Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning

Mentoring in Higher Education Should be the Norm to Assure Success: Lessons Learned from the Faculty Mentoring Program, West Chester University, 2008-2011

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Mentoring in Higher Education Should be the Norm to Assure Success: Lessons Learned from the Faculty Mentoring Program, West Chester University, 2008–2011

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Despite a wealth of qualitative and quantitative data regarding the positive effects of higher education mentoring programs on faculty satisfaction, retention, tenure, and promotion, mentoring programs are not widespread. The authors examine evaluative data from the first four years of the Faculty Mentoring Program at West Chester University. Of the mentors and mentees who filled out evaluation surveys, 100% recommend the program to colleagues and the majority felt the program should become part of the culture and expectations at the university. Common themes emerged from content analysis of qualitative data: (a) centrality of relationship; (b) mentoring for planning and prioritizing career goals; (c) acquiring new skills; and (d) time and scheduling challenges.

Keywords: mentoring, higher education, retention, tenure and promotion

Introduction

Despite a wealth of both qualitative and quantitative data as evidence of the positive effects of higher education mentoring programs on faculty satisfaction, retention, tenure, and promotion rates (Allen & Eby, 2007; Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Johnson, 2006, 2008; June, 2008; Mullen & Kennedy, 2007; Perlmutter, 2008), formal mentoring programs are far from widespread among institutions of higher learning. There are notable exceptions. There have been long-standing, exemplary Faculty Mentoring Programs (FMPs) at a number of public and private institutions (both at the university level and at the programmatic level), for instance: City University of New York, Hunter; Emory University; Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing; Marquette University; Penn State College of Education; Stanford Medical School; University of California, San Diego; University of California, San Francisco; University of Hawaii, Manoa; University of Oregon; University of Michigan; Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania; and Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. As one can see from the list, some of these formal FMPs are specific to colleges or schools within a university such as the program at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (MacBain, 2011), Penn State College of Education (http://www.ed.psu.edu/general/mentoring.asp), and Stanford Medical School (http://med.stanford.edu/academicaffairs/).
Some programs are specific to gender and racial/ethnic equity issues such as those at University of St Thomas, Purdue University, Fitchburg State College and Florida A & M University, and Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Women Mentoring Women Program (http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/careers/women.html). Why aren’t formal mentoring programs the norm in colleges and universities?

In this article, the authors examine evaluative data from the first four years of the FMP at a mid-sized, public university in the northeastern United States. The data may shed some light as to why FMPs are not the norm in higher education or are relatively short lived. Answers may lie in the extent of administrative support, both financially and in spirit, that is, in promoting mentoring as a normative expectation of new and probationary faculty or a culture of mentoring (Johnson, 2007).

Overview of Mentoring in Higher Education
Mentoring is first and foremost a relationship. The mentor can be all or one of the following: a trusted counselor, coach, tutor, advisor, trusted guide, trainer, advocate, and/or role model. At its best, mentoring can be a life-altering relationship that inspires mutual growth, learning, and development. Its effects can be remarkable, profound, and enduring; mentoring relationships have the capacity to transform individuals, groups, organizations, and communities (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

A fair amount of evidence exists that supports the idea that new faculty who have the help of a mentor fare better as scholars and experience higher confidence and morale (Allen & Eby, 2007; Ambrose et al., 2005; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Johnson, 2007, 2008; June, 2008; Mullen & Kennedy, 2007; Perlmutter, 2008). Mentoring is one way in which new faculty can acquire the skills needed for a successful academic career.

Across the nation there are increased expectations for faculty scholarly productivity (Mullen & Kennedy, 2007). The point has clearly been made: faculty who want tenure and promotion must publish research findings, preferably research that furthers the mission and meets the needs of the university (Brown, 2006). Hand in hand with the increased expectations for scholarly and creative products, comes increased expectation for use of innovative and evidence-based pedagogy and assessment of learning. Finally, there is also an increased expectation regarding service to the department, university, and community.

While formal mentoring programs have increased in popularity nationwide, much more critical analysis is needed (Mullen, 2008). Mullen found that mentoring often takes place informally: that is, the mentor and mentee “find” each other and guidance and advice is exchanged without any prearranged schedule or agenda. The common advantage of such informal mentoring is a good fit between mentor and mentee. However, it may be difficult for junior faculty members to identify and approach a mentor early in their career and little is known about informal mentoring. In addition, lack of institution-wide, formalized mentoring programs can lead to department-specific disparities in adequacy of mentoring, opening the possibility of gender, and racial/ethnic disparities, as well (Hyers, Syphan, Cochran, & Brown, 2012). Formalized academic mentoring relationships typically involve an experienced professor (mentor) supporting a neophyte professional (Mullen, 2008); although the case has been made that the faculty would benefit from mentoring relationships from initial hire through retirement (Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000). Effective mentors guide, using their institutional knowledge of the norms, values, and procedures of the institution and from professional experience. The
ideal is for faculty to become more quickly socialized to academia with the help of seasoned colleagues who serve as role models and advisors. In a formal mentoring program, faculty members are often assigned to the relationship by a third party, such as a program coordinator (Campbell & Campbell, 2007).

