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Volume 2
Mentoring of Library
Faculty and Librarians

Academic Library Mentoring:

*Fostering Growth
and Renewal*

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992. ∞

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021950611

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Printed in the United States of America.

25 24 23 22 21 5 4 3 2 1

Mentor-Mentee's Intellectual Partnership:

Planting and Growing the Seeds for Professional Success

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Love, and Patricia Kosco Cossard*

Introduction

University and college administrators for academic libraries have often discussed the significant amount of the budget invested in new faculty salary, support, and professional development as they undergo the tenure process at their institutions. No monetary value can be placed on a mentoring program or relationship, leading to practical and existential opportunities for growth and renewal.

This case study covers a mentoring relationship from formal to informal stages of the tenure process to what has become a stable and endearing friendship. The mentors and the mentee embarked on an intellectual partnership over fifteen

years and participated in organizational changes that perpetuated growth for not only themselves but for colleagues as well. They nurtured each other in meeting institutional requirements for faculty status while their institution was making significant structural changes.

Background on the Organizational Changes Nationwide and at the University of Maryland Libraries in College Park

Pondering the available research evidence in the library-related literature, one can see essential trends emerging in the twenty-first century academic library. Numerous examples of organizational changes across the United States provided a broad picture of how academic libraries should function and succeed as organizations within the academic community. Several studies found academic and research libraries aligning their activities from a hierarchical structure to a more collaborative organizational culture that fostered creativity and innovation.¹ Schlosser² outlined several trends in academic and research libraries associated with the rapid advancement of the internet and technology tools: the growing prevalence of digital content, consolidation of library spaces, and re-aligning librarians' responsibilities to meet the new service paradigms. Following these trends, various models of organizational cultural changes emerged from the literature, such as creating a "salon culture,"³ a "marketing culture,"⁴ a "knowledge innovation culture,"⁵ a "culture of assessment,"⁶ and a "learning culture."⁷

Similarly, the University of Maryland Libraries in College Park (UMD-CP) embarked on a transformational journey to build a culture of assessment and learning.⁸ Dr. Charles B. Lowry, dean of the UMD-CP Libraries from 1996–2008, emphasized the importance of human resources as being the essential driving force in the implementation of change. He stated that "paying attention to the critical importance of the human side [is] an essential feature of coping with our challenges."⁹ Lowry further suggested that every staff member should experience becoming a leader or a manager in a teamwork environment. He advocated that "continuous organizational development" was the key to the new academic library organization, and a team-based organization was vital to its development. Part of the organizational plan was to transform UMD-CP Libraries into a "learning organization" that emphasized full engagement of the staff

in continuous improvement. The implementation of faculty status for librarians, which entailed establishing peer-review processes, for example, tenure, annual review, and merit awards, were some of the mechanisms to achieve the goal of motivating librarians for constant learning.¹⁰

To chart the path toward this organizational transformation, the UMD-CP Libraries administered surveys in 1998, 2000, and 2003 to identify hot areas where actions needed to be made. Three areas identified were recruitment of ethnic minorities for managerial positions, empowerment and trust, and mentoring and diversity training.¹¹ Diversity and inclusion had been ongoing challenges for UMD-CP. The library administration encouraged constant assessment of the workplace climate to identify the most anticipated needs and to address them.¹² Mentoring for the future development of early-career library professionals became an integral part of the changes taking place at the UMD-CP Libraries. The structure of the libraries' mentoring program and its growth were built upon Lowry's decades of research, administrative guidance, and collaborative work with library leaders. The literature on mentoring programs in academic institutions has grown since then.¹³ Over the years, the UMD-CP Libraries have explored academic mentoring programs for librarians on the tenure track to further strengthen its mentoring program.¹⁴

As witnessed in the UMD-CP Libraries' Strategic Plan for 2003, the goals of diversifying the workforce and creating a robust learning program for staff enrichment/re-skilling were also chief concerns of the libraries' administration. To reach these goals, the coordinator of personnel programs position was created in the Human Resources Employee Development Unit. At the same time, Lowry's research and strong advocacy created urgency for growing our own professionals. He was personally instrumental in developing the first UMD-CP Libraries partnership with a group of ten research libraries in Delaware, the District of Columbia, and Maryland called the Chesapeake Information and Research Library Alliance (CIRLA).¹⁵ Its Fellowship Program was included in the Institute of Museums and Libraries' ten-million-dollar inaugural grant program. By design, CIRLA collaborated with library schools to diversify member libraries' workforces, to anticipate the high number of professionals in line for retirement, and to provide opportunities for new professionals to be supported by senior librarians.¹⁶ Through extensive collaboration among the institutions, fellows benefited from financial, educational, and professional support provided by established librarians and administrators.¹⁷ Fellows rotated through four core functional areas of librarian practice: reference, cataloging, acquisitions, and digitization. After completing these primary rotations, each fellow custom-designed two more elective work experiences that best suited their professional

goals. Along with hands-on experience, fellows were financially supported to attend workshops, training sessions, and a national-level professional conference of their choice. The final phase launched fellows' careers by providing them with a one-year, post-MLS position in a CIRLA library, fast-tracking the new professionals into the field and helping them gain valuable professional experience.

The CIRLA Fellowship program created the framework for this case study and the growth of a strong mentoring relationship among the three authors of this chapter.

On the Mentee-Mentor Journey

The United States is among the most diverse countries in the world. However, diversity is still not reflected in the library profession.¹⁸ There is a growing need to diversify the librarian pool and train future librarians in the work of research libraries. In 2005, CIRLA embarked on this challenge and developed a unique recruitment and professional training program designed to solve both problems: recruiting for diversity and developing expertise within the functional areas of research librarianship. Library school students representing many types of diversity (e.g., ethnicity/race, culture, disability, and gender) were recruited and paired with experienced librarians into a formal mentor-mentee relationship. Together, they went through a variety of activities such as training, mentoring, and professional development over two years. The program concluded with a one-year post-degree professional position at the mentor's institution.

Johnnieque B. (Johnnie) Love and Patricia (Patti) Kosco Cossard, the mentors, participated in organizational change activities as described in the background section of this chapter. Johnnie was initially hired to coordinate diversity initiatives for the staff and was repositioned in a variety of new job responsibilities requiring her to learn new skills and gain expertise in other library operations. Patti was a leader in the libraries' shared governance, working on issues of peer review, librarian recruitment/retention, and faculty agency. Nedelina Tchangelova, the mentee, transitioned from being an MLS student having non-tenured contractual faculty status to a tenure-track library faculty.¹⁹ Hand-in-hand and nurturing each other through difficult stages of their lives, they planted the seeds of a successful mentoring relationship that grew into a cherished friendship—one which we hope is inspiring to others to emulate. Figure 1 depicts the significant elements in the UMD-CP Libraries' organizational development related to this mentoring story. The University of Maryland is a major public research university in College Park, less than ten miles north of Washington, DC. It is

the flagship institution of the University System of Maryland and offers more than ninety majors and more than 200 graduate degrees through programs in ten colleges and schools. In the fall of 2019, the UMD-CP Libraries had a total of 197 employees, including sixty-eight faculty, twenty graduate assistants, and 109 staff. There were sixty-five tenure-track and three professional-track faculty representing the race/ethnicity types: White (51), Black or African American (6), Hispanic (5), Asian (3), and unknown (3).²⁰

