

SLAIS Career Expo 2009: Students set to crash the job market

By Katherine Parker.

The Annual Career Expo (formerly the Job Fair) was held at SLAIS on March 20, 2009. Committee member and student Manuela Boscenco came up with this year's theme, 'Crash the Market!', wanting to "turn around the old adagio of the 'market crash' into something funny, positive and that can be overcome by being inventive and persistent." This theme ran throughout the conference; SLAIS Director Dr. Edie Rasmussen advised today's graduates "to cast their net a little more widely" and be adventurous, while panelist Ian Forsythe, University Archivist, SFU, listed flexibility, versatility, and mobility as necessary attributes for success in a time of limited budgets.



Alissa Cherry, Resources Centre Director, Union of BC Indian Chiefs, speaks at the Career Expo.

Schedule of Events

The Career Expo committee, chaired by SLAIS students Erin Abler and Jenny Borland, was hard at work for months to assemble the 20+ professionals to act as panelists, lead group discussions, and answer questions in individual sessions. The event began with Guy Robertson, Consultant, Robertson Emergency Planning Inc giving a thought-provoking keynote address forecasting the future of employment for the information professions, foreseeing growth for seniors' librarians, community outreach archivists, and information security professionals. Robertson was



Chris Middlemass of VPL shares wisdom with SLAIS student Chris Conroy in a one-on-one session.

followed by two panels of speakers, made up of archivists and librarians alike, who spoke of their own career paths and gave advice for students graduating into an uncertain economy. Active involvement in professional organizations was a recurring recommendation.

Experience Shared

Of especial use to students were the group and individual sessions that followed, and as MLIS student Andrea Brown put it, "I'm looking for as much information as I can find to be successful in this economic downturn." The participation of all the professionals was greatly appreciated, and they in turn seemed to enjoy sharing their experience with the students. Panelist Susannah Tredwell, law librarian at Lawson Lundell, commented that she enjoys giving students "as much information as possible... anything we can do to help students shine."

At the End of the Day

The event was neatly summed up by MLIS student Tania Alekson, "everyone always seems happy to welcome students to the profession and to help get you on your way." Students left in good spirits, a little re-assured that with persistence and creativity there are still jobs to be had in today's economy.

Katherine Parker is a PR rep for the SLAIS Career Expo and an MLIS candidate at SLAIS.