

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Autonomy and Agency in Term-Limited Library Positions

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Introduction

ACRL Diversity Alliance residency programs seek to address the library profession's lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the hiring and retention of academic librarians.¹ These programs – earmarked for recent Library and Information Science (LIS) graduates – undertake the difficult process of lessening the inequity in representation across librarianship. While diversity residencies address these goals temporarily, they do not solve the systemic nature of unequal representation in LIS, and they place vulnerable early-career professionals in precarious employment situations.²

We are writing as the first three Diversity Resident Librarians at the University of Texas Libraries (UT Libraries). Our pilot Diversity Residency Program was established in 2018 through a generous private donation and matching university funds. Structured as a two-year role, resident librarians are meant to experience a range of areas of academic librarianship that foster both broad and deep understanding of how academic and research libraries operate, while strengthening UT Libraries' commitment to build a

¹ For more information on the program, see American Library Association, "ACRL Diversity Alliance," Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), September 22, 2016, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/diversityalliance>.

² April Hathcock, "Why Don't You Want to Keep Us?," *At The Intersection* (blog), January 18, 2019, <https://aprilhathcock.wordpress.com/2019/01/18/why-dont-you-want-to-keep-us/>. Hathcock notes that while residency programs "expose early career professionals to new and different types of work," they can also leave resident librarians feeling "tired, microaggressed, and demoralized."

diverse workforce internally and across the profession. This chapter is a mixture of narrative and informational writing, seeking to illustrate challenges we've faced as term-limited professionals, sharing our strategies for navigating and addressing these challenges, and recognizing opportunities to mitigate these challenges for future residents both within our own institution and across the field.

Due to the lack of published scholarship on library residencies, it is difficult for individuals considering residency programs to be aware of lesser discussed negative aspects of term positions. Issues of autonomy and agency, especially for those who are second-career resident librarians, are the most prominent in everyday experience and will be further explored throughout this chapter. There is no universal resident experience, even when discussing three residents at the same institution, but we hope that our experiences add clarity to an under-examined research area and provide practical support for those working in and around residency programs.

Meet UT Libraries' Residents

Natalie Hill was an inaugural Consuelo Artaza and Carlos Castañeda Diversity Resident Librarian from August 2018 – January 2020. For this residency, she relocated from Portland, Maine to Austin, Texas with her spouse and four pets. She has previous working experience in public libraries, school libraries, and university bookstores. Her residency rotations included Scholarly Communications, Special Collections, and Digital Initiatives. During her second year, she served as UT Libraries' Open Education Librarian. At the time of manuscript submission, she holds a permanent Instructional Designer position with the University of New England in Portland.

Laura Tadena was an inaugural Consuelo Artaza and Carlos Castañeda Diversity Resident Librarian from August 2018 – January 2020. Prior to her residency, Laura lived in Austin with her spouse and two toddlers. She is a licensed Texas educator and certified school librarian, with a background in architecture and master planning. Her residency rotations included User Services, STEM Liaisonship, Digital Initiatives, and Assessment. For her second year, she served as the Liaison for Health and Social Sciences and supported Art Instruction under the Teaching and Learning Engagement Team. At the time of manuscript submission, she holds a permanent Inclusive Services Consultant position with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in Austin.

Adriana Cásarez is a Diversity Resident Librarian who joined UT Libraries in July 2019. She graduated from her MSIS program in December 2018. She held a series of temporary positions in education and libraries in Austin until being hired as a resident. Her background is in Classics, and she has previously worked as a fifth grade Latin teacher for the Austin Independent School District. Her planned residency rotations include Humanities Liaisonship, Digital Humanities, Data Management, and Digital Initiatives. At the time of manuscript submission, she is completing her rotation in Digital Humanities.

Challenges

Through the sharing of lived experiences, we seek to illustrate trials we've faced as resident librarians, primarily as they have resulted from and related to our temporary employment status, organizational dynamics, and interpersonal relationships. We hope

to paint a realistic picture of common challenges in residency positions and encourage critical thought on how these challenges can be alleviated or eliminated going forward.

Term-Limited Status

You have to balance building something up with the reality of giving it away. It's hard to care about something and pour your heart into it and then hand it over to an unknown fate. Would someone take it over? Would they ruin it? It was challenging to mentally put myself in the position of a steward and not an owner.

Types of Term Appointments	
Term-limited: Position is contracted for a set amount of time and is often funded on a one-time basis.	Term-to-permanent: Term positions may be converted to permanent following satisfactory job performance and based on available funding. This type of contract is uncommon in residencies.

Table 1: Types of Term Appointments

Residencies are typically term-limited positions, not term-to-permanent. UT Libraries' program is funded through one-time allocations and has no structure for permanent conversion. Due to the temporary nature of residencies, new LIS professionals must relocate with the expectation that they will not stay wherever they go – often leaving behind friends, family, and their entire support system. This term-limited position is challenging in how it affects personal relationships, often exacerbating or accentuating fractures at home. Uncertainty has meant being unable to make decisions on a long-term basis, both personally and professionally. As rewarding as our residencies have been professionally, they have generated real stress. They've

challenged our sense of autonomy within our personal lives, our work, and initiatives we've undertaken.

Common Names for Term-Limited Library Positions		
Diversity Resident Librarian	Visiting Assistant Professor	Project Archivist
Librarian-in-Residence	Visiting Librarian	Resident Archivist
Resident Librarian	Adjunct Librarian	Library Fellow

Table 2: Common Names for Term-limited Library Positions

Whether staying close to home or moving across the country, we've had to make sacrifices that affect our relationships with family and friends, often feeling less connected as a result. This is especially apparent when we have young children, and stability is an essential feature of life. Changes in workload and frequent travel make it incredibly difficult to know what life will look like in a few months. We've uprooted ourselves with the hope that a term-limited position will help us build a more prosperous career. Once we settle into our new environment, changes in climate, housing status, and political leanings of a new location can affect our emotional wellness. All of us have expressed concerns about job security and the work-related stress attributed to our residency's precarious nature.

There is anxiety about leaving a career behind or turning down a permanent offer for a temporary, entry-level appointment. Instead of establishing ourselves right out of graduate school or going further in our existing career, we put ourselves on hold in

pursuit of further learning and development. In some ways, it can feel like “career purgatory.” Having weighed the opportunities and the clout available to us by working for UT Libraries, we decided it was worth the risk, but this is by no means true for every residency program. Additionally, working in a resident cohort has provided an invaluable support system that we feel has contributed greatly to our success. Without peers in the same employment status to consult and convene with regularly, we believe the negative challenges associated with our term appointments would have been far greater.

Institutional Knowledge & Organizational Politics

There were occasions where I felt as if others were fighting battles for me, but not telling me or inviting me to be a part of the conversations. While based on good intentions, their paternalism limited my autonomy and ability to assert myself.

Being new in any organization is a struggle. Being both new and temporary makes it even more challenging to understand why and how an institution functions. Institutional knowledge is the information that lives within an institution and its dominant culture. Knowledge is “...embedded in people’s minds overtime and it is demonstrated through their actions and behaviours.”³ To work at a predominantly White institution that is also a Research 1 University (R1) is to walk on a tightrope. The University of Texas at Austin, as the state’s flagship institution of higher education, is an institution with a long and storied past (and present) designed, written, and revered by dominant culture. UT

³ Adel Ismail Al-Alawi, Nayla Yousif Al-Marzooqi, and Yasmeen Fraidoon Mohammed, “Organizational Culture and Knowledge Sharing: Critical Success Factors,” *Journal of Knowledge Management* 11, no. 2 (2007): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270710738898>.

Libraries is inseparable from its larger institution in this area. Going into our residencies, all of us being native Texans, we knew this, but we didn't quite *know* it.

We knew we were walking into a place that has prided itself on elitism and prestige and accolades, but we didn't recognize how that space would begin to influence our self-perception and our interactions with others. Shared language is a barrier to accessing institutional knowledge. We had to learn to speak the language of UT Libraries, and that was not typically a reciprocal process. Language is important,⁴ and how we choose to communicate in our workplace makes the difference between inclusion and exclusion. Jargon, established by dominant culture, is assumed to be common knowledge, even though it often obscures what is trying to be communicated and alienates the listener. At times, this lack of understanding has made us feel inadequate and unwelcome, regardless of intent.⁵ Everyone has something to gain from new employees, even temporary ones. Libraries must create inclusive spaces by being flexible in their language and valuing the lived experience of their employees.

