Project statement
How to implement an internship for library technicians at Carleton University Library.

Objectives of the project
• Recruitment of talented new Library staff
• Increased involvement in the Ottawa community with the development of closer ties with the Algonquin College Library Technician program. Community engagement is one of four pillars in the Carleton University strategic plan 2009-2014.
• Provide interns with a learning opportunity based on work experience.
• Opportunity for Library staff to be teachers and mentors to new library technicians.
• Utilize the recent training of interns to complete projects on current issues faced by academic libraries.

Methodology used to implement the project
Qualitative methods including interviews and participant observation.

Major findings and their significance
Recruitment: careful selection process resulted in the hiring of two well qualified interns. Both interns are currently still employed by the Library post-internship.

Community involvement: the internship was enthusiastically received by the Library technician program and senior administration at Algonquin College.

Learning experience: feedback indicates interns eagerly welcomed the opportunity to gain on the job experience. Interns would have preferred increased contact with supervisors for guidance and feedback and increased communication with Library staff (i.e. inclusion in Dept meetings and email lists) to enhance learning and integration in the wider Library community.

Library staff as teachers and mentors: feedback from pilot project indicates that supervisors found the internship to be a positive and rewarding experience. However, supervising interns became demanding when projects were not clearly planned and lacked direction.

Completion of projects: for a number of reasons (announcement of a major Library building renovation and an unexpected staff shortage) interns were not able to complete the projects they had been assigned and write up a final report. Feedback indicates we need to review the selection and planning of internship projects.

Conclusions
• An internship program is a significant commitment of library resources in terms of salaries and staff time and has to be carefully planned and administered to be successful for both the library and the intern.
• Additional work is necessary to create a more detailed learning plan for interns. A variety of techniques will be employed to facilitate experiential learning such as a learning journal for interns to document work experience, frequent meetings with an assigned mentor, etc.
• Projects need to be well planned in advance with clearly defined tasks and objectives. Projects need to be reasonable in scope and sufficiently flexible so they can be completed even when unexpected situations arise.
• Positive working relationship has developed between Carleton University Library and Algonquin College Library Technician Program to further the goals of education for library technicians. Program co-ordinator will be involved in reviewing the internship learning plan.

Thank you to:
Carleton University Library Internship Committee:
Lynda Finn, Binding, Maintenance and Processing Supervisor, Technical Services Dept.
Christine Taylor, Senior Interlibrary Loan Technician, Interlibrary Loan Dept.

Library technician interns 2011: Jessica Reeve and Emily Lee.