Nicole Webb, Curator of Collections, from The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula has supervised several interns over the years. In fact, she participated in one of the Museum internships herself when she was in school. “We strive to help all interns at the Museum complete their internship with a new line on the resume that will represent their achievements and knowledge to any future employer.”

What is The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula?

“The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula is the Missoula County historical museum. The Museum is located in the 1910 Storehouse at Fort Missoula and has three changing exhibit galleries. On our 32-acre grounds are a variety of historic buildings including those original to Fort Missoula, as well as others moved to the museum to be interpreted and preserved from around Missoula County. These buildings include the Non-Commissioned Officer’s Quarters (NCO), the Grant Creek Schoolhouse, the Hellgate chapel and Sliderock Lookout.”

Why do you take on interns?

“The Museum has a very small staff of only seven full-time and part-time individuals- so interns are extremely valuable members of the team. Because our staff is so small, interns are able to have a really hands-on experience in all of the different departments of the museum. The museum has had interns in both the collections department and education department for over 10 years.”

Are there different types of internship opportunities available for students?

“At the Museum, the education and collection/exhibit departments offer the most internship possibilities. Within those departments there are two levels of internships available. The first level requires a minimum of 8 hours per week and is unpaid. The second level is the Browman Fellowship within the collections department, and the Living History Internship offered through the education department. These two internships are limited per year, require at least 16 hours per week and come with a $1,000 stipend. Schedules and hours are flexible and we will work to fit projects within an academic schedule.”
Describe some of the tasks interns work on.

“The Museum offers a wide variety of internships and projects and is more than willing to accommodate certain interests, backgrounds and goals. In the education department past internships have included working on visitor surveys, helping develop tours and curriculum, and creating third-person interpretive docent tours. In the collections department past internships have included helping with object inventories, researching and designing exhibits, and writing for the Museum blog.”

What is the work environment like for a student intern? Do you offer any special trainings etc.?

“After identifying a project and initial training, interns are expected to work comfortably on their own. That being said, museum staff is happy to provide further instruction and collaboration as needed. The work environment inside the museum is generally fairly quiet, unless you are working with a school group- then it could be quite noisy.”

“Throughout the year the Museum offers a variety of professional development trainings, lectures and events that interns can partake in, depending on the time of year and availability.”
Did you do an internship as a student? How did your own experiences as student shape your career?

“I actually completed the Browman Fellowship at the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula before I took over as the Curator of Collections. Since high school I have volunteered and interned at a variety of museums. I certainly know the importance that experience in the ‘real world’ has for students and how internships can really help build a resume. We strive to help all interns at the Museum complete their internship with a new line on the resume that will represent their achievements and knowledge to any future employer. We have had many interns leave our museum and go on to grad school and higher-level careers in the museum and non-profit world.”

Do you have any advice for students seeking internships or other curation experiences?

“There’s no doubt that finding a job after school is never an easy task. I truly believe that even with a bachelor’s and master’s degree, it was the experiences I’ve had from internships that got me to where I am today. Its always rewarding to get out of the classroom and get some real world experiences- its those instances that you’ll be able to use during a job interview to show a future employer- yes I can actually do this job because I have the experience to back me up!”

When and how do you advertise for interns? How many do you generally have at a time?

“We have information about available internships on our website, www.fortmissoulamuseum.org. We also advertise on through the University of Montana Internship Services’ Griz eRecruiting and work closely with professors within different departments at the University. We have had as many as 5-8 interns during one semester; it mostly depends on project availability. We have both unpaid and paid internship options depending on schedule flexibility.”
Paul Hutton works with archival collections during his internship.

Are you looking for students from specific majors, years in school, or with specific qualifications?

“Interns in the past have come from a variety of different backgrounds including education, history, non-profit work, english and anthropology- so we do not require a specific major or number of years in school. We have also had many interns with no museum experience at all- but do appreciate a general interest in history!”

For more information head to our website, www.fortmissoulamuseum.org or check out available positions on Griz eRecruiting!