

RETENTION OF STAFF OF COLOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA LIBRARY

Co-presenters: Bob Diaz, Soo Young So, and Mimi Hernandez, UA Library faculty

Summer, 1998, The American Library Association Annual Conference

Abstract:

While much attention has been given to the issue of recruitment of people of color to academic librarianship, there exists little information in the professional literature on the issue of retention, even though it is as critical an issue as recruitment. In order to find solutions to the University of Arizona Library's problems with retention of librarians of color, a new support group called AMIGOS was formed in 1997. This poster session will outline the purpose of the group and will highlight how AMIGOS has worked to create both a supportive environment for librarians of color and a mentoring network for librarians and paraprofessional staff.

Initial ideas generated by small group`:

- organizing a welcome/survival wagon for new hires of color
- defining mentoring/coaching/what term do we want to use?
- defining terminology (like excellence) in the bylaws
- judging research: ?ing criteria in bylaws
- doing a white paper on our experience in a team based org.
- How to (for non-minorities) provide specific constructive feedback, expectations, check self for negative perceptions/retaliatory actions
- ideas for "role-playing" to illustrate negative/threatening language, stereotypical language/behavior

More ideas:

Purpose of group:

- Mutual support
- Reinforcement of who we are
- Deal with minority recruitment and retention issues and act as group mentors for new people coming in
- Safe forum for airing our concerns about the Library climate etc.

- A place to learn about opportunities
- Prove a springboard for sharing ideas, issues, concerns, and solutions
- Assist in P&CS process
- Counter anti-ethnic staff in the Library
- Specific action plans for addressing specific concerns
- Provide history/information on minority issues
- Create an environment where coaching and assisting each other can prevail
- Provide opportunities to know other minority employees on campus
- Organize events for one another
- Become a political force by networking outside the library with others
- Support cultural diversity goal of the Library

AMIGOS PURPOSE STATEMENT

This is to announce the formation of a new group of and for minority and ethnic Library employees called AMIGOS. The purpose of AMIGOS is:

1. to address minority recruitment and retention issues and make appropriate recommendations
2. to make recommendations for improving the climate of the library towards ethnic/racial groups
3. to provide a forum for members of ethnic/racial minority groups where they can share ideas, issues, concerns and solutions in a supportive environment.
4. to define what we as members of the Library need in terms of mentoring
5. to support the Library's goal of becoming a multicultural organization

GROUND RULES

- Confidentiality: whatever is said or discussed in AMIGOS meetings
- should remain within the group.
- It's okay to disagree with one another
- Attendance is not mandatory, but if possible, please inform other
- members of your absence the Friday before the Monday lunch.
- Use "I" statements

Brainstroming on what we want to define "Mentoring/Coaching's" aim:

*help person to succeed, not make success=molding the mentee to be just like the mentor

*take the positive elements/attributes/characteristics of mentee and work with those to assist person to reach goals

*both parties must make efforts to know & communicate which aspects to assist with. So mentee needs to know how to ask for assistance, both need to know how to ask right questions

*Mentoring not=only advising it must be holistic to succeed and involve the following:

-concern for the future development of the mentee

-concern for the well-being of the mentee

-actively provide professional growth opportunities for the mentee

*need to complete a profile/inventory of skills/interests/abilities to assist in the mentor to mentee matching & linking process

*personality match is important too

*it is of paramount value/importance to a mentor external to mentee's home organization

*plan for multiple mentors for multiple needs, internal & external to home organization