

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF RESIDENTS

A Blueprint for Starting a Multi-University Residency Program and Ensuring its Success

"The collaboration between the university libraries sought to place residents in each of the schools that would add to the diversity of each institution and were committed to a career in academic librarianship. While creating a residency program is nothing new and focusing on diversity is a popular topic in academic libraries, what was unique about the Diversity Alliance was that the four universities sought to work together and pool their resources to create a more engaging residency program."

—Michael Matos, American University

TIME REQUIREMENTS

About one calendar year from initial conversations to hiring residents. During that time, the deans/directors met periodically while the residency coordinators held monthly conference calls. Additionally, there were internal planning meetings held at each institution.

"My sense is we easily spent 100 hours conversing with each other."

—Leo Agnew, University of Iowa

"The Diversity [Alliance] coordinators—Leo, Lori, Charla, Michael—held conference calls at least monthly and sometimes more frequently. Emails also were frequent. The coordinators also met in person at ALA [mid-winter]."

—Lori Hostuttler, West Virginia University

COSTS

The costs included that of hiring one faculty member (optionally more) and the cost to host one institute (speakers, venues, and meals). Institute attendance costs were similar to those for attending a conference.

"Building and maintaining a cohort through the yearly Institutes is expensive. The general consensus is that the institutes have been a great success. The challenge we need to work on is how to make them more cost effective and scalable for more residents and more member universities."

—Michael Matos, American University

LABOR COMMITMENTS

Most of the labor was internal planning and decision-making similar to that required when creating any new position.

"UI had sponsored resident librarians in the past but we modified the program prior to hiring residents for the Alliance. For one, we extended the appointment from 2 to 3 years; for another, we decided to assign residents to a dept and set of duties for their 1st year to help them get settled in v. going through a rotation."

—Leo Agnew, University of Iowa

"[We] did some research on other institutions and what they were doing. We created a virtual space to work on what we wanted to accomplish, what criteria was necessary, and work out our approach for marketing the program."

—Charla Gilbert, Virginia Tech

METHODS USED TO BUILD A COHORT WITHIN THE DIVERSITY ALLIANCE

Developing a cohort has mainly been done through events like the institutes and monthly online meetings. These events have provided opportunities for the residents to socialize and learn about each other's interests. Cohort development has also led to opportunities for the residents to collaborate on joint projects.

"Institutes, webinars, etc. Getting you all to work on projects, like this poster!"

—Michael Matos, American University

"I was asked early on to create a set of online collaboration tools for the cohort and to ensure that the residents meet virtually each month to discuss our experiences and/or partner on projects."

—Anthony Wright de Hernandez, Virginia Tech

ASSESSMENT

Formal assessment has included some simple surveys and soliciting feedback from residents. A session was set aside at the second institute specifically to get feedback from the residents. Future plans include tracking the post-residency careers of the residents and obtaining additional direct feedback from the residents about their experiences.

"Simple surveys at this time, but we plan to track our residents throughout their careers."

—Michael Matos, American University

"From the beginning, I've had monthly meetings with the residency coordinator in order to provide feedback on my experience and on my interactions with the rest of my cohort and the logistics of working with a distributed cohort."

—Anthony Wright de Hernandez, Virginia Tech

BENEFITS OF A MULTI-UNIVERSITY RESIDENT PROGRAM

The benefits of joining a multi-university program include the creation of a peer-network for the residents, opportunities for collaboration on projects, and greater possibilities to provide professional development and networking opportunities. The residents have experienced these benefits and agree that they add value to the residency experience.

"The effort to build a cohort across the four universities is the benefit of the DA, which can serve as a sounding board or support group for each resident. ... I think [the residents] would agree that [they] have been able to meet and listen to very high-profile librarians, which might not have been available to [them] at a single institution residency program."

—Michael Matos, American University

"Working with a group of other residents has made the experience much easier. I can't imagine being the only resident at my institution and not having a network of other residents to consult. We are able to collaborate on projects; the institutes provide expanded opportunities for professional development and networking that would be missing otherwise; and opportunities created by one institution can be extended to include residents from nearby institutions."

—Anthony Wright de Hernandez, Virginia Tech

"Being in a cohort of other residents is a pretty special thing. Like, Anthony, I am the only resident at American University. Having discussions about our positions, careers, and our plans is helpful. We are able to learn from each other and offer advice and support. The institutes provide informative and helpful information about not only the librarianship field, but career paths and planning. Having a residency is the opportunity to spend your first couple of years as a librarian exploring the fields that librarianship has to offer. It provides more experience and a broader and diverse experience as a professional."

—Quetzalli Barrientos, American University

MEMBER LIBRARIES:

