

SLO#5: The Student Engages in Professional Development and Service and Identifies Specializations and Related Professional Organizations as Relevant to Individual Interests.

A student can read all the books, as well as listen to all the lectures, that they want until they fall flat asleep at their desk. While those tools can give you some of the skills you need to professionally succeed, it's not going to give you everything you need to achieve that success. You need to take a walk in the shoes of a professional librarian in order to really get a sense of the responsibilities that they fulfill on a daily basis. That is what I believe is the message that this learning objective is trying to tell me. As I have recently come to discover from one of my job interviews, these graduate classes can provide you with the theoretical framework that will get you through the initial door. To continue to stay on that side of the door though, you need to fill in that frame with real, actual professional experience, which is what employers are really looking for.

Acquiring that much needed experience was one of the biggest objectives that I had to accomplish while I was in the program. Before my time in the program, I had absolutely zero experience working in libraries whatsoever. Before, the closest I ever gotten to working in a library was my elementary school's library, which is where I would often go instead of recess to get away from the evil allergies that were lurking outside. One time, I tried to apply to a library job in my local area, but I didn't get the job because of my lack of guest service experience. Libraries of today directly oppose the stereotype of a place where you just simply check books in and out for guests in a quiet atmosphere. Librarians constantly work with a variety of users on a daily basis. To correct this, I decided to take up a job working as a grocery store cashier, where you constantly work with people who come from different walks of life in a fast-paced environment. This has been a successful decision, as not only was I named employee of the month, I am also well liked by the guests who come through my lane as well.

This part-time job serves as a stepping-stone towards what I really want as a professional career, which is to become an archivist. My dream is to become an information guardian that not only protects and preserves the memories of communities both historical and contemporary, but also to share those tales with my community so that they can live on in the hearts of the locals as well. To begin my first steps into my dream world that is archiving, as well as to prepare for a certain practicum to boot, I undertook the first trial that all budding archivists take in this program. That trial is LIS 658, which is Archival Management. In this class, I got to learn about different archival software like ArchiveSpace, as well as the tools and techniques that archivists use to preserve archival materials.

Another thing that I have learned from this class is the importance of creating positive relationships with third party organizations that are relevant to not just the archive's mission, but also the mission of the library as a whole as well. It is mainly because of the relationships that libraries forge with other like-minded organizations, who are on the local, national, and global level, that they have the resources and funding they need to maintain the patron's right to be informed. For archival management, one of the

best ways that archives reach out to organizations that are relevant to their collections is through writing grant proposals. Basically, archives secure most of their funding by getting grants from organizations that they believe could benefit from their collections. Towards the end of the spring 2019 semester, I got to practice writing a grant proposal of my own. It was an enlightening assignment that I feel is one of the most important duties that an archivist does. Not only does it allow archives to resolve their financial issues, which is usually one of their most common obstacles that they have to deal with, it also allows them to meet and establish connections with other organizations. Creating a web of connections that are related to the core that is the library's mission is a must for the library to see success.

While this was merely just an exercise to get me acclimated with how libraries reach out and work with other organizations, the work that I did over the summer of 2019 took it to the next level. After almost a full year of acquiring a complete, theoretical knowledge of library and information studies, I was finally able to get the opportunity to put that knowledge to practical use. To officially begin my professional adventure into the glorious world of archiving, I took a practicum course, which involved doing an internship at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. I got to work with two professional archivists in the Special Collections department of UNC Wilmington's Randall Library. With pleasure, I can honestly say that this was probably one of the best classes that I have ever taken in this program. Even though it was only for a short moment, I got to get a sampling of the dream career, which I am destined to be a part of. Not only did I get to meet and work with amazing people, I also established some high-quality resources and references that I can use in my professional career as well. Overall, it was an excellent experience, which I am thankful to the special collections staff for. It was a wonderful, archival, summer adventure that I will never forget.

I will also be sure not to forget all of the professors and organizations that I have met and learned about in this program as well. I didn't realize this when I first started this program, but I now have come to understand that each and every one of them has and will play a role in both my professional development and identification of organizations that are relevant to my interests. Thanks to these entities, I have already made contact with excellent resources, which includes sources like the Facebook page called the Archivists Think Tank that I can use when I begin my archival career. At the moment that I am writing this, looking at this learning objective has told me how far that I have come in getting my professional sea legs. To me, everything that I have accomplished up to this point is a good prologue to what will be the ultimate, archival journey of Gavin Nelson, master archivist extraordinaire.

Artifacts

LIS: 658 – Archival Management – Assignment #4 – Grant Writing

LIS: 691 – Practicum – Introductory Blog -
https://library.uncw.edu/archives_special/node/192