ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCH LIBRARIES®

Synergy: News from ARL Diversity Initiatives

Residency programs have played a vital role in the recruitment and the professional development of newly credentialed librarians. The Association of Library and Information Science Educators (ALISE) laid the groundwork for residencies in 1992 with Guidelines for Practices and Principles in the Design, Operation, and Evaluation of Post-Master's Residency Programs. These guidelines define residency programs as "the post-degree work experience designed as an entry level program for professionals who have received the MLS degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association. The Association of Research Libraries has long supported residency programs and their role in the recruiting and training of new professionals. ARL collects and makes residency information available on a broad range of career opportunities for future and new professionals. ARL is particularly interested in attracting new and transitioning professionals who are interested in academic and research library careers. ARL is committed to continuing its support of Residency programs in libraries and has:

- Redesigned the Web Site for the ARL Residency Programs (residencies.arl.org);
- Created an electronic community for professionals who manage residency programs and those past and current participants in residency programs (if you are interested in joining the group, send an email to divlmgr@arl.org); and,
- ARL has tentatively planned a post-conference session following the National Diversity in Libraries Conference in Louisville, KY, in October 2008, to discuss the future of library residency programs. The post conference will be hosted by the University of Kentucky Libraries.

In this edition of Synergy, we have a diverse group of articles on the topic. The articles discuss the history of residency programs, managing residency programs, and give two personal accounts of a past and current resident. The authors are:

Julie Brewer, University of Delaware
Marissa Alcorta, Purdue University
LaVerne Gray, University of Illinois at Chicago
Teresa Neely, University of New Mexico
Megan Perez, ARL Diversity Scholar

For more information about ARL's Diversity Initiatives, please contact Jerome Offord, Jr., Director of Diversity Initiatives, at jerome@arl.org.

An Overview of Research Library Residency Programs

Julie Brewer, University of Delaware Library

Research libraries have historically been difficult places for early career librarians to obtain employment. The highly specialized work, scholarly collections, and demanding

promotion and tenure requirements generally limit employment opportunities to those with several years of library service and discipline-specific master's degrees in addition to the ALA-accredited MLS. Many research libraries have instituted residency programs to break down historical employment barriers. Research library residency programs allow institutions to attract early career librarians with current technology expertise and from diverse backgrounds who otherwise may not have considered careers in higher education.

Research libraries began experimenting with post-MLS work experience programs in the 1940s. In the 1980s a number of institutions targeted post-MLS programs to new MLS graduates from underrepresented groups to increase the diversity of their library faculty. In 1992, the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) established guidelines for residency programs. The guidelines defined a residency as a "post-degree work experience designed as an entry level program for professionals who have recently received the MLS degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association ,"[1] distinguishing it from pre-MLS internship and mid-career fellowship work experience programs. Today there are approximately 20 research library residency programs.

Although residency programs vary in size, structure and focus, most programs are two years in length and targeted to new MLS graduates. Residencies are generally library-wide in focus providing a broad overview of services and operations, rather than being a narrowly specialized assignment that is typical of most entry-level positions. Most programs have one or two residents at a time or staggered each year. A few have groups of three to five or more residents at a time.

Residents and host institutions benefit from research library residency programs. Residents gain valuable professional work experience, participate in guided learning and mentoring opportunities, and explore various career goals. The host institutions benefit from the current technology expertise and perspectives of early career librarians. The regular infusion of new personnel also provides staffing flexibility to experiment with new services and respond quickly to change.

The Association for Research Libraries has provided important support for residency programs over the years. In 1996, ARL hosted two national seminars on "Implementing Post-Master's Residency Programs" to encourage the start of new programs and to facilitate communication among existing programs. Recommendations from the seminars on how to start residency programs were summarized in an ARL publication by Julie Brewer, "Implementing Post-Master's Residency Programs." Leading Ideas 4 (September 1998): 2-7. Also as a result of the seminars, ARL established a residency database to assist new MLS graduates. The residency database has recently been enhanced and moved to a new address at http://residencies.arl.org/. ARL diversity initiatives and consulting services continue to support networking and development opportunities for residents and residency program coordinators. A new working group on residency programs has just been formed and welcomes interested participants.

