



Mentoring Pilot Program

Introduction

This mentoring program is intended to be a useful way of helping employees adjust to their new environment. Whether it is the new employee's specialty itself that is new, or simply the Alliance Library System, assistance from a mentor can be an invaluable supplement to the guidance and assistance that a Department Director or supervisor provides during the first few months at Alliance Library System. The program's success will depend on the new employees, human resources and the new employees all taking an active role in the acclimation process. An outline of the responsibilities of each is outlined below.

The Responsibility of the Mentor

The mentor should contact the new employee in advance of his/her arrival at the Alliance Library System and then meet with the new employee on a regular basis over at least the first six months. The mentor should provide informal advice to the new faculty member on aspects of internal Alliance Library System processes, member services, and committee work or be able to direct the new employee to appropriate other individuals. Often the greatest assistance a mentor can provide is simply the identification of which staff one should approach for which task. The mentor should treat all interactions and discussions in confidence. There is no evaluation or assessment of the new employee on the part of the mentor, only supportive guidance and constructive feedback.

The Responsibility of the New Employee

The new employee should keep his/her mentor informed of any problems or concerns as they arise. When input is desired, new employee should leave sufficient time to allow his/her mentor the opportunity to assist the new employee.

The Mentor

The most important tasks of a good mentor are to help the new employee achieve excellence and to acclimate to the Alliance Library System. Although the role of mentor is an informal one, it poses a challenge and requires dedication and time. A good relationship with a supportive, active mentor has been shown to contribute significantly to a new employee's career development and satisfaction.

Qualities of a Good Mentor

- Accessibility – the mentor is encouraged to make time to be available to the new employee. The mentor might keep in contact by dropping by, calling, sending e-mail, or extending a lunch invitation.
- Networking – the mentor should be able to help the new employee establish a professional network.

- Independence – the new employee’s intellectual independence from the mentor must be carefully preserved and the mentor must avoid developing a competitive relationship with the new employee.

Goals for the Mentor

- Familiarization with the Alliance Library System, its members, and its environment.
- Networking—introduction to colleagues, identification of other possible mentors.
- Developing awareness—help new employee understand policies and procedures that are relevant to the new employees’ work.
- Constructive criticism and encouragement, compliments on achievements.
- Helping to sort out priorities—budgeting time, balancing research, teaching, and service.

Benefits for the mentor

- Satisfaction in assisting in the development of a colleague
- Ideas for and feedback about the mentor’s own teaching / work
- A network of colleagues who have passed through the program
- Retention of excellent faculty colleagues
- Enhancement of department quality

Typical Issues

- How does one obtain feedback concerning work performance? What resources are available for professional enhancement?
- How does the merit process work? Who is involved?
- What committees should one be on and how much committee work should one expect?
- What social events occur in the department or system?
- What seminars and workshops does the department organize?
- What is the library system? Who are the members?

Proposed Structure for the Program

- Meet with employee every two weeks for the first two months
 - Introduction to Departments and details about what departments do
 - Introduction to Employee and details about where to go for issues
 - How to use equipment
 - Introduce new employee to members at large member events or meeting held at ALS (i.e., ALS Day, etc.)
- Meet with employee once a month for the next four months
 - Shadow a consultant on a site visit – follow up with Human Resources Administrator
 - Attend a meeting of a member group (i.e., RSA User Group, etc) if pertinent to new employee’s department – follow up with Human Resources Administrator
 - Attend an ALS committee meeting (i.e., Health & Safety Committee, etc.)
 - Miscellaneous – position