

OLAQ

Volume 21 , Number 3 *Mentoring* | Pages 1 - 30

January 2016

Mentoring (Full Issue)

(2016). Mentoring (Full Issue). *OLA Quarterly*, 21(3), 1-30. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7710/1093-7374.21.03>

© 2016 by the author(s).

OLA Quarterly is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association | ISSN 1093-7374

OLA Quarterly



Fall 2015

Vol 21 • No 3

OLAQ

OLA Quarterly
Fall 2015
Vol 21 • No 3

Oregon Library Association
<http://www.olaweb.org>
ISSN 1093-7374

The *OLA Quarterly* is an official publication of the Oregon Library Association.

Please refer questions and input regarding the *Quarterly* to:

Charles Wood
Volunteer Librarian,
Aloha Community Library
wuchakewu@gmail.com

Graphic Production:
Tobias Weiss Design
7345 SW Deerhaven Drive
Corvallis, OR 97333
phone 541-738-1897
julie@tobiasweissdesign.com
www.tobiasweissdesign.com



Upcoming Issue

Winter 2015

*Library Marketing
and Communications*

Cover image by Charles Wood.
Photo taken from the Redwood Deck in Hoyt Arboretum.

Mentoring



DAWN LOWE-WINCENTSEN
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-

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 followship.

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.)



#Why Membership?

Professional Associations in the Millennial Age: A Call to Action through Mentorship

by **Jenkins Lumpkin**
Multnomah County Library
JLumpkin@uw.edu



Photo by Grace Lumpkin Southberland

JENKINS LUMPKIN

Jenkins wants to live in a world where libraries are fiercely funded, all mockingbirds are spared, and every love letter is written by hand. When she's not writing, reading, and thinking about libraries, you can find her re-reading *Ender's Game*, and opening wardrobe doors really, really fast—just in case.

Questions about New Member Round Table? Send them on over to nmrt.ola@gmail.com, or connect with Jenkins directly at JLumpkin@uw.edu.

As a new and emerging member of the librarian profession—although not the library universe—I have been thinking long and hard about the benefits of joining a professional association, such as the Oregon Library Association (OLA), the American Library Association (ALA), and possibly many others. I am certainly not the only one to be kicking this old chestnut of an issue around. Mirroring the challenges and opportunities facing the library world in general, professional associations also face the task of re-invention. Whether this evolution is perceived as a Herculean burden, or a welcome exercise in reinvigoration, the question mark of value rests heavy on the heads of library associations.

Perhaps in a different age, a different era, the return on investment for joining a professional association was not shrouded in an apparent veil of mystery—or possible irrelevance. At one time, it may have been viewed as the responsibility of a new member of a profession to participate: as a necessary rite of passage, a prerequisite to join the ranks fully, the apprenticeship necessary to the magician, the admission charge to the secret society. *Finally*, you might have whispered back in those days. *Finally*, she slowly unfurls from the darkness and into view: the librarian behind the curtain.

Unfortunately, the polished gleam of professional associations has begun to tarnish. Given that professional associations are quickly losing luster, how do we engage those who are currently turned off or turned away from them? How do we entice membership from a new generation, for whom membership may be valued only in terms of the potential networking? What is the value of professional associations—perceived value and actualized value—within the context of the new millennium? Put forth in twitter-ese: #WhyMembership?

Recently, I have been working with some brilliant folks at OLA to re-vamp and re-imagine the New Member Round Table, which has fallen somewhat behind other competing priorities. I have spent some time thinking and talking about the support that is gained from claiming a place within the larger library context, the strength that comes from collaboration across the boundaries that sometimes creep up within our day-to-day professional lives. The ways in which we define ourselves are certainly useful as identifying handles, but these handles can also constrain the space and freedom



which collaboration needs to thrive. Conference attendance can provide the stretching room needed to breathe existence into ideas which we hold in mind sometimes in those last moments before sleep steals them away again, or until the noise of the immediate needs within our personal and professional lives chases them back into the dusty confines of wish lists and rainy day projects. This space to breathe is truly invaluable, and the dazzling riches of conference collaboration can be powerful beyond measure.

Nevertheless, part of the challenge for the somewhat loosely defined millennial generation may be that the kind of collaboration which is so valued from conference attendance can be fairly easily accessed through a multitude of social media networks. It seems that this carries the collaboration aspect of professional membership from the realm of conferences to the device in your back pocket. How do we change the message, the hook, the focus, to one that fosters new voices, cultivates robust leaders, and creates sustainable professional associations for years to come?

Here's an answer: we change the argument for the value of membership from one which is transactional to *transformational*.

The incredible Mentorship program established by the OLA Membership Committee is an invaluable way to share the splendors that surround us in the Oregon library landscape. Mentorship can support and sustain us throughout our library journeys—whether we are just beginning with the first step or at full gallop, miles ahead. If professional associations like the Oregon Library Association are the “Yellow Brick Road” for finding your way through a strange, new professional terrain—the Mentorship program provides the ruby red slippers. It's an easily accessible and transparent way to contribute to the future of the profession—and it doesn't simply apply to those new to the profession or to libraries.


Consider this: we can all act as mentors to each other. In fact, we likely do provide some forms of mentorship on a daily basis. We act as the fearless guides, companions, even sherpas, for those seeking information. We instruct, explore, and fascinate others with infinite worlds—both seen and imagined. We create moments of discovery, develop the spark of creativity, and transform communities. We also transform each other in the process. We surely participate in different forms of mentorship, as well, without even realizing it: from new-hire mentorship for those new to our organization, to reverse mentorship with those Millennials, and even flash mentorship—or “pop-up mentorship,” as I like to call it. Without necessarily intending to do so, we informally transfer knowledge, social capital, and professional development to each other in dozens of ways which can mimic or replicate mentorship.

Through OLA, the mentoring process can be writ large: because membership is not a simple *quid pro quo* equation. With an association membership, we're not selling a loaf of bread or a pair of jeans. Professional associations offer the same gleaming pearl of a prize that you offer each time you open your library doors: it could change your life.

We could embed you so deeply within the mechanisms of the next and the new and the this-just-in faster than a Snapchat post. We could coach you through how to approach an upcoming levy or how to propose a bill that would change the face of funding for your library. We can be a shoulder to lean on and a kick in the pants. We can push you, cajole you, fight for you, and then offer to stitch you up if we lose. We can remind you of the first time you cracked a spine and smelled that new hardcover, just because it just smells *so good*.



We represent the radical notion that membership in professional organizations fulfills a promise to the future of the profession, and to the institution of libraries themselves. We are each a part of the ballast which secures libraries' infrastructure to the community, and we each have a responsibility to sustain that infrastructure. The question is not, in fact, what are the benefits of professional associations to the individual member; rather, it is what strengths and skills can each member bring throughout the professional association.

