

Pennsylvania Libraries: *Research & Practice*

Practice

Changing Lives, One Note at a Time

Library Internships for Undergraduate Students

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Library internships can be valuable learning opportunities for undergraduate students and excellent examples of the rich learning environment of college and university campuses. This article examines undergraduate academic library internships through the lens of an internship for music majors and discusses ways to create engaging, high-impact educational experiences that complement traditional academic settings and programs.

Examples are taken from internship programs in music, reference, and special collections and include former interns' reflections on the life-changing nature of their experiences.

Introduction

The development of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has spurred debate about the merits of online versus residential higher education. Critics of MOOCs often point to the value of campus-based learning environments and the educational opportunities inherent in residential academic settings. Segal (2013) refers to the dynamics of a traditional classroom, in which personal interaction with faculty and other students, Socratic discourse, and the responsibility of contributing to a group play an important role in students' education. Lenox (2014), although a proponent and teacher of MOOCs, also discusses the rich learning environment of traditional colleges and universities and the inherent advantage this gives residential education over strictly online alternatives.

Undergraduate internships in academic libraries are excellent examples of this type of environment. Although these internships take place outside of the classroom, students can have meaningful educational experiences that have a profound impact on their post-graduate lives and careers. Library internships also exemplify the best characteristics of liberal education, particularly the formation of strong mentoring relationships, regardless of

the type of institution the student attends. These relationships, in this case between students and librarians, stand in stark contrast to the mostly impersonal nature of MOOCs.

This article examines undergraduate academic library internships through the lens of an internship for music majors. Internships can be revelatory for music students, allowing them to interact with music in ways beyond traditional applied lessons or classroom assignments and to discover a range of options for post-graduation work with music.

The authors, who have served as a coordinator and a participant in the Robert '44 and Esther Kenyon '46 Fortenbaugh Music Internship at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library, have seen students undergo transformational experiences as library interns. Librarians at Musselman Library have witnessed interns in the Reference and Special Collections and Archives departments have similar experiences. Creating an engaging educational opportunity is essential to this process. This article focuses on ways to create this type of opportunity; although centered on music librarianship, many of the ideas discussed can be applied to internships in other areas of the library.

Internships and Engagement

Internships allow students to experience learning in a way that differs from what they do in the classroom or online and to gain exposure to what may be a largely unfamiliar professional world. Like other forms of experiential education, internships serve as a bridge between classroom theory and practical experience, which is especially helpful for students in academic programs where post-graduation outcomes are less clearly defined. Interns may make new connections with their major area of study or be spurred to explore unfamiliar disciplines. In either case, internships encourage students to broaden their view of themselves and others. For example, a student intern in an academic library will have the experience of relating to other students as information seekers rather than as friends or classmates, with all the service, intellectual freedom, privacy, and information literacy issues that new relationship implies.

Administering a library internship requires an educational approach and a level of involvement with students that may be new for many academic librarians. As David Thornton Moore writes in *Engaged Learning in the Academy: Challenges and Possibilities* (2013), even though internships and other experience-based practices have become commonplace in higher education, the transfer of learning between classroom and non-classroom settings is not automatic. This transfer, and the most engaging learning experiences, occurs when the intern needs to

look carefully at her experience, to question her own assumptions, to place the experience in relation to larger institutional and societal processes and discourses, to hear other's voices, to grapple with the question of why things happen the way they do, to imagine how things might be different...to engage, in other words, in *serious* critical thinking. (p. 201)

The report *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter* (Kuh, 2008), published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), also identifies the characteristics of a successful internship. Internships, first year seminars, writing and skill-intensive courses, original research, and capstone projects are all considered high-impact practices because they help students strengthen intellectual and practical skills and practice integrative and applied learning. These outcomes are the result of five factors being present during the internship: (a) students must dedicate a substantial amount of time and effort to purposeful tasks, (b) interact with internship facilitators and peers about substantive matters, (c) experience diversity through contact with people who are different from themselves, (d) receive frequent feedback about their performance, and (e) understand how to apply what they are learning to different settings. According to AAC&U,

having these experiences “can be life changing... such an undergraduate experience deepens learning and brings one’s values and beliefs into awareness; it helps students develop the ability to take the measure of events and actions and put them in perspective” (Kuh, 2008, p. 17).

