

From Information to Inspiration: How Libraries Can Shape the Future of Diversity by Connecting People and Building Community

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Introduction

Inspiring libraries to increase diversity among library staff has been one of the greatest challenges of the past decade. Recent statistics show that the total profile of the librarian profession in the United States is approximately 89% white, 5% black, 3% Asian/Pacific Islander,

2% Hispanic, less than 1% Native American, and 1% other.¹ The librarian profession is also predominantly female (80%) with males outnumbering female professionals in library senior management and leadership positions.¹ At the University of California, Berkeley (UCB), diversity is defined broadly to include such matters as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, class, physical and mental disability, age and sexual orientation. Since the Berkeley campus is well-known for having a diverse population of undergraduate and graduate students, it is important that the libraries on campus also employ individuals who reflect that same diversity. In addition, diversity is growing at a steady rate at UCB and in many other academic communities in this country. Currently, statistics show that UCB ranks 17th for racial diversity among students at all universities in the nation.² Increased diversity among library staff can help diverse library users feel more comfortable with using the libraries on campus, and can even inspire these diverse users to consider a future career in librarianship.

The Library at UCB is a pre-eminent, world-class research and teaching library staffed by approximately 400 to 450 employees and over 700 part-time student employees in a total of 38 campus libraries, which make up The Library and the Affiliated Libraries. The Library includes the main Doe Memorial Library, the undergraduate Moffitt library, the Bancroft Library, as well as 24 subject specialty libraries. The 11 Affiliated Libraries are administratively separate from The Library system, and are connected to particular departments, professional schools, and organized research institutes. Some examples of Affiliated Libraries include: the Law Library, Institute of Governmental Studies, Institute of Transportation Studies, and the Ethnic Studies Library.

There are numerous career opportunities within The Library, focusing on the provision of library services and maintenance of library operations, including information technology, human resources, finance, development, conservation, and graphics and publication. As of 2007, the UCB academic librarian demographic profile (excluding the Affiliated Libraries) was approximately 65% female and 35% male, and comprised of approximately 72% white, 17% Asian/Pacific Islander, 7% Hispanic, 4% black, and 0% Native American. Similarly, the UCB library staff profile (excluding the Affiliated Libraries) was approximately 62% female and 38% male, and comprised of approximately 59% white, 17% Asian/Pacific Islander, 11% Hispanic, 12% black, and less than 1% Native American. Nationally, 85% of academic librarians are white.¹ Although the statistics at UCB showed that diversity was greater than average in comparison to the national level, there was still much improvement that could be done to increase diversity.

At the beginning of 2007, University Librarian Tom Leonard issued a charge to Susan Wong, the Director of Library Human Resources, to assemble a committee, which ultimately was comprised of five librarians and one library staff employee. This committee wrote and submitted a grant proposal to the Berkeley Initiative for Leadership and Diversity (BILD) on behalf of The Library. The BILD initiative was launched by the UCB Chancellor's Office and the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate, and provides funding to groups developing innovative solutions on issues of staff diversity and inclusion in the workplace across the Berkeley campus. In September of that year, our grant project titled, "Connecting People and Building Community: A Two-Tier Program to Influence Diversity in the UCB Libraries," was funded by BILD, and allowed us the opportunity to create and implement a Library Staff

Mentoring Program and develop a Library Fellowship Program. Our goal was to establish these programs for library employees at all levels on campus, which would help increase supportive partnerships among the staff of the libraries, attract diverse employees to viable library career paths, and support engagement in diversity for the library workplace culture by an individual new to the library profession. These programs would also integrate inclusive mentoring and fellowship initiatives into The Library with the goal of improving its overall diversity profile.

LIBRARY STAFF MENTORING PROGRAM

Background

In November of 2007, the Librarians Association of the University of California, Berkeley Division (LAUC-B) formed the Task Force on Staff Mentoring to implement and support one part of our research grant: The Library Staff Mentoring Program. This program was developed for non-librarian staff employees, namely those in library assistant positions, within The Library and Affiliated Libraries, who were interested in a professional librarian career. The goal was to inspire these diverse library staff employees to find out more about the library profession and also encourage them to actively participate in the program.

In order to determine what types of library activities were of interest to library staff, an electronic survey was created. The survey asked a series of questions pertaining to their potential interest in participating in various activities, including a staff mentorship program, and what areas of librarianship they would be interested in learning more about. An invitation to take the survey was widely announced and distributed to all staff in The Library and Affiliated Libraries.

As a result, a total of 178 out of approximately 400 to 450 Library and Affiliated Library staff members (total response rate of 40 to 45%) completed the survey and provided helpful feedback on how to proceed with developing the mentoring program. In Figure 1, the percentage of respondents categorized by their job titles is shown. The diversity of job titles indicated that a wide range of library staff were interested in participating in a program. The majority of respondents (60%) were library assistants or library assistant supervisors, although there were respondents from various administrative, programming and other types of positions who were also interested. Of all respondents, 95% were permanent, career employees, who had worked for the UCB Library system for varying amounts of time (see Figure 2). It was interesting to see that employees who had worked at UCB for more than 15 years were as interested in participating in a program as staff who were fairly new (less than 1 year to less than 5 years).

Among the total respondents, 28% already possessed degrees from a library or information program, and out of these, 18% were currently looking for a librarian position and 64% had applied for librarian positions within the last 3 years. Although the majority of respondents who already possessed degrees were not interested in job shadowing a librarian on campus nor doing an internship in a UCB library, 44% were interested in being mentored by a UCB librarian, 48% were interested in attending workshops on job seeking skills, and 70% were interested in professional development.

Of the total respondents who were currently enrolled in a library or information program (6%), 100% were interested in job shadowing a librarian on campus, 91% were interested in being mentored, 82% were interested in a potential internship at a UCB library, and 100% were interested in attending workshops and learning about professional development in the field. In addition, 82% of these respondents were interested in obtaining academic librarian positions after graduation. This indicated that current library staff, who were in school, could potentially be interested in applying for academic librarian positions at UCB after graduating. Of the respondents who were interested in applying for admission to a library or information program in the future (26%), 57% were interested in speaking to a current library school student, 85% were interested in attending a talk about library schools and programs, and 57% were interested in job shadowing a librarian at UCB.

Based on positive survey results, the Task Force on Staff Mentoring developed and organized a variety of mentoring activities and opportunities, to encourage librarians to share their knowledge and vision of the future of libraries with library staff, who were considering a professional career in librarianship. The Library Staff Mentoring Program consisted of six main components: the Job Shadowing Program, Mentorship Program, Resource List and Mentoring Opportunities web pages, Staff Summer Conference Mentorship Program, Library Career Workshop, and Library Staff Brown Bag Lunch. The Task Force also created a suite of web pages (see <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/tfmentoring.html>) to publicize all of these events, resources and programs.

Component 1: Job Shadowing Program

This program paired a library staff member with a librarian and/or library professional staff member. Library staff had an opportunity to spend two hours visiting, interacting with and observing a librarian and/or library professional staff member working in a field of their interest. The library staff member got a sense of what it was like to be a librarian and/or library professional staff member at UCB and observed the unique work that they do.

Relevant handouts, e-postings, web pages and links were developed to advertise the job shadowing opportunity to all library staff. Participants who were interested in shadowing or being shadowed completed and submitted an application (found at <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/JobShadowing.html>). Applicants were matched with a librarian or library professional staff member working in their ranked preferred field of interest. Possible fields of interest indicated on the application form were: archiving, cataloging, collection development, data resources, digital services, e-learning, electronic resources, instruction, preservation, reference and other.

A total of 36 matches were successfully made, with 27 library staff members shadowing and 29 participants being shadowed. All 56 participants filled out an evaluation survey after completing the program. Based on the survey results, 85% of library staff said that the program met their expectations and that they would participate again if it were offered, and 96% would recommend this program to their colleagues. The length of library service of the staff participants ranged from less than 1 year to 15 years or more, so this was an interesting

opportunity for library staff with all levels of work experience. For the librarians and library paraprofessionals who were shadowed, 88% indicated that they would participate in the program again if it were offered, and 100% said they would recommend this program to their colleagues. This career exploration and observation exposed staff to areas of interest within the library and may assist them in their future career development.

There were a few challenges during the course of this program. Specifically, several people were interested, but unable to participate because of work-related reasons or time constraints. In addition, a number of staff who participated also wanted to be able to participate again in the future, but in a different area of interest. Another issue involved the relocation of the Bancroft Library, which is the main campus repository for archival material. The move made it difficult to accommodate library staff, who had been interested in shadowing special collections librarians or archivists. In the future, improvements will be made to address the above challenges. The Task Force also recommended that this program be scheduled during the Fall or Spring semester so that participants have opportunities to observe activities such as instruction and reference. The program should also be offered regularly so library staff members have opportunities to explore different areas of librarianship.

Component 2: Mentorship Program

The Mentorship Program matched an interested UCB Library or Affiliated Library staff employee with a librarian mentor (i.e., professional, supervisor or manager) and/or professional library staff, in or outside of their current assigned job field. Interested participants at all levels were encouraged to develop their individual potential and self-awareness in order to achieve professional success and feel empowered within the field of librarianship. Completion of an application (found at http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/Staff_Mentorship.html) was required for both mentors and mentees. After a mentor was assigned, the mentee met him/her within two months of the assignment. Typical discussions between mentors and mentees involved the mentor's primary job duties and responsibilities, the mentor's role and how it fits within the goals and objectives of their unit, and the mentor's career path to their current position and skills and knowledge they needed to get there. Other suggested ideas for meetings included the mentor providing a brief tour of their workplace, introducing the mentee to unit staff, and letting the mentee observe the mentor's librarian or professional functions in his/her job.

As a result, eight successful matches were made. The mentors shared their job experiences and provided useful advice for a successful career in the field. This program provided a supportive link between non-librarian staff and librarians (and/or professional library staff), who normally serve differing functions within a library. In addition, it brought together staff of various ranks from different libraries across campus and created a sense of partnership in the library community. Mentors have also inspired mentees to learn more about the profession and have motivated them to pursue degrees in library science and apply for professional library positions. Ultimately, the goal of the program was to encourage staff to use one another as resources for learning. Since this program only began in August of 2008, it is too early to evaluate the overall effectiveness of it. In the future, measurements will be instituted (survey or

otherwise) to track the progress of the matches that have been made. There will also be a process developed for reassignment if a mentor/mentee match is not a good fit or is no longer useful.

Component 3: Resource List and Mentoring Opportunities Web Pages

As part of the Library Staff Mentoring Program, an inclusive web page of resources was developed for all library staff interested in librarianship or career advancement within the UCB libraries (see <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/Resources.html>). Information about professional development for staff is scattered throughout several web sites within the UCB web site. This new page is exclusively related to librarianship and now serves as a tool for professional development by providing information about forms, and listing local and national library organizations, and classes available through the UCB campus and nearby institutions. In addition, a unifying web page for all staff mentoring opportunities was created (see http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/Staff/mentoring_opportunities.html), where library staff can now go to see what mentoring opportunities exist in the UCB libraries. In the future, one goal is to make sure that both web pages are more visible on the UCB Library web site. Also, in order to determine the usefulness of these web pages, statistical information will be collected, such as how many times the web pages have been accessed and how people are getting to the web pages.

Component 4: Staff Summer Conference Mentorship Program

In summer of 2008, the Staff Summer Conference Mentorship Program was implemented (see <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/SummerConf.html>). Library staff at all levels within all UCB libraries, who planned to attend a library-related conference, program or meeting, had the opportunity to ask to be matched with a UCB librarian mentor, who would be attending the same event. This program was created to encourage library staff who had never attended an outside professional event to be assigned a mentor, who could show them how these events function. In addition, library staff could have an opportunity to meet a librarian and get another perspective from a professional about what attending conferences and professional meetings involves. Suggested activities for the mentor and mentee included: attending a social event and meeting someone new; attending a substantive program and/or a business meeting; planning some free time to chat; spending time walking through the Exhibit Hall together; sharing insights on how to work with vendors in the Exhibit Hall and how to network on the floor; and attending committee meetings together. E-mails were sent out to library staff inviting them to request a mentor for a summer library-related event. Seasoned attendees were solicited for these same events to serve as mentors. As a result, 5 official matches were made (a number of unofficial matches also occurred outside of this program).

Component 5: Library Career Workshop

In July of 2008, a library career workshop was held on the UCB campus and all library staff employees were encouraged to attend. Invited panelist speakers included: Jane Fisher, the Assistant Director for Research and Professional Practice at the San Jose State University School

of Library and Information Science; Locke Morrisey, the Head of Collections, Reference and Research Services at the University of San Francisco; and Elizabeth Byrne, the Head of the Environmental Design Library at UCB. They each talked about such topics as why one might decide to go to library school, how to select a specific program and/or school, how to get into a library school or information program, how to search and apply for jobs, what librarians typically do in their jobs, and what employers look for when hiring librarians. The presentations of two of the speakers are available at: <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/LAUC/tfmentoring.html>. There were 42 attendees, who commented that this event helped to connect library staff members by encouraging them to engage in spirited discussions with the speakers and with each other. All other feedback from attendees was very positive.

Component 6: Library Staff Brown Bag Lunch

Held in August of 2008, this event was for all library staff interested in finding out more information about library schools and programs, and included students currently attending library schools or programs, as well as graduates of library schools or programs. There were opportunities for mingling, asking questions and sharing experiences. Sixteen library staff participated in a lively discussion of various library school programs. A variety of staff with diverse backgrounds and employment experiences attended. Many said they found the session useful and asked for similar additional events in the future.

Results

The Task Force on Library Staff Mentoring set up procedures to ensure that all components of the Library Staff Mentoring Program continued after the BILD grant project ended in June of 2008. The Task Force tracked and reported to the LAUC-B Executive Committee and the BILD grant committee, the number of participants, the lessons learned, and the general evaluation of the entire program, and made recommendations for future mentoring practices for each of the six components of the program. Based on comments and suggestions received from library staff members in response to all of the activities that were held in 2008, a need and desire exists for bringing staff together to learn and share career information on librarianship. Currently, the LAUC-B Committee on Diversity is continuing three out of the six components of the program, in partnership with other committees and task forces. No BILD grant funds were needed in the design, research and implementation for this program. Thus, all components can easily be maintained, as long as librarians and library staff are willing to participate.

The ultimate goal of the overall program was to set up a mentoring model for other campus communities. The inherent value of all six components of the Library Staff Mentoring Program is that they encouraged staff members to use one another as resources for learning. The success of this program has been attributed to a collaborative effort between mentors and mentees. The program has established supportive partnerships between staff and librarians, and it is our vision that it will continue to inspire both groups of participants.

LIBRARY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Introduction

The aim of the Library Fellowship Program is to encourage recent diverse graduates of library or information programs to apply for a two-year temporary, entry-level librarian position at UCB and gain valuable work experience within an academic library. The selected fellow would have an opportunity to work in a culturally diverse environment, learn about academic libraries, explore the latest developments in information technologies, and participate in a dynamic and challenging workplace. In turn, the contributions of the fellow would bring greater diversity to the UCB libraries and the library profession as a whole. The appointment of a fellow would also raise awareness of the campus libraries' partnership and proactive stance to support this program.

The UCB Library system has a continuing commitment to promote diversity and multicultural awareness in all areas of The Library. The purpose of the Library Fellowship Program is to increase the diversity of the librarian profession and to encourage the involvement and participation of under-represented librarians in academic research libraries. The program will accommodate both the professional interests of the fellow and the needs of The Library. Upon completion of the program, fellows will be eligible and encouraged to apply for available career positions in The Library system. Even if the fellow does not remain at UCB, the establishment of this program is a good way of letting people know that the system is open to diversity and that academic libraries are viable career paths for recent graduates.

In April of 2008, two members of the BILD grant committee held a telephone consultation with Detrice Bankhead, the Associate University Librarian of Administrative Services, at the UC Santa Barbara Library, regarding their Library Fellowship Program, which has been in place since 1985. After discussing the framework, components, and administrative process of their program and seeing how successful it has been, the committee was inspired to model the UCB program after theirs. The committee discussed the program's framework and components with UCB Assistant University Librarian Beth Dupuis, who helped to determine which unit heads and managers within The Library and Affiliated Libraries would be willing to participate and let their staff participate in the Fellowship Program. The committee also secured Library Administration's support and engagement for the program.

Fellowship Requirements

The first year of the program is envisioned to include exposure to the areas of instruction, reference and a specialized area of interest to the fellow, such as collection development, archival work or cataloguing. The fellow would have an opportunity to work alongside a librarian in the Teaching Library at UCB, which offers drop-in as well as scheduled class sessions on various library-related topics, such as how to search for articles and other information using the library catalogs and the web, how to use various types of literature databases, and how to use bibliographic management software. In addition to learning how to

prepare teaching material for courses, there would be opportunities for the fellow to observe other librarians teach, and learn about best practices and methods in teaching.

In the first year, the fellow would also have opportunities to staff the reference desk alongside a librarian and learn how to conduct reference interviews with patrons, as well as how to provide individualized assistance in finding a specific piece of information or locating specific items or materials on a topic in person. In addition, the fellow would learn about the various reference collections at UCB and observe how to provide guidance and recommend strategies for navigating the library web, online catalogs, electronic resources, print collections and the Internet. The fellow would also gain familiarity with an area of his/her own interest within The Library, such as cataloging or archival work. In the second year of the program, the fellow would work on campus at either a subject specialty library (if they have an interest in a certain subject area) or at an Affiliated Library, to gain broader experience within their specific interests.

Throughout the two-year appointment, the fellow would be required to attend professional meetings, serve on Library committees (including the LAUC-B Committee on Diversity) and participate as a member of the Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC), which includes all ten UC campuses. In addition, the fellow would receive funding for travel to professional conferences. Fellowship appointment would also include standard benefits, such as paid vacation, sick leave and holidays; and medical, dental, optical and life insurance coverage. Fellowship Program applicants must be recent graduates from a library school or information program and demonstrate an interest in and knowledge of academic librarianship and a strong desire for professional growth.

Fellowship Mentor

A library fellowship mentor would be assigned to guide the librarian throughout the appointment, providing advice, answering questions and helping to provide the best possible chance for a successful experience. In addition, the mentor's role would be distinct from that of the work site supervisor. It would be overarching and responsible for the fellow's entire two-year experience. Specific mentor duties would include: accompanying the fellow at LAUC-B Executive Committee meetings, which would be mandatory for the fellow; explaining meeting issues and providing background information; advising the fellow on upcoming conferences and possibly attending them with him/her; advising the fellow on possible committee assignments; holding regular meetings with the fellow, which could be lunches or coffee breaks; being available for questions and concerns as they arise; and as a past mentor, serving on future Library Fellowship Program search committees. The BILD grant committee agreed that the role of the mentor would be acknowledged as one that has a profound positive impact on the campus, in the library, and on the profession.

Results

Due to the nine month, academic year timeline of the BILD grant, which ended on June 30, 2008, the BILD grant committee was given an extension to November 1, 2008, in order to

fully expend the funding received (\$3,500.00). As there were no costs associated with program research or development of the Fellowship Program, the grant funds were put toward the content design and development of promotional materials. These included 5,000 six-page brochures, 3,000 postcards, and 200 posters advertising the program, and were printed in consultation with UCB Library Graphic Services and external vendor services. Information on these promotional materials described the fellowship, application process, and the requirements and benefits of the Fellowship.

