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Abstract

University of Maryland (UMD) Libraries has a large teaching program that serves between 16,000 and 20,000 students per academic year. This chapter documents the transformation of UMD Libraries' teaching program from an individualistic approach to a strong community of practice based on the mutual affirmation, support, and respect of library teachers, and includes the following sections: (1) history of the UMD Libraries' teaching program, with special attention to how the program has been shaped by the Libraries' partnership with the UMD Academic Writing Program (ENGL101); (2) overview of the theoretical framework of Communities of Practice (COP); (3) exploration of COP at UMD Libraries, including analysis of two teacher training programs, the Research and Teaching Fellowship, and Fearless Teaching Institute; and (4) recommendations for practice.

Introduction

In 2020, the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) granted the University of Maryland (UMD) Libraries their Excellence in Academic Libraries Award in the University Category. Cheryl Middleton, chair of the 2020 Excellence in Academic Libraries Committee, described UMD Libraries as, "stand[ing] out amongst their peers for the development of a robust library staff culture of innovation, as well as their extensive collaborations and engagement with the university's core curriculum, students, and faculty" (Groves, 2020). Although the UMD Libraries is now celebrated for its' innovative approach to teaching, this culture of collaboration has not always existed. We offer the UMD Libraries' teaching program as an example of how transformational change around teaching at an academic library can be achieved. Although many of the circumstances are specific to the UMD Libraries, the challenge of reinvigorating an aging

and divisive teaching program is not unique to our institution. Our hope is that in reading our experiences, readers will see a reflection of their own libraries and teaching programs and, perhaps, be able to recognize how the foundation for change at their own institutions may already have been laid.

Through this chapter, we explore the transformation of UMD Libraries' teaching efforts from an individualistic approach into a strong community of practice around teaching based on the mutual affirmation, support, and respect of library teachers. We begin with a history of the UMD Libraries' teaching program, paying special attention to how the program has been shaped by the Libraries' partnership with the UMD Academic Writing Program (ENGL101). Following, we offer an overview of the theoretical framework of Communities of Practice (COP) and explore how these concepts have shaped development of COPs at the UMD Libraries using two teacher training initiatives as example: (1) the Research and Teaching Fellowship, and (2) the Fearless Teaching Institute. We close with a brief consideration of the specific components that have contributed to the transformation of the UMD Libraries' teaching program and offer recommendations for practice.

University of Maryland Libraries Teaching Program

The University of Maryland is the flagship research university for the state of Maryland and supports 31,000 undergraduate students; 10,000 graduate students; and 14,000 faculty and staff; across 250 individual academic programs. UMD is a member of the Big Ten Academic Alliance and the University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions. The UMD Libraries (the Libraries) are a multi-branch system which employs 59 library faculty members, 99 non-exempt and exempt staff members, 20 colleagues on contract, 13 graduate assistants, and 108 hourly student assistants. Central to the mission of the Libraries is the information literacy teaching program, which serves between 16,000 and 22,000 students per academic year. This instruction is multi-pronged and includes subject specialist librarians, who lead discipline specific information literacy sessions for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students; the Research Education program, which supports graduate students and faculty across the research life cycle; and Teaching and Learning Services, which manages first-year and general education instruction and provides professional development for library staff around teaching. In recent years, the Libraries has expanded instructional programming to support students through co-curricular workshop series, orientations, and synchronous and asynchronous online courses.

Academic Writing Program

Since 1980, the UMD undergraduate composition program has included a lower-division course, Academic Writing (ENGL101), and an upper-division course, Professional Writing (ENGL39X) (Coogan et al., 2018). These courses work in concert with the UMD Writing Center, which provides co-curricular writing support for undergraduate students. Over the last thirty years, the UMD Libraries has maintained a productive partnership with all elements of the composition program, and in particular, the Academic Writing Program (AWP).

AWP consists of several components with a major emphasis on delivering English 101, a mandatory first year composition course that develops students' writing and research skills. Each year, around 5,000 first year students are enrolled in hundreds of ENGL101 sections, taught by dozens of individual instructors, most of whom are adjuncts. Although the UMD general education curricula has changed over the years, Academic Writing (ENGL101) has remained a consistent requirement with few options for testing out of the course (Coogan et al., 2018). As a result, it is one of the few curricular experiences on campus shared by a majority of first year students.

