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Andrea M. Quinn

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## **Are You Local? Academic Library Hiring Prior to and During COVID-19 in the United States**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Using only limited information, job candidates must assess academic libraries as prospective workplaces, while search committee members at academic libraries must make hiring decisions. Highlighting challenges that the pandemic posed to job seekers and search committee members, such as further limiting opportunities to gather information, this study compares a group of individuals hired by U.S. academic libraries before COVID-19 to a group of individuals hired by academic libraries during COVID-19. Results have implications for job seekers and hiring institutions, as they indicate that academic libraries hire more individuals with pre-existing ties to the state or region of the hiring institution and that the pandemic strengthened this tendency.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Pandemic, Job search, Academic library, Information science, Implicit bias

### **INTRODUCTION**

The question this article addresses is whether candidates applying for academic library positions benefit from having pre-existing connections to specific academic institutions, particular U.S. states, or certain U.S. regions. Given the sample size used for this study, I do not claim my results are statistically significant; however, I do show that, for the group of individuals whose outcomes I tracked, nearly half of the successful hires from the pre-pandemic period and approximately two-thirds of the successful hires from the pandemic period had pre-existing geographic ties to their hiring institutions. These results have implications for individuals responsible for hiring academic librarians, for those interested in pursuing careers in academic librarianship, and for academic librarians going on the job market.

Individuals looking for a job at an academic library must overcome a variety of obstacles, and in-person, on-campus visits with top candidates have long been part of the interview process (Defa, 2012). During COVID-19, however, it was largely impossible to continue with that model. As a result, a process that was already demanding for search committee members and job seekers at the best of times only became more challenging due to constraints arising from the pandemic. Academic librarians had to pivot during the pandemic, and job candidates had to adapt as well. Although the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared an end to the COVID-19 public health emergency in 2023, the pandemic appears to have altered how

academic libraries conduct job searches and how candidates for those positions look for and assess open positions (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2023). For example, Green writes that, as a result of the pandemic, many academic libraries cut back on hiring, and Hosoi, Reiter and Zabel note that academic libraries shifted gears to conduct interviews online during the pandemic (Green 2022; Hosoi, Reiter & Zabel, 2021, 695). Such shifts may represent long-term changes with respect to the number of available academic library positions and the processes used to appraise candidates.

Even without the added challenges of a pandemic, and given that each party on either side of an academic library job search holds only limited information about the other party, a key starting point for my research was whether or not search committee members and job candidates relied more heavily during COVID-19 on *whatever limited information they did hold*, amplifying the significance of that information. To that end, the author compared profiles of fifty people hired by academic libraries in the U.S. before COVID-19 to profiles of fifty individuals hired by academic libraries during COVID-19. The results show that, given the sets of individuals studied, more people hired by academic libraries during the pandemic already had geographic ties to the state or the region where they were hired than was the case for the sample of individuals hired by academic libraries before COVID-19.

The findings suggest that, during COVID-19, risk aversion on the part of both search committee members and on the part of job candidates and limited opportunities for candidates and search committee members to gather extensive information about the other, encouraged hiring where connections already existed. Understanding why pre-existing ties to a particular area played a greater role during COVID-19 may help those currently seeking academic library jobs better understand how search committee members assess candidates, and it may allow search committee members to evaluate their decision-making processes when it comes to hiring.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A range of works are relevant to this project, including assessments about the academic library job market, works on search committee members and the role of information, works on applicant decision-making processes, and scholarship about the impact of COVID-19 on job seekers and employers.

### **The Job Market for Academic Librarians**

In terms of hurdles that individuals seeking academic library positions face, many academic libraries require prospective hires to have acquired a master's degree in library science (MLS) before they start their jobs, many applicants are expected to have already worked at a library, and applicants are often expected to possess specialized skills (Chen & Zhang, 2017). Having an MLS is frequently "necessary," but it is often "not sufficient" to guarantee that an individual looking for a job as a librarian at an academic institution will be hired (Torres, Gold, & Donnelly, 2022, 2).

In 2012, Tewell noted that MLS graduates at that time "face[d] considerable challenges finding an entry level job" in an academic library (2012, 420). Similarly, in 2014, Eckard, Rosener, and Scripps-Hoekstra described the job market for those seeking a position in an

academic library as "competitive," and they noted that several factors, including prior work experience and a record of publishing increased an individual's chances of getting a job (2014, 108 and 111).

By 2020, the situation had not improved for other reasons, as Allard found that MLS graduates that year "bore the full force of the pandemic," at a time when fewer new library jobs were posted and when some offers to candidates were withdrawn entirely (2021, 32; Allard, 2020). In addition, as a result of travel restrictions, limitations on in-person meetings, and uncertainty about what would happen next, both job seekers and search committee members in academic libraries had to deal with substantial complications during the height of COVID-19, and Ford (2021) offers evidence that the pandemic made it more difficult for MLS graduates to find jobs, including those in academic libraries. Of the one hundred thirty-one managers at academic libraries that Fletcher, Grandy, Thurman, and Whitney surveyed (2022), 53% stated that they froze job searches during COVID-19, and another 20% canceled searches during the pandemic.

A number of other recent works focus on the logistical and technical hurdles involved in either running an academic library job search during COVID-19 or in having to navigate the job search process during the pandemic. Levine, for example, provides a summary of responses from (in combination) twenty-two job seekers and search committee members, offering insights on how best to structure virtual interviews, the limitations of virtual interviews, and whether Zoom might serve as an alternative to screening interviews previously conducted by telephone (2021). In a work that describes some of the pluses and minuses of interviewing for a number of positions in 2021, Soto-Luna offers suggestions to search committee members conducting virtual interviews and describes the process of searching for an academic library position (2022). Such works offer more qualitative, personal insights into academic library job searches around the time of the pandemic.

### **Search Committee Members and Information Gathering**

Even before the pandemic, search committee members, who were tasked with deciding which person should be recommended to the dean or library head to receive a job offer, have had to reach those decisions while relying on limited information. Search committee members typically have access to candidates' CVs, application letters, input from professional references, and candidate presentations and publications, and search committee members usually have more than one opportunity to talk with candidates to gain insights into their skills, interests, and personalities. Nonetheless, and as Pike, Bateman, and Butler point out, a fundamental challenge that characterizes any hiring process is that there are necessarily bounds to the details available about any candidate, where gaps in information create challenges for individuals making hiring decisions (2018, 730). Even experienced members of search committees are not able to gather all the relevant details about any one candidate given constraints on their time, how much and what sort of information they are able to access about each candidate, and what kinds of questions they can ask candidates. Even given extensive insights into someone's work history, education, background, and more, some individuals who are hired will not succeed at their new workplace, and others will opt not to remain at a new workplace. For search committee members, it becomes necessary to balance dual goals of identifying their best candidate while also gauging if that person is likely to accept a job offer and remain an effective part of the organization for the long term (Purohit, Gollapudi, Raghavan, 2019, 1).

In addition to the fact that search committee members cannot know all there is to know about the candidates under consideration, it is also the case that search committee members do not give every bit of information they do collect equal attention. For example, search committee members accord particular weight to similarities they perceive between themselves and certain candidates (Rivera, 2012, 1001; Hadlock & Pierce, 2021). Search committee members may also focus more heavily on some pieces of information or some candidate characteristics than others, at times relying on cognitive shortcuts to make hiring decisions. For example, search committee members may attach particular importance to recommendations they get from recommenders they know particularly well (Marsden & Gorman, 2001, 468-69). Although they do not focus specifically on academic libraries, a point Marsden and Gorman make is relevant when it comes to information gathering: although trusted connections may provide committee members with extra insights into prospective hires, relying on networks in this way may mean that individuals who are most "socially similar" to the people who actively refer them are the ones who get hired (Marsden & Gorman, 2001, 471).

The flip side of this is that some job applicants face more obstacles than other applicants (Ford, 2018, 38; Leske, 2016; Brodock & Massam, 2016). Leske points out that both overt and hidden assumptions that search committee members make about particular candidates can seep into recruitment and hiring processes (2016). For example, McCarthy and Cheng (2014, 331) and Graves and Powell (1996) note that, not only do a candidate's demographic characteristics potentially influence an interviewer's perceptions, but interviewers also assess candidates based partly on the degree to which they see similarities between themselves and particular candidates. When a search committee member perceives a "common bond" with the candidate, the search committee member is likelier to relate to and advocate for that candidate (Wilkie, 2017, 1).

