Nurturing a Generation of Leaders: The College Library Directors’ Mentor Program

Larry Hardesty with Mignon Adams and Thomas G. Kirk Jr.

As we work harder to attract and retain the best people to professorial careers, we can no longer afford to ignore potential supports that can make a traditionally forbidding career seem more survivable.


Abstract: The College Library Directors’ Mentor Program has operated for more than 20 years, during which a substantial portion of the target audience of first-year library directors of small colleges has participated. Through this article, the authors identify the purpose of the program, describe its evolution and current status, and examine the nature of its achievement and reasons for its success. Finally, we offer recommendations and cautions as the program transitions to new leadership.

Introduction

Looking back, none of the participants in a mealtime conversation at the 1989 American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting had any idea that their discussions would result in the establishment of a program still operating more than a quarter century later. That program is the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program (CLDMP). More than 400 college library directors have participated since its inception in 1992. Those who have recently become first-year college library directors may know little about the program’s founding and evolution. These novice directors (the primary audience) may wonder why certain things are done or not done. Others may be interested in how to start similar programs for new directors of other types of libraries.

After 20 years of operation, the program has transitioned over a four-year period from the founders and longtime leaders into new leadership that includes an expanded...
governing board, new bylaws, and a name change to College Library Director Mentor Program. The authors of this article, former leaders of the program, believe this an appropriate juncture to recount the original purpose, history, and evolution of the program, and to offer recommendations and cautions regarding its future. We hope this will prove useful as the program evolves in serving directors at small college libraries and may perhaps aid others involved in the development of mentoring programs for those in professional careers.

Origins of the Program

In an earlier account of the program after its first five years, Larry Hardesty provided a detailed description of the early history of the program. He wrote then, “It is easy to forget all the discussions, hard work, and false starts that led to the current program.” One could say the same thing about taking a program to its 20th year and developing a successful transition to new leadership. Many people extended considerable effort to make it happen and make it continue to happen, and there are reasons the program has evolved to its current status.

The 1989 dinner participants had met to plan a panel on leadership in college libraries for presentation at the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) national conference. The conversation led to a consideration of our own preparation or, more aptly, our lack thereof for positions as college library directors. Participants identified at least two conditions underlying this lack of readiness. First, the position of associate director, helpful for preparing directors, seldom exists at small colleges. Instead, many college library directors advance from line librarian positions with little or no previous managerial or leadership experience. Second, to address the shortage of administrative experience among college librarians, colleges often hire department heads from libraries at larger institutions. These individuals, however, often lack familiarity with the traditions, norms, and political cultures of the small colleges that hire them.

Afterward, Jackie McCoy, one of the participants and then chair of the ACRL College Libraries Section, created an ad hoc College Library Leadership Committee with Hardesty as chair. Twenty years later, McCoy wrote, “I just felt some vehicle needed to be established to help the up and coming [librarians] in college libraries; a path that is more naturally apparent in the research libraries—more stepping stones for those folks and middle management opportunities.”

Another participant, Mignon Adams, recalled the influence on committee members of an article written anonymously by a library director who had been fired from an unnamed private college. The anonymous author identified some of the problems that led to his or her termination. They included: (1) lack of careful job selection; (2) poor or nonexistent management skills; (3) underestimating the importance of regional culture; and (4) failure to recognize the importance of the social history of the library. Among
other recommendations, the author urged the College Libraries Section to help college librarians improve their managerial skills.\textsuperscript{8}

A salient feature of the CLDMP that affected its direction and leadership is that it has never been an official ACRL program, for reasons covered by Hardesty in 1997.\textsuperscript{9} That is, the funding agency, the Council on Library Resources (CLR), now the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), would not support indirect or overhead expenses, while ALA required them. In a compromise, CLR awarded the grant to the institution where Hardesty served as director of library services (Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida), with that college assuming initial fiscal and administrative responsibility. Austin College in Sherman, Texas, assumed the same responsibility when Hardesty became library director there in 1995. Austin College remained in this role even after the second of the two CLR grants ended in 1996. Following the implementation grants, the program became entirely self-sufficient, continuing without official status at ACRL.\textsuperscript{10} Despite the funding challenges that prevented an official status with ACRL, the national organization supported creation and continuation of the program and provided in-kind support through the years.

### Components of the Program

From 1992 to 2004, Mignon Adams, Evan Farber, and Larry Hardesty (known as facilitators) led the program. During this time, the three major components of the program were established: (1) mentoring, including personal mentoring and interinstitutional visits; (2) an annual seminar; and (3) a private online discussion group. Hardesty matched the first-year directors with mentors, and he handled finances and most of the logistics for the annual seminars. Adams, due to her set of skills, led the seminars. Farber participated in seminars and provided sage and timely guidance from the perspective of a national leader among college librarians. He addressed mentor matches, seminar topics and formats, and related issues. Early on, a participant established the online discussion group, which will be discussed in more detail later.

### Mentor Matches

From the beginning, the program served first-year library directors at small colleges because their particular needs were not met elsewhere. Therefore, the leaders limited the participants to first-year library directors at institutions of fewer than 2,500 undergraduate students and with an emphasis on undergraduate education. The upper range of students increased slightly over the years.

A second criterion is that participants are college library directors in their first year. Initially this did not include individuals in interim positions, but over the years, the eligibility has been slightly modified. Eligibility also included people who may already have directed other types of institutions, such as public or community college libraries, given the different experiences involved at those institutions.
As the program evolved, the leaders found that a range of 12 to 16 matches each year seemed optimal for the dynamics of the seminar and for the time and energy of the leaders, who held full-time positions as college library directors. For the first 20 years, the average number matched each year was slightly fewer than 15, with a high of 19 and a low of 10.11

From the beginning, facilitators matched first-year directors with successful college library directors as mentors who would help the new appointees through the initial year. Help offered by the mentor ranged as widely as the needs of the first-year directors. Members were chosen for breadth of experience as a college library director rather than expertise in particular areas, such as buildings or upgrades of online public access catalogs (OPACs). Important criteria for the mentor involved good listening skills and encouraging the first-year director to define the relationship based on his or her needs. From the inauguration of the program, it emphasized pragmatic “survival” skills rather than management theory or leadership styles. New directors often confronted immediate challenges, such as a difficult staff member, faculty member, or administrator, or an inadequate budget (or all the aforementioned). Often the new directors felt alone, isolated, and ill-prepared to deal with these challenges.

In the brief guidance he gave the mentors, Hardesty cautioned them against telling new directors what they should do. Fortunately, many college library directors have the temperament to serve as good mentors and stepped forward to help their new colleagues. As Bob Kieft, then library director at Occidental College in Los Angeles, wrote in one of his mentor reports, “We librarians are culturally predisposed to, and many of us are even good at, helping each other solve practical problems.”12 Without the ability and willingness of the mentors, the program could not have continued at a high level of success.

Geography also proved an important consideration in making the matches. The program budget could not support the costs of long-distance travel. Despite intentions of the first-year director and mentor to meet regularly, face-to-face meetings declined considerably when driving time exceeded four hours. In the western United States, a few matches required air travel for the participants to meet, but these pairings were made selectively, particularly because travel costs expanded as a proportion of the costs of participating in the program. Hardesty also avoided matches in which the first-year director and mentor worked too close by to develop a confidential and comfortable relationship, such as when they might already meet regularly as members of a consortium negotiating contracts or of another group.
Seminars

The program held its first annual three-day seminar at Loyola University of New Orleans prior to the ALA National Conference in the summer of 1993. This seminar, scheduled with the beginning directors at the end of their one-year commitment, established a pattern of hosting by a smaller institution, allowing facilitators to draw upon the resources of the institution, including chief academic officers, classroom faculty members, and other institutional personnel.

With participation by Farber and Hardesty, Adams led the seminars on topics identified by the participants. Common topics included declining budgets, administration and faculty relationships, and staff motivation. The seminar, as with the entire program, supported directors confronting immediate problems in that initial year. While the directors began with an exercise on management styles and personalities, the seminar did not deal with particular management styles and philosophies, but rather with practical day-to-day concerns.

In addition, Adams established that the leaders serve as facilitators of discussion rather than presenters of information. While she, Farber, and Hardesty offered advice based on their experience, most often the first-year directors suggested ways to help one another. Many participants had considerable expertise both as librarians and in previous professions, thus bringing a wealth of insight and knowledge to seminar discussions, and enriching the mentoring relationship.

Online Discussion Group

In the second year, participant Karen Fischer, then the library director at the University of Minnesota, Morris, suggested and then created an online discussion group available only to participants and facilitators on the program. Over the years, the online group emerged as a third key component of the program where participants, including both mentors and first-year directors, could put forth questions and offer advice in confidence and with assurance that fellow participants understood their situation. Participants remain in the online group as long as they desire, so they represent a broad range of experiences as college library directors. In addition, the online group has undoubtedly created a stronger sense of community among college library directors; as of April 2016, it had 273 subscribers.

Midcourse Changes

In 2002, Farber, then in his late 70s, could no longer travel to the seminar. Hardesty and Adams invited Tom Kirk to join them in leading the program beginning with the 2002–2003 cohort. While in one sense Kirk replaced Farber, Kirk also brought his own strengths and perspectives, becoming more active in the planning and conducting of the seminar. For example, at each seminar Farber had conducted a bibliographic instruction...
interview with one or more classroom faculty members from the host institution, a strategy based on his experience at an earlier Eckerd College-Usa College Workshop. This represented Farber’s particular expertise. Kirk, however, expanded that session into a discussion with professors as to the role of the library and library instruction in their courses. This broadening facilitated a sharing of wider ideas about the role of the library in undergraduate education, as well as the professors’ individual courses.

In 2004, an operational change occurred when Hardesty became dean of the library at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He told Adams and Kirk that a state institution faced challenges in the fiscal administration of the program that private colleges did not. Together, Hardesty, Adams, and Kirk prepared incorporation papers and proposed a not-for-profit classification request for the state of Nebraska and the federal Internal Revenue Service with themselves as the first board of directors. In 2004, the CLDMP became a stand-alone, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization without direct association with an academic institution. At the same time, the informal ties with ACRL and the College Libraries Section further relaxed.

The leaders also modified the fee structure. Initially $750, the fees fell to $650 and then to $600 as the program became self-supporting and developed a sufficient reserve. The leaders further reduced the fees based on the financial resources of the participant’s institution. Payments could be as low as $300 for library directors at lesser-endowed small colleges.

New Leadership

Advisory Group

In the spring of 2008, with their retirements or pending retirements from their college library directorships, Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk formed an Advisory Group to assist in the transition to new leadership. Members of the group had participated in the program as first-year directors, and most had served later as mentors. They were familiar with the program, and all readily agreed. Janis Bandelin, director of libraries at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, provided a typical response when asked to serve on the Advisory Group: “The program was such a tremendous help to me and to so many others. So, if I can contribute something to its transition I would be so delighted.” At the same time, Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk committed to direct the program four more years to again a total of 20 years. Initially, the Advisory Group corresponded via e-mail, but they met face-to-face following the 2009 seminar in Denver and worked with the program leadership over the next three years.

IMLS Grant

Just as the CLDMP relied on grant funds to get started, so also it received grant funds to assist in the transition to new leadership. In the summer of 2009, Scottie Cochrane, a member of the Advisory Group, recommended the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program of the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as a possible source of funds to facilitate the transition. Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk submitted a proposal in December 2009, and in June 2010, the IMLS approved a $137,854 grant for three years, with several new conditions for program transition.
Review of Seminar and Program Evaluation Materials

Members of the 2010-2011 cohort would receive partial subsidy, understanding that they would participate in more extensive evaluation than had been conducted in the past. Irene Herold, then dean of the library at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire, and now at the University of Hawai‘i in Manoa, had interviewed the board and examined key program documents as part of her doctoral dissertation, so the leaders commissioned her to review previous seminars and program evaluation materials. Herold provided the program with two reports. Before the ALA Midwinter Meeting in January 2011, the Advisory Group, with IMLS grant support, met and discussed Herold’s report, as well as plans for focus groups and a request for proposal (RFP) to enhance the mentoring relationship.

Focus Groups

Adams, working through the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, identified Lauren Yourshaw, a recent graduate whose Blueberry marketing firm had conducted two focus groups for new directors and mentors just before the ACRL National Conference in Philadelphia in 2011. The following June, Yourshaw directed a webinar focus group, allowing participation by those who seldom attend national conferences.

Educational Materials for Mentors

Kirk wrote an RFP seeking a consultant to develop educational materials specifically aimed at mentoring in the CLDMP. Hardesty pointed out that, throughout the program, he had given only general directions to mentors (for example, be a good listener). Judging from reports from both mentors and the first-year directors, this approach seemed effective. Nevertheless, the mentoring portion remained the most uneven element of the program, in large part because of the array of personalities involved and the range of needs of the first-year directors. For example, some first-year directors reported they had greatly benefited from a high level of involvement from their mentors. When they later attempted to replicate the relationship as mentors themselves, however, they were sometimes disappointed when a first-year director did not want the same level of involvement with a mentor. Yourshaw also identified, through the focus groups, a need for better guidance for mentors.