Early on, the Libraries recognized that AWP presented an opportunity to teach foundational information literacy skills to students at the outset of their university career, setting them up for success in their subsequent coursework. Through anecdotal information gleaned from librarians employed during this time, the Libraries' began formalizing information literacy instruction for AWP sections in the late 1980's. In these early days, in-classroom instruction for the program was provided by the reference department of the UMD's Undergraduate Library (this branch folded into the main library, McKeldin, in January 2001). During this period, the Libraries' instruction was demand-driven, and the reference librarians taught sporadic one-time sessions within the program (Merikangas, 1999). The requests for in-class instruction came directly from instructors who saw value in having a librarian teach information literacy to their classes. To supplement in-person instruction, the in-house library brochures of that time show that undergraduate librarians also provided one-on-one assistance and conducted scheduled summer orientations to all AWP instructors who desired librarians' help in improving information literacy instruction in their classes. However, while the program showed potential, the small number of Undergraduate Library staff, lack of a dedicated teaching unit in the Libraries, and the large number of AWP sections, kept the Libraries' program from growing beyond its ad-hoc approach.

User Education Services (UES) Department

The Libraries went through major organizational changes around 1996-1998 (Baughman, 2008). The areas of subject and general librarianship, including collection development, reference, and instruction, were particularly affected due to full reorganization and merging responsibilities of reference librarians and bibliographers, creating new cadres of subject librarians who combined elements of both subject and generalist work (Lowry, 2005). Along those lines, a new department was formed, User Education Services (UES), with a mission to coordinate and advance the overall University Libraries' information literacy program, as well as assume responsibility for several Undergraduate Library instructional programs, including AWP (Lowry, 2003).

UES took a systematic approach to teaching information literacy, including solidifying the earlier programmatic attempts with AWP. In the mid-1990's, AWP was going through its own administrative and curricular changes, and UES became more motivated to work directly with the AWP administration, rather than individual instructors. Shortly after, information literacy instruction was formally incorporated in the ENGL101 syllabus, which dramatically increased the requests for instruction sessions. The "University of Maryland Libraries Instruction Statistics Report: 1997," which was compiled by UES on behalf of all library staff who teach information literacy skills, provides a glimpse of the program and its new direction. According to this report,

in the 1996-97 academic year, UES taught 141 AWP classes which were attended by 2,911 students. This program was (and continues to be) an enormous undertaking; particularly for one led by a single department.

Academic Writing Program and Teaching Assistants

One of the initial barriers for the Libraries in growing the information literacy program for AWP was a lack of participation from librarians. Most staff librarians strongly opposed participation due to work overload in other areas, including newly assigned subject responsibilities and other instructional and reference obligations. Around the same time, University of Maryland librarians became faculty, and the newly minted faculty librarians grappled with increased expectations for service and scholarship requirements. Without sufficient librarians to do this work, and to avoid possible staff conflicts, UES resorted to hiring temporary instructors, known as Teaching Assistants (TAs) to teach library instruction for all AWP courses. The TAs came from many academic programs but were primarily composed of graduate students from the University of Maryland College of Library and Information Services (presently, College of Information Studies or iSchool). TAs were hourly employees contracted on a semester-basis and typically taught one or more information literacy sessions per academic term.

By 2013, UES had solidified and consolidated the instructional approach for AWP, including renaming the instructional sections “Library Day” and developing a new curriculum based around developing search strategies and navigating library resources. During the 2013-14 academic year about 200 AWP sections were taught by the Libraries, representing a 40% increase from the decade prior. Most, if not all, of the teaching, was done by TAs hired by UES for this specific purpose. However, in comparison with previous years, far fewer TAs were hired despite the increased load of AWP classes. While there were 39 TAs hired in 1997, in 2013, UES hired only 6. Each TA was compensated at $15/per hour and expected to teach between 20 and 30 sessions over a six-week period of the semester, estimated to be from mid-September to the end of October, and mid-February to the end of March. This would have been a substantial teaching load for a seasoned librarian but was particularly problematic given the majority of the TAs were minimally trained graduate students in their first semester of teaching.

The turnover among TAs was high. Often, these students were hired with no prior experience working in the library setting, teaching experience, or familiarity with campus. Yet, this was an attractive job to many iSchool students. It paid better than most library hourly positions on campus, required relatively limited time commitment, and offered invaluable experience for future librarians. Unfortunately, due to the Libraries' budget timetable, these students were often hired in August, just before the fall semester began, which did not offer sufficient time to properly train and prepare TAs to deliver information literacy instruction to thousands of first year students. To compensate, UES developed a “Library Day Training Manual: A Guide for Lecturers” for newly hired instructors. It described the AWP program, covered expectations of library adjuncts, provided lesson plans, and included some information about the Libraries. In addition, each library instructor (which included both TAs and a small number of subject librarians who continued to teach AWP sessions) were provided with a teaching script and slide deck that included screenshots of the Libraries website. Improvisation or adjustments to these materials were discouraged. Although these efforts were better than none, they were not nearly

enough to properly prepare and develop library instructors. As a result, the program continued to have difficulties for both instructors and the Libraries.

