# Chapter 16
# Mentoring when Librarians Have Faculty Status

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## ABSTRACT

*Numerous academic libraries participate in their campuses' systems for faculty status for librarians, in separate tracks or identical tracks as those for teaching faculty. In either case, a practice is to encourage or require mentoring for librarians without tenure or permanent status. This chapter will cover the special challenges and benefits of mentoring and faculty status, the need for mentoring, and processes for best practices to make mentoring meaningful for all involved. The chapter will draw on the authors' experiences, an environmental scan, a survey of selected institutional practice where librarians have faculty status, and published research and related literature. It will also feature mentoring programs developed by various institutions, including the University of Maryland Libraries.*

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter is written from the vantage points of three individuals with faculty status at the University of Maryland Libraries, two of whom do not have permanent status and one who does. One is a curator, one is a human resources professional, and the third is a librarian by profession. However, despite distinctive backgrounds, all are or have been subject to the same requirements for promotion and permanent status (or tenure, used interchangeably). The chapter thus blends those backgrounds and experiences as it explores the topic of mentoring for academic librarians as an important population among information professionals.

The chapter posits that librarians and others with library faculty status need a targeted mentoring program that addresses librarianship, service and scholarship. This is especially needed for those without permanent status or tenure, to help those individuals meet requirements that do not pertain in institutions where librarians and other professional

staff do not have faculty status. The chapter also posits that these special, standardized mentoring programs in an institution, targeted toward attaining tenure, are effective. This thesis is based on qualitative data. The chapter's observations, recommendations and conclusions are grounded in the authors' experiences at the University of Maryland Libraries (UML) and/or are confirmed in the literature and other institutions' experiences. The authors believe that standardized, formal mentoring programs provide value to the individual and the organization, especially where librarians have faculty status. The chapter also identifies the need for more systematic data collection and analysis on these special mentoring programs and their efficacy, not just for the individuals gaining promotion and tenure, but in retention at the employing library too.

The purposes of the chapter are to set forth various aspects of mentoring programs for three audiences:

1. Key factors essential to successful mentoring programs in academic libraries, for those looking to establish or improve mentoring programs;
2. Essential elements as they relate to requirements when librarians and other professionals working in academic libraries have faculty status, to guide potential mentees and mentors; and
3. Examples and guides for successful programs, for program coordinators as well as mentors and mentees.

## BACKGROUND

Mentoring in the workplace is not new. It has been prevalent in society for centuries and has woven its way into the work environment. *Mentor* refers to a trusted friend, counselor, or teacher. The word dates to Homer's *Odyssey*, in which Odysseus planned to leave for the Trojan Wars and asked his friend, Mentor, to watch over and guide his son Telemachus during his absence. Though the concept of mentoring was created through Homer, it gained popularity during the 15th century in Francois Fenelon's literary work *Les Aventures de Telemaque*. It is believed that the addition of mentor to the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a common noun in 1750 was the result of this popular work (Murray, 2001).

Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* defines mentor by referencing Odysseus' friend named Mentor, while also describing a mentor as a trusted counselor or guide. Eastern Illinois University defines faculty mentoring as "…a mentoring relationship that is a developmental process that involves mutual caring, sharing, and helping" (2009). The University of Iowa describes the mentor as "someone with greater experience (mentor) that offers support and guidance, and advice to facilitate the learning and development of someone with lesser experience, that is, the mentee" (2008). Washington State University states that "mentoring is a process through which a new, untenured faculty member receives guidance and support for successful career enhancement and professional advancement" (2009). The authors' literature review revealed three recurring characteristics: foremost, the mentor is seasoned and more experienced in his or her field of expertise than the mentee; the mentor is generally the lead person in the relationship and initially leads the direction; third, the mentor is generally older than the mentee.

At UML, mentoring means that there is a formal or informal relationship that exists between two individuals. The lead person is usually the more experienced, in keeping with the trends noted above. The relationship exists primarily for the experienced individual to provide guidance, support, encouragement, collaboration, and networking opportunities that assist the mentee in satisfying tenure requirements. The UM College of Chemical and Life Sciences has developed a *Guide for Faculty Mentors (and Mentees),* which

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