

Curriculum Focus Groups Report for MLS Curriculum Workshop May 2022

Three focus groups were conducted with 14 participants (5 alumni, 9 current students). Additionally three students who were unable to attend a focus group completed a Qualtrics form that included the same questions asked during the focus groups. Each focus group lasted approximated 55 minutes and were recorded. The recordings were used to create a transcription – this report is based on the transcriptions and the submitted forms. No personally identifiable information about participants is included in this report.

LIBS 6048

Most Important Things Learned from the Course (Most Important Activities)

- Where to find reviews for books
 - “Being in a school library I’m constantly with kids. I don’t have a lot of time to read everything myself. So having access to a pool of resources was really valuable and something that I use a lot when I’m looking for new content for my library. I really appreciated finding out where I can get reviews, especially things that I haven’t been exposed to as much.” – Alum
 - This also had a cross over effect, as a current student noted using their ability to find reviews to support their reference desk work:
- The community analysis
 - “I also really think what’s going to benefit me a lot is learning how to do that community analysis.” – Current student
 - “I actually really valued doing the community analysis...” (Current student)
 - “The community analysis, getting to know your community, school analysis...” (Alum)
 - “I felt like the community analysis assignment was very important and I enjoyed how that related to what you actually keep in your collection. I thought that that was a very important thing that I learned from the class.” (Current student)
 - “Doing a community analysis of the area that I have worked in for the past 12 years helped me gain a greater understanding of the population and areas of need.”
- The interview with a collection development librarian
 - “I actually really valued doing the community analysis and interviewing the actual collection development librarian because then I actually got insight into what they do, how to...develop and how to weed a collection. And I like that it actually really illuminated the fact that the library is an interconnected part of the university, because so often it seems like it’s kind of like a standalone entity. And so they’re explaining to me about how they actually have to develop good rapport and relationships with the faculty in different departments...attending those faculty meetings, those departmental meetings to assess the needs of them.” – Current student
 - “I was able to leverage that relationship that we built during interviewing the collection development librarian to impact some of the choices made throughout the system. So that interview was really helpful to see the bigger picture. I only knew like my specific

piece so it gave me a broader knowledge base and I was able to leverage that to make some changes.” (Alum)

- “I use the information I gained from interviewing one of our fellow district librarians all the time - she shared several useful resources with me.”
- Learning specific techniques to evaluate and rebuild a collection.
 - “...really taking time to evaluate and rebuild the collection in a better way allowed me in my role as a branch manager to build a better collection and to push for equity in collections across our...entire library system.” (Alum)
 - “...collection development really gave me the tools to analyze my collection, to find gaps. And Lord, there are so many gaps and to try to figure out a way to start chipping away at the mess to fix it...The average copyright in my library is 1986. So old collection of books and high schoolers don't want to read that stuff. So major weeding and purchasing and where to find new things. And just it really helped me a lot to figure out what was missing and what I needed to add...”(Current student)
- Weeding and removal of items.
 - “I think learning what to remove from the collection and...why...something should be removed after a certain amount of time, even if it's getting checked out or...if it's not getting checked out and how many years have passed.” (Current student)
 - “...rebuilding the collection...was very helpful for specifically what you use to evaluate why you're going to get rid of something and to justify that. And I think entering into librarianship, you have this view of books being precious. And so you just believe you never get rid of a book. But yet that's a very important part of collection development as well.” (Alum)
 - “...what I've learned in the class is that it is OK to get rid of stuff. I think as teachers, that's really hard to do in general just because in my 15 years, I've seen things come back maybe like three or four times, but even getting rid of books sometimes that are popular, but the outdated covers or, you know, there's different characters that can give the same story, but it can be a more diverse character and things like that. Just being able to weed for multiple reasons, not just because it's old and moldy, like that's not the big reason. And I think learning about the CREW manual and MUSTIE and things like that really is what helped me, a potential hoarder, understand the importance of making it easier for the kids to search the collection to by not having it overfull of things that maybe aren't the most relevant at the time. (Current Student)
- Diversity audit
 - “The one thing that I still think about is doing the diversity audit... the diversity audit was just, I felt like that was especially eye-opening. And I think that's also really important right now, too. And we actually, [library] just had a diversity audit from our Ingram...vendor...just having that background knowledge and then seeing it, like in real life was just very cool. And yeah, I think that was a really important thing to highlight in in the course as well.” (Alum)
- Access to resources such as the CREW manual.

