Academic Library Jobs Interview Panel
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Background Information about Job Applicants and the College at Brockport procedures:

- I have served on several search committees, as well as interacted with potential job candidates for at least seven searches.
- The most recent search for the reference/instruction librarian had over 180 qualified applicants (which means they got past our initial screen in the online human resources form).
- We request three items, uploaded to the online webpage: resume, cover letter, and references. Submit only what the announcement requires.
- Even if one part looked particularly good but one of the three parts was missing, we eliminated that person, due to the large volume of people who had uploaded materials correctly.
- We often conduct phone interviews first and then bring the candidate to campus.
- A presentation/instruction session is usually required, especially for reference/instruction librarians, which included the more recent emerging technologies position.
- We rate all applicants initially as A, B, or C candidates. An "A" and "B" candidate need to meet the required qualifications; we then give points in the other recommended qualifications category. The "A's" are contacted and have phone interviews; we then move to the "B" pile if necessary.
- Our recommendations move forward to the library director and then dean with a list of strengths, weaknesses, and overall recommendation (not graded or rank ordered).
- We have switched to a "behavioral" interviewing style, e.g. we ask about a difficult situation you may have encountered and how you handled it. Basically, it helps us discover how you have acted in an employment-related situation. These questions are interspersed with some of the more traditional questions.

Cover Letters:

- Use a font that is easy to read and simple. Although fancy resumes may work for some instructional design positions, with the glut of applicants in the library field, it is easier to read a straightforward resume, cover letter, and reference list.
- Make sure you address it to the right person and describe the correct position you are applying for. For our positions everything goes to Human Resources, but if you do some research and use the personal name of the director or coordinator for that position that shows initiative. We all know cover letters are often edited for other jobs, but if you are not detail-oriented enough to update the position, then your application immediately is rejected.
- No grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. Period.
- Since "good communication skills" is often listed as a job requirement, demonstrate that you can communicate clearly in writing. Although librarians often think of communication as "verbal" – working with patrons or teaching classes, you often will need to write letters or emails, along with scholarly articles, research guides, books, etc.
- Research the institution and make a reference to why you would like to work there or what attracts you to it. Be honest: if moving closer to a city or back a certain state is one of the reasons, we were more likely to look at the person twice (especially if they were from out of

state). If you took time off to be with children, family, or for personal reasons, it is fine to mention it and often helps to explain gaps in employment.

- Do not try to write about every project or class you have ever taught. That is what the resume is for. Include one or two creative ideas/projects you have done and connect them to the position description.
- Be honest. It is ok to have a lapse in work experience, just be honest about it.
- Keep them short – less than 2 pages at the most. I went through over 600 pages of materials online, if each resume and cover letter had been just 1 page.
- We did not look at supplemental materials, e.g. personal webpages, until the person had made it into the "A" category. We did look at them for the systems librarian position.

Phone Interviews:
- Be prepared with the correct job description in front of you.   (We had one candidate literally flip through a folder for over 5 minutes, trying to remember what our job was about.)
- When asked if there is anything you would find challenging about the position or a weakness, do not say that you would be able to do everything. It comes across as overconfident, especially over the phone where it is impossible to read body language. There should be one thing or part of the job that you might not be the best in the world at doing; say you would find it challenging but you are willing to learn something new, or something to that effect.
- Ask questions that indicate you have read the position description and have genuine interest in learning what the job entails.

Interviews:
- When you arrive, smile, show confidence, and have a firm handshake.
- Answer questions accurately and give creative examples of things you have tried in your coursework, internships, or other jobs.
- If you are not sure about a question, feel free to ask for clarification or for it to be repeated. It is better to ask than to start talking about something that is not really related that particular question.
- If you do not have a lot of experience in a certain area, don't be afraid to admit it. The best responses usually include how well you learn new things or counter with how you learned a new skill in a different area. Willingness to learn is key.
- Don't be afraid to ask for a break, a bottle of water, or anything else, within reason that will make you more comfortable. The committee is human, too, and understands this.
- Between formal parts of the interview it is good to chat informally with the people there. It helps us get to know you better and establish a rapport.
- Try to relax and learn as much as you can about the job and the institution. As much as we are interviewing you, you are interviewing us to see if you would really like to work with us.

Presentations:
- For library instruction teach a session as though you are teaching to a group of students.
- Don't re-package a presentation you have seen recently at RRLC or another meeting.
- Be enthusiastic! Nervousness is expected, but be enthusiastic about your topic, even if you do make a mistake. Sometimes the humor in that helps everyone relax.
- Creativity – One candidate brought props with them to have us practice speaking with chopsticks in our mouths. This demonstrated how it feels to be out of our own "comfort zone" as how students might feel when they encounter a new research tool or concept.

- For library instruction session prepare a lesson plan with objectives. Describe or demonstrate how you would assess the session.

