

Creating an Undergraduate Student Cataloging Position at Hollins University

LIS-685 Final Proposal: Final Proposal

A definition of the problem which the project addresses - this problem should be framed from the perspective of the LIS institution in which the project will be carried out

Hollins University's library is struggling with metadata due to lingering problems of the pandemic such as a loss of positions. They no longer have a dedicated cataloging or metadata position, causing difficulties and increased workload. To address this, I have utilized student work within the cataloging department. Previously, no students worked in this area, but I have since trained a student assistant position that has been held five times and led internships for four students. Student workers were taught to review catalog records, copy-catalog, and process items while interns were instructed on the creation of MARC records.

My goal for this capstone is to take the material I created for internships and student assistants, and during the LIS-685 course to create two new student positions within the department, one an entry level position and the other a more experienced cataloging position. This helps to solve the issues of workload in the department, but helps give students opportunities as well. An additional goal is that students who work in these positions will have the training and experience for a paraprofessional position in technical services after graduation. Additionally, Hollins has recently created a GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) concentration, and this work experience will further allow students opportunities to work with Metadata.

3- 5 articles from the LIS literature on this or closely related problems to give you some context for what has been done in the past.

Chen, Sherab (2007). Empowering Student Assistants in the Cataloging Department through Innovative Training: The E-Learning Courseware for Basic Cataloging (ECBC) Project, *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 46 issue 2, 221-234.

Chen's work centers on the education of student workers within the cataloging departments of academic libraries. Additionally, their library is one of the few that works with undergraduate students in addition to graduate students in their department. While the modules and instructions I've created to help students learn aren't as sophisticated as software, the lessons and analysis of how students interact with the material will be helpful in creating further material. I could see much of the courseware serving as models for my own courseware, digital or physical, throughout the project.

Mestre, Lori S., & LeCrone, Jessica M. (2015). Elevating the Student Assistant: An Integrated Development Program for Student Library Assistants, *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 22:1, 1-20, DOI: 10.1080/10691316.2015.1001240

Mestre and LeCrone's hypotheses of "If given leadership opportunities at the Undergraduate Library, student workers will take more interest and ownership in providing excellent customer service" and "student workers who have more meaningful responsibilities will be more engaged and productive" align with my own philosophies towards student work. While this paper focuses on circulation students, my project similarly seeks to elevate student work. Incorporating their strategies and philosophies towards student success and motivation can help my work with student employees.

Martinez, Shan Lorraine (2014). Training Tech Services' Student Employees Well: Evidence-based Training Techniques in Conjunction with Coaching and Mentoring Strategies, Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, 52:5, 551-561, DOI: 10.1080/01639374.2014.903548

Martinez's paper discusses how the mentoring and coaching of new student employees in technical services can lead to more beneficial and masterful students, and the techniques and teaching philosophy to help students realize this potential. While there is a large focus on instruction and training documents like I've already made, this could assist with the creation of further material, such as a dedicated libguide or website to house training documents.

Givens, Marlee, & Slutskaya, Sofia (2023). *Transforming Technical Services through Training and Development*. ALA Editions.

I have not yet gotten the opportunity to read this title yet, but it offers sections on staff training and skill development including within student employees. It is also very helpful that one of the ILS the book directly focuses on employees working within, Ex Libris's Alma, is what our library uses.

A short paragraph outlining the steps the student has already undertaken to understand this problem, including a list of stakeholders consulted in this process.

Prior to my LIS-685, I created the first student assistant position and tested initial materials with interns at my library. During that course, I expanded on this by creating and testing learning materials with not only the interns at Hollins, but students at Virginia Tech, Virginia Western, and William and Mary. Additionally, I consulted with Sevim McCutcheon, a cataloger at Kent State whose department similarly uses undergraduate student workers on their thoughts on my project and work. Immediate stakeholders consulted regarding the issue include:

- Luke Villele (University Librarian at Hollins University)
- Rebecca Seipp (Assistant University Librarian)
- Conducted interviews with the four student interns on pacing of learning and the material used, and acquired and implemented the feedback I received on existing instruction modules and altered my teaching approach.

- Conducted similar interviews with current and former student assistants in the current technical services position to gauge ideal workloads, the potential pace of instruction, and account for student work expectations in regards to this potential position.

A short paragraph outlining the steps the institution has already taken to address the problem.

Hollins has already allowed me to have one student assistant to improve cataloging workflows. Afterwards, upon request, I was allowed to teach winter interns how to create original catalog records as well. Prior, there weren't really many ideas outside of mine with how to address cataloging workload or provide cataloging experiences to students. The success with this student assistant and the internships has helped show the staff at Hollins that student work is a viable fix to the issues such as workload for current staff. This has expedited the order to shelf process of some items and relieved workloads, but further training could allow for student work to expand to metadata generation, something I taught in internships.

A short description of the LIS institution in which the project will be carried out, and the name of the key contact (or contacts) in that institution who will consult or in some other way shape the project.

Hollins University is a small liberal arts institution for women in Roanoke, VA. I have been working in the Technical Services department there since March of 2019. It is a small institution with a full time staff of 3 paraprofessional employees, 6 professional librarians, and a part-time administrative assistant. Previously Hollins has been incapable of larger metadata projects due to its lack of staffing. My key contact will be Rebecca Seipp, who can be reached at seippri@hollins.edu.

A detailed work plan describing the steps that you will take to implement a proposed solution to the problem, with a schedule of when the various tasks will be done and benchmarks for assessing progress toward completion of your project.

- August-September - Onboard student assistants to beginning duties and basic workflows that already have guides made. I will carefully review the quality of their metadata during this stage and note their learning. I will also be devising and preparing future guides training exercises for higher level work later in the semester. During this stage I expect students to be able to learn copy cataloging, and be able to identify problems in records and complete original cataloging metadata templates. Conduct an entry interview about expectations of work, experience, and thoughts about the position.
- October - Prepare the student assistant to generate their templated records in MARC, including being able to correctly place the indicators and proper encoding. In the latter half, I will also show them how to create Library of Congress Subject Headings and do subject analysis. This stage will see extensive review of student work. Prepare and conduct a midterm interview with the student before Fall Break.

- November - Prepare the student assistant to generate Library of Congress call numbers. Continue review of student work for this stage, primarily focused on subject headings and call numbers. Prepare and conduct an interview before Thanksgiving break.
- December - Monitor the continuation and growth of student work. Prepare and conduct a final more in-depth interview for the student about the work, overall experiences, and how the position or duties could be made better.
- Unscheduled/Potential - If I work with an intern this semester, I would like to prepare cooperative work and peer-learning that could be done with between the intern and student assistant as their duties share an overlap. If possible, I would also like to speak with GLAM students about the position, and prepare ways to advertise positions to students in this program.

A plan outlining how you will evaluate and assess the impacts of your project-centered field experience

- My evaluation of the student's learning and interaction with materials - This is to see how well the student learns from training materials and exercises. This will be evaluated from my own observations of the students' work with cataloging, analyzing which areas of metadata creation they frequently ask for help with, and where errors tend to appear. I will also use this data retrospectively to see where more or less training exercises or materials may be needed.
- Student interviews - How was this experience for the student? Should workload or pacing be adjusted? Does the student feel they are more prepared for work in the field?
- Quantity of departmental work output - Students and myself will track how many records are produced. This will help to gauge impacts to my usual workflow. The question to answer is if the time spent training shows an overall increase in departmental metadata creation, even though my metadata output may decrease.
- Quality of student work output- How many errors do records include? How detailed are these records? If errors or lack of detail exist, how much time is needed to correct these records?