InULA Research Incentive Fund Report

Christina Sheley
Head, Business/SPEA Information Commons
Indiana University-Bloomington

In January 2015, I received a generous grant from the Indiana University Librarians' Association (InULA) to support a research project titled, "All in a Day's Work: Workplace Information Literacy from a Student Perspective." The study examined undergraduate students' perspectives of information literacy competencies and expectations in the workplace and considered the following questions: a) what workplace activities are informed by research and information? b) what information sources are being accessed and used? c) what research skills are needed in a position and/or workplace? d) how important are research skills in a corporate environment?.

A content analysis of ninety-eight business students' written reflections on workplace information use and behavior was done to systematically look at the texts and investigate trends or patterns. The reflections were completed in summer 2014, while the students were in corporate internships, and submitted to a blog as part of an internship for credit course offered through the Kelley School of Business. The data gathered was examined qualitatively and coded according to emerging themes.

The InULA grant monies were used to hire a graduate student research assistant. This individual independently coded texts in order to increase the reliability of the results. In addition, the grant afforded me a one-year subscription to QSR International's *NVivo* software—a platform that facilitates the coding of text, sharing of work, and querying against data.

Initial results from the project include:

- Company research was the most highly cited research activity (51 references) with students describing the need to conduct competitor analysis or obtain background information on clients. Industry research (39 references) was second. Students also referenced the need to conduct research in order to function within their internships.
- Work-specific resources (intranets, internal databases, documents, and files) were the most highly referenced (110) information sources, with websites as second (74). A finding of interest was the use of individuals (supervisors, co-workers, and teammates) as a source of information.
- Sixty-two (62) references in 50 reflections broadly commented on the importance of research and/or information in a particular position or workplace.

The results of this research project were shared in a poster presentation at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in San Francisco in June 2015. Conversations during this presentation have spawned two possible research collaborations with colleagues at other institutions. In addition, I'm working on an article, also titled "All in a Day's Work," that I plan to submit for publication by the end of the year. Finally, I will propose an item for *Academic BRASS*—"Preparing Business Student Interns for Workplace Information Challenges" (working title)—when the call comes in fall 2015.