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The Impact of Paid Internships at Community Archives for MLIS Students:
A White Paper Reporting on the UCLA Community Archives Lab/Andrew W. Mellon
Foundation Paid Internship Program

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Introduction

Over the course of three years, from July 2018 to June 2021, with support from a $331,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the UCLA Community Archives Lab placed 26 second-year MLIS students in paid internships at 15 community archives sites. At these sites, the student interns have accomplished crucial work processing and digitizing collections, enacting participatory description projects, creating finding aids, organizing exhibitions and other outreach activities, fundraising, and building digital asset management systems. The students gained valuable professional experience while each earning a $9,000 stipend. The community archives sites benefited from the student labor, with most sites reporting that the interns' work drove great progress on key projects that advanced their organizational missions of documenting, preserving, and sharing their community's histories.

This white paper reports on the impact of the project on both the student interns and the participating community archives sites. The two research questions are:

1. What is the impact of a paid community archives internship program on participating student interns?
2. What is the impact of a paid community archives internship program on participating community archives sites?

As reported in greater detail in the methodology section, these questions are answered using empirical data, more specifically, qualitative interviews UCLA doctoral student Oraison Larmon conducted with participating students and site supervisors at the end of each of the program's three years.

This paper demonstrates what the team at UCLA's Community Archives Lab has come to see as the transformative power of paid internships for both MLIS students and community archives. We hope this paper sparks a national conversation among library and information studies faculty, department chairs, iSchool deans, and funding agencies. We also hope his conversation leads to a funded, cross-school nationwide initiative to provide MLIS students with paid internships at community archives sites, as addressed in further detail in the conclusion.

Locating the Issues: Literature Review and Rationale

LIS Labor and Paid Internships
Recent conversations in library and information studies (LIS) have drawn attention to the increasing precarity of labor for professionally trained librarians and archivists. As Emily Drabinski, Aliqae Geraci, and Roxanne Shirazi identify in an introduction to a special issue of *Library Trends* on the theme of labor in academic libraries, generations of public divestment in higher education have caused academic libraries to decrease hiring, deskill the work of librarians, and outsource labor to for-profit corporations.[1] As the authors report, library workers have responded through labor organizing, advocacy, and envisioning entirely new arrangements for higher education. Adding to this conversation, the Collective Responsibility project highlighted the experiences of contingent laborers working on grant-funded digital library,

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[1] Emily Drabinski, Aliqae Geraci, and Roxanne Shirazi, "Special Issue Introduction: Labor in Academic Libraries," *Library Trends* 68, no. 2 (Fall 2019): 103–9.

archives, and museum projects, ultimately advocating for both making contingent labor "more ethical" and to "eliminate contingency itself."[2]

This crisis of precarity has trickled down to new professionals, and in turn, MLIS students, who are often expected to take on unpaid internships by their graduate programs in order to get the practical experience necessary for later employment. These unpaid internships not only place a financial burden on students, they are simply cost prohibitive for many, especially for students who are not from affluent backgrounds. As archival scholars Marika Cifor and Jamie Lee note, "unpaid internships mean that the archival profession opens itself just to those in the privileged financial situation to be able to undertake such labors thereby replicating problematic inequalities in the profession."[3] There is a growing demand from MLIS students and recent graduates nationwide for MLIS programs to prohibit or strongly discourage giving students credit for unpaid internships, to "denormalize" them as recent UCLA graduate Karly Wildenhaus writes, "especially for those institutions that articulate social justice as part of their institutional values."[4] Wildenhaus further asserts:

> By recognizing the connection between unpaid internships and other forms of contingent and precarious labor, denormalizing the practice becomes all the more urgent. Rather than accept this tendency towards precarity, information workers can recognize how advocating for the abolition of exploitive positions can help to bolster their own positions as they too resist the effects of neoliberalism.[5]

Anecdotally, over the past decade of teaching in an MLIS program, the author of this paper has witnessed firsthand the increasing pressures on students to get professional experience through internships, the overwhelming burden of student loan debt on their lives, and the precarity of temporary positions that many students land in after graduation. This confluence has made it clear that MLIS students need *paid* opportunities to gain practical experience working in the field.

MLIS Education and Dominant Archival Theories and Practices
MLIS programs broadly, and archival studies programs specifically, have rightfully come under fire over the past decade for their narrow, harmful, and often unacknowledged bases in white supremacist histories, theories and practices.[6] MLIS programs often teach dominant Western archival theories and practices to the detriment of theories and practices emerging from BIPOC and/or LGBTQIA+ communities. Archival studies scholars like Mario H. Ramirez and Tonia Sutherland have launched a sustained critique of dominant archival education, drawing attention to its limiting definitions of key concepts that belie its roots in dominant white epistemologies;

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[2] Sandy Rodriguez, Ruth Tillman, Amy Wickner, Stacie Williams, and Emily Drabinski, "Collective Responsibility: Seeking Equity for Contingent Labor in Libraries, Archives, and Museums," White Paper, Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2019, 5, https://laborforum.diglib.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2019/09/Collective_Responsibility_White_Paper.pdf.

[3] Marika Cifor, and Jamie A. Lee, "Towards an Archival Critique: Opening Possibilities for Addressing Neoliberalism in the Archival Field," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017): 13, https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i1.10.

[4] Karly Wildenhaus, "Wages for Intern Work: Denormalizing Unpaid Positions in Archives and Libraries," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 2, no. 1 (2019): 13, https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v2i1.88.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Mario H. Ramirez, "Being Assumed Not to Be: A Critique of Whiteness as an Archival Imperative," *The American Archivist* 78, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2015): 339–56, https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.78.2.339.

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its failure to address or incorporate philosophies, cultural frameworks, and practices rooted in BIPOC communities; and its attendant failure to recruit and retain BIPOC MLIS students.[7] As Myrna E. Morales and Stacie Williams have noted, many MLIS educational experiences and practices uphold what they call "epistemic supremacy," or "a political ideology that facilitates, enables, and upholds the conditions that lead to the destruction of communities of color, particularly working-class and poor Black and Indigenous communities."[8] The oft-repeated demographic data collected by the Society of American Archivists—in which 89% of archivists self-reported to be white—has yet to be met by a comprehensive plan or resource commitment to shift student demographics.[9] Although there has been a sea change in the content of archival education in the past decade, there is still a long way to go for archival studies to develop a liberatory pedagogy and more representative student body.

