

WA New Grads get special treatment

The WA New Graduates Group heralded its first event since its name change (from GuMP—Graduate Mentoring Program) with a successful Q&A panel session. Over 30 people braved a cold, wet and blustery evening in July to be treated to an informative evening with seven librarians who are working in the corporate or specialist library sector. Annette Carter (Librarian, Information Management Team at Chevron Australia) generously hosted this event in the Chevron Conference room, situated on the 24th floor of the QV1 building in the heart of the Perth CBD. The spectacular views that span from the city centre to the glistening suburban sprawl across to the north, provided the perfect backdrop to the impressive career paths and experiences relayed by the panel members.

Joining Annette on the panel were Rae Davie (Business Strategy Consultant at the Water Corporation), Amina Itani (Academic Account Executive for SA and WA at Thomson Reuters), Leanne Whykes (Training Specialist at Thomson Reuters), Alissa Sputore (Associate Business & Law Librarian at the University of WA), Pam Phelan (Business and Management Specialist at the State Library of WA), and Jane Edinger (Principal Consultant at SearchResearch).

The broad range of job titles held by members of the panel exemplified one of the main points expressed by all - that there is a multitude of jobs in the corporate or government sector that the skill sets of the 'librarian' can embrace. Whether as a special librarian, information manager, information professional, corporate librarian, information consultant... All agreed that the essential ingredient needed for a successful and satisfying career in this sector was a 'can do' attitude, flexibility, adaptability, a passion to deliver excellent customer service and a willingness to be challenged.

Common themes that emerged included; the satisfaction of being an integral part of the business process within the organisations they work, interacting with highly motivated and intelligent clients, working with high quality resources, and problem-solving in a fast-paced environment.

Another theme was the importance of extending skill sets and being prepared

to use them in different environments; not being afraid to step away from the traditional library field. Team leading roles often combine the management of a library and information service with that of generic office services. A recommended read: *Competencies for information professionals of the 21st century* (Revised edition, June 2003). <http://www.sla.org/content/learn/comp2003/index.cfm>

Seeking and building mentoring relationships was another important factor expressed by all the panel members. They strongly encouraged getting involved with formal or informal networks, whether they be ALIA groups or specialised networks such as the Australian Law Librarians' Association. Getting involved may mean helping to get that foot in the door, and is invaluable for information sharing and support.

The organisers of this panel session were extremely grateful to the panel members for guiding the information-sharing talk. One new graduate, who attended this session, summarises our sentiments succinctly:

"As a recently graduated librarian, working in a corporate library, I enjoyed hearing about the experiences and career paths of the panel speakers. It was interesting to learn how their careers had progressed and how they'd gotten to the positions where they are now. What I really took away from the session was the importance of 'thinking outside the square' when it comes to applying for jobs, as many of the panel speakers had taken on non-traditional roles, or position titles that did not have the word 'librarian' in them, at some stage during their careers.

Attending the panel also provided a fantastic opportunity to meet face-to-face with more experienced special librarians - many of whom I'd heard of or communicated with in e-mails. It was also great to reconnect with classmates who are now working in special libraries." - Emma Taylor (Water Corporation of Western Australia, E-Services Librarian)


The WA New Graduates Group is supported by ALIAWest. To become involved in future New Graduate activities in Western Australia, join the aliaWANEWGRAD e-list.

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