

Jumping Into the World: True Stories of Recent LIS Graduates

By Wendy Ikemoto, Guest Reporter

Entering and graduating from library school is just the start of things to come. Finding a job is an entirely new venture. Recent graduates of the Library and Information Science Program at the UH Manoa shared their stories and insight.

Starting Early and Going the Distance

Despite being extremely busy with school, a student job at Hamilton Library, and leadership duties in Hui Dui and the student chapter of SLA, Uta Hussong began her job search as early as seven months before graduation. "I regularly poured over the postings on about five to seven web sites. I also followed on postings that were seen by other librarians who passed them on to me," said Hussong.

For one position, Hussong flew from Hawaii to the East Coast and back again in the span of 72 hours. "The interview process was long. I had to give a presentation on a topic my interviewers defined but they allowed me to choose the database I would present." The interview process started with dinner with two of the three members of the interview committee. She then met with Business Librarian the next morning to discuss interview schedule and prospective benefits. The rest of the interview included a meeting with the interview committee, her presentation, lunch with several staff members, a meeting with the Reference Department staff, and finally, a

meeting with the library director.

Hussong had approximately 15 active applications out before she was offered her current job at University of Maryland Baltimore County as a Reference and Instruction Librarian.

Jumping Through Red Tape

What seems like a simple task sometimes turns out to be the most difficult, as Darren Tanaka discovered. "Job postings for the DOE come out in late February through April or so. These are positions that are available to transfer to if you are a Department of Education certified teacher. With 10 years of DOE service, I thought that I could transfer to any of the posted library positions. Unfortunately, there were a number of challenges to doing so."

First off, Darren needed to be "certified" as a librarian at the time of the job interview. Therefore, job hunting could not officially begin until after he received his diploma. Darren was offered jobs at two schools soon after graduation, but there were many "hoops" to go through. He needed to update his teaching license through the Hawaii Teacher Standards Board (HTSB), receive authorization from his district personnel officer, approval from the releasing principal, and approval from the receiving principal.

"Both principals agreed to the transfer, but could not officially offer me the job until they got approval from the District Personnel Office," explains Dar-



photo: LORI ANN SAEKI

Recent LIS graduates enjoy themselves at the recent UHM LIS Alumni Association dinner on April 11, 2006.

ren. "The District Office, though they knew I graduated and was fully qualified to accept the job, would not give the approval until they received confirmation from HTSB. A letter from the UH program I graduated from was not sufficient. The HTSB would not update my teaching license until they received word from UH, which, I was told, would take 4-6 weeks *after* graduation. Additionally, I could not transfer out of my district (Windward) into another district because the posting period was over. Both the employer and the teachers union said there was nothing they could do for me."

In the meantime Darren kept sending his resume to other schools until his degree was confirmed. He is currently enjoying his position as the school specialist at Kailua Elementary School.

Bouncing Around

Working temporary library jobs is a common beginning for many Hawaii public librarians. It was no different for Carole Suzui. Through an internship at Manoa Public Library, Carole found a job immediately after her December 2004 graduation at Kaimuki Public Library and began work as a librarian the very next day. From there she branched off to other positions before finding a permanent one. "I was a substitute Librarian III and a Library Technician during the month I was there [at Kaimuki]," said Suzui. "On February 1, I started subbing in Language Literature and History at the Hawaii State Library. I subbed there until I started as a permanent employee in Federal Documents [at the Hawaii State Library] on June 17, 2005."

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editorial



Supporting Our School Librarians

Loraine Oribio, Vice President

For the first few weeks of the semester, I studied for oral comprehensive exams. I gathered journal articles and textbooks. I scheduled study sessions with LIS students. I expected to get most of information from books and journals until I got to the "personal philosophy," when books and journal articles didn't quite help. (Don't worry. I won't go over every section of Category A.)

To prepare for the personal philosophy question, I needed to sit and reflect. I needed to think of all the reasons why I was in library and information science. I needed to think of what kept me motivated at the BHSD and my new job. I needed to think about what kept me motivated all those years while I sat between the circulation desk and the reserve shelves at my old library. In the end, I found three things that kept me driven, motivated and passionate about becoming a librarian: my love of information, my enthusiasm for learning and my call to serve others.

I know these reasons are not at all unique. I know that many of you love information, books, learning, and have a passion to serve your communities, but I would like to make a special plea to you today.

Everyday, many of us help students at our libraries and schools. We normally serve non-librarians and non-library staff, but today, we must help our fellow librarian. We must support our school librarians and our fellow LIS students who aspire to become school librarians.

As many of you are aware, many of school librarian positions in our public schools will be cut. In the simplest terms, this means that literacy programs will come to a halt in many of our children's schools. It means that Accelerated Readers programs and Star programs will stop. It means that many of our school libraries will be without a librarian, without trained library staff and the library may simply become nothing more than a storage area for books.

Are we, as future librarians, going to allow this to happen? Are we going to let this happen in our state, in our schools, in our libraries? I would hope not. We cannot be silent and sit behind our desks ... it's time to do something.

