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## Intentional Design: Crafting a Sustainable Internship Program

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# Intentional Design

Crafting a Sustainable Internship Program

UNO Libraries' Archives and Special Collections

Society of Georgia Archivists Annual Meeting  
October 26-28, 2022

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Omaha



Claire Du Laney | she, her  
Outreach Archivist



Lori Schwartz, | she, her  
Hagel and Technical  
Services Archivist



Wendy Guerra, | she, her  
Digital Initiatives Archivist



UNO Libraries' Archives and Special Collections



Wendy: Welcome everybody to our session Intentional Design: Crafting a Sustainable Internship Program. I'm Wendy Guerra....

Claire Intro

Lori intro

## Land Acknowledgement

It is appropriate to acknowledge that UNO occupies the traditional treaty lands of the Omaha and Otoe-Missouria Tribal Nations whose sovereignty existed long before the state of Nebraska. We would also like to express our respect to the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska, the Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska, and over 170 other tribes represented within the Omaha area.

Please take a moment to consider the legacies of more than 150 years of displacement, violence, settlement, and survival that bring us together here today. At the University of Nebraska, we respect and seek out inclusion of differences, realizing we can learn from each other, and we look forward to building long-lasting relationships with the Indigenous People of Nebraska. [UNL Native American Coalition](#)



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<https://nativecoalition.unl.edu/#:~:text=Land%20acknowledgement%20statement&text=At%20the%20University%20of%20Nebraska,the%20Indigenous%20People%20of%20Nebraska.%22>

## Context...

- Pandemic and going remote
- Born of necessity
  - Project floaters
  - Short-term project creation and management
- Ethical considerations



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Lori: While our presentation ultimately focuses on our new internship/practicum program, it was born out of the pandemic—the part where we were all working from home 5 days/week in 2020 and then transitioning back. Our experiences were likely similar to many of yours—a rush of anticipation and preparation for working from home, the dawning realization of challenges ahead, some fumbling and stress as projects stalled, some wins as projects moved forward, and here we are. Once we were back onsite enough to interact more, Wendy, Claire, and I sort of jumped into this internship program project; we weren't charged with creating it; we saw a need and started working on it. We had all had casual conversations about the spontaneous nature of random interns and volunteers who reached out to us for placement just before and during the pandemic. This random nature resulted in our workload doubling without knowing ahead of time and that really threw off our ability to plan and reach goals. So this effort was born out of necessity, to fix the unsustainable method of random students and workload issues, while also trying to make a better experience for students.

CLAIRE: One of the overarching themes of this work was building an ethically conscious program. Over the last few years especially, there has been a lot of conversations around the topic of invisible library and archives labor, student labor,

and caring for those working with potentially harmful content. We wanted to integrate some of this thinking into our framework. Its one of the reasons we prefer for students to be in a library or library-adjacent program and receiving course credit when completing their internship, since we cannot pay them. We also wanted to create a work space where students had some agency in selecting the project areas and any secondary projects, which we will talk about later. It's really important to us that students feel like their work matters and is visible within the department. These are just some of the areas we considered when creating this framework.

Wendy: Now, we're each going to share the 2 years of intern experiences and projects in our areas of archival processing, digital initiatives, and outreach, before moving on to discuss how we went about designing our sustainable internship program and its various elements. We'll then share lessons we've learned during the 2 pilot phases and the interns who followed them before wrapping up with how we plan to continue moving forward.

## Projects and Our Students: Processing

Worked with 7 students:

- 2 interns (1 remote)
- 5 student employees (3 remote)

Projects:

- Processing small collection from start to finish (in-person)
- Evaluation and suggested arrangement & description of digital collection (remote)
- Metadata enhancement and cleanup in ArchivesSpace (remote)
- Additional description in ArchivesSpace (remote)



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Lori: As the Hagel & Technical Services Archivist, I manage a team of staff and students in arranging and describing the U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel Archives and last year took over managing arrangement and description for all department collections. The nature of the Hagel Archives—a collection of around 1000 cubic feet across many distinct series—has allowed me to assign projects from small to large and simple to complex. With the rest of the department's collections now in the mix, I have more possibilities. This variety benefits student employees and interns of all experience and education levels and time commitments. During the virtual component of the pandemic, I supervised five students working on remote projects, hired two student employees, and supervised a practicum student in arranging and describing part of a digital Collection.

In summer and fall 2020, I hired two students, aware that remote work would require changes to orientation and training. So, I quickly converted the training materials to be accessed remotely and revamped the orientation sheet; it turned out to be the perfect opportunity to drop off some unneeded elements of orientation. Then, I decided what training to hold for onsite, like orientations to our space and hands-on training in the more complex elements of arrangement and description. I met with each student over Zoom to review required readings and provide a forest-level view

of collections and arrangement, and then focused on description and our finding aid database, ArchivesSpace. I assigned them two digital projects so they could switch out tasks during the long hours they were spending at home between both work and online classes. I emailed once a week to gauge their progress and how they were doing in general. This did not always go smoothly, as the students were juggling responsibilities and stress, but it kept them moving forward.

The practicum student who needed a virtual arrangement and description project for a graduate archives course ended up working on our Omaha COVID-19 Collection. The department has other digital collections, but that collection was at the right stage to accommodate this student's course requirements, and I only needed a couple hours of prep to make it happen, which was key as there was little lead time. So, it was done on the fly and without the benefit of the start-to-finish structure of our new internship program, as we were still working out details at this point. The student gained experience sorting individual files, creating a file structure, and crafting folder titles and narrative description. I met with them on Zoom to orient them, talk processes and challenges, and teach them ArchivesSpace, through which they would do the bulk of the description required by the practicum. This student also had health issues during this time that required extra flexibility.