Another set of challenges for candidates relate to search committee member preferences and assumptions about a candidate's potential "fit" with their institution. Being able to gauge if a specific applicant is a "fit" for a position is often a fundamental goal for search committee members, in part because the stakes are so high, with a hiring decision potentially having a significant impact on the organization for years to come. (Pike, Bateman, & Butler, 2018, 729). Gaspar and Brown write that hiring for "fit" is "especially critical" in libraries, as librarians need to understand and disseminate an institution's values while engaging with a broad range of people across campus (2015, 374). When members of an organization screen potential hires, they are "more likely to admit" new members who are like they are (Jackson et al., 1991, 676). As a result, one key problem with "hiring for cultural fit" is that trying to find an individual who meets that criterion may also "stifle diversity," as the new hiree is likelier to be suited to the organization's existing culture and less likely to either push that culture to be more inclusive or to foster change from within it (Farkas, 2019, 78; Blackmore & Rahimi, 2019, 444).

### **The Additional Element of COVID-19**

With respect to academic library positions, one core goal of on-campus visits is for search committee members and candidates to gather as much information as possible about one another. COVID-19 largely upended this approach, as the vast majority of all-day interviews for academic library positions had to be held virtually (Michalak & Rysavy, 2022, 102). Looking at the impact that COVID-19 had on hiring at academic libraries, Fletcher, Grandy, Thurman, and Whitney (2022) found that, for one hundred thirty-one institutions that they studied, all but one campus held at least some portion of their job interviews virtually beginning in March 2020.

Restrictions that accompanied COVID-19 created added challenges for hiring committees and candidates well beyond the usual limits on available information that job seekers and search committee members gather in normal times. Not only did candidates have fewer and more restricted opportunities to learn about possible future workplaces and potential colleagues, but search committee members also had fewer and more limited chances to get to know individual candidates.

McCarthy et al. (2021) summarize some ways in which COVID-19 had an impact on job seekers, including experiences of "heightened anxiety" as a result of concerns about their health and safety and the health and safety of others and due to "apprehension regarding employment and financial stability" (1103). In Kniffin et al.'s view, COVID-19 can be characterized as a traumatic event that increased feelings of uncertainty and loss in areas including job security and social connections (2021). Further, Joshi et al. highlight several drawbacks to the sort of video (versus in-person) interviews that were used during the pandemic, including the fact that video interviews don't allow for the transmission of nonverbal cues as a source of information (2020, 1318). If interviews before the pandemic were already an imperfect way to gather information, then COVID-19 limited candidate-search committee member interactions and opportunities to learn about the other party to an even greater degree.

Allard's survey of 2020 MLS graduates who applied for a range of positions including those within academic libraries indicates that those graduates were "more conservative" when it came to employment decisions than were graduates who came before them, where this conservatism included being likelier to remain with a current job or employer (2021, 32). The idea that COVID-19 led some academic library job seekers to cast a more limited net when searching for jobs is further supported by Ford's finding that during the pandemic, some job hunters who had completed MLS programs adopted "new geographic considerations," including prioritizing jobs located where they would be able to live closer to their family members or be in an area that was already familiar to them (Ford, 2021). Looking for work during "normal" times is already a stress-inducing enterprise, and COVID-19 added additional layers of difficulty, social isolation, and uncertainty to the environment for job seekers (Martin, 2021, 3). Further, COVID-19 made the idea of relocating to an entirely new place during a time of upheaval and uncertainty less appealing to at least some number of job seekers, including those seeking employment at academic libraries (Allard, 2021, 34).

## METHODS

Given the added challenges the pandemic created, did academic library job candidates and search committee members rely more heavily on the existence of geographic ties to make employment decisions? Specifically, did a greater percentage of academic library hirees who found positions during the pandemic have pre-existing connections to the institutions that hired them than was the case for individuals hired by academic libraries before the pandemic?

To address these questions, the author tracked the educational backgrounds of people hired for in-person academic library positions in the United States for two distinct time periods: a group of individuals hired in the years just prior to COVID-19 and a second group of people

hired during COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> Information about a total of one hundred individuals who were hired for permanent positions (“hirees”) and the positions they took at a range of academic libraries across the United States was compiled. Because of the relatively small total number of hirees considered for this study, the results are not statistically significant. The results highlight the possible significance of pre-existing geographic ties between successful candidates and hiring institutions, and the results offer avenues for further research using a much larger pools of unsuccessful candidates and hirees at academic libraries.