Based on these ongoing conversations in the field, it is clear that MLIS education has not yet fully responded to the needs of BIPOC students. The curricula does not yet adequately reflect nondominant theories and practices in the classroom, nor fully prepare students for careers in BIPOC-led cultural institutions.[10] Given these sustained and substantive critiques, it is imperative that MLIS students have opportunities to gain experience outside of dominant archival institutions, develop cultural competency skills, and cultivate the flexibility to work in a range of environments. Patricia Montiel-Overall defines *cultural competence* as "the ability to recognize the significance of culture in one's own life and in the lives of others and to come to know and respect diverse cultural backgrounds and characteristics through interaction with individuals from diverse linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic groups."[11] In archival work, Jessica Tai posits that cultural competency skills can be demonstrated in the following: re-description projects to change harmful and/or oppressive language; acquisition audits that identify gaps in collections and appraisal strategies to fill in such gaps; and reference room policies that open up rather than foreclose possibilities for community use and engagement.[12] Although *all* MLIS programs should provide culturally responsive education and *all* MLIS

[7] Ramirez; Tonia Sutherland, "Archival Amnesty: In Search of Black American Transitional and Restorative Justice," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017), https://doi.org/10.24242/jclis.v1i2.42; and Tonia Sutherland, "Where There's a Will: On Heir Property, African American Land Stories, and the Value of Oral Records in American Archives," in *Defining a Discipline: Archival Research and Practice in the Twenty-First Century: Essays in Honor of Richard J. Cox*, ed. Jeannette A. Bastian and Elizabeth Yakel (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2020), 238–55.

[8] Myrna E. Morales and Stacie Williams, "Moving Toward Transformative Librarianship: Naming and Identifying Epistemic Supremacy," in *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Science through Critical Race Theory*, ed. Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2021), 74.

[9] Society of American Archivists, "Member Needs & Satisfaction Survey," Spring 2021, http://files.archivists.org/membership/surveys/saaMemberSurvey-2012r2.pdf. An additional 5% did not disclose race.

[10] For a recent example of this critique, see the student criticism of MLIS programs recently voiced in the "Reflecting and Imagining Visions for Archival Education" session at the Association of Canadian Archivists Annual Meeting, June 9, 2021, https://archivists.ca/2021/schedule. For a now decade-old analysis, see: Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group and Archival Education and Research Institute, "Educating for the Archival Multiverse," *American Archivist* 74 (Spring/Summer 2011): 69-101, https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.74.1.hv339647l2745684.

[11] Patricia Montiel Overall, "Cultural Competence: A Conceptual Framework for Library and Information Science Professionals," *The Library Quarterly* 79, no. 2 (April 1, 2009): 189-90, https://doi.org/10.1086/597080.

[12] Jessica Tai, "Cultural Humility as a Framework for Anti-Oppressive Archival Description," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, no. 3 (2020), https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/120.

students should be trained in cultural competency skills, it is essential both for BIPOC students to see themselves and their community's values and practices reflected in archival training *and* for white students to learn to decenter their own dominant ways of thinking and being in the (archives) world.

MLIS programs must train a diverse workforce if they are to remain relevant and meet the challenges of contemporary libraries, archives, and museums. A more representative workforce is particularly important for stewarding the collections of community archives, which represent and serve minoritized communities. Funding for MLIS students to work in community archives not only provides paid internship opportunities to those who would not otherwise be able to afford unpaid internships, but helps support a diverse group of archival students, many of whom come from the same minoritized communities represented and served by their placement sites.

Community Archives

UK-based archival studies scholars Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd define *community* as "any group of people who come together and present themselves as such, and a 'community archive' is the product of their attempts to document the history of their commonality."[13] The same research team writes, "the defining characteristic of community archives is the active participation of a community in documenting and making accessible the history of their particular group and/or locality *on their own terms*."[14] In the US, the phenomenon of community archives is inextricably linked to power and oppression. Those who have been disempowered by oppressive systems, those who have been "symbolically annihilated," those whose histories have been ignored, maligned, misrepresented, and/or grossly distorted by mainstream memory institutions (as agents of and conduits for those oppressive systems), feel the need to create their own autonomous community archives.[15] As Nancy Liliana Godoy argues, community-driven archives are spaces for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities to reclaim narratives and to heal from trauma.[16]

These archives are often formed in reaction to the failure of mainstream archives to tell an accurate and complex story of marginalized communities. Such archival spaces enable communities to enact a stake in their own history, often through practices that value and encourage the participation of their users, who are assumed to be community members. These community archives may vary in size, governance structure, financial capacity, relationship to dominant institutions, and the nature of the identity and community being documented, but they are united in their insistence that communities take ownership of their own historical representations as a way of enacting a more just present and envisioning new futures.[17] Through

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[13] Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy and the Mainstream," *Archival Science* 9, no. 1–2 (2009): 75, http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9105-2.

[14] Ibid., 73.

[15] Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez, "'To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing': Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives," *The American Archivist* 79, no. 1 (June 1, 2016): 56–81, https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.79.1.56.

[16] Nancy Liliana Godoy, "Community-Driven Archives: Conocimiento, Healing, and Justice," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3 (2021), https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/136.

[17] Michelle Caswell, "Inventing New Archival Imaginaries: Theoretical Foundations for Identity-Based Community Archives," in *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada*, ed. Dominique Daniel and Amalia S. Levi (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014), 35–55.

interviews, focus groups, and participant observation, researchers from UCLA's Community Archives Lab found that community archives practices often disrupt the hierarchical models in traditional archives, prompting community members to view collections as belonging *to the community* and challenging dominant practices and conceptions of custody, description, and ownership.[18]

Informed by these definitional debates, the internship program reported on herein primarily engaged marginalized identity-based community archives, in which the history held in common coalesces around a shared history of oppression. As such, the majority of community archives sites addressed here form around a marginalized identity, including ethnic and racial identities, as well as sexual and gender orientation, economic status, physical locations, or a combination thereof.[19] Most of the participating organizations are independent nonprofit organizations, though two sites (UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and UCLA Asian American Studies Center) are what we might call (following Nancy Liliana Godoy) "community-driven archives" or (following Thuy Vo Dang) "community-centered archives" located within (and sometimes in opposition to) a university.[20] Rather than adhere to a strict definition of "community archives," the paid internship program broadly looked for signs of community participation in archival processes, particularly from minoritized communities, in making determinations about eligible placement for students.

Furthermore, Southern California has an incredibly rich cultural, social, and political history, one that is often overlooked nationally. Much of that history is buried within backlogs at community archives. From appraisal and acquisition to description and access, community archives build and leverage relationships of trust that enable them to document histories that mainstream institutions simply cannot. Community members who work or volunteer for these archives are experts in their own right, but many organizations lack the capacity to fully support their important work. Due to the inequitable distribution of resources to support cultural heritage institutions, many community archives struggle financially, with some operating on annual budgets of less than $100,000 and relying on volunteer labor. As Bergis Jules writes, "Small donations and one-time funding are available to community-based archives, but substantial and long-term sustainable funding remains elusive."[21] He continues, "community-based archives can develop successful fundraising programs, but some need support to sustain and grow the capacity of those efforts."[22] This points to how community archives possess the knowledge to steward their records, but they suffer from a lack of financial resources to perform and sustain this labor.

