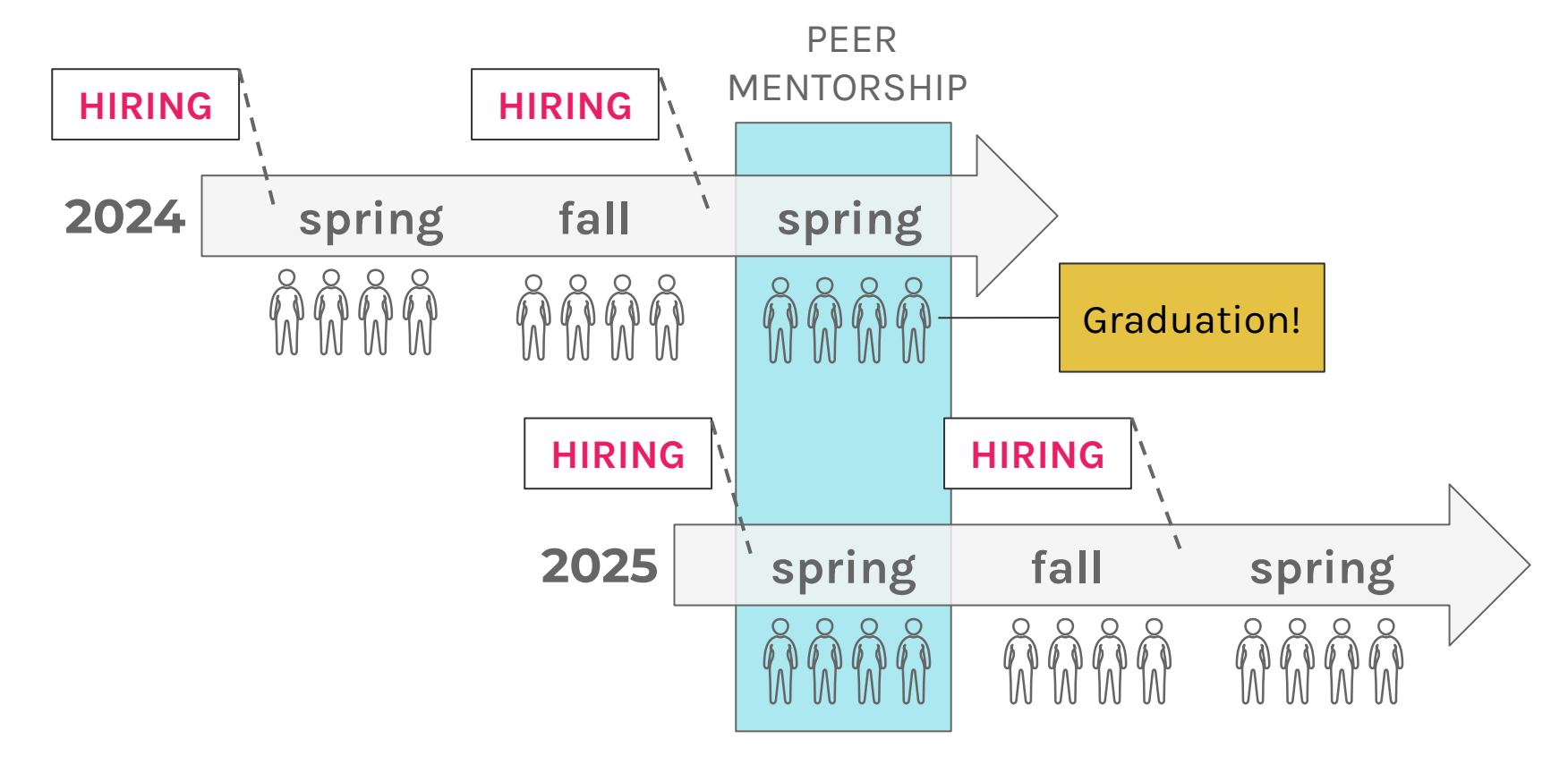


Democratizing Academic Librarianship: Looking Back on 10 Years of Building a Fellowship Community

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About the Research & Teaching Fellowship

The UMD Libraries' Research and Teaching Fellowship (RTF) prepares MLIS graduate students to be compassionate, student-centered, and evidence-based library practitioners who view teaching as both central and essential to their work as librarians. The Fellowship is a three semester program that provides the education, training, mentorship, and support to enable students to succeed in a competitive job market.



