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Purposeful Mentoring in Academic Libraries

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Abstract: This article offers statistical information about the future of our profession and the role that mentoring may play in retaining and promoting academic librarians into leadership positions within an organization. An overview of the history and definition of the word mentor and current terminology is offered to provide the reader with understanding of the complexity surrounding the concept of mentoring. Mentoring as process is explained, and both formal and informal mentoring processes are discussed and examples provided. The benefits of mentoring are detailed and include the benefits for mentors, mentees, and academic libraries, with a special focus on minorities and generational considerations now prevalent in libraries. Qualitative methodologies are examined to determine relationships, and the methods used include interviews, questionnaires, and print and online surveys. Case studies from across the nation are analyzed and offered as evidence that mentoring does in fact work well in many academic libraries, but librarians should be mindful that these mentoring processes must be evaluated periodically to remain viable. A brief discussion and future considerations section offer helpful information on gaps in the literature and the challenges that academic libraries face as they create and implement mentoring processes in their respective academic organizations.

Keywords: academic libraries, case studies, mentor, mentoring, methodology, Millennials, minorities, NextGen

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Purposeful Mentoring in Academic Libraries

The academic library profession is facing a potential leadership crisis, and the next decade will see a significant number of librarians retiring from the profession (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Wilder (1995) predicted that between 2000 and 2010, 40% of professional academic librarians will have retired. Looking ahead at the next decade, starting with the year 2010, about 45% of current working librarians will reach the age of 65 (Lynch, Tordello, & Thomas, 2005), and the number of academic librarians leaving the profession will be approximately 27% (Wilder, 1995). In a more recent study, 36% of "baby boomer" academic librarians surveyed never had a mentor. The research indicates that mentoring is an option for the future as librarians in academic libraries face a dynamic and tenuous future (Neyer & Yelinek, 2011). Librarian and leadership positions within academic libraries will need to be filled by currently employed librarians or recent graduates of nationally accredited library and information science schools.

As evidenced by the research found within the reviewed literature, mentoring in our profession is a viable option for preparing future leaders and for career development (Mavrinac, 2005; Nankivell & Shoolbred, 1997). Though mentoring is not unique to librarianship, and it is found within many fields including business, psychology, sociology, and education (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006; Field, 2001; Hansman, 2003; Kirchmeyer, 2005; Mathews, 2003; Meister & Willyerd, 2010), this article highlights the academic library and leadership literature in order to determine how mentoring in academic libraries and leadership studies can better prepare academic librarians for successful careers as leaders within their institutions.

Literature Search

The literature on mentoring in academic libraries from the past two decades has been analyzed in order to provide an overview and understanding of best practices in the process of mentoring found specifically within academic libraries and to identify seminal works in the field (Golian & Galbraith, 1996). Though mentoring may be one beneficial method in preparing academic librarians for leadership positions, career stage and professional development are also important considerations (Freedman, 2009), but are outside the scope of this article.

If we are to properly prepare currently employed librarians and recent graduates for leadership positions within the profession, the library profession must determine sustainable and consistent methods to assist future librarian leader's success (Mavrinac, 2005). Furthermore, to understand the responsibilities and complexities that librarians face in dynamic academic libraries of the 21st century, mentoring, with its corresponding benefits, is one viable option that academic library leaders can institute within their organization to address the leadership vacuum that is on the horizon in academic libraries (Cox, 2007; Fiegen, 2002; Henrich & Attebury, 2010; Mosby & Brook, 2006).

History, Definition, and Terminology of Mentoring

A foundational understanding of both the history and the definition of what it means to be a mentor is in order to better understand current best practices within mentoring and how best practices can be applied appropriately in an academic library setting. According to the literature, the history of the word mentor goes back to ancient Greece and the tale of Odysseus (Freedman, 2009; Nankivell & Shoolbred, 1997; Ragins & Kram, 2007) and to the master apprentice concepts found in ancient China (Zhang, Deyoe, & Matveyeva, 2007). In both historic instances, a mentor was viewed as an individual who acted as a role model and supporter throughout the

duration of the mentoring process.

