

# DATA LIBRARIANSHIP AT UNC GREENSBORO



**UNC GREENSBORO**  
University Libraries

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## DESTINATION: DATA SERVICES

The changing nature of librarianship calls for new approaches to developing and displaying the skills needed for serving a more technologically advanced populace. UNC Greensboro (UNCG) is exploring new approaches to data science skill development in librarianship, primarily through identifying and recruiting needed data services-related talent in the University Libraries and implementing curriculum adjustments in the University's Library and Information Sciences (LIS) program.

## UNIQUE NEEDS

Although data science librarianship is typically specialized for institutional and user needs, many data science positions require at minimum the following skills:

- Data management planning
- Research data discovery and assessment
  - Including data tools and government resources
- Data visualization (including GIS/geospatial data)
- Dataset and database use and analysis
- Grant writing

## TALENT MANAGEMENT

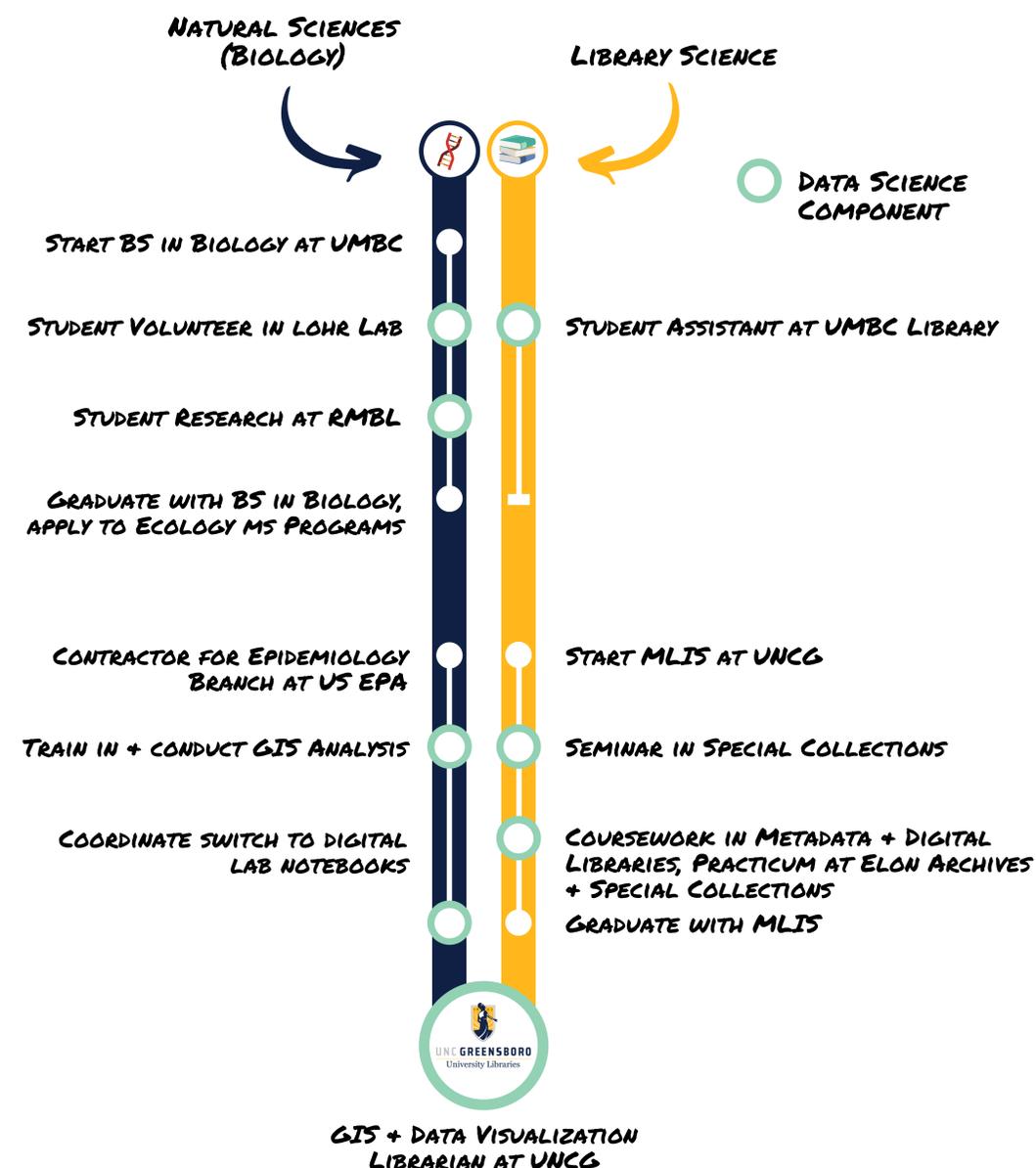
Library administration personnel must recognize the need for data services skills and provide the support needed to create value and expertise, especially for library staff who are still developing these skills. Understanding emerging trends and the research life cycle is also key for full support.

For data services, UNCG University Libraries administration sought to advance research support for the UNCG community, branding the organization as a leader in systems and techniques.

## NEXT STOP: DATA SCIENCE LIBRARIANSHIP

Data science librarians, like other subject-specialized librarians, work within a field that covers a wide range of topics, including instruction and training, data management planning guidance, data stewardship and curation, and data visualization. They also occasionally work outside the boundaries of that field, where interdisciplinary research and collaborations and/or their institution's needs demand. Data is an all-encompassing field, with applications in subjects ranging from geography to dance. As such, data science librarians come to this field from a myriad of starting points and disciplines. There are many paths one could take to gain the experience and skills necessary to succeed as a data science librarian.

Here's the journey made by Jo Klein, GIS & Data Visualization Librarian at UNCG University Libraries:



## LIS EDUCATION

The Master of Library and Information Studies degree at UNCG is an interdisciplinary and hybrid online/in-person program, which requires 36 semester hours and is accredited by the American Library Association. It prepares students for positions in academic, public, school, and special libraries, as well as a variety of roles in both public and private agencies and cultural organizations as information specialists.

To help meet demand for the specialized skills required for many data science librarianship positions, the UNCG Department of Library and Information Science has made several key changes to the MLIS program:

### CHANGES TO CORE CURRICULUM

- **Foundations of Library and Information Studies**
  - Added an introduction to data librarianship alongside other types
- **Info. Sources and Services (Reference)**
  - Added coverage on finding data repositories for users
- **Info. Organization and Access (Collection Mngmt.)**
  - Added coverage on the purpose and creation of data repositories.

### NEW COURSES + TOPICS

- **Data Visualization**  
Topics: using data visualization to explore, present, and express meaning using data
- **Digital Curation**  
Topics: management of digital assets and technologies
- **Electronic Resource Management**  
Topics: licensing digital resources (which could include purchased data repository access)
- **Scholarly Communication**  
Topics: modern publishing landscape, including the librarian's role in research data management

## SOURCES

- Burton, M., Lyon L., Erdmann C., & Tijerina B. (2019). *Shifting to Data Savvy: The Future of Data Science in Libraries* [White paper].
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- SHRM Foundation: investing in the future of HR. (2013). *Recruiting and Attracting Talent*.