Overview

In Spring 2019, the Richard B. Russell Building Special Collections Libraries will launch a student docent program to extend the reach and accessibility of our facility. Our goal is to recruit UGA undergraduate and graduate students who are committed to leading engaging tours of the exhibit galleries for visitors of all ages. Participants in the program will develop skills in archival research, public speaking, and community outreach. They will also gain valuable work experience in both archive and museum settings.

We will accept applications through Friday, February 15, 2019; In-person interviews for finalists will be scheduled from February 18-22, 2019. Candidates selected for admission to the program will be notified by March 1, 2019.

Note: Applicants to the program should be currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students at the University of Georgia who can commit to participating in the program for one year (March 2019 – May 2020).

Training Scope/Schedule

Training will take place this spring from March 18 to April 15, 2019. The program will consist of evening training sessions one night a week for five weeks.

Led by members of the Special Collections staff, early content sessions will largely focus on the mission, collections, and work of the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, and the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies. Trainees will become more familiar with these libraries and the items on exhibit in their respective galleries. Subsequent sessions will provide information about the building itself, the storage vault, research policies and procedures, and acquaint trainees with the various event and classroom spaces, their equipment, and ongoing and upcoming programs and events.

In addition to building content knowledge of the libraries and exhibits, docents will receive instruction on how to engage with visitors, to create tours for specialized groups, and handle difficult questions.

Note: Participants should be comfortable with public speaking at the outset, but subsequent instruction and practice should help to enhance their ability to create engaging tours for the public.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the required time commitment for the Student Docent Program?

Trainees must commit to attending the five-week training period (10 hours). If you must miss a session, you may bring your case to the attention of the Docent Coordinators, Jan Levinson Hebbard and Kaitlin Dotson for consideration.

If a training session is missed, a docent trainee must:
- contact the Docent Coordinator (in advance, when possible) to notify her of the absence and to obtain session materials
- prepare for and be tested on this material at the next training session

Following the five-week training, docents will be paid a $1000 stipend to work for 10 hours per week for ten weeks over the Summer 2019 semester to research and write a full tour script, including 4 tour stops and 2 gallery games. Docents will then commit to working for the Special Collections Libraries through the Spring 2020 semester, paid hourly to give guided tours. Once trained, guides would commit 8-10 hours per month of service to include leading tours, researching and writing new tour stops, and attending regular docent meetings.

What is the required reading for docent training?

Participants will receive a docent handbook, containing overview information on the Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscripts Library, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, and the Walter J. Brown Media Archives and Peabody Awards Collection, as well as information on the exhibits currently on display in the galleries of the Special Collections Building.

Additional information will be added to the handbook as needed (ex. changing exhibitions). Participants will be responsible for reviewing this information on their own and will be tested during subsequent sessions. The notebook will also contain a set of optional readings focused on docent training and tips for giving tours drawn from outside sources.
How do we know when you are ready to give tours?

First, participants will take the quizzes on each of the content of sessions delivered. Quizes will serve as a litmus test -- helping us to understand what information has been retained, what delivery systems worked or didn’t, and what if any follow up training might be needed.

In addition to these written tests, participants will be required to:

- Shadow two tours during the Spring semester
  - Weekly Tour at 2, hosted each Tuesday from 2-3PM
  - Theme tours, scheduled periodically throughout the semester
  - K-12 tours, scheduled periodically throughout the semester for different groups

- Participate in a group checkout tour at the end of the five-week training.
  - Student docents deliver the tour stops and gallery games they have developed during the five-week training sessions. The checkout tour will be held April 22, 2019.

How much will I be paid as a student docent?

If accepted to the program, you will complete the training sessions as a volunteer. That will include 10 hours of training classes; shadowing 2 tours (2 hours); plus additional time outside of classes to study your material and research and write one tour stop for the checkout tour (5 hours). In total, we anticipate you will volunteer approximately 17 hours of your time during this phase of the program.

Applicants who successfully complete the training and checkout tour are eligible for a $1000 stipend in the summer of 2019 in exchange for 100 hours (10 hours/week) spent researching and writing a full tour script. This finished script will include 4 tour stops and 2 gallery games, and must be submitted before the start of the fall semester 2019.

Applicants who successfully complete both the training and who submit a finished tour script will be eligible to give tours starting in the Fall 2019. Guides will be paid $10/hour to lead or co-lead tours for visitors to the Special Collections Building. The number of hours available will depend on the demand for tours each semester, but we anticipate each guide will work 8-10 hours per month during the semester. Guides will also be required to attend monthly meetings to check in on progress, sign up for tours, and review new content in the galleries with curators.