

## CHAPTER 3

# Inorganic is Still Good for You: Building a Structured Group Mentoring Program for Librarians

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Naturally, libraries want their new librarians to succeed, and recognize that high quality mentoring will help accomplish that goal. However, ensuring mentoring for new librarians, whether they are in faculty positions or not, is harder than it sounds. Many envision a traditional one-on-one mentoring relationship, and when such relationships grow organically out of pre-existing positive professional relationships they can be very rewarding for both mentor and protégé. Nevertheless, relying on these relationships to develop organically carries with it natural inequities in access to mentoring for new librarians who have not had the good fortune to meet and bond with a senior colleague. As conceptions of mentoring shift toward building professional networks rather than a teacher/student dynamic, structured group mentoring can address some of the inherent weaknesses of traditional informal mentoring structures. In response to internal assessments highlighting the need for an equitable, scalable approach to mentoring, the University Libraries at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) developed a structured group mentoring program for librarians of all ranks.

### 3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 3.2.1 Mentoring in Universities

The importance of mentoring early career faculty is well documented (Boice, 2000; Johnson, 2007; Mathews, 2003; Noe, 1988; Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000; Wasburn & LaLopa, 2003) with recurring themes of both career enhancement and psychosocial benefits. Some of the many benefits of mentoring junior academic faculty include increased retention, better

adjustment to one's department, institution, and position, greater rates of scholarly productivity, and greater success at achieving tenure and promotion (Johnson, 2007). The benefits of mentoring extend to those serving as mentors and includes gaining new perspectives and knowledge (Wasburn, 2007) and the opportunity to reflect on teaching and processes (Wasburn & LaLopa, 2003). Zellers, Howard, and Barcic (2008) report that faculty with at least one mentor are more confident than their nonmentored peers. Successful mentoring benefits protégés, mentors, and organizations because of its impact on productivity, retention, and socialization (Mathews, 2003; Zellers et al., 2008).

While mentoring has been associated with career satisfaction, van Emmerik (2004) found that individuals who created mentor networks benefited more than those who had only one mentor. Peluchette and Jeanquart (2000) examined the effects of mentoring on both objective and subjective success and also found great importance in the creation of mentor networks including one mentor from within the workplace. Early career professors with mentors from multiple sources performed significantly better than those without mentors, or those with mentors only from outside the workplace. Furthermore, early career faculty with multiple sources of mentors experienced higher levels of objective and subjective success.

In addition to the to impact on one's career, access to mentoring also serves an important role in the psychosocial support and socialization of new faculty (Cawyer, Simonds, & Davis, 2002; de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004; Schrodt, Cawyer, & Sanders, 2003). Those who were mentored felt more connected to their work environments than their nonmentored peers and were able to get the guidance new faculty desire regarding tenure and promotion (Schrodt et al., 2003). The psychosocial benefits extend beyond the protégés to the mentors as well. Cawyer, Simonds, and Davis (2002) found that participating as a mentor made tenured faculty more aware of new faculty needs.

When comparing informal (organic) and formal (inorganic) mentoring, the discussion often focuses on which provides the best mentoring. Recent studies have challenged the belief that organic pairs, whose mentoring relationship develops from existing professional relationships among people with a naturally strong rapport, set the mentoring standard for which an early career faculty member should strive. After piloting and assessing two formal mentoring programs, one for new faculty and one for graduate teaching assistants, Boice (2000) found that the participants

in these formal programs fared better than the naturally occurring pairs. The researchers attribute this success to the structure provided by the formal programs. With expectations of meetings and larger group activities, the participants felt that they were accountable to their mentors and protégés. An advantage to mandated mentoring programs is that they counter the misconception that formal programs are selective or remedial (Zellers et al., 2008). Additionally, formal mentoring programs have helped in overcoming barriers that inhibit some early career faculty in developing informal mentoring relationships, such as physical proximity, feelings of similarity (or difference), and time commitments (Boice, 2000; Buch, Huet, Audrey, and Roberson, 2011; Wasburn, 2007; Zellers et al., 2008).

Going beyond calling for formal mentoring programs, de Janasz and Sullivan (2004) moved away from the apprenticeship model and embraced a developmental network of mentors. Through formal mentoring, combined with workshops, seminars, and other information sessions, faculty can create networks that work for different stages in their careers. In creating a strategic collaboration mentoring model, Wasburn (2007) called for mentoring groups which consist of multiple mentors and protégés. One main advantage of this model is the lessened impact if one mentor leaves the group or the university. Unlike one-on-one mentoring, this program does not leave the protégé feeling abandoned.

