Preparing for the Academic Job Market: An interactive Panel for Doctoral Students

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ABSTRACT
This proposal expands on the basic format of the successful interactive doctoral student panel sponsored by SIG/ED at the 2012 ASIS&T annual meeting. The 2013 panel features panelists prepared to address audience questions on such topics as the traditional academic job market, alternative career paths including post-doctoral opportunities, the development of personal research agendas, and the challenges of online instruction.

The function of this panel is to provide an interactive platform for faculty members at all stages of their careers to provide advice and input for doctoral students nearing the completion of their doctoral work. This panel will provide valuable insight on finishing the dissertation, weighing post-doctoral opportunities, entering the job market, and beginning an academic career. The format will allow participants to ask questions anonymously that may otherwise be embarrassing to ask. The panel will be of greatest use to those doctoral students at the end of their doctoral program, but, as proven in 2012, will also be of interest to doctoral students beginning their doctoral work and new assistant professors.

Keywords
Academe, doctoral students, job searching, academic life.

INTRODUCTION
Faculty members in the United States report working, on average, 53 hours a week (Axtell, 1998). At a research institution, these hours are typically divided unevenly between research (29% of time, on average), teaching (43%) and other service and administrative duties (Axtell, 1998). These averages, however, mask the complexity of institutional type and particular requirements for tenure. Within the information disciplines, there is a full range of institutional types and requirements: a teaching load for an academic year ranges from 2-8 courses, depending on the institution. For some institutions, grants are mandatory—a successful tenure portfolio must contain at least one large research contract. For others, grants represent an element of service and younger faculty members are discouraged from engaging in proposals. The requirements for service also vary, with some schools emphasizing connections to practice, some focusing on school committees, and others promoting national organization experience (Filene, 2005).

For newly minted doctoral students, the transition from doctoral education to academic life can be quite jarring. It is likely that students engaged in elements of academic life during their doctoral program as they taught a course and advised their students, conducted research, and served on committees. However, the increased time spent in each of these areas upon entering academic life may be daunting for some. Learning how to balance the increased demands, daily schedule interruptions (including student emails and meetings), and a personal life can be quite difficult. Informal advice from our panelists will be of value to doctoral students contemplating the demands of the profession.

This panel will give students a platform to ask questions about the critical transition period in academe: finishing the dissertation, considering post-doctoral opportunities, entering the job market, and working towards tenure. The interactive design of the panel will allow for the free exchange of ideas between doctoral students and professors at various stages of academic life.

FORMAT
The event will take place during a single ASIS&T paper session time slot. If possible, the panel will be assembled in a u-shape at the front of the room, allowing for better interaction among the panelists. The students will be seated in concentric u-shapes mirroring the panel. The informality of the room set-up will induce conversation between the panelists and the attendees.

As students and other attendees enter the room, they will be given index cards and asked to write a question of interest.
to them. They will take a seat and work on their questions as others enter. At the start of the session, the panelists will be asked to give a brief introduction (less than 1 minute) to give their name, position, and current and former places of employment. During the introductions, SIG/ED members will collect index cards and begin sorting the cards into similar question types for the moderator, Naresh Agarwal. The moderator will then ask panel members the questions. SIG/ED members will continue to distribute and collect index cards for the moderator throughout the panel, but the moderator will also encourage students to ask questions directly. When there are 10 minutes left in the session, we will stop collecting questions and ask each of the panelists to give one final piece of advice for the audience that they feel is important to share but that was not covered previously during the discussion.

**BENEFITS**

This event will provide an informal opportunity for doctoral students to interact with faculty members at all stages of their academic careers (assistant, associate, and full professors, including administrative positions). This interaction provides a sense of continuity for the student—seeing ASIS&T members at later stages in their careers implicitly highlights the continued value of ASIS&T membership for career development and networking. Explicitly, the content is something that is much desired by doctoral students—answering questions not only about obtaining a job, but what to keep in mind as they engage in academic life. The anonymity provided by the format allows attendees to ask “high-risk” questions—those that may seem embarrassing to ask in a group setting. The setting also acts to build community among the doctoral students and provides a platform for doctoral students to network and socialize.

**PROMOTION**

This panel will be heavily promoted using ASIS&T listservs, as well as the SIG/ED website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts. In addition, a list of all student members will be obtained from Dick Hill and the students will be emailed individually with an invitation to attend the event. The panel will also be listed in the conference program.

**PANELISTS**

The panelists represent all stages of an academic career: five assistant professors, one associate professor and associate dean, and one full professor and associate dean. The participants come from seven different institutions and represent a wide variety of academic experience.

**Naresh Agarwal, Moderator**

Naresh Agarwal is an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Simmons College, Boston. Naresh earned his Ph.D. from the National University of Singapore’s Department of Information Systems, School of Computing. His research interests are information behavior (information seeking, context, source choice), theories/models/frameworks/synthesis, information systems (knowledge management, health informatics) and happiness. Naresh has published in many of these areas. His teaching interests are evaluation of information services, technology for information professionals and knowledge management. Naresh is the former chairman of ASIS&T SIG/ED and recipient of the 2012 James Crestos Leadership award.

As moderator and panelist, Naresh brings the unique experience of an international student background coupled with a successful professional career to the panel.