A Program Divided

Like many academic libraries, UMD Libraries fell into the trap of isolating the administrative work of teaching within a single unit or position. As Arellano Douglas and Gadsby (2019) note, instructional coordinator positions emerge when an instructional program grows to or beyond a point that it requires coordination. Although the instruction coordinator or unit may reduce administrative overhead, it can also silo administrative responsibility and functional support for teaching with a single person or unit. By 2013, the Libraries' instructional programming had reached this point. On one side, UES operated an efficient and tightly managed instructional program, driven primarily by AWP instruction, which relied heavily on hourly student labor, detailed lesson plans, centralized scheduling, and standardized outcomes-based assessment. On the other side, subject librarians led an expansive but largely self-directed teaching program for upper-level undergraduate and graduate students. Although each could have benefited from the skills and experiences of the other, there was little collaboration across departments (Carroll et al., 2014).

Teaching and Learning Services

In late 2013, UES was rebranded Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) and joined a newly formed department focused on undergraduate learning. Although this strengthened the TLS portfolio, it also exacerbated the organizational division between instructional and subject librarians, which was already showing signs of strain. In 2014, a series of staff vacancies offered an opportunity to again rethink the organizational structure, and in October 2014, TLS was moved to its current home in the Research, Teaching, and Learning Department. This offered two benefits. First, it situated the Head of TLS in the same reporting chain as the subject liaison librarians. Second, it consolidated the Libraries' teaching efforts within a single department. Although this organizational shift may seem insignificant, the realignment of TLS was the catalyst to transforming the Libraries' teaching program. Today, the TLS unit sits at the heart of a vibrant information literacy teaching program that invites creativity and collaboration from across the Libraries (Gammons & Inge, 2017).

Moving Forward

We share our story with the understanding that while our organizational structure may be unique, our experience is not. Like many academic libraries, the increase in information literacy instruction in the late 1990s and early 2000s led the UMD Libraries to quickly develop instructional librarian positions, which became institutionalized within the organizational culture. As was typical for large academic libraries of the time, these duties were substantial enough to require the establishment of a dedicated instructional unit. Over the years, as true for many academic libraries, teaching became a specialized skill that was segregated from the day-to-day work of the Libraries. As a result, the teaching program became divisive, pitting instruction librarians against subject librarians, and new teachers against experienced instructors. However, over the past five years, the UMD Libraries teaching program has transformed into a strong and

unified community of practice that uplifts, affirms, supports, challenges, and improves teaching at every level. Our hope is that in sharing our process of transformational change, we inspire others to see the potential for growth in their teaching programs and identify pathways to overcome the obstacles they may face.

A New Community of Practice

A community of practice (COP) is a group of individuals who encourage one another to improve their knowledge or practice through mutual support, shared labor, and intellectual pursuit (Wenger, 1998). Over the past seven years, the UMD Libraries has developed a strong COP around teaching and learning. Participants in the program include a variety of staff members ranging from tenured faculty librarians, to first year graduate students, to early career professionals. Although there have been many changes that have helped to shift the culture toward collaboration, we focus on two areas in which we have intentionally cultivated a COP: the Research and Teaching Fellowship, a teacher training program for MLIS students, and The Fearless Teaching Program, an in-house professional development program for library teachers. Each leveraged existing resources by using an established partnership or program as foundation, started small with the implementation of a pilot program, and involved collaboration from across the Libraries. Our intent is to focus not on the day-to-day logistics of programmatic organization and management, which has been covered extensively in other articles, but, instead, to highlight *why* the programs have been successful in fostering COPs and how these principles could be employed at other Libraries.

Literature Review

"Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2011, p. 1). A term coined by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in 1991, communities of practice (COPs) facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technical skills through three interpersonal practices: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). These components blend process and product and lead to the creation of communal resources, which might include toolkits, programming, stories, or even motivating concepts.

In 2015, Wenger shared three further characteristics of a COP: domain, community, and practice (p. 2). The domain refers to a shared commitment and competence, which is pursued collectively by the community. Through information sharing activities and discussions, members learn from one another. They also facilitate the formation of trusting relationships. Members with varied experiences and backgrounds feel more welcomed in, and significant to, the community. Building on the shared repertoire, the final characteristic of practice distinguishes this community from an affinity group. After the initial production of resources, activities, and models that were created from shared ideas and perspectives, sustained conversations, reflection, and projects between members are intended to refine the practice itself.

