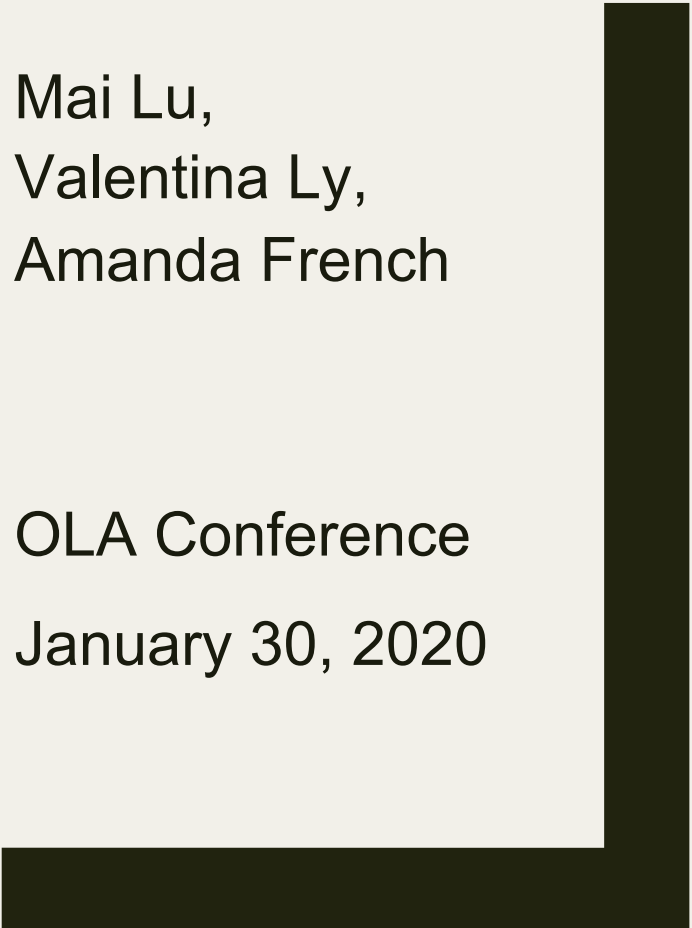




CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

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OLA Conference
January 30, 2020



The image features two thick, black L-shaped corner brackets. One is positioned in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner, framing the central text.

**Why is cultural diversity in
library leadership important?**

Agenda

- Leadership Competencies
- Experiences of Successful Visible Minority Library Leaders
- Mentorship
- Think-Pair-Share Activity
- Key Takeaways

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Leadership Competencies

Leadership Competencies

What You Need to Know to Become a Leader? Based on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

#1: Be Proactive

- Before you can lead and coach others, look to raising your self-awareness.
- What kind of leader are you?

“You cannot be anything you want to be – but you can be a lot more of who you already are” (Rath, 2017, p. 9).



Leadership Competencies

#2: Begin with the end in mind

“Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.”

- Focus on what you want to be and do.
- Plan for the achievement of that success.

A personal mission statement:

- reaffirms who you are;
- puts your goals in focus;
- moves your ideas into the real world.

Your mission statement makes you the leader of your own life.

You create your own destiny and secure the future you envision.

Leadership Competencies

#3: Put First Things First

Organise and execute around priorities.

Start with Why

Frame your end-goals and the parameters for success.

Move on to the discipline of **How** and the consistency of **What**.

Answering these three questions will communicate goals to others and build authentic trust.

Leadership Competencies

#4: Think win/win

All parties feel good about the decision and feel committed to the Action Plan.

SMART Goals v HUGGs

- **SMART**: how-to, but they're not inspiring or motivational.
- **HUGG**: Huge Unbelievable Great Goal.

Leaders are copied, in both positive and negative ways.

- Cooperation and commitment will be emulated.

Leadership Competencies

#5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood

Does a leader make the times or do the times make the leader?

- Transformational Leadership.
- Crisis Management.
- Turnaround Leadership.
- Visionary Leadership.

“Kindness, empathy, humour, humility, passion, and ambition, all marked Lincoln from the start...his desire to lead and his need to serve coalesced into a single indomitable force. Such leadership offers us humanity, purpose, and wisdom, not in turbulent times alone, but also in our everyday lives.” -Doris Goodwin Kearns.