Outcomes derived from a formal mentoring experience include the exchange of experiences and best practices, as well as desirable cultural change (Mullen & Kennedy, 2007). The facilitation of collegiality and interdependence via formalized mentorships can be thought of as a cultural reform strategy. Fullan (2006) persuasively argued in *Turnaround Leadership* that “all successful strategies aimed at changing educational cultures are socially based and action oriented” (p. 44). Establishment of a mentoring culture in higher education could generate widespread cultural change, a culture in which prizes mentor/mentee relationships (Gladwell, 2002).

**Establishing a Mentoring Culture**

Mentoring humanizes the workplace by building relationships of the head, heart, and soul. The importance of embedding mentoring in the organization’s culture cannot be overemphasized. An organizational culture profoundly influences its people, processes, and business practices (Zachary, 2005). Zachary described the ripple effect that mentoring has because of its effects on others, including those outside of the mentoring relationship. Mentoring helps people build new relationships and strengthen existing ones; people become more collaborative in their performance and learning, and individuals feel more prepared to offer themselves as mentors to others.

A mentoring culture helps people meet adaptive challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002); it facilitates new learning and organizational resiliency in the face of rapid change. The impact of culture is omnipresent; it has both a conscious and an unconscious influence on human behavior (Galpin, 1996; Kotter, 1996; Phelan, 1996).

Zachary (2005) stressed the importance of taking the time to know the culture. Lack of cultural congruence, a cultural mismatch, is one of the primary reasons that mentoring fails to take hold in an organization. Far too many mentoring programs fail or merely survive because they were not sufficiently embedded in a supportive organizational culture.

Scholars have asserted that no single mentoring relationship can meet all of a person’s human needs for growth; instead, mentoring relationships live and are nested in larger developmental networks or “constellations of relationships” (Ragins & Kram, 2007, p. 9). Drago-Severson (2009) referred to these as mentoring communities, which have important consequences for the ways in which any single mentoring relationship functions. Mentoring requires a significant amount of time energy, and commitment, not to mention trusting relationships (DeLong, Gabarro, & Lees, 2008). According to Zachary (2005):

Creating a mentoring culture enables an organization to enrich the learning that takes place throughout the organization; leverage its energy; and better use and maximize its time effort, and resources. Launching a mentoring program without simultaneously creating a mentoring culture reduces its long-term effectiveness and sustainability and decreases the likelihood that a program or programs will grow and thrive over time. A mentoring culture sustains a continuum of expectation, which in turn creates standards and consistency of good mentoring practice. A mentoring culture is a powerful mechanism for achieving cultural alignment. (p. 5)
Background on the Development of the University FMP

In partnership, the authors of this paper were instrumental in assessment of the need for a formal, FMP during a period of time from 2003 to 2006. Two of the authors of the present paper conducted a university-wide, email-based short survey including quantitative and qualitative questions in the spring of 2004 that went out to all faculty (both probationary and tenured) to ascertain whether or not mentoring (formal or informal) was going on across the university in any departments. The survey was administered only once and was not a validated instrument. There were three fixed response questions. They were as follows:

1. How would you describe the support/mentoring for new faculty in your department?
   A. Formal—guidelines/policies for support/mentoring are well developed and in written form
   B. Informal—no written guidelines/policies, but support/mentoring has occurred between more senior and more junior faculty members
   C. No significant support or mentoring

2. Have you had any opportunity or been encouraged to consider collaborative scholarship/research with individuals from other disciplines?
   A. Not at all, never mentioned
   B. Mentioned as a possibility, but not actively encouraged
   C. Definitely encouraged

3. With respect to your first years at (university), would you have liked to have had:
   A. More consultation/contact with a senior faculty member or a group of faculty members for support/mentoring?
   B. About the same degree of consultation/contact
   C. Less consultation/contact, as I felt that my independence/privacy was intruded upon
   D. No significant consultation or contact

The survey also had one open-ended question, which was:

Since coming to the university, please describe any problems you may have had in receiving support/mentorship in the three areas faculty are evaluated in when working toward tenure and promotion: teaching, scholarship, and service.

