

## **Improving Performance Through an Internal Internship**

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### **What is an Internal Internship?**

For ten months, the work of an Information Services Librarian at an academic health sciences library was divided between her regular responsibilities and time with three library departments. During her time in each department she shadowed staff, read and wrote documentation, completed projects and took courses to learn as much as possible about all aspects of the operations, policies, and procedures of the departments.

### **Who should do this?**

- Librarians from any department or experience level who want to:
  - Learn about library management
  - Gain new skills

### **What you need:**

- Buy-in from all involved – administration, managers, intern
- A Plan
  - Objectives – specific projects and observable goals for each section of the internship
  - Designated time/schedule – without this, it is too easy to get caught up in “regular” work
- Designated space – not required, but it helps to keep internship time and work separate
- Flexibility – staffing changes and other factors caused the schedule to be adjusted

### **Benefits:**

- Gaining a better understanding of the work of other departments
- Providing more effective reference assistance, better referrals to library departments
- Developing new skills to be used in regular responsibilities
- Viewing the big picture of the whole library

### **Challenges:**

- Balancing the work – sticking to the schedule
- Separating the internship from regular responsibilities
- Having to put some work on hold

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### **Division of Time:**

The division of time did not work out as planned, but this experience was still worthwhile. Any combination of departments could be used for an internal internship. For example, librarians in Technical Services could do their internships with Reference and other departments.

### **Division of Year:**

Proposed = 12 months

- 6 months – Collections & Systems
- 3 months – BACC
- 3 months – FACS

Actual = 10 months

- 6 months – Collections & Systems
- 2.5 months – BACC
- 1.5 months – FACS

### **Schedule:**

Proposed = 20 hours/week

Actual = 10 hours/week (on average)

### **Projects:**

#### **Biomedical Academic Computing Center (BACC)**

- Compiled recommendations for anatomy software
- Wrote documentation for:
  - PARSCORE grading software
  - Reconfiguring the public computers

#### **Collections & Systems (Technical Services)**

- Created a monthly new books list
- Edited documentation for inter-library loan and reserves

#### **Faculty & Curriculum Support (FACS)**

- Wrote documentation for Camtasia screen capture software
- Recommended guidelines for preparing online tutorials

#### **Courses**

- Copyright course, ALA (one month, online)
- Licensing course, ARL (one month, online)