Definitions abound regarding mentors and mentoring, and Golian and Galbraith (1996) provide a litany of sample definitions related to higher education and academic libraries, but explain that one universal definition of mentoring is noticeably absent from the literature. Gehrke (2001) defines mentorship abstractly, using concepts of giving and receiving as foundations for understanding. Zachary (2005) defines mentoring as a relationship established between two or more people that is both reciprocal and collaborative by nature, and one which leads to shared responsibility and accountability between mentor and mentee as they move toward well-articulated goals. The online version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1750) defines mentor as "a person who acts as guide and adviser to another person, especially one who is younger and less experienced. Later, more generally: a person who offers support and guidance to another; an experienced and trusted counsellor or friend; a patron, a sponsor" (Mentor). Goodyear (2006) suggests that mentoring should be considered more as a process between two or more individuals who work together, in order to assist in the career development of the less experienced person.

To better comprehend the definition of mentoring, Field (2001) encourages an understanding of terms related to mentors and mentees. According to Field, the terms most widely attributed synonymously to the word mentor include guide, teacher, advisor, and coach (2001). For the word mentee, apprentice and protégé are used periodically and interchangeably, thus offering further descriptive words that do not lead to a definitional misinterpretation behind the intended meaning of terms. Although the wording may be varied and not universally described, the conceptual meaning, definition, and terminology surrounding mentoring and mentees is articulated in the library-related literature in order to facilitate additional depth of understanding.

Mentoring as Process

Mentoring is a process between two or more people that can be implemented in a variety of ways based on the needs and resources of the organization (Culpepper, 2000). Whether formal or informal processes are used, it is noteworthy to mention that mentoring can be a developmental strategy (Haglund, 2004; Murphy, 2008; Taylor, 1999), a tool for retention and promotion (Snow, 1990), or simply viewed as a process whereby there are stated or unstated benefits for the mentor, mentee, and the organization (Hardesty, 1997; Field, 2001; Munde, 2000). Though there are theoretical considerations for formal mentoring processes that include the ideas of social exchange and communitarianism (Gibb, 1999), this article offers more practical knowledge that mentoring practitioners may find beneficial in their daily interactions within academic libraries.

Mentoring Models in Academic Libraries

The disparate types or models of mentoring found in the library-related literature indicate that there is no clearly defined consensus on which type or model of mentoring is most effective for individual academic libraries, though the literature supports informal mentoring processes as being more effective for academic libraries in general (Field, 2001). The types or models of mentoring processes are often categorized as either informal or formal (Field, 2001; Freedman, 2009; Golian-Lui, 2003; Keyse, Kraemer, & Voelck, 2003; Wojewodzki, 1998), as group/organizational (Bosch, Ramachandran, Luevano, & Wakiji, 2010; Hallam & Newton-Smith, 2006; Meister & Willyerd, 2010; Miller & Benefiel, 1998; Ritchie & Genoni, 2002), or paired within either a peer (Holliday & Nordgren, 2005; Level & Mach, 2005; Mavrinac, 2005) or subordinate/superordinate (Hallam & Newton-Smith, 2006) relationship.

Formal mentoring programs are traditional in nature and involve the pairing of senior administrators with a junior member of the organization (Freedman, 2009). These formal

mentoring programs were popular in the 1970s and 1980s, but since that time, the mentoring processes found in academic libraries are focusing on informal mentoring programs due to their flexibility and personal attachments between mentor and mentee (Field, 2001). However, some formal mentoring programs are being implemented in academic libraries across the country. The College Library Directors Mentor Program, which is sponsored by the College Libraries Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries, is one such program. This formal mentoring program includes a 3-day intensive workshop in addition to the formal pairing of a newly minted library director with a senior director (Golian-Lui, 2003). An innovative and formalized approach was also undertaken by the University of Kansas, and this program includes elements of facilitated pairing, a formal mentoring agreement, and an assessment element, which is vital in measuring program effectiveness (Ghouse & Church-Duran, 2008). Bosch et al. (2011) discuss the creation of a resource-team model approach to mentoring, and this formal approach, though inherently flexible, requires the team or committee to orient, train, and monitor academic librarians during their first 3 months on the job. Though mentoring processes may indeed be moving toward informal structures, formal mentoring programs do offer an alternative for individual libraries to consider as they undertake this difficult and complex issue.