Communities of Practice in Higher Education

COPs often focus on apprenticeship in the context of a range of vocations. Whether midwifery or tailoring, learning—particularly situated learning, where increased participation transformed newcomers into experienced practitioners—is paramount (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 72). With learning comes teaching. Educators across contexts have implemented COPs. Through case studies and reviews over the past three decades, there is consensus that a COP can both center and improve teaching and learning objectives. As principles of COP have taken shape as ongoing professional development circles (Laksov et al., 2008; Vescio et al., 2008; Patton & Parker, 2017) COPs have also incubated broader shifts in teaching, including student-centered learning (Vescio et al., 2008).

In higher education, COPs have been implemented in a range of instructional contexts (Patton & Parker, 2017). Most case studies have focused on qualitative data, with documentation of the support of teachers for various COPs. More rigorous overviews of methodology and quantitative metrics beyond test scores, and even qualitative results from learners other than teachers will reflect a fuller realization of Wenger's hope for COPs in teaching that transforms teaching in three spheres: internally around subject matter, externally "beyond the walls of the school," and over the longer lifetime of students (2011, p. 5; Vescio et al., 2008).

Communities of Practice in Libraries

Speaking to the teaching and learning components of contemporary librarianship as well as the practicability of COP across vocations, the adoption of COP by libraries is considered a key strategy to advance the mission and impact of a library (Kim, 2015, p. 49). The iterative nature of a community of practice is particularly valuable in a library. Patron needs unfold across a shifting landscape of institutional priorities and technologies, making communities of other practitioners with similar priorities and goals essential in refining one's ability to meet and even exceed those needs (Osborn, 2017; Green, 2014; Smith & Lee, 2016).

A mutually beneficial COP can develop within a single library (Osborn, 2017); they can also form virtually and take the shape of forums that connect—and advance—the work of librarians working in shared domains (Louque, 2021).Within the context of an academic library, Gannon-Leary and Fontainha's (2007) foundational work on virtual learning in a community of practice presents a call for awareness of the legal issues and potential for an erosion of the trusting, close relationships that ought to characterize a community of practice in cross-institutional and virtual COPs worth returning to in these emerging contexts.

Benefits of COP in Libraries

Just as a COP in teaching accelerates, and not simply reacts to, advances in pedagogy, so can a COP within libraries (Green 2014; Smith & Lee, 2016; Kim, 2015). When these advances add to the already extensive duties of librarians, COPs can provide spaces of commiseration as much as vocation-related resources (Smith & Lee, 2016, p. 120). Dedication of a community of practice to ongoing knowledge transfer and the creation of usable resources will also reduce the knowledge loss when members of the community of practice leave it (Louque, 2021, p. 63).

Much of the literature on COPs in libraries considers the continuing professional development of practitioners (Osborn, 2017; Smith & Lee, 2016; Louque, 2021, p. 68). Kim's 2015 article guides us back to Wenger's view of a COP as an apprenticeship that extends the potential of COPs to emerging professionals as both learners and key contributors. A COP "is an effective way of learning that helps students internalize the knowledge that they obtain from classroom activities through practice" (Kim, 2015, p. 49). A COP which is inclusive of emerging library professionals will not only integrate their perspectives and experiences to the benefit of the library at large, it can bridge the "considerable gap between the needs of academic libraries and the training MLIS students receive" (Gammons et al., 2018, p. 334). Supportive COPs were also cited as key combatants of imposter syndrome endemic to new academic and instructional librarians (Martinez & Forrey, 2019).

Example 1: Research and Teaching Fellowship

By 2015, the UMD Libraries were ready for change. The organizational restructuring of User Education Services (UES) to Teaching and Learning Services (TLS); realignment of the TLS unit into the Research, Teaching, and Learning Department; and staffing changes at the unit and department levels offered an opportunity to reexamine the TLS portfolio. At the time, the unit supported information literacy instruction for several legacy courses that had been developed by UES. Although the Academic Writing Program (AWP) was by far the most demanding, other courses, such as First Year Experience (UNIV100) had grown to a point that they also required dozens of information literacy sessions. Almost all of these sessions were led by hourly student workers, or TAs.

Over the years, the TA position had become an institutional crutch. The influx of temporary labor enabled the Libraries to grow programs that would otherwise have been limited by staffing levels, but by the same token, the high turnover, limited training and support, and administrative maintenance set a low ceiling for the type and quality of teaching that could be supported by these positions. To maintain a standard of quality around teaching, UES embraced increasingly authoritarian measures, including ever more detailed teaching scripts, slide decks, and intensive teaching schedules. By 2013, the TA positions had become problematic for all parties. The students in the positions were not well supported; UES administrators were struggling to maintain the logistical and administrative responsibilities; and the academic programs served by the TAs were becoming increasingly frustrated with the quality of instruction they received.

In 2015, the new head of TLS partnered with subject librarians and other colleagues to redesign the Libraries' approach to first year instruction. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the unit revealed several redundancies in programming. For example, many of the students who attended information literacy sessions for AWP were also attending sessions for first year experience. Because the TLS teaching calendar was so compressed, these sessions often occurred within weeks or days of one another. On top of this, much of the content was duplicated between the various courses. In their post-session assessments, students reported feeling bored, confused, and disinterested in the content of the sessions. The SWOT analysis showed clearly that the TLS unit was doing too many things, and none of them well. In short, the teaching program had grown beyond the capacity of the unit. Rather than recognizing and honoring those limitations, the former UES/TLS administrators had attempted to subvert constraints by leaning more heavily into standardization and control. Any attempt to change the

culture around teaching had to start here, dismantling the toxic approach to teaching that formed the foundation of the Libraries' teaching program.

The first step in this process was to scale back involvement with low-demand courses, such as first year experience. Although these courses required less oversight than AWP, they diverted time, attention, and resources away from the anchor program, which was (and remains still) AWP. Wherever possible, in-person sessions for "splinter courses," such as first year experience, were replaced by asynchronous self-paced online tutorials that could be incorporated into the course by interested instructors. This allowed students who might have already received library instruction to advance through content that might have been repeated in earlier sessions, while enabling students who had not been exposed to library resources to receive the detailed information literacy instruction that would help them to succeed in their assignments.

The second step was to change the timing, preparation, and hiring process for the Libraries' TA program. One of the challenges of the TA position had been the high turnover and limited window for training. By consolidating the TLS instructional programming and reducing the number of courses being served, we were able to redirect the financial resources back into the TA program. From this emerged the Research and Teaching Fellowship (RTF); a three-semester teacher training and professional development program for Masters of Library and Information Science (MLIS) students.

A New Model for Student Teachers

Rather than hiring part time instructors in August, as had been the previous practice, fellows begin the RTF program in the spring semester, when the number of library instruction sessions is less demanding. While TAs were contracted from semester to semester (often failing to return after a single semester), fellows commit to the RTF program for a full three semesters, beginning with their second semester in the MLIS program and concluding with their fourth and final semester. In May 2015, the Libraries hired the first cohort of fellows, compressing the first semester of reading, discussion, co-teaching, and observation into a 10-week summer pilot program. Since then, RTF has grown into a dynamic community of teachers that gives back to the Libraries and the professional and campus communities. In exchange for their participation, fellows receive invaluable teaching experience, professional development support, and a supportive peer cohort. By investing in the fellows, the Libraries is able to offer high-quality information literacy instruction to thousands of AWP students per year and also able to give back to the profession by training future academic librarians. Although it is not the focus of this chapter, we would be remiss not to mention that RTF is a cost-effective program, with a total annual cost of less than half that of a single graduate assistantship position. To date, RTF has a 100% professional job placement rate, including more than 25 alumni at academic and research institutions across the country.

Earlier works have documented in depth the operation, administration, and assessment of the RTF program (Gammons & Inge, 2017; Gammons et al., 2018; Gammons et al., in press). Rather than duplicate these efforts, we focus here on the elements of the RTF program that have helped to develop a community of practice and, in particular, those components which have helped to shift the broader culture around teaching at UMD Libraries. As noted above, COPs share three

characteristics: the existence of a shared enterprise or domain; mutual engagement and community; and shared repertoire or practice (Wenger, 2015). We offer our examination using this framework as a guide.

Shared Enterprise

In the context of the RTF program, the "shared enterprise" is the mission to provide high quality information literacy instruction to undergraduate students enrolled in AWP. That mission is achieved through structured opportunities for mutual engagement and shared practice. For example, fellows commit to enrolling in a 1-credit course each semester of their 3-semester fellowship. This 1-credit course meets weekly, and provides an opportunity to review standardized teaching materials, analyze pedagogical theory, and discuss strategies for in-person and virtual instruction. Although the curriculum for these courses is set by RTF directors, fellows are encouraged to bring questions and agenda items as they arise, particularly during weeks with heavy instructional loads. This allows fellows and TLS librarians to collaboratively address teaching challenges in real time, sharing tools and techniques to improve teacher confidence as well as student experience. Throughout the RTF program, there is an emphasis on reflection and growth. During their first semester of independent teaching, TLS staff conduct multiple teaching observations for each fellow. During their second semester of teaching, fellows scaffold these skills to conduct mutual peer teaching observations for one another. These observations are structured as opportunities to celebrate growth and strategize areas for improvement, rather than as punitive surveillance practices (Alabi & Weare, 2014). Observations are bookended by (1) pre-observation surveys where fellows can indicate areas where they would (or would not) like feedback, and (2) post-observation consultations to debrief about the session and address any of the fellow's concerns. In addition to completing observation worksheets with their peers, fellows also engage in reflective journaling to process what they gain from observing colleagues.

