

CUL Mentoring Committee

Annual Report 2011-2012

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Committee Members:

Lynn Bertoia (finance lead)
Linda Bryan (Library HR liaison)
Gaby Castro Gessner
Gwen Glazer (chair)
Tobi Hines (communications lead)
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Overview

Once again, Cornell University Library's Mentoring Committee has much to be proud of this year. Building off the success of the 2010-11 pilot program, the committee set out to expand and improve the mentoring program this year.

Inclusivity — engaging staff at every level and in every part of the Library — emerged as a key goal of the program last year, partly in response to concerns that the previous mentoring program had been limited to academic staff. More than 25 pairs enrolled in the program this year; we saw participation from newly hired employees, long-time veterans, members of the Library's top leadership team, and many others from different parts of the system.

Response has been very positive: between this year and last year's pilot program, more than 10 percent of people who work at the Library have participated in the mentoring program. This speaks not only to the success of the program, but also to the desire of library staff to feel connected to the larger organization during a time of uncertainty and change.

As a committee, we're proud of our accomplishments this year, and we believe the program has helped many library staff members — and that it will continue to do so in the future.

Lessons from the pilot program

Overall, assessment from the 2010-11 version of the mentoring program showed a high degree of satisfaction with participants' experiences.

At the conclusion of the program, the committee developed an 11-question survey in collaboration with the Research and Assessment Unit. It allowed us to collect both hard data about participants' experiences and constructive criticism and general impressions about what could be improved.

The feedback was almost entirely positive. Specific comments included:

- Multiple people who weren't sure about their pairings were pleasantly surprised at how well the matches worked
- Both mentors and mentees reported learning a lot from each other
- Almost universally, positive words used: trust; respect; fun; comfortable; generous; friendship

The few problems with the programs and suggestions for improving the program included:

- People didn't have enough time, both personally and because the program was short
- Mentors feeling-felt it was difficult to measure whether they were giving their mentees anything of value and worried, ~~worrying~~ that they weren't helping
- Pairs indicated that they would like a little more support/advice from the committee after the initial orientation and throughout the program

In response to this feedback, the committee decided not to overburden pairs with multiple in-person events, and instead put most of our energy (and funding) into making the three scheduled events — the open house, orientation, and end-of-year celebration — meaningful and productive.

We did, however, want to make sure that pairs continued to feel supported throughout the semester and maintained their momentum, so we developed the Monthly Mentoring Memos. These emails of “tips and tricks”, as well as recommended resources for those interested in further study, didn't require a time commitment or add scheduling pressure, but allowed the pairs to feel connected with the committee. We also hoped that they might inspire pairs whose conversations were flagging and gave them new topics to explore.

The pilot program also showed that the structure of the committee was sound, with six to eight members who rotate off every one to two years.

Structure, events, & programming

The Mentoring Committee's charge was unchanged from its initial 2010-11 charter:

The mission of the CUL Mentoring Committee is to facilitate and support the development of mentoring opportunities for all interested staff members.

The committee is responsible for (1) recruiting members; (2) matching mentors and mentees for both academic and non-academic staff, based on individual needs and interests; (3) supporting mentoring relationships to ensure mutual benefit; (4) scheduling networking and learning events; and (5) conducting an annual assessment of the overall program and review of the charge.

In its first full year, the committee achieved those goals admirably. We were able to build on the successful work from last year's committee to define the concept of mentorship within the Library and explain it to potential members — and take it a step further, to look outside ourselves. This year's committee surveyed and discussed other organizations' professional development and mentoring programs and used those ideas to refine our own efforts. In the Monthly Mentoring Memos, the committee referenced several tools, concepts, and exercises from other professional development sources, such as the Coaching and Mentoring Network portal, the Journal of Extension, and

StrengthsQuest.

Internally, we changed the structure from two chairs to one, but added communication and finance leads to address specific committee needs. The one- and two-year terms ensure that the committee benefits from continuity of long-time members but also gets infusions of energy and ideas from new members.

For participants, we kept a similar structure to the pilot program. Our three main events and programs were an information session, an orientation/training session, and an end-of-year celebration. All three of these programs require quite a bit of advance planning — particularly our June trip with Cayuga Lake Cruises, which needed a guest speaker (Jim Sheridan, senior staff consultant in Organizational Development at Cornell), an official contract, and the vast majority of our funding. We attracted almost 30 attendees and a good time was had by all.

