Joint Manuscript Repositories Section & Students and New Archival Professionals Section Meetings

August 15, 2018

Marriott Wardman Park, Washington 4

Ashley Todd-Diaz announced new vice-chair/chair elect and new steering committee members

Adrian Hilton with update on TS-DACS: Need community feedback on revised Statement of Principles

Panel discussion on hiring practices in the archival profession with Dorothy Berry (digital collections program manager, Houghton Library, Harvard), Melissa Gonzales (director of records management, Houston Community College), and Beth Myers (Director of Special Collections at Smith College)

* Is it a problem transitioning from one type of archives (manuscripts) to another type (university)? Does one get pigeonholed?
  + Melissa: no, it’s about how you market yourself
  + Dorothy: no, it’s about how you present yourself
  + Beth: responsibility of people on hiring committee to see how skills are translatable; management have to be willing to take a leap of faith
* How do you work against a culture where certain professional skills are devalued? What power do you have to work against that as a middle manager?
  + Dorothy: Be open to supporting someone as an individual in a career; it’s possible that someone is underclassed because the institution doesn’t want to pay them what they’re worth
  + Beth: working against the culture of devaluing with HR; pushing back individually against salary and total package; term positions need to be very specific and multi-year; how am I helping them springboard into their career?
  + Melissa: seeking advocates outside your department who are willing to support you
* Is there a trend away from generalist positions to project/term positions?
  + Beth: imaginary division between public and technical services; more concerned about technology gaps in the skills; it’s really important to be able to explain the totality of mission to people
  + Dorothy: institutional-funding type trend; system problem
  + Melissa: made it a point to intern at many different places and learn many things and then be as marketable as possible
* Tips for older applicants (over 50) but new to the profession; is there a preference to higher recent graduates?
  + Melissa: came from corporate banking background and went to grad school at age 30; others who had multiple careers; most went straight thru to grad school; it’s beneficial to have had other careers first; need management training at SAA because most of us don’t have those skills
  + Dorothy: soft skills and hard skills are are something people with previous careers can bring to the table
* How do you approach asking your boss to be a reference when you’re afraid that they might be upset that you’re leaving?
  + Dorothy: don’t ask that person if you’re afraid that they’re going to give you a negative reference
  + Melissa: isn’t interested in counter-offer; just want to be transparent; generally doesn’t put down a current manager as a reference
  + Beth: if not listing manager, be prepared to answer the question why; don’t be negative or cynical if it’s a bad relationship
* How would you approach the need for a spousal hire? Any non-salary approach one can take?
  + Beth: know what the redline is; willing to put it out there; push back, negotiate; it has to work for you; when you’re interviewing at a place, it has to work for you; what are policies for taking leave of absences for family care? What’s the retirement package? What’s the culture/policy on punch-in/punch-out? What’s the tech package?
  + Dorothy: people are often underpaid because they did not negotiate
  + Melissa: if can’t offer more salary, ask for vacation, PD to be written into contract
* What is a reasonable time frame for starting a new position? What is the latest one can negotiate a start date?
  + Dorothy: create documentation so that if necessary, you can leave in 2 weeks; you don’t owe them 3 months or whatever they’re asking
  + Melissa: this profession is really small so give at least two weeks
  + Beth: 2 weeks minimum but some academic institutions want 3 months
* If you started new job without negotiating, how do you recommend fixing that?
  + Melissa: document your job description and what you’re doing above and beyond job description; ask for more money; look at other institutions and other jobs; get statistics and show what others are doing; job expectations change
  + Dorothy: annual review talk
* How do you set yourself apart in a resume or cover letter?
  + Beth: a LOT of applicants; are they hitting key points and terms from job descriptions; cover letters are too generic; customization of resumes catches their eye; group dynamics of committee hiring; working through systems; think about job, prep
  + Melissa: research the institution