Leadership Competencies

#6: Synergize

Synergy is finding opportunities for creative cooperation wherein which the sum of the effort put in is greater than the parts.

Value the Differences:

- Look for “rebels” in your organisation;
- Know your strengths and cover your blind spots;
- Find synergies!

Leadership Competencies


#7: Sharpen the saw

- Communication skills;
- Relationship building and influence;
- Change management;
- Teamwork;
- Professional involvement and mentorship;
- Business skills;
- Time management and work-life integration;
- Public Service motivation;
- Municipal and Library Board relations.

Leadership Competencies

Personal Challenges

- #1 Focus on your strengths: how can you capitalise on them?
- #2 Develop your personal mission statement
- #3 Practice presenting your goals in 3-minute elevator speeches
- #4 Create a HUGG goal using SMART methodology
- #5 Determine what kind of leader you are. What kind of leader does your organization need you to be?
- #6 Identify your blind spots. What are some ways you routinely check them?
- #7 Set a schedule to perform regular skills assessments on yourself.

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Experiences of Successful Visible Minority Library Leaders

Successful Visible Minority Library Leaders

- What motivated them to become leaders?
- What barriers did they face in their journey to become library leaders? Was being visible minorities a barrier for them?
- What advice would they give to future leaders?

Motivation

“After spending time in different libraries in various roles, I realized that I have a lot more to offer in a leadership capacity. I could see changes needing to be implemented that focused on **breaking down barriers** and **helping make staff feel more comfortable** with the ever-changing work environment – and I wanted to be a part of that shift.”

“The profession is homogeneous and I found that intimidating and discouraging as a racialized leader. I felt that it was important to go further in my career **to increase cultural representation** in higher level library roles so that others would know it’s occasionally possible to see a culturally diverse senior leader. It’s tough always being the only one in the room when Senior leaders meet. Seeing leaders who look like me culturally is encouraging for me and to others.”

Barriers

“**Myself.** I had many opportunities along the way but never felt I was quite ready.”

“At the time there were **no opportunities in my public library system** and I wanted to move up quickly, so I had to look around in other cities. The steep learning curve of changing systems and learning a whole new way of doing things takes time and effort.”

“Most of the employer would **focus on Canadian experience** as opposed to my acquired skills. Also, most of the hiring is done based on **networking.**“

Was being a visible minority a barrier?

“Yes, it would have been easier if I were not culturally diverse as I find librarianship in Canada is less culturally diversified and is dominated by a single ethnicity group. This makes it **more challenging for culturally diversified librarians** to establish the required networking.”

“Absolutely. Sometimes I felt I **had to work twice as hard** as others just to prove my worth while **dealing with microaggressions**, unintentional culturally insensitive comments/jokes about my food and hair etc. At times I felt I was **held to a higher standard or questioned more** than my Caucasian colleagues.”

“I have actually been **included in more decision-making conversations** about diversity and inclusion because of my ethnicity and asked for my opinion as a first gen immigrant raised in Canada. So that seems like a positive to me.”

Advice to Future Leaders: You

- Increase self-awareness and self-development
- Consider your motivation. Why do you want to be a leader?
- Learn as much as you can. Develop your leadership competencies.

Advice to Future Leaders: Your Relationships

- Raise your visibility
- Build relationships
- Seek out shared experiences
- Build a strong reputation. Let your reputation speak for you

Advice to Future Leaders: Your Mentors

“My first mentor was a person of colour and we had real conversations about the profession and the experience from a PoC perspective. Over the years, I’ve had **different mentors for different things**, for example, I had one for teaching, one for union related work, one for research, and one for leadership. I found having different mentors for different things **gave me insight into a variety aspects of my work** and sometimes, new insight into other things.”

“I’ve been fortunate to have numerous mentors throughout my career and **credit my success to having had these relationships**. They coached and pushed me throughout my career.”

Summary

- Experiences of visible minority library leaders are diverse
- Being a visible minority was perceived as a barrier for some and a benefit for others
- Self-awareness and self-development helped in preparation for leadership roles
- Relationships are critically important
- Mentors were big help

Mentorship

Why do we need mentorship?