Then, in fall 2021, we piloted our 2nd student through the internship program. They are pictured here on the right. They arranged and described a collection in our Queer Omaha Archives, described and housed artifacts from the Hagel Archives, and completed several smaller secondary projects in outreach and digitization. They spent about 30 hours on outreach with Claire, and 15 hours on digital initiatives with Wendy. Finally, in 2022, I've had four interns who went through or are going through the program right now. They have given us the opportunity to see our program function beyond the pilot phase.



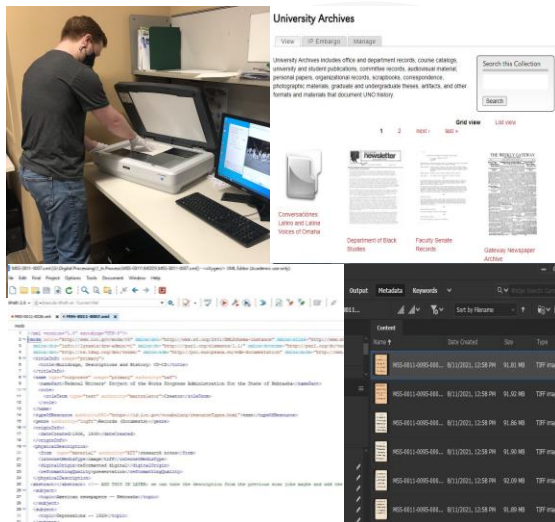
## Projects and Our Students: Digital Initiatives

Worked with 5 student interns:

- 3 remote, 1 hybrid, and 1 in-person

Projects:

- Scanning
- Post-processing of digital objects with trial versions of Adobe Acrobat, Bridge, and Photoshop
- MODS creation with trial version of Oxygen XML editor
- Digital asset management in Islandora



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Wendy: I started working with my first practicum student in fall of 2020 and it kicked off a busy year of managing remote projects for interns. Each student experience provided the opportunity to learn and implement better methods, and I built off of each one. With my first student, I felt a little like I was making things up as I went along. While I really did have a plan for their work and intentionally communicated over Zoom and email to form a connection not really possible by email only, I felt there was a lot of room for improvement with my method of delivering instructions for digital projects. My student was able to complete basic metadata entry into our digital asset management system Islandora, but I feel like their experience with me was rather shallow.

By spring of 2021, I had a much better idea of the experience I wanted to offer students, while also ensuring that their work was beneficial to the goals of Archives and Special Collections. When I took on my second student working on an independent study in their MLIS program at LSU, I created a workplan and schedule for the projects they would complete, the skills they would learn, and the software they would gain experience using during a set time frame. While it took more work upfront to design an approach that incorporated my onsite student scanning to create digital objects for the intern to work with remotely with trial versions of software, the

outcome was significantly better than my first effort. The student was able to learn how to create MODS records in Oxygen XML Editor and how to embed metadata in digital objects using a trial version of Adobe Suite. I provided instructions using email, Zoom, and detailed tutorial demos I made using VidGrid.

With my third student joining me remotely from the University of Washington iSchool, I felt comfortable expanding their workplan to include a small project and connection with Claire to help round out their short internship with me. I used the same instruction methods and software trials as with my former student, with one change being the increase to the student's level of responsibility and access in Islandora. Initially it was a bit of a stretch for me to entrust the student with greater access to our digital asset management system, but ultimately it went great and expanded the learning opportunity for the student.

Joining us in late May of last year, my fourth intern was our official 1<sup>st</sup> pilot effort. This hybrid student from MIZZOU had a learning plan and schedule that included the main focus on digital initiatives paired with secondary projects with Lori and Claire, planned informational interviews with other library staff, a final presentation, and an exit interview. The hybrid nature of his work allowed him to work around his full-time job while gaining important hands-on experience with physical and digital collections, including processing, scanning, writing MODS records, embedding metadata, and completing research for an outreach project. Instruction occurred in-person, over email, and via video demos; communication was extensive as we wanted a lot of feedback from him to help us improve for pilot #2.

Lastly, the fifth student I worked with was primarily Lori's intern for the 2<sup>nd</sup> pilot. With this student I only had 15 hours of project time and I'll talk about that experience a little later on.

## Projects and Our Students: Outreach

Worked with five (5) students:

- 2 practicum students
- 1 long-term grant student
- 2 internship

Areas of success:

- Exhibits
- Primary source research
- Shadowing instruction
- Social media

Areas improved by program:

- Project direction
- Project parity



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Outreach serves as one access point for researchers to work with archival materials. It's important that students working with me understand that outreach ties directly into digital collections and processing, as it is a key facet of collections discoverability. This has been and will continue to be a guiding principle as I move forward with this work. One of the reasons that I was so engaged with crafting this intern program was to build up my own experience and proficiency in supervising students. I can create or implement small projects with some level of agility and short notice, but I didn't have really any experience as a supervisor.

The first practicum student was something of a spontaneous addition to my workload. I was not supervising her directly, but in passing conversations she expressed an interest in exhibit design and installation. She started a secondary project with me for our monthly display cases. I met with the student to discuss how we would go about selecting materials, creating labels, and installing the display. Within this small project, it was important that the student gain experience in using the catalog and finding aids, searching the stacks, and engaging with the primary source materials. Additionally, it was important that there was trust in the interaction, as the student was rather nervous. While we worked on this project over the course of a few days, the student opened up about her college experience, some

frustrations in the program, and hopes for next steps. I appreciated her frankness and the trust she placed in me as we worked together, and I hope that if she has questions in the future she will reach out. This image is of the case she helped me curate.

For the grant student, I was the only supervisor for this long term and complex research and outreach project. The student had a little experience working with primary source materials, but not a great deal of knowledge working in an archives. I wanted him to feel like part of the department team, at least intellectually as he was working remotely. In an attempt to make the student feel welcomed, I overwhelmed him. I assure him that we were working along ethical and compassionate lines during COVID, and that I wanted him to find personal value and interest in the work. I gave him too much freedom in selecting where to start his research. This student dove way too quickly into the materials and started drowning in specifics when he didn't have context. He produced piecemeal things, which I wasn't sure how to explain were wrong or incomplete. Thankfully we corrected course. He and I talked about the larger, programmatic deliverables, and I showed where his research would specifically influence and support this. There have been other positive outcomes- he has asked me to serve as a reference for his grad school applications and the work he produced will help increase collection access and discoverability.

