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### University of Northern Colorado Libraries Mentoring Program

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# University of Northern Colorado University Libraries Mentoring Program

Effective 17 June 2020, rev. 6 August 2020, as approved by the University Libraries Faculty

## INTRODUCTION

The University Libraries has a mentoring program in order to assist newly hired librarians to succeed in their careers. Mentors supplement the efforts of supervisors and provide new librarians with a professional relationship that allows for acculturation, encouragement of talent, sharing expertise and connections, promotion of professional growth, and advising during peer reviews.

The mentor program is important to the health of University Libraries as an organization, because it supports new librarians in their development and becoming successful contributors to the University Libraries and to the profession at large. Serving as a mentor formally counts as a University Libraries service activity.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The University Libraries are committed to fostering the professional growth of faculty members. The University Libraries mentoring program is one such avenue for this support. The outcomes of the University Libraries mentoring program are:

- To assist and orient newly hired librarians to the workplace culture of University Libraries and the University of Northern Colorado.
- To assist newly hired librarians in understanding the University Libraries faculty evaluation process and to address any related questions or concerns.
- To develop professional connections with individuals across the Libraries and campus.

## PROGRAM SCOPE

The University Libraries mentoring program is intended to begin within the first three months of employment and last through the first full peer evaluation cycle. The basic focus of the program is to orient new librarians to the culture of University Libraries and the evaluation and promotion process. However, pairs may wish to discuss wider university and professional topics as they see fit.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### Eligibility/Criteria to Participate

All new members of the University Libraries Faculty are eligible to be paired with a mentor. Faculty include lecturers, interim faculty, resident librarians, contract renewable and tenure track faculty members. Assistant and associate ranks are eligible.

Those faculty members with at least three years of experience at University Libraries and measurable progress towards tenure or promotion, or tenured, are eligible to serve as mentor.

### Process for Selection of Mentor Pairs

**Time is of the Essence:** Matching of the mentor and mentee should be accomplished promptly following the general orientation of the new employee to job expectations and the campus by their supervisor.

“Promptly” means the pairing and initial mentor-mentee meeting should take place between one to three months after the arrival of the mentee to campus.

**Pairing Process:** Planning for the match begins upon hiring of the new employee. The supervisor emails the pairing questionnaires to the new hire and all eligible Libraries faculty (Appendix A and Faculty SharePoint site). The supervisor considers the new hire’s background and career path, gathers responses to mentor-mentee pairing questionnaire, analyzes characteristics of the available pool of mentors, and meets with the mentee to discuss a short list of possible mentors. If the mentee desires, the supervisor initiates the first meeting with one or more of the individuals on the short list in order to help finalize the pair. Individuals may use the initial questionnaire responses to guide these informal interviews. The mentee makes their selection and contacts their mentor of choice. A dyad is established by mutual agreement between the mentor and mentee, and is communicated to the supervisor by the mentor via email. The mentor later communicates with the mentee’s supervisor to address scope, anticipated time period, specific goals, etc.

**Roles:** The following parties will have input into the pairing decision: the mentee, the mentor, and the mentee’s supervisor (these parties are listed in the order of their precedence). Their role during the pairing process is to honestly assess, intuit, and share with one another their estimation of the viability and effectiveness of the pairing. The satisfaction of the mentee is paramount, the mentor’s secondary. It is the added role of the mentee’s supervisor to consider the goals of the organization and build a short list of potential mentors. Inter-departmental (cross-department) pairings are not required but are preferable to intra-departmental (within the same department) pairings because of the benefits of cross-pollination. These more departmentally disparate partnerships avoid overlaps with departmental training, possible conflicts of interest, and unnecessary complications of supervisor/supervisee relationship. Eligible faculty are encouraged to volunteer to be a mentor; motivated participants are ideal.

**Administration:** Oversight of this program is minimal. ABEC administers the evaluative component of the program. The role of University Libraries Administration shall be advisory in nature. They will be kept informed of partnership formations and dissolutions. Any general concerns about the mentoring program shall be brought forward in the Faculty Meetings for discussion. Any specific concerns should be resolved between the three parties (mentee, mentor, and mentee’s supervisor). In the event of an inability of the three parties to reach consensus, University Libraries Administration may be consulted for guidance.