The response rate of probationary faculty, which numbered approximately 100 at the time, was 27%. A high percentage, 79%, of those probationary faculty members who responded reported that no mentoring (27%) or only informal mentoring (52%) was occurring in their departments. An equally high percentage of respondents, 79%, reported that collaborative scholarship/research had only been mentioned as a possibility, but not actively encouraged or that collaborative endeavors had not been mentioned at all. Over half of respondents (52%) would have liked more consultation/contact with a senior faculty member or group of senior faculty members for support/mentoring. The
answers to the open-ended question provided further evidence that a formal, FMP was needed. Twenty-three out of 27 respondents reported significant problems with receiving explicit support/mentoring in the three areas faculty are evaluated in when working toward tenure and promotion. Some commonly mentioned concerns included expectations around scholarship and service are too vague, no release time from teaching load to pursue outside funding and/or to conduct research, and feeling isolated with respect to engaging in scholarly activities. A number of respondents did report specific, positive experiences including the Faculty Development Office’s research grant seminars, and helpful and empathic guidance from department chairs and/or senior faculty members. Three respondents mentioned helpful mentorship/support from faculty members in another department.

Respondents were very specific as to what sorts of support/mentoring is needed to help them succeed. Common themes included: (a) ongoing, probationary faculty seminars (perhaps every other month in the first year or so), (b) formal, written guidelines surrounding opportunities for mentoring/support by more senior faculty and opportunities for collaborative scholarship, (c) more clear and succinct guidelines for expectations around teaching, scholarship, and service—perhaps a year by year guide for suggested activities/level of involvement, and (d) a reduced teaching load in the first couple of years in order to develop a research/scholarship agenda.

Dr Hyers, Department of Psychology and Dr Brown, Department of Communications received support from West Chester University’s Office of Social Equity, the College of Arts and Sciences and the Provost’s Office to conduct more formal research across campus concerning the mentoring experiences (formal and informal) of faculty with an emphasis on those who were members of under-represented gender and/or ethnic/racial groups in their departments. Dr Hyers and Dr Brown found that although there was, indeed, mentoring (largely informal) going on across the campus for probationary faculty, that women faculty who were in departments where women were numerically under-represented and faculty of color in all departments were receiving significantly less informal or formal mentoring experiences than their white, male counterparts (Hyers et al., 2012). In 2006, an official, university-wide, stand-alone committee was recognized, co-chaired by Dr Bean, Department of Graduate Social Work and Dr Hyers. In the summer of 2007, the Provost awarded a modest grant to support the costs of a new mentoring program. In 2008, a Presidential Initiative Grant was awarded to continue the development and expansion of the program.

To date, in the nearly five years that the FMP has been in existence at the university, 54 mentees have been paired with 42 mentors. Mentors can be paired with more than one mentee. Mentors are recruited through a combination of two methods after campus-wide solicitation sent out through the Provost’s office via email; mentors could be identified by Faculty Mentoring Program Steering Committee (FMC) members or mentors could self-identify. Mentor profiles are posted on a dedicated, web-based learning management site. Mentors are trained through an orientation and given a manual created by the FMP Coordinator and members of the FMC. Potential mentees are invited to participate in the FMP via a variety of methods. Incoming faculty are introduced to the FMP at an annual New Faculty Orientation. Returning tenure track and/or promotion track faculty are reminded about the program via an email from the Mentoring Coordinator that is distributed electronically through the Provost’s office.
Mentors, who are tenured faculty, provide objective guidance on ways to further teaching effectiveness, research, scholarship, creative activities, service opportunities, and other professional development in relation to the mentee’s current statement of expectations and their department’s teacher/scholar model. Mentors are matched with mentees in the following fashion: Profiles of mentors are posted on the FMP password-protected website and available for viewing by prospective mentees by early in October. Mentees can then select a first and second choice mentor. The FMP Coordinator then facilitates the partnering of mentors and mentees.

The FMC oversees the FMP in cooperation with the Faculty Mentoring Coordinator. The Steering Committee’s and Coordinator’s approach to mentor training is research based. Research findings concerning formal and informal mentoring that has (or has not) been occurring at WCU to date, conducted by members of the FMC is shared with prospective mentors and mentees via the orientation and summarized in the handbook. The FMC uses survey data collected from participants in the FMP to evaluate the program’s effectiveness, gauge participant satisfaction, and further develop the program. The findings from the first four years of the program’s existence are overwhelmingly positive. The findings will hopefully inspire other colleges and universities as to the powerful, positive impact of formal, mentoring programs on the success of the academic careers of probationary faculty.

The FMP at this university has from the beginning strived to become a part of and transform the culture of the campus to that of mentoring being a central value. The findings from the first four years of evaluative data have pointed to the importance of establishing this central value.

Method

After two semesters of work together, mentors and mentees were asked to fill out evaluation surveys which were distributed electronically. Confidentiality and privacy of participant information was maintained by having a graduate assistant remove any identifying information (department, college) on the surveys except for mentor or mentee status. The answers to open-ended questions were then entered into a word document (one for mentors, one for mentees), grouped by question before another graduate assistant and one of the researchers analyzed the data. For the answers to the quantitative survey items, the graduate assistant entered the data into a spreadsheet (one for mentors, one for mentees), without any identifying information before one of the researchers performed the data analysis (for the first two years of the program, participants were also asked to complete evaluation surveys after one semester of working together. The response rate for these was very low and thus, this practice was discontinued in years three and four). The surveys included both closed-ended, Likert-scale items and open-ended items. The survey can be found in Appendix. The survey was designed to measure customer (both mentor and mentee) satisfaction and to gather suggestions for changes and improvements. The survey had face validity, but there was not a panel of subject matter expert raters that assessed content validity (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). As to content validity, Dr Bean and Dr Hyers did work together to develop and analyze the questions as to whether they were measuring what they were intended to measure (i.e. customer satisfaction with the mentoring program and suggestions for improvement and changes).
The same questions were asked in the same order for each of the four years, thus enhancing reliability of the data.

Mentors and mentees both completed a series of demographic questions regarding their department, rank, and whether or not their gender and/or ethnic group or race was under-represented in their department. They were also asked whether their mentor pairing was cross-departmental and/or cross-disciplinary or within department/discipline. Cross-departmental/disciplinary pairings were encouraged, but not required in the program.

The response rate was quite consistent across the four years. For mentees, the response rate was nearly 60% across all years of the program. A total of 31 end of year mentee surveys were received out of a possible 54 mentees matched over the four-year time period. The response rate for mentors was 50% across the four years. A total of 21 mentor surveys were received out of a possible 42 mentors in the four years.

Quantitative data was compiled, analyzed, and summarized utilizing descriptive statistical analyses (mean, mode, and percentage) via SPSS. Only descriptive statistics were calculated as the data were at either the nominal or ordinal level. Content analysis was used for the qualitative data from the open-ended questions on the evaluation survey. This yielded “coding categories … derived directly and inductively from the raw data” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, as cited in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009, p. 2). The codes were then analyzed for recurrent themes. The qualitative data analysis was done by two coders: Dr. Bean and a research graduate assistant. Inter-rater reliability was not calculated.

**Findings and Discussion**

It is clear that the participants from the first four years of the West Chester University FMP, both mentees and mentors, were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences in the FMP. The participants also consistently stated that there is need for a *culture of mentoring* at the university, and all expressed the desire to see the program expand. In fact, 100% of both mentors and mentees who returned the evaluation surveys over the four years stated that they would recommend the program to future mentees, mentors, or both.

**Findings from the Mentee Survey Data**

Of the 31 mentees that returned surveys, 29 were Assistant Professors and two were Associate Professors. Their departments were quite varied, including Applied Music, Chemistry, Communication Studies, Counselor Education, Early and Middle Grades Education, English, Languages and Cultures, Literacy, Nursing, Philosophy, Psychology, Social Work, Sociology/Anthropology, and Theatre and Dance. Nearly 60% were from the College of Arts and Sciences. An additional 16% came from the College of Education. About 13% came from the College of Health Sciences and about 6% each from the College of Business and Public Affairs and the College of Visual and Performing Arts. This is roughly in keeping with the sizes of the Colleges at the University.

The vast majority of the mentees were matched with a mentor who was cross-departmental (25 out of 31 or over 80%). The sample was largely female (23 out of 31 or about 75%). Most of the mentees over the four years were Caucasian (23 out of 31 or about 75%). There were four or about 13% who identified as Asian, three or about 10%
who identified as biracial/multicultural, and one who identified as Hispanic. Only three (or about 10%) stated that their gender was under-represented in their department. An additional three (10%) stated that their ethnic group was under-represented in their department.

As far as overall satisfaction with the Mentoring Program, 28 out of 31 (over 90%) mentees rated themselves as very satisfied and three rated themselves as Moderately satisfied. No mentees chose a rating less than Moderately Satisfied.

