A Cohort Study of Entry Level Librarians and the Academic Job Search

Jason B. Reed

Kansas State University

Alexander J. Carroll

University of Maryland, College Park

Benjamin Jahre

Lafayette College

Author Note

Jason B. Reed, Kansas State Libraries, Kansas State University

Alexander J. Carroll, Engineering and Physical Sciences Library (EPSL), University of Maryland, College Park

Benjamin Jahre, David Bishop Skillman Library, Lafayette College

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Jason Reed, Kansas State Libraries, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506. Contact jbreed@k-state.edu

Abstract

Previous studies have examined the challenges faced by those seeking a professional position within academic libraries, as well as the skills and qualities preferred by Library and Information Science (LIS) employers. However, less attention has been paid to the common approaches, characteristics and experiences of first-time job seekers who successfully find employment within academic libraries. This paper presents the findings of a cohort study that investigated the academic job search process for entry level professionals. The cohort was comprised of graduates of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science (UNC SILS) who completed their degrees between May 2011 and May 2013, and who were working within academic libraries when the study was conducted. The study used in-depth, qualitative interviews to ask participants to share the experiences of their initial job search. Topics addressed within these interviews included: supplementing classroom training with relevant library experience, finding job postings, creating application materials that capture a search committee's attention, preparing for phone and on-campus interviews, and negotiating a job offer. The results of this study will help LIS students, recent graduates, and others seeking their first professional position in an academic library improve their candidacies by drawing on the collective experiences of this cohort of recent graduates. The results will also be useful for new library professionals, hiring officials, and LIS educators who mentor LIS students by providing insights in how candidates approach and prepare for the application and interview processes.

Keywords: entry level academic librarians, LIS graduates, academic job search process

A Cohort Study of Entry Level Librarians and the Academic Job Search

Introduction

In 2012, *Forbes* caused a stir amongst librarians and library and information science (LIS) educators by concluding that "the low pay rank and estimated growth rank make library and information science the worst master's degree for jobs" (Smith, 2012). This claim prompted a response from Maureen Sullivan, then president of the American Library Association (ALA), who defended the profession by noting that "for librarians the primary motivation is job satisfaction derived from the opportunity to make a significant difference in the lives of others" (American Library Association, 2012). While commendable, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *Occupational Outlook Handbook* unfortunately does not present an overwhelmingly rosy picture for landing a position that will provide this satisfaction. Although the handbook notes a continued need for librarians, employment over the next decade is projected to grow only 7%: a lower growth rate than the average for all occupations, and lower than other education professions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). These projections are based on anticipated tight budgets for federal, state, and local governments, which could lead to a "strong competition for jobs" that may push Masters of Library Science (MLS) degree holders into fields other than librarianship (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). While projections suggest that this outlook could improve later in the decade, this offers little comfort to current students or recent graduates who want to use their graduate degree to carve out a career in academic libraries.

This study was designed to provide job seekers with advice on how to do just that: secure a job in an academic library. In-depth, qualitative interviews were used to determine how candidates seeking to enter academic librarianship can make the most of their LIS education and pre-professional experiences, identify promising job advertisements, craft compelling application

materials, excel during the screening and interview process, and negotiate a job offer. This paper

will discuss recent literature in the field of academic library employment, detail the research

methodology used in this cohort study, briefly describe the study's participants, and present a

summary of the findings broken down into five sections: preparing to apply; preparing

applications; preparing for interviews; interviewing on-campus; and accepting an offer. The

paper concludes with a discussion of results, as well as an identification of limitations of the

study and potential avenues for future research.

Literature Review

Professional organizations are aware of recent economic trends and the reports coming

out of *Forbes* and the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, and attempt to offer some analysis of the

current state of the profession's employment prospects. For example, *Library Journal* annually

surveys LIS graduate schools and compiles a report on placement rates and salaries for new MLS

graduates, which provides a high level overview of the outlook for the profession (Maatta, 2014).

Some LIS programs also offer insight into the outlook for their individual students, but this data

is often presented broadly. A report from Syracuse University on graduates from its Master of

Science in Library & Information Science program from 2011-2013 notes an 89% placement rate

(Syracuse University School of Information Studies, 2013). However, this placement rate is

dependent upon self-reported data, and includes respondents who reported their status as post-

graduate interns or part time employees. This public report also does not make distinctions based

on type of employment, making it challenging to determine how many of these full time

employed graduates are working as professional librarians, as paraprofessionals, or even working

outside of libraries entirely. Reading between the lines of *Library Journal's* and individual LIS

programs' annual reports, it becomes clear that the Bureau of Labor Statistics' somewhat bearish projections on the employment outlook of the profession is warranted.