Since the BILD funding criteria prohibited the application of grant funds toward the salary of the fellow, it was decided that The Library would pay for the fellowship position, provided that funds were available. Currently, UCB finds itself in an uncertain financial situation due to the instability of the State budget. In as much, the Library Fellowship Program has been placed on hold as of November of 2008. However, the promotional materials are ready to be sent out whenever the budget allows for the position to be opened. At that time, the brochures and postcards will be mailed to the Dean of every library school and information program in the country, so that they can forward these materials to their graduating students.

Conclusion

The progress that has been made in shaping the future of diversity on the UCB campus has been significant. The launching of the outreach, staff development and mentoring initiatives in an inclusionary process that exhibits participation by all 38 campus libraries, has been a positive step toward encouraging library staff and librarians to work together to build a strong environment that welcomes diversity. Our goal is to sustain both the Library Staff Mentoring Program and the Library Fellowship Program, although the latter is dependent on available funding each year.

What is needed in the future is a formal integration of these diversity initiatives into the fabric of The Library and Affiliated Libraries workplace cultures. One way that we can help see this integration through is by doing research and being observant, such as documenting diverse library employee reassignments, reclassifications or new appointments into different job fields in the libraries to find out what happened and where they went. UCB can also attract diverse graduating student library employees into the applicant pools for library positions, monitor the ongoing effect and influence of these initiatives on the diversity profile of the respective workforces of The Library and Affiliated Libraries, and benchmark our diversity profile against institutional profile benchmarks for academic libraries.

The University's goal is to recruit and retain a diverse workforce as a reflection of its commitment to maintain the excellence of UCB and to offer our students richly varied disciplines, perspectives and ways of knowing and learning. We hope this work will: influence employees in library staff positions who hold library degrees to be more proactive in applying for librarian positions, thus increasing the pool of qualified diverse applicants for librarian positions on campus; encourage non-academic library staff to explore enrollment in library school, thus influencing the pool of diverse applicants in library graduate programs with an eventual outcome of increasing the diverse pool of applicants for librarian positions on campus;

and bring together staff from various ranks from the many libraries across campus, which will create a sense of diversity and partnership in the library community.

The documented knowledge and experience gained from creating and implementing these programs is invaluable. We hope that by sharing our ideas and innovations, as well as our challenges, successes and setbacks, other librarians and information professionals will be inspired to follow in our footsteps to shape the future of diversity in their libraries.

EndNotes

1. ALA Office for Research and Statistics and ALA Office for Diversity. Diversity Counts. 1-39. 2007.
2. U.S.News & World Report, "Best Colleges: Racial Diversity: National Universities," *U.S.News & World Report*, 2009.

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Figure 1. Survey Response Rate By Job Title

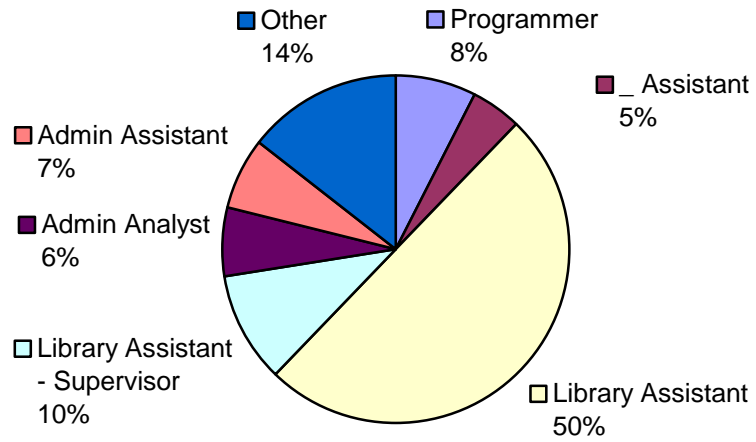


Figure 2. Survey Respondents' Length of Time in Position

