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Job and Career Resources: Not Just for Public Libraries

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Cover Page Footnote

1. Brustein, Joshua, "It has Computers, Gives Advice and Is Free," New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/nyregion/26libraries.html> (accessed November 5, 2011). 2. Byron Anderson, "Delivering Career and Job Information: A Place For Libraries," *Library Services for Career Planning, Job Searching, and Employment Opportunities* (Gloucestershire, UK: The Hawthorne Press, 1992): 17. 3. "Georgia College Students Provided Job Search Assistance," *Union Recorder*, <http://unionrecorder.com/local/x614899412/Georgia-College-students-provided-job-search-assistance/print> (accessed November 9, 2011). 4. Vaishali Patel, "Georgia College Students Provided Job Search Assistance," *Union Recorder*, July 7, 2011, 5A. 5. Georgia College and State University, <http://graduate.gcsu.edu/futurestudents/macon> (accessed November 8, 2011).

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Ben Davis and Katherine Pope

Need

In a declining and struggling economy, libraries have adapted to fit the changing needs of students by providing resources on job searching, resume preparation, interviewing, test taking, graduate school placement, and major and career advisement. Assisting job hunters is nothing new as "We've been in the job-search business for decades," said Paul LeClerc, the president of the New York Public Library, noting that President Obama has said that a librarian helped him find his first job as a community organizer."¹ Byron Anderson states that, "in doing so, libraries have the opportunity to provide much of the information required for a career or job search, and in the process can enhance its reputation within the community."² Public libraries have consistently provided career-related services but academic libraries have tended to leave such programming to other campus departments. This isolated assistance is less effective than a collaborative approach. Historically, libraries have acted as the heart of a campus and a place where most (if not all students) frequent. With the changing climate of technology and e-books, it is important that academic libraries also adapt to meet changing needs; in this scenario, helping students meet their career goals after college in a difficult and ever-changing environment.

Implementation

Georgia College library employee Katherine Pope graduated with her master's degree in public history in May of 2010 and successfully acquired a job in the university's Special Collections department. Pope saw first-hand the difficulties in the job market, and strove to assist students by supplying them with the resources necessary to competitively seek and begin their career paths. As a member of the marketing and promotion committee of the library, Pope brought this need to the committee and offered a solution; she would work with the campus Career Center generally to collate material and to purchase current literature to help students in all areas of career preparation, and specifically to use social media and networking techniques. The idea was approved and Pope and committee chairperson Benjamin Davis met with the Career Center where the idea was readily embraced. The idea became a working plan with the end goal of a specialized bookshelf and resource center with a computer, including bookmarked websites for easy navigation of selected useful sites and articles.

Work divided into department specialties and strengths. The library funded purchases, handled logistics such as book ordering, and provided a bookshelf and computer. By using their expertise, Career Center staff picked roughly one hundred books and materials that highlighted areas such as; job-search strategies, tips and advice about career and degree matching, internships, interviewing, graduate schools and test preparation."³ Policies and procedures were established regarding the ordering and processing of the career specific materials. Since the books would remain on the shelf permanently, it was necessary to create a new holdings location in Voyager. As years progress and newer editions arrive, the older editions can be superseded and moved from the shelf to the regular stacks.

The next decision was determining if the new materials should circulate or not. Many of the titles would typically be housed in the reference section, where they would obviously not circulate. Davis and Pope conferred with the reference and circulation departments and decided that having the materials circulate would most effective to encourage patron use. Upon

receiving the list of books from the Career Center, Davis searched the library's catalog to make sure no duplicate titles were ordered. None of the library's current career related books were moved to the new specialized bookshelf, so only the most current resources were on the highly visible shelf. The titles were then ordered from the library's primary vendor, Baker and Taylor. Upon receipt of the materials, the acquisition's student assistant processed them as they would any normal book, but they were routed differently so the cataloging librarian would know they would be cataloged with the "career" holdings location.

Once the items were cataloged, the records were suppressed until all of the materials arrived. It was decided that the entire collection should go to the career shelf at once. A dedicated computer was also put on top of the Career Center Bookshelf, with clearly labeled folders containing links to a variety of job resources tools on the web. The Career Center Bookshelf and Resource Center was put on display in the front of the main entrance on the second floor. Miscellaneous materials such as Career Center pamphlets, staff business cards and ever-changing promotional posters were also displayed as a one-stop area for job searching and career preparation. This location was chosen in time for spring 2011 graduates and remains at the same location as a reminder for students to think about their plans after school as soon as possible. Both departments made promotional efforts, which included press releases, signage on campus, social media posts, website content, campus emails and an article in the local newspaper. All promotion was done at no cost and with a successful level of exposure. Both entities were thoroughly satisfied with the results and Career Center Director Mary Roberts stated that "we feel very fortunate to partner with the library."⁴

Results/Analysis

In the next year, circulation and usage statistics will be identified and analyzed. This will help in determining use, especially by subject area.

Georgia College's Center for Graduate and Professional Learning in Macon, Georgia, has asked the group that created the resource to create an additional center for their campus. This Career Resource Center will be tailored specifically for the older and professional audience of the satellite campus where students "are already in the workforce and [are] hoping to further develop their career prospects in business, education, health services, the public service, and non-profit management."⁵

Today's fragile economy, combined with the competitive nature of the job market, presents new and evolving challenges to all libraries. The Georgia College LITC has addressed these challenges by collaborating with the Career Center and creating a collection of resources that can be a beneficial tool for students during a volatile job market.

Katherine Pope is Archival Associate in Special Collections at Georgia College's Library and Instructional Technology Center (LITC); Ben Davis is Acquisitions Librarian for the LITC.

Notes

¹ Brustein, Joshua, "It has Computers, Gives Advice and Is Free," *New York Times* <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/26/nyregion/26libraries.html> (accessed November 5, 2011).

² Byron Anderson, "Delivering Career and Job Information: A Place For Libraries," *Library Services for Career Planning, Job Searching, and Employment Opportunities* (Gloucestershire, UK: The Hawthorne Press, 1992): 17.

³"Georgia College Students Provided Job Search Assistance," *Union Recorder*, <http://unionrecorder.com/local/x614899412/Georgia-College-students-provided-job-search-assistance/print> (accessed November 9, 2011).

⁴ Vaishali Patel, "Georgia College Students Provided Job Search Assistance," *Union Recorder*, July 7, 2011, 5A.

⁵ Georgia College and State University, <http://graduate.gcsu.edu/futurestudents/macon> (accessed November 8, 2011).