Building Bridges: Mentoring in the Digital Age

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Introduction and Background

Jodi and Shannon are graduates of this leadership institute. Jodi is 2007 MILE graduate and was part of the 2009 planning committee. Shannon is a 2013 MILE graduate and will be part the 2015 planning committee.

MINNESOTA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The Minnesota Library Association Institute for Leadership Excellence (MILE) is held biennially and started in 2005. The past themes for the Institute have been to provide participants with the opportunity to:

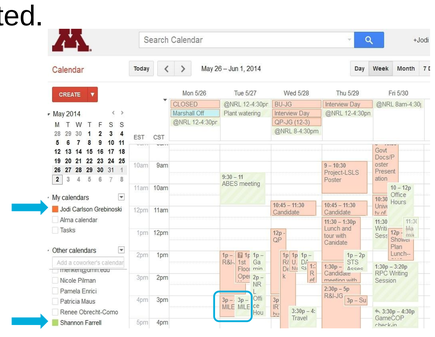
- Develop and refine skills necessary to be a leader in the libraries of tomorrow
- Develop and move forward on professional and personal goals
- Network and make connections with people in the broader community
- Reflect on the variety of leadership opportunities available at the local, regional, and state levels
- Meet and connect with your individually selected mentor from Minnesota's professional library community; you will work with this person for up to a year and a half following the Institute (http://www.mnlibraryassociation.org/MILE)

Mentee Experience

- Having a mentor helps me navigate the University of Minnesota library system (even though we are at different campuses). It has helped me learn about university and library governance, university committees, the merit review process, setting goals for the year, how to manage priorities to balance work/home life, how to spread time between numerous job duties (e.g. liaison role, service, and research).
- Having a mentor who has worked in the system/ profession/region a longer time than I have helps in that I am told about other opportunities that I normally wouldn't know about: for instance, this conference (LSLS)
- The mentor relationship opens up my networking network. I have met and been introduced to people I probably wouldn't have met in my regular work-life.
- The mentor relationship provides me with another perspective on what is "normal" for work. Much of our jobs (despite being very different) are very similar. Stresses and juggling varying priorities appears to happen in numerous environments. Having another librarian to talk to helps me manage this in a healthy way.

Mentor Experience

- Why mentor? It's good for you, the connection with a librarian at a different library and phase of career helps you look at your career projection. Mentoring is fun and it gives you renewed energy for your career as a librarian.
- New opportunities emerge, such as the poster session at LSLS and learning about other professional opportunities.
- Mentoring another librarian is a reciprocal relationship that is beneficial to both librarians.
- I like that I can be a sounding board for Shannon and that we can talk out issues and concerns. We have different viewpoints on librarianship and new perspectives are essential for librarians at any point in their career.
- Scheduling meetings can be via video chat, such as Google Hangout, FaceTime, Skype, etc. Also having some Face to Face meetings is beneficial for both librarians. Digital tools make scheduling straightforward; Shannon and I are able to share calendars and documents to keep connected.



Shannon L. Farrell

The Natural Resources Librarian at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and serves as the liaison to the departments of Entomology, Forest Resources, and Fisheries, Wildlife & Conservation Biology. She holds a BS in Ecology, Evolution and Behavior from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, an MS in Environmental Studies from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, and an MS in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to joining the University of Minnesota, she worked at Colorado State University in a tenure-track/faculty position as the Agricultural and Biological Sciences Librarian. (https://www.lib.umn.edu/about/staff/shannon-farrell)

Jodi Carlson Grebinoski

A Reference and Government Documents Librarian at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her work includes reference services, collection development for specific subject areas, Government Documents work, library instruction and participation in University Governance. Jodi has been at the Kathryn A. Martin Library since January 2004, but began her professional career in 1995. She has had been involved in Academic Professionals and Administrators (P&A) governance at the University of Minnesota since 2010 and is the co-chair of Professional Development and Recognition Subcommittee. (http://z.umn.edu/jodi)