Given these reports, the state of the academic library job market has been the subject of a number of recent studies. Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra (2014) approached this issue from the perspective of the applicant, conducting a national survey of academic librarians in an attempt to quantify some of the background characteristics and preparation techniques of job seekers in academic libraries. Meanwhile Tewell (2012), as well as Triumph and Beile (2014) investigated the job market through the lens of position vacancies, conducting content analyses of academic library position announcements to identify what positions are becoming available and other long term trends within the library job market. In addition to published studies within the literature, blog posts and advice columns that offer guidance to those aspiring towards academic librarianship were manifest in 2014. This coverage expands beyond blogs such as *Hiring Librarians* and *I Need A Library Job* whose entire scope is dedicated to the library job market. For example, in a post on the information literacy blog *Rule Number One: A Library Blog*, Duckett (2014) offers advice on how to maximize professional development opportunities in library school. The February 2014 issue of ALA New Member Round Table's online newsletter *Footnotes* published two such columns, in which Gammons (2014) describes what candidates can expect during an on-campus interview, while Grey and Isaac-Menard (2014) share their advice on the necessity to consider relocation following graduation.

Methodology

Discrete elements of how to prepare for and successfully navigate the academic library job market are being thoroughly examined within the library community. However, few studies

have attempted to bridge all of these gaps and approach this issue holistically: how do entry level candidates land their first academic library job? In order to accomplish this, the investigators recruited a small cohort of participants, which allowed for in-depth, one-on-one interviews with each participant. While based on a standardized questionnaire (see Appendix), these in-depth interviews offered the investigators an opportunity to engage personally with participants by asking follow-up questions, clarifying answers, and soliciting detail-rich responses that would have been difficult to capture using an online survey tool.

Interviews were conducted by phone or internet video chat. Each interview consisted of four broad categories of questions, with durations ranging from twenty to sixty minutes based on the depth of participant responses. The first category was concerned with the pre-application process: how participants identified positions of interest, what extracurricular activities they pursued during graduate school, when their job searches began, what methods they used to discover job openings, and the geographic limitations of their searches. The second category addressed the process of applying to jobs by asking questions about selecting references, preparing cover letters and resumes, and reviewing application materials. The questions in the third category were devoted to the interview process. Respondents were asked about their preparation techniques for, and experiences during, phone and on-campus interviews. The final category of questions discussed the often ignored tail of the job search process, including the process of negotiating and accepting an offer, as well as the respondent's overall job search timeline. The interview concluded with open-ended questions, which allowed participants to express comments and observations on aspects of the job search that had not been covered in previous questions.

Participant responses to each question were transcribed by a member of the research team while conducting the interview. Using the responses generated by the interview questionnaire, the research team developed categorical coding for each question. Responses to questions were collected in aggregate within a spreadsheet, with each participant assigned a randomized number to anonymize the results. The number of responses that fit within the identified codes for each question were then summed; when appropriate, mean, median, and mode were used to analyze the resulting data points.

Participants

The process of searching, applying, interviewing, and negotiating for positions varies widely based on the type of librarianship an applicant is pursuing (Reeves & Hahn, 2010; Saunders, 2014), so careful attention was given to limiting the pool of invited participants to individuals whose first professional librarian position was within in an academic library. In order to ensure that the results reflected the most current trends in the academic library job market and that participants had access to similar opportunities while pursuing their graduate degree, the pool was limited to recent job seekers from a single MLS program. This study's participants were drawn exclusively from alumni of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science who graduated between May 2011 and May 2013. Drawing on lists of recent graduates from LinkedIn, Facebook, and personal networks, 21 individuals were identified and received an invitation to participate in the study. Of these 21 invitees, 15 chose to participate for a 71.4% response rate. Nine respondents were female and six were male. Eight of the respondents graduated with their MLS in 2012, six respondents graduated in 2013, and one respondent graduated in 2011. At the time of the survey, respondents held an array of different types of positions, encompassing general reference and instruction librarians, subject

liaisons, data and digital initiatives specialists, and directors of branches or individual libraries. The respondents accepted these positions at a variety of public and private academic institutions spanning research universities, liberal arts colleges, and community colleges.

Results

Preparing to Apply

In an increasingly competitive academic job market, many of the first time job seekers in this study sought to distinguish themselves from large candidate pools by supplementing their LIS educations through activities outside of the classroom (see Figure 1). Of these approaches, gaining practical library-related experience was the most prevalent, with 100% of respondents holding paid positions and 73% of respondents holding unpaid positions (including field experiences) while completing their degree. When asked in an open-ended question about the biggest piece of advice they would offer to future first time academic library applicants, 53% of respondents explicitly advised that aspiring academic librarians should seek out relevant, practical experience. According to one participant, "[experience] is what employers care most about," with another participant adding "nobody during interviews cared about classes." A third respondent underscored this idea by stating that in their library they "look [to hire] people with experience...because you have to hit the ground running."
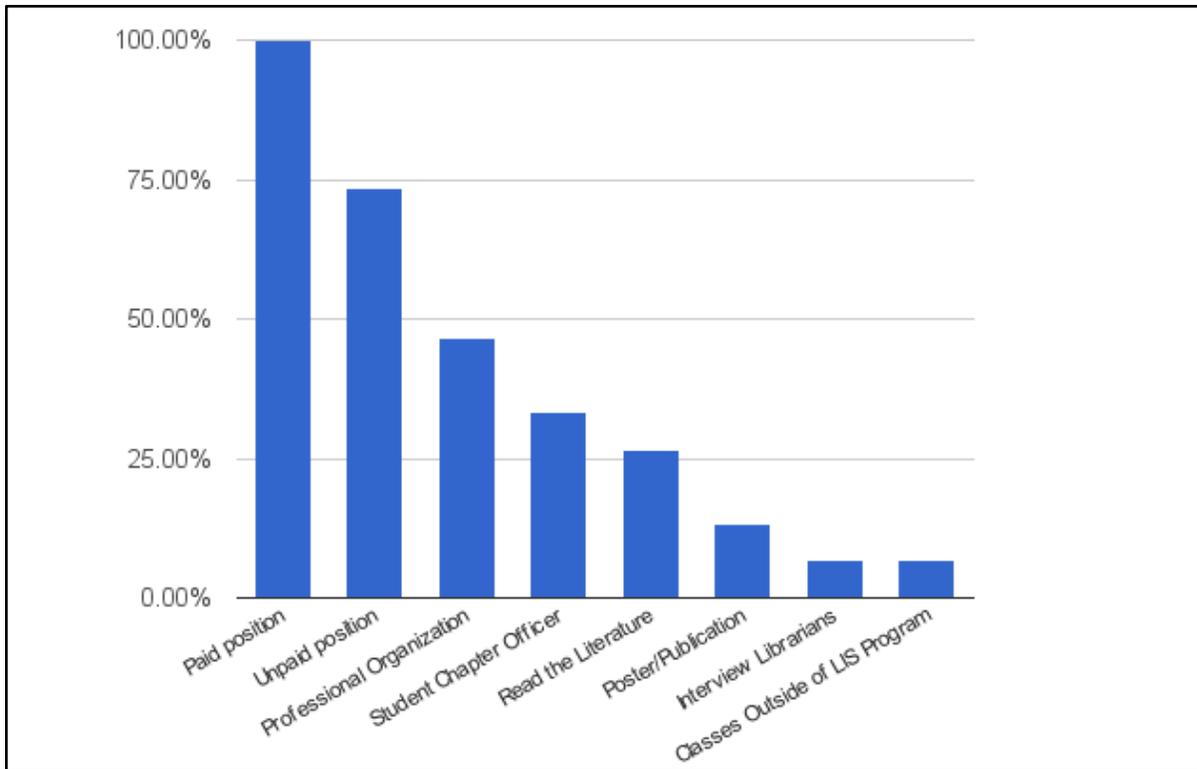
Figure 1. Professional development activities pursued outside of required coursework. This figure illustrates the most commonly reported activities by percentage of respondents.

In addition to practical experience, 46.67% of respondents became involved with professional organizations and 33% served as officers of student groups. Respondents gave such advice as, "participate in the profession, because this counts for something, [and] shows a spirit of wanting to be involved." Participants felt that, in addition to offering practical experience, these activities can help job seekers expand their professional network of librarians. Having a larger network of librarians can help students find jobs after graduation and provide them with professional references who can speak to their impact within the field. This was reflected in the relationship between applicants and their references; 66% of the references provided to employers were a current or former supervisor, which correlates to two out of the typically three references requested by hiring libraries.