Of course, this is easy to say and difficult to enact. There are barriers and roadblocks, from funding to organizational support—even from just plain not feeling welcomed or included. Of one aspect, there can be no doubt, no hesitation: we are stronger when we stand together. There are moments in our professional lives when the crucial question—the pivotal, defining question—becomes not whether you have a voice, but how loud you want that voice to be. Professional associations are, perhaps above all, amplifiers. They are the microphones and bullhorns which proclaim: *We are not going anywhere. We are here to stay.* 



Who me, mentor?

by Sarah Tulman Jesudason
Public Services,
Tualatin Public Library



SARAH TULMAN JESUDASON

Sarah Tulman Jesudason imported her Northeastern snark to Oregon in 2006. She is currently the Public Services Supervisor at Tualatin Public Library. She can be reached at [fledglingnerd](#) on Twitter, and would love to have coffee with you.

When your illustrious editors asked me to contribute a piece on mentoring for this issue, I froze, just a little bit. Is that something I do? It sounds so *adult*. After all, sitting on my desk at work was a professional journal including an article on mentoring Gen-X librarians (Bloomquist, 2014). No, mentoring was not being used as an adjective.

That gave me more pause. I'm Generation X. In 2015, being Gen-X means you have an anti-aging skin care regimen that you faithfully apply before you go out to see that indie band you discovered via Spotify.

The article talked about librarians my age leaving the field in droves because we collectively suffer from the 5-year-itch, because we distrust organizations, because career opportunities have not presented themselves as Boomers just ... don't ... retire. While reading this article I had some reluctant head nods of recognition: yup. The longest I've stayed in a position so far is five years. Yup, I remember taking a part-time position and being told that within a year or two, tons of full-time posts would open due to retirements. That was nine years and three libraries ago. Yup, I watched a wave of non-MLS positions replace librarian jobs, but I'm the one with organizational distrust. What this article doesn't talk about is that some of us hapless, bureaucracy-hating GenXers have become the supervisors, managers and directors that our own high school yearbook dedications warned us about. And that puts us in an odd position: while our professional literature talks about how to best mentor us, we're increasingly in positions that should lead us to mentor others. Is it any wonder this makes us collectively shudder, if not spiral into imposter syndrome?

I'm going to commit one of those sins of library science authorship that I've been on the record as decrying: 'the quick search shows' sentence. This is the sentence that begins "A search on Google shows x-number of hits for the buzz term Y," used to provide validity of concept and stated without any intended irony despite that the author is likely the same person who will make an impassioned case for Google not replacing libraries. My transgression is two-fold: I don't look to library literature to tell me about mentoring, and when I look for that articles on this topic, I look at



the tech industry. You know, those companies who are putting us out of business according to approximately 23,289 think-pieces published in the past three years.

While we are trying to get a handle on whether or not Gen-Xers are worth mentoring, *Fast Company* is advising Millennials how to supervise elder employees - including ‘don’t assume they’re technologically clueless.’ The magazine also tells its readers to find mentors who aren’t in their company, have different backgrounds, who serve as role models rather than replicating machines. *Fast Company* even lists “The Librarian” as one of the kinds of mentors one should seek—sadly, they’re not being MLS-literal here, but they are using our title as an indicator of someone who knows where all the hidden resources within an organization lies (Daskal, 2014; Johnston, 2015; Markman, 2015). (Still! Validation! Woot!)

Some thoughts gleaned both from my readings and my experiences:

There is a difference between supervising and mentoring, even if some of the mechanics are the same. If you’re supervising library staff, you likely have a mentoring facet to your relationship with them. You are setting expectations, giving measurable goals, and helping to explore the best possible path to achieve those goals. But that does not necessarily make you their Mentor with a capital M. In supervision, you are keeping the library’s outcomes as your framework for guiding staff. Professional development often happens more as a natural consequence than its own goal. If staff you supervise seek guidance and opinions from other sources in crafting their own professional skillset, that is not a threat to your role as supervisor. It’s good for them, and good for your library!

Mentoring can be as formal or informal as suits your style. Mentoring can be a regular meeting over coffee with a list of goals to track and topics to discuss. Mentoring can be a helpful response to a librarian you’ll never meet outside of Facebook. Mentoring can be with your peers. It is the content of the advice, not the generation gap, that makes it worthwhile.

Mentoring makes you a better librarian and supervisor. Investing your time and attention to how someone else can best meet their professional goals gives you a new perspective on what’s going on in your own library.

For me, it’s the emails I occasionally receive from staff who have moved on to other libraries that let me know that something I’ve said has made the leap from supervision to mentorship. “Hey Boss, got something to run by you,” those emails begin, and nothing makes me happier. Or as happy as a Gen-X supervising librarian has the right to be. 🐼

References

Bloomquist, C. (2014). Mentoring Gen-X Librarians. *Public Libraries*, 53(3), 30–34.
Author’s note: Please note that despite my tone, Ms. Bloomquist’s article is indeed well-researched and thoughtful.

Daskal, L. (2014, September 17). Ask the experts: How do I find a mentor? *Fast Company*.

Johnston, S. (2015, August 24). 7 Traits of great mentors. *Fast Company*.

Markman, A. (2015, February 25). The five types of mentors you need. *Fast Company*.



Mentoring is Just Reaching out and Sharing our Experience

by **Meredith Farkas**
Faculty Librarian,
Portland Community
College Library
meredith.farkas@pcc.edu



MEREDITH FARKAS

Meredith is a faculty librarian at Portland Community College and an instructor at San Jose State University's iSchool. She writes the monthly column "Technology in Practice" for *American Libraries* and the blog *Information Wants to be Free*. Meredith was honored in 2009 with the LITA/Library Hi Tech award for Outstanding Communication in Library and Information Technology, and in 2014 with the ACRL Instruction Section Innovation Award.

When I graduated from library school in 2004, I was a lot more clueless and less experienced than most new librarians I see applying for jobs today. I'd worked for less than a year at a public library and completed a practicum in a university archive, which only served to convince me that I didn't want to work in archives. I didn't have a clue about how to write a compelling cover letter or to play up my previous experience as a social worker, and eight months into the job hunt and five since graduating library school, I was rapidly losing hope of ever finding a job.

Just before leaving library school, I had started a blog in which I wrote about technology in libraries, and chronicled my awful and sometimes humorous experiences on the job hunt. Lucky for me, an experienced librarian and reader of my blog, Paul Pival of the University of Calgary Libraries, stepped up and offered to read my cover letter and resume. The advice he offered completely altered the course of my job search. After he tore apart and helped me rebuild my application materials, I found myself getting first and second interviews at the sorts of institutions where I really wanted to work. Soon, I had my dream job as a distance learning librarian in the beautiful state of Vermont. Had he not shared his experience so generously, I fear my job search could have gone on much longer, my unimpressive materials never distinguishing me as a viable candidate.

My blog soon led to an offer to write a book about social media, which led to lots of offers to speak at conferences. I was suffering mightily from impostor syndrome and didn't feel like I could do any of this, nor did I have the slightest clue to ask for an honorarium for preparing and giving a presentation. A friend I made through my blogging, Roy Tennant of OCLC, encouraged me, advised me, and helped me ask for what my contribution was worth. While I've never totally gotten over my impostor syndrome, Roy helped



me see that I was capable of much more than I thought and that people would take advantage of me if I didn't ask for what I was worth. It was an invaluable lesson.