“Agencies that have initiated mentoring programs have acknowledged higher rates of minority recruitment as well as retention and promotion.” (Bonnette, 2004)

Mentorship

Benefits for the mentee:

- increased sense of vision about career direction
- support in self-analysis and enhanced feelings of self-worth
- encouragement with work and professional activities
- support with change and difficulties
- advice from a more experienced professional
- insight into informal politics of the organisation
- professional networking/contacts

Mentorship

Benefits for the mentor:

- enhancement of human resources management skills
- development of new professional skills
- increased understanding of self, others and organisations
- enhanced professional network
- career enhancement
- opportunity to give something back to the profession

Mentorship

What does mentorship look like?

Formal mentoring	Informal mentoring
more planned process, often organised by an employer or professional body.	often unplanned, drawing two individuals together for the purpose of professional/ personal growth

Mentorship

What does mentorship look like?

Mentoring for:

- management skills
- professional support and development
- career development
- specific skills
- new recruits
- professional contacts

Mentorship

Visible Minority Librarians of Canada Mentorship Program

- An example of a mentorship program specifically for librarian mentors and mentees who are culturally diverse
- Implemented October to December 2018
- Recruited 25 mentors and 48 mentees across Canada, matched one mentor with two mentees

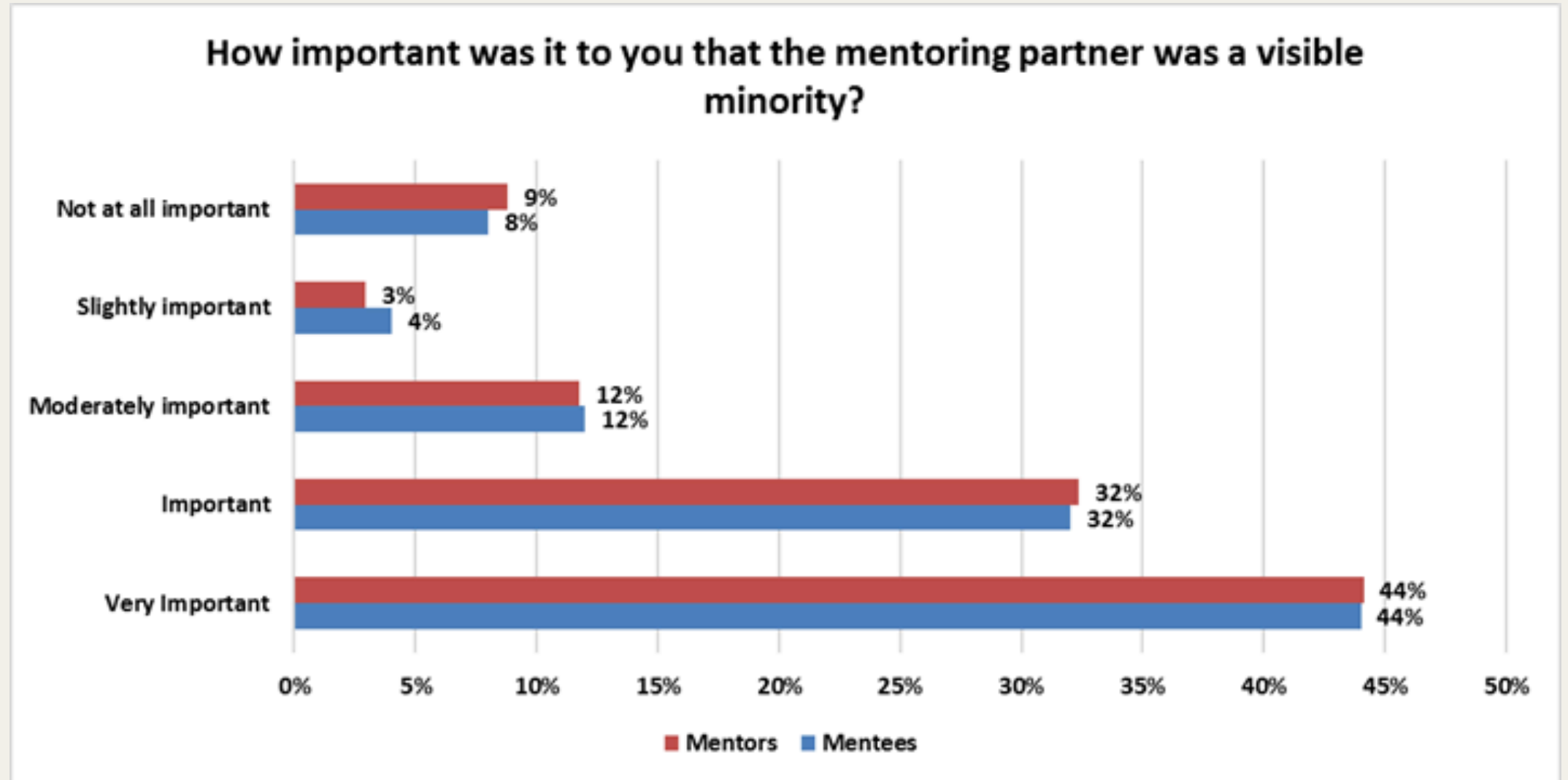
Mentorship

Reasons for participating in mentorship program

Mentees' reasons	
Seeking guidance in career direction	80%
Knowing more about the profession	68%
Learning about how to adapt in an organization as a visible minority	52%
Networking	52%
Knowing about skills & qualifications needed for a librarian-related job	40%
Moving up in your career	28%

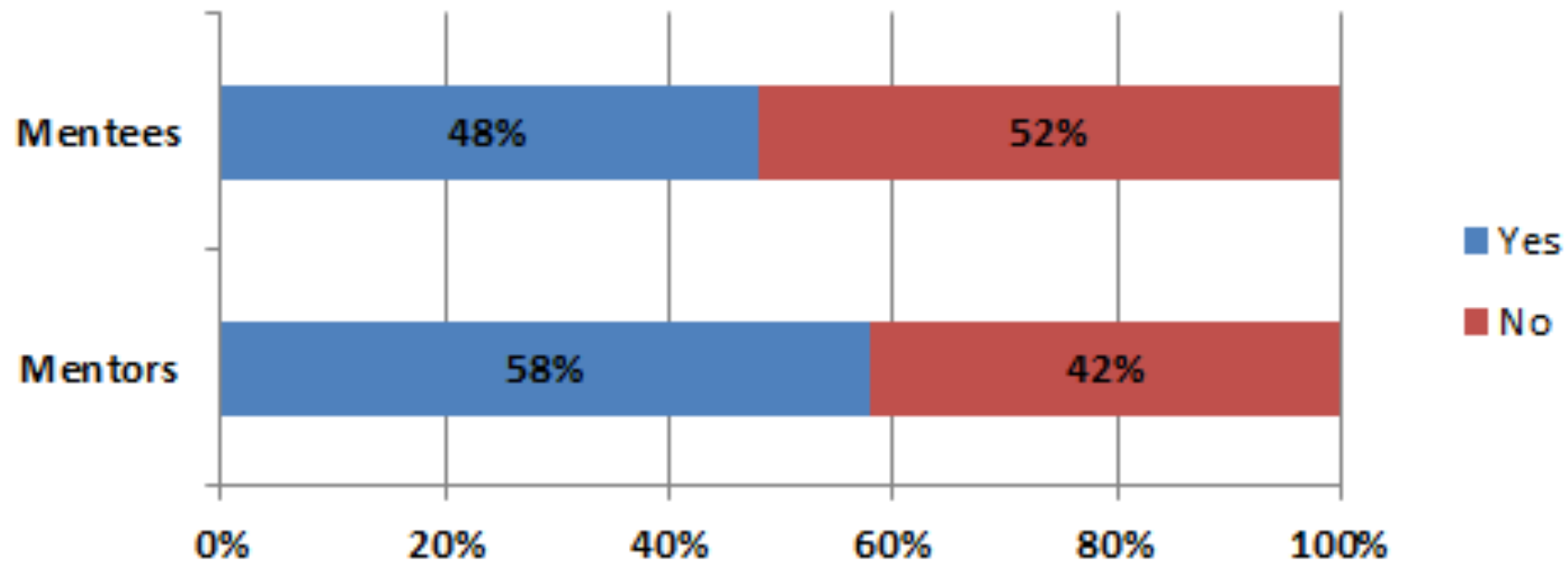
Mentors' reasons	
Passion for helping others	89%
Sharing experience	72%
Professional development	39%
Networking	33%
Meeting requirements for tenure	6%
Other	6%

Mentorship



Mentorship

Did you discuss issues or experiences about being a visible minority in the profession?



