

Internship Summary

This spring, I have been privileged to complete my internship at the Lyman Maynard Stowe Library at the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) in Farmington, Connecticut. Stowe Library is both a medical and an academic library, as it is located at a teaching hospital with medical, dental, and public health programs. I completed my weekly hours on Sunday and Monday afternoons. Each Monday, I met with a different librarian to discuss a particular program, database, or other library offering. I learned about many things including the library's website and catalogue, e-books, LibGuides, RefWorks, EndNote, PubMed, DynaMed, Lexi-Comp, and Micromedex.

During my remaining hours, I assisted both Circulation and Information Services. I provided reference assistance to patrons as well as locate and pull journals from the collection in response to various ILL requests. I have also been able to contribute to the library's subject guides, LibGuides, as well as offer a training on OneNote to library staff.

When I initially began my internship, it did not seem there were many ways in which I could offer the library assistance. To better determine ways I could be helpful, I completed a review of the library's offerings. During my review, I perused all of the library's website, including their subject guides, and was able to provide feedback to various librarians regarding dead URL links throughout the website. In addition, I found that the library had no paper or web-based resources providing guidance for reference formatting. After consulting with the head of Information Services, I created a LibGuide addressing references and citation management which can be found at <http://uchc.libguides.com/styleguide>.

My initial venture into creating subject guides was a wonderful learning experience. It provided me experience searching the stacks for various print materials as well as negotiating the online catalogue. The library's catalogue does not offer static URLs but I was able to find an

alternate route to producing static URLs for the library's individual catalogue records. Up to my discovery, the library staff was not aware of a method to obtain static URLs for the catalogue. I was able to demonstrate this method to various librarians in Information Services so they could update their existing LibGuides to make them more user friendly.

During my initial review of the library's offerings, I also found a lack of resources aimed at human diversity. Through my community connections, I had heard the UConn Health Center was known for providing medical care that was insensitive and unaware of certain populations such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), and intersex individuals. Through my place of employment, I also knew that UCHC's Community Medicine residents had created a four hour presentation on LGBT individuals and emphatically presented the content to their teaching physicians, stating that this was a topic not covered by the medical school or their residency supervisors but needed to be.

In an effort to provide support for present and future medical students, residents, and teaching physicians, I created an extensive LibGuide on human diversity. It can be found at <http://uchc.libguides.com/humandiversity>. The guide covered sexuality, gender identity, intersex conditions, healthcare and human diversity, local resources, community resources, LGBT journals, various databases containing LGBT specific information, and numerous resources from the library's catalogue. In my search through their physical resources, I was able to find some resources that had not come up in my catalogue search because there was a typo in one of the library's MeSH headings. I have pointed this out to Collections Management so they can correct the problem.

Part way through the semester, I was able to offer a training to the library staff on the use of OneNote for project management. I had discovered OneNote's usefulness at my current place of employment and thought the library staff might benefit from using it. I was able to share this resource with librarians from Information Services, Circulation, HealthNet, and Hartford Medical

Society. It was a good opportunity for me to sharpen my teaching skills.

Some of the most substantial things I learned at my internship this semester were not concrete skills. I feel like I learned a lot about how libraries function and gained insight into the managerial challenges that can surface. One of the first things I noticed was the library's home web page is not user friendly. It is extremely simple and not aesthetically pleasing. I spoke to numerous individuals who said the main web page led them to believe the library was outdated, behind the times, and not a useful resource. As I was shown the various databases and services the library provides access to, I was amazed to realize the amount of money being spent on databases of which patrons were not even aware. I found that most of the library's resources were difficult to find unless you knew where exactly where they were. Even circulation desk attendants were not aware of the variety of resources the library offered. When I inquired about this issue, I was told quietly and in no uncertain terms that the library's website was a touchy subject and to not let certain librarians hear me talking about it.

While I understand that individuals have reasons for being protective of their work, I think that leaving this issue alone is distancing the library from being an integral part of UCHC. It is also alienating would-be patrons, increasing librarians' workloads as patrons contact them when trying to find resources they cannot locate on the website, and can lead to funding cuts as the library falls behind in the digital age.

I also found that the librarians rarely leave the library. While they occasionally liaison with different departments like the medical and dental schools, they rarely engage in proactive advertising of their services. When I saw them at UCHC's yearly health fair, their table was bare and only offered a few flyers advertising some of their resources. They did not offer free items or candy like most other tables. The library seems to lack the knowledge of how to advertise itself in an attractive, eye-catching way. It also concerns me that the library employs few younger librarians; all librarians are in their late 40s or older except one librarian in their early 30s. Also,

unlike many academic libraries, they do not offer online chat as an option for individuals with questions. They seem to struggle with keeping the website up-to-date and don't seem to realize that it is the initial point of contact for most would-be patrons and should be a priority. While perhaps UCHC is a more conservative environment than UConn Storrs, it seems the library is struggling to keep up with the rapidly changing digital world. During my final meeting with the library director, I was able to broach these topics with her and provided some suggestions.

Overall, I found my internship to be educational and enjoyable. I was able to find ways to be helpful to the library and provide them with more assistance than they typically possess. I was exposed to one library's employee culture and learned many things I feel I will apply in future ventures. Also, through my attendance at a conference located on campus, I was able to distribute the URL for my Human Diversity LibGuide and was approached by UCHC's School of Medicine staff looking for assistance, recommendations, and resources for updating their school's curriculum. I'm hopeful my LibGuide may provide resources to support curriculum and policy changes at the UConn Health Center in the future.