



STUDENT FOCUS:

LIBRARIES

BY THE STUDENTS,

FOR THE STUDENTS

Brian Fernandez LIBRARY PROJECT ASSISTANT

Libraries provide a multitude of resources, serving as centers of intellectual and personal growth for the student body. This growth is especially present in student employees of George A. Smathers Libraries. Student employees represent diverse backgrounds and often serve as liaisons to bring the student body closer to the Libraries. I worked as a student employee at the Marston Science Library circulation desk and have contributed to special projects and library research. As a first-generation college student, working for the Libraries provided me with much needed access to resources essential for undergraduate success. It also made it much easier to convey awareness of such resources to colleagues, facilitating access to online research databases, study spaces, and technology. Working for the Libraries sharpened my communication skills, provided a foundation for my work experience, and taught me how to interact with a diverse patron population in need of assistance. I am not alone, as other student employees for the Libraries have had and continue to have similar experiences.

INDIA SANDER-NAZARIO

India Sander-Nazario is a junior at UF majoring in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation and minoring in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. She works at the Architecture and Fine Arts Library as a library student assistant. India mainly works at the circulation desk and is often the first point of contact for library patrons. She recalls that prior to working at the Fine Arts Library, she had never stepped



foot into any of the fine arts buildings and that her job has taken her completely out of her comfort zone. India's experiences as a student assistant has enhanced her ability to communicate with diverse patrons, helped her learn to use technology intended for student success, and navigate the Libraries. "Helping out so many different types of people has also gotten me more comfortable with talking to professors and being in a professional setting," India said. **"It's a perfect first job. Not only are you working directly on campus, which is accessible to most students, you have the opportunity to build a lot of connections with staff and students."** Working for the Libraries provides exceptional exposure for student assistants to interact with students, staff, and faculty. Student interaction is perhaps one of the most beneficial factors when working for the Libraries, as student assistants are able to make connections that can create opportunities that might impact their careers.

KEVIN BODE PADRON

Kevin Bode Padron graduated in 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with emphasis on Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience and a minor in Health Disparities in Society. During his undergraduate career at UF, he worked at Marston Science Library for four years: two years as a library student assistant and two years when promoted as an Access Services Assistant. Diversity and inclusion were focal points for him on and off the job, as evident



in the ways he served as a liaison for first-generation students and the Libraries, creating a friendly environment through meetings and events hosted at Marston while serving as president of the First-Generation Organization. **“The library is a welcoming environment where students go to advance their careers. Inclusion is paramount, creating a safe space where patrons from all walks of life can enter and join our vibrant academic community,”** Kevin said. “I cannot express enough gratitude for the Libraries. For they not only gave me the resources and knowledge needed to succeed as a first-generation student, they allowed me to meet patrons, people, who ultimately changed my life.” Kevin once assisted a student that introduced him to the Neuromedicine Interdisciplinary Clinical and Academic Program (NICAP), where he then ventured for more details, applied to, and was accepted to the program. After his shifts at the library, he would attend the program at Shands Hospital to speak to patients in the Neuro Intensive Care Unit. There, he learned about the ways in which medicine improved the lives of patients struggling with debilitating conditions. This experience served as a building block in Kevin’s undergraduate career and added to his desire to pursue a career in medicine. Kevin will attend medical school in Fall 2022.


BRIAN D. FERNANDEZ

I graduated in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science. During my undergraduate career at UF, I worked as a library student assistant and student supervisor for a year and a half. I currently work as a library research project assistant and Spring 2022 will mark the third year in a row that I have contributed to a special project to create an annual report of peer-reviewed publications authored by UF faculty in agricultural sciences. Working as a project assistant has been a fulfilling experience as the



strong attention to detail needed keeps me on my toes. Although there are often strict deadlines that must be met, the work schedule is more flexible than other jobs. The project is extensive as I review thousands of citations for eligibility based on strict criteria. I have learned a significant amount about the process of scholarly publishing, use of library research databases, and work through the use of dense spreadsheets and team collaboration. **My work as a library research assistant has also taught me the importance of evidence-based research and research tools.** The skills, knowledge, and experiences acquired by my work at the Libraries has helped me establish a strong foundation to accomplish my career goals. I plan to attend law school in Fall 2022.

Just as the Libraries provide an exceptional number of services for the student body and the school's performance, its student employees offer just as much.

Student employees provide a variety of services for the libraries, often being the first point of contact for library patrons, directing students to resources catered for their academic success, and contributing to meaningful research projects and endeavors. There are typically 150 student employees that work for the Libraries each semester at UF. Each contribute to an inclusive and studious atmosphere on campus in their own unique ways. 



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