Not Just a Number: Negotiating Salary in Academic Archives & Special Collections
Hello!

I am (Eliza)Beth Myers

Director, Smith College Special Collections
15 Years in the field (FT), 9 supervising staff
Served on 26 hiring committees
Hired 19 staff
Currently have 11 direct reports, total staff of 23 / 7 are term
2016 Live Tweet, MAC, SAA 2017, 2018, 2019
Introduction

- Sources & Resources
- State of the profession - academic archives and special collections
- Reframing negotiation
- What is negotiable?
- Negotiating on the job
- Managers: Strategies for changing unit compensation
Expectations

- Academic institutional focus, some applicability to corporate and government environments
- Not a scholarly study or analysis
- Assumed non-union / non-tenure shop
- Welcome all questions to answer directly or indirectly
1. Sources & Resources
Sources & Resources

- **SAA a*Census** (2004) / SAA a*Census II
- **SAA Employment Survey** (2015)
- **Women Archivists Section SAA Salary Survey** (2017)
- **Professor is In**
- **AAUW** (2016)
- **BLS Occupational Handbook** (2014)
- **Salary Impromptu Survey SAA 2019**
- **CoSA Reports and Surveys**

- **Advocating for a Better Salary Toolkit (2017 ed)**
- **10 Tips for Salary Negotiations**
- **Ask an Archivist** SNAP (2015)
2. State of the Profession: Archives and Special Collections
Who Are We? A Snapshot

- Majority permanent, but...
- 23% on non-permanent positions
- Full time
- Academic
- New(er) professionals
- Middle income?
- Master’s degree
- Certified Archivists
- Female
- White
- Avg Salary: $61,303 yr
- Avg student loan debt: $53,347

Gendered = Underpaid
Systemic barriers
Position matters

- Highest paid positions
- Lowest paid positions
- Geography and regional factors
- Bad actors
50% do not negotiate
3.
Reframing Negotiation
From confrontation (fear) to conversation (confidence) requires archives job finalists to:
(1) understand their own needs
(2) find the right data and use that data to make a case for themselves
(3) know when to accept and when to walk away
Negotiation Process

1. What is the hiring process?
   Can you share (or point me to) any documentation about salary, benefits or similar?
   How do we negotiate the terms of the offer?

2. Unique institutional structures at play
   What is negotiable and what is not

3. Take time, and more time if you need it
   Flex your network
   Weigh against data, your total package needs
   Counter with data and needs
   Be realistic
   Be prepared
Negotiation as a practice I

Traditional Advice:
Point out how your experience and education should translate to a higher offer

Update:
Make a better argument. Know what your own needs are in terms of a total package offer, not just salary

WHY? Repetition of your professional information will not yield a new result. What will you bring to the position that no one else can? What skills make you unique? What problem(s) are you going to solve?
Negotiation as a practice II

Traditional Advice:
The salary is always negotiable

Update:
False. If the salary is fixed, find flexibility elsewhere in the offer package. However, **always** push on salary.

WHY? There is almost always some wiggle room, if not in salary, then in other perks and benefits.
Negotiation as a practice III

Traditional Advice:
Hold firm on your needs

No Update!
This is absolutely still true

Knowing your own needs (hardlines vs. softlines) helps you know where the backstop is on negotiations. You are never obligated to accept a bad offer. Be pragmatic in your expectations.
4. What is Negotiable?
Salary is the starting point, not the end, of negotiations
Whole-Package Negotiation

What is Negotiable?

Depends...

- Salary
- Start date
- Relocation Assistance
- Housing
- Technology package
- Professional development
- Trailing partner assistance
- Flex schedule
- Work from home
- Title or grade change
- One time hire bonus
And Yet!

Non-payment benefits like health insurance, sick time, and vacation time are almost always fixed.

Some non-payment benefits should still be weighed as part of your total package, especially retirement and tuition subsidies; research state-specific law on leaves (fed minimum or better?)
5. Negotiating on the job
Negotiating from Within a Organization

- Tenure, promotion in rank, lanes
- Annual review pitfalls
- Title, grade
- Professional development

Change of duties
- Supervisory responsibility
- Additional duties added
- Duties added outside of original job description *(Technology)*
- Peer comparison
6. Strategies for Managers
Middle Management Reality

Institution

Manager

Potential Hire
Strategies to Improve Unit Compensation

Do your homework

- Study the hiring culture at your institution: policy, practice, and exceptions
- Demographic study, region, cost of living
- Local (unit level) salary survey, including history, if possible
- Leverage skills, especially technology in JDs
- Confront inequities
  - Request a salary review for the unit
  - JD’s up to date?
  - Parity or equity raises may result
- Flex whenever you can
- Be persistent
Strategies to Improve Unit Compensation

- Question historical hiring practices including base salaries, hourly wages
- Develop relationship with HR or hiring representative(s)
- Be opportunistic:
  - New hires are opportunities to move the needle
  - Grant funding for positions is largely at the discretion of the grant applicant. When $$$ is non-central funding, you have more latitude
- Be willing to accept fewer positions or workers, in exchange for higher pay
- Address inequities directly and indirectly
  - Request a salary review for the unit
- Be persistent, strategize

Don’t be a jerk
Cultural Shift

Transparency

- SAA a*Census II salary focus
- SAA Salary Working Group (2019 SAA Open Forum)
- Job posting requirements
- "Salary Impromptu Survey SAA 2019"
- SNAP
- ALA / RBMS
- BAS Salary Survey
YOU WILL NOT GET WHAT YOU DO NOT ASK FOR
Thanks!

Any questions?

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