

Title: Future Library Professionals: An Undergraduate Internship Program

Project Justification: This project aligns with Goal One, Objective 1.2 and will focus on recruiting BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) undergraduate students to the library profession. The project will be coordinated by Old Dominion University (ODU) Libraries in collaboration with our Library Studies program faculty. We will partner with the University's Office of Academic Success Initiatives (OASI) and seek collaborations with K12 schools, public libraries, and special libraries in our region. In this 2-year grant, we aim to provide the internship program for two cycles, including 10-12 students in each cycle, which has a potential impact of 20-24 students entering an MLIS degree program and seeking careers in librarianship. We are requesting \$235,149 in funding.

The goal of this project is to increase diversity in librarianship through a paid undergraduate internship program that provides coaching and support while introducing students to careers in librarianship and laying a foundation for success in graduate school through development of digital literacy skills. It is well-documented that librarianship is an overwhelmingly white profession ([American Library Association, 2012](#), [Kung, 2020](#)). The most recent update to the American Library Association's (ALA) Diversity Counts study finds that only 12% of credentialed librarians are from racial and ethnic marginalized groups (ALA, 2012). Kung et al. (2020) found that the majority of initiatives to recruit and retain diverse librarians focus on early-career librarians and pointed out that initiatives that focus on recruiting minorities from undergraduate programs into LIS graduate programs is a gap that has not been extensively explored. Unpaid internships can be a barrier to students entering the field, especially students from marginalized groups, and this is a barrier that we seek to address through this proposal ([Galvan, 2015](#), [Wildenhouse, 2019](#)). Our funding request includes stipends, professional development, project support, and coaching for interns and training for intern supervisors.

The diversity of our institution and the strength of collaboration between the Libraries and the university's growing MLIS program situates us to contribute to the growth of racial and ethnic diversity in librarianship. Thirty-seven percent of our 24,286 students come from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups. During the 2020-2021 academic year the University Libraries piloted a Future Information Professionals Club for undergraduate students. Thirty-one students indicated interest in participating in the club, half of whom are students from underrepresented groups.

Project Work Plan

This project will take place in two rounds over a period of two academic years. When the grant period begins PI's, assisted by an advisory board, will publicize and recruit interns, coaches, and ODU librarians interested in supervising interns. Priority will be given to BIPOC participants. The advisory board will draw from a national team of librarians with experience with undergraduate internship programs or recruiting and hiring diverse candidates. Members will serve to review planning and assessment documentation at key program benchmarks offering practical guidance to meet program goals. Interns will be recruited from ODU's diverse undergraduate population including members of the Future Information Professionals Undergraduate student club and student employees at the University Libraries. Coaches will be recruited and selected from current students in ODU's MLIS program. Their participation as coaches will provide models for interns and leadership opportunities for BIPOC students in the MLIS program. At least four half-day meetings will be held in the fall which will include field trips to area libraries, attendance together at the Virginia Library Association's (VLA) Annual Conference including networking with the VLA Librarians of Color forum, training to develop an

ePortfolio, and coaching from current MLIS students about career choices and the graduate school application process. During the Spring semester interns will work up to ten hours per week with a trained supervisor at one of the three libraries on the university campus. Two components of the ODU MLIS will be adapted for undergraduates with assistance from OASI: the ePortfolio and an impact project conducted during the internship. ePortfolios are a common component of MLIS degree programs and can contribute to developing a professional identity and job search success ([Graves & Epstein, 2011](#), [Guder, 2013](#)). The Impact project is developed with the supervisor and student and includes setting and evaluating measurable goals related to the internship setting. Interns will be invited to participate in the library science program's summer institute with their coaches where they will have the opportunity to network with MLIS students, faculty, and practitioners and showcase their Impact projects. The two-year design and ongoing assessment plan for this project allows lessons learned in year one to be applied to year two with guidance from the Advisory Board. Throughout the year, participants will be asked to complete brief feedback forms following each event, at the midpoint, and end of the internship. We will collect qualitative data by conducting monthly check-ins with interns to determine and make ongoing adjustments. Assessment data will be shared with the advisory board for input and recommendations. Although the grant period will end prior to this stage, we plan to keep track of participants to determine how many apply, enroll and complete an MLIS degree with employment in libraries or archives.

Diversity Plan: We will collaborate with the University's [Director of the Office of Faculty Diversity and Inclusion](#) (OFDI) and our advisory board to ensure that our call for participation, intern selection process, and supervisor training prioritizes BIPOC students. The target population group for this grant was chosen based on ODU demographics and data provided by the ALA Diversity Counts report (2012) which points out a need for racial and ethnic diversity in librarianship. We will work with OFDI to make the selection process accessible and appropriate for undergraduate students. We plan to recruit from student organizations that promote and support diversity such as the Asian Pacific American Student Union, Black Student Alliance, Chinese Culture and Language Club, and Latino Student Alliance. We will also recruit from our Information Professionals Club for undergraduates. Existing MLIS training for internship supervisors will be revised with assistance from OFDI to explicitly address diversity, equity and inclusion particularly for BIPOC. Consulting the Advisory Board and OFDI, assessments will seek ongoing feedback related to diversity and inclusion and make adjustments as needed.

Project Results: The broad impact of this program will be a model for other academic libraries to partner with an MLIS program to develop an undergraduate internship program. Frequent program assessment and guidance from a diverse and national advisory board will allow us to surface barriers for BIPOC in choosing librarianship and pursuing graduate education. The results of the project will be communicated through a web portal connecting student eportfolios and digital projects, through dissemination in year two at ALISE, and in subsequent journal articles. Supervisor training materials infused with EDI will be shared online for adaptation.

Budget: TOTAL COST: \$235,149 (\$95,252 in YR1, \$99,552 in YR2) to include: Participant Costs: \$60,725 per year (Student Stipends: \$48,000, Travel: \$2,500, Sustenance: \$2,000, Registration Fees (VLA): \$1,750, Books/Supplies: \$1,500, Mini-grant: \$5,000). Travel: \$3,600 in YR2. PI Registration Fees (VLA, ALISE): \$600 in YR1 \$1,300 in YR2. Salary and Fringe (Supervisors, Coaches, Faculty): \$21,927 per year. Advisory Board: \$9,000 per year. Impact Showcase Catering: \$3,000 per year. ONR negotiated rate for on-campus IDC at 55% of MTDC: \$18,990 in YR1 and \$21,355 in YR2.