MENTORED INTO MANAGEMENT: CULTIVATING TO FILL THE GAP

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Skills Wanted

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Technical Skills

1955 - “…understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity… involving methods, processes, procedures or techniques.”

2012 - A plethora of technical skills ranging from word processing to building databases continues to be the foundation of leadership.

Human Skills

1955 - “…ability to work effectively as a group member and to build cooperative effort within the team…”

2012 - The ability to work effectively with others regardless of their ranking is an imperative skill during times of constant change. Being an effective and open-minded communicator are valuable skills, especially when working with employees from multiple generations and perspectives.

Conceptual Skills

1955 - “…ability to see the enterprise as a whole;…recognizing how the various functions of the organization depend on one another… change in any one part affects all the others…”

2012 - The ability to not only see the big picture but knowing how to act and move the entire organization forward especially when the direction is ever-changing.

“…selection and development of [leaders]….. is based not on what good [leaders] are, but rather on what they do. A skill implies an ability which can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential. So the principle criterion of skillfulness must be effective action…..” - Robert L. Katz Harvard Business Review, 1955:33-34.

Leadership Training Desired

Over 93% of reference & cataloging department heads within the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) have no formal education in management. Over half have never participated in any form of management training.

- Wittenbach, Bordeianu, & Wycisk. C&RL 53: July 1992

Follow Through with Support

To retain employees, administrators need to do more than just voice their support. They need to step forward with action and become mentors, advocates, and sounding boards for those who are looking for growth opportunities. Administrators should consider the environment and communication styles of their leaders, and challenge them to play a role in the development of librarians interested in learning leadership skills.

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Next Steps

Survey the population of academic librarians, who are interested in leadership and those currently in leadership positions. Ask both populations what skills they have acquired to become leaders, what skills they believe are needed, and what role mentoring plays in their professional endeavors.

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ARL LCDP- Luminary Class, June 2012

Images and modified: http://www.lcsc.edu/ecc/mentor.htm


Images from: http://teachermentor.net/mentor-services/meet-our-mentors/