Hirees, unsuccessful job candidates, and search committee members were not interviewed for this project because a central assumption about pre-existing geographic ties playing a part in hiring decisions is that those decisions were made without the individual who selected the hiree having explicit knowledge or an understanding of the role of such bias. Implicit bias, sometimes referred to as unconscious bias, can result in discriminatory behavior when it comes to hiring (Houser, 2019, 293). As Houser notes, decision-makers, including those responsible for making hires or recommending individuals for hire, are not aware of their own cognitive biases (2019, 304-305). Because individuals making hiring decisions do not understand their own biases, trying to measure implicit or unconscious bias can pose numerous challenges for scholars (See Noon, 2018). As work by Reynolds et al. indicates, for scholars trying to understand psychological processes involved in scenarios such as the hiring of an individual, finding evidence of bias and getting people to acknowledge how they evaluate job candidates is complex (2021). As such, using questionnaires or surveys to determine whether and to what degree members of hiring committees have unconscious biases about job candidates is best left to researchers with expertise in psychology and related fields.

The data for this study were collected by first assembling a list of approximately one hundred and twenty-five job descriptions from pre-pandemic and pandemic times from a combination of postings, using code4lib.org, higheredjobs.com, and jobs.diglib.org. Although these resources may not cover as wide a range of types of academic library jobs as some other job posting resources do, the aforementioned resources were readily available over an extended period of time, which made it possible to conduct the research necessary for tracking hiring outcomes prior to and during COVID-19. For each position, the job title, the name of the academic institution that posted the position, and the date the job was posted were recorded. Information about the person who was ultimately hired for each position was also recorded, along with that individual’s name, all post-baccalaureate degrees they had earned, and the names and locations of the institutions at which they earned their post-baccalaureate degrees.

The educational background of each hiree was confirmed by cross-checking staffing information from campus library websites, individual LinkedIn profiles, alumni news, information from ACRL's *College & Research Library News*, and campus and library announcements about recent hires. In cases where it was impossible to determine who had been hired for a position, if it was not possible to verify through more than one source who had been hired for the position, or if information about the hiree's post-baccalaureate educational background was not available, that case was removed from the sample. If the hiree had not

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<sup>1</sup> An added wrinkle is that the pandemic increased the option to do remote work for certain academic library jobs, which meant that for at least some applicants, applying for a job in a new location did not mean having to relocate there (Allard, 2021, 34), but for the purposes of this work, I focus specifically on posted in-person (not remote) positions.

received an MLS from a degree-granting institution located in the United States, information about those hirees was excluded from the final sample.<sup>2</sup> Allard's 2020 survey (2021, 36) covers one hundred forty-four people hired by academic libraries, and Library Research Service (2019) estimated that approximately one hundred fifty-five positions at academic libraries were posted in 2018, so the aim is that a sample of one hundred MLS graduates hired by academic institutions during two periods (a time period just prior to COVID-19 and a second time period during COVID-19) is approximately representative of the profiles of the total pool of hirees from before and during the pandemic.

One goal was to cast a wide net with respect to the types of institutions and types of jobs for which hiring outcomes were tracked, where these ranged from institutions of different sizes of both public and private institutions and a variety of different positions within units across academic libraries. For the pre-pandemic time period, information was collected about people hired in twenty-six different states, with the largest number hired in California and Pennsylvania (5 hirees each), followed by New York (4 hirees), Georgia, North Carolina, and Washington state (3 hirees each); the remaining hirees in the other twenty states numbered either one or two individuals per state. For the pandemic period, information was gathered about people hired in twenty-three different states, with the highest number hired in California (9 hirees), followed by Massachusetts (6 hirees), North Carolina (5 hirees), Michigan (4 hirees), and Pennsylvania and Washington state (3 hirees each); the remaining hirees in the seventeen other states numbered one or two people per state.

As set out in the job postings, some of the academic library positions tracked for this project explicitly required candidates to have several years or more of prior, relevant experience; other positions were ostensibly entry-level jobs. For individuals who were hired prior to the pandemic and those hired during the pandemic, the sample of hirees excluded any persons who were already working at a library at a particular academic institution and were then hired to a new position at that exact same academic institution.<sup>3</sup> The types of positions tracked for this project were labeled according to nine broad categories used by San Jose State University School of Information's overview of academic library job postings in 2022 (2022, 35). In extremely broad terms, these categories offer a way to categorize distinct academic library positions.

In addition to tracking when a position was posted, which academic library posted the position, when someone was hired for the position (before or during the pandemic), and what the educational background of the successful applicant (hiree) was, geographic information regarding the location of institution(s) where each hiree earned their MLS and where they earned any other advanced degree(s) was also recorded. Specifically, information about which state within the U.S. was home to the institution where the hiree earned their MLS, MA, or PhD, as applicable, was noted. For each advanced degree earned, information about which of the three categories the hiring state fell into was noted: 1) if the state where the hiree received an advanced degree was the same state as the one that was home to the hiring institution; 2) if one or more of the states where the hiree earned an advanced degree shared a border with the hiring institution's

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<sup>2</sup> Oliver & Prosser (2018, 614-615) offer evidence that academic library positions requiring an MLS have decreased over time, with some types of positions being particularly likely not to require an MLS; here, I focus only on hirees who had an MLS from a U.S. institution at the time of their hire.

<sup>3</sup> Such boomerang employees would have likely been familiar with people on the search committee and in the library they went back to work for. Hiring boomerang employees is "thought to be less risky" than hiring a totally new employee because they are, in Arnold et al.'s words, "a known entity" (Arnold et al., 2021, 2199).



state, or 3) if the hiring institution was in a state that was neither in the state where the hiree earned an advanced degree nor in a state bordering where the hiree earned an advanced degree.

In terms of regional proximity, the closest measure for the purposes of this paper were those cases where the hiring institution was located in the exact same state as where the hiree had earned an advanced degree. An absence of regional ties was represented by cases where the hiree had not earned an advanced degree in the hiring state and had not earned an advanced degree in any state that bordered the hiring state.

## RESULTS

When comparing profiles of the fifty people hired at academic libraries before COVID-19 to the fifty people hired at academic libraries during COVID-19, a greater percentage of the individuals hired during pandemic times had pre-existing geographic ties to the hiring institution than was the case for those hired before the pandemic. Table 1 provides a summary of the number and percentage of hirees with geographic ties to their hiring institutions for the pre-pandemic and pandemic time periods.

**Table 1**

*Pre-COVID and COVID Hiring for Academic Library Positions*

<b>Connection of Hirees to hiring institution</b>	<b>Hirees with no evident pre-existing geographic tie to hiring institution</b>	<b>Hirees receiving non-MLS degree(s) in same state as hiring institution</b>	<b>Hirees receiving advanced degrees in a state bordering hiring institution state</b>	<b>Hirees receiving MLS from institution in same state as hiring institution</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Pre-COVID Time Period*	26 (52%)	7 (14%)	5 (10%)	12 (24%)	50 (100%)
COVID Time Period*	17 (34%)	9 (18%)	4 (8%)	20 (40%)	50 (100%)
Total Hirees for Pre-COVID and COVID Time Periods	43 (43%)	16 (16%)	9 (9%)	32 (32%)	100 (100%)

\* *The pre-COVID-19 hiring period covers 2016 through December of 2019; the COVID-19 period covers the period between spring of 2020 and spring of 2022.*

As summarized in Table 1, between 2016 and 2019, little more than half (52%) of the fifty pre-COVID-19 hirees tracked did not have an evident geographic connection to the institution that hired them. That is, of the fifty pre-pandemic hirees, twenty-six individuals did not receive their MLS or any other advanced (post-baccalaureate) degree from an academic institution located in the same U.S. state where the academic library that hired them was located

or from an institution that bordered the state in which the institution that hired them was located. Of the pre-pandemic hirees, 24% received their MLS from an institution located in the same state as the hiring institution, 14% received an advanced degree other than an MLS from an institution located in the same state as the hiring institution, and the remaining 10% of these hirees received an advanced degree other than their MLS from a state that bordered the state in which the hiring institution was located. That means 48%, or slightly less than half, of the people hired prior to COVID-19 had some sort of pre-existing geographic tie to the hiring institution.

An even higher percentage of individuals from the sample of pandemic hirees had geographic ties to their hiring institutions. Two-thirds (66%) of the pandemic hirees had a geographic tie to the academic library that hired them. Specifically, of the fifty people hired during the pandemic, 40% or 20 individuals, received their MLS from an academic institution located in the exact same state as the academic library that hired them. Another 18% of the individuals from the group hired during the pandemic received an advanced degree other than their MLS from an institution located in the same state as the hiring institution, and a further 8% of pandemic hirees received an advanced degree from a state that bordered the state where the hiring institution was located. In the next section, I explore some possible reasons for the apparent or potential shift in hiring patterns between pre-pandemic and pandemic times.

A summary of job categories, geographical proximity, time period the person was hired, and each hiree's identifying number is provided in the Appendix (Table 2).