**Changes, Collegiality and Compatibility:** It is the ethos of University Libraries Faculty to exhibit collegiality and congeniality, and to communicate and behave with civility. That said, not all faculty members are compatible. Collegiality does not guarantee compatibility. It is the mentee’s prerogative to decline the supervisor’s suggestion of a mentor and request another. Likewise, after their initial exploratory meeting, the mentee and the mentor shall have the opportunity to decline the match if it is not satisfactory. All three parties are strongly advised to consider the first meeting to be exploratory, with the ultimate goal being the most fruitful match, and not necessarily this particular match. Recognition that a partnership does not “click” is something that should not be ignored. The ability to recognize this and request a different pairing should not be taken as a negative, but should be regarded as a successful acknowledgement or intuition. It is important that there be positive chemistry between the mentor and mentee. Dropping out of the mentoring program entirely is discouraged. Instead,

changing one's partner is encouraged in a timely manner. Likewise, a mentor may decline a match for reasons such as conflict of interest or lack of expertise in an area crucial to the mentee. If you have questions during any phase of the mentoring program about the mentoring program, contact your supervisor.

**Transparency and Confidentiality:** Once a dyad is established, their match will be announced by the supervisor in the next faculty meeting. In the cases the supervisor is an administrator, they will be invited to the faculty meeting. This public announcement makes the transaction transparent and acknowledges and recognizes that it is important service in University Libraries. That said, while the existence of the mentorship is transparent, it is crucial that the mentor and mentee honor the privacy of their partner and that they have a clear agreement between one another of what they deem confidential, and that this be expressed with clarity throughout the term of their relationship.

**Duration of the Mentor/Mentee Relationship:** The minimum duration of the relationship shall be one full evaluation period. Thus, each relationship will span more than one year (from 1-3 months after date of hire to the end of the first full evaluation period) and many will approach two years. (For example, if hired on December 15 of 2020, but not matched until March 15, 2021, the first full evaluation period would end December 30, 2022). At this point, assessment is completed and the formal dyad dissolves but productive relationships are encouraged to continue.

## **PROGRAM BENEFITS**

Potential Benefits for mentees include, but are not limited to:

- Learning of University Libraries culture
- Receiving support during the first-year evaluation process
- Having a sounding board for research and scholarship endeavors (reviewing draft proposals and manuscripts, etc.)
- Improving personal job satisfaction and a connection to University Libraries
- Learning a new point of view and professional perspective

Potential Benefits for mentors include, but are not limited to:

- Building professional relationships with new colleagues
- Increasing personal satisfaction in helping to develop new talent
- Continuing the cycle of support within the organization
- Exposing the mentor to new perspectives and trends in the profession
- Serving as a mentor is recognized in the evaluation process as service to the University Libraries.

Potential Benefits for the University Libraries include, but are not limited to:

- Helping new librarians integrate into University Libraries culture and enhance their productivity
- Improving communication of University Libraries policies and procedures
- Reducing faculty turnover
- Providing an overall contribution to the effectiveness of the University Libraries as an organization and of the University Libraries faculty
- Demonstrating the University Libraries commitment to encouraging faculty success

## **MENTEE ROLES**

- Come prepared to engage with and ask questions of your mentor
- Strive to achieve professional growth
- Be open to feedback and advice from a mentor
- Be honest with your mentor
- Take responsibility for their learning and advancement
- Successfully work toward promotion and progression in your University Libraries position and in your career

## **MENTOR ROLES & GOALS**

Expectations of the mentoring role include:

### **Leadership: take the lead**

How: Initiate contact with the mentee, scheduling of the first meeting, and setting up of a regular, sustainable schedule of meetings

### **Positivity: set a positive tone**

How: Praise the mentee for efforts and perseverance; Leverage mentee's talents and strengths (potentially utilize Strengthsquest or other assessment)

### **Create a productive relationship: seek tangible results, encourage accountability**

How: Set SMART (Smart, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based) objectives for mentee

### **Don't expect to know it all; if a mentee needs some resources outside of the mentor's expertise, make referrals**

How: Outsource some tasks (e.g., referral to a colleague, consult outside expertise, recommend a book on the subject—bibliotherapy!)