Mutual Engagement & Community

In addition to class sessions, fellows engage in community through shared office hours. For one hour each week, individual fellows hold office hours that overlap with at least one other cohort member. Fellows can use this time to communicate with AWP instructors, conduct reference consultations, prepare for instruction, or discuss teaching challenges and successes with their peers and/or TLS staff. Initial iterations of RTF did not require fellows to ensure that their office hours overlapped with at least one other person's; however, based on graduating fellows' feedback that these informal opportunities for community were essential to improving their practice and sense of belonging (Gammons et al., 2018), RTF directors now prioritize shared office hours as a key component of the RTF COP.

RTF also fosters community beyond the fellowship by hosting a monthly journal club discussion around a recently published article related to library instruction, which is open to any library staff member or MLIS student (Gammons et al., 2018). In 2020, TLS staff also launched the RTF Alumni Network to better connect current and former fellows. The RTF Alumni Network includes regular communications, such as a bi-annual newsletter highlighting professional achievements of current and former fellows, and a listserv to share job advertisements, research and professional opportunities, and to get support from members of the community (Gammons et

al., in press). The sense of community and mutual engagement was, and remains still, the heart of the RTF program.

Shared Repertoire

In contrast to the authoritarian approach employed by UES, RTF relies upon a shared repertoire that is collaboratively developed, assessed, and refined by the contributions of each cohort of fellows. Using the standard ENGL101 syllabus as a guide, TLS staff develop adaptable information literacy lesson plans that support specific assignments and meet the Libraries' learning outcomes. Fellows are invited to provide feedback on the lesson plans and adapt materials in consultation with their AWP faculty partner, based on student needs and their own teaching style. To support new fellows and streamline the sometimes-cumbersome scheduling process, TLS staff provide shared email communication templates and faculty questionnaires to guide negotiations about the type of content and support provided in an information literacy session. These templates help build fellows' confidence when directly communicating with AWP faculty. They also help to define a consistent communication style between the Libraries and AWP. As with all materials, the communication templates are fully customizable and intended to serve as launching points, rather than directives.

In 2020, with the shift to virtual instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic, TLS staff recognized the need to provide even greater support for fellows who were adapting to independent teaching in a new modality. In response, TLS staff developed slide decks to complement the lesson plans (Gammons et al., in press). As with the lesson plans, fellows were free to adapt the slide decks to suit their needs, or to forego use entirely. Fellows often chose to share their adaptations with their cohort, leading to improvements in the standardized slide decks and further opportunities for discussion about virtual teaching strategies.

Creating a Community that Lasts

Through these and other strategies, RTF builds trust between fellows and librarians, which, in turn, improves the quality of the Libraries' teaching program. Each year, we conduct a focus group with graduating fellows to identify opportunities for improvement in the RTF program. The feedback we hear most often is that fellows crave a sense of community. In fact, fellows cite this as the most important benefit of RTF; even more so than opportunities for mentorship, job application support, or professional experience (Gammons et al., 2018). Through the operation of the RTF program, we have learned that a sense of community is earned, not given. Creating a COP has required that we not only develop strong teaching tools and administrative procedures, but also that we make repeated and intentional investments in building the interpersonal relationships between teachers. Today, RTF is a strong COP that includes current fellows, library staff members, and alumni. Although we are proud to have created such a program, we know that the continuation and sustenance of the RTF community is dependent on our willingness to prioritize relationships, as well as teaching.

Example 2: Fearless Teaching Institute

By 2017, the TLS unit had hired additional staff, reached a full faculty complement, and relationships between TLS and subject librarians had improved. The Libraries had also

developed a close working relationship with the UMD Teaching and Learning Transformation Center (TLTC), which was, at the time, offering a self-paced professional development program for faculty called the Launch Certificate. The Launch Certificate required that participants complete a set number of experiences, including teaching workshops, faculty learning communities, and classroom teaching observations. Although there were several librarians who expressed interest in completing the Launch Certificate, most of the activities were oriented toward traditional teaching faculty, and it was difficult for librarians to complete the necessary requirements.

One of the core components of RTF is a "Teaching as Research" project, a semester-long partnership between a senior fellow and subject librarian in which they work together to design (or redesign) an upper-level undergraduate or graduate-level information literacy class (Gammons et al., 2018). Throughout the RTF program, Fellows are introduced to pedagogical concepts ranging from backwards design, to learning outcomes assessment, to successful mentorship practices. The Teaching as Research projects not only strengthened relationships between subject librarians, the TLS unit, and the RTF program, but have also provided opportunities for librarians to learn techniques from the fellows, and for fellows to benefit from the experiences and expertise of the librarians. Although the success of the Teaching as Research projects suggested that librarians might benefit from more formalized opportunities to engage with new approaches to pedagogy and practice, until recently, it had been difficult to find ways to scale the content from the RTF to the broader Libraries staff.