What Worked Well

- Scaffolding for final project.

- “I thought that...it kind of built up like really well until the final course project, which was honestly one of the most labor intensive projects that I think I've done. I spent probably more time on that than any other singular assignment throughout the whole program...But I felt by the time I got there, I like was really prepared to really look at our collection in that specific area of that collection well, so. I think the build up was perfect and the assignment was just so comprehensive that...I feel confident in that area.”
(Current student)
- “...having the assignment broken out over time definitely was a lot less stressful at the very end. When you had the full thing, it was like it's already done, you know, like you just turned it in and how everything was connected. Like, I thought that was really cool just to have one cohesive big assignment that we did.” (Alum)
- “I really liked the structure of the "mini assignments" spread throughout the course and how they eventually all tied together. That felt like a cohesive and comprehensive program. I'm not sure that I would change anything about that format.”
- “Having the assignments broken down into smaller chunks was very helpful for time management in this course. The best thing though was receiving feedback on the "chunks" before putting it all together for a final grade. This gave me time to reflect on the feedback, learn from any mistakes and/or misconceptions, and make corrections before submitting the final project. I honestly can not think of anything that did not work well.”
- “I like how our final project has been broken down into parts. It has really allowed me to dig into different elements of collection development--looking at part of the overall collection, analyzing what is being used and not, what should be deselected, what periodicals should be purchased for the community, what ebooks would fit the community, how to focus on marginalized communities, etc. It has also tied in the elements we learned about earlier in the semester, such as our community analysis.”
- Formulaic structure of the course
 - “It was very well formulated. And I felt like it flowed so logically that it didn't leave room for gaps for me.” (Alum)
 - “...this course felt so different from the other courses in a lot of ways and I'm not really sure exactly why. I'm not even sure I can put my finger on it exactly. And so at the time, it felt kind of disjointed from a lot of the other courses that I was taking. But now, like I'm about to apply for a job that's actually a collection development specialist. And I find myself thinking about this course constantly, obviously. Just the information, especially anticipating an interview and just thinking about like what we read and talked about in terms of weeding or resources to look for...when building and shaping a collection. And so even though once again, even though at the time a lot of it just didn't seem super relevant, I find myself thinking about it a lot now and being super grateful, especially like, for instance, the rebuilding project seems so formulaic at the time. And maybe...it's because I was more academic focused and it didn't really seem to fit in to the academic side of things as much. But now, looking back...on it, I'm like, oh, I can use that whole rebuilding project to show...what I have done and what I could do and how I have already practiced some of these skills in terms of researching vendors, looking at book

reviews, like creating book reviews even and just showing, I kind of see the value now of that as I'm looking at a position that is collection focused." (Alum)

- Templates for assignments
 - "I actually liked the templates that we received in that course, cause it gave us, you know, how to go step by step for the process. And we just kind of filled in information. So I think that was really helpful, the templates." (Alum)
- Overall Structure
 - "So creating the list of books that we wanted to purchase and give the rationale why, including the standards and objectives and all of those types of things, having journals, ejournals, kind of looking at all of the available materials, not just print materials, kind of was an eye opening experience. And then I was able to kind of go through the whole process by doing the diversity audit...and then kind of like going through and looking at all the pieces. I feel like it's flowed really well. (current student)

