Mentoring in Canadian Academic Libraries: Research Results and Ideas for Practice

Marni R. Harrington, *University of Western Ontario*
Elizabeth Marshall, *University of Western Ontario*
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Marni Harrington & Elizabeth Marshall
University of Western Ontario

Mentoring – What is it good for?

- Mentoring relationships are beneficial for all who participate – the mentees, mentors, and the institutions that support mentoring.
- Mentees: personal gratification, learning, developing relationships (Eby, 2005); critical for the transition from graduate student to new career (Black & Leyyen, 2005); one of the most highly ranked variables for career success for female directors in academic libraries (Kirkland, 1997);
- Mentors: higher compensation, more promotions, increased satisfaction with career (Allen, 2005)

Who did we ask?

- New MLIS Graduates (23)
- Professional Librarians at Canadian Colleges (43) and Universities (245)
- Library Administration at Canadian Colleges (7) and Universities (14)

What did we ask?

- Research Questions:
  1. Who is mentoring?
  2. Do academic librarians expect to be mentored?
  3. What are some important mentoring activities?

Who is mentoring?

- Librarians at large institutions
- Experienced librarians (more than 10 years experience)
- Librarians who were mentored as new librarians

Some mentoring expectations...

- Practicing librarians had very low expectations for mentoring in first library job
- BUT a shift has occurred: new grads now expect to be mentored, formally or informally
- A library colleague would be the most appropriate mentor according to new grads and practising librarians

This is just a snapshot...

For more information:

Looking forward...

Let’s re-evaluate how mentoring is framed

New MLIS Graduates: Ask about mentoring programs during formal interview process
Practicing Librarians: Reach out to new colleagues at your library – they are looking for mentors
Library Administration: Support mentoring initiatives that focus on career guidance, role modeling, and psychosocial support

References