POST-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

CV and Résumé Workshop for Mid-Career Professionals

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ABSTRACT Composed of two parts, this in-person workshop and panel discussion supported attendees in crafting and reconsidering their CVs and résumés with special attention to the concerns and considerations of mid-career professionals. During the workshop portion, facilitators engaged participants through presentation, discussion, and hands-on exercises, offering advice on tweaking these important documents and opportunities to implement suggestions. The panel discussion brought together hiring managers, job seekers, and those who have transitioned to work outside of a theological librarian role for a thoughtful and spirited conversation.

INTRODUCTION

The workshop, sponsored by the Atla Professional Development Committee, was designed specifically with mid-career professionals in mind. It included three main areas of focus. The three segments of the workshop were:

Section 1: Defining the CV and the résumé
Section 2: Recipe for success: cooking up the perfect CV/résumé
Section 3: Maintaining your CV & résumé

Following the workshop, five panelists from various institutions responded to questions posed by a moderator and session attendees.

WORKSHOP

Section 1: Defining the CV and the Résumé

The workshop began with a brief discussion contrasting the purpose and form of a curriculum vitae (CV) with that of a résumé, identifying times when each is valuable. Facilitators characterized the CV, widely used in academia, as a comprehensive written record of accomplishments. Commonly used across public and private sectors, and within academia for specific purposes (e.g., grant applications), the résumé is a concise document, generally two pages or less, and is often tailored to the specific application packet in which it is used.

Attendees were encouraged to consider a number of different "lenses" that might be applied specific to the situation for which the document was prepared, and how each would impact what parts of their work they would wish to highlight — for example: an annual review, grant application, promotion dossier, and so on. These different lenses have distinct audiences and purposes and form key considerations for how they might wish to present or contextualize their body of work as a whole. The first section of the workshop concluded with an opportunity for attendees to individually reflect on what accomplishments they were most proud of, how their professional dreams and aspirations have changed over time, and what lens they might wish to apply throughout the remainder of the day's workshop.

Section 2: Recipe for Success: Cooking up the Perfect CV/Résumé

Facilitators then presented their advice for content and formatting of effective CVs and résumés, developed from their collective experience in reading numerous documents prepared for job applications and for reappointment, promotion and tenure dossiers, as well as from their own personal experience in preparing documentation of this type.

Essential categories to appear in every CV or résumé are education, professional experience, scholarly work (includes research, publications, presentations) and service (within one's institution or as part of professional organizations). Other categories which

might be appropriate to include pending context included awards and honors, media coverage, language proficiency, professional development or certifications, specialized technology proficiency, and volunteering or community service (if industry adjacent). Faith-based employers may also require disclosures regarding religious identity and affiliation, congregation membership or standing and the like -- although this information would not typically be included for other scenarios.

Avoid including images (e.g., charts, photos, decorative borders), as they are inappropriate for the format. Similarly, do not include summary or value statements, goals, or objectives. While these are important, they should appear in other companion documents to the CV or résumé. Attendees were encouraged to keep information presented concise and to avoid long lists and detailed descriptions, with examples of how to transform longer text of this type into short, bulleted lists. A group activity allowed participants to work together to review each other's documents, highlighting items that stood out and discussing whether each other's highlights aligned with what each individual intended to communicate with their documents.

A short discussion on formatting followed, focusing on practical advice: list items in reverse chronological order; number lists, if used; don't rely on color; standard margins and fonts are preferred. Facilitators noted that the inclusion of page numbers and your last name in a document footer is helpful to all readers, in particular those who may opt to print out your files.

This section of the workshop concluded with time for participants to individually review and edit their documentation.

Section 3: Maintaining your CV & Résumé

CVs and résumés are documents that are always "in progress." At mid-career, professionals are well advised to consider what accomplishments to retain and which to remove from these documents, emphasizing that curating for the reader does not reduce the value of accomplishments that might no longer be listed. Facilitators presented various approaches to responding to the evolving nature of career accomplishments and goals as they are represented by their CV or résumé: summarize accomplishments meaningfully as they accumulate (i.e., "thirty book reviews" rather than individual citations); celebrate achievements, but be open to removing them from the current CV as appropriate; review and update supplemental sources,

such as professional networking sites (e.g., LinkedIn), institutional profiles, and self-maintained professional websites.

Attendees were also encouraged to consider and identify a regular schedule for reviewing and updating their documentation, at minimum on an annual basis.