Informal mentoring is discussed in the library literature and includes the concept of peer mentoring (Neyer & Yelinek, 2011). In a study conducted by Holliday and Nordgren (2005), a unique approach to peer mentoring was taken that included using students at various public service points within an academic library to provide an extended ability for librarians to reach out to students and faculty. Though this process is informal, and discusses the identification of peer mentors from the student body, it did allow for librarians acting as mentors to grasp the importance placed on informal mentorship practices that benefit the organization.

Field's (2001) work on informal mentoring processes discussed the differences between formal and informal mentoring and suggested that informal mentoring provides opportunities for a personalized approach, yet maintains enough flexibility to prevent participants from viewing the process as rigid or stagnant. Delving deeper into this research, Field outlined two fundamental types of informal mentoring processes. One type involved either a mentor advising a mentee or a mentee requesting guidance from a more knowledgeable or experienced librarian. This included establishing a long-term relationship which may bloom into a professional friendship that provides a relaxing atmosphere that inspires risk taking, or it may be more inspirational and provides encouragement for mentees to attend professional development conferences or interact with current library-related literature in more substantive ways. A second type of informal mentoring process involved mentoring programs that were in the infancy stages of development and have yet to be formalized. These types of programs do have some frameworks in place to guide the direction of the mentoring process but are not considered formal processes due to their informally inherent nature (Field, 2001).

At Oakland University, an Untenured Librarians Club (Un-TLC) was formed to address a perceived lack of mentoring for librarian faculty members undergoing the tenuring process. This informal mentoring process relied on a relaxed, communication process in which formalized approaches were dismissed as too restrictive and mentorship between tenured and untenured library faculty was supported (Keyse, Kraemer, & Voelck, 2003). This unique concept and view of informal mentoring provided stakeholders with recommendations that would encourage active participation in the tenure process, but also provided a means for guiding untenured librarians toward the accomplishment of individual research and writing goals. From open sharing of research findings to more practical writing tips offered from tenured mentors, this informal

process encouraged a collaborative process between tenured and untenured librarians, resulting in critical reviews of drafts for publication, information on guidelines to reach tenure, and support of research and scholarly pursuits even after the tenure process was completed.

Formal and informal mentoring programs in academic libraries continue to function as opportunities to advance the needs and meet the expectations of academic librarians (Goodyear, 2006). And although there are instances in which mentors and protégés are resistant to the value of mentoring processes (Hansman, 2003), most of the reviewed literature suggests that mentoring provides perceived benefits for mentors, protégés, and academic libraries (Farmer, Stockman, & Trussell, 2009).

Benefits of Mentoring for Mentors, Mentees, and Organizations

One method that has proven to be beneficial for academic librarians interested in ensuring the future success of the library profession is mentoring (Goodyear, 2006). According to Goodyear (2006), there is a correlation between the mentoring process and the derived benefits for the mentor and mentee. For mentees, the benefits might include receiving both help and direction from the mentor in a collaborative manner. For the mentor, benefits include having a salutary influence on those in the library profession, the possibility of leaving a legacy, and reverse mentoring. Hardesty (1997) believes that benefits of mentoring are also correlative and rely on the importance of establishing collegial relationships between mentors and mentees, which encourages candid discussions on sensitive topics in a safe and trusting environment. Field (2001) contends that the provision of career advancement advice, both professional and personal guidance, and the reinforcement of an individual's self-confidence are benefits derived through the mentoring process. Munde (2000) stressed that the benefits found during mentoring relationships not only apply to the mentor and mentee but also to the organization as a whole.