What Didn't Work as Well

- The final assignment was time consuming and a lot for the end of the course (though still worthwhile). It felt a bit repetitious as well.
 - "...the final course project, which was honestly one of the most labor intensive projects that I think I've done. I spent probably more time on that than any other singular assignment throughout the whole program." (Current Student)
 - "...there was a lot of work. And maybe it could have been that last project could have been paced a little better because I spent so much time on this class to the detriment of another class....it just seems like it took so much time and there was some repetition in there. And I feel like there were probably some things that could have been left out. But ...I'm not saying it was a waste of time because it...definitely wasn't...I feel very confident...in what I've learned. But it just seemed like a lot and there was some repetition in it." (Current Student)
 - "The only thing I would say maybe didn't work as well for me personally was I kind of should have thought farther ahead. So it was probably my own fault. But maybe just having it in big, bold letters somewhere of you're going to be finding all these materials and trying to make a diverse collection for the section of the shelf list that you pick. And so it probably said that. But, you know, it's a lot of documents for that final assignment and that course specifically."
 - "I would say the most beneficial experience I gained from the LIBS 6048 course was learning how to analyze a collection/section within the library inventory and look for ways to weed certain materials, curate new materials for that section, and highlight certain titles that were notable. The final project of that course was labor-intensive, but very useful."
- Lack of Pricing information/budget information
 - "I felt like some of the sources, it was harder to find vendor information for academic librarian side of things. And so maybe I felt like it was more geared towards people who are in a public setting or in a school setting. A lot of the resources that we were given and I, I feel like I was given less direction on how to chase things down or like less was available in terms of like how much stuff cost. And so I had to just like make major

guesses at things. So it didn't really feel...that part of it didn't feel realistic. I was super grateful for the whole experience overall. But in terms of like pricing materials and stuff, it all felt so theoretical and nebulous that it didn't really feel useful, that aspect of it.” (Alum)

- “I think that the thing that I thought that we were going to be working with was a budget. I remember in another course, we did work with a budget, but as far as when we were rebuilding the collection, like if we actually had a budget to work with, like they do when you're actually a practicing librarian... Yeah, when your picking out, that sounds good, that sounds nice, but you might not have the budget for that. (Alum)
- “The one thing that didn't necessarily work as well for me was that I really wanted to use our vendor Ingram to collect the items. But I wasn't able to. I had to like I had to find another vendor to use that would let me go in as a student and kind of just build a cart and not be like an actual, you know, institution. So that was really frustrating.”
- “I would like to learn more about how budgets play a role in collection development. I recognize this is difficult because academic, school, and public libraries have vastly different budgets from each other and within their sectors as well. It might be interesting, though, to give a fictitious budget and see how that plays into our decisions on what should/can be purchased or not.”

Applying What They've learned.

- Hands on experience
 - “I did more activities on collection development in my internship than anything else. Like my site supervisor really gave me the opportunity to...weed a section of books and choose what to get rid of. And she even let me sit down on her computer and...put books in a cart to buy for the library and...she gave me the school library journal, like the book list to look at and all that stuff. So it was very similar to the assignment we did. So yeah, it's definitely like this is what I learned in the course and it was just all coming back to me.” (Alum)
 - “I'm not currently a librarian, but the librarian at my school has been phenomenal. And [County], actually just did a huge budget line item for all libraries to update their collections over the next two years. Based on each school, they got a large lump sum of money to spend. And so she's allowed me to go in with her and do the purchasing of new books using the actual collection development rebuilding plan that I made for the 6048 class. And so it was really beneficial to have learned what I did in that class for like which books to weed. Hey, this might not be an outdated series, but maybe it would circulate more if it had updated covers and things like that. So I've seen the potential of how it could be useful in class based on just helping her kind of through the process, because it's a large sum of money. And she actually needed help. And I was like, hey, it's going to teach me something while I help you. So I don't mind helping. So I think it'll definitely be beneficial in moving forward.” (Current student)
 - “Learning about the collection development process, standards, and deselection criteria were all interesting and important topics covered in LIBS 6048. My county library system is currently creating their policies so it was something I was learning about in a

professional setting, but the information from the class gave me the knowledge to ask questions and have opinions.” (Current student)

- Cross over skills of how to locate book reviews (applying them in reference work).
 - “So I will say I have used and learned to access...quality...book reviews and from...good sources...” (Current student)
- Criteria for weeding the collection. And being able to apply different criteria in different library settings.
- Community analysis and searching skills.
 - “...being able to identify needs based on population and statistics, especially like the same kind of searching works for health statistics, has been really useful in my position.” (Alum)
- Able to use the relationship developed from the collection development librarian interview to build influence in the workplace and to also see a larger view of the library – a bigger picture.
- Having a “solid collection policy.”
- How to face challenges to materials.
 - “And the other thing is that just the lessons on how to face challenges, book challenges. And this is...a hot topic right now. It seems like...there's always an instance or another article about how books are being challenged and being able to have that collection development policy and have that material challenged policy and solid and ready to go if it does happen or when it does happen, because it's going to happen sooner or later.” (current student)