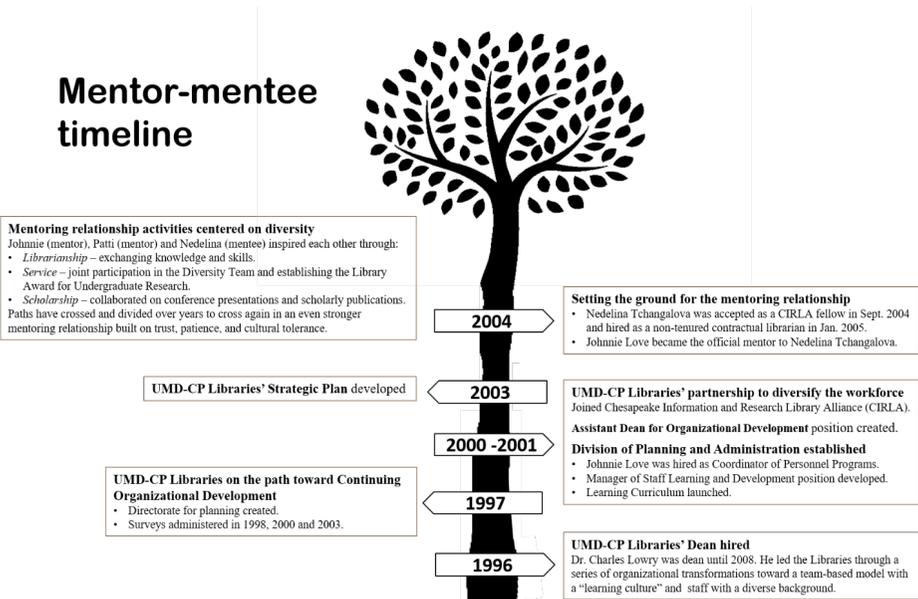


Figure 20.1

Timeline of organizational changes and mentoring activities

Johnnie's Story

Mentoring has always found its way into my professional life, whether as a classroom teacher, media specialist, or academic librarian. As I look back on my career of fifty-three years, I think of those who have left an indelible imprint on my life. I grew up in Kansas City, Kansas, and graduated from Sumner High School in 1963. My mentoring story is quite unique in the sense that it was my mother and a very good family friend, Ethel Jones Noble, who established a nurturing presence in my life. They always demanded the best of me. I did not have what I considered a formalized mentoring relationship until years later. When I look

back and try to recall the lessons learned from my mentors, one of these lessons is “treat others as you wish to be treated.” For that reason, I knew I had to do something at my workplace to change how students felt about themselves as they matriculated and dealt with the complexity of establishing relationships in the university environment. The emphasis had to be placed on academics for them to experience success. During my entire career, I have experienced various models of mentoring relationships, each one tied with enormous emotions.

In 1967, when I graduated from college and assumed my first teaching position, I was told that I would be a “pioneer” because of the racial makeup of Jefferson County Public Schools of Colorado. At that time, there were only nine African American faculty in the school district, and we were each placed in a different elementary school. It was not until after eighteen years of working in Jefferson County Public Schools and returning to Kansas City, Missouri, that my eyes were opened to the critical need to mentor high school students. I found employment with the Metropolitan Community College District, a joint project with the Kansas City, Missouri, School District, and worked with ninth-grade students in English and math. At that time, statistics indicated that academic achievement among ninth-grade students was not grade level and that there was a strong need for mentoring. My role as the instructional coordinator of the project was to hire and train college students to become mentors to the 300 students enrolled in the program.

Deborah Dandridge truly opened the door for me to academic librarianship. She is the accomplished archivist and curator of the African American Experience Collection of the Spencer Research Library at the University of Kansas (KU). We became friends when we worked on a community outreach project together. I was program chair for the Book Lovers’ Club of Kansas City, Missouri. Because of her expertise, she accepted the club’s invitation to be our keynote speaker for our eighty-fifth anniversary celebration. After a successful program for the Book Lovers’ Club anniversary, Deborah invited me to visit her at KU in the Kansas Collection. The excitement of an academic research library was awesome because it was a position I had always wanted from my days in graduate school. I was so excited that I took Deborah upon her invitation to volunteer to work for her that summer in the Kansas Collection. At the end of my summer volunteer work, I was invited by the dean of the libraries to apply for a position.

During 1994–1998, my work as a reference and diversity librarian at KU Libraries was more exciting than I could have imagined. I was hired to implement diversity initiatives for the library staff. Kansas University had emotional ties for me because of my Kansas history. A critical part of my reference work was establishing connections with three national outreach programs for the KU

Libraries: Upward Bound, McNair Scholars, and Gateway Project. Through these programs, I was involved in mentoring activities with students who received information on library services as resources to foster their research skills. However, working at an institution that was in an economic and financial freeze for three years proved to be a personal economic challenge. In addition, I learned that when you work with faculty who leave the institution or make changes in their lives, it creates a void for trying to build continuity in library programming. As a result of the salary crisis, during the late summer of 1998, I applied for a position as education librarian at Texas A&M University. The salary was most appealing and made for a heavy heart in leaving KU.

In 1997, I was selected to be a mentor in the ALA Spectrum Program. Our responsibility as mentors was to set goals for the program as well as to develop curriculum, prepare scheduling, and identify and confirm invited facilitators. The program actively recruited and provided scholarships to minority students already enrolled in library and information science graduate programs. The Spectrum program assisted them with obtaining their graduate degrees and leadership positions within the profession and ALA. Mentoring was a strong component of this program. As mentors, we had the opportunity to meet young library professionals. The scholars were just beginning their careers and were also experiencing racism in their predominantly White institutions. While considerable work was done to break down barriers, there was still yet more to be done. Barriers are hard to break down when life experiences are intricately laced with them, and systems are in the place where "White privilege" is the norm. My mentoring work was emotionally draining because I heard first-hand what some of the scholars were being confronted within their home institutions. As a result, in the early years of the Spectrum Program, the rate of scholars leaving their academic library positions was significant. They left their academic library positions because they were also being heavily recruited for lucrative positions in technology companies.