Examples of the relationship between organizational benefits and the mentoring process were not causal but were interrelated and included reducing employee turnover, exposing new academic librarians to organizational patterns of functioning, and increasing leadership effectiveness throughout the organization. These are important considerations as the profession seeks to improve the employees and organization within which they are employed (Munde, 2000).

Benefits of Mentoring Minorities

Mentoring has benefits for minorities, as well as for the majority of academic librarians, and the research offers insights into how these benefits from mentoring can positively affect retention rates of minority librarians (Bonnette, 2004; Johnson, 2007; and Olivas & Ma, 2009). Bonnette (2004) provides statistical data taken from both the 1990 and 2000 United States census to illuminate how our minority population is increasing exponentially and suggests that half of the population of the United States will be ethnic minorities by the year 2050. Additionally, the author posits that the benefits of mentoring minorities include instilling confidence and providing minorities with a set of skills with which they can compete in a high-pressure work place. These skills might include publication and presentation advice or provide more practical skills that allow minority librarians a better understanding of the politics and environment of an academic organization. In conclusion, Bonnette provides a perspective that self-confidence and self-motivation are direct pathways to career success that are strongly related to the mentoring process.

Research was conducted by Johnson (2007) at the University of Minnesota in the Institute for Early Career Librarians from Groups Underrepresented in the Profession to determine the influence of group mentoring on retention for librarians of color. The research indicated that librarians of color often feel isolated, intimidated, and alienated due to joining a predominantly

white profession where others may be older and have more job-related experience. Additionally, Johnson contends that the use of group mentoring processes can alleviate challenges and support librarians of color as they overcome these feelings through advisement, encouragement, and collaboration on scholarly activities with other academic librarians, both internally and externally (2007).

Similar research regarding the benefits of mentoring minorities were conducted by Olivas and Ma (2009) using an electronic survey targeted toward minority librarians with less than one year of professional experience. The survey's purpose was to identify how mentoring experiences and the level of mentoring received correlated to job satisfaction. Out of 157 completed surveys, the findings indicated that that only 20% of minority librarians felt they had been properly mentored during their first 5 years in the profession and librarians who had received mentoring in some form had significantly higher job satisfaction because of it.

Studies by Gandhi (2000), Howland (1999), and Josey (2002) reflect on diversity and promotional strategies to assist minorities with reaching their full potential, and the majority of these studies suggest that there is a correlation between the benefits provided through the mentoring process for minority academic librarians. For Gandhi, the evidence in the literature indicates that minority librarians need recruited for graduate schools in library science, recruited to academic library positions, and retained, mentored, and promoted into leadership ranks to better reflect the ethnic makeup of the country. This can be done through mentoring processes that act as guides for increasing confidence and job related skills for academic librarians of color (2000).

Howland (1999) promotes the importance of understanding diversity in new ways and reminds us that over 80% of the library profession in the United States is Caucasian. In

professions like librarianship, where minorities were traditionally encouraged to assimilate, organizations must begin to address more complex issues of retention and promotion for minorities and not rely on traditional methods that worked previously for the White majority. Howland contends that establishing mentoring relationships provides a plethora of opportunities and benefits for novice minority librarians through the sharing of knowledge, skills, technical expertise, encouragement, and constructive feedback and provides a means of reaching maximum potential in the workplace.

One example from 1997-1998 indicates ALA accredited library science schools graduates were 90% white (Josey, 2002). However, this research also indicates that there are minorities working in libraries across the country and that developing a strong diversity program allows the identification of minorities in libraries who might be eligible for recruitment and promotion to leadership positions at the middle and upper levels. Though the path may not be as currently accessible to minorities, Josey (2002) believes that as the world moves toward the concept of the global village, libraries may realize the potential benefits that minority librarians can offer an organization, and through mentoring processes continue to promote diversity in academic libraries across the nation.