Requested Skills or Information

- Collection development policy writing, updating, or creation.
 - “I thought we would get the opportunity to maybe analyze one or write one. I really could have...I really wanted more of that.” (Current Student) ***Note** – Another student indicated they did analyze a collection development policy, so this could be a difference in when the class was completed. Another student noted it came up during the librarian interview and it was also speculated that the student interested in learning more had interviewed a librarian at a location without a collection development policy.
 - “I think I agree that I think that [reviewing collection development policies] would be interesting just to look at and pick out different pieces of. I think that would be pretty important to look at.”

LIBS 6991/6991

Awareness of Internships Before Taking the Course

- Some were aware and knew that they were responsible for finding their site.
 - “But I was aware that it was a requirement of the...degree program before I began. And I knew that it was kind of my responsibility to find an internship site as I went along. I was taking about two classes at a time so I knew I needed to take it at the end of my tenure.” (6992, Alum)

- I like to be prepared in advance. So I started thinking about, you know, looking through the catalog and figuring out I needed the internship and what semester it was going to be in because it lined up with my degree works and just carefully monitoring that...So I just kind of looked on the website on my own and said, OK, well, what type of paper, I'm sure I'm going to have to complete some paperwork. So what is it? And I looked at what the rules were and all that...I didn't get any correspondence until after I enrolled in class." (6992, Current student)
- Some were aware but were expecting some sort of contact or information to be shared prior to the start of their internship.
 - "I was aware of the that we had to do an internship, but when I was coming up on the last semester, I was wondering if we were going to be like emailed information like...I kind of saw the information on the website, but I didn't know if we we're going to be emailed information about what we needed to do beforehand. And I did ask my advisor and she wasn't sure, but I never got like a complete answer for me. So I found myself kind of scrambling to get my internship set up at the beginning of the semester instead of having it set up beforehand. I wasn't sure, like if I should have had it set up before the semester started or it was OK to do it at the beginning." (6992, Alum)
 - "So I was aware when starting the program that an internship would be required, but that was something that I was kind of anxious about throughout the program, because I don't feel like there was necessarily a lot of information given at the beginning other than you have to do an internship." (6992, Alum)
- Difficult to find information about what the internship course entailed other than the hours, though most indicated using the website and the student handbook to find information about the internships. Others noted staying in contact with the course instructor.
 - "I could not find and I don't know maybe that was just me. But I spent a lot of time looking for...what exactly am I going to be required to do throughout the course in addition to those 110 hour hours that I need to do...I didn't know much about...building the portfolio and in-service project that we do. I just really wasn't aware. And I did do some searching. Luckily I had...found a couple of people who had finished their internship so they could...let me know. But I couldn't, I just couldn't seem to find...I would have felt more comfortable going into it if I'd known exactly what I was getting into." (6992, Current student)
 - "OK, so the internship thing was an ordeal. I didn't know where to go, where to find information before the semester started. And there was stuff that we had to fill out before the semester even began. And many of us were completely unaware of that in my class. I don't know if that changed in subsequent classes, but a lot of us were playing catch up on day one." (6991, Alum)
 - "I actually looked up information on the website and in the handbook, so that's how I figured out what to do." (6992, Current student)
 - "I looked at the website. I couldn't attend one of the informational meetings, though I think I did access a recording to it and tried to listen through it. Most of the information that was covered during the recording, I felt like had been explained in the on the website. So I didn't really feel like a lot of new information came from the the online presentation." (6992, Alum)

- “I had looked at the MLS student handbook before I started this process, and I'm I was still clueless in a lot of ways.” (6992, Current student)
- “Very minimal background knowledge going in. I would have loved to have more information about the program expectations going into the course. When I completed my elementary student teaching experience in undergrad, I felt much more prepared at the beginning of the semester knowing what the courseload would be like and how much time would need to be devoted to certain activities.” (6991, Alum)
- Without assistance of former alums who had completed the program and an internship, might not have known about the 15 ours in a secondary site.
 - “I knew that we had only through that, through conversations and networking, I knew that we had the secondary site but details were hard to find.” (6992, Alum)
- Unaware of special rules for district related to interns in the school.
 - “I showed up to school and then went to get a badge at the district office and set off some red flags in the district because apparently there was other paperwork required by the district I'm in that I was completely unaware of, as was my librarian who's an ECU grad...She didn't even know that somebody needed to...It's background check. I mean, it was a litany of things. And I was on at this point like I need to be counting my hours. And the district is saying she is not allowed back in the building until all this is filed.” (6991, Alum)
- Confusion as to when internship hours started.
 - “I remember being in some of the discussions, either in small group or maybe just a few classmates were chatting and I was like, should we have started by now? And we couldn't figure out exactly when to arrange that. So knowing in advance that we would have two meetings and then we would be expected to start or something like that, just having a timeline ahead of time for that would have been helpful.” (6992, Alum)
- Unsure of when to start looking for an internship
 - “I had the same experience about not knowing when to start looking for an internship because I wasn't in a school library at the time.” (6991, Alum)
- General Awareness
 - “I was told several times that the internship course is generally taken toward the end of one's degree, but I only recently heard it should be taken after 30 credit hours have been achieved. I didn't know that before! The professors do a wonderful job sending our job and internship opportunities to the students.” (6992, Current student)

Assistance Had/Wanted

- Many students indicated that they would have liked more assistance, though they did not necessarily expect it.
 - “I feel like I didn't have any assistance, but I feel like that was just put out there...like you need to find your internship...that's what it was stated as. So I didn't expect any, but it did feel a little weird...like, oh, my gosh, how do I...do that? Like, show up, knock on a door and say hi, which is kind of what I did, you know, with emailing people...” (6991, Current student)

- Many received assistance from alumni in the field (who often served as site supervisors).
 - “I was grateful to have an alumni who advocated for me at a time when folks were not able to intern. She took me under her wing and advocated for me.” (6992, Alum)
- A couple of students indicated some assistance from their advisors with setting up their internships.
 - “...my advisor was able to help me with connections that she had at, in my new city, set up an internship there, and that felt very valuable to me.” (6992, Alum)
 - “...this wasn't something I was aware of. It was something that my academic advisor...actually made me aware of...I had thought that I was going to end up taking the internship next spring, spring of 2023.” (6992, Current student)
- Some were surprised that there was so little assistance for locating internships – in a couple of cases, due to their experiences as education majors where internship placements were made by the program.
 - “And I appreciate the fact that I had the ability to do my internship in my school. However, if I like [Participant] did not have that opportunity to figure out going through three places would have probably made me have a nervous breakdown. It might be helpful for people who need assistance to get assistance.” (6991, Current student)
 - “I don't feel like I necessarily had a lot of assistance and I kind of felt like I would have more help in that area from my adviser or like maybe someone who sets up internships, because I know that's how it was done when I was in undergrad. I know this is a master's program, so it is different. But like I, I felt like in my brain that that just created a lot of anxiety for me, not feeling like I had any assistance.” (6991, Alum)

Benefits – Most Important Thing

- Application of the ALA Competencies (Academic & School Library Internship)
 - “I'll say really getting familiar with the...ALA competencies...And I got to admit...it took me a little while before I kind of completely understood that document and what they were trying to ask of...librarians and like what we should be working towards. So that really gave me a good total look of the experience and what I should kind of be looking forward or looking to try out to...satisfy like what I'm trying to do.” (6992, Current Student)
- The portfolio
 - “So for me, just being able to put together a portfolio of all the things I learned was actually the most meaningful because it's like I got some unique experiences I didn't anticipate. Getting close to our administration, I got to deep dive into the budget and looking at how that fit into overall policies and procedures, like being able to look at our systems. I've been in it forever. Being able to look at it from a different lens helped me see the big picture way that libraries put all the pieces together that maybe I had missed before.” (6992, Alum)
 - “...having to keep evidence of what you do and be able to show administrators when you go...interview. That will be very import to keep up with that while you're interning.” (6991, Alum)
 - “I think that creating a portfolio that highlighted how I had covered certain NCSLMS standards throughout that semester was very useful. I actually plan to use that portfolio

as part of my summative evaluation experience at my school this year. It also gave me the idea to potentially create a website each school year with evidence as to how I'm meeting certain standards and goals - with evidence." (6991, Alum)

