

Last year, I waddled into the MIAS program a relatively self-disparaging 24-year-old naïf. This year, I strut into my second half of the program after a handful of useful archival experiences, hundreds of “elevator speeches” and several rigorous research papers, a confident lady ready to continue to blossom in the information field.

Let me elaborate on where I’ve made some improvements...

When I entered the MIAS program I had not the foggiest idea of how to write at a scholarly level. My art school background and proclivity for dramatic writing caused Dino Everett to comment on one of my early efforts, “the paper was enjoyable to read, but just remember that the academic setting is different from writing a straight narrative.” Why my papers fell somewhat short of being effective, especially during my first term, likely had something to do with the fact that I was writing in underexplored areas (like “digital storage”) where I thought I could carve out a niche for myself (even if I had little interest in “digital storage”). In screenwriter parlance, I was writing “what I thought would *sell*” as opposed to what I felt *in my heart*.” Later in Winter Term, I found that by exploring topics that were of interest to me (like animation), archival insight seemed to bubble naturally to the surface. I plan to carry this lesson over into my coursework in my second year. My hope is that if I explore research questions that I personally find useful, other people will see the value in them too.

Through volunteer and practicum experience at the USC Hugh M. Hefner Archive, The Jim Henson Company and UCLA Library’s AV Preservation Unit, I learned a very valuable lesson – that it’s okay to look foolish. My greatest insight from engaging in hands-on experience is that most people in the field work through trial and error and that it’s through asking questions and improvisation that conclusions are drawn and strides are made. My recent experiences have taught me not be afraid to look silly and to constantly ask questions.

Over the course of my first year, I developed the assertion that “archives can reveal the creative process.” I uttered this statement multiple times at every interview I went on, citing it as my reason for wanting to be part of the field. Working as a research assistant to a television producer over the summer as he developed a pilot helped me to see my assertion in action. Through doing research, I was able to make archival material relevant to a creative professional, so that he could gain insight and improve in his artistic endeavors. My vague leanings toward research librarianship became full-blown and are something I will continue to pursue.

Last year, through tea breaks, conferences and my own pushing myself to be proactive through e-mailing and cold calling for my research papers, I have begun to develop a wonderful professional network within our delightfully small

and welcoming community. People like Theo Gluck have grown to be valued mentors, who I seek to call upon as I move forward in my studies and in my career.

Given everything that I learned last year, my goals for this year have become more fully realized. I've found a potential calling card in the realm of one of my great obsessions – musicals. At present, I have several research projects in the air whereby I am trying to support the contention that audio-visual materials are essential to the study of musical theater. This is a topic that I plan on delving into this year for my FTV American Film History Seminar and for Ethics of Film Restoration. My hope is to be able to partner with a colleague of mine who is working on an M.A. in Dramaturgy at the University of Oklahoma to publish several papers and to present at multiple dramaturgical and archival related conferences. Right now, the goal is very broad. I hope to hone in on a specific project or two by the end of this quarter.

Another area where I am gaining more paper-publishing insight is in helping Thelma Ross and her Sub-Committee for creating an updated AMIA Compendium of Moving Image Cataloging Practice.

Through an experience I had last year whereby I clung to a promising internship opportunity at the Disney Animation Research Library, but failed to get the position, I've learned not to put all my eggs into one basket. This year, though I will be interning at the Academy Film Archive, working on an oral history video project in both the Winter and Spring terms of 2014, I am still looking for additional, outside volunteering involvement. As I continue to assess what my learning needs are, I will begin to pursue those opportunities. My goal is to become more articulate about my archival interests. I'd like to be able to speak more than one word (a la "cataloging" or "videotape") when somebody asks me what my archival inclination is.

Finally, and probably most importantly, I want to stay involved with all of my cohorts in the program because that, to me, is the most fulfilling part of being in this program. I want to build-up the motivation to attend as many tea breaks as possible because they helped me out a lot last year in terms of sustaining confidence and bonding with classmates. I want to strive to be a positive presence in the program and also cultivate my leadership skills through serving the AMIA Student Chapter.

If I can moderately attain these goals as well as push myself to keep improving in my coursework, I will hopefully be able to judge myself as being a success in the program and, as such, be able to strut with confidence not only into my culminating requirements, but also and most especially, into the field as a professional.