The Internship
My main job consists of cataloging, photographing, and Photoshopping specimens to digitally preserve them and allow anyone to access them through an online database. I also helped clear and stain dozens of specimens and assisted with day to day tasks and other collection projects as they arose.

The Collection
Started in early to mid 1900’s the collection has nearly a quarter million preserved specimens, over 2,400 species from 73 countries, and a large selection of DNA. The collection serves as a biodiversity library for research, teaching, and protection of fishes of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Some specimens date back to 1895, and others are part of species considered critically extinct or rare, endemic to very specific locations. This is especially beneficial because the science community will continue to have access to these specimens and some of their genetic resources regardless of population loss. The collection helps support research in taxonomy, biogeography, genetics, evolution, conservation, anatomy and ecology. This can be researched on campus but also accessed through the loan system to benefit research from all over the world. It also has a teaching collection which provides hands-on learning for students on campus and through photographs for the online class.

The Skills

Photography:

Photoshopping:

Cataloguing and Database Work:

In the Lab:

Clearing and Staining:

Professional Development
Out of the professional development sessions I found the creation of a LinkedIn, elevator speech, and resume editing particularly valuable. Things everyone should do but hard to do on your own without a push. When it comes to talks I like Larry Roper’s article on the “The Ethics of Entering and Leaving Organizations” and how it’s always best to leave on a good note, as well as the talk on listening. Few of us are truly good listeners and it can be a very valuable skill. I also enjoyed the reflection on our own strengths and weaknesses and individual values. Because these are things that are always prevalent but we aren’t always fully aware of. When we get the opportunity to reflect on them we can recognize them and begin to work on the weaknesses and use our strengths and values to our advantage. Helping improve our experience at a workplace while working on those soft skills that will stay with us throughout our career.

Highlights and Reflections
The best aspects of my internship were gaining skills and knowledge I otherwise wouldn’t have had the chance to do. Skills that involved photography and Photoshop, which also helped me gain a personal interest in photography. As well as to create a full fish poster. I have gained larger knowledge of fish, when I previously had very little. I also, had the opportunity to handle and create visually appealing images of some unique and even rare fishes. Specifically, I got to photograph a critically endangered specimen Xyrauchen texanus (Razorback sucker), which can help provide valuable information without collecting new individuals from the already small population. I also helped correct an error in the official scientific Catalog of Fishes. Finally, I enjoyed getting to work with my supervisor and the lab and the opportunities that came with it, including the chance to attend a collecting trip or conference in September.

Future
In the near future I’m looking forward to joining some members of the lab in a fish collecting trip aimed primarily at capturing sculpin, but also a few other species, and taking DNA clips to add to the collection.

For me I’m looking forward to moving on to more science, sustainability and preservation work with a soil health internship coming up in the school year and with hopes of following my six word memoir of...

"Connecting people to science and soil."

Because it will take all of us to make a difference, allowing for a healthier present and future.

“A nation that destroys its soil destroys itself.” —Franklin D. Roosevelt