Many of these mentoring examinations include characteristics of successful mentoring programs. The components of a successful program include clarity of focus, planning, providing sufficient structure, and assessment to improve the program (Boice, 2000; Lumpkin, 2011; Wasburn & LaLopa, 2003; Zellers et al., 2008; Ziegler & Reiff, 2006). Issues that arose in some of these programs stemmed from mismatched goals, which reinforced the need for a clear mentoring contract (Boice, 2000; Wasburn & LaLopa, 2003). Program assessments and evaluations stressed professional development and support for faculty in both the mentor and protégé roles. This support might include training for mentors, facilitating meetings, or guidance for content of mentoring meetings (Lumpkin, 2011; Wasburn & LaLopa, 2003).

While a majority of academic mentoring research is focused on early career faculty in tenure-track positions, there is a need for mentoring across the career lifecycle of faculty members. Repeatedly, the point was stressed that mentoring should not end when a faculty member is awarded tenure (Awando, Wood, Camargo, & Layne, 2014; de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004; Lumpkin, 2009). As Lumpkin (2009) notes, associate professors need

assistance for handling posttenure review and continued faculty development. In their exploration of the needs of mid-career faculty, [Awando et al. \(2014\)](#) examined perceptions around advancement related to both promotion to full professor and other leadership opportunities. They found associate professors are hindered by lack of clarity around promotion criteria and increased teaching and service responsibilities, leaving little time for research growth. Overall, associate professors expressed that there was a lack of institutional support for continued development as well as conflicting information from deans, directors, and promotion committees. [Buch et al. \(2011\)](#) investigated gender differences regarding expectations for promotion to full professor. Only 12% of associate faculty, both male and female, had mentors to guide them through the promotion process and those that did have a mentor were significantly more likely to perceive that there were incentives to seek promotion and that criteria were clear.

### 3.2.2 Mentorship in Academic Libraries

Much of the literature on mentoring librarians for both research and librarianship consists of case studies describing the successes and pitfalls of individual projects, ranging from the traditional one protégé model ([Farmer, Stockham, & Trussell, 2009](#); [Ghouse & Church-Duran, 2008](#); [Kuyper-Rushing, 2001](#)), to more complex models such as the one protégé/many mentors approach ([Bosch, Ramachandran, Luevano, & Wakiji, 2010](#)). These case studies allow us to identify opportunities, challenges, and benefits of mentorship models.

Numerous studies confront the question of how mentorship relates to research productivity; the literature suggests that at institutions where publication is a central criterion for tenure and promotion, mentorship programs are particularly important. [Fennewald \(2008\)](#) suggests that the collegial support provided by formal and informal mentoring programs helps new librarians succeed in conducting and publishing research. [Tysick and Babb \(2006\)](#) identified a need for mentorship around publishing and research because of junior faculty's strong feelings of inadequacy and isolation relating to research. A review of research support and research committees in ARL libraries suggests that many deans and directors recognize the importance of formal and informal mentorship for research and publication, and while the majority support formal mentorship programs, only about half the respondents reported that their institutions actually provide such programs. Informal mentoring was both strongly supported

and frequently provided, but it is unclear whether informal mentorship is consistently available as needed (Sassen & Wahl, 2014). In addition to clear needs for mentorship in publication and research, Wilson, Gaunt, and Tehrani (2009) identify a gap in library mentorship around acculturation to the academy. While teaching faculty begin their career with lengthy acculturation to academia, librarians often arrive at the academy with less acculturation to the academy, and in particular, research.

### 3.2.3 Mentorship and Inclusivity

If mentorship is both effective and essential for success in the academy, then it is particularly important that access to mentorship is equitably distributed. Kuyper-Rushing notes that "... many people would never be able to benefit from a mentoring relationship if formalized mentorship was not an option" (2001, p. 441). In particular, formalized mentorship is key to ensuring inclusive mentorship. An inclusive mentorship program can support equitable access to opportunities and address feelings of isolation and lack of access to social networks. Damasco and Hodges (2012) note that librarians of color may experience isolation, a lack of access to support networks, difficulty accessing mentorship, and missed opportunities. A lack of mentors for faculty of color can lead to "missed opportunities and resources in terms of research and service" (Damasco & Hodges, 2012, p. 282). This can have a compounding effect on faculty librarians—each missed opportunity is another gap in the foundation of their careers. Librarians of color also face potential challenges in developing a professional identity in the context of institutions whose values may not align with their own values or lived experience, explaining the relevance of research agendas that may not align with traditional agendas, as well as coping with a sense of isolation (Gonzalez-Smith, Swanson, & Tanaka, 2014). But mentoring programs designed to address these challenges may not be successful if they simply single out librarians of color: singling-out librarians of color for mentoring can imply that the *librarian* is the problem, rather than institutionalized racism (Damasco & Hodges, 2012).

Evidence suggests that mentorship increases inclusivity within the library. Iuliano, Royster, Johnson, Larrivee, and Driver (2012) explore the experiences of minority librarians explicitly through mentorship, and conclude that mentorship leads to a sense of connection, which in turn enhances retention; since minorities report less sense of connection, mentorship may be a method to enhance retention. Moreover, "minority

librarians new to the profession must navigate through the double challenge of being both a neophyte and a minority in librarianship,” and addressing this double challenge will help minority librarians succeed (Iuliano et al., 2012, p. 484). Ultimately, mentoring is imperative for enhancing feelings of inclusion and retaining minority librarians in the profession (Iuliano et al., 2012). Group mentoring, with its emphasis on fostering collaboration and connection, is a potential tool for minimizing feelings of alienation, isolation, and intimidation for minority librarians (Ross, 2013).

One model that may be particularly optimal for enhancing inclusivity is Wasburn’s strategic collaboration model. In this model, three to five faculty members are paired with two more senior faculty members. This model may be particularly well suited to women and minorities, Wasburn argues, as it both ensures that they have equitable access to mentorship while including all faculty members in mentoring (Wasburn, 2007). This reduces the singling-out effect, enhances connection, ensures equal access to mentorship, and provides a space that explicitly acknowledges varying experiences by providing multiple voices (Wasburn, 2007).

### 3.3 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The CU-Boulder Libraries are an ARL library, in which the librarians carry the same faculty status and ranks as the rest of the campus academic faculty. Most new faculty are hired as Assistant Professors. After a 6-year probationary period, these faculty stand for tenure review, at which point they are either promoted to Associate Professors or given a 1-year terminal contract. After a period of time, Associate Professors may optionally stand for Full Professor: the highest rank available in this process. Like faculty elsewhere on campus and in other universities, a portion of the library faculty is comprised of nontenure-stream faculty at various ranks (senior instructor, lecturer, and adjunct are the most common). The faculty of roughly 45 librarians is smaller than the majority of ARLs, but larger than many other college or university libraries, making it an optimal environment to test mentoring models that could work at other libraries regardless of size. While many mentoring programs are targeted only toward tenure-track faculty, the inclusion of all the ranks makes CU-Boulder an applicable model for programs that are not specifically related to tenure.

The previous approach to mentoring at CU-Boulder was an opt-in, one-on-one mentoring program, usually for only the tenure-track

librarians. It was not an actively managed program, and most mentoring pairs found each other organically either via the supervisory chain or through natural affinities. Pretenure librarians had the option of formally requesting a mentor, in which case, either a mentor would be assigned, or would volunteer, from among the tenured faculty. In such cases, it was most common that the protégé would initiate the mentoring conversations. Mentoring pairs who were able to build strong relationships enjoyed all the benefits described below of the one-on-one mentoring model, but faculty who did not find a good match were left without the guidance and psychosocial support that is critical to professional success.

Over a 3-year period, the library undertook several internal assessments: a diversity-related environmental scan, a program review managed by the campus, an internal survey related to tenure, and a strategic planning process that included several steps of gathering input from faculty and staff regarding the institution's strengths and weaknesses. While the target topic of the majority of the assessments was not specific to mentoring, each assessment resulted in very clear evidence that the mentoring program needed improvement. In each case, mentoring was identified as a weakness both in the context of the pursuit of tenure, as well as in on-boarding and understanding institutional culture. The response was particularly strong that improved mentoring was needed for faculty pursuing tenure. The program review specifically signaled the need to improve the rate of promotion from Associate to Full Professor. While it is common for tenured professors in many fields and many universities to languish at the rank of Associate, an unusually high percentage of Libraries' faculty who achieved tenure have not elected to stand for Full Professor. The results of the program review specifically charged the library with improving this percentage, as well as extending more systematic and effective mentoring to pretenure faculty. In response to this consistent evidence indicating a need for a different approach, the faculty formed a task force to consider the question of mentoring and propose some kind of formal, structured mentoring program.

### **3.4 MENTORING MODELS**

The task force considered multiple models to address the charge of proposing a new structured mentoring program. These models included: one-on-one mentoring, peer mentoring, and three group mentoring models: one protégé/many mentors, many protégés/one mentor, and many protégés/many mentors.

Characteristic of mentoring models	One-on-one mentoring	Peer mentoring	One protégé, many mentors	Many protégés, one mentor	Many protégés, many mentors
Provide opportunities for individual, focused mentoring by senior colleagues	✓		✓	✓	✓
Encourage participation from senior mentors by spreading time and emotional labor among a collaborative group			✓		✓
Provide a supportive environment for mentors new to mentorship			✓		✓
Accommodate personality differences between mentors and protégés		✓	✓	✓	✓
Easy to change mentoring partnerships		✓			✓
Ensure equity of access to mentorship			✓	✓	✓
Utilize the expertise of pretenure librarians		✓			✓
Provide a broad spectrum of perspectives from mentors		✓	✓		✓
Facilitate information exchange among peers		✓		✓	✓
Facilitate information exchange among mentors of varying experience			✓		✓
Maximize access to mentors when there is a significantly smaller number of potential mentors than protégés				✓	✓



### 3.4.1 One-On-One Mentoring

One-on-one mentoring is often considered the gold standard of mentoring. In this model, a mentor and a protégé work together, usually over a long period of time, with the mentor providing professional guidance in any of numerous professional categories. This kind of mentoring is often particularly useful to the protégé since it is entirely individualized to their specific context and professional need, and can be especially rewarding for the mentor, who can feel a part of the protégé's growth and success. One-on-one mentoring is typically organic, and consequently is often not a good approach for a structured mentoring program. The necessity of assigning mentoring pairs in a structured program can lead to mismatches of personality, style, and commitment between the pairs. The unavoidable power differential among the pair can make it uncomfortable for the protégé to step away from the mentoring pair if the relationship is not successful. Additionally, if the mentors participating in a structured program feel insecure about their mentoring abilities, or are for any other reason unmotivated, then the burden on the protégé to carry the workload of the mentoring relationship can also inhibit the success of the structured mentoring. Libraries may also find it difficult to find enough mentors for this model, or ensure continuity during times of high turnover (Ghouse & Church-Duran, 2008; Kuyper-Rushing, 2001).

### 3.4.2 Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring may be structured or unstructured, one-on-one or in larger groups, and offers some unique benefits and drawbacks. At its best, it can provide immediate, relevant feedback about navigating shared challenges; at its worst it can promote misinformation and institutional mythologies. It is sometimes positioned as a supplement to other mentorship models (Level & Mach, 2005). Benefits include psychosocial support, overcoming isolation, bridging divides between departments, and providing a safe space for broaching difficult issues such as insecurity about research skills (Cirasella & Smale, 2011; Level & Mach, 2005). Like other mentorship programs based on developing personal relationships, however, peer mentoring is vulnerable to excluding protégés or peers who do not “fit,” and by its nature it cannot promote information exchange between newer and more senior librarians (Stalker, 1994). When a mentorship goal is to provide assistance with professional development, this is a significant drawback.

### 3.4.3 One Protégé/Many Mentors

The one protégé/many mentors model has the strength of providing a broad range of perspectives to the protégé and a supportive environment for the mentors, as well as diluting the challenges of any personality conflicts between protégés and mentors. When formally structured, it can provide equitable access to mentorship. However, it requires numerous mentors and may be difficult to implement in environments where there are limits on the number of available mentors and their available time, or when there is a high proportion of newer librarians to senior colleagues. It also cannot facilitate peer relationships among protégés, although it may facilitate information exchange among mentors. One California institution implemented a one protégé/many mentor model, which was very successful in providing a range of perspectives to protégés and in alleviating mentor concerns about taking sole responsibility for a mentorship relationship; however because the model is so resource-intensive, it is only available to faculty in their first 6 months of employment (Bosch et al., 2010).

### 3.4.4 Many Protégés/One Mentor

The many protégés/one mentor model solves some of the weaknesses of the previous model by making efficient use of mentors in contexts where potential mentors are few, and can facilitate information exchange and support among protégés (Farmer et al., 2009). When formally structured, it can also provide equitable access to mentoring. However, it lacks opportunities for protégés to hear the views of more than one mentor, whose advice may or may not be representative. It additionally lacks the opportunity for mentors to support one another in their mentoring abilities. And while the group can dilute mismatches of personality or style among mentors and protégés, it may still be uncomfortable for protégés to discontinue the mentoring relationship if it isn't working.

### 3.4.5 Many Protégés/Many Mentors

The many protégés/many mentors model has the strength of deploying mentors efficiently, facilitating information exchange among peers as well as among mentors, and when structured, providing equitable access to mentoring. The multiple mentors model makes it less uncomfortable for both mentors and protégés to join and leave the group without it appearing to be personal on either side. The model provides multiple

perspectives from different mentors, and allows mentors who are less comfortable with mentoring to share the responsibility.

### 3.5 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The structured group mentoring program at the CU-Boulder Libraries creates groups of four to five protégés paired with two to three mentors. Each mentoring group of six to eight total individuals is required to meet at least six times per year. While this is the minimum requirement, some groups may (and do) choose to meet more often if the group so wishes. Each group signs a mentoring contract at the beginning of the year (see [Appendix A](#)). The contract details the expectations of both mentors and protégés, and underscores the no-fault expectations if someone chooses to switch to a different group part-way through the year. The individual groups discuss what topics they want to cover during the year, and list those topics in the mentoring contract. Since some protégés are at different places in their careers than others, the topics of most interest may vary. For example, groups in which the protégés are about to stand for a tenure-related review may spend far more time discussing personal statements and other elements of the dossier than a group of brand-new faculty, who might spend more time discussing institutional culture and procedures.

#### 3.5.1 Mentoring Committee

To support and manage this structured mentoring program, the faculty created a Mentoring Committee. The committee consists of three members, elected by the faculty, on rotating appointments. The committee's charge reads:

*The Mentoring Committee consists of three members elected from the Libraries Faculty, serving a 3 year staggered term. The Mentoring Committee, including at least one tenured and one untenured faculty member, is responsible for assigning mentoring groups, developing the mentoring program, evaluating faculty participation, and assessing the effectiveness of the mentoring program.*

This charge was written to create a committee to oversee the program, which then would be allowed the flexibility to change and develop as it matures. The committee is responsible for assigning membership of mentoring groups at the beginning of the year. These assignments could be based on a number of different criteria, including management responsibilities, rank, area of focus (e.g., reference and instruction or cataloging),

etc. This program has thus far structured these groups based on length of appointment, so that the newest faculty are together, as are the faculty who are about to stand for tenure review. The committee also develops suggested discussion topics to support effective mentoring sessions. They track attendance at group meetings using an online attendance form in order to assure that the individual groups are meeting the requirement of at least six meetings per year. Additionally, the committee hosts workshops for all faculty related to mentoring, including workshops on curriculum vitae and self-statement preparation and work life balance. These workshops stand in place of one of the required six meetings. Finally, the committee is responsible for assessing the overall program and making changes accordingly.

### **3.5.2 Member Expectations**

New faculty who are tenure track are automatically added to a mentoring group as protégés upon their arrival at the Libraries. The only expectation of protégés is that they attend the meetings, though there is no repercussion if they do not, other than missing a mentoring opportunity. There are mentoring opportunities for faculty who are not tenure track. For example, there is a mentoring group for temporary faculty, since it is common in our structure to have a few temporary faculty members at any time. There is also a group for nontenure-track librarians, as well as one for tenured librarians who are considering standing for Full Professor. Given the emphasis in the recent program review, as well as on campus generally, on encouraging Associate Professors to seek promotion, the creation of the group for tenured librarians meets a particular need that was previously unaddressed. Membership for protégés in these additional groups is optional.

Expectations of mentors in the structured mentoring program are more extensive than those for protégés. Participation as mentors is required of all tenured faculty. Mentoring is considered a service activity, and is an expected role. Thus, should a mentor fail to participate in their assigned mentoring group, they will receive a “not meeting expectations” rating for their service evaluation that year. Mentors are expected to schedule the mentoring group meetings and lead topical discussions. Establishing these requirements required a vote of the faculty to add the language to the faculty handbook. The addition of this service requirement was supported by a comfortable majority of the faculty, though it was short of unanimous. Faculty who are not tenured, but want to contribute as mentors, may serve as mentors for appropriate groups. For

example, faculty who have passed the interim review (variously called comprehensive review, 3-year-review, or reappointment) may serve as mentors in a group whose protégés are new to the institution. Nontenure-track librarians may serve as mentors for other nontenure track librarians, and librarians who had once been in temporary faculty positions can mentor current temporary librarians. Mentorship at these levels, by faculty who are not tenured, is optional.

### 3.5.3 Special Circumstances

The structured group mentoring program accommodates several special circumstances. For example, some librarians take extended leaves, such as sabbatical, parental leave, etc. Librarians on extended leave are exempted from the program during the months of their leave, but expected to participate for the remainder of the year. The committee assigns mentoring group membership to accommodate the absences of librarians who have an extended leave by adding an extra mentor to that group.

The program also accommodates switching from one group to another. There is a no-fault clause written specifically into the contract, which states that if someone asks to switch groups they will be moved without needing to provide an explanation. This addresses a common concern of how uncomfortable it may be, particularly for untenured faculty, to seek a different mentoring relationship if the current group is, for some reason, not resulting in the mentoring they need.

The mentoring group memberships are changed on the calendar year, in order to be in-cycle with our elected committee membership and performance review. However, when a faculty member achieves a tenure-related promotion or reappointment, that change becomes official mid-year. For cases in which a rank change is anticipated part-way through the year, the committee asks the faculty member's preference on participating in the program either as a protégé, as a mentor, or both. They can also opt to be a mentor starting after the mid-year promotion, taking the rest of the time off.

In any large organization with long-term appointments, long-standing personality conflicts are bound to develop. Since membership in each group is assigned by the mentoring committee, the committee endeavors to avoid assigning members with known preexisting personality conflicts to the same group. In addition, in order to ensure that the mentoring committee is a safe space to discuss and advise, the committee avoids having supervisors serving as mentors to their direct reports whenever possible.

### 3.6 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

In the first year of the program, the mentoring committee made efforts at continuous assessment of the program. The first of such efforts was a mid-year evaluation and feedback survey. The survey received 30 out of a possible 40 responses, yielding a 75% response rate. The survey was open to both mentors and protégés. Faculty members who served in both capacities had the option to fill out a single response or to fill out the survey twice.

While most survey respondents indicated satisfaction with the program and their mentoring groups, some comments indicated suggested improvements. Though one of the strengths of the group mentoring approach is to allow for multiple perspectives, the committee found that the mid-year evaluation noted a few comments regarding confusion of multiple opinions and disagreement over recommendations. Some of these issues do not fall under the purview of the mentoring committee but, rather, need to be addressed in different fora. The committee directs these issues to the appropriate channels. In one case, discussion surrounding workload expectations was taken to administration for clarification. In addition to topics that needed to be addressed by other groups, some comments were made regarding more administrative aspects of the program such as assistance with scheduling of mentoring meetings and additional guidance regarding meeting topics. Finally, there were responses indicating continuing confusion regarding the scope of the mentoring program, such as whether the program was for more than tenure and promotion purposes.

The mid-year evaluation provided the mentoring committee with a strong focus for the growth and development of the program. Numerous survey comments called for mentor training and guides for best practices. The next mentoring year will include an event for mentors to learn about best practices. The call for expanded development of meeting topics will grow into a year-by-year mentoring discussion guide which allows for groups to determine their own meeting topics and goals while providing a framework for subject matter to cover throughout the year.

While the program is designed to support faculty members throughout their career lifecycle, some respondents noted that they would like to see additional mentoring for tenured faculty members. In the 2 years of the program, only two associate professors opted for mentoring toward full professor. The comments in the mid-year survey, combined with additional conversations with associate professors, indicated that many would be interested in panel presentations or workshops aimed at tenured

professors examining the next steps in their careers but without committing to the mentoring group for full professor. In the upcoming year, the mentoring committee will partner with other campus resources to expand offerings aimed at associate professors.

After reviewing the results of the mid-year survey, the committee is considering ways to gather more in-depth data. For example, in the mid-year survey the committee had not considered that individuals acting as both mentors and mentees would have different experiences in each group. Therefore, the end-of-year survey will be structured to enable those individuals to more clearly discuss successes or failures from both the mentor and protégé perspectives. As the committee builds new groups, it will also need to determine if there are additional ways of grouping that could be more effective for the protégés, such as by research interest or professional responsibility. The new groups present an opportunity to combine different groups of mentors and protégés in order to expand the professional networks of the faculty overall.