The majority of respondents reported starting their search for jobs five to eight months before graduation, with four respondents saying they started looking at job postings up to two

years before graduation in order to, as one participant put it, "get a sense of what qualifications employers were looking for." A third of the respondents reported being limited geographically in their search. This was defined as having a limited area in which they would consider applying for and accepting jobs. Respondents reported using a variety of resources to find job postings, the most widely reported of which are listed in Figure 2.
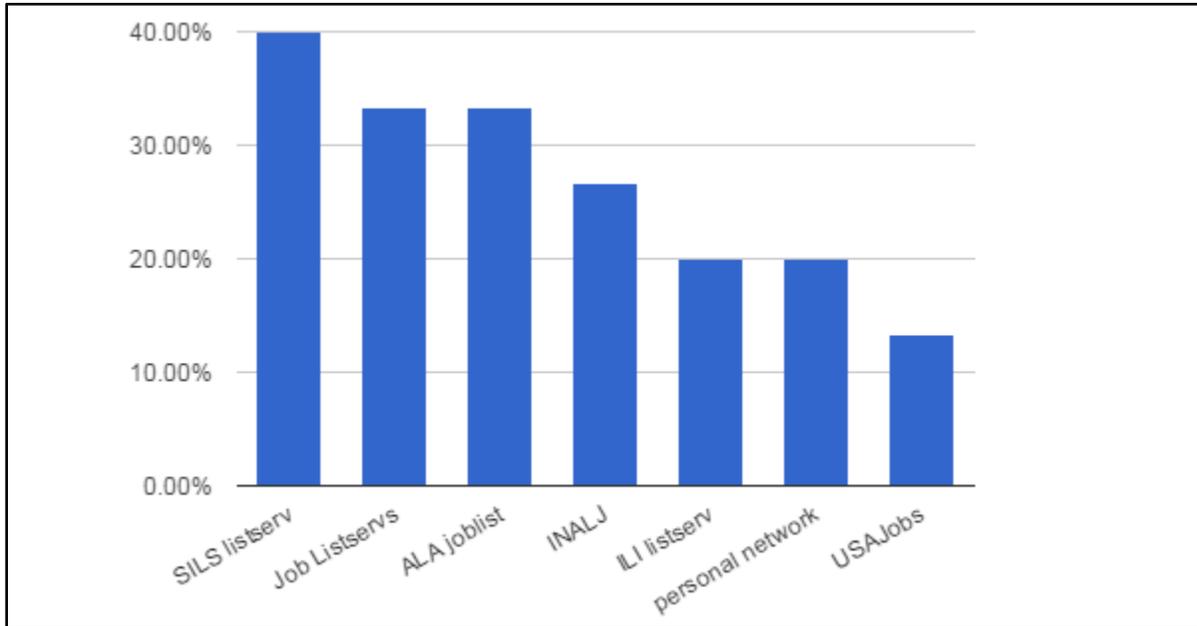

Figure 2. Most common resources used to find job postings. This figure illustrates the most commonly reported job posting resources by percentage of respondents.

Preparing Applications

In regards to applying to specific positions, participants advised that job seekers looking to enter academic libraries should submit applications strategically, submitting materials only for positions that were authentically interesting. In the words of one respondent, "I got noticed because I applied to jobs that really fit what I wanted to do and that I really could make a good case for." Others who expressed a similar sentiment felt that sincere enthusiasm for a position "really shows through in applications" and throughout the interview process; an enthusiastic applicant makes for a much stronger candidate than one simply going through the motions of

applying to jobs. However, actual adherence to this strategy varied among participants, as demonstrated by the wide range in number of applications submitted (see Figure 3). Respondents reported applying for between three and 72 positions, for an average of 20 applications per respondent — or 16.5 per respondent after removing the single lowest and highest reported totals.
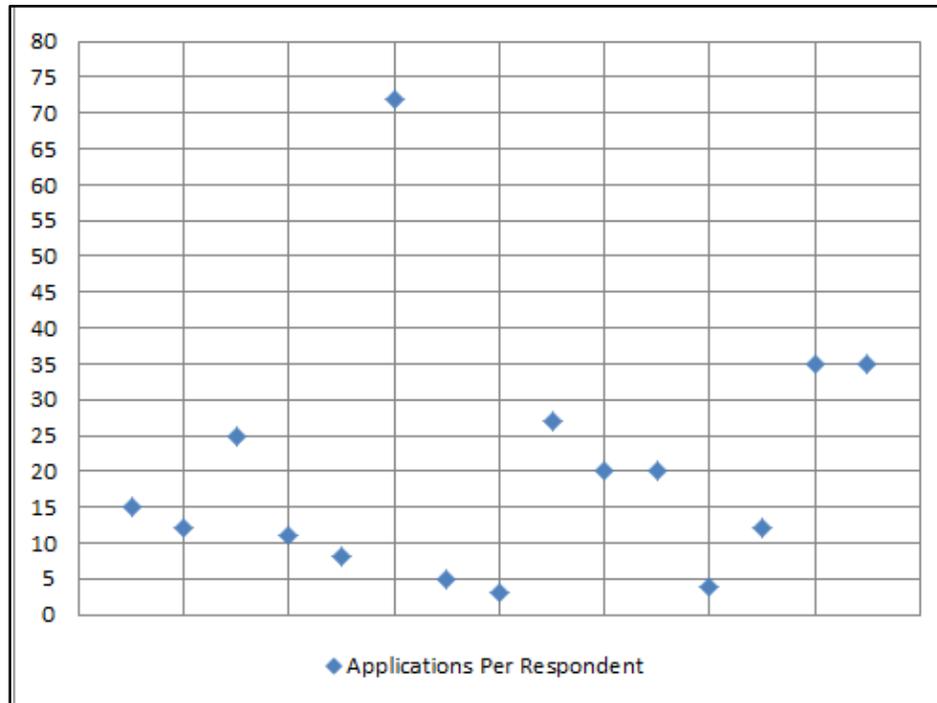

