Public, Academic, NASA, Oh My!
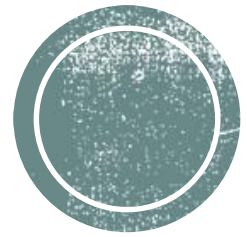
Exploring Careers in Librarianship

VLA Conference Oct. 23-25, 2019

Session Description

There are a variety of librarians out there and we don't always know what each librarian does. Join us as we explore different career paths in librarianship with a panel of librarians representing a variety of fields. What exactly do these librarians do and how did they get here? Could this one day be you?

The Panelists

And what they have to say

Anne Rappe-Epperson

Digital and Adult Services Librarian

Appomattox Regional Library System

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Anne Rappe-Epperson
Talking Points Cont.

- Brought everyone together

- Introduced the group

Caitlin Flanagan

Branch Manager

At Willow Oaks Branch Library

Hampton Public Library

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Caitlin Flanagan
Talking Points Cont.

- Education/Background
  - Longwood University, 2007
  - Florida State University, 2010

- Where I worked before
  - Student worker at Longwood University
  - Capital Group (2008 Great Recession, Laid off in 2009)
  - Severance, Florida State University

- My path to becoming a library branch manager
  - Clerk, 2010-2011
  - Children's Librarian, 2011-2015
  - Branch Manager, 2015-Present

Caitlin Flanagan
Talking Points Cont.

- What I do on a daily basis
  - Collection management
    - Collection development lead (Popular fiction)
    - Order for all collections at branch
    - Subscription services
  - Hiring and team management (team of 7 and myself)--OPEN 7 days a week
  - Building management
  - Managing staff and collection budget
  - Counting money and creating financial reports

Caitlin Flanagan
Talking Points Cont.

- What I do on a daily basis cont.
  - Programming
    - Supervise all branch programming
    - Run the Willow Oaks Book Club
    - City-wide Battle of the Books program
  - Outreach (school visits, festivals, city events)
  - City-wide and system-wide committee meetings
  - Helping patrons (reference, readers advisory, computer assistance, circulation)

Caitlin Flanagan
Talking Points Cont.

- Favorite parts of the job
  - Freedom to be creative
  - Collection management
  - Colleagues
  - Really knowing the patrons

- Surprising parts of the job
  - Jack-of-all-trades

- Advice that helped me succeed:
  - Take initiative
  - Collaborate
  - Prove dependable

Jennifer Stout

Teaching and Learning Librarian
VCU Library
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Jennifer Stout
Talking Points Cont.

- My name is Jenny Stout and I am a Teaching and Learning Librarian at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. I've been in this role for 7 years.

- Keep in mind that there are dozens of "types" of librarians in academic institutions--from catalogers to web designers to subject specialists. I would consider myself an "instruction librarian". I will only be talking about what I specifically do today, but am happy to answer questions about academic librarianship in general.

- I have a Masters of Science in Library Science (MSLS) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. An MLS (or equivalent) is required for my position.

- At VCU, there is a department called the Department of Focused Inquiry. Three required, successive (i.e. must take them in order) writing and research classes are taught out of this department. The Teaching and Learning Librarians (there are 5 of us) provide one-shot library instruction sessions for *one* of these required courses, UNIV 200: Inquiry and the Craft of Argument. There are around 150-170 sections of this course each academic year, so I generally teach around 50-60 per year myself.

Jennifer Stout
Talking Points Cont.

- We used to offer library instruction to another one of those required classes, UNIV 112, but it became unsustainable, so we stopped offering in-person instruction for 112 this year. To give you a sense, I was teaching double the number of classes--so about 100 one-shots each year--and it was very overwhelming.

- The TLI librarians have a "Designated Librarian Program" where we create spreadsheets of all the sections of UNIV 200 and assign FI faculty members to librarians. We generally try to keep people who have worked together in the past paired up in order to encourage deeper relationships. Another benefit of this program is that it is equitable and you know exactly how many sections you will be teaching before the semester begins.

- Topics I generally cover in library classes include keyword development, using the VCU Libraries Search (or discovery tool), subject databases, identifying types of sources (i.e. peer-reviewed articles, news items, books), and how to tell if a resource is credible and relevant.

Jennifer Stout
Talking Points Cont.