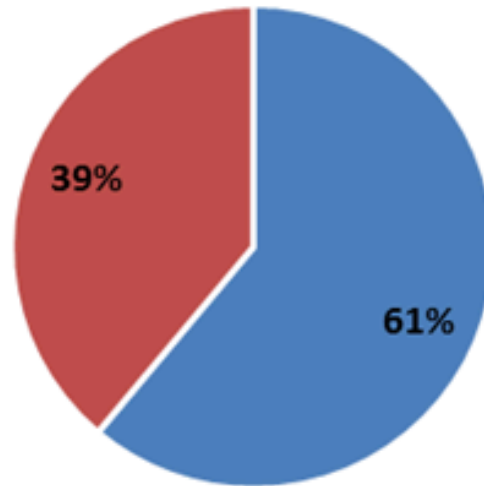
Mentorship

How helpful was your mentor in providing assistance?	
Very helpful	71%
Helpful	29%
Neither helpful or unhelpful	0%
Unhelpful	0%
Very unhelpful	0%

How helpful do you think you were in assisting the mentee?	
Very helpful	18%
Helpful	56%
Neither helpful or unhelpful	21%
Unhelpful	3%
Very unhelpful	3%

Mentorship

Were you ever mentored by an LIS professional, formally or informally?



■ Yes ■ No

Mentorship

<https://vimloc.wordpress.com/>



The image is a screenshot of the ViMLoC website. At the top, there is a red banner with the ViMLoC logo (a stylized 'V' made of three stacked squares) and the text 'ViMLoC' in large white letters, with 'VISIBLE MINORITY LIBRARIANS OF CANADA' in smaller white letters below it. A dark navigation bar contains links for 'About Us', 'News', 'Job Advertisements', 'Resources', and 'Participate'. The 'Mentorship' link is highlighted in a dark box. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'ViMLoC Operating Values'. The text below reads: 'ViMLoC is a collaborative network to connect, engage and support visible minority librarians of Canada.' Underneath, it says 'We aim to:'. To the right, there is a 'Follow Us' section with icons for Twitter and Facebook, and a search bar with a 'Search' button. Below that is an 'Archives' section with a list of months from January 2020 to November 2018. At the bottom, there is a red box with the text 'Connect and represent visible minority librarians in Canada' and a photograph of five people standing together.

ViMLoC

VISIBLE MINORITY LIBRARIANS OF CANADA

[About Us](#) [News](#) [Job Advertisements](#) [Resources](#) [Participate](#)

[Mentorship](#)

ViMLoC Operating Values

ViMLoC is a collaborative network to connect, engage and support visible minority librarians of Canada.

We aim to:

Connect and represent visible minority librarians in Canada

Follow Us

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Archives

- [January 2020](#)
- [December 2019](#)
- [November 2019](#)
- [October 2019](#)
- [September 2019](#)
- [August 2019](#)
- [June 2019](#)
- [May 2019](#)
- [April 2019](#)
- [March 2019](#)
- [February 2019](#)
- [January 2019](#)
- [November 2018](#)

Think – Pair – Share Activity

Instructions

Step 1: Consider these questions on your own. (2 min)

Step 2: Partner up and chat about your responses. (3 min)

Step 3: Discuss your responses as a table. (5 min)

(capture your thoughts on the paper at your table!)