Figure 3. Number of applications submitted. This figure illustrates the number of applications submitted per respondent.

When asked about creating their application materials, every respondent reported creating a new cover letter for each position, though some respondents did say that they would reuse parts from a previous letter when applying for a similar position. For example, one respondent had a "base cover letter for each type of job, but would customize it based on the job description" and "used [the] same terminology as [in the] job description". The vast majority of respondents (87%) asked at least one person to provide feedback on their application materials. During this process, respondents leaned heavily upon the networks of professional librarians they had

established through their activities outside of the classroom; 53% of respondents sought feedback from current or former supervisors, 40% asked a work colleague other than a supervisor, and 40% sought feedback from their LIS department's career advisor. One respondent noted that close colleagues and peers were the most useful resources in this process, saying that while he/she sent resumes to "resume roundups and round tables at professional organizations," the responses received from these tended towards "generic feedback," while personal connections were able to provide more in-depth, customized comments on their application materials. The preparation and time spent creating applications resulted in 4.7 applications for every phone interview and 6.25 applications per on-campus interview.

Preparing for Interviews

Participants expressed a variety of different methods for preparing for phone and on-campus interviews. Methods included extensively researching the hiring institution, conducting background research on search committee members and other staff, and preparing a list of questions to ask the search committee about the institution and the vacant position. Of the various methods reported, drafting a list of anticipated questions and outlining answers for those questions was one of the most reported methods, though it was practiced differently by different respondents. One popular strategy, expressed by two-thirds of respondents, was reviewing the position announcement and description for clues about the potential questions they would be asked during the interviews. Respondents also noted the importance of using interview questions as an opportunity to speak to specific experiences that "explicitly tie to the position's requirements." For first time job seekers, respondents also noted the usefulness of consulting with their personal network of librarians in the field, whose experience on both sides of the hiring process proved to be helpful for predicting commonly asked questions. Several applicants

(60%) explicitly mentioned using the the STAR method to prepare for interviews. This is a technique in which an applicant prepares answers to anticipated interview questions by listing out a given situation, task, action, and result.

Respondents encouraged first time job seekers to conduct practice presentations or mock instruction sessions in front of an audience of peers, colleagues, and supervisors who could critique and provide feedback about their presentation. In total, 73% of respondents reported conducting a practice presentation in some fashion as part of their preparation for on-campus interviews. While not every professional librarian position at academic institutions requires an open forum presentation or mock instruction session, all but one respondent in this study reported that the on-campus interview included such a session. At larger institutions with multiple departments, the open forum presentation may be a candidate's only opportunity to make an impression on potential colleagues, highlighting the importance of seeking out opportunities to practice and polish presentation topics, approaches, and skills.

Interviewing on Campus

The average length of an on-campus interview for the respondents in this study was 10.2 hours, with the longest interview taking 16 hours spread over 3 days and the shortest lasting two hours. The most common length was 12 hours. Lunch with members of the library and/or search team was the most common activity reported with all but one participant having lunch, while 75% of respondents had multiple meals during their on-campus interview. In addition to meals, the activities most frequently reported during respondents' on-campus itineraries included: meeting with the search committee (87%); meeting with the person in charge of the library (73%); meeting with librarians in similar roles (60%); meeting with human resources (60%); meeting with the second highest member of the organizational chart (53%); meeting with the