Now that oral exams are over, I'm going to do three things (1) I'm going to learn more about the Reinventing Education Act in 2004 and the new funding formula, (2) I'm going to email Loraine Hotoke, President of the Hawai'i Association of School Librarians, to ask her how I can help, and (3) I'm going to call my son's school librarian and tell her that I support her. What are you going to do?

Further Reading: Creamer, Beverly. "Schools may cut librarians." Honolulu Advertiser. Monday, February 6, 2006 <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060206/NEWS07/602060325/1001/NEWS>

New Student Profile: Lauren Sin

Interview by Margot Hanson



What is your full name?
Lian Lauren Sin

Do you have any nicknames?

I go by either Lian (pronounced Lee Ann) and Lauren, but I prefer Lauren.

What is your favorite book or movie? Why?

Some of my favorite films are (in no particular order): *Paper Moon*, *Rosemary's Baby*, and *Cinema Paradiso*. One of my favorite directors is Chinese director Zhang Yimou. My favorite TV show is *Gilmore Girls!* I really enjoyed *Curious Incident of the Dog in*

the Night Time by Mark Haddon. It had a quirky sense of humor.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Honolulu, HI

Where did you get your undergrad degree/other degrees and what did you study?

I have a bachelor of fine arts degree in film and television with an emphasis in editing from Chapman University located in Orange, CA.

What interests you about librarianship?

The new direction in which librarianship is heading toward. I'm excited with the wave of resource digitization as well as the challenges we will face in the future because of technological evolutions. I also embrace working and collaborating with future colleagues of various academic, ethnic, and social backgrounds to continue the success of libraries.

What track are you on for your MLISc degree and why did you choose that?

Currently, I'm on the special librarianship track. I hope to combine my film degree with a master's in library science into a media librarian career.

What else should we know about you?

I'm currently working at Salt Lake Public Library as a library assistant.

A hobby of mine is that I run. I finished my first marathon in December in the Honolulu Marathon. I trained for 9 months for the marathon through the Honolulu Marathon Clinic.



photo: MARGOT HANSON

Joe Murphy shows off his prize won at the Spring Semester Ice-Cream Social.

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It Began With an Internship Interview

Like Hussong, Jenn Ogg was aiming for a job on the Mainland, specifically back in her home state of Wyoming. At first she applied for a summer internship that was listed on the Mountain Plains Library Association's website and listserv.

"I did two phone interviews for the internship position and was informed by mail that it was being cancelled due to budget," said Ogg. "Two weeks later the director emailed me to inform me that an adult reference librarian position was opening and I could apply if interested. I did, and scheduled an interview for after I returned to the Mainland. I had to travel two hours by car to the interview. The library paid for a hotel room and reimbursed me for mileage. I also was given a short tour of the library and about a half hour to an hour session with each department to get an overview of the library and how it works."

Two weeks later the same library called Ogg to interview

for a second position they were envisioning that centered on literacy resources. "I had to prepare a preschool story time on any theme. I prepared a bibliography ahead of time that I emailed to the children's supervisor and prepared a folder of craft ideas, even though they didn't do crafts. Two weeks after that, the director called me to let me know that they wanted to offer me a position, doing 20 hours as a young adult librarian and 20 hours working children's in their newly opening small branch library."

What We Learned

One piece of advice was echoed by nearly everyone: Do an internship. Not only do internships provide you with great library experience that will give you an advantage in a job interview, it also provides valuable networking opportunities.

"Do internships and actively participate in student chapters of professional groups," suggested Hussong. "Employers are looking for practical application of skills and evidence of leadership."

It is also a good idea to do research into the library ahead of

time. Not only will it show your interviewers that you are organized and have a true interest in the library, it also helps to provide a snapshot of your potential work environment.

"Try to find out as much about the library where you are interviewing as you can before you go and ask lots of questions about the areas you will be expected to work in," noted Hussong. "Look for publications by library faculty, really comb through their web site and see how it is organized (or disorganized), look for things like subject guides, tutorials and see how well-developed they are. All this is evidence of professional level of library faculty. Be alert for responses like 'we are in transition...' or the inability to get a concrete answer on how a specific program is working. Remember, you are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you."

Don't be afraid to speak up for yourself and your career in your daily life. "Be prepared for a fight," Tanaka stated. "There are so many people who have no idea how librarianship has changed and now it's becoming a public discussion. If anyone asks you what you do, be prepared with a 10-second sound bite in plain English (not librarian-speak)."

Most of all, be proud of who you are (a librarian!). We are the next generation of librarians. "You have skills that very up-to-date and fresh, so seek out if they will be put to use in your prospective library," said Hussong.

Wendy Ikemoto is a May 2005 graduate and former co-editor of the Basement Blotter. She is currently a Librarian III in the Telephone Reference and Information Desk at the Hawaii State Library (main).



Congratulations Annie Thomas!

Annie has won the 2006 Student-to-Staff Award. In June, she will attend the American Library Association Annual Conference, which will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana this year.