

# Mentoring in Academic Libraries: A Canadian Perspective

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*This study is an exploration of mentoring in Canadian Academic Libraries, from expectations of recent MLIS graduates to experiences of practicing librarians and the support provided by administration.*

## Types of mentoring

**Formal** – organized by administration, expected to participate

**Informal** – independently seek someone out with more experience

### A cross-country response:

Province	Librarians	Admin
British Columbia	✓	✓
Alberta	✓	✓
Manitoba	✓	✓
Saskatchewan	✓	✓
Ontario	✓	✓
Quebec	✓	✓
New Brunswick	✓	
Nova Scotia	✓	✓
Newfoundland and Labrador	✓	✓
Prince Edward Island	✓	
Yukon		
Nunavut		
Northwest Territories		

I do not view a mentor as an evaluator, but as a colleague...

### Who are potential mentors?

- ✓ Supervisor
- ✓ Faculty members within the institution
- ✓ Support staff from other units
- ✓ Colleague from same / different department
- ✓ Library Director or Head
- ✓ University Librarian or Dean
- ✓ Peers

### 1 Recent MLIS Graduates\*

- Seeking Academic Library position
  - Mentoring expectations
- \*in progress

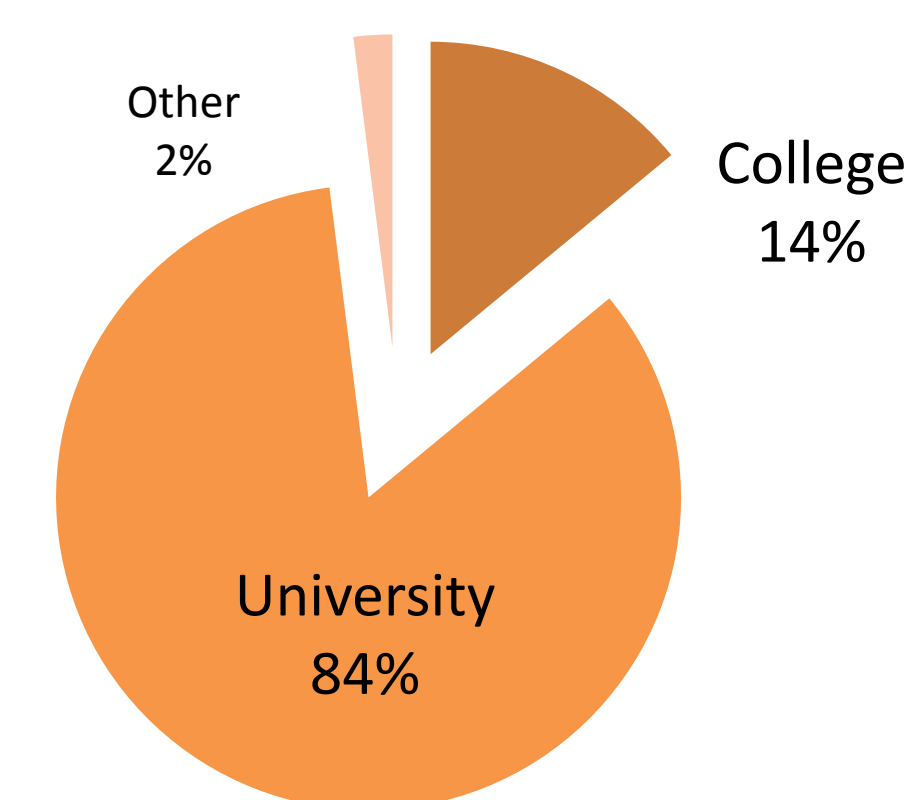
### 2 Academic Librarians

- Mentoring experiences
- Mentoring expectations
- Demographics

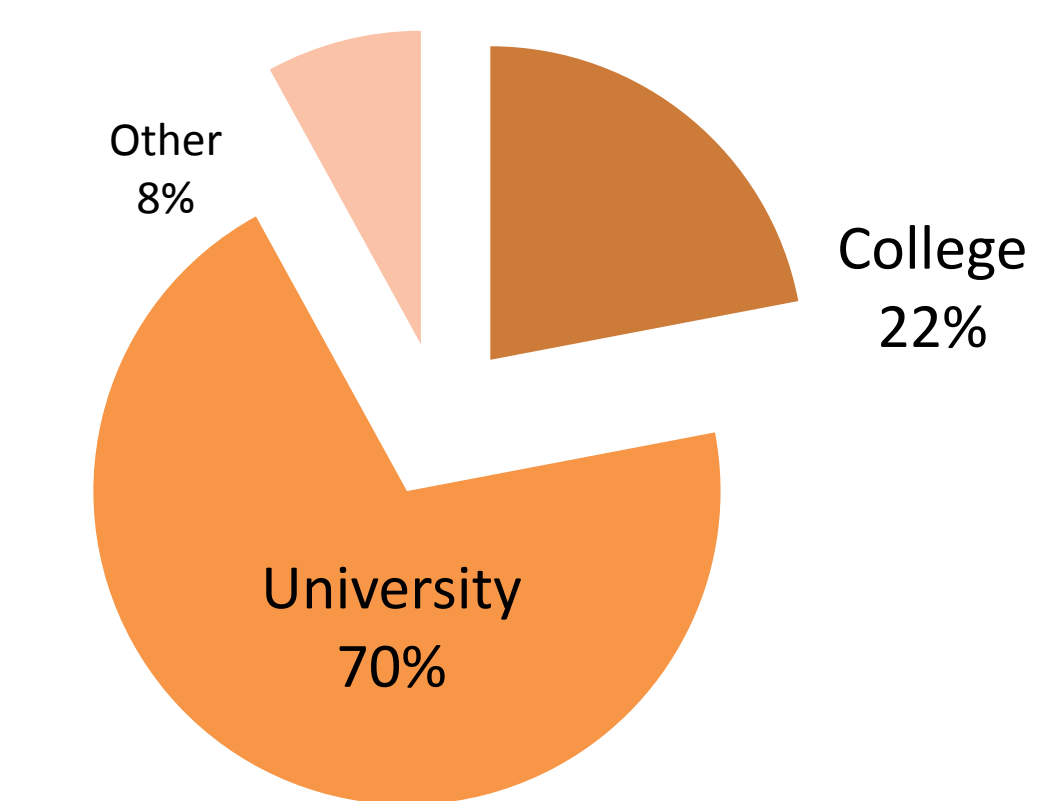
### 3 Academic Administration

- Mentoring experience, expectations...
- Institutional support
- Success / Costs / Risks

Academic Librarians N=329  
(25% response rate)



Academic Administration N=23  
(17% response rate)



### Preliminary findings

Does your academic library have a mentoring program?

- ✓ Librarians
  - No program 45%
  - Informal 36%
  - Formal 12%
  - Both 2%
  - Other 4%
- ✓ Administration
  - No program 71%
  - Informal 19%
  - Formal 10%

As a mentor, I learn as much as I give ... a fresh perspective from a younger colleague.

Are you a mentor within your institution?

- Librarians – 27%
- Administration 45%

Are you a mentor outside your institution?

- Librarians – 17%
- Administration 33%

When you began your career as a librarian were you mentored?

- Librarians – 33%
- Administration 29%

### Mentoring activities:

#### Role Model

- act as a professional role model
- share professional experiences
- keep communications confidential

#### Expertise / Experience

- help with orientation to library culture
- provide knowledge of a discipline or subject area
- act as a research resource
- assist with grant writing

#### Psychosocial Support

- show interest
- listen to my professional concerns
- provide encouragement
- provide candid feedback
- offer challenges
- share library gossip

#### Career Assistance

- advise on preparation of promotion and tenure materials
- open doors for opportunities
- help with setting professional goals
- assist with networking

...a mentor should provide real wisdom and insight regarding the organizational or professional culture.

Academic librarianship is not straightforward and a lot is expected of you. Any time devoted to the explanation of publishing expectations, special projects, promotion and tenure, is very welcome. It's a complicated world and often new academic librarians are left to figure it out alone.

I would want my mentor to share professional experiences ... and to help me reflect critically on my own goals, career choices, and practices.

### Future work:

- Complete survey distribution
- Investigate research questions:
  1. What are the mentoring expectations of new academic librarians?
  2. Has mentoring changed over time?
  3. Are current mentors those who expected mentoring when they were new to librarianship?
  4. Does a Collective Agreement affect mentoring programs?
  5. Does mentoring aid succession planning?