In 1998, I was accepted as one of the fellows for the first class of the American Research Libraries' Leadership and Career Development Program, a "yearlong program to prepare mid-career librarians from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to take on leadership roles in their careers and in the profession at large."²¹ Each fellow was assigned to develop a research topic. I decided to work on the assessment of diversity in the academic library as a workplace.²² I found that the process of evaluation meant continually being aware of the external and internal barriers to assessment as they impact the services and operations of the library as well as staff learning and participation. My formal

mentor was Dr. Joan Giescke, dean of the University of Nebraska Libraries, with whom I formed a relationship that lasted for many years.

During my years at Texas A&M (1998–2001), I served as liaison to the College of Education. My most significant contribution was creating and instituting the Multicultural Storytelling Project in collaboration with two other librarians. This program addressed the problem of a diverse ethnic minority student population (predominantly African American and Hispanic) being taught by exclusively White teachers. Many of the education majors had never interacted with students of color. For these future teachers to be able to communicate effectively with students in their classrooms, the Multicultural Storytelling Project introduced culturally responsive children's literature, folktales, and the oral traditions of other cultures. I am particularly proud of being able to teach how stories can be used to break down walls between students and teachers. The experiential learning component rested upon the Storyteller-in-Residence-Program, where a cohort of five professional storytellers worked to mentor and integrate storytelling into the curriculum. Developing a multicultural storytelling curriculum to support education majors in the exploration of teaching and curriculum proved to be an invaluable experience in my mentoring toolkit.

The last stop where I landed my career was the UMD-CP Libraries in College Park. I began my tenure in October 2001 under Dean Lowry. My position as coordinator of personnel programs was created by the UMD-CP Libraries' associate dean of the Division for Planning and Administrative Services. The division administered organizational growth and change, to positively impact staff and faculty, as well as to integrate diversity initiatives. I was motivated to join UMD-CP because it was one of the leading institutions at that time in evaluating the diversity landscape in libraries. In 2002, I developed the Telework Program, which was implemented in accordance with the State of Maryland Transportation Guidelines of 2000 to alleviate traffic flow and commuting problems of the greater Metropolitan area of Washington, DC. Because of its success, the Telework Program was adopted by the University Human Resources in 2010 for the entire university community.

I was excited about being able to participate in the CIRLA partnership when it was initiated by Dean Lowry in 2004. As a mentor, I found establishing a one-on-one mentoring relationship to be most gratifying.

What can I say about my mentee, Nedelina? Our mentor-mentee relationship has stood the test of time for fifteen years. For instance, Nedelina approached me to work with her on the proposal for this chapter for publication, and when our proposal had been accepted, I was overjoyed. Nedelina has helped me through some of my deepest emotional moments. Over time, our mentoring relationship

has grown into a very strong friendship. I have gained a greater understanding of what it means to be hearing impaired. Before Nedelina, I had never known anyone who was deaf. She amazed me with her ability to contribute and participate in large-group settings and discussions. She carefully chose where to sit to be able to read the lips of the presenters. I have championed her as she moves forward with ability and creative ideas despite what others may have advised. The work that she has done to support and mentor students has been groundbreaking and her perspective is a total asset to the UMD-CP Libraries.

I found my role as her mentor was to be a good listener as she tried to articulate the “space” she needed to make her own decisions about her personal life as well as make professional choices. Nedelina has a heart for people and gives tirelessly in abundance from its depths. I have experienced her love by way of hugs, mementos, intellectual support, as well as her assistance as a resource person. Through the years, the programs we created and produced for the UMD-CP Libraries were monumental; we created outreach not only to the library staff but to the university community as well. Nedelina showed initiative by taking a leadership role in many of our Diversity Committee projects. Her technological skills were extremely valuable to me as well as to the Diversity Team that I chaired for several years.

During my career at the UMD-CP Libraries, I needed to constantly adapt to three generations of deans, new job expectations, and constant technological changes. Some projects did not transfer from one administration to another because of the newly established vision, missions, and values, thus changing priorities and job expectancies. For instance, when a new dean, Patricia Steele, came on board in 2009, the libraries expanded partnerships and supported the changing needs and expectations of students and faculty. Through an ethnographic study where all constituencies articulated their vision of an ideal library, Dean Steele paved the way for another organizational transformation of the libraries. She repurposed physical spaces and re-aligned existing positions to meet the students' and faculty's needs. As part of these restructuring activities, my position in the library was affected as well. I was reassigned to a new division of the library, Collection Strategies and Services, and I no longer worked directly with diversity and mentoring, the reason I had come to Maryland. Some employees embraced the changes with ease, while others struggled to find their place and motivation to do their jobs. I found an immense amount of support from a few colleagues when changes were made to my position in the library.