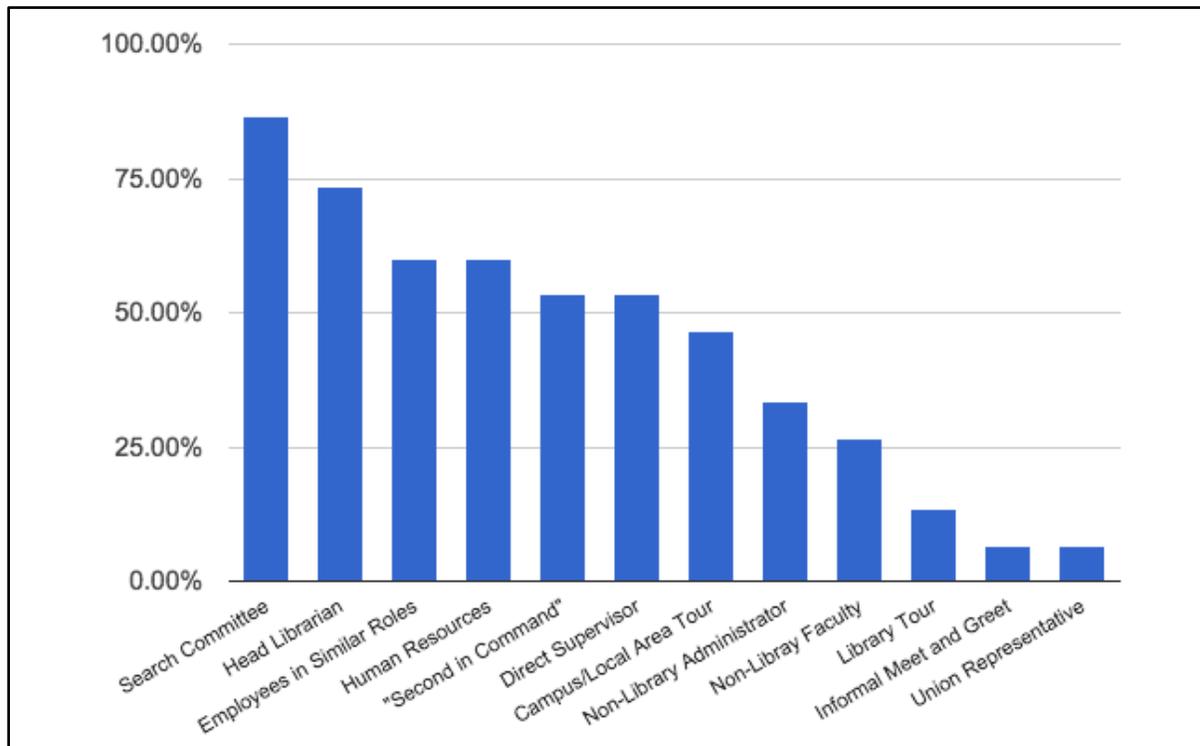direct supervisor (53%); and touring the campus and/or town (47%) (See Figure 4 below for full breakdown).

Figure 4. On-campus interview meetings and activities. This figure illustrates the most commonly reported activities and meetings by percentage of respondents.

When asked to give open-ended advice to job-seekers, the broad themes of confidence and authenticity were expressed in multiple ways. Twenty percent of respondents advised applicants to be confident during interviews, meetings, and presentations, and a separate 20% suggested that applicants should reflect their true self. Respondents felt that these mindsets were important in allowing a candidate to determine how they would "fit" into an institution's work environment, while also allowing interviewers to learn more about the person they would be hiring. A further 20% of respondents expressed the idea that it was critical for applicants to "be persistent," and to "not underestimate your abilities," even in the face of rejection. This notion of maintaining a sense of "confidence in your experience and education" was thought to help applicants maintain a positive attitude and keep from getting frustrated during the job search.

Accepting an Offer

Respondents reported an average of 3.15 months from the time they submitted their application to the time they accepted the job offer. Approximately half of respondents (53%) accepted a position prior to graduation, at an average of 2.3 months before graduation. Respondents who accepted a job after graduation reported an average wait period of three months post-graduation. A majority of respondents (73%) reported that they did not immediately accept their first position upon receiving the job offer, with 60% saying it was because they wanted to negotiate aspects of the job offer. Respondents negotiated salary, starting date, equipment, allowance for professional development, the option to earn early compensatory time off, telecommuting and other flexible work plans, and relocation expenses. Salary was the aspect of the job offer that was most often negotiated, and participants had remarkable success despite being entry level candidates. While only a third of the cohort reported successfully negotiating a higher salary than initially offered, half of the participants who negotiated any aspect of their initial offer reported a successful salary negotiation. Additionally, two respondents reported that they were offered higher salaries without ever attempting to negotiate salary. No participant reported in the open-ended questions that they had a job offer rescinded because they attempted to negotiate.