[1]"Guidelines for Practices and Principles in the Design, Operation, and Evaluation of Post-Master's Residency Programs." Library Personnel News 10 (May/June 1996): 1-3.

Why I Chose a Residency Program

Marissa Galindo Alcorta, Diversity Fellow & Visiting Assistant Professor of Library Science, Purdue University Libraries

Exploration within the field of librarianship and academic research was the main reason I chose a residency program. While attending library school my interests veered towards pursuing academic librarianship in archives and special collections. Yet, I was still interested in other areas of academic librarianship as well. I did not want to limit myself. I wanted to explore all that academic librarianship had to offer me. My time as a Diversity Fellow at Purdue University Libraries has allowed me the luxury of this exploration. In my short time within my residency I have been able to explore and work in the areas of digital initiatives, reference, collection development, research, cataloging, metadata, collection evaluation, and outreach, among other areas of librarianship. In addition, I have been able to gain an insider's view of what it means to be a librarian and faculty within a research institution. As non-tenure faculty, I have been able to interact with tenure-track librarians. Through my interactions I have been able to gain a unique perspective into the issues (research and publishing) that they face in attaining tenure in an academic research library. These are all issues I have begun exploring and will face upon entering a tenure-track position in the future. My integration within this academic research-based environment has been invaluable in terms of better grasping what it means to be an academic librarian.

Library school gave me a strong theoretical and educational experience upon which to enter the profession of librarianship. In addition, as a member of the ARL Initiative to Recruit a Diverse Workforce I was fortunate enough to gain professional experience, such as the leadership institute at midwinter, that has provided me with a strong background in which to enter the world of academic librarianship in a research library. These were all great experiences that helped me grow as a librarian. Yet, upon graduation, I still felt very green around the gills when it came to entering a tenure-track position. There is always the choice to enter into a full tenure-track position when you first finish library school. I chose not to go that path immediately. I was looking for an environment where I could gain professional experience in an academic setting as a librarian but also be given the time and support I needed to grow as a professional before looking at tenure. I was really looking for a supportive, learning-based transition into a professional position. A library residency program seemed like the perfect match for my own personal and professional needs. I was fortunate enough to find that supportive, learning environment here at Purdue University.

Residency programs are not for everyone. But if you are open to exploring the endless possibilities that academic librarianship can offer you, residencies are great opportunities to do so. Personally and professionally, my time as a resident has been invaluable. The experience and professional development I will gain by the completion of my residency will enhance and add to my future as an academic librarian.

Residency Programs: A Great Choice

LaVerne Gray, Assistant Reference Librarian and Assistant Professor, Richard J. Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago

I chose to begin my career in academic libraries as a Minority Resident Librarian at the University of Tennessee Libraries. I learned of the program through the 2005 Association of Research Libraries Leadership Institute. The residency provides an intensive and challenging introduction to academic librarianship. The University of Tennessee provides a cohort experience, where three residents are hired at the same time. We built a special relationship and became a support network for one another.

I came into the program with no previous library experience. Now I feel equipped with the tools necessary to continue the next phase of my career in a dynamic environment. The approach of the program gives the residents the choice of working in different areas of the libraries the first year and concentrating their efforts in a single department for the second. After two years, I have had a variety of experiences. I have worked in reference and instructional services, the digital library, and special collections. I performed duties assigned in the different departments, attended conferences, served on committees, performed research, and presented at conferences. I am always stimulated and happily overwhelmed with all of the possibilities available with work and service.

The University of Tennessee Libraries Minority Residency Program afforded me the experiences I sought and enabled me to build a firm foundation to my career in academic libraries. I have been welcomed into the profession in a supportive environment that encourages diversity and seeks to create a space where one can find and contribute to the organization as a whole. My participation in the program trained me in a nurturing and challenging environment that is committed to diversifying the profession to better serve all users. I have a continued obligation to be an effective professional, acting as an example to those who come after me. In such a program, the benefits for the resident, librarian, and the profession are limitless. I truly feel I made the right decision to pursue a residency program.

Managing a Library Residency Program: The University of New Mexico University Libraries Experience

Teresa Y. Neely, Ph.D., Director, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico

The purpose of the University of New Mexico (UNM) University Libraries (UL) Resident Program, as articulated by the library administration in 2002, is "to bring energy, creativity, and new ideas to the UL from recent library graduates and to provide opportunities to enter the profession with academic library experience, specifically for qualified diverse librarians." I have managed the Resident Program since assuming the position of Director of Zimmerman Library in early 2005. At that time, the program included an orientation to reference and instruction; the remaining opportunities were left undeveloped. One of my first tasks was re-envisioning the program to bring it more in line with the resident's job description, specifically the section that reads:

> The resident will participate in an extensive orientation program that provides the opportunity to develop expertise in all aspects of an academic research library

including research and instruction services, public and technical services, library administration, special collections, library research programs, and library technology.

In order to build a more structured program, I developed a comprehensive residency manual. In addition to the director of Zimmerman Library, this manual serves as the primary resource for the resident, to aid him or her in navigating the complex organization that is the UNM UL. The manual also articulates the purpose of the program and the specific responsibilities, duties, and expectations of the resident. (See Resident Manual at: http://elibrary.unm.edu/residentprogram/documents/ UNMResidencyManual2007.pdf).

In order to get a handle on managing this program, it was crucial to plan carefully and comprehensively document procedures, expectations, and responsibilities--a critical part in the coordination of any project. Specific job duties and responsibilities that are required for managing the program at UNM include:

- An ongoing commitment to the program, and the willingness to advocate for it, educate about it, and continuously improve it.
- Serve as chair of the search committee each year--recruit, hire, orient, and mentor a new resident (usually brand new to the profession with no experience required)--each year. This process routinely yields 100+ applicants, of which we hire one. The search process, coupled with hiring a resident and bringing him or her on board makes managing this program a 365 day-a-year commitment outside of other branch director duties.
- Annually, or when major organizational or institutional changes occur, update the resident manual by contacting each branch director, department manager, and administrative unit in the UL to insure the orientation entry is current and inclusive. This year, I have invited the Health Sciences and Law Libraries to participate in the program.
- Solicit the entire UL for projects for the resident. Resident positions are guaranteed one year, with a possible one-year extension depending on the budget and a good performance evaluation. Projects give the resident tangible experience and exposure to some aspect of an academic research library and look good on their curriculum vitas.
- Protect the residents from themselves and from well-meaning colleagues. With a number of retirements and position vacancies due to transfers and a reorganization in Zimmerman Library, some UL staff expected the residents to fill in at the reference desk or do instruction (sometimes on their first day).
- Educate the UNM UL about the purpose of the program and the duties of the resident (See Web site at: http://elibrary.unm.edu/residentprogram/about.php).

Managing a residency program is an ongoing responsibility. It requires a sense of humor, patience, and perseverance, however, the rewards are well worth the effort.

Professional Residencies: Lessons from the Healthcare Industry

Megan Perez

Early in the summer of 2006, I happened across an ACRL white paper, Recruitment, Retention, and Restructuring: Human Resources in Academic Libraries. The paper described the current state of the library workforce and compared it to previous staffing crises in other, comparable professions such as nursing. This led me to a review of the health science literature, where I learned a number of relevant factors about the nursing profession. First, in terms of demographics, the nursing profession is strikingly similar to our own. One is 90.7% female, approximately 80% white, and has an average age of 26 for its professional students; the other is 79% female, 74% white, and has an average age range of 25 to 29 for its professional students. (Can you guess which is which?)

The factors identified by both the nursing and library literature as complicating recruitment and retention efforts in their respective fields include a lingering negative image, an aging workforce, stagnant school enrollment, and an increase in work opportunities for women outside the profession in question. The literature showed that the nursing profession also employs residency programs as one approach for attracting, training, and retaining new professionals.