**Nicole A. Cooke**

Nicole Cooke is an assistant professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, having graduated from Rutgers University with a Ph.D. in communication, information, and library studies in 2012 (where she was a 2008 American Library Association Spectrum Doctoral Fellow). Previously, she was an instruction librarian and tenured assistant professor at Montclair State University’s (New Jersey) Sprague Library. Her research interests include LIS distance education and instruction, human information behavior in online settings, the retention and mentoring of minority librarians and LIS doctoral students, and leadership, organizational development, and communication in libraries. Nicole is a frequent reviewer for *Library Journal*, was a column editor for *Public Services Quarterly*, and has published profiles in the African American National Biography project; articles in *College and Research Libraries News*, *The Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning*, and the *New Review of Academic Librarianship*; and several book chapters related to information literacy instruction, professional development, and eLearning. Her latest effort is *Instructional Strategies and Techniques for Information Professionals* (2012), published by Chandos Press. Named a Mover & Shaker in 2007 by *Library Journal*, Nicole is professionally active in ALA, ASIS&T, ALISE, and several other professional library organizations. Nicole received the 2013 ALISE Norman Horrocks Leadership Award for her service to the profession and association activities.

In addition to her perspective as a recent member of the academy, Nicole brings her expertise in LIS distance education and instruction to the panel.

**Carolyn Hank**

Carolyn Hank is an Assistant Professor at the University of Tennessee’s Knoxville (UTK) School of Information Sciences. She received her Ph.D. in May 2011 from the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) and joined the School of Information Studies at McGill University as an Assistant Professor upon graduation. Her
research looks at scholars’ digital content creation, communication and management practices, with a particular focus on informal communications and interactions through social media services. She was a key team member for DigCCurr I project (2007-2010), an IMLS-funded project to develop graduate-level curricular framework, course modules, and experiential and enrichment components and exemplars necessary to prepare students to work in the 21st century environment of trusted digital and data repositories. Carolyn is currently on the faculty of the Digital Curation Professional Institute: Curation Practices for the Digital Object Lifecycle, begun under the DigCCurr II project (2008-2012), and is developing a digital curations and archiving program at UTK. She teaches in the areas of digital preservation and access, digital curation, human information interactions, and research methods.

Carolyn recently served as a plenary speaker at the Curate Thyself Ph.D. Symposium, presenting on tips and strategies for developing a personal research agenda. In addition to adding her experience of accepting a post at a non-U.S. institution to the panel, Carolyn can also comment on the challenges and accompanying pros and cons of choosing to take a new position while a junior faculty member.

Barbara Kwasnik
Barbara Kwasnik is a full Professor at the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. She teaches in the areas of organization of information, theory of classification, and information science. Barbara is especially interested in how classifications are translated from one culture or application to another. The purpose of that research is to help support increasingly diverse contexts. Other ongoing research (with Kevin Crowston) includes investigating whether genre information can help in searching, and a project (with Carsten Oesterlund) on the nature of documents and documenting work. Barbara is the Co-Founder, Co-Organizer and Co-Chair of the ASIS&T SIG/CR.

Barbara brings the perspective of a successful career of balanced research, teaching, and service to the panel.

Susan Rathbun-Grubb
Susan Rathbun-Grubb is an Assistant Professor at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina where she teaches courses in library technical services, subject analysis and classification, indexing and abstracting, and social science information services. Her research interests include career and workforce issues in LIS, organization of information, and data curation. She has worked in academic, public, and school libraries, as well as the health information technology industry. After earning her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina’s School of Information and Library Science she worked as a Research Scientist on the Workforce Issues in Library and Information Science projects at the UNC Institute on Aging. While at UNC she was named a Future Faculty Fellow and received the Margaret Ellen Kalp Fellowship and the Adjunct Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence.

Susan brings the perspective of a fairly recent member of the academy as well as her unique perspective on post-doctoral experience to the panel.

Lorraine Richards
Lorraine (Lori) Richards is an assistant professor at Drexel University’s iSchool, and Doctoral candidate in the School of Information & Library Science at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She will receive her doctorate in December, 2013. Her dissertation, entitled “Evidence-as-a-Service: State Government Recordkeeping in the Cloud,” examined the ability of state governments to satisfy their electronic recordkeeping requirements in cloud computing environments. She is currently working as co-PI on an action research project at the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA is developing digital curation capabilities and setting up requirements that will allow them to achieve Obama’s Presidential memorandum on government records management.

Lori has taught courses in electronic records management, archives, management of information organizations, understanding information technology for managing digital collections, and Digital Preservation. Students will be interested in hearing Lori share her comments about accepting a faculty position before completing the dissertation.

Howard Rosenbaum
Howard Rosenbaum is the Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Information Science in the School of Library and Information Science at Indiana University, where he has been on the faculty since 1993. He is the Director of the Master of Information Science program and a co-director of the Graduate Certificate in Information Architecture program in SLIS. Howard is currently interested in social informatics, ebusiness, and online communities. He has led seminars on ebusiness at Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, the University of Bath, and the University of Greenwich, in the UK. Howard has also spoken widely on information architecture in the mid-west.

Howard has presented his work at the American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T), the Association for Information Systems, the Association of Internet Researchers, HCI International, and other organizations. He is a Fellow the Rob Kling Center for Social Informatics at Indiana University and current co-chair of SIG/SI at ASIS&T. Howard teaches classes on digital entrepreneurship, information systems design, information architecture for the web, intellectual freedom, and information organizations and workshops for information professionals in XML, CSS, and web page
design. He has been recognized for excellence in teaching and for the innovative use of technology in education, receiving the Frederic Bachman Lieber Memorial Award for Teaching Excellence, Indiana University in 2005, a state-wide MIRA Award for Technological Innovation in Education from Techpoint in 2003, the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology in 2002, and was named one of the first SBC Fellows at Indiana University in 2000.

Howard has chaired the search committee for new faculty posts for numerous years and brings a hiring perspective to the panel.

REFERENCES