## DISCUSSION

A question guiding this research was whether ties to a particular state or region would be more important during the pandemic – at a time when academic library job interviews took place online instead of in person – than they were prior to the pandemic. In those cases where candidates had already lived in a particular state or region of the U.S., they had first-hand experience they could draw on when it came to deciding to apply for a position in that area and when it came to opting to move to that location when offered a job there. During the pandemic, taking a job at an institution in an area that was more familiar may have seemed less risky than taking a job somewhere completely unknown.

Based on a survey of employed 2020 MLS graduates, Allard writes that those graduates were "much less likely to have relocated" for their new jobs than was the case for 2019 graduates, where going with what was familiar was an important factor for those seeking jobs at libraries (2021, 34). For search committee members, the fact that a candidate had previously demonstrated a willingness to live in the same state or region as the location of the hiring institution may have been interpreted as sincere interest in the position. At a time when the hiring process was more complicated than usual, search committee members may have considered indicators of past interest in living in a particular area to be especially important.

## CONCLUSION

Members of most organizations are finding ways to ensure that hiring practices include people who represent a wide range of skills, backgrounds, interests, and experiences, and in this respect,

understanding some of the patterns that characterize academic library hiring is useful for anyone involved in assessing candidates. Along different lines, the results presented here suggest that to be well-positioned, individuals seeking jobs at academic libraries may need to cultivate ties to locations they are interested in targeting in their job searches. Even though a higher percentage of hirees had ties to the state or region of the hiring institution during the pandemic, nearly one-half of the hirees from the pre-pandemic group similarly had ties to the state or region of the hiring institution. In other words, even before the pandemic, pre-existing geographic ties mattered when it came to getting an academic library job.

For students enrolled in MLS programs, being aware of the significance of pre-existing geographic ties to a hiring institution may be relevant to them for the purposes of planning where they decide to seek out directed field work opportunities, internships, volunteer work, and other positions that may have an impact on future job opportunities. The fact that 24% of hirees from before the pandemic received an MLS from the same state as their hiring institution and 40% of hirees from the pandemic period received an MLS from the same state as their hiring institution may also highlight the importance of information school alumni networks, long-standing hiring patterns whereby graduates are likelier to apply for jobs near their degree program institution, or search committee member preferences to hire graduates from an institution with which they are familiar. At the same time, the increase in hiring characterized by geographic connections during the pandemic suggests that risk-aversion or possibly a desire to stick with what was familiar was a relevant factor for both candidates and search committee members.

Additional avenues of study related to this research would require further information. Having a far larger sample of hirees from pre-pandemic and pandemic times would allow for hypothesis testing in a way that is not possible given the small sample size used for the current study.

In addition, it would be useful to access information about all of the candidates for the positions tracked here, including those individuals who were not hired, in order to compare their profiles to those of the successful candidates or hirees. Relatedly, it is important to assess whether the U.S. and its particular ecosystem of MLS placements is an anomaly or if successful hirees who have graduated from MLS programs or hirees of academic libraries in other countries also appear to have pre-existing geographic ties to their hiring institutions.

Next, by relying on state borders to denote proximity in the United States, this study may have missed out on more meaningful ways to categorize geographic ties; for example, using membership in regional associations might have been a useful proxy. This study also did not consider factors specific to search committee members at these different hiring institutions, yet it is plausible that search committee members who themselves come from a wider range of places outside their hiring institution might be more open to hiring a person without pre-existing geographic ties to the state or region where their library is located. Additionally, with respect to the candidates who did not have pre-existing regional ties to the hiring institution who were nonetheless hired, what factors contributed to getting them a job offer or put another way, what allowed them to overcome the absence of geographic ties to the hiring institution in those cases? Further research into how search committee decision making works and to what extent the pandemic has permanently changed academic library hiring is also warranted.

Looking beyond the pandemic, candidate interviews for academic library positions have in some instances continued to take place remotely, without a campus interview. Next, even after

the pandemic, some people remain less willing to relocate for a new job. Such factors, and others, suggest that some of the patterns that this study has potentially identified may continue to define hiring patterns for academic libraries.

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## About the authors

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## Appendix

**Table 2**

*Academic Library Hiree Proximity to Hiring Institution, Pre-COVID versus COVID*

<b>Hiree ID</b>	<b>Hiring Period</b>	<b>Job Category</b>	<b>Proximity to Hiring Institution</b>
Hiree 1	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	none
Hiree 2	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	same as MLS
Hiree 3	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	none
Hiree 4	Pre-COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 5	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	same as other adv degree
Hiree 6	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as other adv degree
Hiree 7	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	same as MLS
Hiree 8	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	same as other adv degree
Hiree 9	Pre-COVID	web srvc, UX, soc media	none
Hiree 10	Pre-COVID	collectn, acquist, circ	none
Hiree 11	Pre-COVID	catalog, metadata	none
Hiree 12	Pre-COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 13	Pre-COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 14	Pre-COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 15	Pre-COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 16	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	borders adv degree
Hiree 17	Pre-COVID	web srvc, UX, soc media	none
Hiree 18	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	same as MLS
Hiree 19	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 20	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	none
Hiree 21	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 22	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	none
Hiree 23	Pre-COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 24	Pre-COVID	collectn, acquist, circ	same as MLS
Hiree 25	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	none



Hiree 26	Pre-COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	borders adv degree
Hiree 27	Pre-COVID	info systems, tech	same as MLS
Hiree 28	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 29	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 30	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	none
Hiree 31	Pre-COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 32	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 33	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	borders adv degree
Hiree 34	Pre-COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 35	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	borders adv degree
Hiree 36	Pre-COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 37	Pre-COVID	ref/research	same as MLIS
Hiree 38	Pre-COVID	info systems, tech	same as MLIS
Hiree 39	Pre-COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 40	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 41	Pre-COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 42	Pre-COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 43	Pre-COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 44	Pre-COVID	catalog, metadata	none
Hiree 45	Pre-COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 46	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 47	Pre-COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 48	Pre-COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 49	Pre-COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	same as MLS
Hiree 50	Pre-COVID	mmgt/admin	borders adv degree
Hiree 51	COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 52	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 53	COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 54	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	borders adv degree
Hiree 55	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 56	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 57	COVID	catalog, metadata	none
Hiree 58	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 59	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	same as MLS
Hiree 60	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 61	COVID	collectn, acquist, circ	borders adv degree
Hiree 62	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS

Hiree 63	COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 64	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 65	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 66	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 67	COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 68	COVID	mmgt/admin	same as MLS
Hiree 69	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 70	COVID	collectn, acquist, circ	borders adv degree
Hiree 71	COVID	info systems, tech	none
Hiree 72	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 73	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as MLS
Hiree 74	COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 75	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	same as other adv degree
Hiree 76	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	same as other adv degree
Hiree 77	COVID	ref/research	same as other adv degree
Hiree 78	COVID	web srvc, UX, soc media	none
Hiree 79	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	none
Hiree 80	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	borders adv degree
Hiree 81	COVID	ref/research	none
Hiree 82	COVID	info systems, tech	same as MLS
Hiree 83	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 84	COVID	collectn, acquist, circ	none
Hiree 85	COVID	ref/research	borders adv degree
Hiree 86	COVID	data mmgt, data analysis	none
Hiree 87	COVID	info systems, tech	borders adv degree
Hiree 88	COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 89	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 90	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	same as MLS
Hiree 91	COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	same as MLS
Hiree 92	COVID	mmgt/admin	none
Hiree 93	COVID	dig init, dig mmgt	none
Hiree 94	COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	none
Hiree 95	COVID	ref/research	same as MLS
Hiree 96	COVID	mmgt/admin	borders adv degree
Hiree 97	COVID	outreach/prog/instr	none
Hiree 98	COVID	arch/pres/spec coll	same as MLS
Hiree 99	COVID	web srvc, UX, soc media	same as other adv degree

Hiree 100      COVID      dig init, dig mmgt      same as MLS

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*Table 2 job categories for are drawn from SJSU School of Information. 2022. "MLIS Skills at Work: A Snapshot of Job Postings Spring 2022," 35.*

The full description of the abbreviated academic library position categories are:

Ref/research = reference or research

Web srvc, UX, soc media = web services, user experience, or social media

Arch/pres/spec coll = archives, preservation, or special collections

Outreach/prog/instr = Outreach, programming, or instruction

Mmgt/admin = Management or administration

Dig init, dig mmgt = Digital initiatives or digital management

Info systems, tech = Information systems or technology

Catalog, metadata = Cataloging or metadata

Collectn, acquist, circ = Collection, acquisition, or circulation