Around this same time, TLTC was piloting the Fearless Teaching Framework, a research based conceptual mapping of the foundational processes that contribute to effective teaching, including:

- classroom climate,
- course content,
- teaching practice, and
- assessment strategies (Donlan et al., 2019).

Using the Fearless Teaching Framework and Launch Certificate as inspiration, TLS staff developed a pilot program called the UMD Libraries' Fearless Teaching Institute (FTI). The Institute would offer the benefits of the TLTC programming in a format targeted to library instructors. Originally designed as a self-paced certificate program, the FTI pilot program offered opportunities for librarians to improve their teaching climate, content, practice, and assessment through in-house teaching workshops, peer teaching observations, and journal club discussions.

Since its launch in 2018, FTI has become an agile arm of the UMD Libraries teaching program with a mission to deepen and strengthen library instruction at all levels, from staff training to advanced information literacy instruction. Although it began as a certificate program, FTI has evolved beyond its humble beginnings to include a variety of programming, including teaching workshops, informal and formal discussions, peer teaching observations, and office hours. FTI programs are offered both online and in-person; however online has become the predominant mode to maximize participation (Gammons et al., in press).

Shared Enterprise

The joint enterprise of the FTI COP is accomplished through the shared goals of

- improving individual teaching skill, competence, and confidence, and
- strengthening the Libraries' overall instruction program.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the FTI hosted more than 50 events with a combined attendance of more than 400 library faculty, staff, and student workers (Gammons et al., in press). Participants in the FTI have a variety of pedagogical needs, including improving training programs for newly hired student workers, strengthening advanced research strategies for faculty, and leading data services workshops. As a result, the FTI focuses on pedagogical theories, teaching techniques, and learning tools that are broadly applicable, rather than targeting a specific discipline, course, or program. Across all FTI programming, there is a shared and consistent goal of supporting library teachers and improving learning opportunities for the UMD campus community.

Mutual Engagement & Community

As was the case for RTF, the FTI COP began with formalized opportunities for mutual engagement, such as peer teaching observations, and has expanded to include an informal community that offers support to one another outside of FTI events. Although the FTI includes a variety of programmatic offerings, at the heart of the FTI program are structured teaching workshops. Importantly, the topics, format, and goals of the workshops are developed collaboratively. Although TLS staff provide administrative leadership by scheduling, advertising, and leading most of the FTI workshops, library staff are encouraged to submit topics for future workshops or offer their expertise as workshop leaders. Over the last year, library staff have contributed their ideas and facilitation skills for a variety of workshops. For example, in the 2020-2021 academic year, the Coordinator for Reference Services suggested an FTI series on approaching reference as a form of teaching. Over the spring 2020 semester, subject liaison librarians took turns leading workshops on essential resources and common questions in their subject areas. These workshops were open to anyone in the Libraries and were particularly well attended by RTF Fellows and graduate assistants.

An important philosophy underlying the FTI is valuing the expertise and experience of its participants, whether they are new professionals or tenured librarians with years of experience. This synthesis of diverse experiences and perspectives is seen in monthly journal club discussions. A joint venture between the RTF and the FTI, journal clubs are co-facilitated by fellows, with participation from throughout the Libraries (Gammons et al., 2018). Not only do these discussions offer opportunities to stay current with literature on academic librarianship, but they also build community among Libraries staff members who might not otherwise have opportunities for collaboration. Through these discussions, fellows, graduate assistants, and other student workers are given an equal seat at the table with established librarians, experienced staff members, and administrators. The participants learn from one another's experiences and analysis of the selected readings for that session.

Through their participation in the FTI workshops and journal clubs, participants form relationships with colleagues who might work outside of their functional areas but share similar research interests and/or professional goals. As a result, collaboration continues outside the formal programming, with FTI participants consulting each other on lesson plans, online learning tools, and assessment instruments. Rather than viewing teaching as an isolated or individual experience, participants have come to view their colleagues as a ready source of support and have embraced instructional collaboration as a way to strengthen practice, rather than an admission of weakness.

Shared Repertoire

To document the expertise shared in the FTI programs, the TLS unit manages an FTI research guide, which serves the dual purpose of repository for FTI materials and advertising upcoming programs. In the spirit of the COP, the production of these materials works to strengthen the sense of community, which enhances the product (teaching), which is, in turn, redirected back into the COP through the continual refinement of the FTI program. One of the most successful examples of shared repertoire in the FTI COP is the development of the peer teaching observation program.