Kirk distributed the RFP in early 2011. By its deadline, only two proposals had been received, and both exceeded the proposed budget. Part of the stipulated costs included in the responses was time to review the focus group interview results and to bring the consultants up to speed on mentoring. Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk decided it was unnecessary to pay someone else to replicate their efforts. They then rejected both proposals, and Kirk developed the educational materials in consultation with Adams and Hardesty. Kirk completed the materials by late summer 2011, and Hardesty distributed them to participants in the 2011–2012 cohort.
Search for a New Leader

In the spring of 2011, Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk began searching for new program leaders by posting a job advertisement on two e-mail lists (collib-l and newdirector-l) and on the ALA JobLIST. Approximately 20 individuals either inquired or provided completed applications, although several had questions and reservations about the potential responsibilities. In summer 2011, Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk conferred over the applications. All finalists were past participants in the program and well-known to the program leaders, so they did not conduct in-person interviews, saving considerable grant money for other purposes.

Initially Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk advertised for two or three people to take over the responsibilities of the program. After reviewing the applications, they decided to select one person as director, who would then transition into the program and select others as part of his or her team. In late July 2011, they announced to the e-mail list of new directors the selection of Irene Herold as program director. In addition to her analysis of the mentor program through her doctoral dissertation, Herold also had participated in the program during her first year as director at Daniel Webster College in Nashua, New Hampshire. By the 2012 seminar, Herold had selected her team of new leaders, and most attended the seminar as observers.

New Bylaws and Board of Directors

A major task during the spring of 2012 was writing corporation bylaws to reflect the roles of the new leadership and expanded board of directors. Hardesty, Adams, and Kirk wrote the new bylaws and had them reviewed by others. The three approved the bylaws in May 2012, in their capacity as the board of directors of the program. They also selected the members for the new, expanded board of directors and ended their own terms effective May 31, 2012. The new board members began their terms immediately thereafter in June.

Continuing Transition

The IMLS grant was scheduled to end in June 2013. However, since the leadership had been judicious in expending the funds (for example, not hiring a consultant to write the mentoring educational materials and not funding face-to-face interviews for program director candidates), the IMLS encouraged Adams, Hardesty, and Kirk to consider projects for one additional year. They chose to underwrite participation of first-year directors during the first two years under the new leadership. The IMLS grant support ended on June 30, 2014.

Before the IMLS grant ended, however, the program experienced its first test in transitioning to new leadership when Herold accepted a position as university librarian at the University of Hawai‘i and resigned as program director. While committed to the program, Herold resigned because of her concern that, as a director at a large university library, she would “rapidly get out-of-touch with folks in small college libraries, which will make the mentor matching more difficult.” Fortunately, several people volunteered...
to help. In late April 2013, the board approved the appointment as codirectors of Susan Barnes Whyte, library director at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, and Melissa Jadlos, library director at St. John Fisher College in Pittsford, New York. Barbara Burd, dean of library services at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, South Carolina, agreed to assist with the mentor/mentee program. Jill Gremmels, director of the library at Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina, agreed to assist with local arrangements. Herold agreed to act as consultant to the new leadership for one year. Whyte and Jadlos remain as coleaders at the time of this writing. Bob Fleming, executive director of the Emerson College Library in Boston, administers the online discussion group and helps to lead the seminar, and Gremmels continues to assist with the program.

Impact of the Program

Quantitative data indicate that the program has had a considerable impact on college library directors. During its first two decades, 295 first-year college library directors were matched with 151 mentors; 379 individuals participated in the program either as first-year directors, as mentors, or in both roles. In total, the first-year directors represented 242 small colleges from 43 states and Canada. Under the new leadership, the number of participating first-year college directors has moved well above 300. Therefore, to date, the new directors embody more than a third of the approximately 750 small colleges and universities with primary undergraduate programs—the first-year library directors of which are the target audience the program.

Other aspects of the program’s impact are harder to quantify because the program does not lend itself to such research methodologies as pretests and posttests or control groups. Nevertheless, the seminars, participants’ annual reports, and other sources have yielded a wealth of anecdotal and other qualitative information regarding the positive impact of the program. Each seminar is evaluated at its conclusion by the participants, who are consistently and almost universally positive, with occasional suggestions for modest improvements. The only recurring critique was that certain topics were not covered, although participants seldom considered any topic covered as unimportant. They also expressed no strong sentiment for either a longer or shorter seminar.

Participants responded with more variation about the nature and quality of the mentoring than about the seminar. As mentioned earlier, this could result from the many different personalities and needs of the mentors and mentees. Nevertheless, according to the reports of the participants, an overwhelming majority of the matches worked effectively.

