

# Mentoring Connections

By Tamarack Hockin, Anne Smith & Stephen Karr.

This year LTAIG piloted its new mentoring program for technicians and assistants. The program aims to connect those with more than five years experience in the field with recent graduates. The program advances LTAIG's mission to connect its membership in a meaningful context with a view to furthering the longevity of our professional association. The relationships created through mentoring show the importance of professional association, connecting us beyond our jobs and daily tasks.

## The Program so Far

The first intake of the program ran from June 1st to August 20th with four matches (8 participants). Mentors came from academic, public and special (corporate, government, and legal) libraries, and were matched with mentees primarily based on the type of library. One match of the four was a peer mentorship, pairing a recent graduate with a current library technician student at their alma mater.

The pilot provided an excellent opportunity to put the theory of the program into practice. Based on the positive feedback we received from participants, the first intake succeeded in providing meaningful connections within the profession. For the upcoming intake, we have slightly changed the application and matching process for what we hope will be a simpler and easier process.

The second intake has just begun, and will run until February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Further details and links to mentor and mentee application forms are on the website at [www.bcla.bc.ca/itaig/page/mentoring.aspx](http://www.bcla.bc.ca/itaig/page/mentoring.aspx)

## Why Are We Doing This?

By connecting library technicians and assistants with their colleagues in a non-workplace setting, we aim to provide a context for communication that might otherwise not take place. All participants have the opportunity to discuss issues related to the profession and their daily work with someone who is neither a coworker nor a boss. While there is a dynamic of

experienced (mentor) and inexperienced (mentee) in the relationship, mentorship benefits both participants in equal but different ways. While mentees might seek help with resumes and job searching, or gaining insight into their first job, mentors have an opportunity to reflect on their career and share tips and advice. Topics for discussion suggested by the mentoring committee include: Work/life balance, goal setting, further training, career aims, leadership, current library issues and trends, and building confidence.

At the end of the pilot, all participants reflected positively on their mentoring experience. Mentees commented that they had benefitted from their mentors' coaching, and mentors felt their coaching skills had improved.

## What's Next

The second intake of the program will run for 16 weeks from November 5th, 2010 to February 18th, 2011. Late applicants may submit their details and we will try to make matches as available. Links to the electronic mentor/mentee forms are on the website under "Program Details" ([www.bcla.bc.ca/itaig/page/mentoring.aspx](http://www.bcla.bc.ca/itaig/page/mentoring.aspx)).

In the meantime, the Mentoring Committee will work on a series of short mentor interviews for [Lib Tech Soup](#) (the LTAIG blog) to give a sample of what mentoring might look like. Check out the blog for more links to articles and helpful hints throughout the fall. Feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions at [itaig.mentoring@gmail.com](mailto:itaig.mentoring@gmail.com)

*The LTAIG Mentoring Committee also thanks Annie Jensen and the SLAIS Mentorship Program (BCLA/CLA Student Chapter) for helping us make use of Google docs' shared online spreadsheets for matching purposes.*

*Tamarack Hockin, Anne Smith & Stephen Karr are all part of LTAIG's Mentoring Committee.*