

# inula notes

Indiana University Librarians Association

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## A call for mentoring among SLIS students and library professionals

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by Kay M. Dunker

*Kay M. Dunker is a SLIS Graduate, December 1993*

In summer session II (1993) at Indiana University, I had the occasion to compose a literature review on the subject of mentoring in the library field, and I was greatly disturbed at what I found.

The literature on mentoring is immense; however, little has to do with the field of library science. This seems to indicate a lack of interest in the profession on the part of everyone involved—students, librarians, professors, and administrators. In the article “Unwritten Rules: Mentoring Women Faculty” by Mary Niles Maack and Joanne E. Passet, the authors pointed out that women found that without mentoring they tended to be “lost, awash, foundering,

or stumbling,” but more importantly, women without mentors “expressed a considerable bitterness about the absence of mentoring.”

This sends an important message to everyone in the library field, both those in the position to mentor and those in the position to be mentored: we all must work harder at entering into mentor/protégé relationships. This should include library school professors and their students. While still at Indiana University SLIS, I did not witness any mentoring going on around me.

There is support among the students themselves and from professors. This support is definitely helpful, but it cannot take the place of the benefits of a mentor. Student to student men-

toring lacks the power structure which is useful in professional to student mentoring.

For these reasons I believe SLIS should implement a mentoring program between active professionals and students.

The advantages to both mentor and protégé are numerous. The student will be in contact with a member of a field who can share his or her experiences. From personal experience, I know many library school students receive their M.L.S. with limited or no library experience. Most of those with jobs work in one of the many libraries at IU, ignoring the areas of public and special libraries. Mentoring could open up those fields and encourage entry into them. A mentor

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# A response to Dunker

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*Margaret Harter is  
Assistant Librarian at  
Kinsey Institute Library*

Recent School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) graduate Kay Dunker, in her proposal for a mentoring program for SLIS students, comments that the paucity of literature on mentoring in the field of library science "seems to indicate a lack of interest." Mitchell and Morton (1992) lament not the lack of interest but the lack of training and experience in the mentoring process on the part of academic librarians. Yet the consensus in the literature is that mentoring is important, if not critical, to professional growth and success.

I'm sure, if asked, we would all assert that (at least in the abstract) we are in favor of mentoring. What might go unstated, would be our trepidations about volunteering as mentors: I'm already stressed. Where would I find the time to volunteer? Mentoring sounds so open-ended, so demanding. What will be expected of me? What if I get a bad match? What will I get out of it?

Formal mentoring has existed among Indiana University Libraries (IUL) faculty since 1986, and Marilyn Shaver, IUL Personnel Officer, says that feedback on this program generally has been positive. I would not want to attempt to negotiate the promotion and tenure process at

IUL without the guidance of a mentor.

We may not always label informal relationships as mentoring, or even recognize them as such. I realize the extra-system librarians group that I worked to start at IUB fits Joan Kaplowitz' (1992) description of groups of "network mentors" or "peer pals" — supportive groups that share

by Margaret H. Harter  
inclinations among library school students."

InULA is uniquely situated to initiate a system-wide mentoring program for SLIS students; it includes students as members and each year awards a student scholarship. InULA's purpose is to promote excellence in librarianship, and I.U.'s eight-doored campus and the presence of SLIS

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## Does mentoring belong high on our list of professional responsibilities?

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advice and career strategies. For some, InULA has served as a source of network mentors.

Why enlarge the scope of mentoring to include students? As librarians cope with rapidly changing technologies, altered job environments, and burnout, students have the potential to reinvigorate us with their enthusiasm and new ways of thinking about problems. Library faculty, in turn, have an essential role to play in facilitating the acculturation of students and new professionals to what Mitchell and Morton call the "extra-librarianship implications of being faculty": the academic model of collegiality, self-governance, research, and publication. As Mitchell and Morton forcefully put it: "There neither can nor will be an immaculate inception of academic faculty attitudes and

in three locations offer many mentoring possibilities. As part of the revitalization process of the last two years, the InULA Board has struggled with how to involve more librarians on different I.U. campuses and how to strengthen ties with SLIS faculty and students.

One model that InULA might explore in setting up a program is the UCLA Libraries volunteer mentor program, which has expanded during its seven years to include information professionals in special, public, and school libraries. In a survey of participants in the program, to which 70% of mentors responded, 67% had a favorable opinion of the program (75% of student respondents were favorable). Important elements in UCLA's success seem to be:  
1) strong library and library

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school support (the program is coordinated by two librarians, with cooperation from a library school faculty liaison and the library school's graduate advisor); 2) distribution of a set of Mentor Program Fact Sheets to prospective participants, so that all clearly know the goals and expectations for the program; and 3) a get-acquainted reception, after which mentoring pairs develop their own relationships (on average, mentors meet with their students three times a year; other contacts are by phone, etc.). The program is deliberately informal and low-key. The problems encountered are the same ones that have arisen from time to time at IUL: mismatches, poor communication, varying expectations, and the need for more volunteer mentors.