The mentoring committee's end-of-year retreat is organized around setting goals for the second year of the group mentoring program. Many of the goals of the first year revolved around administrative questions, such as how to form groups, offer relevant programming, and act as a resource for all the groups. In the second year, the committee can expand this reach, starting to take the data and feedback from the first year and ensure a stronger program that will improve the entire faculty's experience.

As already mentioned, the program will undergo modifications. In the first year, meetings held by the committee generally focused on providing assistance to the protégés, not the mentors. During the second year the committee will expand its focus to include support for the mentors. The web site created by the committee included basic best practices on mentoring. However there was no actual discussion among the mentors on how to do their work more effectively. Therefore, at the beginning of the second year, the committee will host a moderated discussion for mentors, focusing on handling common questions and concerns, sharing topic ideas, building stronger mentoring groups, etc. The survey results and the questions received throughout the year will serve as a foundation for this conversation and will help the committee build a stronger support system for mentors into this program.

The committee is also addressing the confusion around the objectives of the mentoring program. Whether this is because of the newness of the program or the need for improved communication by the committee or

both, there is a misperception that the program is just to support tenure. Through mentoring training and clearer communication, the committee will demonstrate that the mentoring program supports all faculty in multiple aspects of their career, including, among others, promotion, adaptation to the academy, and professional development.

Our 6-month survey revealed a number of questions about research, thus the committee is developing a research series focusing on topics related to creating, implementing and publishing research. This series will include a roundtable discussion on research project planning and implementation, as well as a visit from the Institutional Review Board to help librarians better understand their responsibilities when conducting human subject research.

Finally, the program had one individual request to switch groups during the course of the year. As the committee forms mentoring groups for the coming year there is a need to ensure that group members who wished to change groups, but did not initiate a switch, realize that they have an opportunity to be assigned to different groups in the next cycle. While there is no penalty for moving groups, it is possible some faculty members preferred a new group but found it easier to wait for the new year rather than switch.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is little question that mentoring represents an important element in creating a work environment in which librarians with a diversity of backgrounds and personalities can succeed and feel included. However, relying on organic mentoring networks to build themselves often makes mentoring inaccessible to some librarians. This can lead to inequitable access, and an environment where important information about institutional culture and paths to promotion is available only to those lucky enough to identify a natural mentor. In response to several organizational assessments that indicated a need for better, more consistent mentoring, the University Libraries at CU-Boulder developed a structured group mentoring program, bringing together multiple protégés with multiple mentors. The scalable program addresses many of the weaknesses of alternative mentoring models by ensuring equitable access to mentoring, providing multiple perspectives, fairly distributing mentoring workloads, and building natural professional networks among both new librarians and senior librarians. Initial assessments are very positive about the creation of the program.



This structured group mentoring model, as implemented at CU-Boulder, could be tailored to fit libraries of most sizes and configurations, in order to build stronger mentoring networks.

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## APPENDIX A SAMPLE MENTORING CONTRACT

### University Libraries Mentoring Contract

The aim of the University Libraries' mentoring program is to foster professional growth and career development in a group mentoring setting. The program strives to provide a supportive academic environment and provide multiple perspectives on university and organizational culture.

#### Expectations of Mentors:

- Mentors will organize and facilitate six meetings a year.
- The mentors will develop, with mentees, clear goals and expectations for the mentoring year (January–December).
- The mentors will articulate, with mentees, specific milestones and timelines for meeting mentoring goals.
- Mentors will participate in annual evaluations and assessments of the group mentoring program.
- The content of all exchanges between mentors and mentees are subject to the expectations of professional confidentiality.
- The mentors will track the attendance of both mentors and mentees at the meetings conducted throughout the year to assist the mentoring committee in evaluating the program.

#### Expectations of Mentees:

- Mentees will attend and participate in six meetings a year.
- The mentees will develop, with mentors, clear goals and expectations for the mentoring year (January–December).
- The mentees will articulate, with mentors, specific milestones and timelines for meeting mentoring goals.
- Mentees will participate in biannual evaluations and assessments of the group mentoring program.
- The content of all exchanges between mentors and mentees are subject to the expectations of professional confidentiality.

#### Group goals for the year:

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