Benefits of Mentoring Gen-X or NextGen

The literature illuminates discrepancies in generational definitions and the corresponding years of coverage associated with generations (Meister & Willyerd, 2010; Neyer & Yelinek, 2011), but according to Young, Hernon, & Powell (2006), the Baby Boomer generation spans the years 1946 – 1964. Generation X covers 1965 – 1979, and the following generation, referred to in the literature as Millennials, Next Gen or next generation, were individuals born between 1980 – 2001. Yet, despite these unclear definitional boundaries, the literature suggests that Baby

Boomers and the generations that follow have few significant differences regarding mentoring processes and attitudes toward work within academic libraries (Neyer & Yelinek, 2011).

Understanding how to mentor the most recent generations of librarians is helpful for Baby Boomers who are currently in leadership roles within academic libraries (Mosley, 2005). According to Mosley, Generation X employees seek flexibility, positive reinforcement, and tolerance from library management in order to meet their own personal needs. For Generation X, mentoring must include a continuous dialog in which ideas are shared, discussion is encouraged, goals are agreed upon collectively, and constructive feedback is offered frequently to allow next-generation employees the opportunity to grow professionally. Furthermore, Generation X employees must be mentored by Baby Boomers in management positions to fully understand the importance of organizational structure and dynamics, the importance of communication using tact and diplomacy, and the role that organizational psychology can take when interacting with other librarians from differing generational backgrounds (Mosley, 2005).

Young et al. (2006) conducted an exploratory study of academic library leadership attributes with a focus on Generation X and discovered that this next generation of library employees felt quite differently from their predecessors regarding which attributes are most valuable for library directors to possess. The literature highlighted attributes such as an appreciation for technology, teamwork, flexibility, open communication, mentoring, and nurturing as being preferred by Gen X librarians. Additionally, concepts of fairness, listening skills, work and life balance, relationship building, trust, challenges, and loyalty were key indicators for Gen X employees to remain engaged and participative in the work of academic libraries and to ensure their own sense of self-worth within these organizations (Young et al., 2006).

Benefits of Mentoring Millennials

Meister and Willyerd (2010) predict that Millennials will make up nearly 50% of the workforce by the year 2014. This research explains that Millennials seek opportunities to establish work relationships, engage in learning new skills, and connect to a larger purpose, and mentoring relationships are acceptable and expected in organizations where Millennials are employed. Additionally, Millennials are looking for growth opportunities in professional organizations, and the authors purport that mentoring can provide a competitive edge for organizations and will assist in attracting and retaining individuals of this generation.

Methodologies

Hallam and Newton-Smith (2006) noted that when evaluating mentoring programs, qualitative research methodologies are preferred over quantitative methods due to the nature of qualitative research, which provides the ability to collect descriptive, attitudinal, and enriching behavioral data. The methodologies used within the empirical studies were indeed qualitative in nature and consisted of surveys in either print or online form (Allen et al., 2006; Hallam & Newton-Smith, 2006; Olivas & Ma, 2009), interviews (Zhang et al., 2007), or questionnaires (Neyer & Yelinek, 2011).

In reviewing these qualitative research methodologies, it was apparent that the number of respondents was too small to form a significant perspective on the relative value of the results. For example, in the research conducted by Hallam and Newton-Smith (2006), the sample size was only 25, and there were only 12 total respondents. In the research conducted by Zhang et al. (2007), only four individuals were interviewed, so the findings may not be generalizable to a library profession facing a potential leadership crisis. The work by Allen et al. (2006) was more comprehensive, but the focus was not on mentoring in academic libraries. Instead, the

methodology analyzed mentoring behaviors and processes from organizations outside of the academy, so the transferability of the data to an educational setting was questionable. Olivas and Ma (2009) had more respondents using their electronic listserv survey format, but the focus of their research was a single instance of one-on-one mentoring, so the methodology used did not allow for either depth or breadth of understanding but did provide an interesting case study for the reader's consideration. Though the methodological studies analyzed were qualitative in nature, one of the gaps that was discovered in the literature has to do with the lack of any longitudinal and quantitative studies of substance that focused solely on the mentoring processes found within academic libraries and the identification of the key elements involved for mentors and mentees when choosing mentoring partnerships (Allen et al., 2006).