Expectation of the mentoring goals include:

### **Evaluation Process**

- Minimum level required: Guide mentee through Annual/Biennial Evaluation Committee (ABEC) /Peer Evaluation/Tenure & Promotion process (explain what it means to meet or exceed expectations in librarianship, scholarship, and service; how to promote yourself in your dossier management software like Digital Measures).
- Expansive level: Getting started in research and writing, building a body of work; single authorship versus co-authoring; IRB process; repurposing/repackaging research; writing style; methodology

### **Acculturation**

- Minimum level required: Acculturate mentee to University Libraries subculture and UNC campus subculture: must I attend extracurricular events? or what does collegiality mean at the University Libraries?

- Expansive level: Acculturate mentee to subcultures of: Greeley community, librarianship, academia, etc.; For example, why join AAUP; why you should know about Tabor and State of Colorado support of higher ed; town-gown issues; the benefits of ALA/ACRL membership (or other organizations such as MPLA and CAL)

### **Other Considerations**

Negotiate scope of mentorship as you go along; the sky is the limit, but remember, your objectives must be SMART. Other topics may include: overview of service and professional development opportunities; introduction to colleagues and VIPs in and out of the University Libraries as appropriate. Sounding board for questions, complaints, and accomplishments.

### **What a Mentor Is Not:**

- A psychologist: mention to mentee the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in the event they share that they are experiencing psychological stress
- A mentee: while you will learn a lot from your mentee, this relationship is about their career, not about yours
- An ombudsperson or referee: do not get embroiled in disagreements
- you cannot make everything fair
- Omniscient: admit when you don't know the answer and refer to someone who does
- Infallible: admit when you make a mistake, apologize, and share constructive stories of your failures as well as your successes
- Complaint taker or gossip monger: sometimes people need to vent, but as often is appropriate, steer toward (and model) direct communication and solution-oriented behavior
- Solely responsible for the career success or failure of the mentee

### **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

The success of the program will be measured using data collected at the conclusion of each dyad as part of a five-year review of the mentoring program. It is not intended to measure the competence of the participants. The data will be de-identified and all efforts will be made to protect confidentiality.

The assessment process is set in motion with an email from the mentor to the mentee's supervisor when the dyad is determined, stating scope, anticipated time period, specific goals, etc.

Each mentor/mentee dyad will respond separately to a series of survey questions addressing elements of the pairing, with an emphasis on the outcomes expressed in this document and those goals that the dyad had established at the outset of the pairing. The chair of ABEC will administer the survey each year.

At the conclusion of the dyad experience, participants will evaluate the program through a survey that includes:

- Whether specific goals had been met
- How well the scope and guidance materials had met the needs of the dyad/mentee; a follow up question could ask how the guidelines (checklist) could be improved
- What was the intended frequency of meetings and how well did that meet your needs?

- Whether they believe the relationship will continue as a less-formal mentoring situation.
- Was the time-frame for the duration of the relationship decided upon adequate?

We recommend that a team be convened in 2025 to review this plan, including what data has been collected from dyads over the years, to determine whether the mentoring plan needs to be revised and updated to meet new organizational circumstances and expectations.

Appendix A Questionnaire for the Initial Mentor-Mentee Meeting

Appendix B Mentoring Program Pairs Discussion Prompts

Appendix C Mentoring Bibliography



Annie Epperson, Wendy Highby, Jen Mayer, University of Northern Colorado  
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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire for the Initial Mentor-Mentee Pairing Process

#### University Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program Mentee Questionnaire

Name:

Supervisor:

Briefly describe your research interests:

Briefly describe your service interests:

What are your strengths?

In what areas do you want to grow?

Do you have any specific ideas about what you'd like to gain from a mentoring relationship?

Are there any areas of expertise that you'd like to see in your mentor?

Is there a specific person you'd like to request? If yes, please explain why you'd prefer this person.

Is there anyone with whom you feel you could not have a productive and/or meaningful mentor/mentee relationship? If yes, please explain why.



University Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program  
**Mentor Questionnaire**

Name:

Briefly describe your research and service interests and areas of expertise:

What are your strengths?

Briefly describe any areas in which you lack expertise or experience but that you have been pursuing recently, and/or in which you would like to grow:

Do you have specific ideas of how a formal mentoring relationship might work best for you?

Do you have experience in a mentoring relationship as either the mentor or the mentee? If yes, briefly describe the experience:

Is there anyone with whom you could not have a productive and/or meaningful mentor/mentee relationship? If yes, please explain why.

A consistent investment of time and energy is required of participants in this program, and mentoring counts toward University Libraries service. Are you able to make such a commitment?

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## Appendix B

### Mentoring Program Pairs Discussion Prompts

How mentors and mentees interact is up to the members of the dyad. Here are some suggestions to get started.

#### **Potential prompts for mentors working with mentees:**

Shall I set up a regular meeting on our calendars?

What questions do you have for me about UNC Libraries and UNC?

What questions do you have for me about local policies, procedures, and culture or other professional matters?

What questions do you have about annual/biennial review and comprehensive review process, peer review, writing comments, etc.

Let's brainstorm opportunities for contributing to the profession.

Here is my advice on networking, and here are a few names you could contact.

How do you describe yourself as a professional?

What are your career goals?

What do you see as the next point on your career trajectory?

What obstacles, barriers or challenges are you facing, if any?

What are your research interests? How do you plan to move forward with those interests and how can I help?

What types of professional development are you interested in? What new skills would you like to learn?

Who have you already talked to for support?

Who do you wish you could meet in the University Libraries, on campus, or any field?

What makes you really excited or proud about your work?

What workplace concerns do you have?

What steps are you taking to get to your next point?

If you could wave a magic wand, what would you want to happen next in your career?

#### **Potential prompts for mentees to ask mentors:**

Are you willing to review my T&P narrative, CV, research plan, draft manuscript, etc.?

How did you develop your research agenda?

How did you get involved in library, university, and national service opportunities? How did you select your service roles?

How do you balance your workload?

How have you moved forward in your career?

How do you describe yourself as a professional?

How did you overcome any obstacles, barriers or challenges to get to where you are now in your career? What's a mistake you made at work? What happened next?

Did you ever get stuck in your career or in a job you didn't like? What did you do about it?

Who helped you in your career, and how?

## Appendix C

### Mentoring in Libraries: Annotated Bibliography

Baker, Vicki L. and Aimee LaPointe Turosky. "Early Career Faculty Mentoring: Career Cycles, Learning and Support." In *Sage Handbook of Mentoring*, 421-433, edited by David A. Clutterbuck, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2017. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org.unco.idm.oclc.org/10.4135/9781526402011.n26>. Baker and Turosky apply a developmental theory of mentoring to early career professors in academia. They use the "career stage model" to discuss best practices and most effective approaches toward faculty mentoring. The stages are (1) exploration (typically graduate school level); (2) trial (first three years of professional employment); (3) establishment (at/after mid-tenure), and (4) mastery (associate level). An extensive bibliography is included. Read this chapter to gain an understanding of the typical academic career trajectory and for suggestions on how to customize the mentoring experience to match the mentee's developmental phase.

Burke, John J. and Beth E. Tumbleson. "Mentoring in Academic Libraries." *Library Leadership & Management* 33, 4(2019): 1-19. Retrieved from: <http://dspace.lib.muohio.edu:8080/xmlui/handle/2374.MIA/6611>. This article presents the results of a survey of 514 librarians. The authors include mentoring best practices listed side-by-side in a chart featuring logistics and characteristics (for example, the first logistic is "assess the experience," with the characteristics of "clarity and kindness" at the top of the list). The article an interesting amalgam of feeling and empiricism, a paean to mentoring.

Clutterbuck, David A. and David Megginson, "Working with Goals in Mentoring." In *Sage Handbook of Mentoring*, 169-184, edited by David A. Clutterbuck, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2017. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526402011.n11>. Authors Clutterbuck and Megginson offer a thoughtful alternative to the ubiquitous SMART goals [recommended herein]. They situate goal-setting in the process of change, seeing it as non-linear and sometimes unpredictable. Deliberately subverting the linear model, these scholars take a systemic approach which assumes that "goals are messy (unfixed or abstract) and evolutionary (adaptive to internal and external change)." If you agree with the truism that life is what happens while you are making plans, you will appreciate this chapter.

Doolittle, Elizabeth M. et al. "Creating a Culture of Mentoring @ Your Library." *The Southeastern Librarian* 57, 1(2009): 29-38. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/seln/vol57/iss1/7> : This piece addresses the cultural, psycho-social, socio-political impacts of a mentoring program. It considers the organizational context as well as the individual. This six-page article, a quick read, does an efficient job of condensing and covering potentially complicated topics—recommended as a timesaver.

Harker, Karen, Erin O'Toole, Setareh Keshmiripour, Marcia McIntosh and Catherine Sassen. "Mixed-Methods Assessment of a Mentoring Program." *Journal of Library Administration*, 59 (2019): 873-902. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2019.1661745>. These researchers conducted a case-study of the assessment of a formal mentoring program at a large academic library at the University of North Texas in Denton. They found that the "continuous cycle of mixed methods assessment contributes to the success of a mentoring program." If you are interested in mentoring and assessment methods and instruments, this is the article for you.

Johnson, W. Brad (2017), "Ethical Considerations for Mentorship: Toward a Mentoring Code of Ethics." In *Sage Handbook of Mentoring*, 105-118, edited by David A. Clutterbuck, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2017. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781526402011.n7> The author identifies eight areas in which ethical problems can arise for mentors: (1) level of relationship formality; (2) competence in the mentor role; (3) advocacy versus evaluation; (4) privacy and confidentiality; (5) intimacy, attraction and sexual feelings; (6) self-disclosure; (7) multiple relationships; and (8) equal access by diverse mentees. Johnson advises that the mentor-mentee relationship is fiduciary and thus, "mentors hold some measure of power relative to mentees and therefore must place mentee's interests first in all decisions and actions." Johnson's proposed "Mentoring Code of Ethics" sets forth nine ethical principles that can serve as the foundation of a mentoring program.

Kennedy, Marie R. and Kristine R. Brancolini. "Academic Librarian Research: An Update to a Survey of Attitudes, Involvement, and Perceived Capabilities." *College & Research Libraries* 79, 6 (2018): 822-851. Retrieved from: <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/viewFile/16855/18471>. This article investigates academic librarians' attitudes toward research and their readiness to conduct research. It provides strong evidence that both formal and informal mentorship tend to increase the research success of academic librarians.

SPARC. "Mentor Manual: Background, Guidelines, and Best Practices for Open Education Leadership Mentors." Washington D.C.: SPARC, 2018. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MBS3Dqax0l0Cd0E9Jco6a9OwYCsliSDw8DI4z1iua6M/edit>. Although this manual specifically concerns mentoring of open education leaders, the last 10 pages can be modified to pertain to any mentoring situation and are a quick read. The guide provides examples of agendas for regular meetings and monthly updates, a mentorship timeline, tips for portfolio evaluation, and dos and don'ts for effectiveness.

University of Wyoming Libraries. "Library Faculty Personnel Committee Mentoring Program." Laramie: University of Wyoming Libraries: 2018. [Available from Jen Mayer upon request]. This descriptive policy document outlines the mentoring program at UW, our neighbor to the north. It covers purpose, benefits, administration, assessment, and delineates general guidelines. Examples of formal letters to mentor and mentee participants are appended.

Wallace, Bailey, Melissa DeWitt, and Elia Trucks. "#SwipeRightForMentorship: Mentoring in Libraries for the Modern Era." [Presentation at Colorado Association for Libraries meeting, 2019.] [Available from Annie Epperson upon request]. Three members of the New Professionals Interest Group provide an intriguing and entertaining update of mentorship programs, emphasizing the importance of psychosocial and social mentoring. They identify antiquated forms of mentorship and advocate for peer, informal, and group mentoring.

Wittkopf, Barbara. *Mentoring Programs in ARL Libraries: A SPEC Kit*. Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1999. SPEC is an acronym that stands for Systems and Procedures Exchange Center. It contains the summary of the status of a current area of interest in librarianship, along with supporting representative documentation. Eighty-one ARL libraries responded to this survey. Thus, this utility of this resource is twofold: it provides an historical portrait of the state of mentoring in major academic libraries of the era, and maybe more importantly, gives you easy access to a wide variety of program documentation such as policy statements and forms. Use this resource to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Zhang, Sha Li, Nancy Deyoe, and Susan J. Matveyeva. "From Scratch: Developing an Effective Mentoring Program." *Chinese Librarianship* (2017). Retrieved from: <https://soar.wichita.edu/bitstream/handle/10057/1131/Mentor?sequence=1> This case study examines the mentoring program at Wichita State University. WSU is similar in size to UNC. The strength of this study lies in its candor; the lessons learned are revealing. Read this article to get a realistic picture of the programmatic strengths and weaknesses that might be discovered when implementing and/or changing a mentoring program.

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