THE ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN AS MENTOR:
HELPING STUDENTS INTO AND OUT OF THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

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LUC Conference October 13, 2011
MENTORING: WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

• Definition: A deliberate act of advising and guiding a new librarian in order to facilitate a smooth transition to and/or development in the profession.
WHY MENTOR?

• To reduce anxiety in and/or minimize difficulty for someone new or inexperienced.
• To match experience and know-how with needed guidance and assurance.
• To increase retention and enhance success.
• To structure successful outcomes in order to establish desired success.
BENEFITS OF MENTORING

• Successful job transition or professional development.

• Demonstrate organizational commitment to the achievement of employee success.

• Improve organizational networking, sharing, and collaboration.

• Improved organizational camaraderie and satisfaction
FORMS OF MENTORING

Formal

Formal mentoring typically involves a defined arrangement or assignment and may also involve specified goals or outcomes.
FORMS OF MENTORING

Informal

• Providing assistance or help when and in the manner in which it is needed can be Informal Mentoring
FORMS OF MENTORING
Teacher/student vs. peer/adviser

- A Teacher/student relationship intends to impart experience and show guidance
- A peer/adviser relationship involves collaboration and partnering with common objectives
FORMS OF MENTORING
Virtual vs. physical

E-mentoring affords mentoring to individuals and diverse groups across distances and in non-obvious ways.

Traditional face-to-face contact works to provide an immediate exchange and an observable result.
FORMS OF MENTORING
Subject-focused vs. General

• Mentoring to help with a specific subject can be detailed, illustrative, and demonstrated

• Generalized mentoring can be encouraging, championing, and adaptive
FORMS OF MENTORING

• Mentoring vs. coaching

Mentoring is designed to be helpful and instructive.

Coaching is designed to provide guidance and vision.
MENTORING STUDENTS IN THE ACADEMIC LIBRARY

• Qualities of a mentor.
• Why mentor students?
• Methods of mentoring for librarians
  – Relationships
  – Professionalism/attitude
  – Goal-setting
• Highlight/share accomplishments
QUALITIES OF A MENTOR

• A willingness to serve and to be helpful
• Have or be able to have a good relationship with students
• The ability to listen to and keep a student’s confidentiality
• Challenge the capabilities of the student
QUALITIES OF A MENTOR

• The ability to build-up a sense of empowerment in students (especially with student workers)
• Being committed to the student’s success
• A strong understanding of their personal nature and sense of morality
• Patience
Why mentor students?

- Mentoring is done for many reasons personal and practical.
- For this presenter the motivations stem from a combination:
  - of upbringing
  - the desire to pass forward the level of guidance and care given in college and graduate school
  - as well as to contribute to retention goals of the academic institution
  - the betterment of the host community
**WHY MENTOR STUDENTS?**

- These underlying motivations can be stated in four points:
  - 1. Help new and returning students acclimatize to the academic environment.
  - 2. Help all students reach their academic potential.
  - 3. Help the institution’s retention goals.
  - 4. To help students transition out of college and into professional life.
**WHY MENTOR STUDENTS?**

- There are also other reasons librarians reach out to students.
- For some, the reasons may include:
  - Recruitment of future librarians or instilling research skills into people they feel have the potential for a career in academia.
  - A religious or moral calling relating to service for others. [i]
- Whatever the reason, there is a need for librarians who are so honorably inclined to share time and skills beyond the reference interview or supervisor/supervisee relationship with the students of their institution.

[i] Em Knowles, *The Next Generation: Mentoring, Recruitment and Library Education*. 
METHODS OF MENTORING FOR LIBRARIANS

• Relationships
  • Find people you can and want to work with
  • Know and enforce proper boundaries
  • Realize every student isn’t a possible mentee
  • Know when to end or change mentoring relationships
  • Be willing to give of yourself

• Professionalism/ Attitude
  • The ability to provide or promote goal-setting in student academic and social behavior
RELATIONSHIPS

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• Know and enforce proper boundaries
• Realize every student isn’t a potential mentee
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PROFESSIONALISM / ATTITUDE

• Provide a positive professional model for mentees
• Display in action and communication the realities of the professional world
• Let them know that you expect them to succeed in whatever they do
• Be able to guide them through various situations
ABILITY TO SET FOR OR PROMOTE GOAL-SETTING IN STUDENT BEHAVIOR

- Communicate expectations with the student regularly (especially important with workers)
- Inquire about progress in classes and life (within boundaries)
- Provide concrete examples of what you’ve done to be successful in college and work
- Challenge them to be successful in their work and follow up with them
HIGHLIGHT/SHARE ACCOMPLISHMENTS
EXPECTED MENTORING OUTCOMES

• Successful student acclimatization to college environment.
• Achievement of educational potential and maximization of the academic opportunity.
• Through success, students stay in college, graduate, assimilate positive learning skills.
• Students appreciate the value of education and transition to professional life.
REFERENCES


Mentoring Makes Libraries Better!