The Ins and Outs of Job Hunting for Library Positions - An Insider's Perspective

ALA JobLIST Placement Center
2014 ALA Midwinter Meeting
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All of these slides are posted at

http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00019454
UF Libraries employment page:

http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/pers/careers.htm
What will we cover?

1. Overall Advice
2. Where to Find Job Postings
3. Search Committees and Hiring Authorities
4. Recruitment Process
5. The Job Posting
6. Your Application
7. Preparation for the Interview
8. The Interview
9. Post-Interview
10. References
11. Closing Thoughts on Improving Your Odds
Disclaimers

Too much to thoroughly cover everything in the time permitted

-But, links to additional sources are provided throughout
Disclaimers

My examples will be largely drawn from a large academic library at a large public university

-But, my belief is the examples and advice will translate to other types of institutions
Disclaimers

There are no “tricks”

-But, knowledge, preparation and technique will improve your odds
Overall Advice

This market means more deliberate recruiting

- Many libraries are shrinking
- Which positions to post
- Distinguishing between minimally, well, very well, ideally and overly qualified
- Selecting a candidate to hire
Academic Libraries Recruitment Efficacy and Outcome Study
http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/recruitmentstudy

Review the Professional Librarian searches for the representation of:

- Working Titles
- Specialists
Overall Advice

Determine your salary requirements, and apply accordingly

• Trailing partner considerations?
• Refer to the ARL Salary Survey or others
Overall Advice

The fewer the better

The better the better
Overall Advice

– Develop your message
  • How your qualifications (uniquely) match the job
  • Why the job makes sense for you

– Do not rely on the search committee to determine the above on their own
– Deliver your message
  • Application materials, interview, reference selection, etc.
Overall Advice

– Take advantage of the unique opportunity afforded by your cover letter
Overall Advice

–Be able to effectively answer, “Why do you want this job?”
**Overall Advice**

– Seek out opportunities now that reflect…

- Engagement
  - Enthusiasm
  - Leadership

…in the field of Librarianship

(NOW!)
Overall Advice

Consider your employment alternatives

Possible references:

www.simmons.edu/gslis/careers/lis.php
www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/careers/librarycareerssite/home.cfm
Reference

ALCTS e-Forum:
Job Hunting: A Conversation About How To Do It Well (5/4-5/5/11)

Led by
Tiffany Eatman Allen, and Erica Findley

Archive:
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/confevents/upcoming/e-forum/0504job.cfm
Reference

In the Library with the Lead Pipe
What Not to Do When Applying for Library Jobs (Group post)

Quintessential Careers
Career Resources Toolkit for Job-Seekers
http://www.quintcareers.com/career_resources.html
Reference

ALA JobLIST
Career Development Resources
http://joblist.ala.org/modules/jobseeker/controller.cfm

San José State University
School of Library & Information Science
http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/resources/career_development/
Reference

A Librarian’s Guide to an Uncertain Job Market by Jeannette Woodward (ALA Editions)

ALA Placement Center Conference Services
http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/hrdr/placementservice
Reference

“Hiring Non-MLS Librarians Trends and Training Implications”

Betsy Simpson, University of Florida
ALA Carroll Preston Baber Research Grant

Slides from 2011 presentation available at:
http://www.ufdc.ufl.edu/IR00000459
Posting Sites

- Regional/Consortia
- Professional Associations
- Specific Employer’s Website
- Electronic Mailing Lists
Posting Sites

ARL Joblist
http://www.arl.org/resources/careers/positions/index.shtml

ALA Joblist
http://joblist.ala.org/

The Chronicle
http://chronicle.com/jobCategory/Library-information-sciences/58/

LibGig
http://libgig.com

LISJobs.com
http://www.lisjobs.com/
Posting Sites

Lists of posting sites available at:

http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/resources/career_development/jobsearch_resources.htm

http://www.libraryjobpostings.org/

Academic Libraries Recruitment Efficacy and Outcome Study (see venues)
http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/recruitmentstudy
Posting Sites

Tools for managing your search:

Aggregators
for example: www.indeed.com

RSS Feeds
for example: www.LibWorm.com
What you need to know about search committees

- Selection is weeding out
- Assessing qualifications takes 2 forms

1. Measurement
   - Years of experience
   - Educational credentials

2. Judgment or inference
   - Good colleague?
   - Inventive?
What you need to know about search committees

They have limited means to learn about you and use those to learn different things

- Documents
  - CV or Resume
  - Cover Letter
- References
- Interview Sessions
- Presentation (Do not underestimate the importance of this!)
- Your interactions with staff
What you need to know about search committees

Members:

- They are conscientious
- They are likely to be intelligent
- They likely have a stake in the position and, therefore, the search
- They may not be skilled recruiters…
The Recruitment Process

– Advertise
– Application Period
– Assess Applications
  – Telephone Interview(s)
  – Assess Applications
– Reference Checks
– Assess Applicants
  – On Site Interview(s)
  – Assess Applicants
– Job Offer(s)
The Recruitment Process

The typical is 3 – 6 months from application to offer with periods of little or no activity apparent to applicants.
The Job Posting

–Read it and assume it was written deliberately by intelligent people with a real stake in finding the right person for this position

–Assess

1. Deadline
2. Salary and location
3. Qualifications
   Required  v.  Preferred
4. Responsibilities
5. Interesting?
The Job Posting

– Submit all of the required information in the requested format
The Job Posting

Please:

– Cite works used in developing any essays or opinion pieces
– Observe word limits and other instructions
The Job Posting

Sample Position Vacancy Announcement
The Job Posting

short ad
v.
full ad

Make sure you have the full advertisement
Your Applicant Submission

• These documents are your representative to the screening committee

• Tailor these documents to information in the posting
  – Explicitly state how you’re qualified for THIS job
Your Applicant Submission

How is your submission used and how are you assessed by the Search Committee or Hiring Authority?

Sample Criteria Chart
Your Applicant Submission

• Grammar, punctuation and decorum in all documents and communication are critical (Short documents but very time consuming)

• Aim for succinct

• Enthusiasm preferred
Your Applicant Submission

– Cover Letter

• Use correct address information

• Refer to the correct position, including requisition number, in the subject line
Your Applicant Submission

– Cover Letter
  • This is the ‘mortar’ for your packet
  • Use the opportunity to deliver your message
  • This is your narrative
  • Can be up to 1 or 1.5 pages
Your Applicant Submission

– Narrative

• Explain your interest – why this position is a good move for you

• Clearly connect your qualifications to the unique job
  • why you are a good bet for them and will contribute
  • shows thoughtfulness and understanding
Your Applicant Submission

– Narrative

• Explain your career or personal path
Your Applicant Submission

– Narrative

• Address
  – Significant changes in job types or institution types
  – Breaks in employment
  – Frequent or numerous job changes
Your Applicant Submission

– Narrative

• How have your experiences improved your suitability for this position?
• How have you stayed current?
• How have you credentialed yourself?
Your Applicant Submission

–Narrative

Relevant experience might come from…
  »A different Industry
  »A different Professional Level
  »While in School
  »Through your Professional Service
Your Applicant Submission

Cover Letter Links

Making Your Cover Letter Work For You
http://liscareer.com/allenmurray_coverletters.htm

Cover Letters, Resumes, and Interviews, Oh My!

Avoid These 7 Killer Cover Letter Mistakes
Your Applicant Submission

Cover Letter Links

Open Cover Letters
anonymous cover letters from hired librarians & archivists

http://opencoverletters.com/
Your Applicant Submission

Cover Letter Links

The Interview Trump Card: The Cover Letter to be presented for the ALA JobLIST Placement Center at the 2014 ALA Midwinter Meeting

http://ufdc.ufl.edu/l/IR00003638/00001
## Your Applicant Submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Audience</th>
<th>Curriculum Vitae</th>
<th>Resume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic or professional</td>
<td>Complete and detailed list of employment, education, trainings, presentations, publications, professional memberships, grants and fellowships, awards, and honors</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Education, employment, awards, and accomplishments</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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## Your Applicant Submission

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Length</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>List of Lists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CV and Resume

- Provide links to publications, web content, etc.
- Do not include personal information or photographs
- *Use an appropriate font and color*
CV and Resume Links

5 Resume Mistakes You’re Making and How to Avoid Them
http://www.careerrocketeer.com/category/resumes

Crafting a Winning Resume
http://liscareer.com/allen_resumes.htm

How to Write a Resume

Writing the Curriculum Vitae
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/641/1/

Sample CV’s
http://jobsearch.about.com/od/cvsamples/Sample_Curriculum_Vitae.htm
Communication

• Email
  – Send messages from a suitable address
  – Treat this as professional correspondence

• Voicemail Message
  – Is it suitable for potential employers?
Communication

• Telephone Interviews
  – Have a beverage
  – Do not multitask – no typing clicks
    – Prepare, plan and take advantage of this medium
Online Presence and Branding

Use this to distinguish yourself…

• Social networking
  – Do you control access?

