning item priority based on condition and quality for a collection of documents.
- Carefully handled and assessed archival materials from several collections.
- Used flatbed, overhead scanners, and computer hardware to digitize thousands of documents.
- Saved the scanned documents images into organized files.
- Performed basic functions using Adobe Photoshop (color correct, straighten, and crop images).
- Transcribed recorded audio interviews and deciphered handwritten materials.
- Created PDF, text and TIFF graphic images files.
- Applied cataloging techniques to match items with subject terms from a controlled vocabulary.
- Created and entered hundreds of descriptive and searchable metadata summaries into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.
- Transferred metadata into the digital collection management software, CONTENTdm.
Where have our students landed?

• Good placement record from “real world” experience.
  • Several digitization project managers
  • One UX coordinator for a public library
  • One state-level digital archivist
  • Two university archivists
  • One video game designer
  • One university reference librarian (at least)
Brief Bibliography


Questions?

Nora Bird
njbird@uncg.edu

Kathryn Crowe
kmcrowe@uncg.edu

Michael Crumpton
macrumpt@uncg.edu

David Gwynn
jdgwynn@uncg.edu