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Hand on the Net: Helping Land Job Candidates for Liaison Departments

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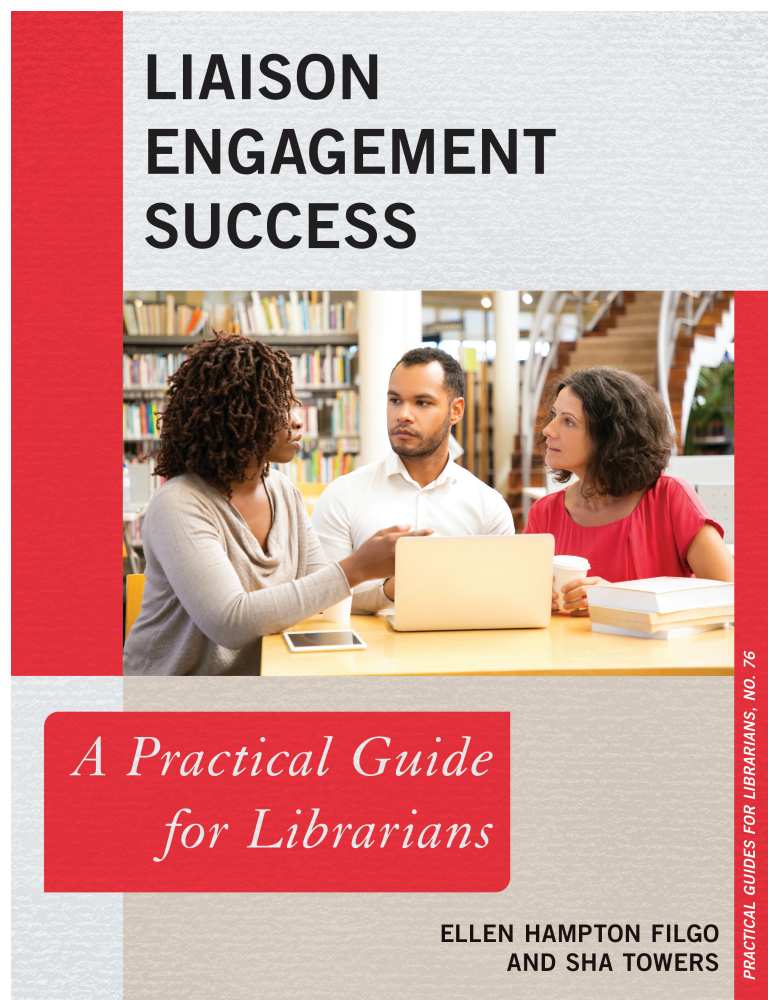
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Liaison Engagement Success

Supplement:

Stories of Liaison Engagement Success



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information on the “public website.” As with Group A, the other groups received training on LibGuides through group sessions and one-on-one consultations. By the end of the semester, the undergraduate cohort was able to successfully develop a permanent digital exhibition using twenty-five of the library's rarest books as well as an accompanying project website.

Working directly with the liaison faculty, I was able to facilitate an experiential learning opportunity for undergraduates that provided unique hands-on experience with rare Special Collections materials, a commercial institutional repository and publishing software, and a content management system. It has strengthened the overall partnership between the library and the Digital Humanities program whereby librarians are regarded as effective curriculum design and delivery partners. The library will continue to work with Digital Humanities faculty in the coming semesters as there are plans to accommodate full digitization, ArcGIS Story mapping, and usability studies.

Overall, this project highlighted how liaisons can work with their faculty to create experiential learning opportunities that use library work as an opportunity for hands-on learning.

Hand on the Net: Helping Land Job Candidates for Liaison Departments – by John Glover, Virginia Commonwealth University

HOW MUCH TIME does an academic library liaison have to spare for someone who isn't part of their area of responsibility? At some institutions, you're there for everyone, and the “liaison piece” of your work is small. At others, the entirety of your efforts revolves around a fixed group of students, staff, and faculty, and other patrons are to be referred to other liaisons or general library service points. In either environment, or anywhere in between, it is less common for liaisons to devote valuable time to people who may potentially become members of your academic community. That said, planning for visit to the library by job candidates in my liaison departments, participating on the interview day, and following up subsequently has been fruitful for my work as a humanities liaison at VCU Libraries.

Over the years, contacts in a number of my liaison departments have reached out to inquire about “showing a candidate the library.” Sometimes this has meant arranging a substantial tour of the building itself, other times gathering a group of staff who will be relevant to the successful candidate's work, and still others, shepherding a candidate through a series of brief one-on-one meetings in units around the library. As a rule, departments have sought to arrange equivalent tours for all candidates for a position, to ensure equal opportunity for each person. At

tour's end, the candidate has gotten some exposure to the people, services, collections, and other resources germane to the position.

Meeting with liaison department job candidates, whatever the encounter's format, provides multiple points of engagement with liaison departments. The process of arranging candidate interviews typically involves a series of emails with a member of the search committee, and occasional in-person meetings to plan the itinerary and focal points. Such interactions inevitably lead to chatting about what's going on at the library, as well as in the department. Frequently they lead to library instruction, research support, or other forms of liaison interactions.

In addition to the outreach involved in setting up job interviews, in-reach is frequently required in order to arrange meetings with others in the library. Almost universally, these meetings have been, in my case, with colleagues I already know. Even so, the interactions have very often followed the same pattern as those with the liaison departments: we incidentally pass information back and forth that otherwise might have waited until standing meetings or our next serendipitous interaction. This contact also helps, as with any form of repetition, to increase recall and familiarity. For me, it has helped me to think more systematically about the services the library provides to my departments and to identify more potential collaborations with my library colleagues.

Last but not least, the interview itself offers an opportunity to engage with candidate faculty members. On the surface, this allows me to learn about their interests and what drew them to the institution. Beyond that, the job candidate may share perspectives on the institution and department that may later prove valuable. As with visits with colleagues at conferences, they also can tell you new, useful things about how other institutions work, as well as their perspective on libraries generally. The candidate also offers space for you to share the story of your library and institution. What do you like most about it? What drew you as a librarian job candidate? These things may help "land" the candidate, and I have often heard subsequently from my departments that the library visit was a highlight of the interview. Regardless of any specific candidate's success or failure, supporting job candidate interviews provides opportunities to share information—a core duty for any liaison.

Classical Virtual Reality – by Caitlin Bagley, Gonzaga University

AS A LIAISON TO A SMALL DEPARTMENT, it can sometimes be easier to make inroads with faculty and students. I am the liaison to the Classics department at a medium sized liberal arts college in the Northwest. With an average of about 10 majors per year, the majority of Classics students are filling electives or extremely loyal to their program. When I was first assigned to the