As a tenured faculty member, fortunately, I seized the freedom I had to explore my passion for diversity and inclusivity under the new management and sought opportunities beyond the UMD-CP Libraries to provide contributions based on

my learning experiences, work accomplishments, and career specialization. I found a few colleagues whose positive mindsets influenced me to move forward. I also found myself leaning emotionally on Nedelina. We would commiserate on life-changing moves made within the system. That is when I knew we had experienced role reversal. I also found myself going out of the libraries to experience personal success and yet grow professionally. For instance, in one of my career experiences, I had served as president of my high school alumni association for several years. I motivated a group of alumni to work on the publication of the book titled *Sumner Story*.²³ I became involved in the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). In 2013, a group of African American librarians, curators, and archivists, formerly an ALA Roundtable, became an affiliate group of ASALH. Our group was named ASALH Information Professionals; its mission is to support and advocate for the preservation and enhancement of collections about African American culture, life, and history, and to call for the field of information science to be a diverse cohort of professionals and paraprofessionals working in archives, libraries, and museums. The group has also established a mentoring component to serve young African American professionals.

In 2012, I was the recipient of the James Partridge Award given to outstanding African American information specialists in Maryland by the UMD-CP College of Information Studies. This award was given to an African American professional who had dedicated their life's work to support others and the cause of equity and diversity.²⁴

To say that the process of establishing a good and effective mentoring relationship is built on trust, offering encouragement, and confidentiality is a foregone conclusion. It is also filled with boundless compassion. However, as we look to the future, a common thought and frame of reference is that we should all be in more than one mentoring relationship. For example, one mentor could focus on enhancing a faculty member's specialty while another could assist in navigating the communication terrain of social media and technology.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Treat others as you wish to be treated.
2. Get involved with mentoring at every step in your career. Mentoring can develop your emotional intelligence, positively manage your own emotions to relieve stress, turn intention into action, and achieve your career and personal goals.

3. Recognize when the mentee needs other supporting mentors to assist in the development of their subject expertise or other needs.
4. Accept the positive work of role reversals when the mentee is skilled in areas that you are not. Accept growth opportunities for yourself by being in the shoes of a mentee.

Nedelina's Story

Fifteen years ago, I did not realize that being a mentee could have such a huge impact on someone's professional career. I had the misconception that the mentee is the only one who benefits from a mentor-mentee relationship. The relationship with my mentor, Johnnie Love, endured a very long-term commitment, which flourished from a formal relationship toward a longstanding friendship. Both Johnnie and I had challenging personal and professional events, and being there for each other made us grow and succeed in our endeavors. As a mentee, I was challenged by my mentor to pursue an academic career, although I would likely face numerous obstacles due to my cultural background and hearing challenges. Thanks to her support and library expertise, I set goals and took the steps toward professional advancement. Now, as a tenured faculty member who is inspired by my own mentors who empowered generations of librarians, I am taking steps backward to mentor early-career library professionals. Giving back and empowering others is the biggest reward a librarian can have in their career.

My relationship with Johnnie began in 2004 when I was still pursuing my library degree and was accepted into the CIRLA Fellowship Program. Through this program, every fellow had the opportunity to work in a library setting while continuing library school. Johnnie was assigned to be my mentor and to guide me through the professional library maze. You will understand my astonishment when I first met this African American woman after you read my personal story below.

I was born in Bulgaria, a small country with a rich history and a homogeneous White population. In 1999, I immigrated with my family to the United States, a country of immense size and population diversity. Without knowing English upon my arrival and being hard-of-hearing, I embraced the challenge of mastering the language. Juggling various jobs to support my family, I have had mixed experiences with supervisors due to my newness to this country. A driving force in my career decision to become a librarian was my supervisor at a public library where I landed my first job as a circulation technician. She was an African American woman who was very supportive of my work. Still, for

some reason, I could not accept the fact that she was a woman of color due to my cultural and educational background.

A traumatic circumstance contributed to my anxiety, uncertainty, and doubt in my capabilities; my husband died from cancer two weeks after my graduation with a master's degree in library science. I needed to take ownership of my career and seek opportunities to further my library experience at a higher level. I had no idea what academic librarianship was nor what faculty status means for a librarian. My participation in the CIRLA Fellowship Program planted the seeds for me toward intellectual inquiry, and Johnnie paved the way toward my successful library career. When I first met her, I had the same mixed feelings toward Black individuals, but Johnnie quickly erased the negative picture in my mind and replaced it with a bright and positive one. Intuitively, Johnnie and I went through a learning process that Mavrincac and Stymest²⁵ describe as “learner centered, bi-directional, and one-to-one.”

Through the CIRLA fellowship, I was exposed to a variety of job functions that revealed a dynamic and fast-paced library environment focused on constant technology changes while providing customer-focused library services. I sought a mentor who could hold my hand in keeping pace with these organizational changes through guidance in navigating the tenure process. Johnnie advised me at every step in two directions: (1) personally—how to deal with unfortunate events happening in my life, and (2) professionally—how to take the steps toward a successful academic library career. Johnnie showed outstanding professionalism when introducing me to the many exciting opportunities in the library field. She demonstrated a great deal of patience with me as an individual who had hearing loss, spoke English as a second language, and was dealing with the illness of my husband.

This period of my life was the turning point after which my life completely improved. Johnnie does not realize what a giant source of support and inspiration she has been for me since we met. With a great deal of diplomacy, she influenced my hiring as an academic librarian at UMD-CP Libraries by emphasizing the strongest qualifications I had for my current position. I transitioned from a contractual to a tenure-track position within several months during a time when my supervisor had left his position to pursue other employment opportunities. As part of the tenure and promotion guidelines, library faculty need to make accomplishments in three areas—librarianship, service, and scholarship—and Johnnie has been influential along my path.

In librarianship, I have benefitted from several mentors, but Johnnie is the most cherished one along with another very precious colleague, Patricia (Patti) Kosco Cossard, art and sociology librarian. I strived to stay on top

of newer technologies in all aspects of my job responsibilities as a reference librarian and subject liaison to physical sciences and engineering departments. Constant learning and gradually increasing my subject expertise were a permanent part of my career, especially with the implementation of the UMD-CP Libraries Liaison Program.²⁶ Taking full ownership of my career was crucial, and I actively sought mentors with various skills and expertise. Johnnie, with her educational background, and Patti, with her subject liaison experience, introduced me to teaching pedagogies, while some other mentors outside of UMD-CP opened the doors for deepening my subject knowledge in the STEM disciplines. I encountered experienced librarians from other universities virtually via listservs and then met them in person at conferences. Seeking their advice and guidance prepared me to land other opportunities for building on my knowledge and skills on the job.

In service, during Dean Lowry's leadership, led by my constant curiosity to learn more about African American, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT), disability, and other diversity experiences and issues, I joined the Diversity Committee chaired by Johnnie. She was a great source of inspiration, and with the other committee members, we organized conference presentations, exhibits, and town hall meetings on various diversity issues. While working on projects, Johnnie always stepped back so library colleagues could achieve their highest potential by encouraging others to try leadership roles and by supporting new ideas and projects. She constantly shared with library staff information about hot diversity topics, and she took diversity issues seriously on a daily basis. Most of Johnnie's work was accomplished in teams (because she is passionate about people!), and her great contributions were made behind the scenes. The Diversity Committee (renamed later to Good Will for Diversity Collaborative under Johnnie's leadership), was awarded the Outstanding Contributions Organization Award by the President's Commission on Disability Issues, University of Maryland, College Park in 2008. This honor was in large degree due to the great leadership skills Johnnie had to motivate and encourage people. She made every effort to make everyone special and inclusive in this community.

During Dean Steele's leadership, I entered another formal mentoring relationship, this time with Patti, which provided another boost to my career. Her positive mindset, constant encouragement, diplomatic skills, and strong advocacy for the success of every project and person—all these traits of my mentor contributed to my success as a librarian. Together, we collaborated for many years, from idea development to program implementation on the Library Award for Undergraduate Research.²⁷ Patti showed a great deal of diplomacy

when promoting the idea to the library administration and securing \$3,000 annually to fund three awards. Through this experience, I was able to develop leadership skills and boost my confidence in leading a project on my own. Thank you, Patti, for this strong push in my career!

Finally, both Johnnie and Patti provided mentoring through scholarship activities. We worked together on research projects related to our research interests and co-presented at conferences. Johnnie and Patti provided creative ideas for research and laid the ground for developing my research interests further. To overcome my anxiety about public speaking, they often became my practice partners. They assisted me in focusing on the presentation content rather than on my audience and taught me how to not fear the moment of silence. As I matured as an information professional and took the steps up toward the highest levels of my career, I looked for opportunities to look back and assist library school students and early-career librarians whenever they needed assistance. I slowly switched roles from mentee to mentor and took every opportunity that came along my path to support library students working at the library or newly hired colleagues to navigate the tenure process and engage in service and creative endeavors.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Be open-minded and leave prejudice behind. Do not create stereotypes as they can hinder opportunities for growth.
2. Find a passionate mentor with a positive mindset and a team-oriented attitude.
3. Look for mentors at every step in your career. Build short-term and long-term relationships, depending on your career needs.
4. As you grow professionally, transform your role from an apprentice to a master. Share your knowledge and experience with others.

Patti's Story

After fourteen years in the profession with academic but not faculty status, I was determined to look for a tenure-track position. In 2000, I accepted a faculty librarian position at the UMD-CP Libraries. I served as the architecture librarian until 2013 when I was an *ex officio* faculty member of the School of Architecture. The terminal degree level for architecture faculty is the same as for librarians, the master's degree. I was able to observe experientially how these faculty articulated the praxis of their profession and began to develop my power to formulate and execute my librarian practice.

I met Johnnie when she first was hired at UMD-CP Libraries, and I was immediately impressed by her professional achievements in the area of diversity and inclusion. Through the instrument of shared governance, the UMD-CP Library Assembly, Johnnie and I developed a collegial and deep friendship. In 2008, I was elected the assembly chair. At that time, the UMD-CP campus was rethinking its faculty mentoring policies and programs and its role in facilitating successful tenure and promotion cases. Having appointed Johnnie as the Assembly's webmaster, we discussed the faculty mentoring policy and program being developed in the libraries upon request of the university Office of Faculty Affairs. Her experience in mentoring and her perspective of diversity significantly contributed to my role in guiding the policy to approval.

I met Nedelina when she approached me with the idea for the New Librarians Network as a Library Assembly-sponsored program that would enable junior faculty to network among themselves and all faculty to share their research. One of these programs later became formalized as the Libraries Research and Innovative Practice Forum.²⁸ This inspired me to undertake a "listening tour" in which I asked junior faculty about their professional anxieties around tenure and promotion. What I found was a consistent bombardment of conflicting information ranging from outright animosity toward individual faculty intellectual freedom by supervisors from hierarchical backgrounds to ridiculously high expectations for publication records. I was struck by the negative impact this had on junior faculty morale and retention. These insights were incorporated into the Library Assembly's new formal mentoring program based on creating a safe space and supportive relationship that is free from power dynamics and potential conflict of interest.

Nedelina asked me to become her mentor in the newly required formal faculty mentoring program. I learned through this formal relationship that there is a fundamental personal and organizational need for mentors to facilitate, advocate, advise, and promote their mentee's practice. I also learned that the mentor must recognize and expose discriminatory bias, whether unconscious or not, by those that are in positions of power and review mentee performance. The mentor is someone who looks holistically at the individual's development and promotes their agency for the common good. Moreover, the mentor must actively offer opportunities to shape and articulate their mentee's practice and how their abilities and talents contribute to organizational success.

In 2012, Nedelina had a wonderful idea to raise the visibility of the libraries on campus—that is, the Library Award for Undergraduate Research.²⁹ Unable to get traction through hierarchical channels, Nedelina asked me for advice.

In order to draw away direct repercussions for circumventing the power structures, I agreed to co-chair the proposal and the committee, utilizing my tenured status and political capital to justify jumping straight to the upper administration. This has been one of the libraries' most successful and highest visibility programs that culminates annually in an award program where the dean for undergraduate studies and the dean for the libraries stand together at the podium bestowing accolades and prizes to top students. By design, after a few annual award cycles, Nedelina and I co-wrote a peer-reviewed case study based on our experience.³⁰ I realized the importance of designing collaborations so that either co-publication or citations can benefit the impact of the mentee's work.