Case Studies

Case studies on mentoring in academic libraries were prevalent in the library literature. Studies conducted at Wichita State University (Zhang et al., 2007), Louisiana State University (Kuyper-Rushing, 2001), California State University at Long Beach (Bosch et al., 2010), Colorado State University (Level & Mach, 2005), University of Kansas (Ghouse & Church-Duran, 2008), and academic libraries across Pennsylvania (Neyer & Yelinek, 2011) were analyzed to determine what information might be gained from a review of these selected studies.

The case study conducted by Zhang et al. (2007) at Wichita State University provided some insights and findings that may be applicable to academic libraries interested in establishing formal mentoring processes within organizations. The results of this case study indicated that additional research and formalization of specific processes were needed, but findings focused on previous experiences of the participants in the mentoring process, the perceptions that both mentors and protégés had of each respective role, factors influencing matching, overall

organizational structure, effectiveness of the formalized program, and suggestions for improvement. This program at WSU may need to be reviewed to remain current and to address concerns expressed by participants, but the evidence demonstrated that mentor and mentee participants in the program did believe that mentoring provided a positive and supportive atmosphere which will assist those in the program in achieving professional excellence in the field of librarianship. One participant suggested that mentoring should be considered by organizations as a long-term investment that helps colleagues grow professionally, and in turn, creates a healthier and more productive work environment.

At Louisiana State University, a formal mentoring program was crafted that considered components necessary for programmatic success (Kuyper-Rushing, 2001). These components included the identification of clear goals for the program and the drafting of a mentoring plan that targeted assisting tenure-track librarians in areas of research and service. Mandatory participation in the program for tenure-track librarians was encouraged, but tenured librarians' participation was voluntary. Interested stakeholders became involved in the initial planning processes necessary for program success. Guidelines were established and included the creation of an oversight committee, workshops offered by external experts, and regular meeting times. The plan was implemented on a pilot basis, and the evaluation of the program was a central tenet to ensure success of the program at LSU. Kuyper-Rushing (2001) discovered that the creation of this formalized mentoring process for tenure-track librarians was successful due to the input provided by participants in the initial planning phase. Additionally, the ability to revise and update the program, based on participant feedback, and the external expert offering a mentoring workshop at the onset of the implementation of the plan, provided a foundation for the program's success and sustainability.

To address inadequacies in orientation, training, and mentoring, the librarians at California State University, Long Beach, established an innovative program entitled the Resource Team Model. This model was used to advocate for librarians in order to allow them to participate in group mentoring at the university library (Bosch et al., 2010). This model used three mentors for each mentee and concentrated efforts on networking with colleagues, building self-confidence, acclimating new librarians to the institutional culture, recognizing the value of diversity in the workplace, traditional librarianship skills, collaboration, and career development. The program has been viewed as successful by participants but continues to undergo improvements in order to clarify participants' roles and expectations. One direct benefit mentioned in the literature centered on the ability of this model to foster rapid socialization and acculturation to the library and the university by those who participated in the model.

Colorado State University librarians determined that informal processes of mentoring, including peer and group mentoring, were the appropriate approach for the institution and those individual employees pursuing tenure (Level & Mach, 2005). A review of the literature revealed that the importance of library administration support for mentoring, creating an atmosphere that promotes voluntary mentorship, creating opportunities for communication and discussion, and maintaining flexibility as the goals and the expectations of the program changed were considered essential elements in this program's success. Using peer-to-peer mentoring and group mentoring, the program was able to maintain its flexibility to meet the needs of tenured mentors and tenure-track mentees, and the results have been positive for the organization.