The benefits of that structure is evident by working with the third student. **(CLICK)** This Pilot 2 student was supervised mainly by Lori but has a secondary project in outreach with me and another with Wendy. Before the student started, Lori shared the scheduled and the number of hours that the student had with each of us. Lori asked Wendy and I roughly map out the hours and tasks we would have the student work on. This simple document provided structure when invariably the student came to my office and said "Ready to start." This student curated two flat case displays and created social media posts about the exhibit, items in our collection to celebrate LGBTQ+ History month in October, and posts about their work processing. I wanted this last set of posts in particular to combat the idea of invisible archival labor and invisible student labor. This photo show the student with their case.

For our two current Fall 2022 interns, I am partially supervising them for outreach elements that include social media, exhibit installation, and for the first time shadowing instruction sessions. In my initial meeting with both interns, I shared the expectations of these outreach secondary projects, specifically the social media portion. Interns will create a few posts about the content of there work, the projects they liked, the collections they engaged with, etc. They are required to write at least one post about their work that they do, so that it is clear that collections aren't processed or finding aids updated through invisible labor. That is an essential part of my contribution to our ethical framework- student labor is highlighted, discussed, and

celebrated.

So far both students have shadowed instruction sessions in our reading room. Before the classes, I confirmed with students whether they would like to be introduced when I did my own introduction and if they would like to help with any elements of the class, such as the Native Nations acknowledgment or other discrete teaching elements. Both declined on the latter, which is totally understandable. But I wanted to provide them with a little bit of agency and decision making.

## Documentation

- Internship program design document
- Learning plan
- Learning objectives bank
- Required readings
- Exit Interview questions
- Final presentation requirements



Claire: one of our main objectives for this presentation was to share with you the documentation that we created for our internship program. The documents evolved over the course of our planning and they are still living documents that we update as needed. The six elements of our documentation are the internship program design document, which once finalized became a core piece of the application; learning plan, learning objectives bank, a required reading list, exit interview questions, and the requirements for the final presentation. We are going to walk you through these items in detail in this presentation and answer any specific questions you may have during the live Q&A. It gets slightly confusing when discussing the Internship program design, which encompasses all the 6 documents you see listed here, and the internship program design document, which was the word doc we used to brainstorm, organize, and finalize the documents that we wanted to incorporate. We will try to keep those two items distinct during the walk-through.

## Internship Program Design

- Own experiences and ideas
- Design a well-rounded, mutually beneficial experience shaped by empathy and ethics
- Tracks...main projects and side projects

### Areas of Focus:

#### 1. Digital Collections projects supervisor: Wendy Guerra, Digital Initiatives Archivist

- Scanning (flatbed, sheetfed, overhead)
- Editing (Photoshop and Bridge)
- Embedding metadata (Bridge and Acrobat)
- Creating MODs records (Oxygen or Sublime)
- Collection evaluation and risk assessment
- Collection care and maintenance related to digital projects
- Islandora metadata entry and collection ingest

#### 2. Outreach projects supervisor: Claire Du Laney, Outreach Archivist

- Physical exhibits
- Instruction
- Teaching pedagogy
- Social media programming
- Collections promotion and engagement

#### 3. Processing projects supervisor: Lori Schwartz, Hagel and Technical Services Archivist

- Arrangement of a series or collection
- Description of a series or collection, including introduction to ArchivesSpace
- Description and housing of artifacts
- Inventory and minimal arrangement and/or description of collections



Lori: Claire, Wendy, and I all had our own ideas and experiences, stemming from being interns ourselves back in the day and later as supervisors, and we knew we wanted our design to include empathy and be ethically informed. As a grad student, I had an official internship, a practicum, and random other practical experiences. My practicum was a whirlwind 60 hours teaming up with two classmates. Our supervisor checked in on us twice, and we barely knew what we were doing. For my official, 3-hour credited internship, I interned at a state Archives where I scanned photos and entered metadata. I stayed in one room, there were no enrichment activities, and I didn't learn about the broader structure behind my work, save for 20 minutes from my supervisor about digitization setup when I pestered him. I'm betting their internships are structured differently these days, but this is one reason why I was on board for bringing structure and well-roundedness to our internship design. I've supervised around 20 interns as a professional, and most of them haven't been part of an official program, but I suppose due to my earlier experience, I supplied all sorts of value-added components, probably talking my interns' heads off as I gave them loads of contextual information about their projects, our archives, and the profession. Now with this program design, this whirlwind can be filtered through a structure.

Wendy: I completed my MLIS entirely online while I worked full-time. That situation

required me to fit internship experiences around a very packed schedule and in a very specific geographic region. At the time, remote internships were few and far between, rare even!

Wendy: My best internship experience occurred within a formal program at a large historical society, starting with a competitive application process (good practice for the future!), guided by a learning plan, supplemented by informational interviews, and evaluated by a final presentation with my intern cohort. When Lori, Claire, and I started trying to figure out what elements we needed for our intern program, we each contributed several examples of programs we admired. The elements and design were also influenced by our desire to create well-rounded experiences while understanding that students are only human and so are we.

Wendy: I'd say one benefit of the pandemic is that we've learned that much of our work can be accommodated to be performed remotely, especially a majority of digital collections work. I entered into this design planning stage with the idea that I specifically wanted to ensure opportunities for people who might not be able to relocate or work a typical 8-5pm schedule. I suspect that the library and archives field misses out on a fair bit of talent that we weren't able to encourage or give opportunity to simply because people can't make onsite internships happen for whatever reason. With that in mind, I also felt very strongly about designing experiences that were beneficial to both the student and Archives and Special Collections. It is easy to quickly get burnt out by adding additional projects onto our required work and goals. My experiences definitely influenced my desire to create a primary project that could be done remotely during hours that could accommodate the reality of distance students' schedules. Hence the reliance on trial software programs, cloud storage, and our web-based DAM.

