

# Connecting the library community: BCLA to launch mentorship program

By Amy Ashmore.

This spring, BCLA will launch an association-wide mentorship program, an expansion of the existing LTAIG mentorship program. This will be a combined program offering mentorship opportunities to BCLA members working as librarians, library technicians, library assistants, and other information-related professions, as well as library students. The program aims to connect library workers throughout British Columbia, building and strengthening relationships and discourse throughout the library community and our professional association.

## The program

The mentorship program will match experienced professionals (mentors) with those new to the field, new to the province, or those seeking to explore a different area of library work (mentees). Participants will be able to arrange meetings that suit their schedule, needs, and geographical location – while face to face meetings are encouraged, participants will also have the opportunity to connect by phone, Skype, and email. The program will have two intakes per year, and participants will be matched based on their interests and needs for a designated period of time.

## The value of mentorship

Participants in the mentorship program will have the opportunity to learn and gain feedback from their colleagues and explore different areas of library and

information related work. Mentorship can benefit both people involved in different but equally important ways. Mentees who are new to the profession or to their area of work can benefit from the experiences and knowledge of mentors who have spent several years working in their given field. They may wish to discuss interview and job search strategies, or explore ideas and issues related to a new job. Mentors have the opportunity to share advice and ideas, gain leadership skills, and pass their enthusiasm for their profession on to others. The hope is that this program will contribute to a culture of open dialogue, knowledge sharing, and support within our professional association and in the work that we do.

## What's next?

The first intake of the program will launch in May 2012. If you're headed to Richmond for the annual BCLA conference, a session on Speed Mentoring for Library Professionals will be offered as a means for participants to explore mentorship and what it involves. As the program moves forward, we hope that it will provide a valuable opportunity for BCLA members to connect, share, and become more involved in the library community.

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