Although peer teaching observations are an important component of the RTF COP, at the time of the FTI pilot, the practice was not common in the Libraries. Taking inspiration from the TLTC Launch Certificate - which included a formal teaching observation as one of its requirements - the FTI pilot program asked participants to complete at least one reciprocal teaching observation with a colleague. While there was interest from library staff around peer-observation, many librarians were apprehensive about inviting anyone, even a trusted colleague, into their classroom to offer critique. To reduce anxiety, TLS librarians worked with subject librarians to develop a formal peer observation program plan, which included a list of best-practices, procedures, and templates that could be used to guide peer observations and post-observation discussions (Gammons, 2018). As a soft launch to the program, TLS staff hosted an FTI workshop on peer observations. During the workshop, a TLS librarian “observed” the workshop, and the session concluded with a mock debrief between the observer and the workshop facilitator. Like the RTF, in which the communication templates and teaching materials had supported the transition to online teaching for the fellows, the peer teaching observation templates, program tools, and workshop helped to ease participants into the new environment of peer observation and foster trust between participants. In addition to the formal FTI peer-observation program - which is offered by the FTI every third year - informal teaching observations are now a part of the culture at UMD Libraries.

Creating a Community that Lasts

As with the RTF, the FTI has required a balance between offering the administrative support necessary for a large and complex instructional program to succeed, while encouraging the creativity and innovation that makes the content and experience appealing to participants. Although the TLS unit offers logistical and programmatic support for the FTI, the success of the program emerges from the sense of shared responsibility that extends beyond the unit. Library staff routinely send TLS staff ideas for new workshops, offer suggestions for speakers, and forward relevant readings or professional development opportunities that might inspire new

programming. The feeling of shared ownership of the FTI, or as Wenger (2011) would describe it, *mutual engagement*, generates enthusiasm for the FTI programming. As a result, events are well attended. To put it simply, the FTI program belongs to no one, and because of that, it belongs to everyone. It is the sense of community and shared responsibility that have made the FTI COP successful.

Conclusion

Today, the UMD Libraries teaching program is almost unrecognizable from the program that existed a decade prior. Changes in staffing, programming, and a renewed sense of enthusiasm and purpose have encouraged the development of new teaching programs and processes. In addition, the intentional cultivation of communities of practice has led to a strong comradery among staff, which has in turn strengthened the Libraries' teaching. Although many of the challenges presented were specific to our institution, our hope is that through this discussion, readers have seen a reflection of their own libraries and teaching programs. In conclusion, we offer two recommendations for librarians who may be interested in pursuing transformational change around teaching, which can be applied regardless of institutional size or type.

Support from Library Administrators

One of the biggest contributors to the success of our teaching program has been visible support from library administration. Library leaders at every level, from unit heads to senior administrators, routinely attend FTI and RTF events, such as journal club discussions or teaching workshops. Administrators have also offered tangible expressions of support. For example, to support the launch of the FTI pilot program, the Director for the Research, Teaching, and Learning department offered one hour of the department's monthly two-hour long meeting to dedicate to a teaching workshop; which ensured that everyone in the RTL department would be able to attend. This early participation laid the groundwork for the program and helped to build enthusiasm for the FTI program. During annual reviews for librarians, administrators praised librarians' participation in FTI events and/or support of the RTF program. While these gestures may seem small, the transformation of our teaching program would not have been possible without their support.

In our experience, while administrators are happy to offer their support, they are best positioned to succeed when we are able to articulate the ways that they can be helpful to us. For example, early in the RTF program, the head of TLS sent individualized invitations to library administrators inviting them to journal club, which specified how their presence would benefit the discussion. Other examples have included requests for financial support to offer coffee and pastries for early morning events, inviting administrators to program planning meetings to communicate the often-invisible labor of instructional oversight and endorsements for specific events or opportunities. Our experience shows that while administrative support conveys importance, importance leads to participation, and participation leads to community. All of this begins with advocating for why and how a teaching program matters.

Intentional Cultivation of Community

Through the RTF and the FTI, we learned that, although participants often desire community, they need support in building the relationships that enable a community to flourish. This type of support can include formal experiences, such as offering teaching workshops, but can also focus on providing the administrative or logistical support for informal opportunities for mutual engagement, such as a peer teaching observation program, journal club discussions, or overlapping office hours. Our experience in developing communities of practice at UMD Libraries leads us to believe that while a sense of community cannot be manufactured or forced, it can be encouraged. Often, as instruction coordinators, we focus on the big programs, new tools, and exciting trends. But in building community, it is often paying attention to small, multi-faceted, and seemingly insignificant ways that we build relationships that can lead to a sincere and lasting community of practice.

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