- For school librarian, being part of a professional learning community.
 - "The thing that I took from my internship that was most important to me was learning about the leadership opportunities available and the PLCs available because I felt all alone and until I was able to reach out with the person that I worked with, I kind of was researching, watching YouTube videos..." (6991, Alum).
- Two internship sites:
 - "So structuring it in a way that we had the big internship as well as a secondary site was really important for my career growth. Being able to experience a different kind of librarianship really helped me." (6992, Alum)
 - "In terms of the overall structure, I think I was at first, I was uncertain about why. I mean, I saw the value in doing the additional hours in a separate library, but I think I was kind of surprised that so many hours had to be in a separate library, but by the end of it, I was extremely grateful because I thought I was like 100 percent going to go towards academic. And then I actually really enjoyed working in the public library. So I think that's it's one of those things where at the time I was like, this doesn't work that well. This just seems like an added burden. But I ended up being really grateful for it afterwards." (6992, Alum)
- Writing the Article
 - I really found value in that and I think it would be great to have to have that more fleshed out, more developed, I don't know where that went from my class, but I really enjoyed that process and I think it's great professionally, no matter which concentration you're in, to have that professional writing experience for publication and to have that experience of - Yes, it's published. No, it's not published. What can I do, do I tweak it? And no was not always just a no. It's a not right now sometimes. And that's a wonderful thing, especially leaning forward into further academic study and furthering your career. I think it's a great thing to set students up for the future." (6991, Alum)
 - "So I'm glad that we went through that process and to complete the article by the end of the class. So I submitted it to one publication and it was rejected because it wasn't enough research...now I know what to either add or either what type of publication to look for." (6991, Alum)
 - "I felt grossly underprepared for writing and publishing an article and experienced a lot of anxiety about it throughout the semester. Once I was able to wrap my head around what to do and choose a pertinent topic to write about, I felt a little more confident. I do think that if this is going to be the expectation moving forward (publishing), then information about how to locate library-related journals, the process of publication, and choosing career-oriented topics should be covered much more in depth in earlier courses in the program. Perhaps even a practice paper." (6991, Current student)
- Mentorship. It was noted that students may benefit from the relationship they build with their site supervisor.

- “I have a library mentor because of...my site internship. And they were explaining to me the importance of that. And there's an ECU alum at that library. So I had no idea about. So I lucked out with that.” (6992, Current student)
- Tangible Work Experience & Learning What a Librarian Does
 - “...getting your experience in early, because when you and they'll probably say this to you in your internship, that when you're out searching for jobs, years of experience matter even in a quote unquote entry level position. Even if it's not direct work experience, if it's like experience in a library, even just as an intern.” (6992, Current student)
 - “...what a librarian actually does in actuality, because it's important to be able to take the theory of what you learn in your classes to actually have practical application. So just kind of getting the day to day, learning how to ask questions...” (6992, Current students)
 - “I don't have any experience with in librarianship before, so I learned definitely learned a lot from my internship experience because...it's one thing to...learn about it on paper, but then you actually go do it. You see how it might be different or it might be the same. I mean, it was definitely like an invaluable experience for me. So I'm really glad that it was included in the program.” (6991, Alum)
 - “...it also involved getting to interview all like tons of the academic librarians that worked at my university. And that was so invaluable because I tried to interview librarians who were working in every piece of the library since I was working directly with reference librarians mostly. I was kind of getting to chat with them on a regular basis. But I also got to interview like the various deans working in the library, some people in interlibrary loan, some people on the more access side of that and people in archives. And just being able to do that, let me see all facets of the academic library that might not have been as visible working on the reference side... I just felt like the internship in general was extremely valuable because it got me inside of the library and especially an academic library. Sometimes finding that in can be tricky and just being able to get inside of it and have an excuse and a reason to talk to everybody who works there was super valuable.” (6991, Alum)
- Creating connections and future employment opportunities
 - “The public library where I was working, I ended up applying for a job that was open and ended up working there. And so, I mean, I think it was extremely valuable. And I'm still working there just because the the internship gave me the opportunity to meet the librarians and for them to see that I was a good worker. And then so then when jobs came open, they were like, yeah, come work with us. So, I mean, I think that that was extremely useful.” (6992, Alum)
 - “The internship actually helped me with interviewing for jobs because I was interviewing for jobs in the system I was interning in, and so I knew what they were looking for. And I knew, like, I had just, I just finished interviewing, actually. So I already knew what summer reading was going to look like. And they had you prepare programs. And my site supervisor gave me the standard the system uses. So I was able to design my programs for the internship based off of the information she gave me already. So it gave me like an upper hand when I was interviewing for sure.” (6991, Alum)

Struggles

- Lack of Information and contact prior to internship
 - “I also kept thinking, I'm going to get an email, like I'm going to get an email that tells me what I need to do before the semester starts. I didn't get an email. So then when the course started, it was like, holy cow, I have all these things that I need to get filled out. And of course, I got them filled out and that was fine. And I did all of my work or whatnot...like it's on the Web page. I thought we'd get some kind of communication after we registered for the class or something, but that didn't happen until the class started. So if I had not been in my school library already. I literally would have had a meltdown...” (6991, Current Student)
 - “I guess maybe because I didn't have a syllabus ahead of time. I did not realize we were going to have so much work to do inside of the internship, like actual coursework. I thought it was just going to be like us doing the internship and, you know, probably like a project or something at the end. I had no idea it was actually going to the assignments along the way.” (6992, Current student)
- Difficulty locating secondary site.
 - “But I called all of our local libraries here. They were turning me down for reasons that didn't make any sense. Like they were saying, we're understaffed, we can't take you. And I'm thinking, how does that work? It sounds like you could maybe use some help... But, yeah, anything that could help us identify some sites, because I ended up having to go to [redacted] to finish mine, which is about fifty five minutes away from me. So, yeah, that was a bit frustrating just to say.” (6992, Current student)
- Taskstream for portfolio building:
 - “I've just been using Taskstream, there's a tab in there which is just an unfriendly software to use for this project.” (6991, Current student)
- Paperwork in terms of what to complete, when, and also what it requests.
 - “A lot of the paperwork for 6992 is...redundant. Very, very a lot to read through. If that can be clearer, that would be very helpful.” (6992, Alum)
- Timing of Portfolio submission
 - “...one thing I did not like or I didn't think worked as well is...we submitted our portfolios last week...Going into it, I kind of thought like I'd have the entire semester, so by the time it kind of caught up, I was like, well, you don't really have the entire semester to work this thing out. You know, you've got to have a few weeks there at the end to, like, wrap everything up. So that kind of maybe I would have liked to have that portfolio pushed back a little bit, I think, until the very end...because now it's I mean, I'm essentially done...” (6992, Current Student) *Note, focus group took place on April 18th and last day of classes was April 26th
- Amount of Work
 - “...overall it felt like there was a lot going on...over that internship and it was a little overwhelming.” (6991, Alum)
 - “...but it did make me think like, OK, this this is like taking doing the internship and taking a class. Like it felt like it was like double the work because I was doing all the internship hours and doing the class load on top of it.” (6992, Alum)
 - “...having the extra assignments along with your internship, and also that I also took another course at the same time. So I if I suggested anything to anyone, do not take

