

Jennifer E. Nutefall

Moving for your career?

Advice on adjusting

Congratulations! You've accepted that new job and now all your belongings are boxed up and ready to move. Whether you're moving just a few states away or across the country, settling into a new area can be a challenge. What does it take to feel like part of the community? One important aspect is making professional connections and new friends. I began working at Oregon State University (OSU) in April 2009, having moved from Washington, D.C., and have spent the last year adjusting to my new job, library, university, and city. What follows is from my perspective as a single librarian and includes strategies for making connections on-campus and off.

Developing professional connections

1. Go to events for new employees.

Most new faculty and librarians start at the beginning of the fall term, which is when the majority of new faculty events are held. But even for those new employees who begin during the academic year, attending new employee events is well worth the effort. These are a great way to meet others new to the campus and community, and they provide an opportunity to learn how the university views itself. Since I started at OSU toward the end of an academic year, I had to wait until the fall quarter for the new faculty events. Since then I've had the pleasure of attending a new faculty breakfast, orientations for several units on campus (such as the research office), and specific orientations through the College of Liberal Arts.

2. Be proactive. No matter your position in the library, you need to make connections outside the library. These could include faculty in the departments you'll be liaising with, instructional design staff, or, in my case, other university administrators in areas such as student engagement, assessment, and academic success. While I initially connected with people over e-mail, it was meeting them in person that was most important. I've been fortunate that several people I need to connect with on campus are also relatively new to the area—one even came from the Washington, D.C., area. We've been able to share our experiences with the transition and with the differences between our previous and current locations. These connections have turned into monthly lunches, strengthening our professional and personal connection.

3. Join library and campus-wide committees. Finding a library or campuswide committee that focuses on your interests is a perfect way to meet people. Librarywide committees offer you a chance to work with individuals outside your department, while campuswide committees introduce you to faculty from a range of disciplines. I started attending the Outreach and Engagement Council meetings last fall because they had an agenda item focused on service learning, which my university li-

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brarian knew was an interest of mine. That led to an opportunity to assist with OSU's application for the Carnegie Classification on Community Engagement. Through these committees I have met others on campus and learned more about the university's outreach and extension service.

4. Get involved in your state library association. When you're new to a state, a great way to meet local librarians is through the state library association. When I moved to Washington, D.C., I became a member of the District of Columbia Library Association and took the lead on organizing instruction-related workshops. This allowed me to meet librarians working across Washington, D.C., in academic, public, and school libraries. These connections were valuable as I planned one workshop on applying for library jobs in different types of libraries and another on students transitioning between high school and college.

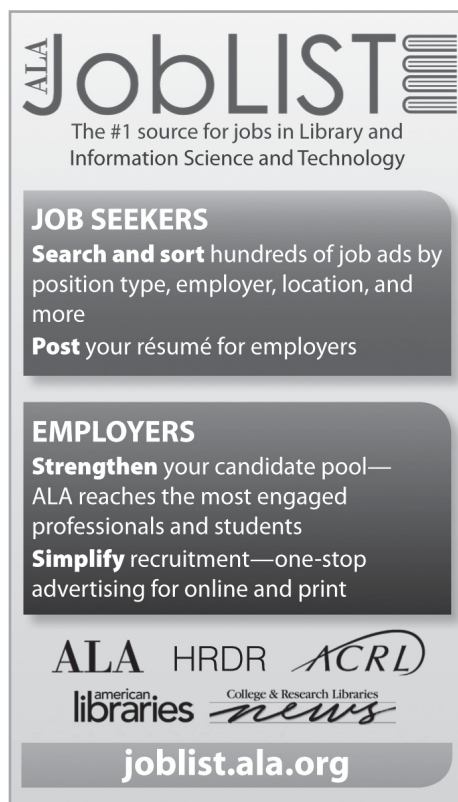
Developing friendships

5. Become a member (gym, club, group, church, etc.). Everyone has heard this advice—become involved in the community and meet people with similar interests—but it really is one of the best things you can do to. While I was in the Washington, D.C., area, I met three good friends through gym classes. When I started taking classes at the gym in Corvallis, Oregon, I let the instructors know I was new to the area, and they introduced me to others in the class and offered suggestions for local restaurants and places to visit in the state. For me, the gym is the place to be, but you need to decide what's best for you. Do you want to volunteer in town? Join a singing group? Get involved in a church? Whatever you decide let people know you're new to town.

6. Look for groups to join via meetup.com or other social networking tools. Meetup.com is a network of local groups. When you join and create your

profile, you identify topics you're interested in, and the site then suggests local groups you might be interested in joining. Digital photography, wine tasting, social events, movies, hiking—there are groups for everything. Using this resource at the suggestion of a friend, I found a local women's social group and have attended several of their events, including a dinner night, a movie night, and a wine tasting. I've met women in my age group and explored nearby cities. All it takes is the initiative to go to an event and start meeting people.

My final piece of advice is to get started right away. It can be all too easy to get so focused on your new position that you don't prioritize the importance of meeting new people and making new friends. But making professional connections and friendships is as important as your new position. A career move is an opportunity to experience a new state, city, culture, and community. *~*



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