I've never had a formal mentor, but I have had a number of informal mentors who shared their wisdom and encouragement generously at times in my career when I needed it most. It probably didn't take much effort for them to do what they did, but the fact that they were willing to reach out made a world of difference to me. All I had to do was reach out to the library community—which I did through my blog—and I found that there were lots of experienced librarians willing to reach back. I recognize I was lucky to have started blogging at just the right time in the evolution of social media. As someone who is often reluctant to seek help from others, I was even luckier that people were willing to mentor me without my having to ask. And because I feel blessed for what happened to me, I wanted to give back.

The Oregon Library Association (OLA) is an amazing organization. If you have an idea and are willing to put in the effort to make it happen, you will find lots of enthusiastic support. When I suggested that OLA build a mentoring program for early-career librarians at an information session at the 2012 OLA Conference, I was approached by the Membership Committee Chair, Emily Papagni of the Multnomah County Library, who informed me that another librarian was interested in doing the same thing. I quickly found myself partnered with the amazing Shirley Sullivan of the Beaverton City Library, and with Emily's help, we developed a proposal for the OLA Board. In less than a year, the OLA Mentoring Program was up and running.

The OLA Mentoring Program is designed to match early-career library employees in Oregon with mentors who have five or more years of experience working in libraries. Active since 2013, the program has matched up approximately 60 early-career library staff with mentors. Mentors and mentees commit to a relationship of at least one-year (or nine months for those on nine-month contracts), though the majority state in their end-of-mentoring-year surveys that they plan to continue the relationship. Mentors are matched based on the mentee's goals, the mentor's experience, and geography. We try to match people who live relatively close to each other, but sometimes that doesn't work out due to the mentee's goals or the makeup of our pool of willing mentors. Based on our surveys, somewhere around 65 percent of mentoring pairs meet in-person and many more communicate via email or over the phone. While we do our best to find good matches for applicants, occasionally, we end up with problematic matches for a variety of reasons. However, in our end-of-year surveys, 94 percent of responding mentees reported their mentor was supportive and 83 percent reported satisfaction with the mentoring relationship.


Last year, I had the pleasure of not only administering the OLA Mentoring Program, but of being a mentor myself. I'm not sure I was really the best mentor to my mentee, simply because she didn't need very much. She was one of those early-career librarians who, as soon as you meet her, it is obvious that she is going to do big things. Other than providing encouragement, a little advice, and feedback on one of her articles, I don't feel like I did much. Then again, mentoring isn't supposed to be hard! It's supposed to be about sharing experience and encouragement with someone who could benefit from both, and I hope I



provided that in a way that was helpful to her. It's really gratifying to see her achieving so much recognition and success in her career now.

Currently, I'm the Chair of the OLA Membership Committee and am administering the OLA Mentoring Program with the wonderful Lisa Molinelli of Portland State University, Emily-Jane Dawson of the Multnomah County Library, and Chris King of the Hillsboro Public Library. They all give of their time so generously to support this valuable program. Everyone who has been involved in administering the OLA Mentoring Program has been motivated by either having had a fantastic mentor early in their career or wishing they had and wanting others to have such a valuable career development experience.

Very soon, there will be an additional way to support early-career library staff. The OLA Membership Committee and the OLA New Member Roundtable have collaborated to develop a resume and cover letter review program that will be launching in Winter 2016. This program will provide short-term mentoring focused specifically on providing advice on a job seeker's cover letter and resume. Advice might run the gamut from writing and formatting issues, to highlighting previous experience, to suggesting experiences and skills the candidate might want to get to become more marketable for the job they want. It will meet an important need in our community, given the number of new library school graduates struggling to find work in Oregon libraries.

So many of us in this field suffer from impostor syndrome, so it can be hard to imagine that we have something valuable to offer an early-career librarian or staff-person. Try to remember your new-to-libraries self. How much do you know now that you wish you had known back then? If you can think of even a few things, you probably have a great deal to offer someone new to libraries. Whether you participate in a formal program or informally take someone under your wing, sharing experience and encouragement costs us so little and can benefit a new librarian immeasurably. I'm living proof of that. 



Adventures in Mentoring and Menteeing

by **Nyssa Walsh**
MLIS
nyssaj@gmail.com

and

Laura Zeigen
Liaison Librarian,
OHSU Library
zeigenl@ohsu.edu



NYSSA WALSH, MLIS, is currently a kick-ass web developer and all around awesome human being gracing the Portland area with her presence. Contact her at: nyssaj@gmail.com



LAURA ZEIGEN, MA, MLIS, MPH, AHIP is a liaison librarian at the OHSU Library. Contact her at: zeigenl@ohsu.edu

Nyssa: I'd like to introduce you to myself in 2013. I'm two years out of library school, balancing a part time position in an academic library and the odd barista shift, with the dream of being a full-time academic Librarian (with a Capital L). Up to this point I had a decent resume of academic library positions, good connections, but despite applying for any and all positions that I could find, and even getting a few interviews, nothing seemed to click. I was beginning to worry and longed for my "glory days" of library school.

The thing about library school is that it's your best chance for finding work. At no other time are you so surrounded by the library community: local Librarians (Capital L!) teaching your classes, discounts to conferences, practicums, internships, not to mention the other students in your class who are equally passionate about your chosen career. Then, one innocuous autumn day, you graduate and lose all of those opportunities and you're kicking yourself for not joining just one more student club, or trying to get your final paper for your Library History class published in the local library journal. What's a young librarian (lower-case l) to do?

I tried to jump back into the library community with gusto: I volunteered at conferences, and still paid to attend those that didn't need volunteers. I tried to get published, or at least speak at any chance I could (I swear, I could give a Lightning Talk on any subject now.) I worked diligently at my job at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine to try and distinguish myself in the library community, but I was floundering and starting to feel lost. One by one my classmates were getting amazing positions, and I was beginning to think I should fall back on my barista skills ... when I opened my email to see that the OLA was offering a mentoring program connecting new library employees with Professional Librarians. It was exactly what I needed.



Laura: When in 2013 I saw that the Oregon Library Association (OLA) was putting together a formal mentoring program, I was very excited. Although I had informally mentored several people over the years (and been informally mentored myself), I appreciated the work OLA had put into having a formal program. I both wanted to try this out and also wanted to help support their efforts.

The mentor program organizers were extremely clear on the project web site about expectations of both the mentor and mentee. There was only a one year commitment, so if even if things were working out fantastically and we wanted to keep going with the relationship, there was a definite endpoint to my formal responsibilities (very appealing!).

I was matched with Nyssa Walsh, who at the time was working at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM). She had expressed interest in pursuing work in academic libraries, so we focused on what she could do to pursue that goal. One of the requirements of the OLA program was working out logistics of how often and in what way you would communicate with each other. Nyssa and I decided to check in at least once a month over email, possibly more often, and start by getting together in person at least once.

Nyssa: I was thrilled when I was matched with Laura Zeigen. I had met Laura at various conferences and other school sponsored events, and had considered her a Real Librarian: working professional position and a big deal in the library world. How could this successful woman be a mentor to me? How did I get this lucky? And once I got to know her I realized just how lucky I was. Despite being incredibly professional and well-connected, Laura is unfailingly encouraging and friendly. We met often to discuss life, Stumptown iced coffee, babies, puppies and oh yes, libraries.