Components of Research & Teaching Fellowship

Teaching

- Formal & informal teaching observations
- Independent instruction / co-teaching
- Reading & discussion

Research & Professional Development

- Journal Club (2-3 times a semester)
- Reference (1 hour per week)
- Office Hour (1 hour per week)
- Mentorship (on-going)
- Job application preparation

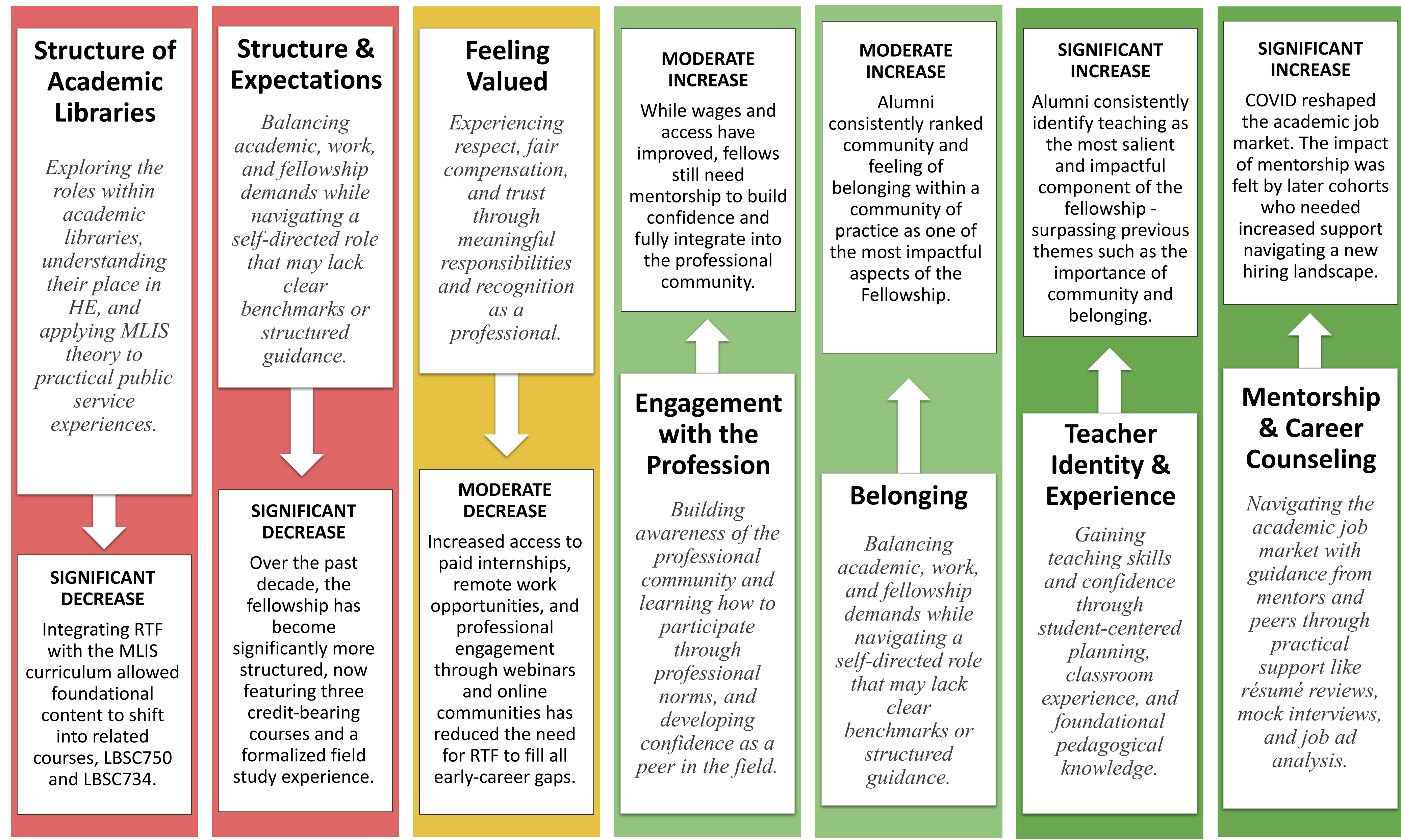
Current Support to the Fellows

- Teaching & Learning Services has created baseline instructional materials (slide decks, lesson plans, worksheets) for Fellows to customize in their own instruction.
- Fellows have regular teaching observations and check-ins with TLS staff.
- TLS staff host teaching practice sessions with Fellows over the summer.
- TLS sponsors field studies for the Fellows and pairs Fellows with library mentors.
- Fellows attend one local instruction conference during their first semester.
- TLS provides extensive job application and interview support.

Comparative Analysis 2018 to 2024

In 2018, we published a qualitative study based on focus group interviews with two cohorts of Research and Teaching Fellowship (RTF) alumni (graduating in 2016 and 2017), identifying nine core themes that shaped their experiences. In this follow-up exploratory study, we surveyed RTF alumni who graduated between 2016 and 2024 to understand which of those themes remained most salient in retrospect. The analysis below highlights overall trends and changes across the seven themes that showed the most significant movement over time.

