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## **Here Comes the Future: Embedding Library Leaders of Tomorrow**

### **Proposal**

- Learning Outcome One      Gain insight into the benefits of embedding library science students within an academic library in order to create opportunities for the students' professional development.
- Learning Outcome Two      Consider the ways in which academic libraries can connect with current students in order to develop knowledgeable new librarians.
- Learning Outcome Three      Discover advantages to the library and its goals in order to influence colleagues' full participation in embedding library science students.

### **SHORT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Learn about an exciting program that embeds MLS students within an academic library, providing them with professional experience and mentoring by academic librarians. Through an IMLS grant, twenty MLS students were nurtured by current library managers and leaders. This program provides students with leadership experience and professional development, preparing them to take charge in the profession. Discover how to create a fellowship that embeds select library science students in your library.

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Current library science students have limited chances for professional development. They receive some experience through part time jobs, and practicums, but often are involved with the profession only at very basic levels. With a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to create academic library fellowships, twenty MLS students have had a unique and advantageous experience. This funding allowed them to be 'embedded' in academic libraries across four campuses. The students received detailed training in how library departments work together, and were mentored by deans and department heads, getting a close-up view of what it looks like to manage and lead a library.

Our session will discuss the benefits of this program to both the students and the libraries that sponsored them. We will share the progression of the students' experiences, from visiting

different departments and attending department, university, and consortium meetings, to working in specialized areas, drafting policies, and planning events. Throughout the two years each student is in the program, they attend professional conferences, including ALA and ACRL, and are mentored by leaders from each library. Additionally, by being embedded in a library without being restricted to one department, the student has unparalleled opportunities for networking.

The library also benefits from this partnership; the students contribute their newly learned skills to meeting the strategic goals of the libraries by completing special projects, relieving the work load of staff, helping the libraries to identify weaknesses, challenging the institutional cultures with curiosity and ambition, and dedicating their strong work ethics to improving library services.

These academic library fellowships are unique in that they span four campuses across the state, and meet twice a year to discuss experiences, allowing ideas to be generated as a group to adjust the program as necessary. In this way, the fellowships allow the students to mirror what they see in meetings at the libraries and conferences. The fellowships connect to a growing trend that seeks to expand the current training given to library science students and help them become invested early in their profession. It explores the ways library schools and libraries can connect and forge relationships that bring increased cooperation and prepare the next generation of library leaders. While this program received a high level of funding, embedding library science students is within the reach of any library, and our presentation is intended to inspire other librarians to implement their own programs.

The presentation will be given by the strongest advocates of the program: the students themselves. We will share our common experiences and the distinct ways each campus shaped the program to fit its strengths and needs. We will talk about what worked well and speed bumps and issues that arose in trying to work out a program that requires the contributions of so many people. Finally, we will share where some of the graduates of this program are now, and how it has contributed to our knowledge that we have a voice and a stake in the future of librarianship.