Other challenges we've encountered include developing an understanding of existing communication channels, working groups, and organizational policies and procedures. We find ourselves walking a narrow path with unclear guidelines and vague directions. These information roadblocks, caused both by UT Libraries' structure and

⁴ Isabel Espinal and Denice Adkins, "The Diversity Mandate," *Library Journal*, May 21, 2010, <https://www.libraryjournal.com?detailStory=the-diversity-mandate>. Adkins and Espinal argue that "knowledge of other languages and cultures has been dismissed or overlooked as unimportant."

⁵ Imposter syndrome and the unintentional consequences of white-centered mentorship experienced by people of color in libraries has been discussed in Jennifer Brown et al., "We Here: Speaking Our Truth," *Library Trends* 67, no. 1 (October 25, 2018): 163–81, <https://doi.org/10.1353/lib.2018.0031>.

physical size, have prevented us from rooting ourselves and knowing where to find information. Without a cohort of other residents to consult, this could have enhanced feelings of non-belonging.

I wanted to interact with departments, assess partnerships, build collections, do outreach, and collaborate with faculty. The reality is that it's hard not to step on toes when what you want to do is either not a priority, under someone else's domain, or would ultimately cause more work.

New employees need to know which areas are non-controversial, where they should tread lightly, and where to avoid altogether. Being rotation-based, we've navigated multiple units within UT Libraries' organization and worked under a variety of supervisory styles. Under these conditions, it was inevitable that we would unintentionally step into uncomfortable situations and uncover old wounds. While we don't recommend a library only hire residents with the existing ability to be assertive and self-advocate, we believe it is the library's responsibility to establish a culture where open sharing of information is intentionally encouraged and valued. This honesty and transparency is critical for any diversity resident who finds themselves in difficult situations. Without a working mechanism for honest communication, we're left to internalize our sense of non-belonging and doubt our worth within our organization and the larger profession.

As temporary employees, it can feel as if we have no agency. At times, it can also seem as if the only way to avoid institutional politics is by keeping our heads down,

even when we're being encouraged to participate and ask questions. Not knowing why and where these barriers exist is troubling and confusing. Residents should not be treated any differently than permanent staff. Information should be shared with us for our own informed decision-making. If we intentionally shield diversity residents but do not do the same for our White colleagues, then we are doing a disservice to all colleagues and going against our profession's code of ethics.⁶

Emotional Intelligence & Emotional Labor

*I did not consider what it would take **from me** to make things happen. I didn't realize that – with my specific goals, my own motivation to learn, and even the support of my residency coordinator and rotation supervisor – there were other factors at play.*

Emotional intelligence, or “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotions; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth,”⁷ is a critical skill for all individuals, but especially those from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in precarious employment situations. As a temporary employee, you are “on” at all times, in case any misstep on your part is seen as a complete negation of your ability to

⁶ American Library Association Council, “Code of Ethics of the American Library Association,” last modified January 22, 2008, <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/proethics/codeofethics/Code%20of%20Ethics%20of%20the%20American%20Library%20Association.pdf>. According to the Code, we are to “treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions.”

⁷ John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, “What Is Emotional Intelligence?,” in *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications*, eds. Peter Salovey and David J. Sluyter (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 10.

perform professionally. This performative necessity is unwarranted, untenable, and unsustainable.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work is not a requirement for UT Libraries' residents, beyond the level of DEI work expected of all Libraries' staff. However, having the word diversity in your job title definitely influences the way you perceive your role. In a majority White space, you feel double-marked as a visible minority with a Diversity title. You become hyper-aware of your presence and start to act as your own voyeur.⁸ We've all participated in DEI work with a strong commitment to educating ourselves and others, critically interrogating our own thoughts and actions and those of our institution and implementing or suggesting improvements as appropriate. This is consuming work. Recognizing past and present injustices and coming to grips with just how biased institutions are even now is draining. Doing this when your reputation and likability are some of your most valuable assets can often feel like a losing endeavor requiring an inordinate amount of emotional labor.⁹

A residency is a learning opportunity. To permit personal and professional growth, it's critical that programs build in norms for regular assessment and constructive criticism. This cannot be the sole responsibility of residents. We were promised

⁸Margaret Atwood, *The Robber Bride* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1993). Atwood notes, "Even pretending you aren't catering to male fantasies is a male fantasy: pretending you're unseen, pretending you have a life of your own, that you can wash your feet and comb your hair unconscious of the ever-present watcher peering through the keyhole, peering through the keyhole in your own head, if nowhere else. You are a woman with a man inside watching a woman. You are your own voyeur." Additionally, consult bell hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 115–31.