Description of the Project
Given the three issues described in the literature review—the need for students to get paid for their labor, the need for MLIS programs to provide culturally responsive and competent training,

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[18] Jimmy Zavala et al., "'A Process Where We're All at the Table': Community Archives Challenging Dominant Modes of Archival Practice," *Archives and Manuscripts* 45, no. 3 (2017): 202–15, https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2017.1377088.

[19] Michelle Caswell, "Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives," *Archival Science* 14, no. 3 (2014): 307–22, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-014-9220-6.

[20] Godoy. Also, Orange County & Southeast Asian Archive, "Community-Centered Archives Partnerships," accessed August 9, 2021, https://ocseaa.lib.uci.edu/partnerships.

[21] Bergis Jules, "Architecting Sustainable Futures: Exploring Funding Models in Community-Based Archives" (Shift Design, February 2019), 8, https://bit.ly/ShiftASFreport.

[22] Ibid.

and the need for community archives to fiscally sustain themselves—the UCLA Community Archives Lab applied for and received a three-year (July 2018 to June 2021) $331,000 grant from the Andrew M. Mellon Foundation to launch the program. The UCLA Community Archives Lab/Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Paid Internship Program had four main goals:

Goal 1: Complete archival projects that increase the visibility, preservation, and accessibility of the histories of marginalized communities in Southern California.
The project helps preserve and make accessible the unknown histories of marginalized communities in Los Angeles. Specific projects were proposed by participating sites based on their own needs. For example, at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, student interns proposed a new digital asset management system and created a digital preservation plan that enabled the Archives to create online exhibitions, and students also created innovative video finding aids that provide additional contextual information about collections. At the Skid Row History Museum & Archive, student interns created and implemented a digital preservation plan and digital asset management system for the archive's collection of moving image materials, which document public events, performances, and protests on Skid Row. And at Visual Communications, student interns helped describe audio-visual materials documenting Los Angeles's history of Asian American activism, supervised undergraduate interns processing collections, and organized community tagging parties in person and via Zoom for community elders to provide contextual metadata for photographs.

As part of the program, sites were awarded $1,920 to pay for staff personnel time spent training and supervising the students. There were 15 participating community archives, with some sites participating multiple years. The program included the following sites:

- The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights
- La Historia Historical Society Museum
- South Asian American Digital Archive
- Bob Baker Marionette Theater
- June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives
- May 23, 2014 Isla Vista Memorial Archive at UC-Santa Barbara
- Skid Row History Museum & Archive
- UCLA Asian American Studies Center Library
- UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library
- Visual Communications
- Chinese Historical Society of Southern California
- Chicana por Mi Raza Digital Memory Project and Archive
- Social and Public Art Resource Center
- Go For Broke National Education Center
- Women's Center for Creative Work/Feminist Library on Wheels

Goal 2. Give UCLA MLIS students paid opportunities to develop their professional skills in non-dominant organizations.
A total of 26 students gained practical on-the-job skills. These skills have helped many program participants secure professional employment after graduation. Interns were paid a $9,000 stipend

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directly by UCLA to work 12 hours a week for the 30 weeks of UCLA's academic year, averaging $25/hour.

Program staff matched students to specific communities of belonging and projects of interest if possible. Preference was given to students who have already taken UCLA's Community Archives course, which is offered every year. Students may have, at their discretion, enrolled in internship course credits towards their MLIS degree.

Goal 3. Increase the sustainability of community archives through guidance on fundraising.
PI Michelle Caswell offered workshops and individualized guidance to participating community archives sites based on her decade of experience as a professional development officer before entering the field of LIS and, since then, her decade of experience raising money for the South Asian American Digital Archive. In these consultations, she imparted skills to enable community archives to increase their fiscal sustainability. Additionally, many of the student interns crafted grant proposals and organized crowd sourcing campaigns that successfully increased fiscal capacity of participating organizations.

Goal 4. Create new scholarship helping us understand the cultural landscape of community archives via an open access white paper.
This paper, published in *eScholarship*, the University of California's secure repository, partially fulfills this goal. Project staff, interns, and site supervisors have also presented the project at the Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting, the Society of California Archivists' Annual Meeting, and the Archival Education and Research Initiative.

Methodology
While the UCLA/ Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Paid Internship Program is primarily an internship program, the project also includes a research component to assess the impact of paid internships. The UCLA Community Archives Lab team approached this research through an interpretivist research paradigm, in which we do not claim to be neutral observers to the phenomena that we are observing, but rather integral parts of them. Furthermore, the aim here is for rich, "thick description" of a specific and under-researched topic rather than a broad or generalizable understanding of larger national or international phenomena. The research project was given approval by UCLA's Institutional Review Board.

In order to assess the impact of this project, Oraison Larmon, the graduate student researcher on the project, conducted in-depth, qualitative semi-structured interviews with participating site supervisors and student interns at the end of each academic year for three years. (See Appendix A for *List of Semi-Structured Interview Questions*.) Interviews took place in person, over the phone, or via Zoom, as schedules and pandemic protocols allowed. Interviews were recorded with the written consent of the participants, which included UCLA MLIS students and site coordinators from community archives. Participants were given the option to consent to be cited by name or for their identities to remain confidential; their wishes are honored in this paper.

After the interviews were recorded, they were transcribed using Temi, an automated transcription service. The transcripts were then checked for accuracy against the original audio recordings. Data was then coded the transcripts for reoccurring themes using constant comparative analysis, where themes are compared with existing themes that emerge from the data corpus. The findings reported in this paper emerged from this constant comparative

analysis. This paper provided lengthy quotes from the interviews in order to give rich, detailed data that illustrate the themes that emerged. Interview participants are cited by name when permission was granted to do so, whereas other participants prefer to remain anonymous.

It is important here to briefly address the power issues that arise when university-based researchers conduct research on community archives. Universities are relatively well-funded institutions, while community archives struggle for financial sustainability. Community archives are often delegitimized by professional archivists and academic researchers. It is thus imperative that academic researchers conducting research on or at community archives acknowledge this power differential and attempt to bridge or level the gap to build mutually beneficial relationships. As Bergis Jules writes, "Collaborative work with academic partners exists and is desired by community-based archives, but equity and recognition of the legitimacy of the archive should be foundational to the relationship."[23] This project began with a fundamental recognition of the importance and legitimacy of community archives as knowledge institutions with important theories and practices from which MLIS students and LIS educators have much to learn. While the project strived to be mutually beneficial, with sites benefiting from student labor and $1,920 stipends, the gulf between large, well-endowed research universities and small, chronically under-funded community archives remains. The larger fault line of inequity underlying this gulf will not be eliminated by a small grant-funded project like this one; eliminating inequities will take a seismic structural shift in society writ large. The author of this paper is committed to such a seismic shift, even while operating within existing academic structures.

Findings

This section presents findings from the semi-structured interviews with MLIS students and site coordinators working at community archives. Interviews with MLIS students surfaced the following themes:

1. Being paid is crucial for the internship.
2. When students were a site's first professionally trained archivist, some practical and communication challenges arose.
3. When students identify as part of the community that their internship site coalesces around, they are able to see themselves reflected in ways that resonate emotionally and professionally.
4. Community-engaged practices changed *how* interns performed archival work, with a particular focus on the importance of relationship building as an archival skill.
5. Students acquired important professional skillsets that prepared them for professional work.

Interviews with site supervisors surfaced the following themes:

1. The "right fit" between student and community is crucial for a successful internship.
2. Students with archival skillsets are beneficial to sites without formally trained archivists.
3. Students have completed significant archival projects at the sites.
4. Paid interns are more reliable for the sites than unpaid ones.
5. The stipend is important for the fiscal sustainability of community archives.

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[23] Bergis Jules. "Architecting Sustainable Futures: Exploring Funding Models in Community-Based Archives." Shift Design, (2019).

Taken together, these findings reveal that this paid internship program was mutually beneficial for community archives site supervisors and student interns. These themes will now be illustrated with data from the interviews.

Impact on MLIS Student Interns
Finding 1: Being paid for the internship is crucial for the students
MLIS students expressed, with very few exceptions, that payment made the internships possible for them. A student who prefers to remain unnamed indicated how payment enabled her to partake in the program without being hindered from the financial burdens that come along with an unpaid internship. She said:

> It was very important to be paid. Because of my financial situation, I never considered unpaid internships. I just knew that was something I could not afford to do. And so, I never bothered to apply, even if it was an internship that I really liked . . . I think being able to be paid allowed me to have this experience that I would not have had otherwise.

Ariel Hahn, who did internships at the Feminist Library On Wheels (at the Women's Center for Creative Work) in 2018-2019 academic year, explained her personal decisions to not accept unpaid internships for ethical reasons:

> I would not have done this if it was not a paid internship both financially and politically. And I noticed this in all the sites that I was at—there was a lot of devaluation in this custodial labor. I feel like one way that we can sort of work against it beyond programs like this, but also in how we move through the professional role ourselves, is like by resisting that, pushing up against it whenever we can. So, even though there are so many great places that I could have interned at . . . I did not want to do a formal internship without being paid.

Yuri Shimoda, who interned at Visual Communications in 2018-2019, an Asian American multimedia archives, asserted how payment allowed her to participate in the internship, which could not have been possible due to personal demands beyond graduate school:

> It was really important to be paid for this internship. I am really adamant about not applying for things unless they are paid . . . At this stage in my life, I have a lot more experience than a student just coming fresh out of college . . . I think anyone who goes back to school and has a child like I do, every minute that you spend away from home . . . needs to be for an important reason. So, if I was going to do any internships this year, they had to have been paid. But I was looking for more than that in my internship. I was looking for something that would help me grow my skills and continue to round out my training.

Some interns noted that being paid for their work made them take their responsibilities more seriously. Hannah Lien, who interned the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in the 2020-2021 academic year said:

> I do not know if other people have felt this way, but [being paid] helps me feel like I am doing more professional and valuable work than I might otherwise be doing. When I do an unpaid position, it feels like an extension of just schoolwork, whereas being paid makes it feel more like a professional obligation or a job. And being paid has also been really helpful because I am able to focus my time on helping SPARC instead of needing

to also have a part time job to support myself. Like with COVID going on, paid opportunities are so few and far between that it is such a boon to do something that is helping me grow in my professional skills, while also being paid in a substantial manner.

Several of the interns in the 2020-2021 cohort addressed the importance of being paid during the pandemic, when few paid opportunities were available and financial pressures were more difficult to navigate.

Across student cohorts and sites, the majority of interns stressed the importance of being paid and said that they would not have undertaken their internships without payment for both financial and political reasons.

Finding 2: When students were the first trained archivists onsite, some practical and communication challenges arose.

MLIS students describe the practical challenges that surround being the first formally trained archivists onsite at some of the community archives. Brianna Toth and Adam Foster, who did archival internships at the Bob Baker Marionette Theater in 2018-2019, discussed how they navigated working as the theater's first archivists:

> We were the first archivists there. So, I think there are all those challenges of explaining the work that we are doing, or . . . what that would entail to make that ask happen . . . There is also a lot of things like just explaining infrastructure . . . Like how that relates in an archive setting is really foreign [to the theater]. I think they kind of understand now . . . keeping the collection as a whole is more valuable than like just keeping parts of it. Like [the archive] is kind of its own story, which at first [the theater] did not really understand. And now I think they are really into it, and really excited about [the collection], and like get that concept.

> [There was] a learning curve for us as the [first] archivists to make sure . . . that we are supporting them and not telling them they are doing something wrong . . . so, the delicate balance of them wanting something that is very kind of a traditional archive setting to preserve this original order, but at the same time a deliverable or a presentation that gives them access [to the collection].

As the first formally trained archivist onsite, Lauren Molina (2018-2019) explained the challenges that surround teaching volunteers how to preserve and process records at La Historia Historical Society Museum:

> I think entering into a community archives . . . [where] there is no [existing archivist] . . . it is really challenging to think of a way to teach the things that I have learned . . . I think that they benefit a lot by having someone who they saw as an expert tell them exactly what they had already imagined was an issue with their collections, mainly preservation and organization. And I think being able to say with authority that that needs to change and there needs to be a rehousing project to protect these really precious materials into the future, or digitization if they are unable to do a giant rehousing project. I think that was valued really highly.

One student intern (2018-2019) described how she managed the collections as the first archivist onsite at the organization:

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> This is the first time I did not have an archivist to supervise me. And so, it was more like being a lone ranger. And it was just very new because I had to figure out a lot of things by myself. I had to do a lot of reading up. I had to do a lot of reaching out. And asking people what do you do in this kind of a situation? So, it was sort of like being thrown in the deep end and then you just have to learn how to swim.

Several interns reported being challenged by how to best explain archival practices to staff and volunteers without formal archival training. Henry Apodaca (2018-2019) discussed how to approach community members from the Skid Row History Museum & Archive about best practices for housing audio-visual records in proper archival storage:

> I had to really gauge myself sometimes when saying, "This is the best practice" . . . but not really understanding the nature of possibility within the archive. For instance, I could sit here and say, "We need archival grade boxes" . . . but there is no budget for [that] . . . So, the challenge for me was understanding . . . the inner workings of this organization. And to use that as a way to offer best practices that triangulate financial resources, human resources, and [physical] space.

Lauren Molina (2018-2019) recalled how she implemented archival practices at La Historia Historical Society Museum, so the volunteers who perform all the archival labor onsite have basic knowledge about managing the collections themselves:

> I think that the members of La Historia maybe expected . . . this internship to make something big and public happen. So, it took some time to explain that the best thing I could do for them is leave them something that they can pull from, in order to do that for themselves whenever they wanted. To develop something like an inventory where they can find things easily and search for keywords. And just kind of explain how you use an archive. I think [that] is really what I spent a lot of time explaining [to the members].

