

2015

Appalachian State University Profile

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JO: I do not currently research anthropology, but I keep up in my own way, following the history of anthropology to a degree and how anthropology/ethnography is being used in library settings and other academic environments. I maintain a lengthy bibliography of sources of relevance to librarians and information specialists that includes sections such as anthropological methods. At the moment I am completing a piece on the development and application of principles in scholarly communication.

ATG: *You were an early associate editor of ATG. What advice would you give to us editors about maintaining and growing our readership?*

JO: *ATG* has always had a nice mix of scholarly and breezy approaches to draw in readers of several types. I remember years ago we discussed whether to keep “**If Rumors Were Horses**” on the front page because it was not scholarly; however, in the process of surveying readers, they said that was their favorite starting point. We kept it on the front page. Maybe the readership has changed. I don’t really know. The articles are still relevant and timely.

ATG: *Two years ago, you were honored by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as Distinguished Alumna. How did that come about? What did it feel like to be chosen for such an honor?*

JO: I was so overcome I had to immediately sit down, and my jaw was hanging open. As you know, the UNC SILS program has always been one of the most revered in the country, so I felt especially honored and moved, particularly when I looked at the list of previous honorees. I gave the commencement address to the December graduating class about “An Unexpected Journey,” in which I talked about what my education had done for me and how the SILS program still influences my life from time to time. For example, when giving a presentation in Denmark a few years back, my research partner’s computer died. One of the UNC professors was in attendance, and all I had to say was, “You don’t know me, but I am a SILS alum and I need your help.” And help I got in the form of a loan of her laptop. I am now a member of the Board of Visitors for SILS. I like giving back to an institution that gave me a firm foundation to sustain me over many years.

ATG: *You have had a distinguished career path along with a wealth of experience. What advice do you have for young library administrators eager to have an impact on the profession?*

JO: You can really boil most of it down to this: never miss an opportunity to say thank you and do everything with class. That said, new administrators need to discover their talents and strengths. Identify what they are, develop the best, learn to respond differently in differing situations, keep your cool, and listen a lot. We all fail at these from time to time, so

against the grain library profile

Appalachian State University

University Libraries
Belk Library and Information Commons
218 College Street, Boone, NC 28608

ANNUAL EXPENDITURES: \$9M

TOTAL PERMANENT STAFF: 90 positions, including 38 faculty members. We also employ 140 students and are the largest employer of work study students.

We are in a small town in the mountains, have 18,000 students, and still experience greater than 1.24M visits each year.

TYPES OF MATERIALS YOU BUY: We have a very healthy mix of print and eBooks and e-journals, plus numerous databases. We acquire everything on Appalachia that we can find. We have a small, focused rare books collection.

USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY: Students are using lots of mobile technology. We circulate technology for anyone on campus to use, and last year we checked out approximately 100,000 technology items (iPads, laptops, cameras, etc.)

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR LIBRARY WILL BE LIKE IN FIVE YEARS?: We have a new master space plan that calls for more student study and group work space, a larger maker lab, a larger writing center, more technology enhanced spaces, an experimental classroom, visualization lab, and digital scholarship lab. We will likely come up with even more changes as these spaces are developed.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB: I am the dean and have a distinguished professor position. I provide leadership for the university libraries that consist of the Belk Library and Information Commons, the Ernestine Music Library, the W. L. Eury Special Collections, and the University Archives and Records (including electronic records).

HOW MANY DIVISIONS ARE THERE IN YOUR DEPARTMENT?: The library has two associate dean positions and nine teams.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORK IN YOUR DEPARTMENT?: Technically, everyone!

WHAT IS YOUR MATERIALS BUDGET?: Our expenditures vary every year, but roughly \$3,000,000. 🌲

its okay to screw up — admit it, learn from it, and move on. As the saying goes, “Win some, lose some.” I have met so many talented and enthusiastic young librarians busting their butts to improve the world who have the capability to become effective, passionate, and compassionate administrators with encouragement. And administrators should never forget to champion the staff — they really run the library and have such influence on the execution and perception of our services. Take good care of them.

ATG: *On a more personal level, if we were headed up to the North Carolina mountains for a visit, what favorite recreational activities would you recommend for the first time vacationer? Are there any particular places that should be on our itinerary?*

JO: My small town, Blowing Rock, is the highest incorporated town east of the Rockies. It has a very deep history in tourism and is an escape from heat and rush of cities. A lot of homes in the community are second homes. There is a lot to explore nearby. We have Tweetsie Railroad park (I can hear the whistle as I write) that has its roots in the railroad industry that at one time thrived

up here because of the need for lumber for furniture making. The mountains offer lots of hiking, biking, and skiing opportunities. Also, just driving on the Blue Ridge Parkway and passing towns, fields, valleys, forests, and rivers is good for the soul. I particularly like the sudden shifts from fields of crops, horses or cows to spectacular overlooks. The Rocky Mountains are big and imposing, whereas the Appalachian Mountains are inviting, comforting, and seem to roll on forever. The rhododendrons are incredible when blooming, and the leaves are gorgeous in the fall. We are just a five-hour drive from Charleston, so y’all come on your way to or from the conference in November!

ATG: *Joyce, thank you so much for sharing your thoughts with us and with our readers.*

JO: Thanks for asking. It’s a pleasure to answer your questions. 🌲