⁹ The term "emotional labor", or the management of personal emotions in the professional environment, was coined by sociologist Arlie Hochschild. See Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

something when we accepted this job – the training and opportunities needed to be successful within academic librarianship during and post residency – and we must ensure organizations are holding up their end of the contract. We must view feedback as a gem, and that viewpoint needs to be cultivated in all staff to avoid the very real pitfalls of imposter syndrome.

Further complications arise when we're competing with existing permanent staff for space. When your interests cross over or live fully within someone else's professional realm, it requires a great deal of emotional intelligence and emotional labor to effectively navigate a tight space. You are expected to ensure them of your respect for their work, to acknowledge the relationships they've built, and to be mindful of the increased workload that your decisions will put on them after you leave. This is a lot to ask of early-career librarians, and we think the reality of a resident's experience could (and should) be better understood by permanent staff.

While we are relatively early in our careers, we are still colleagues, and we deserve the same level of trust that is placed in any other professional, regardless of our non-permanent status. Established librarians should be champions of the diversity residency program and the residents it includes. If librarians are worried they will be undermined by a resident, they should take the time to self-reflect and consider why they feel challenged, taking some confidence in their own decades of experience. We're a profession that promotes lifelong learning, and we must practice those concepts in our everyday work.

Opportunities

Although library residencies present very real challenges that can negatively impact a resident's well-being, they are also a fantastic opportunity to learn and explore the LIS field in a way uncommon to other entry-level positions. The people we've met, the relationships we've built, and the positive experiences we've held as residents with UT Libraries have driven us in new and exciting directions. Through this section, we wish to inform others of the promise inherent in residency programs.

Skills Acquisition

You feel capable and confident with your unique skill set. It can be refreshing to think of what you'll have to offer a future employer, especially when experiencing tangential roadblocks during the residency.

The legitimate concerns surrounding term-limited positions expressed by organizations like Do Better and the letter from UCLA's temporary librarians to their administration,¹⁰ are largely not the same issues that we as residents face. Unlike these groups, we're encouraged to develop our library expertise. Our positions exist explicitly for us to be competitive, highly qualified candidates by the end of our term. This is one great benefit of the residency program. For many early-career librarians, there is a gap between the theoretical skills that were presented in graduate school and the applied experience that is required in job postings. Our residency focuses on coaching us to

¹⁰ See Hillel Arnold et al., "Do Better - Love(.) Us: Guidelines for Developing and Supporting Grant-Funded Positions in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums," January 2020, <https://dobetterlabor.com/>; Courtney Dean et al. to Sharon Farb, "Support for UCLA Temporary Librarians," June 11, 2018, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1h-P7mWiUn27b2nrkk-1eMbDkqSZtk4Moxis07KcMwhI/mobilebasic>.

build skills applicable to our professional interests and to address any gaps in understanding.

To focus our goals, we identified what areas of academic librarianship interested us and found relevant job postings. With the support of our residency coordinator, we reviewed these postings, identified necessary experience, and incorporated any missing skills into our rotation and professional development plans. Through rotations in Digital Initiatives and Digital Humanities, we've learned digital asset management best practices, created digital exhibits, wrestled with questions of ethical digital description, and organized workshop series. During rotations in Liaisonship, we've provided specialized research support, taught courses, and performed collection development and analysis. In Scholarly Communications and Data Management, we've interpreted user analytics, promoted open research practices, and facilitated a community of practice. Time management, project management, and program development were also honed throughout our residency experience.

Engaging, quality professional development undertaken in a focused and supportive environment helps to balance the challenges of being in a term-limited position. With the support of our program, we've found some autonomy in designing our professional development plans and acquiring skills in line with our individual career goals. Claiming that agency has been integral in building confidence in our own professional expertise.

Career Exploration

I wanted to learn what I wanted to do with my life.

Academic libraries are notoriously under-resourced yet desirable places to work, making true entry-level professional positions exceptionally difficult to find.¹¹ Knowing this, when you do find a position, there's a strong temptation to hunker down and never leave, because what if you can't find another one? Additionally, due to lack of resources and changing user needs, job creep is rampant and hyper-specialization is increasingly required among academic librarians. It's difficult for new library professionals to truly explore the field. One of the biggest perks of UT Libraries' residency program is the ability to explore multiple areas of academic libraries and archives. While rotations add a level of complexity to residency coordination, they were a large part of why we chose UT Libraries in the first place. They've also been incredibly useful in not only illuminating what we want to do professionally, but also what we would rather not do.