Laura and I were connected in September of 2013, and I believe it is no coincidence that in December 2013 I finally got a promising interview for a full time position at the State of Oregon Law Library. Laura helped me with my cover letter and resume, connected me with a law librarian to prep me for my interview, and even offered suggestions for how to wear my hair (“Whichever way makes you feel the most confident”). She couldn’t have been more supportive ... even when the interview didn’t turn out as well as I’d hoped. They seemed to like me, I was able to answer the questions well enough, and got a call back for a second interview, but I felt uncomfortable. I wondered if I was ready to leave academic libraries for something so different. I wondered if I was willing to leave my current job at OCOM, which, despite being part time, was the best work experience, best coworkers, best boss, and most interesting job I’ve ever had. I convinced myself that I was just afraid of change, and that I had to take chances in order to grow, and that this was my chance to finally be a CAPITAL L Librarian. But I wasn’t the only one who was worried about this job.

Laura told me to think hard about this decision. She reminded me that when you’re applying for a job, you’re interviewing them as much as they’re interviewing you. Was this the kind of place I wanted to work for years? Was the boss someone I could see myself getting along with? She encouraged me to not just take the job because it was Capital L. But I was afraid I wouldn’t get another chance and when they offered me the job I took it. Folks, listen to your mentors. They’ve been doing this longer than you, and they’ve seen it all.

Laura: Once Nyssa obtained her full-time position in a library, I knew there might be a few political issues to navigate, as there are in any environment, but that she had the emotional



intelligence to manage these issues and would manage them well. Nyssa admirably took on the organizational and other challenges that arose, but I was helpless to fix her most exacting situations. I could just counsel her that she was, in fact, doing a great job and that from what I could tell she was making her best efforts to operate in a challenging situation. I also tried to connect her to others who could provide other perspectives than my own that might be helpful to her. One of the things I think is important being a mentor is knowing when you are actually not the best person to advise your mentee and when to connect your mentee to other people so they can obtain the best, most informed perspectives on any particular situation.

Nyssa: I could discuss all of the problems I had there, but they aren't meaningful, and likely no different from anyone else's experiences in a job they didn't like. I could say that the commute took up too much of my life, or that I missed working with students too much, but all excuses aside, the job wasn't for me, and after six months I quit. I took the first job I could find, a non-library position doing web development, and walked away.


Laura: Although I really wanted Nyssa to stay in the library field, I could tell she was extremely stressed and where she was could not be a long-term option. I fully supported her decision to move on to a better, less stressful, more supportive environment. At the same time, I mourned the professional loss of an extremely capable colleague. Nyssa may or may not ever come back to librarianship or academic librarianship in particular—if she wants to, the road back will likely be challenging since competition for such positions is fierce.

I admire how long Nyssa lasted in her position and the courage it took for her to make her decision to leave it. I had to work through my own feelings of frustration about the unnecessary difficulties she experienced and about the experience of others in similar situations.

Nyssa: I'd now like to introduce you to 2015 Nyssa. I'm still doing web development and I'm really happy. Sometimes I see library positions that seem to bridge the gap between academia and web design and I wonder if I should jump back in. I admit that I'm afraid, but I'm luckier than most. Despite being out of the library community for over a year, Laura is still the same supportive, encouraging and positive presence in my life. I'm confident that when I'm ready to get back into libraries, she'll be there for me not just as a program-appointed-mentor, but as my friend.

Laura: I learned as a mentor that although I can encourage and commiserate and help guide or direct to people or other resources, I cannot fix everything for my mentee. I wanted to help guide Nyssa into a great first full-time professional experience. The best I could do was to help remind her she was a talented, capable professional and to support her moving on with her life.

My experience with the OLA Mentoring Program was extremely positive. The OLA Mentoring Program coordinators were extremely organized and their program was well thought out and very clear about expectations on the part of both mentor and mentee. I would recommend it to anyone who has ever been interested in having a mentor or serving as a mentor.

I am so grateful to have had Nyssa as my mentee. She is a strong, talented, amazing information professional and human being and I hope we are friends for years to come! I learned a great deal working with her and about what I can and cannot do as a mentor. 



A New Shape to Mentoring

by **Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen**
Wilsonville Campus Librarian,
Oregon Institute of Technology
Dawn.lowewincentsen@oit.edu

What we tend to think of as mentoring is a one on one relationship between people with differing levels of experience, however, there are other shapes and sizes that mentoring can take. Stephen Bell (2013) discussed the millennial generation and newer professionals seeking non-traditional relationships such as peer mentoring or cohorts. Add in virtual mentoring programs, sponsorship programs, and expert databases, and there are many choices to make when designing a new program. Mentoring is not new by any means, but it does seem that newer generations of librarians are seeking it out more, and in different ways. (Neyer, L., & Yelinek, K. 2011)

In 2014–15 an ad hoc committee for the Academic College and Research Libraries Distance Library Section (ACRL/DLS) was tasked with designing a member engagement program. There was careful consideration from both the committee and the DLS executive committee to not call it a mentoring program. The ad hoc committee researched five different types of engagement models, traditional mentoring, peer to peer mentoring, expert database, sponsorships, and co-orts, sent a single question survey to the DLS membership, and compiled a recommendation for the executive committee. While the committee has tabled the proposal for now, the results of the research and the survey give a different shape to what a mentoring program could be.

This article seeks to provide an overview of some of the shapes of mentoring. While some citations are given, this is in no way an exhaustive literature review. Someone seeking to start a program or investigate a shape of mentoring is strongly encouraged to delve deeper and do further research.

Traditional Mentoring

Traditional mentoring programs are what we tend to think of when the word mentoring is used. These are a one on one relationship between people with varying degrees of experience. The relationships can focus on something specific such as tenure (Kuyper-Rushing, L. 2001) or be a more general matching program like the Library Leadership Administration Management Association (LLAMA) mentoring program.

Technology has opened these types of programs up so that they may be e-mentoring programs where you never meet each other in person, but know each other quite well through other forms of communication. (LLAMA Mentoring Committee, 2015). There are vast numbers of these types of programs available in both face to face and less conventional models. However, mentoring is not a one shape fits all proposition.

Peer-to-Peer mentoring

One alternative, but closely related shape to traditional mentoring is the peer-to-peer model. Again, this is a one to one relationship, but often the participants are at a more similar level of experience. Similar to the model described by Kuyper-Rushing (2001), the model described by Level, and Mach (2005) is meant to support people in the tenure process. The difference is that the people involved are at a more peer level, instead of a senior to junior level. This type of arrangement may help to ease some discomfort people may have confiding in a superior by having mutual coaching toward a common goal (Mavrinac, M.A. 2005). Eldridge (2010) discusses this peer-to-peer model in virtual or e-mentoring programs that may benefit colleagues who work at a distance with a strong model and training module on the front end to provide guidance.



Co-horts

If one mixes the traditional model with the peer-to-peer model, a co-hort would emerge. In this structure there is a group of peers working together, learning from each other, and one or more people with more experience to guide the group. Mullen (2010) calls these knowledgeable facilitators. A class setting is one manifestation of this shape of program. In an article by Mullen and Tuten (2010) they use a case study of doctoral students working on a thesis. The students receive support from each other and the dissertation advisor while still working independently.

Another example that might be more familiar to readers is the American Library Association (ALA) Emerging Leaders program. Each participant in the program participates in a project team that works together on a common project. Projects are proposed by a project host (often a roundtable or division level project), and has access to an ALA staff liaison for clarification and connection. (ALA, ND)

Expert Databases

Virtual mentoring or e-mentoring is something mentioned previously. In many cases this type of mentoring is thought of in the context of email or chat, or similar synchronous communications. It does not have to be that way, and with a bit of experimentation other avenues may open up. Hutchinson, and Colwell (2012) discuss a model using a wiki. This method may have brought forth more creativity in both mentor and mentee interactions.

While a wiki and an expert database are not the same thing, they both use technology to connect people in a way that other programs may not. One example of an expert database is the New Member Round Table (NMRT) resume review service. This service keeps a list of resume reviewers, the experts, to pair review seekers, the mentees, up with. (NMRT, ND) Currently this is being done by email with the resume review committee. It has also been done through ALA connect in the past. Using a network such as ALA connect or a wiki would allow mentees or mentors to self-select.

An example of this type of self-selection occurred with the ACRL conference buddy sign up. Conference attendees who wanted a buddy, or mentor, for the conference, could post a profile. Buddies, or mentors who had previous conference experience could sign up and select a mentee based on that profile, all in one process. (ACRL, 2015). Another example of this self-selection is the Educause Affinity Finder. This tool is a membership directory meant to connect people for networking purposes. (Educause, 2015)


Sponsorships

Sponsorship may be stretching the definition of mentorship for some. The word may bring up images of 12 step programs, or kids going door to door in a fundraiser. Even an image of a Kickstarter or Gofundme program may come to mind before a mentorship program. A sponsor is someone whom the mentee seeks out, usually as a resource to a specific outcome. Chynoweth (2012) writes that women sometimes seek sponsors in the more long term mentoring type of relationship before men. While this can happen, it is not the intended outcome usually. Golden (2012) mentions sponsors as a role model, cheerleader, or potential door opener in a career path. This was the least researched shape identified and often only briefly mentioned in other studies or literature reviews. No current examples were found.



The Survey

A single question may not be a survey. As the committee was only asking the section membership, just over 1,000 people at the time, the demographic type questions were not needed. In a wider research study of mentoring style preferences a researcher would want to know that type of data. The recommendation the ad hoc committee gave was a twofold approach involving an expert database and a cohort model. These were the top two preferences on the survey results. Peer to peer was the third, with a large gap in the results between it and the remaining two.

Looking at the data, and the literature on the different types of mentoring programs, the results speak to a shift from the traditional shape of a mentoring program. A desire for more collaboration is demonstrated by cohorts being a group of people at the same level working toward a common goal, and the peer to peer being two people at the same level learning from each other, leaning on the expertise of peers. There is certainly still place for the traditional mentorship program in the profession. No single type of program will ever be one size fits all. It is important to take into account many of the shapes of mentoring when choosing and developing a new program or evaluating a current program. More research for a specific need is recommended, especially anytime the targeted population can be asked before a new program is put in place. 

References

American College and Research Libraries. (2015) Fun Stuff.

<http://conference.acrl.org/fun-stuff-pages-296.php> Accessed 11/23/15

American Library Association. (2015) ALA Emerging Leaders Program

<http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/leadership/emergingleaders> Accessed 11/20/2015

Bell, S. (2013) The Next Generation May not Want your Mentoring. Leading from the library. *Academic Newswire*.

Chynoweth, C. (2012, July 08). Take me to your sponsor. *Sunday Times (London, England)*

Educause. (2015) Member Directory. <https://www2.educause.edu/members> Accessed 11/23/2015

Eldridge, J.D. (2010). Virtual peer mentoring (VPM) may facilitate the entire EBLIP process. *Evidence Based Library & Information Practice*, 5(1), 7–16.

Golden, J. (2012) Mentoring as a career strategy for mid-level public library managers: a selective review of literature involving methodology and cross-disciplines. *Library Philosophy and Practice*

Hutchinson, A. & Colwell, J. (2012). Using a wiki to facilitate an online professional learning community for induction and mentoring teachers. *Education and Information Technologies*, 17(3), 273–289. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10639-011-9159-7>



Kuyper-Rushing, L. (2001). A formal mentoring program in a university library: components of a successful experiment. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 27(6), 440–446. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0099-1333\(01\)00258-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0099-1333(01)00258-0)

Level, A.V., & Mach, M. (2005). Peer mentoring: one institution's approach to mentoring academic librarians. *Library Management*, 26(6/7), 301–310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01435120410609725>

LLAMA Mentoring Committee. (July 14th, 2015) Mentoring Orientation (Electronic Presentation)

Mavrinac, M.A. (2005). Transformational leadership: peer mentoring as a values-based learning process. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 5(3), 391–404. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/pla.2005.0037>

Mullen, C. A. (2010) Naturally Occurring Student-Faculty Mentoring Relationships. The Blackwell Handbook of Mentoring a Multiple Perspectives Approach. 119–138 <http://tinyurl.com/p5cpw7r>

Mullen, C. A. Tuten, E. M. (2010) Doctoral Cohort Mentoring Interdependence, Collaborative Learning, and Cultural Change. *Scholar-Practitioner Quarterly* 4 (1) <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ942494.pdf>

New Members Roundtable Resume Review Service. (ND). Need a job. <http://www.ala.org/nmrt/oversightgroups/comm/resreview/jobseekers> Accessed 11/23/15

Neyer, L., & Yelinek, K. (2011). Beyond boomer meets NextGen: Examining mentoring practices among Pennsylvania academic librarians. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 37(3), 215–221. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2011.02.013>



Mentor Where You Are:

Informal Mentoring of Student Workers

by **Karen Head**

Public Services Supervisor,
Northwest Christian University
khead@nwcu.edu

and

Steve Silver

Library Director,
Northwest Christian University
ssilver@nwcu.edu



KAREN HEAD



STEVE SILVER

Do you work with student workers in an academic library? Congratulations, you're a mentor! Do you work with volunteers in a public library? We suspect the same could be said for you. Do you work with students, volunteers, or aides in a school library? Yup, you're a mentor too.

While we may think of formalized programs and upper leadership positions when we hear the word “mentor,” the truth is that nearly every one of us has ample opportunity to be a mentor right in the position we currently hold. At Northwest Christian University (NCU) we have no formal mentorship program. “Mentor” does not appear anywhere in our institutional or library goals or outcomes. However, our interactions with library student workers, and the approach we take to supervising their work, involves an intentional degree of what could be termed informal mentoring. This approach is likely paralleled in many (probably all) of our college and university libraries across the state, and seen in various forms in all of our public, school, and other libraries.

