Activities by month

February Check-in
March Check-in
April Check-in
May Check-in
June Check-in
July Check-in
August Check-in
September Check-in
October Check-in
November Check-in
December Check-in

February Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation

Social media and professional identity

Consider some of these questions and discuss with your mentor/mentee:

- Are you a social media user? If so, is your online presence work-based, personal, or both? Do you keep your work online persona separate from your personal online persona?
- Are social media and library work compatible? Why or why not?
- Do you see yourself as a “viewing/passive” or “contributing/active” user of social media?
- Is there a reason that you gravitate toward either of these?

Also see Pike, George H. (2014). “Social Media and the Workplace,” Information Today, 31(9).
http://search.proquest.com/docview/1625404665?accountid=15172
March Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation

Time management and productivity


Consider some of these questions and discuss with your mentor/mentee:
- Do you use a to-do list system? What is it?
- How do you block out your time to complete tasks outside of meetings?
- Which tasks do you prioritize during busy periods at work?
- How do you manage longer-term tasks?

April Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation

Libraries and diversity

In a blog post titled “The Quest for Diversity in Library Staffing: From Awareness to Action” ([http://www.intheliibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2016/quest-for-diversity/](http://www.intheliibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2016/quest-for-diversity/)), Jennifer Vinopal writes:

Despite our ongoing quest for diversity and a growing number of initiatives to increase it, the demographics of the professional librarian population haven’t changed in any significant way. We are starkly lacking in diversity based on race and ethnicity (we are overwhelmingly white), age (librarianship is an aging profession), disability, economic status, educational background, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other demographic and identity markers of difference. This lack of diversity should be seen as a signal, an invitation to us to look critically at our culture, our practices, and our assumptions, and investigate what it is about ourselves and our profession that is preventing underrepresented people from being able to, or even wanting to, enter and stay.

Discussion questions for mentors and mentees:
- What are the root causes of the lack of diversity in the professional librarian population?
- Can you identify any critical points where action could be taken to change the status quo?
- What is the role of individual action versus collective action in achieving the goal of a more diverse profession?

May Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Gossip in the workplace

Almost everyone has come into contact with gossip in the workplace at some time in their career. You may have overheard it, participated in it, or seen it do damage within a department.

Mentors and mentees:
- What have your experiences with workplace gossip been?
- How do you deal with pressures to gossip, or the fallout from gossip?
- Have you ever had a positive experience with workplace gossip?

The paper “Hearing it through the grapevine: Positive and negative workplace gossip” (http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2011.12.007) describes how workplace gossip arises, why people do it, and how to keep work culture positive.

How to deal with gossip at work (from eHow):
Sustain a positive attitude about your job and about the environment around you. Speak positive and avoid saying negative things to anyone about your job unless your intention is to change it with a positive solution. When you are approached with some “gossip,” let your response be something like, “If what so-and-so did is so wrong, you should talk to them and not be telling me because I can’t do anything about this,” or, “If this really bothers you then you should go and talk to them about it, not to me.” That usually stops all gossip dead in its tracks.

Read more: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2011.12.007

June Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Technology

Can comfort with technology make you “overproductive”?


Mentors and mentees: consider some of the following questions
- Are you an early or a late adopter when it comes to new technology?
- Are you skeptical when new technology is released, or do you jump on board quickly?
- Is technology a constant companion in your work and non-work life, or do you use it more sparingly?
- If you teach, do you use technology-based tools to facilitate learning, or are you more focused on
human interaction?

Share your reflections with your mentee or mentor.

July Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Summer is upon us: work-life balance

In recent years, “always-on” culture has permeated workplaces. The New York Times published an issue of their magazine devoted to work, including articles such as “The War on Meetings,” “Failure to Lunch,” “Rethinking the Work-Life Equations,” and “The Post-Cubicle Office.” Pick an article from this issue to discuss. (Note: There isn’t a link to the full issue, but the article navigation is at the top of the page! http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-theperfect-team.html)

- In the spirit of summer fun, share with your mentor or mentee some of your favorite non-work activities. This could be a hobby, a favorite vacation spot, a favorite de-stressor, or even favorite films, music, or authors.
- Do your favorite non-work activities change with the seasons?
- When is work-life balance easiest for you during the year? When is it hardest?

August Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Coming up with ideas

Having a new idea concerning delivery, organization, or content of library services can be an exciting experience. But sometimes new ideas are hard to come by. . .

Read Seth Godin’s blog post “Where do ideas come from?” here:

Mentors and mentees:
- Which of Seth Godin’s statements about ideas ring most true to you?
- Do you have any others to add to the list?
- SCOPA offers grants for M&P staff within YUL who want to work on a project (see https://guides.library.yale.edu/scopa/grants). Brainstorm some possible ideas that might be a good fit for a SCOPA grant.
- How might you use the outlines of Seth Godin’s post to think about project opportunities that may require a small grant?
September Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
The last fifteen minutes of your day

It’s getting close to the end of your work day, and you’re wondering what to do with those last fifteen minutes. You certainly don’t want to start working on a big project. You could putter around, organizing your email or the piles of paper on your desk, but before you do, consider this short blog post which has an intriguing proposition for those last few minutes: [http://blogs.hbr.org/bregman/2011/01/the-best-way-to-use-the-last-f.html](http://blogs.hbr.org/bregman/2011/01/the-best-way-to-use-the-last-f.html)

- What do you think of Peter Bregman’s suggestion for the last five minutes of your day?
- Does the “Julie” he describes in his post seem familiar to you in any way?
- Share your reflections with your mentor/mentee

October Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Leadership and professional service

Consider some of these questions and discuss with your mentor/mentee:

- Do you serve in any leadership capacities outside of your direct work?
- Do you engage in professional service opportunities?
- If you serve in leadership roles or professional service opportunities:
  - How did you initially get involved?
  - Why do you choose to continue?
  - How do you benefit?
  - How do you balance leadership and service with other responsibilities, in and outside of work?

November Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Meetings

Meetings are a necessity of library work, but how do you get the most out of your meeting times?


Consider some of these questions and discuss with your mentor/mentee:
● Do the strategies outlined in the article work for your meeting style?
● What strategies do you use to make your meetings efficient? How do you approach time management in meetings?
● How do you ensure that your meeting strategies are working? Do you ask for feedback periodically?
● How do you deal with debates or tense situations in meetings?

December Check-in

Check-in Activity/Conversation
Professional development

Building on the September discussion of leadership and professional service, take some time to reflect on one or two areas in your career that you would like to develop. Consider with your mentor/mentee how you might achieve your goal(s).

Check out Yale’s Career Development page (https://your.yale.edu/work-yale/career-development) and review the Yale Training and Certification Courses page (https://bmsweb.med.yale.edu/tms/tms_enrollments.owners) for guidance and possible training courses to consider, such as Project Management for Yale Professionals.

If you would like to join a new association or learn how to become more active in a professional association, look for new member groups or mentoring programs. For example, the American Library Association (ALA) organizes the New Members Round Table (NMRT) and the Society of American Archivists (SAA) coordinates a Mentoring Program.