One commonality found throughout the case-study literature on mentoring in academic libraries stands out. All mentoring programs, whether formal or informal, continue to evolve, and those participants in these programs, acting as mentors or as mentees, maintain that this

evolution of mentoring programs must continue in order to address the dynamics found within academic libraries (Ghouse & Church-Duran, 2008; Neyer & Yelinek, 2011).

Discussion and Future Considerations

A wealth of research and corresponding literature about mentoring exists in the library field, but there remain significant gaps in understanding and in the areas of quantitative studies that pose some concern for researchers. Allen et al. (2006) believed that the mentoring literature had gaps regarding research on factors that mentors and mentees should consider when deciding upon mentoring partners. Bosch et al. (2010) expressed concerns regarding formal mentoring configurations and the length of formal mentoring programs. Questions surrounding evaluation, the qualitative nature of existing studies, learning outcomes for both mentors and mentees, and the ability of formal mentoring programs to raise the commitment to institutional goals were asked in an effort to lay the groundwork for further research in this area. Scandura, Tejeda, Werther, & Lankau (1996) suggested that future research concentrate on the integration of leadership and mentoring, in addition to focusing on the costs and benefits associated with creating a non-egalitarian work place where some employees are mentored and others are left to fend for themselves. Farmer et al. (2009) mentioned that scant evidence was available for those interested in revitalizing existing mentorship programs and that little or no information was found in the literature that described the skills necessary to be an effective mentor or how to maintain a thriving program that would engage the interests of both mentors and mentees.

Other researchers identified challenges in the mentoring process that they believed were significant areas of concern. Culpepper (2000) made similar connections to the research conducted by Scandura et al. (1996) in which organizations that used mentoring processes were inadvertently creating a chasm between mentored and non-mentored employees. Additional

challenges to the mentoring process centered on the mentors and mentees themselves. These included a lack of personal responsibility and commitment on behalf of one of the involved parties and the lack of evaluation and feedback throughout the process. Hansman (2003) echoed similar concerns and stated that some mentees had purposefully turned away from constructive criticism and advice offered by mentors. This could lead to an environment of ambivalence that challenges the effectiveness of mentoring processes and poses great concerns for organizations. Furthermore, challenges involving class, gender, sexual orientation, and race have not been fully addressed at the time of this article, yet Hansman's research indicated that these elements of mentoring are vitally important political and social contexts that should be included in the conversations about mentoring challenges.

As evidenced in the review of the literature on mentoring in academic libraries, there are still areas of research that are yet to be fully addressed. The dearth of quantitative and longitudinal studies provides opportunities for researchers interested in mentoring within academic libraries to be innovative in their choice of methodology and add quantitative research to the already qualitatively heavy research studies available in the current library literature. Quantitative research may provide robust evidence that can be generalizable and that may bolster the degree of rigor regarding studies in mentorship.

Conclusion

This review of the library-related literature on mentoring in academic libraries was conducted to provide an overview of current practices and to assist in the identification of future areas of research. With the realization that the library profession will be facing a leadership vacuum throughout the coming decade, it is reasonable that a variety of methods must be identified that will encourage and support current and future academic librarians in pursuit of leadership roles

within their respective institutions. One method that is timely and reasonable is mentoring. Though mentoring might be formal or informal, the mentoring processes must be clearly articulated and disseminated transparently in order to be successful.

Future success is predicted for academic librarians as they pursue knowledge of best practices, carefully scrutinize case studies, identity benefits of the mentoring process, and discover appropriate methods of evaluating and assessing mentoring programs. In order to sustain our profession in future years and to create a corps of library leaders that value mentoring with all of its known benefits, successes, and failures, it is imperative to gain an understanding of how mentoring works in organizations so that this knowledge can be fully applied to dynamic academic libraries of the 21st century.

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