• Google and Google Alerts
  (http://www.google.com/alerts)

• Slideshare

• Scribd

• List serves
Online Presence and Branding

See:

Social networking with a brain: a critical review of academic sites, Kim Leeder

You: The Online Version, Michael Porter
http://www.libraryman.com/blog/2009/10/02/youthethe-online-version/
Preparation for Interview

• Practice
  – Role play with someone
  – Practice effectively touting your strengths
  – Get over being embarrassed
  – Practice discussing (and addressing) your weaknesses
Preparation for Interview

• Practice

  – Prepare for common interview questions
    (the internet abounds with lists)

  – Assess and work on your interview weaknesses

  – Learn as you go on interviews through self-assessment
Preparation for Interview

Prepare for the 6 things interviewers want to know

1. Do you have the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities?
2. Do you have the untrainable attributes?
   - Attitude
   - Aptitude
   - Motivation
3. Will you fit in? (Personality)
Preparation for Interview

Prepare for the 6 things interviewers want to know

4. Do you understand the job and its purpose?
5. How do you compare to other applicants?
6. Do you want the job and will you stay?
Preparation for Interview

For recent MLS graduates, in particular:

• Convey your maturity

• Show your flexibility
Preparation for Interview

If you have another degree type, in particular:

- Convey you get libraries
Preparation for Interview

For changes in library types, in particular:

- Convey you get their type
Preparation for Interview

Learn about the organization (do your homework)

- Key people
- Services and products
- Patron/Student population
- Size
- Structure
- University/Parent Organization
- Peer organizations
- Latest news
Preparation for Interview

Learn about the organization (do your homework)

- Basics of the catalog
- What databases are available

Results
- Avoiding embarrassing gaffes
- Making a positive impression
Preparation for Interview

Learn about the position

- What it does
- How it fits into the organization
- Status
  - Faculty
  - Tenure Accruing
    - What do those mean?
- Additional expectations for the position
  - Scholarship (Publishing)
  - Service
Preparation for Interview

Prepare questions to ask and be ready to interject them to relevant folks throughout the interviews

– Why is this position available?

– Expectations for the position?
  from various stakeholders, including supervisor

– Are there opportunities for (advancement) learning and professional growth?
Preparation for Interview

Prepare questions to ask and be ready to interject them to relevant folks throughout the interviews

– What are they looking for as far as candidate attributes?
Preparation for Interview

Prepare questions to ask and be ready to interject them to relevant folks throughout the interviews

– Questions for interviewers or others might include:
  • What do you like best about the institution?
  • What do you like most about your position here?
  • What was your background?
  • Where did you go to school?
Preparation for Interview

Prepare questions to ask and be ready to interject them to relevant folks throughout the interviews

– Is there a relevant “hot topic” for the field you could bring up?
Preparation for Interview

– Do not ask about salary or benefits, first.
Preparation for Interview

– Balance your enthusiasm for professional development activities

  – Do not ask how soon you can take your first sabbatical
Preparation for Interview

• How will you get around campus, from the airport, etc.?
  – Ask if not discussed

• Stake out the location and parking before the day of the interview

• Communicate any special needs
Preparation for Interview

- Learn who you will be meeting with
  - Review the itinerary - if not offered, inquire
  - Make some assumptions as to why individuals or groups are on the schedule and plan for what they may want to know and what you might learn from them
Preparation for Interview

Sample Interview Itinerary
Preparation for Interview

If there is a presentation, solicit reasonable information or clarification regarding:

**Audience**
- affiliation
- expertise level

**Topic**

**Media**
If there is a presentation...

- Put appropriate effort into it
- Cover the topic
- Incorporate relevant information about the institution
- Be prepared for technical glitches
If there is a presentation…

- Practice
- Plan based on time limit and provide for Q&A
  - Answer questions
- Involve-Engage audience
The Interview

Appearance

• Fresh and rested
• Alert
• Listen
• Do not smoke or smell like smoke
• Dress for the position, lean towards conservative

• Relax – Your talent got you here
The Interview

Conduct

- Learn people’s names and positions
- Indicate where your previous training or experience applies
- Attitude and demeanor are as important as responses to questions
The Interview

