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Job Searches in Liaison Departments: Opportunities for Outreach and Inreach

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Just the facts

• In 2013, Virginia’s Bureau of Capital Outlay Management approved funding for a new library building on the Monroe Park Campus of VCU.
• Construction coincided with an increased level of library liaison outreach, and it stimulated a new level of general library activity and visibility that has persisted.
• In 2013, I received a request from a liaison department engaged in hiring to “schedule some time for candidates to come by the library and see what great resources the library has for teaching... and also for their research.”
• Tours for 7 sets of interviews, 2 liaison departments.
• >6 library departments involved per interview, depending on position and staff availability.

Meeting the library

Full building tour

Areas and services relevant to position

Adjust and improvise

The library meets itself

Departments collaborating

Candidate and liaison department feedback

“The visit to the library was excellent! You and your colleagues did such a thorough job with the presentation that I don’t have any questions at this point. It was a pleasure meeting you and I hope to work with you in the future.”

“These trips to the library were a great hit with our candidates and if it’s OK with you, we’ll continue scheduling you (or the person you name in your stead) for these interviews.”

“For your nightstand

• No library literature treats this topic. More generally:

The moral of the story

• The interview process provides further opportunities to teach faculty patrons about the library.
• Arranging to meet with library staff highlights shared goals and concerns for specific patron populations.
• Successful completion of candidates’ library tours paves the way for future collaboration—externally with liaison departments and internally among library units.
• Introducing job candidates to the library, its services, and its collections promotes the library beyond campus.

For your nightstand

• VCU Libraries, for supporting this work and presentation.
• My supervisor, Bettina Peacemaker, for encouraging me to consider the impact of this aspect of liaisonship.
• VCU Libraries faculty and staff who have talked with job candidates in the humanities, including (but not limited to) John Birch, Roy Bonis, Neil Chensue, Wesley Chensue, Kevin Foley, Yuki Hibben, Ken Hopson, Cindy Jackson, Eric Johnson, Libby McDaniel, Laura Muskavitch, Kelsey Sheaffer, and John Ulmschneider.

Gratitude


Filling up the dance card

• Contact from liaison department: search chair, department chair, or administrative assistant.
• Establish tour timing and logistics.
• Identify potential library needs for successful candidates:
  • Teaching or research interests?
  • New library resources or services?
• Identify staff responsible for maxing candidates’ needs:
  • Arrange tour paths to make optimal use of time, meet all relevant staff members.
  • Circulate candidate application materials, if available.
  • Confirm staff availability day before tour.
• Review key library information: hours, gate count, etc.
• Welcome candidates:
  • Provides library promotional materials and contact information for any follow-up questions.
  • Confirm mobility needs e.g. stairs vs. elevator.
  • Storage of candidate belongings during tour.
  • Improve as needed, and end promptly.