Another student intern described how she explained best practices for digital preservation to community members at the site:

> One of the challenges I faced, which I think is common to a lot of archivists, is having to explain your work to people who . . . are not themselves archivists . . . so, at the beginning [of the internship] they wanted to digitize everything and then just throw [the physical records] away. And I had to explain to them 1) why you do not throw things away, and 2) even if you do digitize everything . . . that is a huge cost. There is the digital preservation, which is constant work. And I do not think they realize that. So, I think it was useful for them to have someone explain to them why that is not feasible.

While the students often reported these communication and technical issues as challenging and often asked for advice on how best to navigate them, these challenges did provide critical professional experiences that placed the students in leadership roles. These experiences were key for the interns shifting from seeing themselves as students to professionals.

Finding 3: When students identify as part of the community that their internship site coalesces around, they are able see themselves reflected in ways that resonate emotionally and professionally.

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One student intern who identifies as Asian American explained how she perceived herself at the Asian American Studies Center Library, where she preserved records that document Japanese American incarceration so that communities can access them in the future. She said:

> [I] never really had the opportunity to work in that kind of environment where I see myself reflected. So, I felt like that was just such a big motivation—the work that I was doing to . . . leave behind something where other folks in the community can also see themselves reflected . . . Not even within the Asian American community, but just to make Asian American history more visible to those outside of the community. So, I am really glad I got the opportunity to work here.

Another student, who worked for an organization that preserves records documenting immigrant rights for Latinx communities throughout Southern California, said:

> I identify as Chicana and as Latina. And so, I felt working at [the site] was sort of working in my own community . . . we have a story to tell, we have a story to share . . . and so . . . I think in the little conversations I would have with people [onsite] . . . allowed them to see themselves as part of a movement and part of a movement that has a long history . . . And I think listening to them and hearing them talk about their experiences, it also made them feel very empowered.

Yuri Shimoda, who interned at Visual Communications in 2018-2019, described how she identified with the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities whose history she helped preserve:

> I am usually always in the minority . . . so being able to go someplace where not only does everybody come from some kind of Asian background or a combination of Asian backgrounds like me . . . has been great . . . and there are so many different ways we identify—with different communities and different groups within those communities. And more than that, it has enabled me to see faces that look like me in the archival materials, which has never happened ever . . . so, I feel like that really has been the most remarkable part of my experience—seeing myself and my life kind of reflected back at me for the first time ever.

Chantel Diaz, who interned at the Chicano Studies Research Center (UCLA), described her experiences of working with members from the Chicanx community she come from. She said:

> I think ... you can't really do this work without the community. Especially, if you were in a regular archival internship, I would just maybe do processing and things like that. But with this [paid] internship, it was really getting to work with the community on their own terms... I want to say [this experience] kind of got personal because I consider myself part of the Chicanx community. I do not think I would have gotten this opportunity anywhere else. And maybe this has to do with the connections and partnerships that the [Chicano Studies Resource] Center has... I do not think I would be able to do this anywhere else because I think the materials in the Center requires more than just sitting there and seeing what you can get from the finding aid. Whereas if you have a community member, it adds another layer or unique picture that you probably never thought about.

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Casey Winkelman explained how the collections that document feminist and lesbian herstory at the Mazer archives resonated with her on a personal level. She said:

> What really resonates with me is the fighting spirit and the activist spirit of so many women that are represented in the Mazer collections. There's endless amounts of emotional and like activist labor that went into fighting for the recognition of who they were as women and as people. So, I just really resonate with that in the collections. And also, just like seeing all of these like feminist periodicals in one place is really powerful too. Again, like seeing that history of activism in these communities has been really cool. So, you walk out of the archive and it's just like . . . wow, it's amazing to see so much of this work created all by women and non-binary people over the years.

These conversations about minoritized students seeing themselves in the collections they processed revealed how emotionally and professionally important "representational belonging" is for student interns and how rare this affirmation is in the face of persistent symbolic annihilation. Conversely, some students who did not identify as part of the community whose history they were preserving expressed some hesitancy about making decisions as an outsider. These discussions underscored the importance of having BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ students matched with community sites that represent and serve communities they come from themselves.

Finding 4: Students reported that community-engaged practices changed how they performed archival work by emphasizing relationships over materials.

The student interns reported that building relationships with communities transformed how they conceived of and practiced archival work. Casey Winkelman, who interned at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives (2019-2020), said:

> Things are done really differently [at the Mazer], but the real benefit of it is that everybody that walks into the archive automatically feels like they're on the same level as everybody else around them. So, there's sort of like an invitation . . . there isn't that feeling that you're in this space that is so much like bigger than you. [The Mazer archives] invites you in, if that makes sense. I think just reiterating how great of an experience it was to work with the entire board of the Mazer and with Ann [Giagni], the director, and Angela [Brinskele], the communications director. I just felt really welcomed from the very beginning . . . it's just amazing like what extending not only like a working relationship, but like feeling a real friendship between these women has done [for me]. And I think that really serves the work that is done in community archive spaces.

Chantel Diaz, interning at the Chicano Studies Research Center Library (2019-2020), also emphasized the importance of relationship building in her archival work. She said:

> I definitely feel like I understand a lot more of the history, especially since I grew up in South Central, Los Angeles. So being part of LAUSD . . . you would hear these things mentioned like certain events and stuff like that. But once I got to college, you understand the history a little bit more. So, finally with this internship and being able to have someone who lived through it . . . you kind of think why aren't more people aware of [the Chicano Moratorium]? If I think about like our community, I understand we're still kind of limited in resources . . . I guess seeing how like there's a lot of like resiliency and generational trauma . . . I think the next part forward, at least in my position as an archivist in training, [is] how can the community heal now?

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A student who interned at Go For Broke National Education Center described collections documenting Japanese American incarceration during World War II. She said:

> I think one of the most important things [I learned] was about "incarceration" versus "internment." Just the watering down of that terminology is really harmful and erases what happened. So [the archives] have a controlled vocabulary that you can use when you are making the finding aids, [generating] the metadata, and [doing] the cataloging, [which] has different terms that they like [to use] as the archive and the community… And like "incarceration" was one [term to describe the records] and they also have like [terminology to describe] the names of the camps.

This student, like others in the internship program, discussed applying this knowledge in future archival positions, as well as implementing culturally sensitive and reparative descriptive practices based on relationship building with the communities represented in the collections.

Finding 5: Students acquired important professional skillsets that prepared them for professional work after graduation.

Student interns expressed that acquiring on-the-job skills that help prepare them for the profession. Lauren Molina explained how she learns various skills about working in community archives from her internship at La Historia Historical Society Museum:

> I am still learning from my community archives site. And I really believe that if a student or professional wants to participate . . . at a community archives site, or beginning of a new archives site, that I cannot really imagine a better way to learn these really kind of nuanced skills . . . except for putting oneself into a community archives to learn it. So, I think it is just important to consider how important an opportunity like this is for someone who sees themselves in that profession.

