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Have You Thought about an Intern from a Local Undergraduate College?

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Have You Thought about an Intern from a Local Undergraduate College?

*By Sister Rose Marie Martin, Retired Archivist, and
Sister Mary Navarre, Director of Archives for the Dominican Sisters, Grand Rapids, Michigan*

Since 2009, we have found that hiring an intern from a nearby college has many advantages. The intern finds out if archival work is an appealing career option or not. The experience also gives the person an opportunity to assess his or her interest and aptitude for archival work in an unparalleled real-life context that is always more realistic than reading about it or observing from afar. Additionally, the intern makes some income to offset the cost of living.

From the vantage point of the director and staff of the archives, the intern may be able to offer assistance in computer input, in collection arrangement, and (if the talent is there) in mounting displays and exhibits. Yes, it all takes some direction and supervision, but the intern is able to focus on one project at a time, which is a great advantage over the director who must keep many “plates spinning” at once.

In our own case, interns have been invaluable for data input in the our recently acquired PastPerfect content management system; in labeling, moving, and rearranging boxes; and in doing errands both on and off campus. Furthermore, young people can be a joyful presence reminding us of the purpose of our work in providing a legacy for the next generation.



An intern helps design an exhibit.