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## InULA Book Sale April 17-18

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The 1994 InULA Booksale will be held on April 17 and 18 in conjunction with the National Library Week (April 17-23).

The InULA Booksale Committee is interested in collecting books, magazines, records, sheet music, posters, etc., for the Booksale. Monies raised by the Booksale will support InULA and its programs in continuing education, scholarships in the field of Library Science, and *inula notes*.

Does mentoring belong high on our list of professional responsibilities? Should InULA seek to implement Kay Dunker's proposal? Let the InULA Board hear from you on this issue!

#### References:

Kaplowitz, Joan. (1992). "Mentoring library school students—A survey of participants in the UCLA/GSLIS mentor program." *Special Libraries* 83(4):219-233.

Mitchell, Bede W., and Morton, Bruce. (1992). "On becoming faculty librarians: Acculturation problems and remedies." *College & Research Libraries* 53(5): 379-392.

*Send your responses and comments on this proposal to Marianne Mason, Law Library, IUB, email: MASONM, or Karen Nissen, IUPUI Columbus Library, KNISSEN@INDYVAX.*

If you have any material to donate, please contact Jackie Byrd (email: byrd; 855-7511) or Wen-ling Liu (email: wliu; 855-7511) to make arrangements to have your donation picked-up locally. Thank you.

Wen-ling Liu, Chair, InULA Booksale Committee, Cataloging Dept., Main Library E350, IU Bloomington

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## Mentoring

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could also become a valuable resource in the protégé's search for employment.

The mentors will gain the satisfaction of knowing they are aiding in the training of future colleagues and leaders. The relationships may also generate the sharing of ideas in both directions.

Mentoring is an absolute must at IU SLIS. Students need to be more aware of what is happening in the field. They need the guidance that mentors can provide.

#### References:

Maack, Mary Niles and Joanne E. Passett. (1993) "Unwritten Rules: Mentoring Women Faculty." *Library and Information Science Research* 15:117-141.

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## InULA's Research Incentive Fund

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The InULA Research Incentive Fund encourages and supports research by funding research projects of any size or scope. Project proposals submitted by untenured librarians will receive top priority because it is often difficult for beginning researchers to obtain research grants. However, all requests will be considered on their individual merit and value to the field of librarianship.

The next deadline for applications is May 31. Contact Marianne Mason, InULA President, for details.

# A home for the InULA Archives

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Past InULA presidents, officers, and committee chairs who have spent hours organizing the InULA archives and papers can rest assured that their work and our organization's history will be preserved. Two locations for InULA archives have been established; Room 521 in the Undergraduate Library for records of the last five years and the University Archives in Bryan Hall for older material.

Material in both locations is readily accessible for those who need to use the files or individual

documents. To borrow a file from Room 521, just complete the information requested on the check-out sheet located in the room. The key is available from the Undergraduate Library Office. Older material is available during regular business hours of the University Archives and, with special arrangements, may also be borrowed.

We're delighted that the InULA Archives no longer need to move each time InULA officers change!

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## Calendar Notes

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**March 2** : INForum Program, Main Library, IU Bloomington, "Information Anarchy, Quality, Standards, and Overload"

**April 6-9**: Indiana Library Federation Annual Conference (Indianapolis)

**April 8**: IUPUI University Library Dedication

**April 17-18**: InULA Booksale , Main Library, IU Bloomington

**April 29**: Librarians Day, LEAP Center, Indianapolis

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## Members welcome!

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InULA welcomes new members anytime throughout the year. If you're interested in joining contact Mechael Gago, Serials Dept., Main Library E-048, IUB (email MGAGO.UCS.INDIANA.EDU).

## Volunteer: Seize the opportunity

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*Marianne Mason,  
InULA President*

InULA is, proudly, like no other IU organization. We are an organization established for and by librarians with the common goal of individual professional excellence. InULA is a very open organization, where new leadership is encouraged. Our very organizational structure requires constant turnover and staggered terms to assure both new ideas and continuity. The energy of the organization comes, however, from membership participation. One may have an impact on the Association simply by volunteering to help with an InULA activity or committee. No ballots are involved; no name recognition is required.

Serving on an InULA Committee is an especially good way to meet, work with, and learn from members whose jobs and experiences are different from your own. Our goal is to have participation from experienced and newer members, members from various types of IU Libraries and geographic areas. Committee participation can happen through conference calls, in conference rooms, and/or over lunch. A great deal of creativity in InULA's membership remains untapped. Please invest a small amount of your time to help make InULA the organization that you want it to be.

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*InULA Notes* is a publication of the Indiana University Librarians Association  
Letters and comments should be addressed to Karen Nissen, IUPUI-Columbus Library, email:KNISSEN@INDYVAX.IUPUI.EDU.  
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