- another course the same time your taking your internship, because I was exhausted trying to keep up with both courses at the same time and interning.” (6991, Alum)
- “And so in the school internship, we also had to write this paper that we have to submit to a journal on top of discussion board assignments and the portfolio and the internship in the two places. So, yes, it's a lot and it's a lot of pieces to figure out how to balance, and I would also echo that no one in the school track needs to take another class and do this internship because it is a ton of work.” (6991, Current Student)
 - “It [the article] was just one more thing to do, if that makes sense within this kind of I'm trying to balance all these other pieces of the internship. The class is a lot, I think several people mentioned we didn't quite anticipate as many assignments in the middle of an internship, so I kind of felt it was intense.” (6991, Current student)
 - “I actually took the five week course in the summer for my whole internship. So that was like a whole thing and it was crazy. But I really appreciate...kind of let us start early beforehand to start getting our hours in and work on our project because we had like one big project, the artifact that we have to do. I feel like that worked well for me only because I started it early. The artifact was a lot of work and it was really good work and really valuable. But I think for a five week course, having other stuff to do on top of that wasn't great. You know, there's always discussion boards and things like that, and I understand that. But just having all of these things to do and I, I definitely couldn't have done it if I hadn't started my other stuff so early.” (6992, Alum)
- When employed and not employed full time in a position
 - “I feel like my position as somebody who is not employed at a school full time is very different than somebody who is already employed as the school librarian full time and doing their internship. I feel like those are two completely different experiences.” (6991, Alum)
 - “The downside is, even after you graduate, they still treat you like you're a newbie, like you're not quite vested yet, I guess is the way to say it. They treat you like you don't quite know what you're doing because they saw you go through the learning process. So there's a positive and then there's a negative to it. I'm still dealing with a little bit of that, trying to prove my worth, as it were, in my library.” (6991, Alum)
 - “The experiences I was involved with in this internship are my usual day-to-day experience as a SLMC, so it's hard to differentiate the "internship" experience outside of my "full-time career" experience. They mostly go hand in hand.” (6991, Alum)
 - Taking internship early was seen as both a positive and negative experience.
 - “Because I took it so early on and because I hadn't had the opportunity to take the tier three, the courses that were actually involved with academic librarianship. I look back at that experience, and as good as it was, I've always wondered if it would have been so much better if I would have had those classes. If I would have had the benefit of the skills and the knowledge of academic, how academic libraries work before...serve as a foundation.” (6992, Current Student)

Recommendations

- A pre-internship session in the semester before the internship to go over the expectations. This could include what goes into the portfolio. Similar to the WebEx event that discussed internships as part of the ALA Student Chapter.
 - “I think if there was something ahead of time before the internship starts...these are the things that you're going to need to document and make sure you document everything.” (6991, Alum)
 - “I did find that there was, so I think I forget who led the session, but there was a WebEx session at one point where they did like an internship kind of overview meeting...so they could just talk about different things you'd be doing in the internship. And I did find that very helpful just to see what kind of stuff I could be doing and to hear from other students like what they ended up doing in their internships, which I think all of the speakers were actually in the school library track. So it would have been nice to hear a little more from maybe an academic or a public library student as well.” (6992, Alum)
- A timeline ahead of the internship to indicate when hours should start (expectations for class meetings and start times).
- A database of internship opportunities (daunting prospect but would be great).
- A list of internship sites where ECU grads have completed internships and where further students might be welcome; Or where ECU alumni currently work and who might welcome an intern.
 - “Having a list of, hey, these are where internships have been done before and they're open or these were alumni working in school libraries in your area, you can reach out to these people because I would be willing to have someone in my library now that I know what that's like.” (6991, Alum)
- Examples of e-mail text or phone script for when you do reach out to an internship site.
 - “If things were different, I think a template of how to reach out to school districts and administrators in search of a library internship would have been valuable.” (6991, Alum)
- Update the course FAQ document.
 - “It wasn't super helpful. It was a little repetitive. I was thinking...this cannot be all of the FAQs that we've gotten about this. I think that that document could be a lot more useful if it's maybe sent out...well ahead of...before we get into the Canvas course...” (6992, Current student)
- Do not take another course at the same time you are taking the internship. Most student indicated they would not have taken a second course if they had known about the additional work they would be doing in addition to the 110 hours.
 - “So, now I'm wondering, OK, I'm working a 40 hour week job. Does this mean I need to quit my job in order to do an internship?” (6992, Current student)
- Add article or CV completion to academic/public internship
 - “I think if that was if we had smaller assignments that built up to that, the writing, the completion of the article, I think that would be fantastic...Actually I think there should also be a career services assignment where we actually need to go and gain...interview skills and learn how to write our CV and everything because that's one of the things that was on the to have a category on the CV like presentations, publications. And so yeah, it's really, that's a really invaluable...I don't know how anybody outside of a class actually published an article ahead of time, maybe over the summer, but during the fall and

spring, if you did it, more power to you. I don't know how, but I think that would be great. Absolutely. Instead of like the other assignments if we were able to do that.” (6992, Current student)

- “...after I graduated, I spent two weeks writing my writing and rewriting my resume. I actually went through the career center, which is very great, if anyone wants to do that, they were very helpful. But getting your resume up to date and including everything. So I think that would be great if we had to have a resume completed by the end of that course, our internship course.” (6991, Alum)