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The How and Why of Mentoring

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The How and Why of Mentoring

Cover Page Footnote

Acknowledgments This paper grew out of a panel proposed by co-author Tom Sommer; in spite of the panel not being accepted by SAA we felt that the topic of mentoring is an important one. We would like to thank a number of people who helped make this paper possible. Thanks to our reviewers. The Lincoln Memorial University internship program would not be possible without the support of Dr. Michael Toomey, Internship Coordinator; Dr. Thomas Mackie, Museum Director; Rhonda Armstrong, Library Director; and Steven Wilson, Museum Curator. Their support has allowed the internship program to grow and develop. Thanks to John Watts, UNLV Undergraduate Learning Librarian and Co-Chair of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee from 2014-2015, who provided the latest information and updated documents regarding the UNLV Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program as well as being a reviewer of this case study. Thanks to Samantha Godbey, UNLV Education Librarian and Co-Chair of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee from 2013-2015, who provided the latest information and updated documents regarding the UNLV Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program as well as being a reviewer of this case study. And thanks to Sue Wainscott, UNLV Librarian, who reviewed this case study. The section on mentoring on the national level was reviewed with the capable eyes and minds of Dr. Jamie Wagman, Professor of History and Gender and Women's Studies at St. Mary's College; Dr. April Lidinsky, Professor and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Indiana University South Bend; Elizabeth Williams, independent author, South Bend, Indiana; Nalani Stolz, sculptor, South Bend, Indiana. Also reviewing the section were the current Co-Chairs of the Society of American Archivists Mentoring Program: Kate Dundon, Archivist at University of California, Santa Cruz and Michael Zaidman, Senior Archival Administrator at the Jim Moran Foundation.

The How and Why of Mentoring

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring those in the archival field is critical to the development of any professional, or budding professional archivist. The mentoring relationship is one that has the potential to inform, nurture, encourage those on both sides of the relationship. This article explores that relationship and the frameworks that foster such mentoring programs. Discussed are mentoring to undergraduates, graduate archival program students, peer-to-peer mentoring of archivists at different institutions, as well as mentoring in the tenure process. This article is meant to be at once informative about such programs as well as offering guidance for those wanting to create a similar mentoring program or foster a mentoring relationship.

Archivists, like most technical professionals, must deal with a myriad of issues on a daily basis. They include meeting the demands of learning the latest in arrangement and description standards, new content management systems, administration issues, and in some cases, navigating the tenure process.

Archivists must collect, organize and provide access to the rich history of surrounding communities, institutions, organizations and governments. Similar to librarians, archivists are also in management positions. However, administrative duties such as managing students and volunteers, outreach/advocacy and donor paperwork require a completely separate set of skills and a different set of best practices than those used by our colleagues in the library field.

Mentoring is a philosophy built upon the idea of advising or passing along wisdom and knowledge to a younger, or lesser experienced, colleague in one's field. Library Science programs, and by extension Archive programs, do a good job of preparing students for the professional world. Yet there are many issues and skills that an education program cannot address, but which a Mentor can. In an ever-changing and demanding field like archiving, the Mentor-Protégé relationship has become increasingly important, yet it is not being used as widely or fully as it could be within the archival field.

When it comes to the mentoring relationship, only the barest guidelines exist. The relationship can be challenging. It requires a commitment on the part of the

Mentor and Protégé as the individuals involved must jointly determine the level of involvement. It is guided by the needs of the Protégé and the style of the Mentor. For the relationship to be successful, both parties need to effectively communicate their needs and ideas: the Mentor needs to be available and to feel comfortable offering unprompted advice and guidance; the Protégé needs to be able to articulate their needs and concerns. Through open dialogue, the Protégé and Mentor create parameters; to that end the Mentor and Protégé need to be honest about expectations and outcomes.

The lack of a mentoring system within our own field makes the goal of preserving history for future generations harder to achieve, as mentoring, through best practice information, helps ensure the most complete historical record. Mentoring, in and of itself, connects the past with the future. In addition, archivists also have the goal of attracting and keeping people in our field who are passionate about archiving. Mentoring helps to satisfy that goal by smoothing the road, while sharing the passion of historical preservation. Archivists have had an informal mentoring system for years. Every repository has its own legacy systems and unique approaches to archival problems, from which other archivists can borrow, and upon which they can build. We know that the greatest asset to any archivist is the archival community, and by sharing successes and failures, the whole community benefits.

Therefore, this case study will demonstrate how various organizations in the archival field recognized the need for a formal mentoring program, and how each organization implemented and continue to administer successful programs. Each of these programs not only met but exceeded their original goals, and through constant feedback and administrative oversight, continues to provide the tools and direction necessary for their new archivists to succeed in an ever-changing environment.

Our investigation of the archival mentoring relationship at the national, regional, and local levels revealed expected and unexpected corollaries. We discovered that the lack of codification has created a wide variety of methodologies, terminologies and goals. This diversity has positive and negative effects on the archival profession as a whole.

Nevertheless, through case study, literature review and general observation, we have attempted to collate the mentoring experience. And through that collation a uniquely archival mentoring theory emerges. Simply put, archival mentoring requires a guided but malleable approach. One that pulls from mentoring approaches used in the education, medical, and library fields, yet has been transformed to meet unique needs. These case studies can serve as examples for other archival institutions looking to create and administer their own mentoring programs.

Throughout this paper the authors return to the same issue: the lack of research and theory on mentoring in the archival world. There is a simple reason for this; almost no ink has been spilled on the subject. To highlight, let's turn to a review of Mentoring literature.

Literature Review

Our investigation revealed a resounding lack of substantive, theoretical literature on Archival Mentoring. Two primary factors contribute to this issue:

- The Archive profession is fairly young—especially when compared with organizations such as the American Library Association. There has not been enough time for an Archival Mentoring Theory to naturally emerge.
- Established and emerging archival theory focuses largely on the day-to-day aspects of archival work. Theories like MPLP revolutionized the way archivists process collections. Concepts like Mentoring take a back seat to the more practical aspects of what we do as archivists.

This is not to say that archivists are creating mentoring relationships in a vacuum. Archivists are nothing if not resourceful, and are creating mentoring relationships and programs that borrow ideas from outside the Archives field.

There is a substantial amount of literature about mentoring, but it is overwhelmingly geared towards the business or medical field. Academic mentoring has turned to the issues of inclusiveness, and how to mentor marginalized groups such as women, LGTBQ and African Americans. Much of current mentoring theory has used mentoring as leadership training.

One idea that intrigued us is the Reversal Theory of Mentoring. This theory is “a set of oppositions representing four pairs of opposing fundamental motives”.¹ It focuses on mentoring relationships that emphasize changeability over time, use concepts that have worked well in other settings, and raise issues for discussion and personal reflection.² The theory looks at mentoring in psychological terms.

Many archival mentoring programs use this theory without even realizing it. Case studies regularly depict Mentors concerned for their Protégées overall well-being, as exemplified by Janice Jipson and Nicholas Paley's comments about their mentoring relationship: “so, long before we thought of ourselves as co-mentors or collaborators, we were friends.”³ Personal anecdotes such as this can attest to the evolving nature of a mentoring relationship.

1. Michael Apter and Stephen Carter, “Mentoring and motivational versatility: an exploration of reversal theory,” *Career Development International* 7, no. 5 (2002): 292-295.
2. *Ibid.*, 292
3. Janice Jipson and Nicholas Paley, “Because No One Gets There Alone: Collaboration as Co-Mentoring,” *Theory into Practice* 39, no. 1 (2000): 36-42.

In contrast to the Reversal Theory is the Resource Team Model, put forth by Eileen Bosch, et al., which is “an innovative model of mentoring, coaching and training which includes a broader network of support for mentors and mentees”.⁴

Narrowing the search to library field literature yields a small, but promising, number of results, although none which speak to the unique world of Archives. One of the first things we noticed was that much of it is case study-based. Because there is so little formal guidance from professional organizations, people are teaching by example. Case studies have a great deal of value, offering specific examples of what works and what does not work that can help guide a new Mentor. Yet case studies cannot replace instructive texts; what works in a specific situation cannot consistently translate into a detailed guide for all situations.

Nevertheless, a great deal can be learned from general mentoring texts. New Library World regularly features case studies from a variety of points of view and institution types. These case studies highlight personal experiences in mentoring relationships and how those experiences did, or did not, work. But, again, case studies do not replace a codified theory of Mentoring.

Case studies such as the program discussed by Eileen K. Bosch, et al in their piece, “The Resource Team Model: An Innovative Mentoring Program for Academic Librarians”⁵ shows us that a well thought out mentoring program can be a success. Using a variety of methodologies borrowed from other fields, archivists can create a mentoring program that works for their repository. However, many of the case studies discussed a specific program in general terms such as how the work was received by participants and administrators, or how the program affected the Mentors and Protégées, but rarely addressed the specifics of how the program was actually set up, administered on a daily basis and kept relevant to changing needs.

Published literature concurs that mentoring is an important activity, benefiting both the Protégé and the Mentor. But there is very little guidance on how to make the relationship work. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) bookstore and the free publications section of the SAA website currently have no titles on the subject, as there are no books written specifically for archivists. The American Library Association bookstore offers four books on the subject but these are geared towards the library world (Bibliography, ALA Store Offerings).

A WorldCat search on the topic of mentoring and the mentoring relationship reveals that much of the current literature is geared towards the medical profession or the business world. However, there is a good selection of general mentoring books, such as *The Elements of Mentoring* by Johnson and Ridley. This book breaks

4. Eileen Bosch, Hema Ramachandran, Susan Luévano, and Eileen Wakiji, “The Resource Team Model: An Innovative Mentoring Program for Academic Librarians,” *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 16, no. 1 (2010): 57.

5. *Ibid.*, 57-74.

mentoring down into nineteen elements that seem almost overly simplistic such as “nurture creativity,” “provide correction,” and “display dependability”.⁶ Additionally, in the article “Mentoring, Socialization and the Mentor/Protégé Relationship”, author Steve Colwell looks at the differences between classical and instrumental mentoring using his personal experiences as examples.⁷

Most articles seem to have the same goal: explaining the Mentor-Protégé relationship to people new to the idea. But by virtue of being overly simplistic, these resources offer little help or guidance to the semi-experienced Mentor, and virtually no information on how to administer a mentoring program. Alternatively, the article “Mentoring in Organizations: A Social Judgment Perspective for Developing Tomorrow's Leaders” look at mentoring in the context of “complex social problem solving”.⁸ In this case, mentoring is less about guiding a student or new professional into the field and more about helping the Protégé move through the organization on an administrative/leadership track. Effective and conscientious leadership is critical to the success of a repository or institution, but it cannot be the sole focus of a mentoring relationship.

The literature review made it clear that most archivists are creating mentoring programs through a system of borrowed theories, personal experience, and ingenuity. Archivists borrow heavily from the related library and education fields to build a program that works for their institutions. However, case studies show one important constant: the archivists' commitment to sharing knowledge and wisdom with colleagues who need guidance.

Let us now turn to three different real-world examples of mentoring, within both formal and informal administrative contexts. On a national level, we will look at how the Society of American Archivists administers their mentoring program in order to meet the needs of its members. We will also look at mentoring as a professional/peer activity in a formalized local program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. And finally, we will look at mentoring archival students and new professionals in an informal regional setting at Lincoln Memorial University.

National Level Mentoring

The new archivist, floundering alone, can cause irreparable harm to priceless materials. A Mentor gives the new professional needed support to build the

6. Brad Johnson and Charles Ridley, *Elements of Mentoring* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 40.
7. Steve Colwell, “Mentoring, Socialization and the Mentor/Protégé Relationship,” *Teaching in Higher Education* 7, no. 7 (5332): 757.
8. John J. Sosik and David Lee, “Mentoring in Organizations: A Social Judgement Perspective for Developing Tomorrow's Leaders,” *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 8, no. 4 (2002): 17-32.

confidence required to do the work and to build their own repository of experience. The mentoring relationship enriches the experience of those training for the profession (e.g. archives program students), those completely fresh to the profession (new professionals), as well as those who have been in the profession for many years. The mentoring experience is one from which both the Protégé and Mentor can deeply benefit. As Sarah Long so eloquently states in her essay “Mentoring: A Personal Reflection”:

We are all guides to each other. Having a mentor gives us the opportunity to share in and learn from another person’s enthusiasm, knowledge and vision for our profession. Mentoring helps us to pass on those gifts of time and sharing that we have received from others. In the process, mentors find new insights, energy and inspiration.⁹

By serving as a Mentor, a practicing professional can connect with students, new professionals or peers to offer advice, counsel, answer questions and even just exchange news regarding what is going on in their respective shops. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) Mentoring Program allows connections and networking on several levels: the opportunity to Mentor undergraduates contemplating careers in archives, archives program students, new professionals and peer lone arranger archivists.

In this review of the SAA Mentoring Program we will highlight the following:

- Administrative set-up and oversight
- Mentor-Protégé identification
- Matching and problem solving
- Administrative review to increase effectiveness

Administrative Set-Up and Oversight

The SAA Mentoring Program has been in existence for over twenty years. Within the SAA hierarchy, the Program is administered by a subcommittee of the larger Membership Committee. Currently the Subcommittee is comprised of nine members in total, including its two Co-Chairs. The Membership Committee acts as a liaison between the Subcommittee and the greater SAA, as well as support and counsel to the Subcommittee. The Mentoring Program is open to SAA members of all sorts – students, practicing archivists, archival educators, SAA Fellows, those in related professions (perhaps most notably records managers), and retired archivists.

Mentor-Protégé Identification and Matching

The SAA Mentoring Program’s mission is to help create relationships between peers in the profession at different stages of their career, as well as between archival

9. Sarah Long, “Mentoring: A Personal Reflection,” *New Library World* 103, no. 3 (2002): 94-97.

program students and practicing professionals. As Melissa Johnson notes, professional organizations serve a key importance in enabling leadership.¹⁰ The SAA Mentoring Program also provides support to professionals who have experienced a major change, such as moving from a large organization to a lone arranger situation. These professionals are also encouraged to apply as Protégés. For the Mentor role, the Program draws on a group of professionals that is rich and varied in its experience, skillsets, and types of institutions.

To become either a Mentor or a Protégé in the Mentoring Program, one completes an application form that specifies one's characteristics as an applicant, such as geographic area, areas of interest within the profession, years in the profession, and SAA sections and roundtables of interest. Also, the applicant has the option of listing matching preferences regarding gender and/or geographic area. The mentoring relationship lasts for one year.

Matching and Problem Solving

Historically, the applicants who had expressed a matching preference of gender or geographic area caused truly challenging matches, and inadvertently caused a dual-tiered system. Some people were easily and quickly matched, Protégés to Mentors. However, several people who had made their wants more specific were waiting longer for that helpful connection to happen.

There were also problems with some regular matches; too many Protégés waiting—and in some cases, waiting for a long time—or matches with too few Mentors with which to match them. In retrospect, it made sense that there would be more archives program students, new professionals and lone arrangers waiting in the wings than seasoned professionals available to help. Therefore, the matching process has been a focus of the Program's Co-Chairs for the past four years, with the goal of having absolutely no Protégés waiting for a connection with Mentors.

But how to solve this problem? The leaders of the Mentoring Program, in the past three years, undertook a number of strategies to address this:

- Re-thinking the matching process itself
- Creating a survey to communicate with those who had served in the program
- Clarifying the Subcommittee's workflow in the matching process
- Expanding communication and the call for Mentors

The first strategy addressed was the matching process itself, with the goal of finding pairings that matched as closely as possible. The Subcommittee developed a

10. Melissa P. Johnston, "The Importance of Professional Organizations and Mentoring in Enabling Leadership," *Knowledge Quest* 41, no. 4 (March 2013): 34-39.

database to track matches, when matches were made and other pertinent information. The database became a tool, not just of record keeping, but also of tracking all matches by date.

The SAA Mentoring Program Subcommittee's members divided up the calendar year, with everyone choosing at least one month that is "theirs". Each month a Subcommittee member was assigned to keep track of and communicate with all new applicants, both Mentors and Protégés. The assigned member also tracked all lapsed Mentors and Protégés, contacting them to see how the match went and asking Mentors if they would be willing to continue serving as a Mentor. This activity achieved a good level of success in maintaining the number of greatly needed Mentors.

The Mentoring Program leaders found that it helped to be a bit more expansive in the way the Subcommittee viewed the matching process. For example, a prospective Protégé waiting for seven months, who had specified they only wanted to be matched with a female in the Boston area, would be asked if they'd be comfortable being matched with someone outside their originally specified geographic area. Usually, people assented particularly when the Subcommittee member was completely honest and for instance, told the prospective Protégé that there were no available female archivists in Boston with whom to be paired, but there might well be a female Mentor in Ohio who has just the expertise that that applicant is seeking.

The matching process was also redesigned to make it more communicative. The Subcommittee deliberated in vigorous email conversations as to how best serve potential Mentors and Protégés, and then worked together to agree on procedures. The Subcommittee also agreed that, when it was an individual's turn for matching duty, to weigh the particular specifications that an applicant had in their form against the real numbers of waiting applicants, and think creatively. The Mentoring Program's Co-Chairs worked with the Subcommittee in order to better communicate with the applicants and get them matched as best as possible.

By making matches using a more wide-ranging and inclusive process, the Subcommittee made record-breaking successful matches—some months, matching dozens of people and bringing the number of people waiting for matches down to zero or near zero. This was a real accomplishment in attaining the goal of having people find meaningful mentoring relationships that spoke to their profession, or their proposed profession.

The second strategy was to develop a survey that was distributed to those whose Mentor or Protégé role had recently lapsed (Appendix A). The goal was to collect feedback on the program and see if the Mentors were interested in being matched again. Using this survey, they found many professionals who would willingly serve again, but who simply had not been asked. They often felt the mentoring relationship was a personally beneficial one, and gladly signed up for another term. It boiled down to simply following up with people who had recently served and not being timid in asking them to serve again.

Another step taken was to ask Mentors if they would be willing to Mentor more than one Protégé at one time. Several, including the Co-Chairs, took this charge up, significantly reducing the Program's numbers of those waiting in the wings for a match.

Administrative Review to Increase Effectiveness

The Subcommittee developed an additional step in the Program's workflow; specifically a Mentoring Program member checked in on mentoring partnerships periodically to see if the connection was going well. This point of contact provided an opportunity for the Subcommittee to disseminate the survey and receive feedback on the Program. The Program sought to capitalize on the energy and mutual benefit that people on both sides of the mentoring partnership felt, as noted by Kern and Popp.¹¹

Additionally, the Subcommittee was able to analyze the less favorable anecdotal responses from the surveys and use them as discussion points—turned to action points—to better the Program's effectiveness and be more responsive to the participants' needs and wants.

A theme arose from the survey responses: some participants were interested in greater structure within the mentoring relationship. These respondents desired a set time to communicate with their Protégé or Mentor. Relatedly, some voiced the need to have a structure of just when to communicate with their Protégé or Mentor. These expressed needs and concerns helped steer the Program to be responsive to meet participants' interests. The Subcommittee developed and codified guidelines, and then incorporated them into the regular workflow for all Subcommittee members. All Subcommittee members, during their matching month, are required to read over and address each action item detailed in the SAA Mentoring Program End of Matching Month Checklist (Appendix B). The Subcommittee found that using the checklist helped to address other key points necessary to strengthening the Mentoring Program, including gaining a more representative numbers of active participants as a way for the Program to be more focused.

The Mentoring Program Co-Chairs also sought to clarify the workflow and tasks that the Subcommittee undertook in the matching process. When a Mentor and Protégé were matched, a cheery and welcoming message was sent out – albeit a form letter – to the entire Mentoring Subcommittee. This way the members of the Subcommittee were all literally “on the same page”, as well as the Protégé and Mentor being matched.

The SAA Mentoring Program Subcommittee also sought to expand its call for Mentors. This was a key part of the Program's comprehensive communication strategy. They used different tactics, such as regular calls out for Mentors on various

11. Kathleen Kern and Mary Pagliero Popp, "I'm a Chair, but I Feel Like a Folding Chair," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 5-8.

listservs, including the Society of American Archivists' Archives and Archivists Listserv as well as other related listservs across the profession and related "sister" professions. This won the Program many new applicants for Mentors. It also occasioned, of course, an increase in Protégé applicants. This was not a massive problem—but as stated, there are usually more Protégé applicants than Mentors.

In thinking through the process of growing the numbers of Mentors to Protégés, the Subcommittee targeted seasoned professionals and gained the help of Society of American Archivists staff to put a call out to SAA Fellows, some of the profession's brightest stars. This was a terrific strategy that garnered many new Mentors. The Subcommittee also reached out to the various SAA sections and roundtables for active members to serve as Mentors. The strategy was successful because it matched an unprecedented numbers of Mentors to Protégés of various levels, interests, and locations. It brought the Program from having many waiting to matching many happy professional pairs.

Last in the Mentoring Program's communication strategy was to overhaul the web content of the Mentoring Program. A Subcommittee member reworked the website in 2013, making it easier to navigate and more up to date. The website is often a prospective participant's first contact with the Program and so it was essential that the updated website be both representative and easy to use.

As of September 2015, the Mentoring Program has created seventy-four matches, with twelve additional Mentors waiting to participate. Many participants are still talking to each other, though the Program does not keep data on past active participants. In 2015, the Mentoring Program took the initiative to add the participants' phone numbers to the introduction form.

The Society of American Archivists Mentoring Program stands to strengthen ties amongst archivists of all stripes, as well as those interested in and aspiring to the profession. The Program is a key component of connection, encouragement, knowledge sharing, and networking for hundreds of archivists. The Program, in the coming years, will help to cultivate those passionate about the profession on many levels.

The SAA Mentoring Program has taken significant steps to help formalize and codify the professional mentoring relationship. By helping Mentors and Protégés find each other and suggesting parameters and expectations, SAA has taken on the "hard part" but the onus still rests with the Mentor. Marta Lee has created a comprehensive guide to mentoring in a library setting, addressing issues such as how "Mentoring impacts promotion/tenure",¹² "Mentoring new professionals",¹³ and "Mentoring electronically".¹⁴ Lee's approach to the mentoring relationship offers the reader

12. Marta Lee, *Mentoring in the Library: Building for the Future* (Chicago, IL: ALA Editions), 59.

13. *Ibid*, 43.

14. *Ibid*, 79.

choices, including examples of various types of forms and timelines. In Roma Harris' article "The Mentoring Trap", she points out that "Mentoring poses pitfalls not only for aspiring professionals but for their organizations".¹⁵ An overworked archivist may avoid becoming a Mentor for fear of upsetting administration or putting their own positions in jeopardy. Harris succinctly sums up many of the pitfalls of mentoring but offers few solutions beyond advocating for all library staff rather than a single Protégé. While this is a noble attitude, it offers no individualized guidance.

The SAA Mentoring Program gives local programs a framework to build on. But what works on the national level does not necessarily work on a local level. The SAA Mentoring Program is built on a traditional "hierarchical model in which a single mentor is assigned to a mentee".¹⁶ This is a model that works on a large scale with corresponding levels of support. National level programs are a critical component of archival mentoring theory but offer no guidance on how to create a local or regional version of the national program. Local archival mentoring programs tend to be based on pre-existing library mentoring programs that are severely altered to fit the archival model.

Local Level Mentoring

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program began in 2010. It began as a program to help candidates coming up for tenure. Participants were paired with a Mentor who had gone through the tenure process. However, not all Mentors had to be tenured in order to take part in this program. A Mentor could have a significant amount of professional experience in a particular area that would benefit a Protégé going through the tenure process (e.g., scholarship, service, or professional development). At the UNLV Libraries, Protégés are called Mentees.

In this review of the UNLV Faculty Mentoring Program, focus will be on the following:

- Program inception, structure and implementation
- Administrative review and modification
- Sister program and ongoing review

Program Inception, Structure and Implementation

The UNLV Faculty Mentoring Program started as a result of Dean Patricia Iannuzzi's request to better assist new faculty within the UNLV Libraries. At UNLV,

15. Roma Harris, "The Mentoring Trap," *Library Journal* 118, no.17 (1993): 37.

16. Eileen Bosch, et al., "The Resource Team Model," 58.

new librarians are at the rank of academic faculty and must go through the same tenure process as teaching faculty on the UNLV campus. It is a process that not only evaluates job performance, but also service and scholarship activities. Librarians who work in the UNLV Libraries' Special Collections perform archival work, but are classified as academic faculty. Therefore, there is a large portion of staff at UNLV Libraries that would benefit from an archival mentoring program.

Dean Iannuzzi suggested a mentoring program when the Chairs of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee met with her in 2010. To brainstorm new programs for the year, the Dean felt this particular committee was the perfect home for the development of a mentoring program. She explained her goals for such an important program at UNLV Libraries and charged the committee with creating it as soon as possible. In general, she felt a mentoring program would help new librarians while they navigate the tenure process at UNLV. Specifically, she wanted them to receive mentorship on scholarship and service.

The UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee Chairs went to work quickly, researching mentoring-related articles for the rest of the Committee to then read. This helped provide some history of what other institutions had done in terms of mentoring programs within an academic library context. The reading included "Communities of Practice at an Academic Library: A New Approach to Mentoring at the University of Idaho" by Kristen J. Henrich and Ramirose Attebury, which discussed the importance of the "peer mentoring model" and how places like Texas A&M University created an alternate form of mentoring for their junior faculty.¹⁷ These authors noted the related article "Academic Librarians and the Pursuit of Tenure" by Jeannie Miller and Candace Benefiel that stated, "the establishment of an informal tenure support group can provide an outlet for discussing common concerns and channeling the participants' energies toward finding effective solutions."¹⁸

Articles such as these helped to provide a mentorship model and basic guidelines for the Faculty Professional Development Committee. They decided that the model of one Mentor to one Mentee would work best at UNLV Libraries. Pairings would be based on similar interests and strengths, utilizing two pools of candidates – one of Mentors and one of Mentees. The Committee also developed five basic guidelines:

- The mentoring arrangement would last for one calendar year.
- Mentors and Mentees would be encouraged to meet within the first month of being paired.

17. Kristen J. Heirich and Ramirose Attebury, "Communities of Practice at an Academic Library: A New Approach to Mentoring at the University of Idaho," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 36, no. 2 (2010): 159.

18. Jeannie P. Miller and Candace R. Benefiel, "Academic Librarians and the Pursuit of Tenure: The Support Group as a Strategy for Success," *College & Research Libraries* 59, no. 3 (1998): 262.

- Additional meetings would take place at least once every two months.
- Information that was exchanged at these meetings would remain confidential.
- At the end of the year, the Mentors and Mentees could continue to work together.

The Faculty Professional Development Committee created separate questionnaires for the Mentors and the Mentees (Appendix C). The questions were developed with the idea of pairing the candidates together in a way that would provide the most benefits to the Mentee. Both forms include questions relating to helping a Mentee with scholarship (presentations, writing, and research methods), professional development (leadership skills, technology skills, and grant writing skills), service (committee assignments, professional association involvement, and campus involvement), and the mid-tenure/tenure process and related documentation (writing and reviewing). Once the questionnaires were filled out and turned into the Committee, the pairing of pool participants began.

Administrative Review and Modification

Later in 2010, the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee members determined that the Faculty Mentorship Program guidelines needed to be revised and clarified. The document was updated to state that issues concerning job performance would only be dealt with by the Mentee's supervisor. The guidelines, research articles, and questionnaires were all placed within the Committee's staff wiki page for easy access. The Chairs of the committee then began to promote this new program at monthly faculty meetings and through emails that included the supporting documents.

The application questionnaires were revised again in 2013 to include questions relating to "Adjusting to Las Vegas." It was determined that Mentees needed help in adjusting to their new community as well. The questionnaires would now include requests for receiving information on local attractions, restaurants and even outdoor activities to help Mentees adjust to their new community of Las Vegas.

Sister Program and Ongoing Review

In 2011, the President of UNLV created a campus-wide mentoring program for new academic faculty. Upon learning of the President's new program at a Campus Faculty Senate Meeting, Tom Sommer, Chair of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee, met with Dr. Marta Meana, administrator of the new campus-wide program, to discuss the Faculty Mentoring Program at UNLV Libraries. Specifically, Sommer explained the genesis of the Mentoring Program within the libraries and showed Meana the documentation that supported it, including the guidelines and questionnaires. This meeting informed the administrator as she created a campus-wide mentoring program for the new faculty at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

So how far has the UNLV Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program come since its infancy in 2010? In the inaugural year of the program, there were sixteen participants, resulting in eight pairings. In 2014, the Program had grown to twenty-eight participants, which resulted in fourteen pairings. 2014 had the largest Program turnout, which included both librarians and archivists who were going through the tenure process at UNLV Libraries. UNLV Libraries had recently hired a large group of academic librarians and the mentoring program was a great way to introduce them to the libraries.

In a conversation with co-author Tom Sommer, John Watts, the 2014-2015 Co-Chair of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee, stated that the needs of these new academic faculty members would be greater than the usual group who were looking for direction on activities like service and scholarship.¹⁹ This new group of librarians and archivists included managers who needed a specific type of mentoring and wanted to learn more about leadership from the established managers at UNLV Libraries. In response, they were paired up with Mentors who had more experience as managers.

In the fall of 2013, the committee created a best practices document (Appendix D) and sent it out in February 2014 in anticipation of a larger group of participants. It included a list of helpful activities for any UNLV Libraries faculty member who was paired up in the Mentoring program. It also included suggested readings which provide examples of successful mentoring programs for academic librarians from around the country. The best practices document was later added to a shared drive accessible to all UNLV Libraries staff.

Samantha Godbey, the 2013-2015 Co-Chair of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Professional Development Committee, stated in an email conversation with co-author Tom Sommer that the Committee created an assessment survey for the Mentoring Program in the summer of 2014.²⁰ It was a chance for the Committee to get a pulse on where it was and what needed to be updated to reflect the changing needs of its participants. Six questions were created for this survey, which range from what role did the participant play in the mentoring program to what kind of activities or topics were covered at the meetings between Mentors and Mentees.

A survey follow-up focus group was also implemented and included members of the 2014 Mentoring Program. It was an opportunity to receive further feedback from the program's participants. The 2015 group of participants includes nineteen members; mentors include managers and a Dean. It is now a successful mentorship program that has helped dozens of new librarians and archivists find their way to success in an ever-changing academic environment.

19. John Watts, interviewed by Tom Sommer, January 16, 2015.

20. Samantha Godbey, email message to Tom Sommer, March 13, 2015.

The UNLV Libraries Faculty Mentorship Program is an example of how a formalized mentoring program can be grown from an informal system to a fully developed and self-sustaining program. Now let's see how a small and isolated repository built and sustains a primarily virtual mentorship program.

Mentoring Graduate and Library Science Students

Whom we mentor is just as important as how we mentor. Students transitioning from one stage of education to the next have basic mentoring needs while needing general guidance. Examples include how to decide on and apply for a graduate program, how to craft a career plan, how to get their foot in the professional door, and time management. Given the variety of repositories and educational backgrounds in a small university, archivists have the ability to mentor students across disciplines. It's also a great opportunity to introduce graduate students to the idea of an archival track within a Library Science program. Even at the graduate level, most students have to curate their educational track.

In the following section we will discuss:

- Mentoring undergraduate and post-graduate students
- Mentoring new professionals

Mentoring Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Students

Students enrolled in Library Science programs have decided they want to go into the field, but they may not be sure of what subfield they wish to pursue. They need a substantial amount of guidance to build a solid foundation and graduate on solid footing. Yet, it is shocking how little basic information is imparted to students. Students often don't yet understand the difference between a curriculum vitae and a resume. They struggle with things like how to write a cover letter, how an academic interview works, or the realities of the current job market. They need to better understand how to advocate for themselves so they are better prepared for the current job market.

Interviewing for an academic archivist position is a long, exhausting, and daunting task. If students know what to expect and how to prepare, finding that first job is much easier. More importantly, by introducing the requirements for the archivist certification exam, administered by the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA), students are able to more quickly apply and will be better positioned to succeed. ALA-accredited Library Science programs do an excellent job of educating students in the theory and practices of the field, but it is impossible to create a program of study that encompasses every potential situation or scenario. The mentoring relationship can and should fill those gaps.

Depending on the Library Science program in which students are enrolled, they may or may not have the opportunity to take archiving courses. To ensure that all

Protégés at the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum (ALLM) are familiar with basic archival terms and concepts, the archivist has created a small set of readings that are sent to students as part of the initial communications which covers some of the basics of what an archivist is and what they do.

At Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) and the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum (ALLM), students have the opportunity to work with the university and museum archives staff from the first day they are on campus. This level of interaction fosters a unique environment to forge mentoring relationships very early in a student's academic career. It allows for long-term planning and gives students a stable source of support throughout their educational career. The majority of these students go on to become historians and history professors, and their early exposure to archivists and archives can only work in their favor.

In conjunction with the history department at LMU, the ALLM archivist created an archival internship program. A process was put into place to ensure that each student receives the same level of support. Whether a student signs up for a formal internship, or approaches archival staff for an informal mentoring relationship, they follow the same procedure. First, the student sets up an interview with a formal cover letter and resume. This allows staff to talk about what these documents are meant to do and to start a curriculum vitae. Each student receives a copy of a document created by the archivist that explains application documents and how to create them (Appendix E). Next, the archivist and the student discuss the student's career goals and how to achieve them. Regardless of their goals, the archivist also advises them on how to search for a graduate program or a job. The archivist and the student also discuss strategies and resources, as well as how to integrate these into their graduate or undergraduate program.

Equally important is helping Protégés build a solid foundation for their professional careers. Starting curriculum vita and resumes at the earliest stages helps students stay focused on their career path, while chronicling their early successes. While most Library Science students will not end up in the archives field, there is a lot of generalized help that an archivist can offer. Marta Lee's book, *Mentoring in the Library: Building for the Future*, is one of the few that addresses mentoring students in any meaningful way.²¹

A vast majority of the literature reviewed stresses that Mentors have personal experience from which to draw. Mentors have been through the post-high school system, taken certification exams, and applied for positions. This can be especially important in East Tennessee. The only university in an area where most residents have only a high school education, LMU is dedicated to giving Appalachian/disadvantaged students the opportunity to build a better life for themselves and their families. In their article, "Investing in the Future: The Importance of Faculty

21. Marta Lee, *Mentoring in the Library: Building for the Future* (Chicago, IL: ALA Editions, 2011), 35.

Mentoring in the Development of Students of Color in STEM”, Griffin, Perez, Holmes and Mayo discuss the results of their study and found that participants directly credit the Mentor-Protégé relationship for their success in STEM fields.²²

Mentoring New Professionals

To transition from student to professional is terrifying; a good Mentor can make that transition smoother and faster. Having someone with experience who can be called upon is not only sound mentoring, it elevates the profession as a whole. A new archivist, floundering alone, can cause irreparable harm. A Mentor gives the new professional confidence to do the work and build their own competencies in the archival field.

New professionals face a unique paradox: they need experience to get the position, but they can't get the position until they have experience. To expect a new professional to have the experience of a seasoned archivist is impossible but to become seasoned, a new professional needs to start somewhere. It is the job of the Mentor to help the Protégé gain confidence in their skills, point out resources, and offer guidance. Most of the new professional Protégés matched with the archivist at LMU are lone arrangers; the similarity in situations allows for the specialized support that they need. Issues like advocacy and how to deal with budget shortfalls work differently for lone arrangers with little or no support. Lone arrangers are often asked to take on many additional roles outside the archival scope. These Protégés need help with how to cope with taking on non-archival roles such as curator, administrator, teacher, and programming. A Mentor in a similar situation can offer insights others cannot. The SAA Mentoring Program facilitates the peer-to-peer mentoring, which takes much of the pressure off the Protégé.

Helping a Protégé create their own support structure is crucial to success. To that end, it is important to introduce Protégés to peers and steer them towards SAA roundtables and sections, as well as to regional groups such as the Midwestern Archives Conference (MAC). This helps them build professional relationships. As Lisa O'Connor notes, shadowing and observing in the corporate world helps new professionals get their bearings on how the institution operates and “get the lay of the land” while the unique support of another archivist is crucial.²³

The SAA Mentoring Program pairs Mentors and Protégés for one year but these relationships usually extend beyond the program. Every Protégé is different but generally after the initial year, the relationship begins to change from Mentor-Protégé to one of colleagues, and even friends. By the end of that year the Protégé is ready to

22. Kimberly Griffin, et al., “Investing in the Future: The Importance of Faculty Mentoring in the Development of Students of Color in STEM,” *New Directions for Institutional Research* 148, (Winter 2010): 95-103.

23. Lisa O'Connor and Emily R. Aldridge, “What They Didn't Tell Me in Library School is that My Colleagues Would be My Biggest Asset,” *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2012): 28-29.

become a Mentor themselves and continue the cycle of paying it forward and helping the next generation of archivists succeed.

Archival mentorship is a crucial, but often ignored. Part of an archivist's continuing education, Mentors support their Protégés through critical transitions such as starting a Master's program, becoming a new professional, and the tenure process. In turn, Protégés ensure that Mentors stay up to date on trends and changes in the profession.

Conclusion

When we started this paper, we approached the mentoring relationship from three different angles but found that in spite of the variances, we all have the same goal: creating a nurturing environment that allows Protégés to flourish. We looked at how mentoring happens at the national, localized, and lone arranger level, and found that the Mentor-Protégé relationship is drastically different depending on a number of factors.

The literature showed a great disparity in mentoring resources available specifically to archivists. Most of the literature about mentoring is geared towards business, medical fields, and education professions. The small number of library-focused resources are more helpful but still removed from the archival field. What is available are often case studies that may not translate to a specific repository or archivist. But archivists are resourceful, and hundreds of local programs have demonstrated that the mentoring relationship is not only feasible but sustainable in the long term.

Society of American Archivists has made great strides in the last few years to resolve many of the problems with its Mentoring Program, to the benefit of both Protégés and Mentors. The continued participation and growth of the Program proves its value. SAA continues to respond to the growing and changing needs of the archival community. The Mentoring Program's continued commitment to mentoring has a positive ripple effect that gives archivists the support to create their own mentoring relationships.

The UNLV Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program has been impactful for not only librarians, but archivists as well. The program at this particular institution is an example of how mentoring can be successful at the local level. It can be a template for other institutions who are considering a similar program to assist librarians and archivists on a range of topics, including mentoring librarians and archivists who are working towards tenure, providing access to campus and professional networks, and helping faculty adjust to a new city.

The relationship between an archivist who is either fresh to the profession or a peer with particular needs, such as a lone arranger, and a seasoned professional is an incredibly valuable one. It is one in which both sides benefit from on many levels. Knowing someone is there to support you, cheer for you or just bounce professional

ideas is immensely valuable. Developing these relationships is something that everyone—on both sides of the mentoring relationship—can benefit from in the archival field.

Appendix A: Society of American Archivists Mentoring Program Survey Report, 2013

The Mentoring Program of the Society of American Archivists sent out a survey to the SAA membership via the SAA listserv in April 2013. The survey includes nine questions in all:

1. Did you serve as a Mentor or as a Protégé?
2. How long have you, or did you participate, in the Mentoring Program? Which years have you participated in the Program? (approximately is alright)
3. What drew you to participate in the SAA Mentoring Program?
4. Was your application responded to in a timely fashion? Was your acknowledgement of the application answered in a timely fashion? Was a match made in a timely fashion?
5. Was your experience serving as a Mentor or as a Protégé a fulfilling one? Were your expectations fulfilled? Why or why not?
6. Did you encounter any obstacle(s) during your term serving as a Mentor or Protégé? If yes, what were they?
7. Do you think that you were matched with the right person? Why or why not? We want to hear your experiences!
8. Can you think of ways to improve the Mentoring Program experience for those who serve as Mentors or Protégés? Please feel free to give detail!
9. Optionally, feel free to add your contact information here if you would like us to include your comments in future SAA articles and promotion of the Mentoring Program.

Out of the respondents, 70.37% (19 individuals) were Mentors; 40.74% (11) were Protégés. The majority of the respondents participated in the program for more than one year; the average is two to three years. There were a couple of respondents who were very new to the program (one only a week old) while one respondent has served as a Mentor for seven years.

Reasons that drew participants to the Mentoring Program ranged from the idealistic to the pragmatic. The idealistic answers tended to come from those who served as Mentors, such as wanting to give back to the profession, receiving similar good help as they grew in the profession, and wanting to connect with new professionals. The pragmatic responses came from Protégés, such as wanting help with reviewing

and amending their curriculum vitae, getting guidance on education, being new to the profession, being the only archivist at their institution, and needing a sounding board. A whopping 96% of respondents felt that their application was responded to in a timely fashion by the SAA Mentoring Program, and a match subsequently filled.

As to whether or not the respondents felt that their experience serving as a Mentor or a Protégé was a fulfilling one, overwhelmingly the answer was yes from the 2013 set of respondents. Some of the responses were glowing, in fact. There were a few people who did not have such positive experiences—all due to lack of communication or response from either their Protégés or Mentors.

The obstacles that respondents found serving as a Mentor or a Protégé boiled down to lack of communication, distance from their match or lack of time to truly make a connection.

As to whether or not the respondents felt they were matched with the right person, again, the overwhelming answer was yes. Detailed no responses included comments that they had wanted to be paired with someone skillsets similar to themselves or in search of acquiring. There were a couple of lone arrangers at small colleges who were matched with academic archivists at large universities whose experiences, they felt, were dissimilar to theirs.

Participants did give some feedback as to ways to improve the Mentoring Program that were quite promising. Several suggested having a third party – meaning a Mentoring Program member – to check in on the partnership periodically to see if the connection was going well or in the case of a few, just to see if the connection was made. Another suggestion that came from more than one respondent was for the Mentoring Program to draw up guidelines (who, when, how often, etc.) so that both the Protégé and the Mentor knew what to expect from the program and from each other. Six respondents offered further comment and contact information to the Mentoring Program for both promotion and connecting purposes.

Submitted by Alison Stankrauff, SAA Mentoring Program Co-Chair—July 24, 2013.

Appendix B: SAA Mentoring Program End of the Month Checklist

Questions	Yes	No
Have all applicant been notified within 5 business days?		
Have all applicants been entered in the database?		
Have any special requests, notes, issues, or comments been received? Were the co-chairs notified (if applicable) and information entered in database under "Notes" field (if applicable)?		
Has a filter been done in the database for any soon-to-expire matches or those at the end of their term?		
Do any Mentors or Protégés at the end of their term need to be contacted and sent a survey? If so, when were surveys sent?		
Did any Mentors or Protégés near the end of their term receive a survey?		
Have any surveys been received? Has the receipt of the completed surveys been acknowledged?		
Did any Mentor or Protégé at the end of their term request to be signed up again for another match? If so, was another online application completed and/or a separate record created in the database to reflect this recommitment?		
Did any Mentor or Protégé at the end of their term request NOT to be signed up again for another match? If so, was this information entered in the database?		

Questions	Yes	No
Have there been any new matches made?		
Have the records of all mentors and protégés newly matched been updated in the database?		
Do any Mentor or Protégé applicants remain unmatched?		
Have any unmatched Mentor or Protégé applicants been contacted within 2 weeks after their application?		
Have any applicants been contacted to expand their geographical location or other match criteria? Has the day of contact and initials of sub-committee member initiating the contact been entered in the database?		
Were any responses received from applicants and/or newly matched Mentors or Protégés to emails sent by the sub-committee member on matching duty?		
If any responses were received (as mentioned above in the previous question), did any action have to be taken by the sub-committee member on duty and/or co-chair(s)?		
Has a filter been done in the database for expired matches in the previous month (or two months) through the final day of your matching month? If so, are there any Mentors or Protégés from an expired match that need to be contacted if they haven't already been (i.e. to complete survey, to sign up again, etc.)?		

Appendix C: University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries Questionnaire for Faculty Mentoring Program

Mentors

Please fill out the form below indicating your interests in ranked order so that we can match you up with an appropriate person as a mentee.

Name:

1. Which division/department are you in? _____
2. Please rank the categories you feel capable of providing guidance on (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.). Also, please check off the subcategories that are of particular interest or strength for you.

___ Scholarship

- Presentations
- Submitting proposals
- Research methods
- Writing
- Generating ideas
- Grant writing
- Other (please specify) _____

___ Professional Development

- Leadership skills
- Presentation skills
- Technology skills
- Networking skills
- Grant writing

- Other skills (please specify) _____

___ Service

- Committee assignments (local, regional, and national)
- Editorial board
- Professional association involvement
- Campus involvement (faculty senate, campus organizations, and committees)
- Other (please specify) _____

___ Mid-Tenure/Tenure Process and Documentation – writing and reviewing

___ Access to Campus and Professional Networks

- Introduction to chairs of various campus or professional associations committees
- Identify and introduce faculty with similar research interests within UNLV and other institutions

___ Adjusting to Las Vegas

- Restaurants
- Local attractions
- Outdoor activities
- Other _____

___ Other (please specify):

3. List your research interests: _____

If you have a particular person in mind, please provide his/her name:

Appendix D: Suggested Activities for UNLV Library Faculty Mentor/ Mentee Pairs

- Review Mentee questionnaire together to identify priorities for meetings
- Go to lunch
- Go for a walk
- Orient to campus as needed
- Orient to town, including location of businesses, shopping, schools, clubs/
organizations, parks, recreation, etc.
- Provide introduction/overview of Library and University governance and
committees
- Discuss local/regional meetings/conferences/workshops that might be of
interest
- Discuss community/social activities/events that may be of interest
- Assistance or guidance with joining a committee/roundtable/section
- Discuss how to identify venues for publication/presentation
- Assistance with portfolio/vitae - share vita with each other
- Assistance with research, writing and publishing (e.g., team up on a research
project together if appropriate)
- Assistance with presentations (e.g., review draft proposals, rehearse
presentation, share examples of work with one another)
- Assistance in selection of additional courses, degree-work, etc.
- Read and discuss articles on mentoring
- Adapted from Farmer, Stockham & Trussell (2009) and [http://selaonline.org/
membership/mentoring.htm](http://selaonline.org/membership/mentoring.htm)

Suggested Articles for Further Reading:

Bosch, Eileen, Hema Ramachandran, Susan Luévano, and Eileen Wakiji. "The Resource Team Model: An Innovative Mentoring Program for Academic Librarians." *New Review of Academic Librarianship* 16, no. 1 (2010): 57-74.

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Appendix E: Employment Documents Guide

When you start applying for jobs you are going to want to have four different documents ready to go.

1. Resume: A one-page summary of your skills/employment/education.
2. Curriculum Vitae (CV): A multiple-page document that details everything you have done.
3. References List: A separate document with your references and their contact information.
4. Cover Letter: a bullet-pointed letter that directly addressed the qualifications in the job posting.

Leave your mailing address off all of these documents.

You are going to want to post these online and it can be dangerous to have too much personal information accessible. Just include your phone number and email address.

Name the documents with your name and the title of the document (i.e.: Michelle Ganz Resume).

Don't use punctuation in the name; a lot of employers use online systems that don't like to upload documents that have dashes or periods. It's just easier to avoid them right out of the gate. You may also want to save them as PDFs to ensure that there aren't any formatting surprises on the viewer's end.

Look at your formatting to maximize the space on the page.

You can mix font sizes and use columns to do this. This is especially critical to the resume where you need to cram a lot onto a single page.

Avoid anything that's not immediately relevant to your academic career.

Any positions not on there are something that you can bring up during the interview process, if it is relevant (like if there's a management aspect).

The documents that all of you sent me can just be re-titled as your CV. You might want to consider rearranging the various sections so your experience and skills are at the beginning. You can also take your high school off; it's a given that you graduated from high school and it takes up a lot of space. Remember that you will continue to add to this document, and while your CV can be as long as it needs to be, you do want to keep it tight by removing things that are irrelevant or extraneous.

Potential employers ask for references at different stages in the process so you want it

as a separate document. You also want to order them with your most recent supervisor first and the oldest ones last. You want to keep your references up to date and relevant, so as you move through the field you are going to want to find one person who was your supervisor, one person who is an equal colleague, and one person you supervised. You also want to let your references know ahead of time that they will be contacted and send them a copy of the position description so they can speak directly to the skills required. If you think you'll be applying for lots of jobs you only want to let people know if they will actually be contacted. I am not 100% sure how the interview process works for museum folks, but for archivist/librarian positions there's a phone interview and then a 6-9 hour in-person interview. I would contact my references before the in-person but after the phone interview. If you're applying for an academic position the interview may or may not be an all-day affair.

The cover letter is your opportunity to directly address the job posting. You want a short paragraph stating the position you are applying for and where you learned about it. You then move to a bullet-pointed list where you address each specific point of the position description and in one line say how you fill that need. Then you close with a few sentences thanking the committee for considering your application and say that you hope to hear from them soon.

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