Claire: The two internships I had as a student during and directly after grad school were great because they were extremely well rounded and I felt like I was a part of the department and not just a grunt worker. These internships were both relatively self-directed. For the one during grad school, I was charged with a theme and a rough outline of an exhibit but I had freedom to map the contours of the work. Similarly for the post-grad internship, I selected a track but the projects within that track were of my choosing. I learned a great deal from both internships but as far as deliverables were concerned, one internship was far more successful because I had a supervisor that was very engaged; my second internship I did a lot of daily work, but at the expense of my projects. It was really important that this UNO internship be well rounded and include the "glamorous" and the more mundane daily activities that are necessary in an archives or special collections, like shelving. Those tasks were really important to me during my internships because it made me feel like part of the normal work force, and not just a special projects person.



Claire: When we actually sat down to design the program elements, we started out with a really complex track system with a primary track and secondary track, with optional side projects depending on the number of hours the student was working. This became overly complicated with parsing out percentages of hours that could be worked, how students would indicate their track preferences during the application process, and how we would let applicants know what tracks were available, depending on archivists' availability. The bulk of our time and energy spent creating the program design was spent on moving away from the track system to a much more simplified format. We decided that it would be better for students to pick one area of focus (digital collections, outreach, processing) and then depending on the number of hours they worked, could incorporate secondary projects. This also allows us flexibility during the program. If something comes for one of us, we can shift some of the intern's time around, for example incorporating more outreach work, or assisting in other departmental projects.

# Internship Program Design Document

- Introduction
- Eligibility
- Background check and Housing
- Application
- Application Dates
- Elements of the Internship
- Areas of focus
- University of Nebraska at Omaha Non-Discrimination Statement

## UNO Libraries' Archives & Special Collections Internship Program (including fieldwork and practicums)

### Introduction:

The University of Nebraska at Omaha Libraries' Archives and Special Collections is responsible for collecting, preserving, and making available to the university community and public our unique archival collections and rare books. Under the general guidance of the Director of Archives and Special Collections and the specific direction of the Head and Technical Services Archivist, Digital Initiatives Archivist, or the Outreach Archivist, interns and practicum students will focus on a specific area of interest while gaining experience in a broad range of archival skills.

### Eligibility:

Internships and practicums are open to undergraduate and graduate students at UNO and other academic institutions. These are not paid positions; for ethical reasons students must be enrolled in a library science, history, or discipline-adjacent program.

If students are pursuing this opportunity for credit, they must upload the course or program requirements and learning outcomes from their academic institution. If students are not pursuing this opportunity for credit, they will be required to fill out a UNO Libraries' Archives and Special Collections Learning Plan with their supervisor at the beginning of the internship or practicum.

### Background check and housing:

All non-UNO and on-site interns and practicum students offered a position will undergo a university background check and complete additional documentation as required by Human Resources.

Please be aware that the UNO Libraries does not offer housing or relocation funds for interns, practicum students, fieldwork students, or volunteers.

Application: [Microsoft Forms](#)



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WENDY: The design document, as mentioned before, was the living document we used to brainstorm and organize what we wanted for this program. I wish we had a picture of the whiteboard and first version where we tried to define the percentages of times that could be allotted for the primary and secondary tracks, and the side projects. It was messy and fun and led us thankfully to a much more streamlined approach where there was one area of focus, with a second area for possible projects. This document is for internal use only and is not shared with students.

The images that you see here is the cleaned up, and most finalized version. It is the template or guide to the five other documents listed on the previous slide, as well as the online application. In the design document, there is an introduction to the internship program, briefly describing the department, the areas of focus, and what students can expect to gain from the program.

In the eligibility section, we are very transparent about our desire for students to be in a library or library-adjacent program and that we cannot pay them. In an ideal world we would pay our interns (more about that later) but when we were writing this and currently, we do not have the funds to pay students. In a slightly less ideal world, all our interns would take this for credit so that they at least were getting

something towards their degree. But we have to be aware of the realities of our profession- students need internships even if they can't take them for credit. For credit and not for credit, we require students to have a learning plan. Which we will talk about later.

UNO may conduct a background check on student workers, including interns. This is a university policy, not an archives and special collections one. We wanted students to know that this was a possibility upon acceptance into the program. We also really needed students to know that we do not offer any housing options or any funds for travel. This was again, one of the reasons that remote internships are a central part of our program- being as inclusive and accessible to the widest range of students is really important to us.

The application we use is a Microsoft form (next slide)

## Application

### Application: Microsoft Forms

Academic Program Requirements: If you are taking this internship or practicum for credit, please upload the requirements from your academic institution's course or program.

Cover Letter: explain your reasons for interest in both our department and the primary area(s) of focus you selected.

- How to write a cover letter: <https://www.askamanager.org/category/cover-letters>
- About us: <https://www.unomaha.edu/crisis-library/archives-and-special-collections/index.php>

Resume: must include your year/progression in your academic program and coursework relevant to libraries, archives, and history (for example, a research methods class in humanities or the social sciences).

- How to write a resume: <https://www.askamanager.org/category/resumes>

Optional writing sample. If you decide to include a writing sample, it should be from a relevant course or publication (blog, newsletter, or presentation).

### Application Dates:

TOTAL HOURS	APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR SUMMER CYCLE	APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR FALL CYCLE	APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR SPRING CYCLE
40-60* hours	May 1	August 1	December 15
65+ hours	April 15	July 15	December 1

\*If number of hours needed is less than 40, please contact us separately via email.

\*If your program is on the quarter or trimester system, please contact us for dates.

Start dates are negotiable and dependent on applicant and archivist.

### University of Nebraska at Omaha Archives and Special Collections Internship Application

\* Required

#### Applicant Information

Academic Program Requirements: If you are taking this internship or practicum for credit, please upload the requirements from your academic institution's course or program.