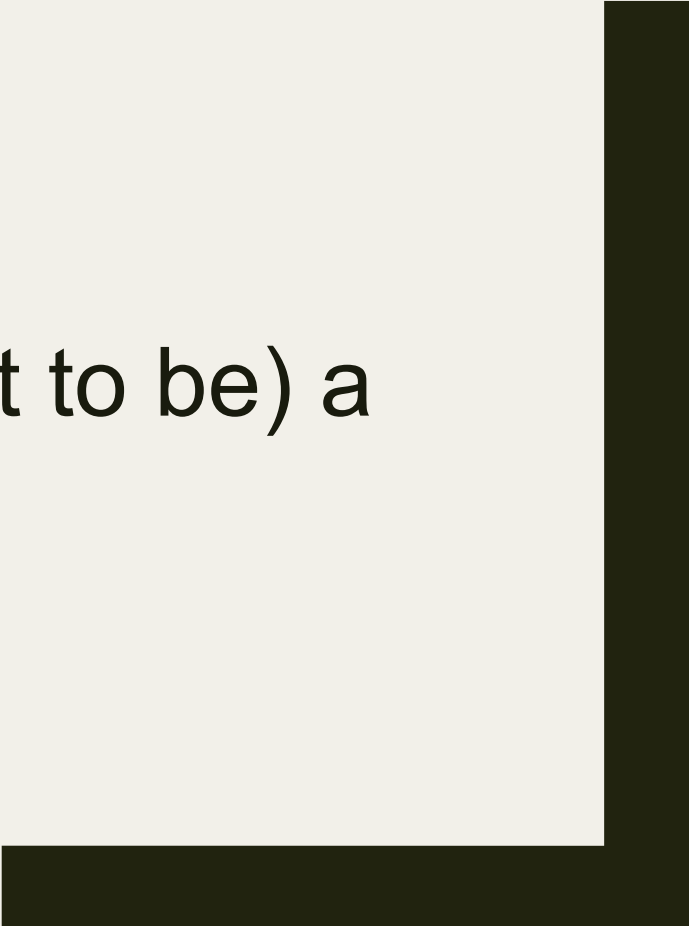
Step 4: Move to another table with people you don't know.

Step 5: Repeat steps 1-3



Question 1:

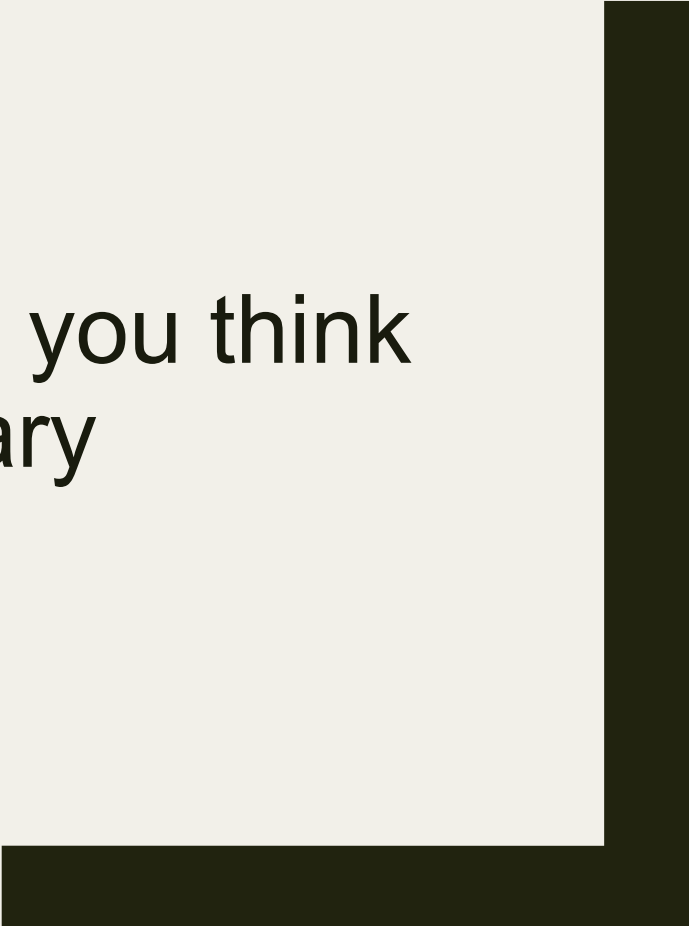
What inspired you to be (or want to be) a library leader?





Question 2:

What have you done, or what do you think you need to do, to get into a library leadership position?





Question 3:

Do you think cultural diversity is a benefit or a barrier to entering Library leadership?
Discuss.



Key Takeaways

- Library leaders must successfully demonstrate leadership competencies.
- The experiences of successful visible minority library leaders is diverse. Developing self-awareness, building relationships, and surrounding oneself with a positive network contributed to success.
- Community is important for success. Get involved in mentorship to share experiences and network.
- Cultural diversity in library leadership provides greater inclusivity, increases diversity in perspectives and ideas, and represents the population served.

Questions? Comments?

Thank you!

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