Sample Questions
(Samples of many of Brockport's hiring procedures are available on the webpage at: http://www.brockport.edu/aao/sampleratings.html)

Phone Interview
- What attracted you to the College at Brockport and what interests you about the position you are applying for?
- What library experience do you have?
- Is there anything in the job description that you would find challenging?
- Is there anything in your experience related to teaching or library instruction?
- What is your experience working as part of a team?

Systems/Assessment Librarian
- What is your experience with library-specific applications such as ILLiad, or an integrated library management system? What programming languages and database environments have you worked with?
- What Web 2.0, mobile or social media do you use, either for work or personal purposes? In what ways have you been involved in applying such media to library services or projects?
- What is your background and experience in creating and maintaining web pages and websites? Please describe some examples. What web development applications have you used?
- Please tell us about a noteworthy library service or project in which you collaborated with others in your area or in other areas in the library. What methods did you use to assess its effectiveness?
- Please describe any teaching or training you may have done. What is your experience with learning management systems?
- Please describe your experience with providing service at a library reference desk or other public service point. Have you used remote technologies and/or social media to provide such service?
- What strategies do you employ to maintain your awareness of the latest developments and trends in the profession and your competence in the skills needed to do your job?
- Describe your experience working with colleagues, staff, faculty, students and/or the general public in culturally diverse environments.
- Part of the promotion/tenure process at Brockport requires participation in scholarship, university and professional service, and continuing growth activities. Please comment on your interest in, and commitment to, such activities.
- Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?
- Do you have any questions for us about the position, Drake or Brockport?

Reference/Instruction Librarian
- Why did you become, or why are you interested in becoming, a librarian? What current trends in the field interest you?
- What particularly interested you in applying for this position?
- This position is part of the Public Services organization and, as such, requires interaction with Library patrons (some of which may not be students). Please discuss your interpersonal communication skills, especially at the verbal level.

- Please describe any teaching or training you may have done.
- What is your experience with technology in learning and teaching?
- What has been your greatest professional or workplace challenge? How did you overcome obstacles and what would you have done differently?
- Describe your experience working with colleagues, staff, faculty, students and/or the general public in culturally diverse environments.
- Part of the promotion/tenure process at Brockport requires participation in scholarship, university and professional service, and continuing growth activities. Please comment on your interest in, and commitment to, such activities.
- Please tell us about a noteworthy library service or project in which you collaborated with others in your area or in other areas in the library. What methods did you use to assess its effectiveness?
- What Web 2.0, mobile or social media do you use, either for work or personal purposes? In what ways have you been involved in applying such media to library services or projects?
- Is there anything else you would like to add that we haven't covered?
- Do you have any questions for us about the position, Drake or Brockport?

Application Screening Form for Reference and Instruction Librarian

Name of Candidate_____#_____Reviewer_____

Required Qualifications:

1. MLS from ALA-accredited school by July 1, 2013.   Yes   No

2. Evening and weekend availability.   Yes   No

3. Ability to work with diverse populations   Yes   No

IF ANSWER IS NO TO ANY ONE OF THE ABOVE, RATE CANDIDATE "C" AND DO NOT PROCEED TO NEXT SECTION.

Preferred/Weighted Qualifications: (0-10 points: 0=none, 10=superior)   Points

1. Interest in instruction, instructional design   _____

2. Demonstrated currency with library, digital and social media apps.   _____

3. Strong interpersonal skills.   _____

4. Ability to work as part of a cross-functional team.   _____

Evaluation of Candidate: (circle one)

    A   Meets required qualifications and recommended for interview.
    B   Meets required qualifications and not recommended for interview.
    C   Does not meet required qualifications.

Comments:

Application Screening Form for Systems/Assessment Librarian

Name of Candidate_____#_____Reviewer_____

Required Qualifications:

1. MLS from accredited program or equivalent.	Yes	No
2. Relevant library experience, especially with an integrated library management system.	Yes	No
3. Strong service orientation and commitment to library user needs.	Yes	No
4. Experience using web development applications, such as Dreamweaver, Flash, and/or scripting languages.	Yes	No
5. Knowledge of relevant Web 2.0+ technologies and social networking tools.	Yes	No
6. Ability to work effectively and collegially with a diverse population of faculty, students, and staff.	Yes	No
7. Excellent interpersonal, communication, and presentation skills.	Yes	No
8. Commitment to continuing professional development.	Yes	No

IF ANSWER IS <u>NO</u> TO ANY ONE OF THE ABOVE, RATE CANDIDATE "C" AND DO NOT PROCEED TO NEXT SECTION.

Preferred/Weighted Qualifications: (0-10 points: 0=none, 10=superior)   Points

1. Library instruction or other teaching experience.   _____

2. Strong organizational and project management skills.   _____

3. Experience with graphic design tools.   _____

4. Experience with learning management systems (e.g., ANGEL, Blackboard).   _____

Total Points: _____

Evaluation of Candidate: (circle one)

      A   Meets required qualifications and recommended for interview.
      B   Meets required qualifications and not recommended for interview.
      C   Does not meet required qualifications.

Comments: