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The Upsides of Downsizing

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The Upsides of Downsizing

Jennifer Pate

Prior: Non-tenure track librarian, primary job focus first year instruction. Liaison to some departments. No job growth, no promotion potential.
Now: Tenure-track librarian, departmental liaison, promotion potential to full professor. Exponential job growth. Job focus Scholarly communications and instruction.

Advantages

1. Getting to really know your students-smaller enrollment means more interpersonal relationships
2. Getting to know your faculty-smaller campus = more interaction between departmental faculty and librarians. Increases collaborations on research, writing, grants, and helps with becoming embedded in your liaison areas.
3. More collaboration within the library-smaller staff in library = fewer silos. You have to be able to help out in multiple areas
4. Many times smaller universities = smaller towns, which = more opportunities for civic engagement
5. Closer working relationships with colleagues, patrons, and the community

Tips and Tricks

1. Be flexible and open to new experiences
2. Don't let your prior expectations stop you from seeing new challenges as opportunities
3. But do anticipate that higher ed bureaucracy will still be there, and you will still have to deal with it
4. Remember to take care of yourself as you go along in the new job hustle
5. Don't be afraid to ask questions or get help when you need-This is a sign of strength not weakness :)

Karlie Johnson

Prior: Non-tenure track librarian, primary job focus first year instruction. Liaison to some departments. No job growth, no promotion potential.
Now: Tenure-track librarian, departmental liaison, promotion potential to full professor. Exponential job growth. Job focus: Subject Specialist in History, Geography, and Anthropology

Opportunities

1. Smaller faculty (teaching and library) = more opportunities to serve on campus committees and boards- from search committees to faculty senate
2. Expanding one's skill set beyond the library:
Ex. Jennifer is teaching as an adjunct in the History department (translating her job skills working with the IR and metadata) to a digital collections management class

Karlie is transferring her library outreach and public communication skills into larger civic engagement projects by serving on a planning committee for an Asian culture convention called AnniCon
3. Increased cross-collaboration across university departments and with the surrounding community

Adjusting

Fair warning-There were some adjustments-both good and bad-that we had to make in moving from a larger institution to a mid-size institution.

1. Having smaller overall budgets (collection, travel, in some cases salary)
2. Increase in wearing multiple hats
3. Closer working relationships with colleagues, patrons, and the community
4. Some communities are small enough that you will feel like an outsider at the beginning. Don't give up trying to integrate yourself - you will find your place in the community!

Meet the "Downsizers"

Advantages

Opportunities

Adjusting

Tricks &

Tips