Cover Letter: explain your reasons for interest in both our department and the primary area(s) of focus you selected. <https://www.unomaha.edu/crisis-library/archives-and-special-collections/index.php>

Resume: must include your year/progression in your academic program and coursework relevant to libraries, archives, and history (for example, a research methods class in humanities or the social sciences).

Optional writing sample. If you decide to include a writing sample, it should be from a relevant course or publication (blog, newsletter, or presentation).

1  
Name of Applicant \*

Enter your answer



UNO Libraries' Archives and Special Collections



Wendy: One element if we decided to institute was a formal application process. The image on the left is our working doc and the image on the right shows the final form available through our website. The application is intended to give students experience applying for jobs and to give us the information we need to select students to work with us. We simply can't take on every student that seeks an internship with our repository. I'm sure we have all experienced interns before--who we realized once they were onboard—didn't have the intentionality that is needed for them to thrive and for either party to see any benefits from their time with us. Our application process is intended to help prevent or decrease the chances of that happening and to also reduce the likelihood that we will have more interns than we can handle at any one point. After launching the application, we did update the information to reflect that applicants will be reviewed on a rolling basis until we hit our maximum or our deadline.

Wendy: We spent a fair bit of time determining what to include in the application. It was important that students come to this internship with a sense of the work that they will be doing and how they will play a role in the overall function of the department. Even if it is required by a library program, it is still a time commitment and we wanted students to be aware of hours, timelines and deadlines. We hope that

by sharing the website and application with library program chairs and directors, we can avoid last minute shuffling.

Lori: When creating this application, we tried very hard to set expectations for applicants. This includes points about no compensation or housing and required background checks. We also tried to be clear about submitting the learning plan, program requirements, or internship requirements from a student's academic program. Every program has different goals and expectations for their internship components- some specific and others quite vague. We tried to clearly indicate that whatever information about your program was available, we would like to receive it.

Lori: One of the lengthier sections of the application is the description of elements of the internship and the areas of focus, which we spent a lot of time working on. We wanted prospective interns to know what their time with us would look like. We tried to explain the primary and secondary project possibilities in a way that was clear and not overwhelming. Orientation and readings, informational interviews, and an end of the internship presentation are all elements that the three of us felt very strongly about. Regarding the informational interviews, our department is on a different floor from the rest of the library and so it's easy for students to feel separated from the rest of academic library work. Our hope is that students will interview staff outside of Archives and Special Collections to understand how our work is connected. Finally, the final presentation, which Wendy will share more about later, has real benefits for our students. Not only does this ask them to reflect and explain their work and how it can be integrated into their schooling, but it gives them material to use for job interviews.

Claire: Going back to that point about students understanding our expectations, we do require that students submit a CV and a cover letter. The CV will help us understand what relevant course work the student has completed and the cover letter will force the student to think about this as a job and not just a thing that has to be done for school. From previous experience of going over student application packets, it's fairly clear that most students don't know how to write a cover letter or a CV. For me (Claire) one resume in particular stands out for being completely aspirational, as opposed to showing what the student had accomplished. To try and help students, we included links for writing CVs and cover letters in the application. This MOU or contract language, where we ask students to confirm their understanding of the program, allows us to have some expectation of the student's seriousness. We did originally have students upload documents directly through the Microsoft form. However that wouldn't work for students outside UNO. So now we have directions of how to email the cover letter and CV. This will be a good test for following directions.

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- University of Nebraska at Omaha Non-Discrimination Statement

#### Application Dates:

TOTAL HOURS	APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR SUMMER CYCLE	APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR FALL CYCLE	APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR SPRING CYCLE
40-60* hours	May 1	August 1	December 15
65+ hours	April 15	July 15	December 1

\*If number of hours needed is less than 40, please contact us separately via email.  
\*If your program is on the quarter or trimester system, please contact us for dates.

Start dates are negotiable and dependent on applicant and archivist.

#### Elements of the Internship:

**Learning Plan:** Prior to start of internship, supervisor and intern will complete the learning plan from the intern's academic program. If the intern doesn't have a learning plan from their academic program, they will use ASC's learning plan.

**Orientation, including required readings (2-4 hours)**

Informational interviews with faculty and staff across all Library departments. Following discussion with supervisor, student will arrange interviews (30-60 minutes interview, 30-60 minutes preparation). If the internship is 40-60 hours, the intern should complete one interview. If the internship is over 60 hours, the intern should complete a minimum of two interviews. Final number determined at the discretion of the supervisor.

**Primary project(s) (60-75% of internship hours):** Applicants will select one area of focus within the department. Three areas are available: Digital Collections, Outreach, and Processing. Examples of work and skills gained through each area of focus are listed below; they are representative and not exhaustive of the tasks a student can expect to engage with during their internship or practicum. Students will report to the archivist supervising their primary projects who will oversee the completion of all internship or practicum components. If a student has one or two secondary projects, they will continue to report to their primary supervisor.



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Claire: We also have deadlines! The Application dates are there to protect us in Archives and Special Collections so that we have the ability to say no to applicants, or program directors who email us after the deadline or even mid semester. I would say we struggle with this, because we have a deep empathy for students who need internships.

We are going to talk about the learning plan in a later slide so I'm going to jump down to the orientation section. We require all students to go through a brief departmental orientation. This includes required academic readings, the library student handbook, the archives and special collections student handbook, codes of ethics from ACRL and SAA, tours of the department and library, and safety training for lockdowns, fires, and tornadoes. We also discuss issues of confidentiality (such as medical, legal, educational, and other types of sensitive information) and ask them to sign a form indicating their understanding. We follow a student training checklist to keep the orientation on track, and it is flexible enough to be used by both student employees and interns.

## Learning Plan

- Contact information
- Practicum/Internship Requirements
- Schedule
- Experience
- Internship components
- Learning objectives

### Practicum/Internship Requirements:

This plan is for the completion of a \_\_\_\_-hour internship/practicum.