In *Internships as a High-Impact Practice: Some Reflections on Quality* (2010), Nancy O’Neill follows up on AAC&U’s report by writing about her experience as the director of career services at a large university. She believes that while many students have high-impact learning experiences as interns, others do not, mostly due to a lack of direction and meaning in their work. To remedy this, she recommends making clearer connections between students’ internship and academic experiences, even if the internship is not required by their school or a particular academic department and is not given for course credit. Internships should relate to what O’Neill calls college learning as well as professional development. By having clearly defined goals in both areas, she says students can “enter a process where faculty, staff, and peers ask them to reflect on their experiences, challenge their assumptions, test theories, and make connections across different sites of learning” (p. 7).

The *CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education* (Mitstifer, 2012), published by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, also addresses the need for academic and career goals in internship programs. In their standards, CAS emphasizes that internships are not the sole responsibility of the career services office, but involve elements of both curricular and co-curricular programs:

The formal education of students, consisting of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, must promote student learning and development outcomes that are purposeful, contribute to students’ realization of their potential, and prepare students for satisfying and productive lives.

Internship Programs (IP) must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote student learning and development, persistence, and success. (Mitstifer, 2012, p. 315)

CAS also points to the deliberative form of learning in internships and the importance of student reflection and supervisor feedback throughout the experience. This process is essential for interns to develop and achieve learning goals and objectives and to maintain a balance between learning and contributing.

This balance is also related to the issue of course credit given for internships. The CAS standards specify that course credit, if offered, must be as much for learning as for practical work or hours accrued. CAS recognizes the variability of internship experiences, and their standards encompass four distinct types: (a) discipline-specific, course-based internships, which are a part of the academic curriculum and for credit; (b) student-initiated internships and (c) short-term internships, both of which may be either part of the academic curriculum and for-credit or co-curricular and not-for-credit; and (d) paid internships, which do not offer credit but give students an opportunity to apply theory and knowledge to a professional setting and to explore career opportunities while receiving compensation for their work. (Mitstifer, 2012, p. 316)

Internships in Practice

The Robert ‘44 and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh ‘46 Music Internship at Musselman Library is a semester-long, paid internship available to music majors and minors at Gettysburg College. It is one of three Fortenbaugh internships offered by the library; others are in the Special Collections and Archives Department and the Reference and Instruction Department. Although the college does offer faculty-sponsored, course-based internships for credit, the Fortenbaugh internships have to this point been solely under the purview of the library and non-credit.

All three internships are funded through an endowment established by Robert Fortenbaugh in 2000. Special Collections hosted the first Fortenbaugh intern in the fall of that year, and Lina Terjesen, co-author of this article, served as the first music intern in the fall of 2005.¹

The music, reference, and special collections internships share a similar hiring process: applicants submit a letter of interest and the names of two to three faculty references. The supervising librarian and other librarians within the department review the letters for that particular internship and invite the strongest candidates to a personal interview. Internship descriptions, which provide an overview of the position, including the type of work, hours involved, and compensation, are posted on the Musselman Library website.

The description for the music internship, included in the appendix, lists the range of music resources in the library collection and gives examples of the types of projects interns may complete. This helps interested students understand the expectations of the position and determine if the experience will be fulfilling.²

Eleven students have held the position of Fortenbaugh Music Intern since its inception in 2005. Unlike the internship program described by Harwood and McCormack (2008), intended to encourage undergraduate business majors at the University of Washington Bothell to pursue careers as business librarians, not all students have entered the internship with the goal of becoming a music librarian. This is certainly not an application requirement, as indicated in the position advertisement.

Most prospective music interns are passionate about music but have a vague sense of the type of work necessary to collect, organize, and make it accessible. Many want to learn more about the research process or become better catalog and database users in order to help with their own academic work. Some are very aware of how little they actually know about the basic principles of librarianship, while others may consider themselves good library users but have little knowledge of what librarianship actually entails. Although prior library experience need not be a prerequisite for the position, evidence of a genuine desire to learn is essential.

This desire, coupled with a deliberative learning experience and the achievement of learning goals, leads to an engaging internship experience and, for some students, an interest in librarianship as a career. A number of former music, reference, and special collections interns have gone on to graduate studies in librarianship. The "Internships at Musselman Library" webpage has information about some of them, in the section "The Fortenbaugh Interns: Where Are They Now?" The webpage also has links to videos about the internship experience at Musselman Library as well as a blog maintained by current interns describing their work and learning.³

For music interns, learning begins with a tour of the entire library and a discussion of the different functions of each unit. Learning goals for the internship include developing an understanding of how different departments in the library work together to provide excellent service for patrons and what role music librarianship plays in this service. Musselman Library's reference internship has a similar goal of familiarizing students with reference services and the range of work available in Library and Information Sciences.

After interns are familiar with the organization, assigned readings help them learn more about the contributions and day-to-day activities of a music librarian. Readings promote deliberative learning by encouraging questions, stimulating critical thinking, and providing challenges that go beyond those experienced by student assistants. First-person narratives are a good choice; for example, *Careers in Music Librarianship II: Traditions and Transitions* by Elliot and Blair (2004); "Warp, Weft and Waffle: Weaving Information Literacy into an Undergraduate Music Curriculum" by Christensen (2004); and "Spreading the Message: Teaching Music Librarianship by Distance-Learning" by Wagstaff (2011).

Asher and Alexander (2006) point out that interns at California State University, Bakersfield, are assigned readings in library science and given advanced instruction in library use for the first three to five weeks of their internships. The Fortenbaugh Reference Internship includes reading assignments for ten of the fourteen weeks of the semester. The authors have found that interns may initially be shocked to have reading assignments but can come to

embrace them when they realize they are not being tested or graded on the material beyond honest and thoughtful discussion with their internship coordinator. They also learn that this reading and research gives them a solid theoretical foundation to prepare them for practical work in the heart of music librarianship: collection development and assessment, cataloging, information literacy instruction, and outreach.

With careful planning and teaching, interns can contribute in each of these areas. Tailoring projects to student's academic and personal interests is key to making connections between the internship and academic courses. For example, an intern with an interest in Baroque opera used standard bibliographic tools such as *Choice* reviews, *Resources for College Libraries*, and subject area comparisons in WorldCat to compare music literature holdings for this music genre. She went on to recommend book purchases for the collection, created a section on the library's online music research guide which details relevant resources, and presented her work to an upper level class in the history of opera. The intern refers to connections with her academic work in the introduction to the online guide:

I decided to make this Baroque opera research guide after having difficulty finding scores for Handel and Lully pieces I was singing in my voice lessons repertoire. Taking music history made me intrigued about the culture of opera in this time period, how it exhibited virtuosic singing, new gender roles with the castrati, intricate set designs, and texts based on Greek drama. This research guide should help those who want to learn more about Baroque opera, and it points to resources that help the researcher to experience the opera first-hand through audio and film of full-length performances (Creedon, 2012).

In other cases, voice majors have done the initial assessment of gift collections of vocal music, checking gift scores against holdings in the local catalog and OCLC, then using the accessioned materials as a basis to learn copy cataloging and score processing. An intern with a focus on conducting wrote an online guide to historical, critical, and collected editions; co-author Lina Terjesen prepared an online guide to writing program notes in advance of her senior recital.⁴

These examples illustrate the importance of interns being given projects with concrete outcomes they can point to on their résumés and discuss with friends and colleagues. Additionally, interns see how their work has lasting effects as their projects are used by future library patrons. This applies to other areas of the library as well. For example, Bastian (2002) surveyed students in archives education programs about their internship experiences and most believed the need to create a final product played a major role in the success of the internship. One of the learning goals for the Fortenbaugh Special Collections Internship involves the processing of a manuscript collection, including the rehousing and description of materials and the completion of a finding aid to help researchers navigate the collection.

Both Musselman Library's music and reference internships have learning goals relating to information literacy instruction. Most interns relish the opportunity to share what they have learned with their classmates, and the value of this type of communication, in music and other disciplines, cannot be overstated. Brown and Murphy (2005) found that interns in the Bachelor of Arts in Information Studies program at the University of Oklahoma cited the need to interact effectively with users as essential, both during and after their internships. For student and professional musicians, effective verbal and written communication is now often as important as expressive musical performance, and being involved with delivering information literacy instruction provides valuable opportunity for practice.

Music interns can initially be assigned discrete tasks within the wider goals of an information literacy session. For example, interns can demonstrate how to request a book or score from interlibrary loan or explain the differences between searching the local catalog and WorldCat. Over time and with coaching, they can be given more

and more responsibility, and some students will especially embrace these challenges. One intern planned an entire information literacy session based on a bibliographic scavenger hunt, complete with searches for scores, books, and media appropriate to the content of the coursework. Using a performance-based assessment model, students in the class were required to retrieve materials and complete a formatted bibliography, generated by the free online software Noodletools Express (noodletools.com), by the end of the session. Interns can also assist with answering music reference questions and help contribute to music research consultations with other students. As with their other projects, assisting with information literacy sessions gives interns the opportunity to both hone their own library skills and witness the direct impact of their work on their classmates and other library patrons.

Music internships are also an opportunity to show off the creative side of the profession. This can be easy to do, considering the energy and fresh ideas interns often bring to their work. Fortenbaugh music interns have

- created and managed social media sites for library music services;
- helped plan and administer performances in a library concert series, including interviewing performers, writing preview articles for the campus newspaper, and giving pre-concert talks about the music or performers;
- created music trivia contests for outreach events;
- and designed online and physical exhibits of music materials.

For example, an intern with talent and interest in multimedia production used archival footage to create a video celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Gettysburg College Choir's tour to Asia and Europe (youtu.be/S0zBzU_Xflg), as well as a video highlighting current exhibits in the library (youtu.be/2uF-dDABtik).

Throughout this process, interns reach learning goals through hands-on experience with library music collections and services. For example, they learn about the decisions made when evaluating and acquiring new materials and the basics of bibliographic description. They gain fluency in tools such as catalogs and databases, greater understanding of the wide range of music information available in the library, and the ability to teach patrons what they have learned. They understand how music collections are housed and made accessible, the value of marketing those collections, and how libraries play an active role in the cultural and intellectual life of a campus.

Best of all, interns work closely with a music librarian and other library staff, often forming valuable relationships which continue well past the internship or even past the student's time on campus. For internship supervisors, this can be an unexpected and highly rewarding experience. Co-author Tim Sestrick has had the opportunity to serve as a mentor and a reference to two former interns pursuing careers in music librarianship and has enjoyed the process of helping students move from roles as interns to that of colleagues and friends.

Although Musselman Library is fortunate to benefit from the endowment established by Robert Fortenbaugh in 2000, other libraries have found other means of funding internship programs. Asher and Alexander (2006) make the case that undergraduate internships can be run on limited budgets and describe a number of different funding scenarios, including their own receipt of a U.S. Department of Education Title V grant for Hispanic-serving institutions. Considering the current discussion in the press about the rising cost of higher education and the unfavourable income versus debt ratios incurred by many recent graduates, providing examples of how library internships have led to stable careers builds a strong case for the efficacy of these programs.

Regardless of their career goals, Fortenbaugh music interns are encouraged to become familiar with the Music Library Association (MLA) website, particularly the sections on employment and education. They are also encouraged to attend chapter or national MLA meetings. For interns who discover an interest in the profession, attendance at these meetings is often the first place to begin the networking process that is so valuable in securing a position should they decide to pursue librarianship. Interns have also visited other libraries, including the ensemble library of the National Symphony Orchestra. Opportunities such as these provide tangible examples of the broad and varied nature of the field.

Interns' Stories

Interns' experiences both during and after Musselman Library's Fortenbaugh internships provide tangible proof of the Association of American Colleges and Universities' claim that internships can change lives. Of course, a career in librarianship is not the only measure of an internship's success. Many interns take the skills they have learned and apply them in other avenues. Former music interns have gone on to careers as music educators or graduate school programs in subjects such as music performance, musicology, or foreign languages.

For two former music interns, the Fortenbaugh Internship opened a pathway to a fulfilling career in music librarianship. According to co-author Lina Terjesen (personal communication, Sept. 27, 2013), who began college as a music education major,

During my time as an intern, I learned about many aspects of music librarianship - from memorizing (and being quizzed on) MARC tags, to setting up presentations for a national traveling exhibit, to writing a guide that would help students research and write their program notes. But what I learned above all was that becoming a music librarian was what I was meant to do. While I was nervous about leaving my music education background, I learned that music librarianship was actually the perfect way for me to marry my love of research and music history with my abilities as a teacher. Whether I was answering a reference question or assisting with library instruction, I was able to help people, and after I read a passage in *Careers in Music Librarianship II* that explained that people become librarians because they like to help people, I was hooked. I always enjoyed volunteering and helping others, but the idea that I could do that for a living was amazing to me. Shortly after, I considered pursuing a career in music librarianship.

I do not know if it was because I was the first music librarianship intern, but what resulted in the following years was amazing. I forged a wonderful relationship with my supervisor that became a mentorship and friendship that continues to this day, and I saw many other students take advantage of the internship experience, many of whom were in the same boat as I was: floundering and unsure of what to do beyond earning their music degrees. Personally, I entered graduate school having secured one of two coveted assistantships in a university music library, and I was told later that it was because I already had so much experience that they knew they would not have to train me.

