

Sprouting STEMs: Science Librarianship Internships for Undergraduates

Prof. Matthew Harrick, Prof. Lee Ann Fullington, & Thomas DeAngelis
Brooklyn College, The City University of New York

Introduction

Librarians at the Brooklyn College Library began developing the Science Information Internship in Spring 2014, and launched the pilot in Fall 2015.

This unique internship introduces undergraduate STEM students to librarianship in general, and science librarianship in particular. It is a fully realized, semester-long program incorporating exposure to different library units, field trips, and small group discussions, and culminates in a final project/presentation.

Behind the Scenes

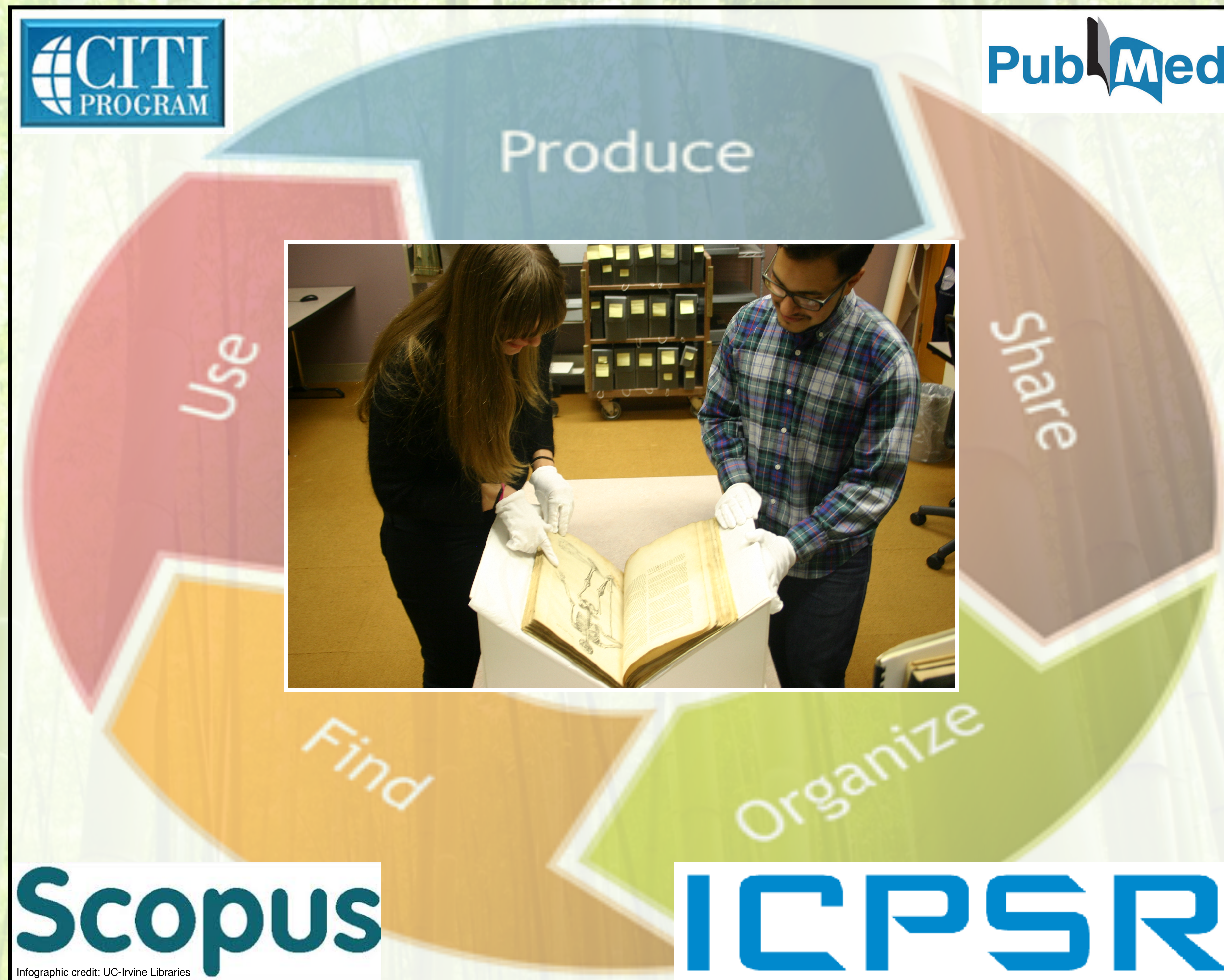
A working group of librarians collaborated on the internship curriculum and content, meeting throughout Summer 2014 to develop the syllabus, and to craft assignments, tasks, and the capstone project.

The focus of the internship was based on our first intern's major – health sciences. The internship was highly collaborative, not only among librarians, but also between librarians and the intern himself.

Implementation

Weekly activities, all on site, included:

- Working with different librarians based on their areas of expertise
- Independent work (readings, tutorials, exercises)
- Shadowing at the reference desk
- Visiting other library units
- Field trips to other science libraries and professional meetings
- Presentation of the capstone project to library colleagues at the culmination of the internship



Module Themes

Orientation to Field * Tools of the Trade * Data/ Demographics * Publishing/Open Access * LIS Research * Outreach

Assignments & Tasks

Unit Visits to Technical Services, Government Documents, Special Collections, and Library Administration * Weekly Readings * Observing Instruction Preparation and Classroom Sessions * Database Training * Searching and Citation Tracking Exercises * IRB Training

Assessment & Outcomes

Librarian Perspective:

- Flexibility among participants led to a more robust and dynamic program
- Many willing and interested librarians volunteered
- Modular format works well
- Not for the faint at heart as it requires time and commitment

Intern Feedback:

- Great mentoring opportunity
- Freedom to follow own interests
- Gained valuable research skills
- Would have liked to team teach
- Needs a better balance of discussion and readings

Next Steps

- Adapt and expand the program to develop natural sciences, engineering, and computer sciences modules
- Ideally have a Health Science intern for the Fall semester, and a STEM intern for the Spring
- Streamline document sharing among librarians

Sample Week

Monday:

1-2pm: Take the UCI Libraries' Science Information Life Cycle Tutorial

2-3pm Discussion of info life cycle with this week's librarians

3-4pm: Independent work: Find news or blog or website with current public health "news"; evaluate with CRAAP test; locate the original research/studies

Wednesday:

1-2pm: Tour Brooklyn College's Archives & Special Collections

2-2:30: Follow up on Monday's activities with Health Sciences Librarian

2:30-4: Reference Meeting -- testing and feedback for OneSearch discovery system (work with Health Sciences Librarian to test MeSH searches, etc.)

Sample Readings

Bell, S. (2007). Tools every searcher should know and use. *Online*, 31(5), 22-27.

Bobick, J. E., & Berard, G.L. (2011). *Science and technology resources: A guide for information professionals and researchers*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Georgas, H. (2014). The implementation of an independent and self-paced online library orientation for freshman students and the use of Sakai as a quiz management system (QMS). *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 21(1), 75.

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