Is this internship/practicum being taken for course credit, as a component of an internship/practicum course, or as otherwise required by the student's academic program? If yes, list type.

If yes, list any internship requirements, other than hours, from the student's course or academic program:

List any evaluative/assessment measures required by the student's academic program to be completed by the primary supervisor, including appropriate due dates, if known:

### Schedule

Internship/Practicum Site:  Online  Onsite at Criss Library  Hybrid

Start date:

Projected end date:

Average hours/week (if online):

Schedule per week (if onsite at Criss Library):

### Experience

Understanding more about the student's learning experiences up to this point will help the primary supervisor plan appropriate orientation activities and required readings.

Has the student completed an introduction to archives course? If so, list course title:

List any other relevant courses from undergraduate and/or graduate studies:

### Internship Components

Required readings:

Informational interview(s):

Primary Project(s):



WENDY: Some grad school programs provide a learning plan, listing the expectations and requirements for their internship and practicum credits, while some schools don't. We built our learning plan to use when students do not have one provided by their program, when they aren't completing the internship for credit, or to supplement if the school learning plan feels inadequate.

The learning plan is filled out by the primary supervisor and the students prior to the internship beginning. Sections of the learning plan include the requirements from the student's program, expected student schedule, if they intend to be onsite, remote, or hybrid, what prior experience the student has, and the primary and secondary projects that will form the core of the internship; basically a roadmap of the internship. The final section includes the learning objectives we think will best support the work of the primary project and give the student a well rounded experience.

The learning plan is for both the students and our benefit. With the learning plan, expectations are clearly articulated and if changes have to be made, we have original documentation from which to evolve.

## Learning Objectives

- The student should become acquainted with the mission, administrative organization, policies and procedures, resources and services, and clientele of a particular archival repository.
- The student should learn to communicate effectively with supervisors and colleagues.
- The student should be able to articulate how skills learned may be applied in the future.
- The student should understand the career paths to becoming an archivist and the various fields within archival management: Processing, Digitization, Preservation, Access and Reference, and Outreach and Promotion.
- The student should understand the descriptive methods and tools that provide control and access to records and papers.
- The student should learn to revise and update descriptive language in online collection guides to remove racist, harmful, and biased language.



Lori: For some elements of our internship design, our ideas shifted over time- the learning objectives are an example of this. For a learning plan, which would list learning objectives and the projects they would complete with us, we spent time discussing how vague vs specific the learning plan should be for students that did not have a plan from their academic institution. For example, we had one intern whose program had a very basic learning plan; the learning objectives on another intern's learning plan were so broad as to be useless for their purposes (and ours). We wanted the learning plan to guide student work and ensure their projects had tangible results and resulted in learned skills, and we wanted the learning objectives to be obtainable and useful.

I've listed some example of the learning objectives, which we currently keep in a word document that we update as needed. We have objectives that relate generally to archives and the archival profession, as well as area-specific objectives in outreach, processing, and digital collections. So when I filled out learning plans with my latest two interns, it was easy for me to open our learning objectives bank, select the objectives that fit the projects, and boom, done.



## Required Reading



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WENDY: We wanted to use required readings to prepare students for their internship with us and to fill in any gaps from our specific areas of expertise that a student may not have been exposed to in their formal course work. This would help start all interns on a more level playing field. Eventually, we'd like to have interns form cohorts each semester that promote deeper engagement and learning; this is still an idea though! Some of the books we selected readings from are displayed on the screen.

We all selected readings that we felt were important in our areas of expertise, as well as basic and more advanced materials that cover the archival profession as a whole. Required reading materials can be adjusted based on what an intern has been exposed to previously, although I've definitely asked interns to re-visit some articles they told me they covered early in grad school. A refresher is always good!

## Exit Interview and Final Presentation

- What did you think of the required readings? Did you find them helpful?
- Was communication with your supervisors (Lori, Claire, Wendy) clear? Did you always know what you were doing and why?
- Were expectations and goals clearly laid out in either the learning plan or verbally?
- What did you think about the complexity and interest of the projects you were assigned?
- What could we do differently to make the experience better for other interns in the future (if not covered above).
- In a 15-20 minutes presentation, demonstrate an understanding of the work by describing the internship elements, including readings, interviews, and projects.
- Don't assume everyone knows what arrangement, description, outreach, and digitization fully entails (because we may not).
- Discuss skills learned and challenges encountered.
- Please ask me if you need a reminder on why you did the things you did. I'm happy to reinforce what you learned!
- One idea is to create a PowerPoint with one slide per interview, project, etc.!



Claire: To round out the required elements, we wanted our interns to give a final presentation and take part in an exit interview. We saw the exit interview as a meaningful tool for reflection during which we could provide feedback about their projects and offer insights for how these experiences can be applied to their careers. Of course, we also want to hear from them about what was meaningful, what did and didn't help them understand the projects we asked them to complete, and so on. Listed here are some of our questions.

Likewise, the final presentation helps the student reflect on their work and understand their takeaways from the internship, like what can they add to their resume, how the work accomplished their learning objectives, and what can be applied to their coursework or future employment. We've listed here some of the questions from the exit interview and the requirements of the final presentation. You can see here on the right that we are specific in our instructions for the final presentation because Lori had a couple students who were very, very nervous about it, and these instructions helped reduce their anxiety.

## Lessons (Being) Learned...from both pilots and beyond

- Don't underestimate the readings
- Flexibility is key for interns who work FT or have other concerns
- Learning plan required by school program may need supplementing
- Structure is essential
- What can be accomplished in a limited timeframe?
- Balance between breadth and depth of experience.
- Send follow up emails to students with project expectations.