Another student intern described how she obtained valuable practical experience from interning at the community archives site:

> I think this internship has been valuable in giving me experiences I would not otherwise have had. [Previously,] I had only done processing . . . but I got a chance to . . . learn more about copyright and how it pertains to deeds of gift. I got to learn about records management. I had to do a fair amount of education on archival work to non-archivists. And so, I think those are all really useful skills that you do not always get a chance to like learn in practice, maybe like in the abstract.

Lauren Trujillo (2018-2019) reflected how she developed skills to project manage records through her internship at the May 23, 2014 Isla Vista Memorial Archive:

> This was really a unique opportunity because I got to be the project manager and make decisions, and guide the organization in some of the projects that we are working on. And [that] has definitely given me more confidence in leading archival projects . . . and not only project manage, but do the detailed work that needs to be done as far as metadata and importing all types of things and working with all types of formats . . . so, I feel prepared to go into a manager role in an archive now.

Similarly, Coryn Hardison described how she acquired various archival skills while interning at the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California:

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I think [the internship] has given me a lot of practical experience . . . working with software and conducting archival processes on my own largely for the first time . . . working with ArchivesSpace, making a finding aid on there. That is obviously a very beneficial skill to have because I want to be a professional archivist. And it's something that I got to be exposed to. I got to process my own collection by myself for the first time . . . even though I kind of dove head first into these skills and these tasks, I think it definitely helped me build a foundation for these skills that are definitely going to help me in a professional setting.

At the beginning of each intern cycle, students often expressed anxiety about being thrust into a high-level position making key archival decisions. However, after careful support from project staff, interns emerge at the end of each year excited about the new skills they acquired and leadership roles they took on. These skills are crucial for student success on the job market. Although we have not formally tracked interns after graduation, we know that many of the student interns report using the skills they acquired at their internship sites in professional roles after graduation.

Impact on Community Archives Sites
Finding 1: The "right fit" between student and community is crucial
Site coordinators expressed that the most successful internships matches involved MLIS students who are personally part of the community their site serves and represents and/or with personal interests in the community served by the site. A site coordinator who preferred to remain unnamed observes how the student intern's personal interests in the community resulted in a positive internship experience:

I think it really comes down to the matching . . . when you have an intern that is interested in the archival materials . . . it makes a big difference. I have been in charge of internships at other organizations and a lot of the interns that come in—whether it is paid or not—when they did get disengaged, it is very hard to move things forward. And I think that is probably the number one thing—for them to be engaged, to understand [the materials] and match really well with the organization. And then when that happens, they take a pride in what they do—the tasks that they are assigned . . . and then additionally, what happens is that benefits them because they are gaining experience in something that they want to gain experience in. So, I think the matching . . . is very important to make a very successful internship.

Annie Platoff from UC Santa Barbara, discussed the student intern's relationship to the May 23, 2014 Isla Vista Memorial Archive, an archive that commemorates a mass shooting. She noted the role that both student and the archive perform in making the internship a reciprocal experience:

The fact that [Lauren Trujillo] has a personal connection [to the Isla Vista archives], but yet has been able to do such a professional job of this internship, speaks volumes about her character . . . I think the quality of the intern is hugely important, but also the understanding of the organization hosting them is really important . . . the success of an internship is based on both the intern and the host institution. And if either of those do not live up to their piece, you are not going to have a successful internship. We knew what

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we would need to do for Lauren. And Lauren knew what she would need to do for us. So, I think that is how we were successful.

Clancey Cornell, a site supervisor at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive explains how receiving a student intern with personal interests in the broader community her archive serves resulted in a productive internship experience:

> I think one of the most important things is that the student [intern] is invested and interested in the community. There were a lot of times when we were doing work . . . and you get a lot of people coming off the street. Our intern [Henry Apodaca] was great at dealing with those situations. So, being informed about the community and the organization itself, and showing a real interest . . . that was the key to [this internship] being successful.

Based on interviews with site supervisors, the student being part of and/or having a personal interest in the community being served and represented is an important factor in a successful placement. This finding underscores the necessity of having BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ students in MLIS programs in order to create successful matches with community archives sites.

Finding 2: Students with archival skillsets are especially beneficial to sites without formally trained archivists
Site supervisors asserted that MLIS students with technical archival skillsets are beneficial to community archives that do not have formally trained archivists on staff or as volunteers. Rosa Peña from La Historia Historical Society Museum described how the student intern applied specialized technical knowledge when completing tasks at the community archives:

> Some of those tasks I do not think they would have been completed, and completed as quickly . . . if [Lauren Molina] did not come in and have the knowledge that she brought to us and her skill too . . . I mean this internship helped us so much to get things done that I have been wanting to do for a long time, thinking I could do them. And it is like, Oh my gosh, I do not have that skillset yet, you know? . . . I have been waiting for this for so long, like probably even since I first walked through the door.

Angela Brinskele from the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, explained how the student intern applies skillsets gained from MLIS courses to complete a records inventory at the community archives:

> I think the timing [of this internship] is perfect because we get [the intern] right when she has learned those skills and tried [them out] a little bit . . . [Because] there were absolutely things that would not have gotten done without her. There is no chance we would have indexed the archives to the degree she did it in . . . I want to emphasize that one of her greatest skills, although she had many, was to think of a really organized way to do something. And so, [tasks] got done so much better and faster because personally that is not my skillset.

In 2019, Clancey Cornell at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive discussed the expertise that the student intern provided about audio-visual preservation to ensure invaluable records are properly housed at the community archives:

[Henry] completed an inventory of all our audio-visual materials. Because of his expertise . . . in that whole realm, he was able to assess what type of playback materials we needed for specific formats that I had no knowledge of . . . [Henry] also provided insight and advice on certain preservation techniques, as well as different archival institutes to buy preservation materials from. So, together we worked assessing how much of the audio-visual materials we had and figuring out what boxes we needed to order for which. You know, getting that all organized [for our archives].

A year later in 2020, after supervising a second intern, Cornell reported that even more archival work had been accomplished:

All of these [archival projects] have always been on our to do list so to speak. But I guess before our first Mellon intern, which was Henry [Apodaca] two years ago, and then now with the addition of Zachary [Rutland], like it's just absolutely . . . I don't even know the words . . . it's impossible to imagine where we would be. I know where we would be without them: we'd be exactly where I was two years ago doing everything by myself. So, I guess the answer is no, [this archival work] wouldn't have been accomplished without [Zachary], although these tasks that always needed to happen. But it's like the manpower and also the expertise that they bring was something that is really needed for our community archives.

The site supervisors clearly valued the technical expertise the student interns brought to the community archives, especially when combined with the community investment described in the previous finding.