Has every match been highly productive? The answer is “no.” Some first-year directors take more advantage of the program than others. Some may feel more need for mentoring than others. Some mentors may be more comfortable and helpful in their roles than others. While occasional telephone calls helped to nudge meetings and address issues, ultimately the program leaders relied on the good judgment of both parties as to what worked and did not work between the two of them. Over the years, the first-year directors have written in seminar evaluations, reports, e-mails, and letters literally hundreds of versions of the following comments:
My mentor’s visit was in March… She came prepared! My mentor has been a wonderful mentor with a wealth of knowledge that she has willingly shared with me. We have emailed since the visit and she never hesitates to answer. I feel comfortable asking her for advice. I hope that we continue our communication.

Nothing can replace the one-on-one exchange and guidance I gained through my conversations with my mentor.

Time after time, my mentor’s expert advice helped me tackle many of the unfamiliar decisions and situations that one finds as a first-year director.

The mentoring program exceeded my expectations.

The first-year directors have made numerous similar comments about other aspects of the program. For example:

Over the subsequent years my engagement with the program strengthened, because I found the New Directors listserv and the relationships I formed with new and later not-so-new directors to be invaluable to me in my evolving role as a library leader.

[It] gave me the tools to weave an ongoing web of supportive friends who fundamentally sought what I did—advice toward common questions and concerns.

The new directors’ listserv is also a wonderful tool to share questions and receive quick and accurate feedback.

I was able to connect to peers across the country, receive good counsel from highly respected librarians, and discuss concerns and issues in a supportive environment.

I transitioned from being a library professional to a library director because of the membership of this program.

Time and time again, new directors reported that the program helped them overcome a sense of isolation and aided them in building professional confidence. Some would even say, “It helped me to survive my first year.”

In many respects, the full influence of the program remains intangible. A number of current and past leaders of ACRL, especially those in the College Libraries Section, have participated. Whether or not the program directly contributed to their success is an open question, but many give it extensive credit as demonstrated by the following comments:
I looked at the list of library directors who have gone through this program [and] I was struck by the number of people who are not only leaders on their campuses now but also leaders in our profession.

I believe that these networking, collaborative, and professional development opportunities [made possible by the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program] played a significant role in my recent election to the Board of Directors of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

By enhancing the leadership capabilities of new college library directors, this program in essence touches the lives and helps ensure the success of the thousands upon thousands of students who attend the institutions these directors represent. At the same time, mentors often said that they, too, benefited from the program. Frequently, mentors reported reconsidering their library’s policies and procedures when questioned as to their rationales by first-year directors.

One more measure of the benefits of the program has been the willingness of past participants to step up to become Advisory Group members, members of the board of directors, and program leaders. They came forward to ensure the CLDMP would continue after the retirement of the original leaders. Perhaps most telling is that many first-year directors participate because past participants who have brought the program to their attention encouraged them to take part. Almost 20 years after their initial participation, some college library directors continue to offer unsolicited testimonials as to the benefits of the program. The new board of directors contracted with Gene Spencer, a previous participant in the program, to conduct an extensive evaluation. He began work in 2013 and finished his 70-plus page review and recommendations in late June 2014. While Spencer developed a set of recommendations for the board of directors, he also concluded, “It is certainly possible for the program to continue . . . without making a single change. The program works (PERIOD).” Spencer found that his review has revealed two fundamental truths: (1) The program is a wonderful resource for the vast majority of its participants; and (2) There is no shortage of excellent ideas about ways to enhance it.

The authors agree with both conclusions. A danger lies in giving attention to only the many positive comments from participants and overlooking that not every participant had a positive experience. At the same time, dwelling too much on the areas requiring improvement can overshadow the overwhelmingly favorable responses of the participants. The authors aim for both a fair and helpful balance in our recommendations.

Almost 20 years after their initial participation, some college library directors continue to offer unsolicited testimonials as to the benefits of the program.

Areas for Improvement (and Cautions)

Spencer noted that the Hardesty, Adams, and Kirk had uniformly recommended that the new board of directors and program directors “exercise caution in the ways the program
is changed in the future, expressing their concern that the program could easily become unwieldy, ineffective, or irrelevant.” That caution is repeated and underscored here.

Many of the suggestions from Spencer’s review involved individuals wanting more (for example, a second year, participation by library directors from other types of academic institutions, regional seminars, or more guidance for mentors). While some revisions are needed, others suggested by respondents, would, in the opinion of the authors, dramatically alter the nature of the program and raise considerably the cost of a program that is now generally affordable. As the new board of directors considers any revisions, it must take into account the resources and purposes of the program.

An important but limited resource is simply the time of the program leaders. In the past, and probably for the foreseeable future, the program leaders will be practicing library directors with full-time responsibilities serving their institutions. Making the matches, preparing for and conducting the seminar, and other aspects of the program take a great deal of time; future leaders could burn out attempting to do more.

It is telling that there was only a handful of applications for the position of program director when the program sought one. In addition, despite offers by the founding leaders to help, no leaders from other types of academic libraries (for example, community and junior college libraries and medium-sized academic libraries) emerged to create a similar mentor program among those types of libraries.

One area that the authors attempted to improve with the IMLS grant was guidance for the mentors. Given the way the matches were made (via telephone conversations, with Hardesty usually knowing only one side of the match) and the number of personalities involved, it is surprising that just a few partnerships were imperfect (although in 20 years no first-year director or mentor requested a different match). An overwhelming majority of matches worked well and some extremely well—with occasional lifelong friendships an important result.

This experience testifies to the willingness of busy, experienced college library directors to give their time to help new colleagues. In addition, the mentors did so for no more financial compensation than reimbursement of expenses for campus visits. Mentors took the minimal guidance (“be a good listener”), and a vast majority served the program well. Without a cadre of willing, able, and seasoned college library directors serving as mentors, the program would not exist.

Still, mentoring orientation can be improved. The new leadership instituted a webinar to help the mentors. Barbara Burd first developed the webinar and, most recently, Robert Fleming has led it. Fleming reported about 80 percent participation by the mentors in 2015, and he established an online discussion group to facilitate mentor communication.

Herold also has developed three documents to improve the relationship. Both parties are required to sign a “New Director and Mentor Agreement” and return the document to program leaders. Two other documents, a “Worksheet Mentor Expectations” and a “Worksheet New Director Expectations,” help to guide the relationship.
Such formalization of the mentor role should improve the mentoring that the first-year directors receive.

A second caution regards finances. The program received support from CLR during its first four years of existence and from IMLS during the four years of transition. Nevertheless, for most of its history, it has been financially self-sufficient. Fees were intentionally kept low to encourage new library directors from the less-endowed, and often more isolated, small colleges to participate. Herold, in her dissertation, described the fee structure, compared with that of other leadership training programs, as “modest.” She also pointed out that the activities are not limited to the on-site program but cover an entire year. In fact, as noted earlier, mentors and first-year directors can participate in the online discussion group as long as they desire to do so.

The IMLS grant, in particular, supported several transition initiatives, while allowing the retiring program leaders to transfer any reserve fund to the new leadership. Nevertheless, with increasing costs, particularly travel expenses (to the seminar and between mentor and first-year director) and housing and food costs (at the seminar), expenses had begun to exceed income near the end of transition, which, of course, cannot be sustained. No parent organization has emerged to underwrite the program if costs continue to exceed income. To date, the finances of the program are sustainable under the new leadership. In fact, the program still offers discounts, or “scholarships,” to participants from lesser-endowed institutions. As past and potential participants seek more from the program, the new leaders must keep in mind the need for continual cost containment.

**Future of the Program**

In the past, the program reflected the strengths, time, and interests of its leaders. By the time the leaders retired from the program, Adams and Hardesty had been involved with it for more than 20 years and Kirk for 10 years. In addition, the three had been longtime colleagues in professional organizations, collaborating for almost 40 years. The range of overlapping but distinctive skills, the mutually beneficial collegial relationship, and the ease with which those relationships supported the program improvements are factors that new leaders cannot replicate quickly.

Nevertheless, the authors are reassured that the program has highly capable and dedicated new leadership. The program has a solid organizational structure and a healthy financial reserve. The new leaders have increased participation in the leadership and, as a result, have expanded services offered (such as the webinars and an enhanced Web page). In addition, the new leaders can draw upon the support of literally hundreds of college library directors who have participated in the program and value its continuation.

The CLDMP should evolve and reflect the strengths, time, and interests among these new leaders and the diverse and changing needs for first-year college library directors. The program is approaching its quarter-century mark, and the authors are confident that the new leaders will continue to advance a program serving future generations by helping to develop capable and resourceful college library directors.
Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank Jinnie Y. Davis, librarian emerita at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, and Mark Tucker, professor emeritus of library science at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, for their invaluable editorial assistance.

Larry Hardesty is a founder and retired program director of the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program and a retired library director at Austin College in Sherman, Texas; he may be reached by e-mail at: libdirmentor@frontiernet.net.

Mignon Adams, a cofounder of the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program, is professor emeritus and former director of library and information services at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia; her e-mail address is: mignon.adams@gmail.com.