Nursing residencies have a number of specific outcomes for their participants and for the host institution. The programs seek to ease transition for new graduates entering the profession, to recruit new talent to the field, to increase retention rates, and, perhaps most importantly, to develop resident skill sets. Some of the areas in which nursing residencies attempt to increase and develop competencies include stress management, self-confidence, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and scholarly responsibility. These skills sets are expanded through the use of a curricular component distributed throughout the duration of the residency.

In all cases studied, the results were extremely positive. Upon completion of a program, residents were evaluated in terms of confidence, competence, and commitment. Their performance matched or exceeded that of more experienced practitioners. Retention rates increased, as did levels of critical thinking, problem solving, professional behavior, and autonomy. One program was even able to demonstrate a savings in fiscal resources by calculating a program's return on investment.

Given the similarities between nursing and librarianship in demographic composition, workforce challenges, and the employment of a recruitment strategy, I thought a comparison between nursing residency programs and library residency programs would be a useful study. How do currently active library residency programs compare to the nursing models reviewed? Do they assess critical thinking skills or teach communication and organizational skills? Do they employ a curricular component? Are the programs successfully fulfilling their objectives?

Library residency programs can be traced back to as early as 1938 but very little of the research regarding library residency programs is current. In fact, the majority of research in this area predates the turn of this century, with the lone exception of a 2001 study done by Mark Winston and Julie Brewer, "Program Evaluation for Internship/Residency Programs in Academic and Research Libraries." To try to answer some of the questions above, I designed a survey seeking information in a variety of

areas including recruitment practices for programs, program design, and participant development within the program.

In early 2007, the instrument was sent to the personnel and human resources officers of ARL member libraries. The findings of the survey show that most library residency programs simply do not use skills assessments similar to those used in nursing residencies as an integral part of the program. For example, with regard to critical thinking skills inventories, 100% of survey respondents indicated such an inventory was not used. Ninety-two percent of respondents indicated learning style measurements were not performed on the resident.

In terms of evaluating performance indicators such as confidence, stress, and job satisfaction, however, the results are less clear. Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents indicated the resident's confidence and ability is measured over the course of the program. More than half of these respondents, however, indicated the measure was informal, i.e. through conversation or discussion. Two-thirds of respondents indicated levels of stress and job satisfaction were measured, but when asked to provide an open-ended answer to the question of the measure's frequency, respondents indicated level of stress was not expressly measured and formal measures were not used to determine a resident's job satisfaction.

Other outstanding findings include the provision of orientation to the program for new library staff, resident tracking upon program completion, and program disadvantages. Nine out of eleven respondents (82%) indicated new library staff did not receive an orientation to the program. Respondents were asked whether subsequent employers of program participants were contacted to discuss the role of the program in the resident's professional development. One hundred percent of respondents indicated subsequent employers were not contacted. Few responses were provided regarding the question of program disadvantages, but "resentment from existing employees" was the response selected most often.

A discussion of methods of advertising, applicant pool development tools, resident development, mentoring, program visibility and reputation, and more are available in the full report (see the link below). Also available in the report are a series of recommendations and suggestions for program coordinators, LIS faculty and practitioners, and professional organizations for supplementing the existing structure and design of library residency programs.

During a recent LAMA Diversity Officers Discussion Group at ALA Annual, one particular recommendation received a substantial amount of interest: the creation of an inter-campus Residency Working Group. The group would be comprised of members from professional associations, program coordinators, current and former residents, and LIS faculty. The group's purpose would be to outline short and long-term goals for the group. Some of these goals include the centralization of information regarding program availability and management, and the development of 'teams' to coordinate communication, advocacy, programming, and research, for examples. Discussions to establish this group are currently in progress.

Although nursing residency programs and library residency programs share similar goals, their structure and execution differ. It is my hope that, despite these differences,

library residency programs will learn from the models available in other industries. Additional success and long-term sustainability may be enjoyed if they incorporate some of the practices and principles used by the nursing profession.

To read the complete report, see: From New Graduate to Competent Practitioner: Rethinking the Architecture of Post-MLS Residency Programs in ARL Libraries. Unpublished master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. http://etd.ils.unc.edu/dspace/handle/1901/395