What does informal mentoring look like? It will look different in every unique setting, of course. All we can do is describe some of what we do at NCU. Karen Head, public services supervisor, works most closely with our student workers. She has been a supervisor of student workers in the circulation department for almost twenty years. She has informally, but very intentionally, mentored over a hundred young workers. She sees it as a two way process, imparting her hard earned experience, wisdom and advice as they contribute fresh new perspectives and insights. We, as staff and students, mutually respect, care about, and encourage each other.

It is a growth process for us as staff as well. Karen believes she is a better mentor today than when she first started working with these young people. As she says:

“My first few groups of students liked me, but I’m not sure I put their best interests ahead of being liked and being popular with them. I gradually realized that they were better served by me if I placed their greater welfare and ultimate good over my desire to be liked. Today I address the tough stuff, giving them constructive advice and warning to counteract unproductive and unhealthy work habits. I am very intentional about



teaching and role modeling a productive work ethic. I focus on promptness, excellent customer service, good work habits, teamwork, diversity inclusion and positive attitudes that will help them prosper and thrive in their future careers. I encourage them to set work goals every year. We illustrate these goals and post them to remind us of what we are aiming for. Through building and maintaining respectful, friendly and close relationships we encourage and inspire each other to be better workers and better people.”

Mentoring is not a responsibility we take lightly. It involves patience, compassion and the understanding that everyone has their own pace in the process of incorporating learning into practice. But it feels good to be there for our student workers as a sounding board, as well as to offer encouragement and advice. Mentoring, even informally, provides mentors with a sense of usefulness and purpose. There is a definite aspect of “paying it forward,” in recognition of those in our lives who took the time and effort to advise, instruct and encourage us in our formative years.

It is very fulfilling to see these students persevere through four or five years of rigorous academic and life stresses, culminating in the joyous celebration of their academic and personal achievements at graduation! There are certainly taxing times that try our patience, wishing they could quickly acquire and put into practice, the wisdom we impart to them that has taken us years to accumulate and incorporate. But in the end it is worthwhile to be a witness to their personal growth as these young people persevere and triumph through the trials school and life throws at them.

It is also very gratifying when the students want to continue the relationship after graduation. It is fun to keep track of them on social media, to see their life progress as they pursue jobs and careers, travel, form new relationships, get married, have or adopt children, etc. Some will even come back and visit, which is a special delight. As one former student worker said to Karen:

“I think the library is a safe place for anyone to be and hang out, but I believe the staff are what make a library great. If people were to ask me who my mentor was, your name would come up in the conversation. I think it is important for every young adult to have someone they can go to and talk to about things. It created a comfortable environment, I think, for me to be at ease and just work well in the library. It creates a ‘happy place.’ The NCU library is my happy place, and you are my happy person.” (Morgan Horn).

It is especially gratifying to see student workers move on and do well in our own profession. Each of us in librarianship have our own stories about the way some positive experience in a library or with a librarian influenced our own career choice. As supervisors of student workers we have the opportunity to be that influential story in some student worker’s life.

There is no way to know in advance, of course, who those future librarians and library workers will be. Very few of them are thinking about librarianship this early in their careers. Of the many students we have collectively worked with over 20 years, only one has expressed interest at an undergraduate level in a career in librarianship, and that student is still in school (and still working for us), and is a story yet to unfold.

We have had students go on to work in libraries, and even to earn MLS degrees, and work as professional librarians. In every case these students’ later decisions to pursue library work have come as a mild surprise to those of us who worked with them while undergraduate students. It



has been an honor and a privilege to support their efforts, of course, by providing letters of reference to library schools and to employers, and by answering questions and providing advice to the former students themselves. We know many of you have similar stories of student workers, volunteers, or assistants who have gone on to become colleagues in one form or another.


By being more than merely a supervisor, and by treating our student workers as more than just a student worker, we like to believe that we have contributed to the success these former students now enjoy in our own profession. Through our actions, words, and decisions, we exemplify the positive values and worth of librarianship to student workers. When we explain the ‘why’s’ of work assigned to students, or help them understand how their tasks fit into the overall mission of the library, we help our students gain an appreciation of the important work we do, and that they might do in the future. When we share reasons for decisions, and have discussions about theory and practice, we instill library values in our student workers, whether they go on to work in libraries or not. In the words of some former student workers now working in libraries:

“My initial reaction to librarianship was, “That’s too predictably uncool for a girl labeled ‘bookworm’ all through her formative years.” My year as a student worker, however, opened my eyes to how subversive and cool librarians actually were.” (Jenny Gapp, Portland Public Schools; Oregon City Public Library).

“So as far as mentoring goes, I feel that the most important part was in helping me see what strengths I possessed that I wasn’t even aware of. The other great thing about being mentored as a freshman was just the chance to explore.” (Kelsey Sutton, Tillamook County Library).

“I’m forever grateful for (the library) trusting someone as young as myself with a variety of challenging and essential tasks and projects. If (they) had not given me the confidence and willingness to take on new tasks and learn new skills, I may never have applied for (my current position). Mentorship is essential to libraries and librarians of the future, and I only hope I can find myself filling the same role someday.” (Katlyn Temple, Chetco Community Public Library).

Obviously not every student worker is open to discussions about theory or cares to know how their work fits into the overall goals of the library. When we stress to all of our student workers that they are an integral and important part of our team, engage them in the full process of providing quality library services and resources, and develop a work culture of trust and mutual respect; then those that may not be considering library work have a positive foundation and perspective, if and when that career option opens for them in the future.

Wherever our students end up in the future, the opportunity to have been a part of their maturation and growth is a real joy. Each of their journeys is unique, and some come with more bumps, detours, and roadblocks than others. But each one can benefit from a little intentional informal mentoring while our journeys intersect for a short while. Even though we have no formal mentoring program in our library, the intentional informal mentoring we do reaps great benefits for our student workers, for us as staff, and for our library. Wherever your informal mentoring opportunities exist, we hope you enjoy the same rewards. 



The Library Movement as the Real Mentor and How Stories Recognizing Good Work Influence Us

by **Tammy Westergard**
Director of Libraries,
Jackson County Library District
twestergard@jcls.org



TAMMY WESTERGARD

*The only person who is
educated is the one who
has learned how
to learn—and change.*

—CARL ROGERS,
American psychologist

Tammy serves as the Director of Libraries for the Jackson County Library District. She holds a BA in Speech Communication from the University of Nevada, Reno and an MLS from the University of North Texas with a Graduate Academic Certificate in Advanced Management. She was inducted into Beta Phi Mu in 2014. She also maintains membership with Association of University Research Parks, the American Library Association and its Public Library Association Unit, the National Summer Learning Association, and serves as the Chair of the Social Responsibility Roundtable for the Oregon Library Association. Her professional focus is on strategic planning that leverages partnerships through shared and complementary policy between institutions. In 2014, Tammy presented during an ALA national conversation about strategic library partnerships between library types and local government, business communities, and community groups. She is also very focused on workforce training and development of the public library as the essential “onramp” for working-age citizens to reframe or gain new marketable skills. Tammy recognizes that mentoring begins at home and is especially thankful for her parents and siblings, her husband of 30 years, three grown children, a large and engaged extended family and many friends and colleagues who continue to inspire her journey.

