

Pulse Check: Introducing the Valuing Library and Archives Labor Study

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Abstract

This presentation discusses the study titled, “Valuing Library and Archives Labor: Assessing the Implications of Internships and Fellowships on the Library and Archives Community.” This study is a 3-year empirical investigation into the structures and outcomes of professional development programs for recruiting, training, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce that better engenders social and financial wellbeing through libraries and archives nationwide. Operating with the understanding that most information professions including Libraries, Archives, and Museums remain homogeneous as majority white and female (over 75 percent), this study focused on three programs working within the subfields of research libraries and archives, public libraries, and audio-visual archives and how their efforts and participants continue to shape the future of the profession.

Each program focuses on emerging professionals from underrepresented backgrounds in the subfields of public libraries, academic libraries, and AV archives. In this presentation, we present an overview of the project and initial findings from program documentation to further discuss benefits and challenges of grant-funded internship or fellowship programs. As part of DEIA efforts, these programs strive to help transform the composition of the archival workforce. Overall the study will provide suggestions and best practices for how DEIA recruitment and retainment efforts might help transform labor structures and traditions including who serves communities and how to support that service. By gathering feedback at SAA we hope to support archival workforce transformation in becoming scalable and sustainable.

About the author

Itza A. Carbajal is a US settler born in New Orleans and raised in Texas currently pursuing a PhD in Information Science at the University of Washington Information School focusing on children and their records. Previously, she worked as the Latin American Metadata Librarian at UT-Austin LLILAS Benson focusing on Latin American post-custodial archival projects. Carbajal received her Master of Science in Information Studies at the University of Texas at Austin School of Information. Carbajal’s doctoral research analyzes how records embody childhood trauma as well as how archival records may provide release or relief from traumatic memories. By working with vulnerable populations such as foster care youth within the context of disasters, Carbajal’s dissertation hopes to better understand how, if, and when records assist youth in crisis. Carbajal also works at the intersection of youth archival education and environmental issues specifically through the use of memory, stories, and future making. Her philosophy as a researcher centers on facilitating self-determination through self-documentation and storytelling, records as materialized and collective memories, the use of archives and

metadata as centers of power, memory preservation and retrieval, and how digital archives as a response to the historic erasure of marginalized and neglected populations.