Standing Out in the Academic LIS Job Market:
An Interactive Panel for Doctoral Students

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ABSTRACT
This proposal builds on the previous successes of the interactive doctoral student panels sponsored by SIG ED at the 2013, 2012, and earlier ASIS&T annual meetings. The all-new 2015 panel features faculty in various stages of their academic careers, including a relatively new assistant professor to a seasoned chair or dean. The panelists are 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 panel discussion will focus around the academic job market and how applicants can present themselves in the best light depending upon the type of position sought. Doctoral students will gain valuable insights on finishing their dissertation, weighing postdoctoral opportunities, and preparing for their first academic position by interacting with the panelists. This panel will provide for an anonymous mechanism for doctoral students and new faculty to ask questions without feeling inhibited or intimidated. The panel may be of greatest benefit to those doctoral students nearing the end of their doctoral program, but will also be useful to new doctoral students and new assistant professors.

Keywords
Doctoral students, faculty, academic jobs, academe.

INTRODUCTION
The completion of the doctoral dissertation is the culmination of a long and ostensibly rewarding journey for doctoral students. However, there may still be numerous challenges along the way to securing an academic position due to the highly competitive nature of the current academic job market. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the nature and expectations of academic positions will help doctoral students prepare for this pursuit.

In general, library and information science faculty members are expected to demonstrate excellence in three areas—research, teaching, and service. The actual parameters of the three areas vary greatly by institution, and it is important to do some fact-finding about the specifics within a particular institution before applying. At research-intensive institutions, one might be expected to spend comparatively more time on research, publications, and grants while being given a lower teaching load of perhaps 1–2 courses per semester. Teaching-intensive institutions, by contrast, will likely require comparatively higher teaching loads (around 3–4 courses per semester) and have less rigorous research and publication expectations. At the same time, the expectations for service activities in the school, university, and profession remain high and vary from institution to institution. New faculty members are expected to be effective teachers, competent researchers, and active participants in academic life (Adams, 2002).

Given the complexity of the expectations and intense competition in academia, it can be challenging for new doctoral students to make the transition from graduate school to their first academic position. One should always remember that “graduate school is not your job; graduate school is a means to the job you want” (Kelsky, 2012). The challenges encountered vary from individual to individual. While some doctoral students might have gained some teaching experience during their doctoral education, others had more exposure to conducting and preparing research reports. However, the key to thriving in academia is in learning how to manage the competing demands of teaching, research, and service.

This panel will provide doctoral students immense opportunities to gain insights into critical issues such as finishing their dissertation, how to tailor their applications, crafting teaching and research statements, considering post-doctoral opportunities, and what to expect when starting in a new faculty position and working towards tenure. Furthermore, the interactive nature of this panel will facilitate the smooth exchange of ideas, viewpoints and perspectives among doctoral students and panelists.
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. A SIG ED officer will Tweet the questions and answers for the benefit of those students who are unable to attend the panel session.

Questions for the panelists will be solicited prior to the conference on the ASIS&T student listserv, and attendees will transmit their questions electronically to the designated SIG ED officer, Program Coordinator Rajesh Singh, who will be transmitting questions electronically to the panel moderator’s laptop. Index cards will also be available for students to convey their questions to the SIG ED officer, Rajesh Singh, if they do not wish to use electronic media. Whether submitted electronically or by index card, the anonymity of the questions’ source will be maintained to promote the free exchange of ideas and perspectives.

At the start of the session, the panel moderator, Naresh Agarwal, will ask the panelists to give a brief introduction including their name, current position and institutional affiliation, relevant highlights of their past experience, and what qualities they believe are most important for success in academia. Thereafter, the moderator will ask panel members the questions transmitted by the SIG ED officer. When there are 10 minutes left in the session, each of the panelists will be asked to provide a summary of the quality indicators they look for in an applicant, then the panel moderator will ask each panelist to offer one final piece of advice for the attendees that was not covered previously during the discussion.

BENEFITS
This event will provide an opportunity for doctoral students to interact with experienced faculty in an informal and non-intimidating environment. The panel provides a good balance of faculty members who are at all stages of their academic careers (assistant, associate, and full professors, including several with administrative responsibilities of Chair or Dean). The interaction with the panel will begin to form a sense of the ASIS&T community for the doctoral students, as they will have the opportunity to understand the career progression of panelists at later stages in their careers. This will help them to see the continued value of ASIS&T membership for career development and networking. This panel will also provide an excellent opportunity to network with other doctoral students and faculty members. Although this panel is primarily for doctoral students about to complete their Ph.D., there also may be insights for current faculty who are seeking to make transition laterally from one institution to another.

PROMOTION
This panel will be heavily promoted using ASIS&T listservs, the SIG ED website, and SIG ED social media accounts, including Facebook and Twitter. Furthermore, a list of all student members will be obtained from Dick Hill and the students will be emailed individually with an invitation to participate in the event by submitting their questions and attending the panel. The panel will also be listed in the conference program.

PANELISTS
The panelists represent all stages of an academic career: three assistant professors, one associate professor, and two full professors. Two of the panelists additionally hold chair or dean positions in their LIS institutions. The panelists represent six different institutions and represent diverse academic experience. Furthermore, some of the panelists also possess either international educational or work experience in countries other than the United States.

Naresh Agarwal, Moderator
Naresh Agarwal is an Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, Boston. He earned his Ph.D. from the National University of Singapore (NUS)’s Department of Information Systems, School of Computing. His teaching areas are technology/web development, evaluation, knowledge management and theories of information science and technology. Naresh’s research area is information behavior and knowledge management—the way people look for information and the contextual factors that impact their choice of information sources. He seeks to understand and synthesize the apparent contradictions in this phenomenon and tries to reconcile multiple perspectives, and his publications span these areas. Prior to entering the doctoral program at NUS, Naresh worked for six years in technology roles in the voice-over-IP, bio-informatics, and digital cinema industries. You can learn more about him at http://www.nareshagarwal.co.nr/.

Naresh has held various leadership positions at ASIS&T and was a member of its Board of Directors from 2012–2014. He was awarded the ASIS&T James M. Cretsos Leadership Award in 2012.

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

Lorraine Richards Bornn
Lorraine (Lori) Richards Bornn 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. Her dissertation, entitled “Evidence-as-a-Service: State Government Recordkeeping...”
Nicole A. Cooke
Nicole A. Cooke is an Assistant Professor at The Graduate School of Library and Information Science (GSLIS) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, having graduated from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, with a PhD in Communication, Information, and Library Studies in 2012 (where she was an 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.


Named a Mover & Shaker in 2007 by Library Journal, Cooke is professionally active in ACRL, ALISE, and several other professional library organizations. She holds the MLS degree from Rutgers, and a M.Ed. in Adult Education from Penn State.

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 School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She received her Ph.D. from the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) in 2011, and was a 2010 recipient of a Eugene Garfield Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from Beta Phi Mu. She teaches in the areas of digital curation, human information interactions, social networking, and research methods. She is also involved in professional training, serving as an instructor in the Digital Curation Professional Institute: Curation Practices for the Digital Object Lifecycle, hosted at UNC-CH, since 2009. 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 H Kwasnik
Barabara Kwasnik is a full Professor at the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. She currently serves as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. She also teaches in the areas of organization of information, theory of classification, and information science. She is especially interested in how classifications intersect with everyday human endeavor; for example, how they are translated from one culture or application to another. The purpose is to help support increasingly diverse contexts. Previous research (with Kevin Crowston) includes investigating whether genre information can help in searching, personal information management, and browsing.

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

Howard Rosenbaum
Howard Rosenbaum is the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and a Professor of Information Science in the School of Informatics and Computing at Indiana University, where he has been on the faculty since 1993. He is also a co-director of the Master of Information Science program and the Graduate Certificate in Information Architecture program in the Department of Information and Library Science. Howard studies social informatics, ebusiness, and online communities. He has published in a variety of information science journals and has presented at ASIS&T, iConferences, and elsewhere. In 2005, he published Information Technologies in Human Contexts: Learning
from Organizational and Social Informatics with Steve Sawyer and the late Rob Kling. Last year, with Pnina Fichman, he published Social Informatics: Past, Present, and Future, which received the 2014 ASIST SIG publication of the year award.

Howard teaches digital entrepreneurship, information systems design, intellectual freedom and other classes. He has been recognized often for excellence in teaching and for the innovative use of technology in education, receiving the 2011 Thomson Reuters Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award from ASIS&T, the 2005 Frederic Bachman Lieber Memorial Award for Teaching Excellence from Indiana University, a 2003 state-wide MIRA Award for Technological Innovation in Education from Techpoint, the 2002 Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology, and in 2000 was named one of the first SBC Fellows at Indiana University.

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

REFERENCES