Finding 3: Students have completed significant archival projects at the sites
Site coordinators from across multiple community archives described how MLIS students completed significant archival projects. Samip Mallick from the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) spoke about how the student intern processed digitized records from an important collection that the online repository houses:

[This] collection had been unprocessed because our site did not have the capacity to process the digital images, create metadata, and adjust them into the SAADA website . . . and it is a really large collection. I mean there is just a hundred albums and thousands of images . . . it is already the largest collection in SAADA . . . if Raisha [Pacella] had not been working on this collection, it would either be that I would have to do it, or that it would not get done. I have other priorities to work on . . . that are not necessarily always the most mission critical because the [archival processing] work has to get done.

Dawn Finley from the Feminist Library On Wheels explained how the student intern made a guide that contains information for volunteers to help sustain the collections:

The biggest thing that [Ariel Hahn] did was our volunteer guide, which [contains] . . . things like our mission statement, our core values, our weeding policy, how to checkout [our] books, how to sign people up for [our] library cards. How to think about the categories that we use to sort our books and so on. So, some of that material already existed, but some of it she edited or wrote. And then collected all together in one major document. So, that is a really big tool for us in terms of training new volunteers . . . and I think . . . having all of that in one place was a huge boon for us.

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Angela Brinskele at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives reflected on how the student intern created an extensive archival inventory for the analogue records that the community archives houses onsite:

> Our intern created an inventory day where we indexed the archives . . . she put it on a Google Doc, so that everyone could contribute live and she could watch their progress. And she had them work in teams: one person would type, one person would take things out, [one person would] describe them . . . so, that could have easily taken us a year. She did that three different days and the majority of the archives is now indexed. And not only that, but there is a whole system set. So, we can just continue that until we are done. We have a very small amount of work compared to what it was before she got there.

Site supervisors discussed the impressive amount of work the students accomplished, how their technical skills contributed to the sites, and how important projects would not have gotten done without the student interns. Students created digital asset management systems, conducted oral histories, created finding aids for collections, wrote several successful grant proposals, created online and in-person exhibitions, launched social media campaigns, digitized analogue materials, and organized outreach events. Across sites, supervisors were enthusiastic about the high level of professional work students accomplished, even during the pandemic and the subsequent shift to remote work after March 2020.

Finding 4: Paid interns are more reliable for the sites than unpaid interns
Site coordinators emphasized that paid MLIS student interns are more reliable in terms of taking on responsibilities, completing tasks, and requiring little supervision. A site coordinator who prefers to remain unnamed reflected on how the paid internship provided the student intern with incentive to not just complete archival tasks, but to value the archival expertise and labor that the student contributed:

> I think it is very important because the work that [interns] do is very valuable for us. I mean there is really no amount of money that you can put on that because [our paid intern] was exceptional. She really put her time and energy to do it . . . she is very thoughtful in terms of how she thinks things through, and she does a very thorough job. Like she does not want to disappoint. I think it is just an incentive of getting paid like [interns]—they put a lot more energy into it. In the past I have worked in different organizations where the internship was not paid. So, [the interns] feel like there is less obligation and I think that the payment helps. You know, it benefits both ways.

Annie Platoff discussed how paid internships help both the intern and the archive to create a more conducive working environment:

> Internships in my opinion, based on the ones I have done and my experience with other interns, can be whatever the intern works to make it happen and whatever the site works to make it happen. But by making it something that involved a stipend . . . I think that really makes it more successful because . . . everybody is more engaged and takes it more seriously. So, you are less likely to get an intern who . . . does not get the stuff done. Also, the site takes more responsibility because they are getting some payment for the intern. So, I think all around it is a great way to do this.

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Samip Mallick from SAADA explained how this paid internship provided him the capacity to manage a student intern, which otherwise would not be possible. He said:

> I actually had stopped taking on unpaid interns, both from an ethical perspective . . . but also from a very practical perspective, which is that unpaid internships are quite unreliable. Understandably, people are not getting paid for . . . their work, so when other priorities come up, those become what is most important to them . . . because of the realities of not being able to pay for interns, I have not been able to take them on. So, this opportunity . . . was really critical because otherwise, even if there was the opportunity for us to work with a [MLIS] student, I would not have the time or the energy to supervise that student—not knowing whether they would actually be able to follow through on the internship if it were unpaid. So, from my perspective, it is really what enabled this partnership to happen in the first place.

Gavin Do, Archivist at Go For Broke National Education Center, which preserves the history of Japanese American World War II veterans, said in 2020:

> For smaller community organizations it's important to have resources such as this [paid] internship [program]. Because when resources are very scarce, sometimes the archives can be on the lower of priorities or needs if the organization itself is not an archive inherently by design. So, having resources that are specifically set for the archive departments of smaller community organizations is so vital. It can be the difference between having the ability to talk about doing a project versus not. So, [this paid internship] is a very big lifeline and that cannot be understated at all.

Importantly, the project transformed how some of the community archives sites view internships, with some seeking further resources to fund interns outside of the UCLA Community Archives /Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Paid Internship Program. Angela Brinskele, Communications Director of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, spoke about the impact the internship program has had on the organization's labor practices. She said:

> Because of this [paid internship] program, I have to say that the board at the Mazer has realized that we really have to start having paid staff either on our archive board or just at the archives. We have to have paid staff in the future. We've realized . . . without paid archivists and without paid staff, who have some expertise in the field, often the systems that are created are not sustaining. And that's a really crucial thing to us now [since] that we've had . . . two years of paid interns who are trained in library studies and archiving— it's really been an eye opener for the board on how important it is to have paid staff. And [also to have] people who have professional training in archives and library science because of exactly what I was talking about—the systems created need to be something that can carry us into the future.

Based on these conversations, it was clear that site supervisors valued the reliability and responsibility that accompanied students being paid for their labor. In some cases, the program led community archives to launch fundraising efforts to fund their own interns in addition to participation in this specific program.

Finding 5: The stipend is important for the fiscal sustainability of the archives
Site coordinators identified fiscal uncertainty as the biggest challenge their archives face. They discussed how, though not a huge sum of money, the $1,920 stipend they were paid helped to

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safeguard the community archives from fiscal precarity. Annie Platoff described how the stipend alleviated the need to access funding from other sources, so that she can focus on helping the student intern complete archival projects. She said:

> I really think having [a] stipend for the student as well as for the project [is important] . . . because then I did not have to go begging for money from . . . other parts of campus. I really liked that you combine those two elements. And that [there] was not just pay for the student—there was also some operating money [for the site]. I think anybody would have appreciated that.

Winona Bechtle from the Bob Baker Marionette Theater explained the process of purchasing archival materials to preserve records onsite, which otherwise would have not been possible without the internship program stipend and the expertise of the MLIS students:

> We mostly left it to [interns] Adam [Foster] and Brianna [Toth] to tell us what they needed [the stipend] for . . . just like what are we spending it on and what are we doing with it. Because . . . there was a little bit of push and pull between what an archivist might recommend as something that was totally essential. And then us identifying it as like, actually we never use those things . . . So, those conversations were super important and we did spend most of the budget . . . for archival materials . . . It is always helpful to have financial assistance, but the value is really just having experienced people tell us what we needed. Because we did not have any idea.