Lori: Let's talk now about lessons we learned before and during the pilot phase and all that we're continuing to learn in 2022. My first lesson learned goes back to our 1st pilot. With them, I had reinforced that it is hard to estimate processing times! Even if I have students work on a simple set of processing steps, students wrap their minds around it at different speeds. I can say that with certainty after 18 years of teaching processing. With our 1st pilot intern, I estimated what someone with no experience could get trained on and accomplish in just 15 hours. They weren't able to finish all the elements of processing, from inventory to description. For the next short project like this, I will pair down expectations so that the intern sees a final product from their efforts. Can I teach all the steps of processing with a much smaller amount of material? Yes! If the intern turns out to be speedy, I can find an hour or two of work to supplement if needed, but no matter what, they'll walk away with a sense of accomplishment and a vision for all the steps of processing.

Claire: Something I learned is to write things down. If I have a meeting with a student about a side project, I need to send an email repeating the project, sharing links, and giving timeframes. Pilot one wasn't a student at UNO so access to certain documents was tricky in the beginning. There were no problems with project expectations or timeline for this student, but needing to send out multiple emails for document

permissions makes me realize that it would be better to have a project template to share.

Lori: I decided that my 2nd pilot internship would benefit from precise scheduling. They had 140 hours to complete and were scheduled for 15 hours each of outreach and digitization aside from their primary processing projects. I built out a schedule with input from Claire and Wendy on how much time to spend each day on which projects; I did not schedule times within each day or send calendar invites. That seemed like overkill. Even then, we ran into some schedule squooshiness. They were scheduled for outreach work many days in a row, and as the days added up, their time spent in outreach went over bit by bit until they had doubled their outreach time by the end. I felt the intern was reaping benefits from this time, and Claire wasn't complaining (mainly because she didn't know that happening) so I didn't say anything. However, my decision to not say anything hampered my planning for the intern's other projects. So, I should have checked in with Claire sooner to better gauge the remaining time and plan ahead accordingly.

Claire: Social media took way longer than I (or Lori) anticipated mainly because I assumed the student was following the hours allotted on their schedule so I didn't check in with them. It will be good to compare the original calendar, the actual hours, and how we want to adjust that time frame for future interns. Similar to the project follow up template, I need to make a social media template for students to follow. The intern that crafted various posts had great content, but the posts were too long, contained bullet points, and linked to photos in their personal google drive that I couldn't access when time came to post. My lesson here is make templates. I don't mean anything prescriptive- it doesn't serve me or the intern if I end up ghost writing the posts or exhibits. But providing clear expectations surrounding word or character count, finding a balance between educative text and context of the item, and number of images that should be uploaded I think would help things run more smoothly.

Wendy: The 2nd pilot intern was the shortest amount of time I had worked with a student, and I dramatically overestimated how much content was reasonable to cover in a 15 hour secondary project. While I was able to teach the intern everything from scanning, through post-production to ingest into our DAM, I felt it was a shallow experience for them and one that put A LOT of pressure on me in the days surrounding their work. In the future, I will aim to provide a deeper experience in one or maybe two areas in hopes of allowing a student to actually gain familiarity with a process, instead of briefly trying to cover everything I can with an intern and only really providing them with an awareness of the work I do.

Lori: When our 2nd pilot intern did their final presentation and exit interview in November 2021, I was a bit nervous. As a supervisor, you never want to hear

anything surprising in how an intern is describing the work they did and challenges they encountered. This didn't happen here thankfully! What I learned was that the intern picked up some missing knowledge from the readings and found the structure of program helpful.

Claire: Internal communication is going to be the key to the success of the program. The point about Outreach hours creep is a good reminder that this program can only function if we three are communicative, honest, and receptive to scheduling. The empathy and respect we want our students to experience must extend to the three of us as well.

## Lessons (Being) Learned...continued

- Application process in action
- Getting hired!
- (And not getting hired...)
- Managing expectations at the beginning and throughout
- Conducting exit interviews...the good and bad
- Sticking to learning plans
- (Micro?) managing scheduling



Lori: With our four interns in 2022, we saw our full application process in action for the first time, and it worked as we hoped. I know we were all pleased that the two spring 2022 interns, who were in our university's undergraduate library program, followed our application directions, submitted their materials on time, and produced decent cover letters and resumes. They later told me they used the resources we provided to craft their cover letters and resumes. The graduate interns didn't need those hints, but the undergraduate students did—at least in our sample of four. After receiving their application materials, we determined I would be their likely primary supervisor based on their interests and our availability. Then, I set up meetings with each student. We discussed the elements of the practicum, filled in the learning plan, discussed scheduling and other issues, and addressed any questions. I found those meetings to be helpful in setting expectations and even in building their excitement for the practicum/intern experience.

Wendy: One of the most valuable pieces of feedback we received from our first pilot intern was how truly critical hands-on experience is to being successful in the job market. We probably all know this, we've likely all lived those experiences of multiple internships to gain enough experience to pair with our formal education, to get our

foot in the door. Despite knowing that, it was valuable to have it reinforced. From this first pilot intern, we heard that:

"The largest gap in what I have to offer professionally was practical experience, which I received in droves here."

"This exit interview, the presentation, and the practicum as a whole are the best possible preparation I could ask for."

The experience was clearly critical for them, because they were hired within UNO Libraries a few months after their internship and attribute their success to having gained practical experience.

Lori: This had actually happened with my on-the-fly practicum virtual-only intern as well, but we don't always hire our interns! With limited archival budgets, of course we don't, but you never know what expectations a student may bring with them. No matter the expectations we may try to set at the beginning of the internship experience, you WILL have to manage expectations as you go, as well.