Reported Significance of Response Categories, 2018 vs. 2024



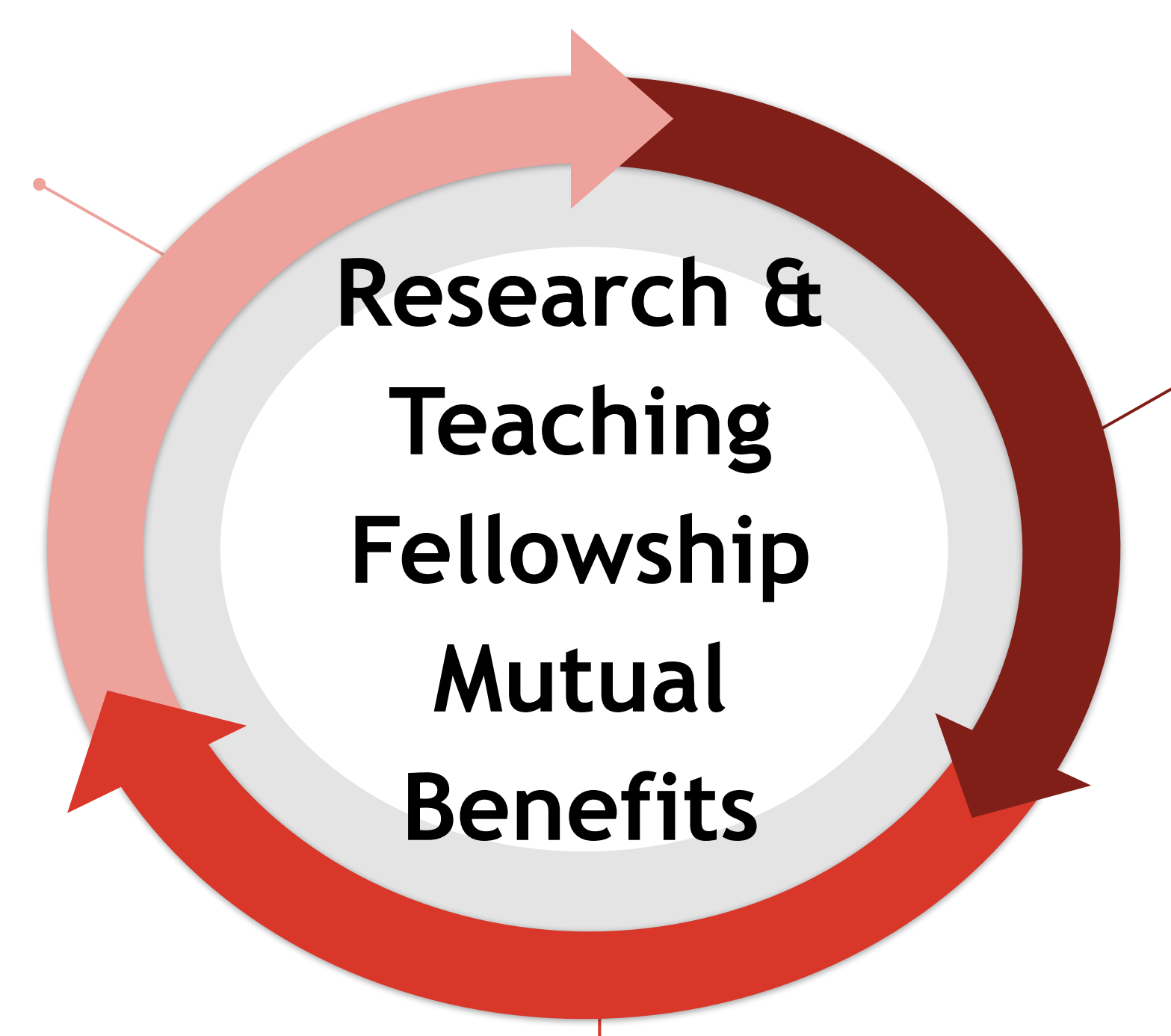
Key Quotes from Alumni

- “This field really requires you have someone show you how to **navigate the tangled ivory web of academia**, otherwise you easily get stuck and lost and have to untie these knots yourself. “
- “One thing I remember most clearly is being told is “**if you try to give them everything they are going to get nothing.**” I really needed to hear that then, and it’s something I still remind myself about today!”
- “Part of it has to do with the beginning of the semester when [the directors] asked my cohort to **decide how we would build community**, and my cohort has held to that... We went out of our way to see each other outside of the Fellowship, get coffee, have each other over for dinner, talk about personal things. And now we're all excited and see each other as **teammates, not rivals**. It's wonderful.”
- “I **struggled to find any sense of belonging in the larger MLIS program**... But the Fellowship provided a group of folks who I was consistently in contact with outside of class who had similar interests and career paths. **I could also tell that the sense of community was intentionally supported and created** by Rachel and Lindsay. I felt supported and encouraged through the Fellowship, and I have tended to keep in touch with other Fellows more than other classmates.”

Future Research

This was an exploratory survey conducted with the alumni of the Research & Teaching Fellowship. Future research will further focus on how mentorship in MLIS programs prepares early career librarians for success in their first professional roles.

Research and Teaching Fellows
Provide practical experience in teaching, reference, mentorship, and professional development.



UMD MLIS Program
Integration into the MLIS program through curricular courses.

University Libraries

Fellows assist in First-Year Writing instruction and general reference in the Libraries.

Want to learn more about the Research and Teaching Fellowship? Scan this QR code to take a look at our program guide!

