Spring 2014 USG-NLM Virtual Internships Kick-Off Event

On February 10, the new cohort of National Library of Medicine (NLM) interns had the opportunity to get together with their NLM supervisors, their academic advisors and the projects’ coordinators. The event was held at NLM.

The event began with an opportunity for students to informally share a little about themselves and what projects they will be undertaking throughout the semester. Two of the interns, Lissa Snyders and Becky Baltich Nelson, are graduate students in the iSchool and one student, Juliet Namazzi, is an undergraduate in the Public Health Science program. The Supervisors then talked about their work at NLM and described their academic and career paths that brought them to where they are today. This allowed the students to begin to see different possibilities for future careers. During this sharing session, common interests and possible collaborations began to emerge. One of the interns is originally from Uganda and expressed interest in using her studies to find ways to help tackle some of the health issues in her home country. On hearing this, one of the supervisors mentioned that he had previously participated in public health promotion programs with a university in Uganda and another intern added that she had worked for an NGO in Uganda focused on HIV/AIDS education. Immediately, connections were made and the opportunity to share and learn from each other became apparent.

Following this sharing session, the group went on an informative tour of NLM. They watched a brief video of the history of NLM and explored mini-exhibits of some of its digital projects, such as the Visible Human Project and Turning the Pages. They trekked to the bowels of the Library to see some of the miles and miles of bookshelves that hold its many treasures. The group also received a crash-course on how Gutenburg revolutionized the world of books, as they examined some of NLM’s oldest medical books in the History of Medicine division of the Library.

Given the virtual nature of these internships, it proved extremely valuable to the students to have the opportunity to learn more about the organization for which they are working and see it in person. Having the students and supervisors meet also helped them begin to build a stronger working relationship. It also enabled the student to meet in person and make them feel more comfortable about contacting each other if they needed support or advice throughout their internships. Overall, it was a productive and fun event that launched the students on their new learning endeavors this semester.