

MAXIMIZING MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

In this special session a panel of business faculty, from public and private universities, discusses the challenges and opportunities for successful mentoring of students in a variety of contexts. The session begins with a short review of the literature on mentoring, followed by practical examples from business curriculum. The latter part of the session includes an open discussion among panel members and attendees on strategies for successful mentoring. Included in the panel are college administrators, directors of an honors program, a Small Business Institute program, an internship program, and an MBA program.

OVERVIEW

Most research agrees that mentoring is important, however there is no clear definition of what mentoring is or of what it consists. Discussions on mentorship use the term “acontextually and inconsistently” [1] and there is no agreement on a clear definition. Generally, mentoring is considered to be, “the process whereby a more experienced person helps a less experienced person develop in some specified capacity [3, p. 322]. In recognition of the value of mentoring, many organizations, including academic institutions, have attempted to create formal mentoring programs. However, investigations of such programs show mixed results. Researchers have demonstrated greater effectiveness for informal mentoring than for formal mentoring [2]. In curriculum design, academic administrators and faculty want to avail as many students as possible of the benefits of mentoring. To enhance the likelihood and degree of mentoring success, curriculum should maximize opportunities for “mentoring moments” which might further develop into mentoring relationships. Mentoring becomes especially important in academic programs targeting a diverse student body [1], especially those with populations not typically well-represented in academics and whose existing networks may not include connections to the business community.

REFERENCES

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