

CO-OP END-OF-TERM REPORT

ROBYN HALL

End-of-term Report for Winter 2009

Placement name: Innis Library- McMaster University

City: Hamilton, ON

Supervisor: Ines Perkovic

** I give permission for potential co-op students to read my report.*

Introduction

In what follows, I describe the projects and assignments I have undertaken during my 8-month work term as a co-op student at Innis Library, McMaster University's business library. I then lay out a few constructive recommendations that future co-op students and the employer may wish to consider, and conclude with a few personal reflections about my overall experience at Innis and how it has shaped my future directions as a librarian.

Work Assignments and Projects

I completed a number of tasks during the past two semesters at Innis Library, which included the following:

Fall semester

- Promoted and delivered a RefWorks for Business workshop for business students and faculty.
- Helped develop sessions for blended service (whereby library assistants at Innis and other libraries on campus are being trained to provide research help in addition to their circulation duties). I also helped develop a mentorship program for library assistants to assist with this process in the form of a document that was given to assistants and mentor librarians when the mentorship program was launched in the spring of 2009.
- Compiled an annotated bibliography on mentorship in academic libraries, which was given to attendees at the 2nd annual Associate University Librarians (AUL) meeting held at McMaster University in late November. I also took notes at the meeting and wrote a brief piece about the event for the McMaster Library staff newsletter

<http://staffnews.blog.lib.mcmaster.ca/2008/12/18/ontario-associate-university-librarians-meeting-at-mcmaster>).

- Worked at the research help desk (12-16 hours per week).
- Did instant messaging reference using Meebo (1-2 hours per week).
- Constructed a guide on how to find market share (<http://library.mcmaster.ca/find/how-find-market-share>).
- Created a Facebook group for Innis Library to help with the promotion of library services.
- Participated in teaching squares, which involved visiting a number of library instruction classes in order to reflect on my own instructional strategies.
- Explored newspaper content held by McMaster library to assist with the decision of whether or not to purchase a less expensive version of LexisNexis.
- Attended guest speakers, symposiums, health and safety training sessions, research help debriefings, staff/ liaison librarian meetings, and in-class library instruction sessions.

Winter semester:

- Constructed a guide on how to find business cases (<http://library.mcmaster.ca/find/business-cases>).
- Constructed an FAQ on open access publishing for Barbara McDonald, Scholarly Communication Librarian (<http://library.mcmaster.ca/scholarly-communication/open-access>).
- Provided input on service, collection, and space decisions (e.g., IT hours, the creation of a suggestions box and signage, additions and extraction to the collection, and so on).
- With a fellow co-op student, completed an annotated bibliography on learning commons in business libraries to assist with the development of a learning commons in what will tentatively be McMaster's Burlington Campus (which aims to expand the DeGroote School of Business program offerings).
- Completed a bibliography on grant writing and librarianship for the Library Management Committee.
- Helped develop and then co-taught approximately two dozen library instruction sessions. These involved teaching first and second year commerce students about a variety of library

resources and facilitating activities whereby students learned how to evaluate these resources appropriately for use in their assignments.

- Helped develop an assignment and marking rubric for second year commerce students that centered on evaluating resources for business research.
- Attended guest speakers, job talks, research help debriefings, and staff/ liaison librarian meetings as well as one day of sessions at the Ontario Library Association's Super Conference (which McMaster paid for).
- Helped organize a viewing of the ACRL Virtual Conference in Mills Library.
- Took a leading role in organizing co-ops' professional development meetings that were held twice a month by developing a preliminary schedule of topics, presenters and session organizers/facilitators.
- Organized and facilitated a co-op professional development session that focused on the experiences of new librarians and the challenges of looking for and acquiring employment after library school.
- Worked at the research help desk (16-18 hours per week).
- Did instant messaging reference using Meebo (1-2 hours per week).
- Was trained on how to provide research help using Second Life.
- Created a poster board display on two databases as a means of promoting them (WRDS and BestCase).
- Led a staff roundtable that focused on open access publishing, questioning whether librarians should position themselves as advocates for open access, educators, or in opposition.

Recommendations

My recommendations for future co-op placements do not vary significantly from those I outlined in my previous co-op report at the conclusion of the Fall semester. These included:

- A start date at the beginning of the month rather than the end to assist with apartment leasing.
- More training on resources and services specific to Innis Library, in addition to training within the other libraries on campus.
- Continued opportunity to offer research help.

- More opportunities to be involved with library committees.
- Improvements to how IT and facility problems are handled in the library.

In terms of projects, I would recommend future co-op students be given assignments that focus on enhancing information literacy among business students, and which assist the provision of research help. This could involve the following:

- Promotional efforts to encourage greater use of the many business research and course guides the library has developed in the form of a display and/or a news posting added to the library homepage.
- Helping to develop library assignments that are integrated into the curriculum.
- Developing an engaging, comprehensive online tutorial about business resources and how to use them (which could perhaps alleviate some of the need for in-class library instruction).
- Creating an online business FAQ similar to Western's (http://faq.lib.uwo.ca/recordList?library=western_ontario_business&institution=western_ontario) that aligns with McMaster's specific resources, since this could assist people offering research help at Innis as well as at the tentative Burlington Campus perhaps.

Personal Reflections and Conclusion

The great thing about an 8-month work term at an academic library is that there is ample time to surpass the learning curve that comes with the many procedures, resources, and tasks involved in this line of work. Additionally, the great thing about working at Innis Library specifically is that it provides an opportunity to work in a smaller, more specialized library that brings with it all the benefits and challenges of a larger library system. There is therefore a lot of support, a valuable chance to learning how to conduct business research, a wide variety of opportunities to undertake projects and participate in library events, and a chance to experience an organization that is going through somewhat perpetual structural change in an effort to service its users and stay abreast of trends and developments in the library world. That said this experience has reaffirmed my desire to work in an academic library, where there is the opportunity for collegial work relations, creativity, and diverse projects that are both intellectually and personally satisfying.