Going into grad school, we all had different ideas about what kind of information professional we'd someday become; whether that was a school librarian, a digital humanist, or an archivist. We took courses focused in these areas in preparation of the need to specialize early, and we stressed over the very real possibility that we were making the wrong choices. Having this residency experience has allowed us to build on our strengths and prior experiences, while fine-tuning what it was that we liked about different areas of LIS.

It has let us catch our mistakes before they feel irreversible. For instance, being able to dedicate months to working in a full-time archives role allowed the ability to

¹¹ Eamon C. Tewell, "Employment Opportunities for New Academic Librarians: Assessing the Availability of Entry Level Jobs," *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 12, no. 4 (2012): 407-23, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2012.0040>.

really dig into the work and weigh personal pros and cons. By the end of that rotation, the resident could make the sad realization that archives aren't for them without second-guessing. The experience allowed them to better recognize and articulate what brought them joy in work. As is said in the LIS field what feels like constantly: you don't know what you don't know.

Additionally, working in a large, prestigious institution like UT Libraries gave us the opportunity to see both the job market and academic library trends in-depth. Going to job candidate presentations, being involved in a sub-committee for DEI in hiring and retention, and working for and having individual relationships with the current president of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) have been invaluable in guiding our career decision-making. We've been fortunate to witness firsthand what it means to be an academic librarian at this point in time and to proactively structure our work around those functions.

And while the role we find ourselves wanting may not exist at UT Libraries, that is okay, because we should be equipped by our organization to get that role elsewhere. Due to our term-limited status, we have the flexibility to speak openly about looking for a new job and the benefit of using the resources around us to help in the recruitment process. We can cross-train without fear of becoming replaceable. We can try new things and figure out what we want without looking like a job hopper or being penalized for flightiness. Unfortunately, this is likely not an experience we will ever have again. Even with the stress, the uncertainty, and the flux that is inherent in rotation-based residencies, this program has allowed us the opportunities to meet so many amazing

people that we likely never would have otherwise, and it has opened us up to entirely new fields of work.

Leadership Development

I really wanted to professionally level up.

Each of us knew that accepting the residency would provide us with professional and leadership development that we would probably not receive otherwise. There is a misunderstanding surrounding residencies, especially diversity residencies, that these positions are a crutch for individuals who were not able to find permanent employment. However, this is not the intent of residencies, nor is it the reality for many residents. The ACRL Diversity Alliance residency programs are an investment for the LIS profession. Through these programs, residents may catapult through this profession while effecting change along the way and becoming tomorrow's leaders. Residencies are a prestigious opportunity to fast-track into leadership positions.

Our program's model has developed our leadership skills through mentorship and networking opportunities. Our residency coordinator, supervisors, mentors, and Vice Provost and Director have each taken an active role in connecting us with their professional networks. Through the efforts and connections of our Director, we've held leadership discussions with leaders across our organization, our institution, and our wider community. She has also set aside time for standing meetings with her throughout the year, where we've been provided the opportunity to share updates on our work and our well-being in the program, as well as learn directly from her in an unfiltered setting.

UT Libraries' Diversity Residency Program includes a set allocation of professional development funds for each resident. Throughout our time with UT

Libraries, we've been empowered to take part in many professional development opportunities. Between the three of us, we have led workshops, presented at conferences, organized webinars, and served as invited mentors. Our organization wants us to succeed and has provided monetary and moral support in order for us to do so. Our coordinator has organized practice job talks, reviewed application materials, and provided us with letters of recommendation. We had dedicated time within our first year to acquire new skills, and when planning our second year, we were able to earmark time for mentorship and leadership training.

Looking Forward

To close this chapter, we want to provide strategies for organizations and prospective diversity residents to use in designing and maximizing positive diversity residency experiences. While the material conditions surrounding organizations and residency programs vary greatly, we've identified elements in our own experiences that should be present for program and resident success.