After graduating, I compounded my experience with another internship that perhaps I did not really need but was an opportunity that anyone would be foolish to pass up. Shortly after leaving that position, I received a much-needed phone call from my mentor offering me a position in the library at my alma mater. Although it was temporary, it gave me the experience necessary to secure my current position as a music librarian at a small university. By the time I secured my "dream job," I had an amazing wealth of knowledge from all of my various experiences, but none of it would have been possible without the library internship I had as an undergraduate student.

Another former intern reflected on her transition from the role of graduate student to music librarian:

I can't say that I had librarianship in mind as a career path when I applied for the Fortenbaugh music internship at Gettysburg College. I can say, however, that I was excited to be working in any capacity in the field of music while getting paid for it. At that point in my studies, I was focused on academia and getting into a good grad school to further my studies in music. However, it was

somewhat eye-opening to be “in the music field,” while not being solely a performer or academic, and to realize that there are some other options for those who love music (and still want to eke out a living).

After I graduated, I headed straight into grad school to get my Master’s in Music Theory. At this time, I was still focused on academia and sought a Ph.D. as an end-goal. However, while I studied and taught as a music graduate student, I also started working at a public library to help pay the bills. As the glamour of being a grad student wore off, and the mounds of work and teaching set in, I found myself digging deeper into my job as a library assistant. I eventually realized that I was enjoying my library work almost as much as my music work. I then realized (or remembered) that there were other options for a music career—namely music librarianship. I thought back to my time as a Fortenbaugh intern, and I also remembered my supervisor’s position, and thought that he (and I by extension) had it pretty good! To me, this sounded like the ideal career for me. I have the internship to thank for opening my eyes and helping me recognize the many opportunities for careers in music outside of academia and performance, and specifically for leading me into the world of music librarianship (K. Rodda, personal communication, Sept. 24, 2013).

In many ways, then, these and other Fortenbaugh interns had high-impact experiences that grew from the rich learning environment of a college campus. Clearly these experiences cannot be overlooked in the debate between traditional and online educational models. Library internships do change lives, for students in music and across the campus.

Editors’ correction: 9 July 2014

An earlier version of this article misspelled the name of the Robert ‘44 and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh ‘46 Internship in Music Librarianship. Mrs. Fortenbaugh’s name is spelled Esther, not Ester.

Notes

- ¹ More information about Robert and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh and the establishment of the internships is available in the Friends of Musselman Library Fall 2001 newsletter. See <http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=foml>
- ² For descriptions of the Reference and Special Collections internships, see <http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/information/general/internships/students/index.dot>
- ³ See <http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/information/general/internships/index.dot>
- ⁴ See <http://libguides.gettysburg.edu/content.php?pid=14182&sid=810744>

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Appendix: Description for Robert '44 and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh '46 Music Internship at Musselman Library, Gettysburg College

The Music Liaison of Musselman Library invites Gettysburg College students to submit applications for the spring semester Robert '44 and Esther Kenyon Fortenbaugh '46 Internship in Music Librarianship. The internship is open to students with either a major or minor in music and offers an opportunity to learn firsthand about music librarianship. Students considering a career in the field, or interested in learning more about music in libraries, are encouraged to apply.

The Music Liaison works with the many different types of music resources available in the library, including audio-visual materials, printed music, databases and digital collections, and books about music. We select and catalog new materials; work closely with Sunderman Conservatory faculty and students to provide information literacy instruction and research consultations; design exhibits and help develop music-related web content; and coordinate various outreach programs, including a library concert series.

The Fortenbaugh Music Intern will work 6-8 hours per week while classes are in session. The internship carries a stipend of \$8.50 per hour (6-8 hours/week, 14 weeks). Projects will be assigned based on the interests of the intern and the current needs of the department. For example, the intern might help develop an area of the music collection in which they have special interest, such as bibliographies of music for wind instruments or resources for the study of conducting. Interns may also contribute to information fluency instruction sessions, help develop online music resources, or learn to catalog music materials.

To apply, submit a letter indicating your interest in the position, your education and/or career goals, and the names and contact information for 2-3 references (references should be faculty members who can tell us about you and your work in the classroom and/or your supervisor in a campus job or other relevant job). Please be specific about why you would like to be Fortenbaugh Music Intern.

(Gettysburg College, n.d.)