Discussion

This small cohort-based, qualitative study identifies and highlights some of the common elements of the job seeking process in academic librarianship from the perspective of first time applicants, providing an overview of what first time applicants can expect to encounter during this process. The results of this study could be beneficial for LIS graduates who are considering a career or actively seeking a position in academic libraries. The findings provide insights into

how successful applicants identified jobs, which generated a detailed list of specific resources that can be used to gather positions of interest (see Fig. 1, above). The results discussed could also benefit prospective LIS students by providing a potential roadmap for how to prepare during school to be competitive in the job market after graduation.

Respondents also related how they prepared their application materials and prepared for interviews, which indicated that paying attention to the precise wording of job postings and practicing interview presentations were important preparation techniques for successful applicants. Participants' descriptions of the experiences they had while on-campus resulted in a baseline of activities that job applicants can reasonably expect to engage in during their own interviews. First time applicants can also benefit from the knowledge that many of this study's participants negotiated the terms of their initial job offer. This is a significant aspect of the academic job search process that may be unclear and anxiety-inducing for first time job seekers. Members of this cohort were remarkably successful in their negotiations, especially in regards to salary, suggesting that entry level candidates may have more leverage in negotiations than they realize, and that many employers may be amenable to offering entry level candidates higher salaries than originally advertised.

It is important to note that with very few exceptions, there was almost no unanimous agreement in answer to a particular prompt. The results suggest that there is no exact set of experiences or preparation techniques that will guarantee a successful academic job search. As noted by many respondents, job seeking in academic libraries is largely about finding the right fit between applicant and position. Rather, the findings are intended to provide prospective job seekers with a pool of suggestions and advice. However, the finding that all of the participants in this survey held paid positions while pursuing their MLS should be noted by both future job

seekers and those who provide mentorship to MLS students. While this small cohort study does not prove causation or generalizable correlation between holding a paid position and obtaining a professional job post-graduation, it does demonstrate that in a competitive job market, all of the participants identified gaining practical, hands-on experience as critical to their successful job search. As one respondent noted, the opportunity to "get library...work experience" is a decided advantage during the job search process, because successful applicants "talked about [these experiences] way more than classes or anything [learned] in library school." The study also provides LIS educators and administrators an insight into how their students and alumni are preparing for the job market, and suggests successful behaviors and approaches that should be advertised to current and future students.

This study demonstrates that there is a significant amount of informal knowledge possessed by successful first time applicants for professional academic positions, and that they are willing to share this information to support current and future job applicants. Consequently, conducting cohort interviews shows promise as a research method to utilize in future investigations into this topic. However, as this study featured a small sample size and recruited its participants from alumni of a single LIS program, a number of limitations should be considered. The size of the respondent pool, and the narrowly-defined population from which respondents were drawn, places obvious limitations on the ability to generalize the findings of this study as representative of the experiences of the LIS community at large. Candidates were not asked to disclose if they identified as a member of a historically underrepresented population, so these findings may not reflect the experiences of all applicants. The study did not gather information on participants' employment and educational experiences prior to enrolling in their MLS program, which may have affected the job search. While candidates were asked about

negotiating salary, data was not captured on the difference between the original offer and the final accepted salary, which could be useful as a guide for future applicants wishing to engage in negotiations. Further, this study did not examine participant job satisfaction with their first professional position. All are areas that may be of interest to first time job seekers, and could warrant further consideration in future studies.

Conclusion

While job searching and academic interviewing are ultimately personal and iterative processes of discovering how to identify promising position announcements and craft application materials that showcase skills, aspiring academic librarians nevertheless can benefit from using the experiences of previously successful applicants as a guide to what to expect. With tight budgets and slow employment growth creating a competitive library job market, potential applicants should find emulating these methods to be particularly beneficial. In spite of the limitations that come with a small sample of participants, this study called attention to a number of features that were common among recently successful academic library job applicants. Certain themes emerged, such as gaining practical experience prior to submitting applications; engaging in detailed preparation for phone and on-campus interviews; projecting confidence during interviews; and negotiating aspects of job offers where possible. This direct advice from recent job applicants, along with often overlooked details about the job search experience such as how many applications to submit and the average length of on-campus interviews, is intended to provide potential applicants with important information and resources as they prepare to enter the job market.