My working relationship with Johnnie dramatically changed during one of the many UMD-CP Libraries' reorganizations. When the Art Library's staff was downsized, Johnnie was given the opportunity to move to the Art Library to work with me on a number of "right-sizing" collection projects as collections strategist and to help provide subject and reference support to me. Having experienced the trauma of reorganization, as well as having confronted discriminatory bias behind closed doors by my peers against a number of my mentees, I shared with Johnnie my deep collections functional knowledge and helped her to adapt with resilience. Moreover, support for Nedelina, as she was still on track to tenure, was strengthened as we allied our efforts to co-mentor and benefit Nedelina's development. By the same token, my friendship with Nedelina enhanced my collaborations with Johnnie because we could rely upon her sharing her skills and abilities generously and without judgment. This working triad was ostensibly to benefit the mentee but, in fact, contributed significantly to each mentors' adaptability and well-being.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. The mentoring relationship is best when it fosters intellectual collaboration and academic freedom for both in the relationship.
2. Design collaborative projects so they have long-life—that is, proposal → program → product → publication → impact.
3. Privileged political capital of tenured status should be used generously to create a safe space for mentees to explore a variety of achievements.
4. Encourage discussions about the theoretical, ethical, and conceptual sides of the information profession; it will help you build and sustain a bi-directional academic career.

Benefits of the Mentoring Relationship and Reversing Roles

Over the years, Johnnie, Patti, and Nedelina developed mutually respectful, trusting relationships. They often met to discuss core values in the profession and to develop adaptive and resilient strategies for navigating organizational changes successfully. They identified their unique strengths and found the areas where their characteristics, traits, and skills overlapped in order to work on projects that were interesting to all. For example, figure 20.2 shows an example for some areas where Johnnie and Nedelina are different but tied together with some commonalities. Use this graphic to develop your own list of strengths and common characteristics as you embark on your mentoring journey together.

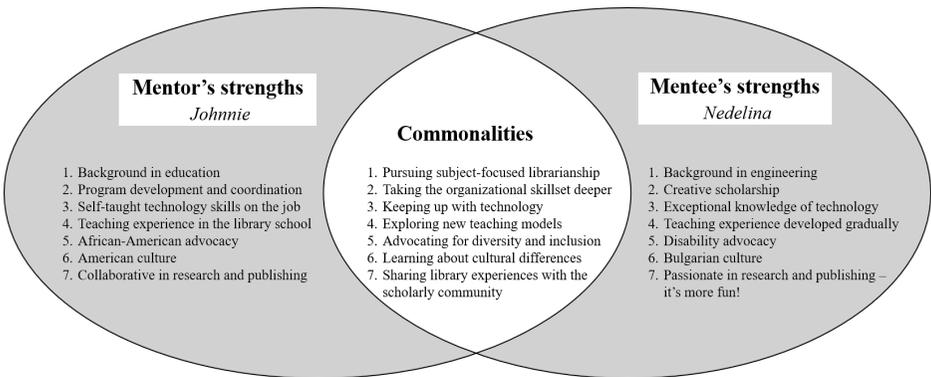


Figure 20.2

Venn diagram of major mentor's and mentee's strengths and commonalities

The mentors and the mentee discussed challenging work issues and collegial relationships, supporting each other through emotional matters related to their job performance. Their relationship grew out of formal mentoring and transformed into a very precious friendship. This mentoring relationship has had significant value where the mentors and the mentee have worked together in the same institution for many years. The support we have found through an enduring mentoring relationship within one library can occur among committed, trustworthy librarians from various institutions. The mentee and the mentors have

agreed that their experience improved growth, quality, and learning curves as well as access to opportunities that have increased the value of their relationship. They have gained a valuable perspective from other experienced colleagues and library professional organizations.

Johnnie's career ended in 2019 when she started enjoying her retirement, while Patti and Nedelina continue to savor the products of their achievements at the UMD-CP Libraries. This book chapter is the happy end of their "mentoring marriage."

Conclusion

This case study demonstrates and defines what is necessary for a successful mentoring relationship. It began with participants' belief in the value of recognizing the human spirit and its potential to thrive. This mentoring relationship moved from a formal to an informal relationship as the relationship was transformed. The main outcomes were (1) building a supportive relationship where all parties served as advocates for each other, (2) understanding the importance of accepting other cultures in the workplace and embracing them, and (3) supporting the desire to continue working in the field even after reaching professional milestones.

Note: We are very grateful to our longstanding colleague, Beth Guay, continuing resources librarian, for graciously reviewing the draft of the manuscript and for providing comments and thoughtful suggestions. She has also experienced the UMD-CP Libraries' organizational changes and tirelessly advocated for equity, inclusivity, and diversity in the workplace. Thank you for being on our sides all these years!

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