Timeline

August

- Committee holds retreat to assess lessons from pilot program.
- Committee begins meeting twice a month; chooses chair and finance/communications leads.
- Begin editing application, planning open house & orientation, deciding who will do the pairing.

September

- Application finalized, promoted, and sent to all of CUL.
- Open house held Monday, Sept. 19, in Olin 703, with the goal of answering questions, motivating people to participate, and sharing experiences from past pairs.
- Applications due Sept. 30.

October

- Committee creates and announces pairs.

November

- Orientation and training session held Nov. 3, in Mann 102.
- Pairs begin meeting formally, and committee begins meeting monthly.

December (through June)

- Monthly Mentoring Memos begin.

January & February

- Begin planning for big end-of-year event, focusing on what the main goal should be.

March

- Staff table at the Career Fair for Career Development Week, with information about the program.

April

- Nail down specifics of end-of-year event and begin spreading the word with first emails to participants.

May

- Discuss recruiting new members for the committee, particularly what skills and talents are needed from past members rotating off, and other changes to be made for the next year.

June

- Hold end-of-year event. Rejoice!
- Decide on new chair(s) and lead(s), and assess any structural changes for the next year.

July

- Create and send out the end-of-year survey for all participants.

Funding

In early fall, the committee was informed by Library Forum that we were given a budget of \$1,000.00 for the 2011-2012 academic year. The Mentoring committee decided use these funds to host three public events— the open house, the orientation and training session, and the end-of-year celebration on the M/V Columbia. We decided not to redesign or print new applications/brochures. Electronic applications were sent to participants instead of mailing them print material.

In February, the committee decided to do something new and different for the final event, celebrating the year's accomplishments. We invited Jim Sheridan, a senior staff consultant in Organizational Development at Cornell, to give an informal presentation, and he graciously volunteered his time. The goal of this program was to have fun, learn something about the value of mentoring, and encourage people to serve as ambassadors for the upcoming year.

With \$797.48 remaining in our budget after the first two events, we requested additional funds to cover the cost of the final event. Lee Cartmill generously agreed to add \$350.00 to the Mentoring Program's budget to cover the estimated cost of using Cayuga Lake Cruises for the end-of-year celebration. We spent a total of \$1,372.52 for the academic year.

The committee would like to increase its budget request to \$1,350.00 for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Comment [GG1]: Lynn, all of this is from last year's memo... could you take a look and see if you can update?

We believe this sum would cover mentoring activities and will allow us to plan structured, appealing events for participants throughout the year.

Budget

Mentoring Committee expenditures for fiscal year 2011-2012:

Date	Transaction	Amount	Balance	Attendees
1-Jul-11	Budget allotment from Library Forum	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
19-Sept-11	Mentoring Committee Open House	(\$113.42)	\$886.58	25-30 people
3-Nov-11	Mentoring Committee Orientation	(\$89.10)	\$797.48	25-30 people
Mar-12	Additional funding provided by Library Administration	\$350.00	\$1,147.48	
19-Jun-12	Mentoring Committee End-of-Year Celebration	(\$1,170.00)	(\$22.52)	30-35 people
22-Jun-12	Additional funding provided by Library Forum	\$22.52	\$0.00	
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$1,372.52		

Comment [GG2]: Lynn, could you fill in this part? Any changes you'd like to make are fine. If you want to keep the section on attendees, I can fill that in later after you put in the chart.

Future plans

Next year, the mentoring committee is hoping to capitalize on this past year's success and keep the momentum going, and will make an effort to explore coaching as a means to emphasize personal and professional development efforts. Some members have also expressed interest in developing a job shadowing event for interested participants. Results from this year's assessment will help to inform next year's programming, as will suggestions from the new committee members, at our annual committee retreat in late August.

Going forward into this next year, the committee will have to find a way to balance the interests of the continuing pairs, who may be looking for new ways to expand their partnerships and a little less interference from the committee, as well as attract new participants (or returning participants interested in forming new partnerships) who may need a little more support from the committee.

In accordance with the terms of its formation, the Mentoring Committee will conduct an annual review of the goals established in its charge. Assessment will be done at the end of the 2012-2013 academic year.

Comment [GG3]: Gaby and Tobi, maybe you could flesh out this section? So sorry I had to miss that last meeting.