Tips for Implementing a Library Mentoring Program

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Agenda

• Introduction
• Benefits of a library mentoring program
• Administering a library mentoring program: Basic needs
• Starting a library mentoring program: Recommended next steps
Introduction

• Context
• Various types of mentoring programs
• Two functions of mentoring:
  • Career goals/job performance,
  • Psychosocial
Benefits of a Library Mentoring Program

- **Onboarding**
  - New staff member will have a go-to person to talk to or ask questions
  - Mentor can help orient new staff member to the culture of the library and campus
  - Mentor can provide support for tenure or review process requirements

- **Recruitment**
  - Candidates ask about mentoring
Benefits of a Library Mentoring Program

• Inclusive environment
  • Indicative that an organization wants staff to succeed
  • Everyone feels welcomed equally
  • Combats imposter syndrome

• Building relationships
  • Between more seasoned library staff and new person
  • Cross-departmental - improves communication
Administering a Library Mentoring Program: Basic Needs

- Commitment from existing library staff
  - Staff members must be willing to serve as mentors
  - Change in library culture

- Support from library administration
  - Staff time, professional development investment

- Who will administer the program?
  - A committee works well so that the program doesn’t depend on one person
Administering a Library Mentoring Program: Basic Needs

- Program goals

- Program guidelines
  - What is expected of the mentor and the mentee
  - How long does the paired relationship last
  - What happens if there are issues with the pairing

- Participant agreement form

- Assessment plan
Starting a Library Mentoring Program: Recommended Next Steps

• Take the initiative
  • It’s helpful to have someone(s) as point person: Start the discussion, draft initial documents, get the ball rolling.

• Engage library staff in discussion
  • Staff are more likely to participate when they are part of the idea-generating process.
  • Sometimes these things need much discussion before action can be taken, so get the idea out there.
Starting a Library Mentoring Program: Recommended Next Steps

• Needs assessment
  • What needs specific to your library would the mentoring program help fulfill?

• Do your research
  • There is plenty of literature out there on library mentoring programs
For Future Consideration

• How to be an effective mentor (and mentee)

• Network of mentors beyond the formal program: supervisors, peers, and other informal relationships

• Assessing and improving program goals, guidelines, and structure