Samip Mallick asserted how the stipend both recognized his labor in supervising the interns, but also how it helped with other expenses to maintain the community archives. He said:

> Never have I ever before had a stipend offered to the organization to manage an intern. And what was remarkable about that to me was it recognized a huge amount of work that goes into managing an intern . . . And to recognize that side of the labor, that was a really big deal for me . . . In terms of the specific stipend . . . SAADA is an independent nonprofit organization and that goes toward our general operating expenses for the year. So, it pays for the continued expansion and growth of . . . the archive.

Conversations with site supervisors enabled us to see how stipends for participating sites, however small, were important symbolic and material interventions for the participating community archives.

Conclusion
Although there were some complications throughout the initial three years of the project particularly in light of the pandemic, the project was a rousing success from the perspectives of both site coordinators and MLIS student interns. With funding for the UCLA Community Archives Lab/ Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Paid Internship Program, stories buried in backlogs at community archives across Southern California were uncovered and made accessible; a diverse group of students were able to develop professional skills and cultural competencies; community archives grew their archival and fiscal capacity. Additionally, through conference presentations as well as this paper and others like it, scholarship was generated to better understand the needs of community archives and MLIS students.

Student interns have reported the great affective and professional impact of the internship experience, with four student interns being hired into paid positions at their internship sites after

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graduation (two at the Skid Row History Museum & Archive, one at the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, and one at June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives). Other graduates of the program have reported the importance of the skills they acquired at their community archives sites, including relationship-building and community outreach, to their current work in libraries and archives such as UCLA's Ethnomusicology Archives, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and the Santa Barbara Library Foundation.

In 2021, the program was renewed for another three years with a generous gift from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Moving forward, the next iteration of the program will involve seven pre-selected internship sites chosen based on their track records of successful student supervision, as well as organizational and community needs. These sites are:

- La Historia Historical Society Museum
- Skid Row History Museum & Archive
- June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives
- Los Angeles Contemporary Archive
- Visual Communications
- Chinese Historical Society of Southern California
- The Social and Public Art Resource Center

UCLA Community Archives Lab staff is very excited to continue the important work at these sites with new cohorts of students.

We are also investigating the long-term fiscal sustainability of the project beyond support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Ideally, community archives would be funded such that they would be able to hire and pay their own interns directly, as the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives has started to do. Another option would be for a donor to endow paid internship positions through a major gift to UCLA. That latter option is currently being explored.

Importantly, the next iteration of the program includes a plan for scaling up by convening a group of archival studies faculty from iSchools across the U.S. to design a national paid community archives internship program for MLIS students. Faculty teaching community archives courses at iSchools throughout the U.S. have become familiar with the UCLA community archives internship program through conference presentations and informal conversations over the past three years. They are very excited to implement similar programs at their own universities, seeing paid internships as a way to transform their own MLIS programs to better prepare a diverse group of students to serve diverse communities. With this in mind, the next phase of the project will develop a plan for a national community archives internship program for MLIS students.

During year two of the next phase, project staff will assess the readiness of seven leading iSchools to undertake participation in a national community archives internship program. These seven programs were selected based on faculty research interest in community archives, course offerings related to community archives, and infrastructure to support student internships. The assessment will be based on conversations with key faculty teaching and/or conducting research on community archives, as well as written evidence they provide in the form of policies, course descriptions, student handbooks, and budget commitments. The PI and doctoral student researcher will write a white paper based on this assessment that will be published on the UCLA Community Archives Lab website and deposited in the UC scholarship repository.

At the start of year three of this phase (academic year 2023-2024), we will convene an in-person meeting at UCLA of faculty from the seven iSchools. The goal of this meeting will be to

develop a proposal for a national community archives internship program. We will then seek funding for this national program through a sustainable mix of government agencies (such as IMLS), private foundations, and our own institutions.

If successful, the next phase of this project has the potential to help revamp MLIS education nationally to better address the information needs, perspectives, and practices of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities and to respond to increasing demands from MLIS students for paid internship opportunities. In this way, this paid internship program could be an important next step in transforming MLIS education, LIS labor policies, and archival theory and practice.

Appendix A: List of Semi-Structured Interview Questions

<u>Interview questions for site coordinators</u>

1. Who was your intern as part of this paid internship program?
2. What tasks did you ask them to do during their internship?
3. What tasks did your intern accomplish at your community archives?
4. Would those tasks have been completed without a paid intern through this program?
5. From your perspective, how important was it that your intern was paid for their labor?
6. Were there any specific challenges in managing your intern?
7. How do you plan to spend the stipend your organization received as part of this internship program?
8. Would you have been able to purchase those things without the stipend?
9. What do you see as the most pressing issues effecting your organization?
10. What external funding challenges do you face at your community archives s?
11. Do you have a shortage of employees to maintain your community archives?
12. Are the employees that staff your community archives part-time or full-time workers?
13. Are these positions temporary or permanent?
14. Are they payroll or grant funded positions?
15. Do you have volunteers who work with your community archives? If so, what tasks are they responsible for doing? And on average how long of a timeframe do they volunteer for?
16. Did this paid internship program meet the expectations of your community archives?
17. Do you have any suggestions for us to better implement this paid internship program at other community archives in the future?
18. [Added in 2020 and 2021] How has the COVID 19 pandemic impacted work your community archives site?

<u>Interview questions for student interns</u>

1. What community archives site was your paid internship at?
2. What were your responsibilities there?
3. Was this experience different from any other internships you have had? If so, how?
4. How important was it to you to be paid for this internship? If you had not been paid, would you have been able to do the internship? Why or why not?
5. Were there any challenges that you faced during your internship? If so, what were they?
6. Were there any specific challenges of working with your site-coordinator?
7. How has this paid internship help to develop your professional skills as an archivist at your community archives?
8. In your opinion, how did your skills as a trained archivist benefit the staff members who work with the collections at your community archives site?
9. Did you work with volunteers at your site? If so, what was your experience like as a paid intern working with community members who volunteer their time to help maintain the community archives? Did the difference in pay status matter?

10. What do you see as the most pressing issues effecting your community archives site?
11. Based on your experiences working at this site and other sites, and your knowledge gained from your MLIS classes, do the practices and goals of your community archives site differ from those of mainstream repositories? And if so, how?
12. Could you discuss how you helped to increase the visibility, preservation, and accessibility of the histories at your community archives?
13. During your internship, what did you learn about the communities represented in the collections that you came into contact with at your site?
14. Did you develop any cultural competencies, meaning any skillsets to work with people of different cultural backgrounds from your own, including that of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, or nationality?
15. How do you think your paid internship impacted your community archives site?
16. Do you have any suggestions for how the organization can continue these projects after your internship is over?
17. Do you have any suggestions for us to better implement this internship program next year at other community archives?
18. [Added in 2020 and 2021] How has the COVID 19 pandemic impacted your internship experience?

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