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Mentoring



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OLAQ Guest Editor

Dawn is the Wilsonville Campus Librarian for the Oregon Institute of Technology. She has edited, written, and mentored/eed in a number of places. She is a current co-chair of the ALA/LLAMA Mentoring committee, and has noticed a convergence on mentoring in the last couple of years. In 2016 she will edit and contribute to a book titled, *Beyond Mentoring: A guide for librarians and information professionals*. Dawn has an MLIS from Louisiana State University and a BA in Creative Writing from Linfield College.

You are already someone's mentor!

I have had the privilege of working with some great mentors so far in my career. In my first position out of graduate school I worked for Dr. Althea Jenkins at Florida State University. While it wasn't called a mentoring program, she was my direct supervisor. She took me under her tutelage and taught me how to work hard, and how to make change happen, even in an environment that was not always ready. I still think to myself (more than 10 years later), "What would Dr. Jenkins do?"

Mentorship is not always the same though, and it should be different depending on the situation and the people involved. When I was new to Oregon and Oregon libraries, I went through the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) mentoring program. I was paired with Jennifer Abramson, a librarian at UCLA then, retired now. I was trying to adapt to a different library, a different circumstance, and she was able to give me suggestions and connections to help me get settled. I am currently co-chairing the committee that runs that same program. We see librarians and future librarians with all different backgrounds and desires who want to connect with someone for many different reasons. Jenkins Lumpkin's article, #WhyMembership, gives librarians a call to mentor, to share their knowledge, experience, and to reinvent what is possible through library associations. It is a call to make something old, new again, and to attract and keep the new professionals engaged. Sarah Jesudason compliments this well in her article on the reluctance of Generation X librarians to accept mentor roles. (Anti-aging cream—check. Indie concert—check ...)

Steve Silver and Karen Head's article on the informal mentoring of student employees brings to mind my own start down the path to librarianship. I was a volunteer in my middle school library at age 12. This later turned into volunteering in my high school library, and eventually working at the Linfield College library as an undergraduate, meeting Susan Barnes-

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Whyte who is still someone I look to for advice, and whom I consider a mentor.

I have participated in the Answerland mentoring program as a mentor since the inception of the program, getting to know librarians staffing the service, mostly over email, but occasionally face to face. The needs of each vary from people who are just a little shaky on the technology to those who are experiencing reference services for the first time. In her article on the inception of the OLA Mentoring Program, Meredith Farkas, talks about how the OLA Mentoring Program came to be, as well as ways to take advantage of relationships you may already have made. Nyssa Walsh and Laura Ziegen provide a great mentee and mentor perspective on the OLA Mentoring Program. Tammy Westergard, Library Director for Jackson County Library Services, rounds out the issue with an article about good work, recognition of good work and a theory of mentorship through fellowship.

I hope that readers are inspired to mentor by this issue. You are already a mentor to someone. Make the most of that relationship, formal or not. For those interested in formal programs, here are two mentioned in this issue. There are many other options available too. 

OLA Mentoring Program:

<http://www.olaweb.org/mentor-program>

LLAMA Mentoring Program:

<http://www.ala.org/llama/llama-mentoring-program>

(Applications are currently being accepted for the 2016–17 cycle. Apply through February 2016.)