References

American Library Association. (2012, July 10). ALA president responds to Forbes.com post that

library and information science is among the worst master's degrees. Retrieved

November 13, 2014, from http://www.ala.org/news/2012/07/ala-president-responds-

forbescom-post-library-and-information-science-among-worst-masters

Duckett, K. (2014, June 18). Some Advice for LIS Students: Maximizing Experience to Prepare

for the Academic Job Search (Guest Post by Kim Duckett). Retrieved from

http://rulenumberoneblog.com/2014/06/18/some-advice-for-lis-students-maximizing-

experience-to-prepare-for-the-academic-job-search-guest-post-by-kim-duckett/

Eckard, M., Rosener, A., & Scripps-Hoekstra, L. (2014). Factors that Increase the Probability of

a Successful Academic Library Job Search. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*,

40(2), 107–115. doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2014.02.001

Gammons, R. W. (2014). What Nobody Tells You About the Academic Job Interview. *NMRT

Footnotes*, *43*(3). Retrieved from

http://www.ala.org/nmrt/news/footnotes/february2014/what-nobody-tells-you-about-

academic-job-interview

Grey, A., & Isacc-Menard, R. (2014). The Right Move for Your Career. *New Members

Roundtable Footnotes*, *43*(3). Retrieved from

http://www.ala.org/nmrt/news/footnotes/february2014/right-move-your-career

Maatta, S. L. (2014, October 15). Placements & Salaries 2014: Explore All the Data. Retrieved

November 13, 2014, from http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2014/10/placements-and-

salaries/2014-survey/explore-all-the-data-2014/

Reeves, R. K., & Hahn, T. B. (2010). Job Advertisements for Recent Graduates: Advising,

    Curriculum, and Job-seeking Implications. *Journal of Education for Library and*

    Information Science, *51*(2), 103–119.

Saunders, L. (2014). The Public Services Job Hunt: Observations and Advice. *Public Services*

    Quarterly, *10*(3), 193–203. doi:10.1080/15228959.2014.921881

Smith, J. (2012, June 8). The Best And Worst Master's Degrees For Jobs. Retrieved November

    13, 2014, from http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2012/06/08/the-best-and-

    worst-masters-degrees-for-jobs-2/print/

Syracuse University School of Information Studies. (2013). Outlook. Retrieved November 13,

    2014, from http://ischool.syr.edu/future/career/outlook.aspx

Tewell, E. C. (2012). Employment Opportunities for New Academic Librarians: Assessing the

    Availability of Entry Level Jobs. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, *12*(4), 407–423.

Triumph, T. F., & Beile, P. M. (2014). The Trending Academic Library Job Market: An Analysis

    of Library Position Announcements from 2011 with Comparisons to 1996 and 1988.

    College & Research Libraries, crl14–675.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014, January 8). Librarians: Occupational Outlook Handbook:

    U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from

    http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/librarians.htm#tab-6

Appendix: Subject Interview Questionnaire

Prospecting / Identifying Positions Phase
1. While enrolled at SILS, what activities or experiences did you pursue as a method of professional development outside of required coursework?
2. How long before your anticipated graduation did you begin searching for positions?
3. What methods did you use to find job vacancies?
4. In total, approximately how many job applications did you submit during your search?
5. Did you limit your search geographically?
    a. If yes: how did this limitation impact your search?

Preparing Application Materials Phase
6. What was your relationship to the people who served as your professional references?
7. What information, if any, did you provide your references about the position you listed them on?
8. Did you select your references based on the job description or location, or use the same references for all job applications?
9. Did you use the same cover letter and resume for each job, or did you alter your materials throughout the search process?
10. Did you have anyone else review your cover letters and/or resume?
    a. If yes: Who?

Interview Phase
11. How many phone interviews did you participate in during your job search, and how many of those led to in-person interviews?
12. Describe your preparation for phone interviews.
13. Describe your preparation for in person interviews.
14. How long did your in-person interview last (e.g. full day, 1.5 days, etc)? Was a presentation involved? What were the major activities during the interview process?
15. Were meals part of the interview itinerary? If yes which ones and how many people were there?
16. What was the most unpleasant aspect?

Follow Up Phase
17. Did you contact any libraries that rejected your application to ask for advice on how to improve your application materials?
18. Did you send a thank you letter or email to the head of your search committee?

Negotiation Phase

19. Did you immediately accept the job when offered? If you deliberated or called back, what were your main considerations?
20. If you negotiated, what terms or aspects of the position did you attempt to negotiate? Were you successful with your negotiation? If so, which ones?

Job Search Timeline

21. What was the timeline for the position you ultimately accepted? How long between submitting your application and the formal job offer?
22. Did you accept a professional position prior to graduation? If not, how long after graduation until you accepted your first position?
23. How much time elapsed between when you first began applying for professional positions and when you received your first job offer?

Concluding Remarks

24. What would be the biggest advice that you would offer to a student applying for their first professional position?
25. Is there any other aspect of the job process that was not covered here, that you would like to address?