- It is my practice to always leave time at the end of these sessions for students to research on their own while I come around and check in on them. I find that students are more likely to ask questions one-on-one than in front of the whole class.

- I also use very simple, active learning activities, such as asking students to brainstorm keywords in a group or having students explore a database and fill out a worksheet about what they find.

- I offer personal research consultations with students where they can meet with me and discuss their research for a longer period of time (~45 minutes).

Jennifer Stout
Talking Points Cont.

- I am also the library liaison to the Department of Focused Inquiry, so I attend their faculty meetings, sit on their Curriculum Committee and Information Fluency Committee, and attend workshops and "retreats" with them. I have a deep knowledge of the curriculum for the required courses as well as concerns, trends, and priorities w/in the department.

- Master's-holding librarians are considered faculty at VCU Libraries, which means we are highly encouraged (though not strictly required) to engage in scholarship and service in the profession. I do research, present, and publish.

- To be honest, much of what I do today I learned by working--not in my classes when I was a grad student. The single most helpful thing I did as a grad student was take a job at UNC's "Undergraduate Library" (shout out to Suchi Mohanty, my boss there) which required me to teach library instruction sessions for freshmen classes. This was the first time I taught anything and I found that I was naturally good at it, so that was where I took my career.

Jennifer Stout
Talking Points Cont.

- If someone in the audience wants to be an academic librarian, you will have to get an MLS (or equivalent) degree. My recommendation is to get scholarships, grants, work-study, etc to pay for it. Or, to find a less expensive school if you have to take out loans. Basically: don't go into debt for a library degree because you will not make a ton of money in this field. It's a solid job and I feel comfortable with my salary, but don't saddle yourself with debt.

- Additionally, spend some time figuring out what *type* of academic librarian you want to be (you can talk to people in the field, even shadow them for a day, or intern) and then get experience working in that role in addition to taking classes that relate to your career aspirations. When you are sending out resumes for your first library job, job experience will look even more impressive than the degree.

Nandhitha Aagram

Digital Literacy Librarian

Richmond Public Library

Nanditha.agaram@rchmondgov.com

Nandhitha Agaram
Talking Points

- Started out as a part time shelver, and then moved up to full time Circulation staff at Henrico County Public Library.

- Pursued my MLIS with University of South Carolina which was a completely online program and graduated in 2012.

- My first librarian job was as programming librarian at Appomattox Regional Library System. Moved on to manage the library website, social media posts and was in charge of the digitization project going on in our Local History Room.
  - Took this job initially, to get my foot in the door.
  - Discovered programing wasn't for me and I wanted to get management experience, which I couldn't at ARLS, so took current job at Richmond Public Library.

Nandhitha Agaram
Talking Points Cont.

- Currently a Digital Services Librarian at the Main branch of Richmond Public Library, in charge of the Computer Lab and tech programming.

- Current Tasks
  - Manage desk for a couple hours a day at the computer lab
  - Reference questions
  - Monitor and post on Facebook for the library
  - Approve meeting room reservations
  - Some collection development
  - Assist customers with technology

Nandhitha Agaram
Talking Points Cont.

- Current Tasks Cont.
  - Manage Staff
    - 1 part time
    - 1 full time
    - VCU work study students
  - AARP work program at the Main Branch
  - Technology programing

Jay Moor

Archivist

The Mariners' Museum

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marinersmuseum.org

Jay Moore
Talking Points

- I work at The Mariners' Museum, a maritime library, which contains materials focused on maritime topics and containing distinct genres and forms of material. I also work at a private library with no reading room

- I first seriously considered it when I collaborated with a very learned librarian on collection development. He was the bibliographer; I was a faculty member teaching in the area. It was thrilling!

- I finished the degree by doing an internship at a neighboring institution, The Mariners' Museum. I did a cataloging internship because I thought it would make me a better reference librarian (career goal). After graduation, it took a few months to get a job, so I volunteered in their archives for a while, until I got a job!

Jay Moore
Talking Points cont.

- I started out as a part timer at Old Dominion, that is, at an academic library, as a music archivist. ODU had a satellite music library and a small archives at the Diehn Composers Room, where I was a lone arranger. That got me into the realm of Special Collections, and found that, though I was in a library job, I was performing like an academic still, and had not learned Library culture. That I had to learn, and learn fast.