Lori: For example, with one intern, this involved a job opportunity and a realization that maybe archival work wasn't quite what they expected. During their first 30 hours, I had long discussions with them about processing and collection management during which they seemed engaged and enthused. They were also diligent about their project work. But then about halfway through the internship, they applied for a grand-funded staff position in my department. They were up against people with more relevant experience who were also known quantities to us. In other words, it was a tough decision. I spoke with them in private about where their application stood, so they would hear straight from me and not the grapevine or impersonal HR response. Their reaction in person was polite. Their reaction in emails...was not. They said they hadn't really enjoyed the work and were now considering another area of library work entirely. The fact they were saying this soon after penning an enthusiastic cover letter for the archival job aside, threw me a bit. It was also incongruent with my experience of them. Then they said they wouldn't even put the internship on their resume! They also said other things, but in any case, I suspected they were hurt and lashing out. So, I followed up with gentle questions and reminders, along with some resume advice, and waited for the exit interview to have a broader conversation. Sufficed to say, I was more nervous for this exit interview than I was with my pilot intern. By the time it came, however, they had cooled down and reconsidered their statements. Though I had to be direct at times, we ended up having a pleasant talk about resumes and the hiring process, public library work, and where they might head post-graduation. Speaking directly as a supervisor can be awkward but it's also my responsibility while helping prepare students for their professional lives. At least, this is what I repeat to myself. The other very concrete lesson learned from this was that Claire and I decided to add language to our application materials about internships not being a guarantee of a job.

Lori: With another intern, I found myself managing expectations related to their academic supervisor, and the importance of sticking to the learning plan came into focus. The intern felt pressured mid-internship by a supervisor in their grad program to spend more time on digital initiatives than we had all agreed to. However, Wendy didn't have more time to give; for the sustainability of our internship program, we were determined to stick to the learning plans where possible, so that our schedules don't get warped by external pressures. I ended up coaching the intern about how they could explain to their supervisor that learning to process and learning the ins and outs of our online database—a database used by thousands of archives across the U.S.—were also valuable elements of archival work. In other words, for this internship, the learning plan helped set AND manage expectations.

Lori: Finally, I'm continuing to learn lessons about scheduling, including with my two current interns. What may have worked (or sort of worked?) for my pilot intern last year wouldn't necessarily work for one of my 2022 interns. For one thing, my last five interns were with our department for 60, 60, 130, 135, and 180 hours, and they all had different combinations of primary and secondary projects. The scheduling has to bend to the parameters of each internship but I may have more lessons learned when my two current interns leave in 2 months.



## Moving Forward Ethically and Sustainably



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Wendy: When we started out, it felt a bit like we were laying the track to follow immediately before crossing it! Our intent though in creating this formalized program was sustainable work for all people involved, founded on empathic labor practices. We have learned a lot and expect to continue learning how to provide mutually beneficial internship experiences.

Wendy: The ethics of unpaid student labor are difficult to navigate. On one hand, there is the reality that you can't get a job in this field without experience. And that experience is more often than not from unpaid labor, which has many issues of contributing to a skewed workforce based on who is capable of working for free. While on the other hand, you have this intensifying awareness and effort to change the practice of unpaid intern labor. It is a difficult situation that we are trying to navigate by requiring that our interns are enrolled in fieldwork or internship credit hours for school. Additionally we haven't historically advertised that we are seeking interns; this changed a little bit though with the creation of our website. It further changed when I made connections with advisors at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and UW-Milwaukee. While the primary goal of connecting with advisors there was to make SLIS students aware of UNO as an option for fieldwork, it has just recently resulted in a student seeking experience but not for credit. This is the second

student who was seeking such experience; the first was my student from the Washington iSchool. Obviously, I took the first student on. With this second student, I discussed with Claire and Lori and we determined that when such requests arise as they inevitably will, we handle them on a case by case basis. I'm in the process of determining what projects and timeline this UWM student is interested in before fully committing to taking them on as an intern. Part of the sustainability piece is that we the archivists must have the capacity to support interns and provide meaningful and mutually beneficial projects.

Lori: And speaking of that, I don't feel comfortable—and I know Claire and Wendy are the same—bringing on an intern if I can't give them a meaningful experience. If my boss says, "They could do x project" but I know that x project wouldn't give the student a substantive learning experience—if they would be a clerk on a simple archival re-housing project, I nix it, no question. It wouldn't feel ethical otherwise. In addition to the considerations of credit v. no credit and wanting them to have a substantial learning experience, we also don't want to use interns to do the work student employees would normally do. Perhaps these considerations are magnified because we don't have funds to pay them, though I'd like to think we'd have similar thinking no matter. We are making a little headway in finding funds, though; paying interns from our own university recently became the top priority in fundraising for one of our big private funding sources. Fingers all the way crossed on that.

Lori: Also, providing meaningful and mutually beneficial projects isn't always so easy to determine. A recent intern came to me past our application deadline, but I wanted to make it work for a variety of reasons, one being they needed something in person in our city of limited archival options. They also needed 135 hours of graduate-level work. But I had another grad intern lined up who needed 180 hours, plus I had the rest of my job. So this is where transparency and sustainability can collide. A colleague and I have been surveying our collections and identified a bunch of "tiny projects" in our stacks. Think along the lines of enhanced description, re-housing material, and so on. If I started this late-breaking intern on these easier projects, I could make my September work. Then, we'd ramp up to more difficult projects from there, though I may never give him a from-scratch project. I wanted to explain this to the intern up front. And he readily agreed. Transparency was important to me in that moment. And honestly, being a good supervisor and starting an effective mentoring relationship starts with transparency.

Lori: Related to that, I swear that every intern or student teaches this to me anew -- we have to approach mentoring differently for every student. They come to us at different stages of life and with different amounts of support, privilege, knowledge, skills, natural ability, personalities, etc. For the supervisor, navigating this takes emotional energy, which takes time--literal time as we think through their needs and

our approach.

Claire: We're gaining new insights every semester as we continue in our program, so what you've just heard is our "as of September 2022" insights. We hope they've been useful or helpful in some way. Finally, we hope that by intentionally designing a sustainable internship program grounded in ethical behavior and empathy, we can successfully attract students who wish to gain practical experiences while contributing to mutually beneficial projects in our department.

# Thank you!

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Claire: And that wraps us up. Thank you! We hope to see you at our live Q&A during the annual meeting, and we hope your conferencing goes well.



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