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PRACTICE ARTICLE

Building Relationships With the Library Publishing Coalition Peer Mentorship Program

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: In 2018, the Library Publishing Coalition (LPC) Professional Development Committee (PDC) created the Peer Mentorship Program as a way for library publishing practitioners to build professional relationships within the LPC community and support the development of professionals in the library publishing field. This program was created to help fill the gap in library publishing mentorship resources, in both programs and published literature.

Description of Program: The LPC Mentorship Program was created in 2018 as a traditional mentor/mentee mentorship relationship, but it has undergone iterations each year since, resulting in the current Peer Mentorship Program. Additionally, more structure and support for mentorship pairs have been developed and made available each year, thanks to helpful feedback from mid-year and end-of-year participant survey responses.

Next Steps: This article identifies ways in which further outreach should be conducted to diversify and expand participants of the Peer Mentorship Program, and also to help support the work needed to sustain a program like this. Finally, suggestions are made for further research and literature to be made available to support the growing need for mentorship in the library publishing field.

Keywords: mentorship, peer mentorship, library publishing, Library Publishing Coalition, LPC Peer Mentorship Program

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INTRODUCTION

The authors of this paper, who were closely involved in the creation of the program and its early sustaining efforts, offer the following case study for developing a community-facilitated, practice-focused mentorship program for peer professionals working in scholarly communication.

The Library Publishing Coalition (LPC) is a “community-led membership association of academic and research libraries and library consortia engaged in scholarly publishing” ([Library Publishing Coalition, 2022b](#), “Library Publishing Coalition Homepage”) that seeks to support the library publishing profession by providing professional development and networking in part through the various committees and task forces that it oversees. One of the committees supported by the community is the Professional Development Committee (PDC), which “bears primary responsibility for assessing professional development needs and planning and implementing professional development and training opportunities for LPC members” ([Library Publishing Coalition, 2022a](#), “Committees and Task Forces: Professional Development Committee”). The PDC conceived the Peer Mentorship Program ([Library Publishing Coalition, 2022c](#)) as a way for the LPC to support the acquisition of library publishing competencies by connecting members and suggesting how they might learn from one another.

As noted by Bonn et al. (2020), library school curricula often do not adequately prepare graduates for work in scholarly communication, and many of those skills are learned on the job. Specific competencies needed for library publishing include operational aspects of the publishing process, program development and management, and teaching/consulting ([LPC Professional Development Committee, 2020](#)). As the need for these competencies grows, so does the need for opportunities to learn from others in the field and for person-to-person connections. The LPC Peer Mentorship Program offers a model of how communities can come together to fill gaps in professional development needs for scholarly communication practitioners.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a wealth of literature on the broad subject of mentorship that offers best practices for establishing and nourishing mentorship relationships (e.g., [Allen & Eby, 2010](#); [Axelrod, 2019](#); [Fain & Zachary, 2020](#)). The focus tends to be on partnerships formed in educational and workplace settings and often frames mentorship as something that happens strictly between a mentor and mentee. Fain and Zachary (2020, p. 6) define mentoring as “a reciprocal learning relationship in which a mentor and mentee agree to a partnership where they work collaboratively toward achievement of mutually defined goals that will develop mentee’s

skills, abilities, knowledge, and or thinking.” While mentorship itself is often organic and informal, many resources suggest that greater structure and formalization of partnerships can lead to their success.

The literature provides many recent examples of mentorship programs within academic libraries. Commonly seen is the traditional mentee-to-mentor model with students, staff, and/or early-career librarians paired with more experienced library professionals. There are also less traditional peer and group mentorship models (Malecki & Bonanni, 2020; Rod-Welch & Weeg, 2022), which do not adhere to the strict mentor/mentee formula. Freedman (2021) highlighted myriad benefits to mentoring, including career-related advice and support, long-lasting professional relationships, role modeling, providing resources and opportunities, and psychosocial, cultural advice and support. Further, Goodset (2021) finds the following elements to be beneficial ingredients necessary for meaningful mentorship, on the part of both participants: commitment, trust, and respect. Challenges revealed included potential mismatching of mentoring pairs and non-inclusion of mentees in the mentorship partnership selection process (Adekoya & Fasae, 2021), as well as a lack of mentorship opportunities for mid-career and post-tenure librarians (Williams, 2019; Couture et al., 2020). Rod-Welch and Weeg (2022) call for attention to inclusion in mentoring and highlight work being done in that realm.

Interestingly, there is not much applicable research regarding formal or informal mentorship in library publishing, although there are some resources available for non-library publishing mentoring programs. In the planning stages of the LPC Peer Mentorship Program, the PDC reviewed the program documentation for the Society for Scholarly Publishing (SSP) Mentoring Program (2020) and the Association of University Presses (AUPresses) Mentoring Program (2022) for some helpful participant-facing logistics of publishing-focused mentoring programs, such as eligibility requirements and application processes. Also consulted were the EDUCAUSE (2022) Mentoring Program materials, which provided good information on mentoring from an information technology perspective. However, there was limited information on the background operations of these programs. The PDC adopted a “learn as you go” mentality in developing the LPC Peer Mentorship Program, and we are pleased to share what we have learned in this article.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Background/getting started

The LPC Peer Mentorship Program officially began in January 2019, inspired by discussions at the Membership Meeting of the 2018 LPC Forum held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The Forum is the annual conference hosted by the LPC, and its Membership Meeting is where

topics of interest are posed to the community as a whole for discussion. At the 2018 Forum Membership Meeting, members met together and discussed the current state of and future aspirations for the LPC.