Supervising a Resident 101

Expectations and Communication

It is impossible to navigate new departments without clear expectations. If you want your resident to be successful, you need to define what success looks like programmatically and for the individual resident in accessible and actionable terms. This also means communicating this information to all staff on a regular basis. Do not force a resident to feel as though they must justify why their position exists to their colleagues. Additionally, ensure that lines of communication are open for the resident, should any issues arise. Be proactive in your communication approach but respect the autonomy of your resident and avoid any tendencies to micromanage.

Feedback and Trust

Create an organizational culture where employees are encouraged to fail forward and feedback is truly a growth opportunity. Without this framework it can be difficult for residents to innovate and suggest improvements in line with the spirit of residency programs. Their lived experiences can help shape and positively impact the organization, but this is only possible in a safe and trusting environment. Work to build up cultural competence in all staff before hiring a diversity resident and continue this work after the resident's arrival. Listen to what the resident has to say (whether or not you really want to hear it), find ways to say yes to the resident's wants and needs (even when it's difficult), and extend opportunities for tailored personal and leadership development (even when the budget is tight). If you or your organization are unable or unwilling to commit to doing these things, then you shouldn't have a residency program.

Community

While a formalized residency committee may not make sense in every organization, a group of individuals that act as peer mentors, advisors, coaches, and potential sponsors can help establish a strong culture of support.¹² It also provides a cohesive vision for the organization's residency program, improves the efficiency of long-term planning, eliminates the percentage chance of individual bias, and distributes the necessary work in a more equitable fashion. Residency stakeholders may also connect their program's resident with past and current residents so this burden does not fall solely on the resident. Community-building is key for diversity residents.

¹²For more on sponsorship, see M.S. Eisler, "Informal Mentorship Matters: One Librarian's Leadership Journey," in *Beyond Mentoring: A Guide for Librarians and Information Professionals*, ed. Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen, Chandos Information Professional Series (Amsterdam: Chandos Publishing, 2017), 39–43.

Organizations must make efforts for residents to connect, whether through a cohort model or networking beyond the organization.

Dear Future Resident

We see you. LIS needs more people like you in professional roles. You have a lot to contribute, and we will all benefit from learning more about your experiences and your perspectives on libraries and archives. Consider this the letter we wish someone would've given us when we began our residencies, and hopefully it can serve as a source of guidance as you begin your own residency journey.

It is temporary, and you will get through it. First and foremost, there is an end in sight. It's incredibly important to understand an organization's culture before accepting a residency there, but if you've misjudged and recognize that this is not the place for you, that is completely okay. This will not be permanent. Distance yourself from negativity, connect with individuals in similar positions, and plan for your next move.

It is temporary, so make the most of it. A residency should be self-directed. If opportunities are not presenting themselves, make them. If they are not happening within your organization, look for them across the field. Be assertive in terms of goal-setting and evaluations. Allow yourself to be a burden and ask for what you need to get the most out of this experience in your limited time.

It is temporary, so you can create your path. Embrace the fact that in a term-limited position, you get the chance to determine what you like and or don't like about a position, organization, or location. Your time is precious. Don't feel like you have to say yes to every opportunity that comes your way, but ask yourself whether something is

actually beneficial to you and your goals. Do what you want to do while you have the freedom to choose.

It is temporary, but the profession is small. Don't burn bridges. There are only so many academic libraries, and at times it feels like you know every librarian who works in each one of them. As you specialize, things start to feel even smaller. You will see people you know at every conference you attend. It's often exhausting to maneuver these spaces, but there are many people who want to see you succeed, and most colleagues are willing to assist you and help you build connections across the profession.

It is temporary, and there is no security at the end. As diversity residents, we are entering a profession that historically has not made space for us, and we feel an intrinsic need to hustle and make that space for ourselves. There's certainly value in that work ethic but be sure to check in with yourself regularly on why you're doing what you're doing. Otherwise, you will run yourself ragged and forget what you ever enjoyed about the field in the first place. The need to find permanent, fulfilling employment is real, but so is the need for stillness.

It is temporary, but you are not. You deserve acknowledgment, time, and praise. This is a job, and a job is not a life. Be sure to prioritize yourself and your needs. Pay close attention to your mental and physical wellness – your sick time is a right, not a privilege. Ask questions, ask for help, ask for time off, ask for merit. Know that this is only for now.

It is temporary, and you will get through it.

It is temporary, so make the most of it.

It is temporary, so you can create your path.

It is temporary, but the profession is small.

It is temporary, and there is no security at the end.

It is temporary, but you are not.

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