Fellowships: Making the most of student-library relationships
Meet the Library Fellows!

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What’s a fellowship?

It is:

- Graduate-level position
- Space for questions and growth
- Opportunity for mentorship
- Arena for professional development

It is NOT:

- Student worker
Our journey as fellows

1st month: On-boarding
3 months: Settling in
6 months: Understanding the profession
1 year: Branching out
Present and future: Professional involvement
What is one thing you would like to add/grow/expand in your own library?
A library fellow could help with that!
Benefits for Libraries
Completing Projects

- Remember all those things you just mentioned? A Fellow can help with that!
- Students do really great work and bring new ideas into the workspace
  - Seriously, students do REALLY great work, (Keyes & Dworak, 2017)
- Harsh reality - Libraries are understaffed, and graduate students are more affordable than full-time staff
Fellows Provide Unique Perspectives

- New ideas from a new generation of Librarians
- Students ask questions and challenge the status quo
- Symbiotic learning experience - Current employees can learn from Fellows, just as Fellows are learning from the current employees
Mentorship Benefits Everyone

- Mentorship sets the fellowship apart from other graduate students positions
- Lacy & Copeland (2013) discovered huge benefits not only for the LIS students being mentored, but also for the Librarian mentors themselves, including:
  - a strengthened commitment to the profession,
  - a better understanding of their own work,
  - and the ability to stay more current than usual within their areas of practice. (p. 142).
Benefits for Students
Meaningful Experience

- Employers expect experience
- Fair number of entry-level jobs, but more experience preferred (Tewell, 2012)
- Fight imposter syndrome!
Practical applications of theory

- Theory makes more sense when you see the end result
- Contextualizing concepts from the classroom
Exploring interests

- What type of librarianship am I interested in?
- What options are there?
- What is the right fit for me?
- Can I try a few things out?
Networking and mentoring

- Dedicated support and guidance
- Learn from other professionals
- Potential references for the future
What can I do to implement a similar program at my library?

Make it real & applicable.

Make the work diverse.

Make the experience worthwhile.
Questions?