Thomas G. Kirk Jr., a longtime leader of the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program, is library director and coordinator of information services emeritus at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana; he may be reached by e-mail at: kirkto@earlham.edu.

Notes

1. Robert Boice, “Lessons Learned about Mentoring,” New Directions for Teaching and Learning 50 (Summer 1992): 51. While Boice is referring to the importance of mentoring for classroom faculty members, his advice also could be applied to the importance of mentoring for directors of small college libraries.

2. The participants and where they served as library directors at that time were: Mignon Adams, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science (now University of the Sciences); Anne Commerton, State University of New York (SUNY) at Oswego; Larry Hardesty, Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL; Michael Kathman, St. John’s University, St. Joseph, MN; and Jacquelyn McCoy, Occidental College, Los Angeles. All have since retired.


6. Larry Hardesty chaired this committee, which was later to become a permanent committee of the College Libraries Section, for several years. Other initial members include Caroline Coughlin, Evan Farber, Bart Harloe, Carolyn Sheehy, and Mary Sellen. Damon Hickey soon joined the committee as a replacement for Mary Sellen.


9. Hardesty, “College Library Directors Mentor Program.”

10. After chairing the ad hoc College Libraries Leadership Committee and later when it became an official standing committee of the College Libraries Section, Hardesty continued to attend its meetings and wrote reports to it. He frequently described the College Library Directors’ Mentor Program (CLDMP) as operating under the “aegis” of the College Libraries Leadership Committee, although the program had no official ties to either the
Larry Hardesty with Mignon Adams and Thomas G. Kirk Jr.

11. Matching mentors with first-year directors was more an art than a science. While in most cases Hardesty knew the mentors, his acquaintance with the first-year directors developed largely through two or three telephone calls. In the early years, Hardesty drew heavily for mentors from experienced library directors among the Oberlin Group (a consortium of library directors at selective colleges first convened by Oberlin College Library Director Bill Moffett in 1986). As the years passed, Hardesty included as mentors more individuals who had participated in the program as new directors.


13. A reader for the initial grant proposal to the Council on Library Resources (CLR) proposed the seminar. He may have had in mind the Harvard Seminar for New Presidents. For many years, the Harvard University Graduate School of Education has offered annually an intense, multiday seminar providing a practical and conceptual orientation for new college and university presidents. The reader proposed that the Mentor Program host such a seminar in the summer prior to the initial year of the first-year college library director. A quick survey of several newly appointed college library directors, however, revealed a strong hesitancy among them to participate that early in their tenure.

14. The next year brought another change. When the leaders encountered difficulties finding a host institution in scheduling the seminar in Miami, they changed the time of the seminar to precede the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association (ALA) in Los Angeles with Whittier College in Whittier, CA, as host. The participants indicated strong support for a seminar at this time; they bonded earlier in the process and addressed issues needing immediate solutions.

15. Irene M. H. Herold, “An Examination of the Leadership Program for College Library Directors Associated with ACRL’s College Libraries Section” (PhD diss., Simmons College, Boston, 2012). In this in-depth analysis of the program, Herold concluded it was more a management program than one geared to leadership.

16. When Karen Fischer left the University of Minnesota, Morris, Damon Hickey, then library director at the College of Wooster in Wooster, OH, accepted responsibility for the electronic mailing list, which was hosted by his institution. In 2006, when Hickey retired, Hardesty asked the ALA to host the mailing list. Hardesty administered it from about 2006 until 2012, when Robert Fleming, executive director of the Emerson College library in Boston, assumed responsibility for it.

17. Robert Fleming, e-mail to Larry Hardesty, April 25, 2016.


19. The 10 serving as members of the Advisory Group and their positions at the time were Susan Barnes Whyte, library director at Linfield College, McMinnville, OR; Robin Wagner, library director at Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA; Chris Loring, director of libraries at Smith College, Northampton, MA; Mark Tucker, dean of library and information resources at Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX; Kristi Tornquist, dean of learning and technology services at St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN; Debbie Malone, library director at DeSales University, Center Valley, PA; Janet Fore, library director at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN; Kate Hickey, dean and university librarian at Elon University, Elon, NC; Scottie Cochran, library director at Denison University, Granville, OH; and Janis Bandelin, director of libraries at Furman University, Greenville, SC. Later Kate Hickey stepped down, and Monika Rhue, director of the library at Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, NC, joined the advisory group.