To conclude, facilitators encouraged attendees to think of their CVs as a celebration of their achievements, acknowledged that the information shared was a matter of opinion and that individuals are best suited to make their own best choices for these documents, and shared a sample CV available online (*https://scholar.colorado.edu/ concern/defaults/k0698876t*). As a final reflection activity, attendees responded to one or more prompts on a postcard, to be mailed to them by the facilitators in four months: one thing learned from the workshop; one strategy to remember to implement; a point of pride gleaned from the day's reflection on one's accomplishments.

PANEL DISCUSSION

The panel discussion portion of this session amplified content presented in the workshop and provided more detailed and, in some instances, alternate perspectives. The five panelists are located at institutions across the United States. These institutions are very different from each other, and panelists were able to offer personal perspectives about professional documentation in the mid-career stage based on their own unique settings and experiences. The panel was moderated by Megan E. Welsh, Associate Professor and Interdisciplinary Arts & Humanities Librarian at the University of Colorado Boulder, and panelists included:

- Courtney McDonald, Associate Professor and User Experience Librarian at the University of Colorado Boulder, who works at a large public, secular institution,

- Alexis Weiss, Member Engagement Librarian at Atla, who works for a professional organization after working in various academic library and school settings,

- Patrick Milas, Library Director and Assistant Professor of Theological Bibliography and Research, who works at New Brunswick Theological Seminary,

- Jessica Boyer, Library Director at Mount St. Mary's University, who is located at a private, Catholic institution,

- James Estes, former Library Director at a seminary library, who is a Head of Section in the Library of Congress, a position in the US federal government.

Below are summaries of the discussion prompted by each question.

Question 1: What do you focus on as you review CVs/résumés?

Panelists found it important for CVs and résumés to relate to the job description or the job ad. One panelist mentioned wanting to see a direct connection between an applicant's experiences and the responsibilities associated with the position. Yet this panelist also added that they like seeing "extraneous nonsense" — maybe a past position unrelated to the one for which they are applying or a volunteer experience outside of the profession entirely — that allows them to see the uniqueness of the individual and how seemingly unrelated experiences and skills might transfer to the position. Other panelists also appreciated applicants who connect their experiences directly to the position description: one panelist mentioned the importance of comparing CVs to a rubric established by Human Resources (HR) to help them rank applications, and two other panelists desired seeing how applicant experiences related to the business needs of the library and how the applicant may contribute to their team. While one panelist mentioned looking for organization and clarity on the CV or résumé, another said they may not even look at this documentation which is supplemental to the required fields on a well-structured application platform which their organization uses.

Question 2: Do you require CVs or résumés? What are you hoping to see on these documents?

One panelist described how their hiring platform requires knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) to be completed in specific fields, rather than represented on separate documentation such as a CV or a résumé. A rubric for evaluation is developed based upon these fields, allowing applicants to first identify if they have a KSA and then explain relevant experiences associated with each. This panelist mentioned a functional style résumé may be most helpful as a supplementary document in this situation given that functional résumés organize an applicant's professional history around acquired skills across a career and individual positions (rather than listing individual positions and responsibilities for each). Other pan-

elists described receiving both CVs and résumés, depending upon the type of job they hire for (faculty or staff status) and if there is an expectation of scholarship. Résumés were sufficient for many positions, especially non-tenure track positions. One panelist suggested that they preferred more information to fully contextualize a candidate's application, and another panelist reiterated that applicants shouldn't "add fluff."

Question 3: How did you reformat your CV/résumé for a position outside of theological or academic libraries?

While one panelist shared that their CV was drastically different when they worked in a K-12 setting, they didn't change their documentation significantly as they shifted from an academic library setting to a position in a professional organization. They emphasized the importance of asking oneself: how are skills transferable between institutional settings and positions? Other panelists mentioned that they personally maintain multiple CVs and résumés for different purposes such as authoring grants, seeking new positions, and for tenure and promotion purposes. In particular, one panelist stated that they update a CV for theological library roles, maintain a different CV for adjunct teaching positions, and they crafted a limited résumé for a federal position. Also discussed was the trend that different platforms, such as LinkedIn, have become places not just to communicate professional history and qualifications, but also to apply for jobs. Such sites can pull content from your profile, but this content is only as good as how well you update it.

Question 4: How do you prefer CVs or résumés to be organized? Is there a structure you prefer that makes these documents easier to review?