- Meanwhile, I was still underemployed, so I was asked by Susan Berg at TMM if I would agree to a stipend to transcribe the text of Thomas Hariot's "A Brief and True Report" for an edition they were doing with UVA (University of Virginia) Press. My medievalist kicked in, and I helped rescue what I perceived to be a faltering effort to produce this book, working with the main historical collaborators to determine simple things like "who is the audience and how to I translate (notice it was no longer transcription) for them", to more complex issues such as "how do I render American Indian Algonquian words in this text"?

Jay Moore
Talking Points cont.

- When the edition was finished, I was asked, again by Susan Berg, to apply for a part-time position that NOAA had funded, to deal with the extensive photographic collection in the Monitor Collection Associated Records. So I had 2 part time jobs and was definitely fully, maybe over-employed. Then, the news broke that charges were being filed against my boss at TMM for theft from the collection.

- I applied for his job, didn't get it, but did eventually did parlay the NOAA/Mariners' job into a full time gig and resigned at ODU.

- I got more training funded by NOAA and the Museum in records management and became a certified federal records manager, so that I could properly administer the entire Monitor Collection Associated Records.

- The Museum eventually put me on their payroll and not on grant money, and I moved away from doing work on the NOAA collection, which had to be transferred to the National Archives due to issues above my pay grade.

Jay Moore
Talking Points cont.

- Culture is the hardest part of the job shift. Learning the library culture quickly is imperative. I was at home at ODU because I'd been a college/university professor in my previous career, but quickly found out that Library culture is different.

- Nothing is ever entirely lost in a job shift. Embrace your new role and give your primary knowledge area as a "value added".

- Adjust your sights lower and take jobs that give you the latitude to find what you really love subsequently.

- You will never get rich. Happiness in this career is the trade-off for financial gain. It is, I believe, a more than fair trade-off.

Michelle Chrzanowski

Information Management Analyst

NASA

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Michelle Chrzanowski
Talking Points

- Current Role - Information Management Analyst - NASA STI Program
  - Catalog, evaluate, and index scientific and technical reports, journal articles, conference papers, presentations, videos, and other assigned materials for inclusion in the [NASA Technical Reports Server (NTRS)](#), [NASA Technical Reports Server-Registered (NTRS-R)](#), and [NASA's PubSpace](#).

Michelle Chrzanowski
Talking Points cont.

- Develop and maintain the NASA Research Access activity (NASA's public access policy) and act as the Research Access team lead and subject matter expert
  - Analyze activity data, suggest methods to improve efficiency and automation, and keep abreast of data management and scholarly communication trends
  - Process and perform quality assurance for accepted manuscripts submitted through NASA's NF1676 form
  - Manage NASA grants and ORCID collection activities utilizing internal databases and systems
  - Provide guidance for NASA authors using the NIH Manuscript Submission (NIHMS) system
  - Manage the NASA Research Access Help Desk, provide customer service to users, and provide support to all NASA centers

Michelle Chrzanowski
Talking Points Cont.

- STI Program Center Liaison (Outreach)
  - Provide STI publication guidance and support for NASA centers.
  - Manage document discrepancies and provide resolution guidance for NASA centers.
  - Provide online and in-person training.
- Develop the NASA Thesaurus by identifying candidate terminology, definitions, scope notes, and provide modifications and enhancements to the thesaurus hierarchical structure.
  - Will be working on our new machine aided indexing tool.

Michelle Chrzanowski
Talking Points Cont.

- Conducts metadata analysis tasks and suggests enhancements to existing schemas.
- Train new STI Program Support Services staff on indexing principles and practices.
- Suggest topics of interest for the STI Program social media outlets and contributed content for posts.

- Background
  - While in library school discovered a passion for metadata and linked data
  - Found an internship with [SAE International](#) via the I Need a Library Job group on LinkedIn
    - Became an indexing and taxonomy consultant
    - Began adding to my library bag of tricks with taxonomy and algorithm training
  - At a VLA social, networked and found a position with the NASA Scientific and Technical Information (STI) Program

Michelle Chrzanowski
Talking Points Cont.

- Background Cont.
  - While in library school discovered a passion for metadata and linked data
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Job listing places

- Glassdoor
  - https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm

- VLA Jobline
  - https://www.vla.org/vla-jobline

- Institutions you are interested in
  - their websites

- Networking at events such as VLA Conference and committees

- Facebook