Introduction

We are bound by job descriptions, rules, policy, procedure, time-sheets, performance evaluations, change and more ... much more. And so it goes on the first day of a new job, we're in search of someone to guide us through the maze of tacit authority that forms the workplace culture. “The evolution of culture is therefore one of the ways in which a group or organization preserves its integrity and autonomy, differentiates itself from the environment and other groups, and provides itself an identity.” (Schein, 2010).

This paper looks through the lens of the public library and the nature of the public “trenches.” Further, the piece contemplates the role of recognition for good work, and how



stories inspire and share others' journeys of excellence that rarely (if ever) begin with a quest for recognition.

The unintended aim of an individual's professional experience and how one leads by example is studied for impact on informal teaching and influence. Leaders that define a forward-tilting vision of the organization inspire the forward-tilting mission (Schein, 2010).

The focus of this piece on good work, the recognition of good work and mentorship through followship is timely. As a step toward advancing the best practices of supporting aspirational library service, this paper provides insight on how others have successfully implemented solutions to big challenges.

"What ignites the human spirit is when the leaders of our organizations offer us a reason to grow. To really inspire us, we need a challenge that outsizes the resources available. We need a vision of the world that does not yet exist, a reason to come to work," (Sinek, 2014).

Background

Most public library systems are decentralized throughout communities with scores of businesses, institutions and organizations. Each has an interest in community development and success. Problems can present when success is defined in too many disconnected ways, sacrificing a unified message and aligned purpose.

With one of America's most challenged state economies, many Oregon counties struggle to provide adequate public services. Brene Brown, PhD, a trailblazing thought leader and researcher, talks about the challenges of leading in a culture of never enough. From her 2012 book, *Daring Greatly*, Brown notes, "After doing this work for the past twelve years and watching scarcity ride roughshod over our families, organizations and communities, I'd say the one thing we have in common is that we're sick of feeling afraid. We all want to be brave. We want to dare greatly. We're tired of the national conversation centering on 'What should we fear?' and 'Who should we blame?'"

The never have enough, woe is me mantra is rare from plucky Oregon librarians. Three recent 2015 special elections for library levy increases in Eugene, Washington County, and Sweet Home all passed. Last year, in Jackson County, voters passed a special library district creating stable funds to keep its fifteen libraries open and thriving. Douglas and Josephine Counties are gearing up for 2016 levy measures that will continue to tell the story of library services as a substantial return on taxpayer investment. "Our system demands ongoing affirmation of library services. Emphasizing outcomes enhances our investment value; education drives economic advancement enhancing quality of life," (Gross, 2013). Libraries are fundamentally about the ability to access opportunity to level up skills. "Human beings have thrived for fifty thousand years not because we are driven to serve ourselves, but because we are inspired to serve others," (Sinek, 2014).

Sinek's commentary embodies the work being done now to provide public library services in Josephine and Douglas Counties, despite extreme budget cuts. Under some of the most difficult and heartbreaking circumstances in Oregon, these library leaders are successfully preserving and sustaining the foundation of library services for today's residents, and for future generations. They are walking the talk of perseverance and tenacity, of innovation born from meeting their patrons where they are in a life-long learning journey that requires 21st-century skills in a digital world. "A leader's legacy is only as strong as the foundation they leave behind that allows others to continue to advance the organization," (Sinek, 2014).



A Base of Solid Experience

The mentors that inspired my journey into the profession include faculty from the University of North Texas (UNT), especially my stellar and unwavering advisor Yvonne Chandler, PhD.

Dr. “C” (as her students call her) has an impressive, hardworking and inspiring story. In 1978 as a graduate of Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia Dr. C. launched into library school. In 1979, she graduated with her Master of Library Science from Atlanta University. By 1995, she had earned her Ph.D. in information science from the University of Michigan. For nearly twenty years Dr. Chandler has dedicated herself to the training and education of librarians. In fact, Dr. C has received over \$4 million in federal grants that have supported students and faculty. She can claim credit for hundreds of librarians working across the United States and abroad who have benefitted from her mentoring, teaching and advisement.

She received the UNT President’s Council Outstanding Teaching Award in 2008 and in 2014 was president of the Texas Library Association (TLA). Among other achievements during her yearlong reign, the delivery of a weeklong library conference for Texas information professionals included over 400 programs and events under Dr. C’s *Lead Out Loud* theme focused on learning, empowerment, advocacy and diversity. The event inspired and mentored over 7,500 attendees—well over 1,000 more than the previous year, (2014, *TLA Cast*). I did not attend the conference, but I feel certain that the experience was a concentrated version of her inspiring, magnetic, pastoral approach to instruction, student advisement and degree planning. As a former student, I can recall class oftentimes felt like a rousing Sunday at church and I absolutely know I got the call to be a librarian of agency and change from Dr. C.

Too, library trustees, public library elected officials and other elected officers, in particular school board members and mayors, can mentor as enlightened and inspired policy makers. My previous relationships with municipal supervisors and mayors, school boards, redevelopment and economic development department leadership and city managers were formative. I learned to see the difference that was extended to the library wish list when their

energy was added to the advancement of public library services and systems. I also learned what happens without such allies. In particular, in Nevada, Supervisor Robin Williamson (who also became a Library Trustee after 12 years as a city supervisor) had the capacity and wherewithal to advance library services from the influence of her position as a trusted and longtime community leader. Her legacy continues years after she retired; that said, progress was not won without difficulty.

When a rare opportunity presented itself for the advancement of a public/private partnership for a city-center development, she built a team within the city’s public service departments that included the office of business development, the city manager and the library. At that time, I worked in the business development office with Joe McCarty, the Director. Above anyone, Joe taught me how



Old School: All smiles at the California Library Association 2014 meeting in downtown Oakland, Tammy Westergard and UNT’s renown library leader, Yvonne Chandler, PhD pause for a smile and hug.”



the built environment is purposeful in design and can inspire movement either toward or against community priorities. He really understood the public library as the key civic anchor in any community. In the case of this landmark opportunity, the unintended consequences of elected officials' indecision cost the community the project. The opportunity costs are too big to count, but these were big lessons that fundamentally expanded my understanding of public service. I get why the process matters and why movements do require mentors. This movement did expose real civic truths. Today, community challenges persist and the public library space remains inadequate. Of course the new, current community leaders still wrestle with development problems, but they're working on it. The movement we began has moved the community forward in positive ways, which to some degree I now believe is the way it works. Moving mountains takes a very long time.

The current Jackson County Library District Board is a tremendous positive example of an effective and inspiring elected body. Monica Weyhe, President; Maureen Swift, Vice President; Carol Doty; Susan Kiefer, and Jill Turner Board Members are all first-term elected officials to this new district, formed in May 2014. These leaders were so committed getting a library district passed, that they were also willing to step up, run for office, and assume the weight of responsibility that would and has come with setting up an entirely new govern-

ment. They are not paid elected officials, but for many months the board president works nearly full time and board members easily work twenty or more hours a week on committee assignments, board meeting preparation and community relations.