In Table 1, we summarized the types of contact with the mentor and how often that contact occurred according to the mentees who filled out the surveys:

In rating the quality of the relationship with their mentor, 16 of 31 (52%) rated the relationship as “excellent” and another 14 (45%) rated the relationship as “good.” Only one mentee rated the relationship as “average.” An overwhelming majority of the 31 mentees, 26 of them or nearly 85% stated that they foresaw a continued/future relationship with their mentor. Another 16% stated that they were not sure about whether they will continue a working relationship with their mentor. No mentee stated that they would definitely not continue a working relationship with their mentor. Over 70% (22) of the mentees stated that they found the Mentoring Program Coordinator to be “very helpful.” Another 13% (4) found the Mentoring Coordinator to be “somewhat helpful.” Four mentees answered the question regarding “how helpful has the Mentoring Coordinator been” as, “no way to judge/NA.” Finally, as stated earlier, 100% of the mentees would recommend the program to future mentees and/or mentors.

Themes Found in the Qualitative Data from the Mentees

As mentioned previously, Dr Bean and Dr Hyers worked together to develop and refine the questions, both quantitative and qualitative for the survey. Mentors responded to the following, open-ended questions (see Appendix for complete survey):

1. Which aspects of the mentoring program have you found to be most beneficial and why?
2. Which aspects of the mentoring program have you found to be the least beneficial and why?
3. How can the university improve its mentoring program?
4. In what ways do you feel that your mentor contributed to your professional development?
5. Were there any areas in which your mentor was not able to provide support or assistance?

There were five, common themes found across the mentees’ answers to these questions: (a) relationship is what matters, (b) mentors helped in planning and prioritizing career goals, (c) mentors helped in acquiring new skill sets, (d) time constraints and scheduling conflicts were the biggest challenges in the mentoring relationship, and (e) the program is very good to excellent as it is and should be expanded.

Relationship

In myriad ways, mentees addressed the centrality of relationship in the quality of the mentoring relationship. Many expressed how important it was that they had a go to person to answer questions on topics ranging from dealing with difficult students to understanding the politics of both departmental and university-wide communities. Consistently, over and over the mentees described the most helpful aspect of the relationship as having regularly scheduled, one-on-one, confidential time with the mentor. Often, encouragement and/or emotional support were mentioned as the most important aspects of the mentoring relationship. Most mentioned that the cross-departmental matching was desirable for confidential information discussed with the mentor.

One mentee stated that they appreciated:

... having someone to talk with about problems, issues, ask questions of, etc. My mentor was very open to discussing topics that are important to me as a new faculty member. Moreover, (s)he was great in asking about how I’m doing. This is an important question for new faculty members—one that isn’t asked very often because of the busyness of our lives at WCU. The mentoring program allows for us to carve out the time needed to talk about important questions like, “How are we doing?” and reflect on and evaluate our experiences as a faculty member.

Planning and Prioritizing Career Goals

Most mentees mentioned planning both short-term and long-term career goals, particularly around teaching and research/scholarship was the most important topic that they discussed with their mentors. One mentee noted, “Long term planning eased transition into WCU life and adjustment to (the) culture.” Another mentioned that “setting targets, [and] developing a realistic sense of expectations” was an exceedingly important benefit of the mentoring relationship. One mentee mentioned that their mentor helped with “time management/prioritizing.” Another stated, “(S)he helped me put everything in perspective—tenure and promotion requirements, time commitment to each of the areas of teaching, research, service, etc.”

Acquiring New Skills Sets

Many mentees mentioned new skills that their mentor helped them to develop, particularly in the areas of research/scholarship and teaching. One mentee stated that their mentor “helped me structure and organize my research agenda.” Another mentee mentioned
that their mentor, “helped with teaching evaluations/teaching opportunities.” Still another mentee stated that the mentor helped with “information with working on research grants, writing, and conference presentations.” A number of mentees commented that they received scholarship advice and/or collaboration around grant writing, research, conference presentations, and writing. One stated, “Because we share similar research and teaching interests, we email often about these and collaborating on projects.” Another, new faculty member mentioned learning about how to deal with challenging students. “As a young faculty member, I benefitted from my mentor’s experiences in dealing with students. I also believe my mentor’s professional interests, helped give me insight into dealing with potentially difficult student situations.”