Panelists expressed that clarity is crucial for an effective CV or résumé. While content in these documents can be rearranged to emphasize strengths, essential categories to include on a CV (especially for a tenure track position) are: education, research, teaching, and service. Regardless of how these are arranged, panelists wanted applicants to clearly share their story. One panelist emphasized how busy they are and how important it is for applicants to share their stories in a way that is quickly and easily understandable to them. They said, "I'd like to be able to glance at the first page and be able to tell if you meet the job requirements, so that would entail listing the

appropriate degrees and work experience." Their preferred structure means having the "nuts and bolts" of an applicant's professional history on page one of their CV or résumé.

Question 5: How do you prefer applicants distinguish experiences and qualifications which appear both on the CV/résumé and in cover letters? How do you approach each document strategically (either personally or how you prefer applicants to approach them)?

Panelists agreed that cover letters are another important tool that further illuminate professional history and accomplishments listed on a CV or résumé. Effective cover letters could include pulling specific words and phrases from the job advertisement or description; they offer an opportunity to describe the "why" behind an applicant wanting *this* position at *this* institution, and they also help reviewers to evaluate candidates based on a rubric. Cover letters do not have to be long. After a question from the audience, panelists suggested that cover letters range from one to two pages depending on the position and the applicant's experience level, but, most importantly, they should enhance the story that a CV or résumé begins to tell. As one panelist stated, "Consider a CV as a menu and your cover letter as a 'buffet of all the things.'" Cover letters can be especially important if transitioning to another type of library or role within the institution. They should be used to clearly highlight something unique you're very proud of, explain the diversity of your experiences, and acknowledge if and how your research changed over time.

Question 6: Does your institution require religious affiliation or membership to a specific religious community? If so, how and where would you like to see that represented on a candidate's CV/ résumé?

Ranging from federal to public to private institutions, panelists overwhelmingly noted that religious affiliation was not expected to be disclosed on a CV or résumé though, for some, it was a part of the interview process. Overall, panelists had not been asked to identify their own religious identity when applying for positions. For panelists affiliated with federal or public, secular libraries, requesting information about religious identity is actually illegal. For those at private, religiously affiliated libraries, panelists emphasized that candidates should be prepared to respond to interview questions about how they can contribute to the mission of the institution which

is often aligned with religious values. One panelist suggested that applicants should "do their homework" about the institution and possibly incorporate alignment with values in a cover letter (rather than a CV or résumé). This homework also entails personal reflection, i.e., are you okay working for an institution with very specific values and everything that it entails?

Question 7: How do you personally keep track of your accomplishments and responsibilities while balancing currency, impact, and the audience reading your CVs? How do you identify and articulate accomplishments of great impact on your CV?

Tracking accomplishments and responsibilities, especially at the mid-career stage can be difficult to manage. Several panelists shared that they maintain a "master" CV which lists all of their professional history, everything they have published, and the smallest details which may not be important in the moment but could be helpful to revisit years from now. As one panelist mentioned, "You can't keep too much information on yourself." One panelist also mentioned keeping a document outlining their major responsibilities associated with their past positions. While a long list of accomplishments might be ideal for your reference, panelists agreed that CVs and résumés should be tailored as needed to specific audiences including administrators, teaching faculty, evaluators (such as supervisors), and grant-issuing bodies. Ideal timing to update CVs and résumés differed from panelist to panelist. These ranged from updating annually in time to submit annual evaluations, updating on Friday afternoons as a low-stakes means of doing something productive, and updating immediately when anything changes. These changes can include updates to numbers where you have quantified your work (e.g., number of information literacy classes taught in a semester), publication status updates, promotion or rank changes, and changes to job duties.

Question 8: How do you learn how to dream again? Where do you draw inspiration for your career now that you are in the mid-career phase?

As one of the most open-ended questions, panelists responded to this final question with incredibly unique perspectives. Notably, one panelist began, "I don't dream of labor." Noting that life satisfaction is more important than work, their dreams focused on enjoying

life outside of their professional position, where they "kept work at work." One panelist found inspiration in engaging in professional organizations, both at annual conferences and throughout the year, as a way to situate their work outside of their immediate institutional setting. Another panelist draws inspiration from mentoring the next generation of librarians, and still another panelist voiced the importance of appreciating the human moments that are present throughout our daily work and our careers as a whole.

CONCLUSION

While most advice about CVs and résumés is focused on those in the student or early career stages of librarianship, this session, consisting of a facilitated workshop and moderated panel discussion, addressed a mid-career audience. Mid-career librarians have particular needs related to tenure and promotion processes, and career transitions, possibly including a transition outside of librarianship. This workshop and panel discussion provided space to address these needs, learn from each other, and implement tangible advice into each attendee's own CV and résumé.