One of the main threads that came from the table discussions across the room was a desire for more benchmarking, collaboration, and discussion among those in library publishing programs across the LPC. Participants valued that these community-focused activities were present at the LPC Forum, and a desire and need to add them to other areas of LPC came to the surface. Ally Laird attended this meeting, and her personal desire to connect and communicate with others coupled with this theme emerging from LPC members at the Forum began to solidify into an idea to form a mentorship program.

In 2018, Ally served as chair of the LPC PDC. She pitched the idea of a mentorship program to Melanie Schlosser, LPC's Community Facilitator. Melanie was supportive and felt the time might be right, so the plan was shared with the rest of the committee. Committee member Emily Howard immediately volunteered to help in the creation of the program and was instrumental in planning, organizing, and establishing the Pilot Year of the LPC Mentorship Program. Initially, the LPC Peer Mentorship Program was offered with a mentor-to-mentee focus, rather than as peer mentorship, and thus it was simply called the LPC Mentorship Program. Details about this initial framing and the reasons for transitioning to a peer mentorship model are shared in the following sections.

The whole PDC pulled together resources to draw from as the guidelines and policies for the pilot were drafted. Documents such as the aforementioned SSP Mentorship Program Handbook, AUPresses mentoring guidelines for members, the EDUCAUSE mentoring resources, and information about library mentoring from Florida State University were used as guides during the drafting process. From July to December 2018, the PDC established eligibility criteria and program goals, set guidelines, outlined mentorship activities, and developed a timeline for the program¹. To drum up interest and support for the program, the PDC held a community call in early January 2019 to introduce the program and answer questions in anticipation of the official launch in late January. The Pilot Year of the LPC Mentorship Program officially began in February 2019.

Pilot Year

The Pilot Year of the LPC Mentorship Program ran from February to December 2019. Participants were given the option to select whether they wished to serve as a mentor or as a mentee

¹ See LPC Mentorship Program webpage for more details: <https://librarypublishing.org/get-involved/lpc-mentorship-program>.

in the program. Not surprisingly, there were far more applications for mentees rather than for mentors; the rationale for starting the program was to allow LPC community members to learn from their peers, and so the desire for participants to learn and not be the ones imparting wisdom was apparent from the start. The initial cohort consisted of 13 individuals, with one individual serving as both a mentor and a mentee in two different pair groups, for a total of 7 pairs.

Only 10 applications were submitted initially, with one applicant offering to serve as a mentor, one applicant offering to serve as both a mentor and a mentee, and the rest of the applicants wishing to be mentees. With a larger number of mentees than mentors, recruiting was necessary to balance the potential pairs. Three long-standing members of the LPC community were invited to participate as mentors. During this recruitment process, many of the mentors agreed to participate but noted that they felt more comfortable learning from others than being considered an expert.

While the program did not have specific parameters for meetings, the PDC provided some suggestions in the initial email that went out to the mentorship pairs (for a version of the email, please see Appendix E). The email provided baseline suggestions such as recommending that pairs meet at least once per month, and encouraging pairs to establish what their relationship would look like in their first meeting and get a sense of what the mentee wished to learn to help direct their meetings and conversations over the next months. A brief set of “get to know you” question prompts were provided to the pairs, which can be found in Appendix A.

A little less than halfway through the year, the mentorship pairs were offered the opportunity to meet up in person at the 2019 LPC Forum in Vancouver, Canada. About half of the participants were able to attend in person, including only one complete mentorship pair. The other participants used the time to discuss with each other how the program was going for them, what topics they were discussing with their mentor or mentee in their meetings, and what challenges they faced or things they learned. The participants also went through some questions to guide their conversation at this meeting (see Appendix B), such as how their meetings were going, what they learned so far, and whether they wanted to provide feedback on the program.

In addition, all participants were asked to complete a virtual survey midway through the program (immediately following the Forum) to assess the program and provide feedback. At this point, the participants were told they could continue on in the mentorship relationship with their current partner or they could choose to stop meeting. In the Pilot Year, all of the participating pairs chose to continue their mentorship relationship.

In December 2019, participants were provided with the opportunity to participate in a virtual meeting to share their experiences with the larger LPC community. Attendees of this

community call posed excellent questions about the time commitment, the things that surprised the participants, and things they might either change or do differently next time. Many of the participants noted that the time commitment was far lower than they had anticipated and that they really enjoyed having time set aside to meet with someone who understands their work but is located outside of their organization. While this first community share-out was relatively small, it was a recruiting success; at least two individuals who attended became first-time participants in the program in the following year's mentorship program.

At the conclusion of the Pilot Year, participants were encouraged to continue meeting outside of the program, if mutually desired. However, participants could also reapply, receive a new match, and begin another mentorship relationship. Anecdotally, we heard that some pairs were planning to continue meeting, although no official follow-up data was collected on that topic.

Sustaining the program following the Pilot Year

After a successful Pilot Year, attention turned to program sustainability. The PDC wanted to ensure that the program could continue to be successful, and even improve, year after year. Given the fact that the program would be run by a rotating group of volunteers, the need to document an operational framework for future committee members to use was apparent. To be sure the program would continue, the first task was to establish the hand-off process from one program leadership group to the next. Service on the PDC is a two-year commitment, with a new chair serving in their second year. The PDC determined that each outgoing chair would hand off responsibility to the incoming chair to find committee members who would be willing to participate in managing the mentorship program. Ally handed the reins to Amanda Hurford in 2020, and Amanda handed them to Chelsea Johnston in 2021. Several other PDC members participated along the way.

In 2020, members of the PDC started documenting a calendar of activities (see Appendix C) and a collection of templates (see Appendices D and E) to support the sustainability of the program. The calendar documents all the major events and action items of the program and offers a timetable for their completion. Additionally, the tasks listed in the calendar link to a number of templates for communications, forms, and publicity materials. By reducing the overall capacity needed to plan and execute the activities, the step-by-step calendar contributes to the overall sustainability of the program and increases the likelihood that important tasks are not overlooked.

Shifting models in Year Two

Year Two of the LPC Mentorship Program saw a transition away from the Pilot Year's traditional mentor/mentee model to a new model in the LPC Peer Mentorship Program.

While the mentor/mentee model was appreciated by many of the Pilot Year participants, the PDC noted the difficulty of getting participants who self-identified as mentors. By moving to a peer mentorship model, the PDC hoped to receive more applications from the LPC community, broadening the audience of the program. Participants were still encouraged to discuss their respective goals and needs with their partner, reverting to a traditional mentor/mentee model if that would help them get what they needed out of the program. However, the decision to choose a formal mentorship model over a peer mentorship model was left to program participants and not facilitated by the PDC. Because the PDC was not involved in these decisions, formal data was not collected. See Appendix F for a sample application using the peer-to-peer model.

Year Two also saw the need for increased flexibility and understanding from program participants and the PDC, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As everyone adjusted to remote work, new safety precautions for on-site work, blurred lines between professional and personal lives, and stressful uncertainties about the health and well-being of ourselves and our communities, PDC members wondered whether the Peer Mentorship Program would continue to benefit participants or just become another task on an endless to-do list.

Once again, feedback from the mid-year and end-of-year surveys were critical in understanding what was working and what needed attention. Participants appreciated the opportunity to connect with each other, especially in a time characterized by lockdown and isolation. Participant Janet Swatscheno, University of Illinois at Chicago, commented,

I have found the peer mentorship calls to be especially useful during COVID, since it's been even more difficult to connect with colleagues in-person and through professional conferences.

Participant Sonya Betz, University of Alberta, said,

This year has been so challenging for us all, and it's been really helpful to have an empathetic and supportive colleague to connect with on a regular basis. Talking with my peer mentor about how we're each dealing with these incredibly difficult situations at our home institutions has been reassuring, not just because we are sharing knowledge and coping strategies, but knowing that someone else is up against the same obstacles I'm facing really helps me feel like we are tackling them together in some small way. Even if we work at different institutions in different countries!

The positive and thoughtful feedback inspired the PDC to continue building and formalizing the program.

Adding resources in Year Three

Year Three of the LPC Peer Mentorship Program continued with the peer mentorship model. However, inspired by feedback from the mid-year and end-of-year surveys, the PDC decided to add optional resources and program structure for participants. An optional orientation was added to formally kick off the program. The orientation included an introduction to the history of the program, the logistics of the program, different mentoring styles, and tips and tricks for successful mentoring. The orientation concluded with getting-to-know-you prompts and ample time for informal discussion to encourage a community-minded feel for the program cohort.

Also added were monthly prompts and resources for participants to guide discussions based on feedback from the mid-year and end-of-year surveys. Although not all participants used the prompts, the PDC received enthusiastic feedback from participants who did. Creating the monthly prompts and finding appropriate resources takes time, so future iterations of the program may choose to repeat prompts from previous years. Sample discussion prompts and the accompanying resources can be found in [Appendix G](#).

It is interesting to note that several participants in the program post-Pilot Year were repeat applicants, some electing to take a year off before participating again. This may be due to renewed interest in the program after the PDC implemented changes such as the shift to a peer model and the addition of support resources.

ASSESSMENT

The Pilot Year of the LPC Mentorship Program launched with one opportunity for formal assessment: the mid-year survey. In Year Two, an end-of-year survey was added to gather more feedback. The program currently operates with two surveys sent during the program year: one survey sent midway through the program (June) and another at the end of the program year (December). Feedback is also welcomed unofficially at any time to any member of the PDC, or to a Peer Mentorship Program leader if preferred. Either way, feedback is invited but not required.

Sample copies of surveys can be found in [Appendices H and I](#). The surveys were constructed to allow participants to reflect on their experiences individually and with their partners and provide the opportunity for participants to make suggestions to the PDC about potential improvements.

Each year, the PDC has made changes to the structure and operation of the Peer Mentorship Program based on participant feedback. These changes will be addressed in detail in the following sections.

1. The move from a traditional mentorship model to a peer mentorship model
2. The addition of optional program structure, resources, and support
3. The maintenance of optional program structure, resources, and support

This analysis section focuses on data collected during the years that the authors were leads for the Peer Mentorship Program (Years 1–3, 2019–2021). Program data is still collected by the PDC but was not analyzed in this article.

Survey results: Encouraging the move to a peer mentorship model

In the Pilot Year of the LPC Mentorship Program, survey responses were particularly critical in providing feedback to assess the new program in real time. There was one opportunity for formal assessment during the Pilot Year: the mid-year survey, which provided information on meeting frequency, level of satisfaction, suggestions for improvements, and the most beneficial part of the program.

It was during this formal mid-year survey, and through informal feedback at the LPC Forum, that it became evident that mentors especially viewed themselves as peers of their mentees. This was interesting feedback to consider, especially paired with the early troubles of finding participants who self-identified as mentors. However, positively, survey results also suggested that the assigned mentors felt that they were learning just as much from their partner as their mentee was learning from them. This feedback encouraged the program leads to shift the model from a traditional mentorship model to a peer mentorship model.

Survey results: Adding optional program structure and supports

Survey respondents frequently—and specifically—called out the desire for more program structure and support (see Figure 1). Ideas included enabling participants to set goals for themselves in the program, providing more resources for those new to formal mentorship, and providing opportunities for the full program cohort to meet and discuss their experiences and lessons learned.

Requests for additional structure and support were repeated in surveys in Year Two and Year Three. Ideas included the following: suggested monthly discussion topics, sharing rationale for why pairs were matched together to help inform discussions and shared goals, suggestions on how to continue the mentorship relationship after the conclusion of the formal program. These were added to program offerings as capacity allowed.

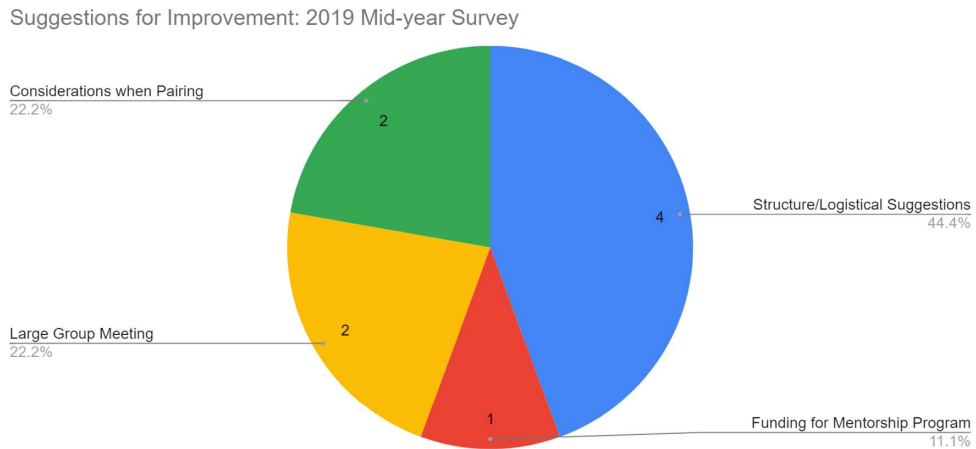


Figure 1. Responses to the suggestions for improvement question of the LPC Mentorship Program from the 2019 mid-year survey.

Survey results: Maintaining optional program structure and supports

Interestingly, participants’ attitudes each year have been split on the usefulness of the monthly discussion prompts and resources. Some respondents found the emails helpful in nurturing their mentoring relationships, whereas others found them interesting but not necessary. One respondent reported that they found the prompts more beneficial for their own personal consideration than for discussion with a partner. This feedback suggests that actively providing resources and structure for program participants is wonderful when possible, but it can be optional in years in which capacity to support is limited from the PDC and program leads. One option, explored in 2022 and 2023, is to reshare the resources developed in previous program years.

Low response rates

Response rates to the formal surveys are consistently low, as seen in the below table.

Year	Mid-Year Survey Responses	End-of-Year Survey Responses
Pilot Year/Year One (2019)	9 of 14 program participants	N/A
Year Two (2020)	9 of 16 program participants	6 of 16 program participants
Year Three (2021)	6 of 16 program participants	4 of 16 program participants

Table 1. Response rates to mid-year and end-of-year surveys (2019-2021).

Throughout the Peer Mentorship Program, survey responses have been voluntary. We suspect that this contributes to low response rates. While required responses would provide higher response rates and feedback that is decisively more reflective of the surveyed group, required responses would increase the workload of program participants. Because the Peer Mentorship Program is meant to be a supportive program for participants, and not a formal research project, program leads throughout the years have chosen to keep the surveys voluntary and settle for low response rates. It is assumed that no responses mean the program is going well, or well enough.

Final thoughts on assessment

These surveys are invaluable feedback tools that allow the PDC to create and maintain a sustainable and successful mentoring program. Hearing directly from participants, rather than trying to anticipate needs, allows program leads to make informed decisions to support each year's unique cohort. Direct feedback also helps to remind program leads of the reasons behind their work, providing welcome compensation for the emotional labor of supporting the program.

Here are a few quotes gathered from early participants:

Things are going well! Really nice to have time and energy dedicated to chatting with a peer who does not have the same institutional context as me. —Emma Molls, University of Minnesota

I really enjoyed serving as a mentor during this inaugural year of the LPC Mentorship Program. Benefits included expanding my professional network through forming a strong relationship with my mentee, broadening my expertise through learning about library publishing at his university, and the opportunity to contribute back to this wonderful community. All of these positives resulted from a minimal time commitment of about one hour per month to meet with my mentee, so future program participants can be confident that they will receive an outstanding payoff with nominal effort. —Jody Bailey, Emory University

Being quite new to library publishing, the LPC Mentorship Program was a fantastic way to get a personal & friendly introduction to the world of library publishing outside of my own institution. It was incredibly helpful to compare & contrast how location, institutional history, funding, and size of operation affects our daily workflows. My mentor was very generous, and I got access to some excellent resources to share with my team! —Emily Zheng, University of Alberta

LESSONS LEARNED

The first three years of the LPC Peer Mentorship Program brought forth successes, challenges, and areas for growth. With the experience these three years have provided, we have learned many lessons that are helpful for others looking to participate in or facilitate a mentorship program.

We learned that feedback from program participants is crucial in determining which program resources are essential. However, as we mentioned, the feedback solicited during these first three years was not required of participants, which led to an extraordinarily low response rate for all of our feedback surveys. This outcome highly impacted our analysis of the program, making it difficult to determine with certainty what portions of the program worked well and what areas needed growth. Because the program began without a research study in mind and the surveys were designed merely to receive feedback for our internal purposes, the majority of our results can only be offered as a case study for others to learn from because we did not have a representative response. Still, this feedback was key in helping us improve our program. Although not representative, we believe it is beneficial for other programs seeking to implement a mentorship program to consider.

Additionally, we learned that feedback from the committees and/or individuals leading the program is crucial in determining the capacity for providing program resources. Comparing feedback was essential as the program changed, helping to determine what resources were too much effort to be sustainable. It goes without saying that the program changed over time, but we realized that this was okay and, in many cases, desirable; the success of a growing mentorship program can be enhanced by adding, removing, or revising available resources as needs shift.

We also learned that maintaining a comprehensive mentorship program and community of practice takes a lot of work. It is important to consider who is doing this work and to determine strategies to make the work more sustainable. As the LPC Peer Mentorship Program has grown, it has needed an increase in support in order to sustain community needs. At the end of Year Three, the 2021–2022 PDC, LPC leadership, and previous Peer Mentorship Program leaders discussed moving management of the program to a new committee/task force that would be exclusively charged with managing the program. Plans to formally propose the relocation of the Peer Mentorship Program to its own committee moved ahead, and recruitment for the new group was included in the recent 2023–2024 call for volunteers for LPC committees.

As with any ongoing initiatives that involve changing leadership, clear instructions, documentation, templates, and calendars are crucial to ongoing success. Those resources take time and attention to create but are necessary to ensure organization and continuity for the program year in and year out. These resources also empower incoming program leaders to continue the program uninterrupted and at a consistent level of quality.

NEXT STEPS

Looking ahead to the future of the LPC Peer Mentorship Program, there are a number of plans and suggestions to encourage new growth. Of note, we hope to see the Peer Mentorship Program become more inclusive. One survey respondent commented that they appreciated having librarians from outside the U.S. in the program and suggested encouraging more participants from the Global South. Currently, the program is only open to individuals at LPC membership organizations, the majority of which are located in North America and Europe.

Making the program more inclusive could include opening up eligibility to individuals outside of the LPC, such as members of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Special Interest Group on Library Publishing. This expansive participation model could also mean broadening the program to include individuals who are members of an LPC affiliate organization, such as AUPresses, a group that the LPC already cross-pollinates², or anyone who meets LPC's membership criteria of considering or participating in library publishing activities. Of course, opening up the participation eligibility of this program would require careful consideration of the reasons and parameters behind opening up the program and establishing guidelines for who can participate. Library school students are another group that may benefit greatly from a mentorship program like this, and they should be considered.

Additionally, to make the program more inclusive, the PDC could focus on outreach to library publishers at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) or other institutions supporting historically marginalized groups. Outreach could also be done through the National Associations of Librarians of Color. Another way that the Peer Mentorship Program could be more inclusive is by encouraging participants to invite additional peers into their mentorship relationships if questions or situations arise in which the peer mentor does not have expertise. This could be done in the form of a “bring a colleague to lunch” meeting, or something more formal if necessary.

We must also acknowledge the emotional labor and supportive work required of the Peer Mentorship Program community to participate. Incentives and rewards for participation would be helpful to encourage more participation and support of this program. Acknowledgment for this work could include sending a formal letter at the conclusion of the program year, thanking participants for their service, which may be useful for annual evaluations or promotion and tenure efforts. Another consideration is to explore the possibility of providing a discount or even free registration for the annual LPC Forum to provide acknowledgment and thanks.

² The LPC and AUPresses participate in a program in which two individuals from each community receive complimentary registration for the other's annual conference after a competitive application process. For more information on AUPresses, see <https://aupresses.org/>.

Looking ahead, the LPC is focused on outreach to other collaborative communities that may benefit from establishing a mentorship program or simply learning about ours. Members from the PDC have already met with representatives from the Open Education Network (OEN) as they planned their Colleague Connector Program. That conversation helped the OEN finalize the structure of its program, and it also offered proof of concept that the Peer Mentorship Program is an adaptable model. We could expand this type of outreach and provide detailed results from our cohorts and provide other collaborative communities with the timelines, templates, and other resources within our toolkit.

With these next steps in mind, it would also be important to focus on more rigorous feedback and data collection mechanisms so that the impact of the program can be better assessed. Creating and circulating methods of feedback would be far more effective if an understanding of how they may be used for research is considered from the outset.

CONCLUSIONS

In the library publishing profession, many of the necessary skills are learned through hands-on work and peer networking. The LPC Peer Mentorship Program was created to support the acquisition and growth of these skills. The program has seen many iterations since its ideation in 2018, leading to a more formalized and structured program over time. Feedback from participants has shown that a program like this is desirable and important, and that peer mentorship within the library publishing community is valuable. Peer mentorship is the desired model for this sort of program given the desire for participants to learn from each other and the lack of participants who self-identify as mentors. Feedback has also been essential to establishing the sustainability of the Peer Mentorship Program; supporting an initiative like this takes work, so clear documentation, prepared email and communication templates, and a list of resources to reuse each year have been extremely helpful. There is also much work that can be done to recognize and value the work of individuals, such as the members of the PDC, to increase mentorship opportunities within the library publishing profession. We are hopeful that the experiences and information provided in this case study will contribute to the limited resources around mentorship, especially in the library and library publishing contexts, and will encourage future research and scholarship on this topic.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Getting-to-know-you Questions

- Talk about your background (personal or professional) and how you got to where you are today.
- Tell each other about your publishing programs.
- Tell your partner about at least one area in which you are really strong in your professional life. (We encourage the use of the StrengthsFinder assessment, if available at your institution).
- Tell your partner about at least one area where you would like to grow in your professional life.
- What is one specific goal you are hoping to achieve in the next year - either for yourself or for your publishing program?
- What would you like to gain from this mentor/mentee relationship?
- What are you reading right now? What is your favorite book?

APPENDIX B:
Lunch Conversation Suggestions (2019 Library Publishing Forum)

1. What session at the Forum are you most excited to attend?
2. How has this mentorship program been benefiting you (both mentors and mentees)?
3. What do you hope to dive into further in your mentorship relationship?
4. What have you been most excited to learn from your mentor?
5. What has your mentee taught you that has surprised you?

APPENDIX C: Sample Calendar

January: Review applications to make matches

February: Get organized - notify pairs, create email list, schedule orientation

March: Hold orientation meeting and start monthly prompts

May: Host a meet up

June: Send mid-year survey

July: Evaluate mid-year survey data to determine improvements

November: Start getting ready for next cohort: Draft a blog post, update webpage

December: Announce call for applications via blog post, email. Hold community call to encourage participation. Send end-of-year survey and review responses.

**APPENDIX D:
Call for Participants**

Dear LPC Community,

The [YEAR] LPC Peer Mentorship Program is wrapping up. This year, we were again reminded of how meaningful professional connections can help us get through challenging times. In a new post to the [LPC Blog](#), we've outlined how the [YEAR] cohort went and outlined plans for next year.

Interested in joining the [YEAR] LPC Peer Mentorship Program? Applications are open now through [DATE]. The application form is [HERE]. The Peer Mentorship Program is a fun and engaging way to enrich your experience in the LPC community, and it might just be the perfect addition to your professional development portfolio.

If you have any questions about the Peer Mentorship Program, contact [program leads]. You can also visit the [program page](#) for more information.

We hope you'll consider signing up for the Peer Mentorship Program in 2022!

[YOUR NAME], on behalf of the LPC Professional Development Committee

APPENDIX E: Notifying Pairs Email Template

Subject Line: Your LPC Mentorship Program Match

Dear NAME & NAME,

Thank you for applying to the [YEAR] Library Publishing Coalition Peer Mentorship Program. We have finished reviewing all applications and are pleased to introduce you to your match.

NAME, POSITION, SCHOOL, EMAIL

NAME, POSITION, SCHOOL, EMAIL

The Professional Development Committee thought you would be a particularly well-matched pair. [MORE ABOUT WHY THEY WERE MATCHED]

Here are some suggestions on how to get started:

- Share your CVs and/or connect on LinkedIn to learn more about your mentorship partner's education and work history. Professional backgrounds can be very illuminating, especially if one hasn't always worked in library publishing!
- Figure out a realistic meeting time/frequency. We find that once a month at the same designated day/time works best (ex: the first Thursday of every month at 11AM) while also being flexible about last-minute conflicts that may push your meeting to another time or day.
- Make note of what you hope to get out of your time together. Are you looking for professional guidance in a specific area? Or do you wish to network/connect with others in the field?

For your first meeting, you may want to consider the following discussion prompts to get to know each other.

- Talk about your background (personal or professional) and how you got to where you are today.
- Tell each other about your publishing programs.

- Tell your partner about at least one area in which you are really strong in your professional life. (We encourage the use of the [StrengthsFinder assessment](#), if available at your institution.)
- Tell your partner about at least one area where you would like to grow in your professional life.
- What is one specific goal you are hoping to achieve in the next year - either for yourself or for your publishing program?
- What would you like to gain from this mentoring relationship?
- What are you reading or listening to right now? What is your favorite book, movie, activity, etc.?

Soon, you'll be added to the Google Group for the 2022 Peer Mentorship Program, so be on the lookout for that notification. Stay tuned for more information on the activities of the program!

We hope you enjoy working together. Please let us know if we can do anything to assist!

Best,

[YOUR NAME] & the LPC Professional Development Committee

APPENDIX F: Sample Application

The LPC Professional Development Committee is excited to invite you to participate in the LPC Peer Mentorship Program. The goals for this program are twofold: to orient people to the LPC, encouraging them to build relationships and get involved; and to facilitate professional mentorship around library publishing.

Mentorship is a mutually respectful relationship where both participants have something to contribute. Peer participants will be matched based on their complementary goals, experience, and/or expertise. We hope to encourage collaboration between and growth of both participants.

The Peer Mentorship Program will formally run from February 2022 - December 2022, with mid-year and end-of-year check-ins where we will receive feedback from all participants. The program is open to all LPC member institutions, and welcomes both newcomers and those who have participated previously.

To participate in the Peer Mentorship Program, please fill out the form below by January 7, 2022. Share as much as you like - more details may help us make a more meaningful match!
NOTE: THE DEADLINE HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO JANUARY 21, 2022!

The LPC Professional Development Committee is committed to the success of the Program and its participants. If you have any questions, please email [program leads].

* Required

Name (first and last) *

Title and Institution *

Email *

How many years have you been working in library publishing? *

What is your professional background and/or areas of expertise? *

What areas would you like to learn more about, or grow in? *

What are you looking for in a mentor? What are you hoping to gain from your mentoring relationship? (Note that we'll do our best to pair appropriately, but pairings will depend on the pool of applicants we receive.) *

Do you have any comments or questions for the Professional Development Committee?

APPENDIX G: Sample Supplemental Resources and Discussion Prompts for Monthly Peer Mentor Discussion Prompts

Topic: Burnout

Prompts:

- Have you overcome feelings of burnout in the past? If so, what helped? What wasn't helpful?
- Feeling consistently powerless or out-of-control can amplify feelings of burnout or low morale. Can you identify one specific area of your work where this is an issue? What's one small way you can work towards getting more control?
- Even when things are overwhelming, we do great work. What's something that you've accomplished since your last peer mentor meeting that makes you proud? Share with your peer mentor.

Resources:

- Chatterjee, Rhitu, and Andee Tagle. "Burnout Isn't Just Exhaustion. Here's How To Deal With It," March 18, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/03/08/974787023/burnout-isnt-just-exhaustion-heres-how-to-deal-with-it>.
- Kaetrena Davis Kendrick publishes incredible work in this area, as related to librarianship. Some suggestions to start:
 - Kendrick, K.D. (2021). The public librarian low-morale experience: A qualitative study. *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 15(2): 1-32. Retrieved from <https://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/perj/article/view/5932>
 - Kendrick, K.D. & Damasco, I.T. (2019). Low morale in ethnic and racial minority academic librarians: An experiential study. *Library Trends*, 68(2): 174-212. Retrieved from <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/746745>
 - Kendrick, K.D. (2017). The low morale experience of academic librarians: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Library Administration*, 57(8): 846-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2017.1368325>

Topic: Outreach

Prompts:

- How does your library publishing program conduct outreach?
- What roles do marketing materials (like flyers, social media posts, branded swag, etc.) play in outreach? Have marketing materials been effective for you (pre-COVID and during COVID)?
- How is your publishing-related outreach coordinated with related programs in your library (e.g., scholarly communications, digital services, data management, etc.)?
- What's one recent example of a successful outreach initiative that you've supported or led?

Resources:

- Basic guide to engagement in scholarly communications:
<https://acrl.libguides.com/scholcomm/toolkit/engagementideas>.
- Article on how researchers can creatively disseminate their research (interesting perspectives from outside librarianship):
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1007704>.
- The *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* has tons of wonderful practice articles with specific case studies related to outreach strategies. Do a quick search for “outreach” and skim an article that speaks to you.

Topic: Assessment

Prompts:

Note: these prompts were borrowed from the Library Publishing Research Agenda's Research Questions.

- What does success look like in library publishing?
- How do we create publishing programs that can be meaningfully assessed?
- What assessment tools and techniques are currently in use by library publishers?
- Which tools and techniques could usefully be adopted or adapted for our field?

Resources:

Note: these resources were borrowed from the Library Publishing Research Agenda's Relevant Resources.

- Craigle, V., Herbert, J., Morrow, A., & Mower, A. (2013). The development of library-led publishing services at the University of Utah. In A. P. Brown (Ed.), *The library publishing toolkit* (pp. 63–77). IDS Project Press. <https://idsproject.org/press/LibraryPublishingToolkit.aspx>
- Davis-Kahl, S., & Seeborg, M. (2013, April 10–13). *Library publishing and undergraduate education: Strategies for collaboration* [Conference presentation]. ACRL 2013 Conference, Indianapolis, IN. http://works.bepress.com/stephanie_davis_kahl/38
- Hare, S. (2019). Library publishers as educators: Crafting curriculum for undergraduate research journals. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 7(1). <http://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.2296>
- LaRose, C., & Kahn, M. (2016, May 17–19). *Conducting a comprehensive survey of publishing activity at your institution* [Conference presentation]. 2016 Library Publishing Forum, Denton, TX. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/134688>
- Lippincott, S. K. (2017). Starting or growing a publishing program: Considerations and recommendations. In *Library as publisher: New models of scholarly communication for a new era* (pp. 20–46). ATG LLC (Media). <http://dx.doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9944345>
- McCready, K., & Molls, E. (2018). Developing a business plan for a library publishing program. *Publications*, 6(4), 42. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications6040042>
- Molls, E. (2019). Assessing the success of library published journals. *Against the Grain*, 31(4). <https://against-the-grain.com/2019/10/v314-assessing-the-success-of-library-published-journals/>
- Swoger, B. (2015, March 20). *Getting started in assessment for library publishing* [Conference presentation]. Publishing in Libraries Conference, Brockport, NY. <https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/pubinlib/2015/schedule/6/>
- Weiner, S. A., & Watkinson, C. (2014). What do students learn from participation in an undergraduate research journal? Results of an assessment. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 2(2), eP1125. <http://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1125>

**APPENDIX H:
Sample Mid-Year Survey**

The LPC Professional Development Committee values your participation in the Peer Mentorship Program, and we'd like to hear how it's going so far! Please respond to the below questions as candidly as you'd like. We are interested in your honest feedback. Your responses will not be shared with anyone aside from the Professional Development Committee. Please reach out to [program leads] if you have any questions.

* Required

Have you been able to successfully meet with your Peer Mentor on a regular basis? *

How often have you been meeting? For how long on average does each meeting last? *

Have you been satisfied with the Peer Mentorship Program, overall? *

Not Satisfied

1

2

3

4

Very Satisfied

Do you feel you had enough information and resources to begin this mentorship relationship? *

What could be improved about the Peer Mentorship Program? *

What has been most beneficial or important to you so far? *

Additional comments to share with the Professional Development Committee:

Do you wish to continue your relationship with your mentor for the rest of the year? *

Option to Discontinue Your Participation in the Peer Mentorship Program

Please provide a few comments, if you feel comfortable, about why you feel that your needs are not being met. We will reach out separately to follow up and provide necessary support. *

Additional comments to share with the Professional Development Committee:

**APPENDIX I:
Sample End-Of-Year Survey**

Thank you for participating in the LPC Peer Mentorship Program! We'd like to get a better sense of what you liked, didn't like, and what we can improve or change for next year's participants.

Please feel empowered to continue meeting with your mentorship partner for the remainder of the calendar year, or for as long as you feel comfortable, and please consider applying for a new partnership in the new year! We've sincerely appreciated your participation, and look forward to reading your comments.

Sincerely,

The LPC Professional Development Committee

* Required

How satisfied were you with the program OVERALL? *

Not satisfied at all

1

2

3

4

5

Very satisfied

How easy did you find maintaining your mentorship relationship? *

Very difficult

1

2

3

4

5

Very easy

Has anything changed since your mid-year check-in? Frequency of meetings, depth of relationship, etc? *

Yes (if so, please elaborate by filling out “Other” field below)

No, things stayed the same

Other:

Were there any pain points during your time in the Mentorship Program? If so, how can we improve or prevent this in future programs?

Was there anything you felt the Mentorship Program was missing, or something you wish had been included but wasn't?

Do you plan to do any of the following? Check all that apply.

Continue checking in/meeting with current partner informally

Sign up for a new partner next year

Other:

Please leave any additional feedback below, the more specific the better!