**Time Constraints and Scheduling Conflicts**

Six mentees stated that all aspects of the mentoring program were beneficial. Among those that offered opinions on the least beneficial aspects of the program, a number mentioned time constraints and scheduling challenges with their mentor as being significant. “Trying to find time to connect” and “mentor not available” were two examples of the challenges mentioned. In fact, over the four years, the Mentoring Program Coordinator was alerted by four mentees that they had met with their mentor only once or never during the two semesters in which they were paired. Unfortunately, these mentees did not come forward with this information until after the two semesters were complete. Otherwise, the Coordinator could have offered to facilitate connecting with another mentor. There was also one mentor who shared that their mentee was not reliable in keeping scheduled appointments. Both mentors and mentees have mentioned that the responsibilities of both mentees and mentors in scheduling and keeping regular, monthly appointments are equally shared.

**Program Should Expand**

Mentees overwhelmingly stated that they felt that the program was very good or excellent as it is and that they thought the program should be expanded. Eight mentees stated that either the program is excellent and/or that it should continue as it is. Many mentioned that the program should expand to more faculty members at various stages of their career. Also, many suggested that the program “start sooner and last longer.” Another mentee mentioned that not only should the program be expanded, but that perhaps there should be sub-groups formed such as, “publishing/scholarship groups for faculty” with similar interests. Many suggested that there should be more recognition of the accomplishments of mentees and mentors as well, particularly by the administrators of the university. Finally, several mentioned a “culture of mentoring” at the university as being essential the program’s development.

**Findings from the Mentor Survey Data**

Of the 21 mentors who returned surveys over the four years, nine were at the Associate Professor level and 12 were at the Full Professor level. Their departments were quite varied and included Applied Music, Communication Studies, Counselor Education, Early and Middle Grades Education, Social Work, Health, History, Kinesiology, Mathematics,
and Psychology. Nine or 43% of the sample were from the College of Arts and Sciences. There were four each from the College of Education and College of Health Sciences and three were from the College of Business and Public Affairs. Of the 21, 14 reported being in a cross-disciplinary mentoring relationship and seven were in a mentoring relationship that was within their department.

The sample of mentors was about 62% female (13) and 38% male (8). As far as race/ethnic diversity, the sample was overwhelmingly white; 19 of the 21 identified as Caucasian. Only two mentors identified as from minority race/ethnic groups. However, six of the 21 (nearly 30%) stated that their gender was under-represented in their department. Two mentors stated that their race/ethnic group was under-represented in their department.

The group of mentors was also either very satisfied overall with the mentoring program (71%) or somewhat satisfied (29%). No mentor rated their overall satisfaction with the mentoring program below somewhat satisfied.

In Table 2, we summarized the types of contact with the mentee and the frequency with which that contact occurred according to the mentors who filled out the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of contact</th>
<th>Type of contact (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never/NA</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a month</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a month/not regularly</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=21.

Themes Found in the Qualitative Data from the Mentors

The same, open-ended questions were asked of the mentors as were asked of the mentees. There were five, common themes found across the mentor answers: (a) relationship, is what matters, (b) mentors took pride in helping mentees with planning and prioritizing...
career goals, (c) mentors derived satisfaction in helping mentees with acquiring new skill sets, (d) time constraints and scheduling conflicts were the biggest challenges in the mentoring relationship, and (e) the program is very good to excellent as it is and should be expanded. These themes were essentially the same as those found in the qualitative responses of the mentees.

Relationship
Consistently, mentors described the benefits of having a relationship with their mentee. Many commented that the one-on-one meetings that were face to face were rewarding for both parties. Several commented on the opportunity to link colleagues from across departments. One mentor stated, “linking people from across departments helps us to get to know one another and can possibly lead to stronger work collaboration (i.e. writing together or doing research together).” Another commented, “Meeting with a mentee from another discipline allowed the mentee to feel free to ask questions and share opinions with me without fear of being evaluated.”

Pride in Helping Mentee to Plan and Prioritize Career Goals
Mentors offered insights on publishing, conferences, and scholarship pieces. Mentors also provided a safe place to ask questions and think through career moves. One mentor commented, “I helped my mentee sort out priorities in professional development. Guidance was needed regarding scholarship, teaching and service priorities.” Three mentors mentioned helping their mentees navigate politics on campus and making decisions about service obligations. Many discussed scholarship and writing strategies with their mentees.

Satisfaction in Helping Mentee Acquire New Skills Sets
Several mentors mentioned helping their mentee develop new skill sets. Technology support was a reoccurring theme. One mentor mentioned, “I wasn’t able to help with the technology, but did know the right place to send my mentee.” Another mentor shared information about tenure, advisement, advice regarding students who were difficult, and showing the ropes of who to contact for various issues. Understanding the grant writing process was a skill set that many mentees lacked and their mentors were able to explain support.

Time Constraints and Scheduling Conflicts
One mentor commented, “There needs to be more of an emphasis on the mentors/mentees shared responsibility to meet.” One mentor mentioned the need for more mentor training. Two mentors felt that there should be more opportunities for mentors to share their mentoring techniques and issues with each other. Another mentor mentioned the challenge to appreciate the course content that their mentee was teaching since the subject area was so different. Time and scheduling constraints to meet with their mentees were consistent challenges.
Program Should Expand

Program expansion was mentioned several times. An expanded handbook was suggested as well as more opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet face to face. One mentor commented, “Expand! Have chairs of each department that has new faculty member recommend the program!” Another mentor stated, the university, “needs to institutionalize it more so that professors feel it is good to participate rather than the program being somewhat invisible and not administratively sanctioned or supported.” Several mentors felt that more support financially and in presence of administrators would strengthen the program.

Conclusions

More long-term data are needed to unequivocally conclude that the university’s FMP is effective in enhancing success, in terms of retention, tenure, and promotion retention rates for probationary faculty. Questions that must be answered in the future include, Do those probationary faculty members who choose to have a mentor enjoy higher retention, tenure, and promotion rates than probationary faculty members that do not choose to have a mentor? To date, in the FMP, eight faculty who participated in the FMP as mentees have applied for and received tenure and promotion. Granted, this is anecdotal data and there is not a comparison data-set regarding faculty success rates for those not in the mentoring program. Still, that is a 100% success rate regarding tenure and promotion decisions for probationary faculty members who have participated in the FMP. However, those are very preliminary data, as many probationary faculty members who have been mentees have not yet applied for tenure and promotion.

We have added to the body of knowledge regarding FMPs in higher education in a number of ways. One of the most important facets of the present research is the combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodology. The quantitative data indicates that frequency of in person, phone, and email contact is a central factor in how mentees and mentors rated the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship. Those pairs that had the most frequent, regular contact rated their relationships as above average or excellent much more frequently. The common themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis of the mentee responses: (a) relationship is what matters, (b) mentors helped in planning and prioritizing career goals, (c) mentors helped in acquiring new skill sets, (d) time constraints and scheduling conflicts were the biggest challenges in the mentoring relationship, and (e) the program is very good to excellent as it is and should be expanded; were virtually identical to the themes that emerged from the analysis of the mentors’ answers to the open-ended questions on their surveys. The centrality of the relationship as what is important to both mentees and mentors is remarkable. Mentoring is first and foremost a relationship, as the authors have stated earlier. Our findings are aligned with that of other scholars’ investigations and writings as to how important the quality of that relationship is for both partners (Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Johnson, 2006, 2007, 2008; Mullen, 2008; Perlmutter, 2008). Mentors as well as mentees rated the quality of the relationship as the most satisfying and important aspect of participating in the FMP. University administrators should take heed that one of the most important elements of developing and retaining promising, probationary level faculty members and maintaining satisfaction of more senior faculty members is to ensure that there are opportunities to enter into formal support systems, that is, mentoring partnerships.
Another question that should be addressed in future research is, *Should faculty mentoring become an accepted norm or expectation for new/probationary faculty?* The evaluative data from the first four years of the FMP seem to indicate a resounding “Yes!” answer to this question. However, a question with that specific wording has not been a formal part of the evaluation tool to date. The authors believe that a question like this should be added to the evaluation.

And finally, *Has the culture been transformed at the university? Is mentoring a central value?* The answers to these last two questions seem to be “not quite yet; but there is slow and steady progress.” Many mentees and mentors mentioned that the program needs to become an expectation for new and developing faculty members and that both mentors and mentees should be recognized by the administration as doing an extraordinarily important service in promoting success of faculty. Phenomenological research methods should be included in addition to positivist approaches in the seeking of answers to the above question—most specifically, in-depth interviews and/or focus groups of probationary faculty who choose to have a mentor and those who do not.

**Notes on contributors**

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Lisa Lucas, EdD, is an associate professor in Early and Middle Grades Education at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She consults in numerous school districts helping educators refine curriculum, integrate content area standards and determine processes and procedures to work as teams to make the written curriculum become the actual curriculum. She continues to lead professional development sessions throughout the United States helping teachers integrate writing into the curriculum and working with leaders with a professional development module she developed, “Presence Based Teaching, Leading and Learning.” She has published extensively in journals including Multicultural Education (2012), The Clearing House (2011), Ethics and Critical Thinking Journal (2011) and Middle Ground: The Magazine of Middle Level Education (2011).