22. Lauren Yourshaw, “College Library Directors’ Mentoring Program: Qualitative Research Findings,” report on focus groups, August 2011.
24. They were Susan Barnes Whyte, library director, Linfield College; Melissa Jadlos, library director at St. John Fisher College, Pittsford, NY; Gillian (Jill) Gremmels, director of the library at Davidson College, Davidson, NC; and Barbara Burd, dean of library services at Coastal Carolina University, Conway, SC. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant supported their attendance as part of the transition.
25. The new board members and their positions were: Debbie Malone (chair), library director at DeSales University; Celia Rabinowitz (secretary), director of the library and media center at St. Mary’s College of Maryland in St. Marys City; Janet Fore (treasurer), library director at Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN; Robert Fleming, executive director of the library at Emerson College; Bob Kieft, college librarian at Occidental College; Frank Quinn, library director at Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego; and Faye Watkins, library director at Hampton University, Hampton, VA. All of the new members had participated in the program either as first-year college library directors, as mentors, or both. Per the corporation bylaws, the seven directors will serve staggered terms of one, two, and three years with possible reappointment. Since the establishment of the expanded board, members have transitioned off the board, and new members have come on. At the same time, the Advisory Group was disbanded. Hardesty remained as agent of record because the program is incorporated within the state of Nebraska and a resident of the state of Nebraska was required for such purposes.
27. Irene Herold, e-mail to Larry Hardesty, March 28, 2013.
29. Susan Barnes Whyte, telephone conversation with Larry Hardesty, February 17, 2015.
30. Personal files of Larry Hardesty.
32. The number is derived from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, accessed August 11, 2015, http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/summary/basic.php. Not all new library directors at these institutions would be eligible because some would have served previously as library directors at other small colleges. Over the life of the program, some institutions grew and changed focus and would no longer be considered small colleges.
33. The anecdotal information would probably reach the point of ad nauseam for the readers if it were all included here.
34. Steven Bell has written about his experience with the program as “It just fizzled,” adding “After two years I was secure enough to break free,” in Steven Bell, “The Next Generation May Not Want Your Mentoring: Leading from the Library,” Library Journal, April 24, 2013, accessed August 21, 2014, http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2013/04/opinion/leading-from-the-library/the-next-generation-may-not-want-your-mentoring-leading-from-the-library/# . The authors will note that the official length of the mentoring relationship is one year. Sometimes lifelong friendships are made; sometimes the relationship lasts only during the crucial first year of the new director’s tenure, which is sufficient for the vast majority of the participants to consider it highly successful.
36. For example, in response to a call for participants, David Stanley, library director at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, who participated in 1997–1998, wrote on May 19, 2015, in an unsolicited e-mail on collib-l@lists.ala.org: “I went through this program 18 years ago and found it to be a great help in preparing me for my new position.”
37. Gene Spencer interviewed Hardesty, Adams, and Kirk via telephone, and he traveled to Keene State College in Keene, NH, to interview Herold. He also interviewed two past ACRL presidents (and program participants) Pamela Snelson and Steven Bell and ALA President Maureen Sullivan (also a past ACRL president) to gain their perspectives on the program from a broad professional level. In addition, Spencer randomly selected individual new directors from the five cohort groups from 2003 to 2008 and conducted one-hour telephone conversations with them. From there, he developed a survey that he sent to 70 former participants in the five cohort groups from 2008–2013 with 42 (60 percent) responding. He also surveyed 41 former and current mentors with 29 (70.7 percent) responding.


40. Ibid.

41. Spencer asked past participants in his sample the following question: “Overall, how would you rate the quality of the full CLDMP experience?” Nearly 93 percent responded either “very high” (60 percent) or “high” (33 percent). Only 3 (7 percent) responded “moderate.” None responded “low” or “very low.” When asked, “Would you recommend the CLDMP other new directors you may know?” of the 42 respondents, 41 (97.6 percent) indicated “Yes” and only 1 (2.4 percent) indicated “Not sure.” From their experiences, the authors believe that is a reasonably accurate representation of the responses of all the participants over the 20 years of the program. The program is multifaceted. As Spencer found, even failure to serve a participant in one aspect of the program, “does not tend to undermine the overall benefit of the program for any one individual.” Spencer concluded, “The experience is simply different for different people.”


43. An example of a useful addition by the new program leaders is webinars for the new director participants prior to the seminar.

44. In the 20-year history of the program only a handful of experienced college library directors turned down Hardesty’s invitation to serve as mentors.

45. Robert Fleming, e-mail to Larry Hardesty, February 9, 2015.

46. Irene Herold, e-mail to Larry Hardesty, February 18, 2015.

47. Melissa Jadlos, e-mail to Larry Hardesty, February 17, 2015.