Conduct

• Be polite to everyone

• Interested and show it with body language and feedback to interviewer
  – Lean forward
  – Maintain eye contact
  – Nod your head
The Interview

Conduct

Effective answers to questions
• Be positive about your qualifications
• Describe how your qualifications relate specifically to this job
• Mitigate weaknesses with your strengths
• Avoid judgmental or negative remarks about previous employers
The Interview

Conduct

Effective answers to questions
• Be brief but thorough in your communications
• Use specific examples from your experience to illustrate your points whenever possible
• Be sincere and direct
The Interview

Conduct

Humor

• Appropriate

• No reference to violence (or bombs or guns) or sex
  – at all
The Interview

Conduct

– Don’t talk over people
– Don’t be too serious
– Don’t look at your watch
– Be honest
– Be on guard
– Ask great questions
The Interview

Conduct

• Enjoy yourself, people are going to be really nice to you
The Interview

Conduct

Meals-

• Purpose?
The Interview

Conduct

Meals-

- Purpose
  - More relaxed setting
  - Can assess fit, and how well rounded
  - Opportunity to observe curiosity about position, institution or community
The Interview

Conduct

Meals-

• Manners
• Drinking
The Interview

Honestly, but diplomatically, address issues in your employment history:

– Gaps
– Demotions
– Terminations
The Interview

For all phases and sessions

– It is better to ask for clarification for a question or take a moment to think than to give an irrelevant or unnecessarily incorrect answer

– If you cannot answer specifically, communicate how you would get that information
The Interview

For all phases and sessions

- Get across your message
- Do not count on the interviewer to do a great job
The Interview – In Summary

Strive to express these sought after qualities:

- Communications and Interpersonal Skills
- Intelligence and Aptitude
- Enthusiasm and Energy
- Flexibility
- Leadership
- Maturity
The Interview – Links

Interviewing: At a Glance
http://www.crc.ufl.edu/students/studentInterviewGlance.html

25 Weirdest Interview Questions of 2011
The Interview – Links

First Impressions, Lasting Impressions: Tips for Job Interviews
http://www.ala.org/cfapps/archive.cfm?path=nmrt/footnotes/interview.html

Interview Checklist

Interview Advice
http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/rts/nmrt/oversightgroups/comm/resreview/interview.cfm
After the interview

Follow up?

• Maybe…

• Definitely if you need to clarify or address an issue
After the interview

In anticipation of an offer, consider

• Do you want the job?
• How much would you need to be paid?
• Partner considerations?
After the interview

In anticipation of an offer, consider

• How will you negotiate your salary?

Reference:

- Qualifications from advertisement
- Salary surveys
After the interview

In anticipation of an offer, consider

- When could you report for work if offered?
  - Notice to current employer
  - Completion of school
  - Move and other personal arrangements

- What other information do you need:
  - Benefits
  - Relocation assistance, if relevant
  - Trailing partner assistance
References

• Cultivate them
  - Work
    - School
    - Professional Service
References

• Select according to what the position

• Coach them
  – Provide a current resume for their reference
  – Share your cover letter and job posting
  – Tell them why you picked them – what they speak to
References

• Do not send a general (or previously obtained) letter of reference, unless requested
Current Employers

• It is fine to request that your current employer not be contacted unless you are a serious candidate and/or with advanced notice to you

• Most employers are going to understand and support advancement
Credential yourself now

Seek:
- Training and education
- Leadership and service opportunities

In order to:
- Build competencies
- Prepare for the next job
- Keep yourself relevant
- Demonstrate interest
- Demonstrate aptitude and ability
- Network
Credential yourself now

Examples:

1. Lead (or contribute meaningfully to) a student group or an important project at work
2. Convert papers or blogs into scholarship
3. Attend professional meetings or discussion groups
4. Attend state, regional or national conferences
5. Join a professional association
Credential yourself now

Incorporate these experiences and accomplishments into your application materials and interviews in a way that enhances your narrative and distinguishes you.
Helpful Links

First Time on the Market?
(The Chronicle of Higher Education)
http://chronicle.com/section/First-Time-on-the-Market-/146/
One last piece of advice for interviewing:

get sleep

eat breakfast and lunch

drink coffee
Thank You and Best of Luck!

Brian W. Keith

Check out the UF Library Employment website: http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/pers/careers.htm