Lauri L. Hyers, PhD, is an associate professor in the Psychology Department at the West Chester University of Pennsylvania. She received her doctorate from Pennsylvania State University with specialization in Social Psychology. She has published broadly on issues related to ethnic identity, prejudice, and activism. She holds teaching and research interests in mentoring and rites of passage to adulthood, multicultural psychology, gender socialization and diversity issues in higher education. She has recently published on higher education in journals including Psychology Learning and Teaching (2013), International Society for Environmental Ethics Newsletter (2012), Journal of Faculty Development (2012) and Journal of College Student Development (2008).
References


Appendix. Anonymous FMP End of Academic Year Program Feedback Form
Complete by May 15, 20__

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in the Faculty Mentoring Program and assisting us with evaluation and improvement! Please either complete this survey electronically (this is posted on the FMP D2L site) and email to Dr. X at __ or photocopy this survey and send in an anonymous envelope to Dr. X, Blank Hall:

Please indicate your role in the program: □ Mentor □ Mentee (New and/or Probationary)

Please indicate your position: □ Assistant Professor □ Associate Professor
□ Full Professor □ Administrator □ Other ___

What is your department? ______________ What is your college? ______________

Are you in a within-department or cross-department mentoring pair?
Same Dept. ___ Across Depts. ___

What is your gender? __________ What is your racial/ethnic background? __________

Is your gender underrepresented in your department (circle one)? Yes No

Is your ethnic group underrepresented in your department (circle one)? Yes No

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Faculty Mentoring Program (check one):

Very Satisfied ___

Moderately Satisfied ___

Not too Satisfied ___

Not at all Satisfied ___

Which aspects of the mentoring program have you found to be most beneficial and why?

Which aspects of the mentoring program have you found to be least beneficial and why?

How can the university improve its mentoring program?
1. How often did you meet in person with your Mentee this academic year?
   - Once a month__
   - More than once a month__
   - Once a week__
   - More than once a week__

2. How often did you exchange emails with your Mentee?
   - Once a month__
   - More than once a month__
   - Once a week__
   - More than once a week__

3. How often did you communicate by phone with your Mentee?
   - Once a month__
   - More than once a month__
   - Once a week__
   - More than once a week__

4. How often did you have unplanned/spontaneous meetings or communications with your Mentee?
   - Once a month__
   - More than once a month__
   - Once a week__
   - More than once a week__
   - Never (then skip the next question) __

5. Who initiated your unplanned/spontaneous meetings or communications with your Mentee?
   - Mentee initiated__
   - Other (please explain) _______________

6. How would you rate the quality of your mentoring relationship?
   - Excellent__
   - Good__
   - Average__
   - Below Average__

7. Do you foresee a continued mentoring relationship beyond the end of this program (after May 20__)?
   - Yes__
   - No__
   - Not Sure__

8. How helpful was the Mentoring Coordinator in assisting you or being available for you?
   - Very Helpful__
   - Somewhat Helpful__
   - Not too helpful__
   - Not helpful at all__
   - No way to judge/not applicable__

9. Would you recommend participation in the Mentoring Program to others (check one)?
   - Mentees__
   - Mentors__
   - Both Mentees and Mentors__

10. In what ways do you feel you were able to contribute to the professional development of your mentee?

11. Were there any areas in which you felt you had difficulty supporting or assisting your mentee?
1. How often did you meet in person with your mentor this academic year?
   - Once a month
   - More than once a month
   - Once a week
   - More than once a week

2. How often did you exchange emails with your Mentor?
   - Once a month
   - More than once a month

3. How often did you communicate by phone with your Mentor?
   - Once a month
   - More than once a month
   - Once a week
   - More than once a week

4. How often did you have unplanned/spontaneous meetings or communications with your Mentor?
   - Once a month
   - More than once a month
   - Once a week
   - More than once a week
   - Never (then skip the next question)

5. Who initiated your unplanned/spontaneous meetings?
   - Mentor initiated
   - Mentee initiated
   - Other (please explain)

6. How would you rate the quality of your mentoring relationship?
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Average
   - Below Average

7. Do you foresee a continued mentoring relationship beyond the end of this program (after May 20__)?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Not Sure

8. How helpful was the Mentoring Coordinator in assisting you or being available for you?
   - Very Helpful
   - Somewhat Helpful
   - Not too helpful
   - Not helpful at all
   - No way to judge/not applicable

9. Would you recommend participation in the Mentoring Program to others (check one)?
   - Mentees
   - Mentors
   - Both Mentees and Mentors

10. In what ways do you feel your Mentor contributed to your professional development?

11. Were there any areas in which your Mentor was not able to provide support or assistance?