These officials shoulder the responsibility and invest the time because they believe that the public library is essential to Jackson County's quality of life. These are leaders who are willing to defend the community's right to robust library materials, services and programs because of a fundamental belief that public library services promote access to lifelong learning, enjoyment and civic engagement. They have the demonstrated ability to approach people and problems with an open mind, and have the courage to resist pressures which interfere with the community's democratic right to public library services, places and spaces. I find them an unusually inspiring and hard working elected body.

My most formative mentor has been Sara Jones, MLS, currently



Team Jackson: Immediately after the JCLD December board meeting library leadership paused for a photo on the dramatic staircase of the system's main branch in Medford. At bottom row #1 Tammy Westergard, MLS, Jackson County Library Director; row #2 Maureen Swift, Vice President; Row #3, l to r, Jill Turner, Board Member; Carol Doty, Board Member; Susan Kiefer, Board Member; Row 4, l to r, Monica Weyhe, Board President; Mark Bartholomew, J.D., Board Legal Council and top Lisa Marston, J.D., Board Administrator.



Director of County Library Services for Marin County, California. During our work together in northern Nevada, Sara showed me what it meant to understand the mission of the library. My lived experience underpins the *good work as the mentor* theme of this paper. It is with gratitude I share lessons learned.

Leading by Example

As library director in Nevada, Sara built teams who were free to be committed to the work of implementation. The list of projects envisioned, deployed and assessed are too numerous to name, but suffice it to say Sara is a nationally recognized library leader and Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) grant authority.

Sara's most significant leadership traits relate to integrity and vision, or values-based leadership, (Fernandez, J.E. & Hogan, R.T., 2002). Her interpersonal qualities inspired momentum (despite large obstacles) and spoke to other's requirements, values and feelings.



Sara Jones, MLS, Strategic Planning in Carson City, Nevada.



All smiles: Left, Director of County Library Services for Marin County, California, Sara Jones and Tammy Westergard take a moment to appreciate the view from Sara's office in the Civic Center Library, located on the fourth floor of the Marin County Civic Center Administration Building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

This was particularly important during times of controversy. Through example, I was shown a library vision and mission that set the stage for mentors at every level in the organization. I watched her support team building at many levels creating an environment of interdependence, where no group had complete autonomy. These linkages helped the library implement a vision with a clear sense of purpose.

One example regards her leadership that secured a Broadband Technology Opportunity Program grant (BTOP), with a work program that included as a highlight the opening of a special library branch for business. It was featured in the August 2012 issue of *American Libraries*; writer Bradley Collins in *How Libraries Are a Boon to Small Business*, talks about how information resources are especially important to entrepreneurs at a time when a scarce number of public libraries were focused on business services. In fact the year after Sara moved to take the California post, the library was named *2013 Nevada Broadband Hero*.

The total BTOP grant was \$596,999 and as a team, over about five years, we were able to leverage this tremendous opportunity. In fact, from the seeds of the BTOP grant and subsequent LSTA grants, the system has attained the ability to leverage community access to cutting edge technology that blends opportunity to learn marketable skills for



students already in formal learning environments and those outside of a formal setting who want to level up.

Milton Chen, PhD and co-founder of the George Lucas Educational Foundation notes, “Just as the hybrid gasoline-electric motor has brought innovation to automobiles, turning either/or into both-and thinking can create new approaches to fuel educational performance.”


The Nevada library recently was the first in the nation to offer certified training in advanced manufacturing that has helped patrons “graduate” from the public library and land jobs at Tesla’s advanced manufacturing facility not twenty miles from the library in northern Nevada.

This is fundamentally positioned to explode workforce training because it tells the story of the nature of public libraries and what the role of public libraries mean to the idea of “access.” *Library Journal* covered the story extensively in its March 18, 2014 online issue (Peet, 2015). This story from its foundational beginning, to its legacy conclusion answers one of the “whys” of library work. “It is a fitting role for the library to link learning to earning by offering the MT1 certificate program, resulting in individuals equipped with industry credentials and prepared for jobs in manufacturing,” said Kathleen DeRosear, Executive Director of the Manufacturing Skills Institute of the Nevada program (*Library Journal*, 2014).

Economist Tyler Cowen notes, “If you and your skills are a complement to the computer, your wage and labor market prospects are likely to be cheery. If your skills do not complement the computer, you may want to address that mismatch. Ever more people are starting to fall on one side of the digital divide or the other. That’s *why average is over*” (2013).

OLA Facilitating Mentorship

Values-based mentors rely on having valid information, making free and informed decisions, have internal commitment and possess compassion. Further, mentors with values-based approaches in essence operate from a foundation of facilitation that can be practiced by anyone in the organization. Successful mentors are successful because of regular involvement with many people deciding how to achieve the organization’s vision, giving people a sense of control. This is the fundamental role and fuel of the Oregon Library Association.

Without recognition we risk lost stories, and with them, their transformative messages. So in this way, good work is the mentor and OLA is an excellent platform to gather and share our stories. Without realizing it, many of us seek guidance from people in our organizations who reflect our own aspirations through the work they are doing. We seek to follow in their direction. The inspiring energy generated from people who *walk their talk* moves mountains. “Real change rarely comes from the front line. It happens from the middle or even the back. Real change happens when someone who cares steps up and takes what feels like a risk. People follow because they want to, not because you can order them to,” (Godin, 2010). The public library develops social and economic fibers that model the idea of opportunity through learning. 

References

Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Chen, M. (2010). *Education Nation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781118269398>



Cowen, T. (2013). *Average is over: Powering America beyond the age of the great stagnation*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Fernandez, J.E. & Hogan, R.T., 2002. Values-based leadership. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 25(4), 25.

Godin, S. (2010). *Linchpin: Are you indispensable?* New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Gross, V. J. (2013). *Transforming our image, building our brand: The education advantage*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.

Loud and Strong in San Antonio. (2014, May). *TLACast*, 33(3), 1–2.

Peet, L. (2015, March 18). Nevada library to offer manufacturing certification. *Library Journal*. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/hb3m9dq>

Schein, E. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sinek, S. (2014). *Leaders eat last: Why some teams pull together and others don't*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.



OLA Quarterly Publication Schedule 2015

The *OLA Quarterly (OLAQ)* is the official publication of the Oregon Library Association. The *OLAQ* is indexed by *Library Literature & Information Science* and *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts*. To view PDFs of issues, visit the OLAQ Archive on the OLA website. Full text is also available through HW Wilson's *Library Literature and Information Science Full Text* and EBSCO Publishing's *Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA) with Full Text*.

Each issue is developed around a theme determined by the Communications Committee and Guest Editor(s). To suggest future topics for the *OLA Quarterly*, or to volunteer/nominate a Guest Editor, contact the OLAQ Coordinator.

Vol./No.	Theme	Deadline	Pub. Date	Guest Editor
Vol 21 • No. 4 Winter 2015	<i>Library Marketing and Communications</i>	February 10, 2016	March 1, 2016	Joan Petit, Portland State University

Oregon Library Association Inc.
PO Box 3067, La Grande, OR 97850



The OLA Communications Committee

OLA Communications Committee Chair
Sara Thompson,
OSU Cascades

OLA Hotline Editor
Berenice Prado, Emporia University

OLA Quarterly Coordinator
Charles Wood,
Aloha Community Library

Association Manager
Shirley Roberts

