

BEST PRACTICES IN FACULTY MENTORING

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ABSTRACT

In light of ongoing shortages of new Ph.D. faculty in business disciplines the retention and development of business faculty is critical to the success of Colleges of Business. The intent of the current study is to review the relevant literature regarding mentoring in both industry and academe to identify best practices that have general application in the academic setting. While it is anticipated that every situation is unique, it is also anticipated that some common features of successful mentoring programs are applicable in a wider sense. It is the purpose of this study to attempt to identify these best practices in faculty mentoring programs.

INTRODUCTION

As reported by The Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), due to a variety of factors the number of academically qualified faculty available to fill open faculty positions in accredited schools of business is not sufficient. AACSB recently reported, “. . . recurring shortages of new Ph.D.s, and the expectation that these shortages in academia will be an ongoing condition for business schools, threaten the essence of business scholarship as schools burden a shrinking number of research faculty to cope with growing demands in other professorial areas.” [42]

The shortage of academically qualified faculty has created a situation where excess demand for scarce faculty resources has bid up market salaries and made it difficult to recruit and retain qualified faculty. Also in recent years economic circumstances have placed additional fiscal burdens on both private and public institutions placing an even greater premium on every penny spent on faculty recruitment and salaries. [43] In light of the scarcity of qualified faculty and very tight budget resources the retention and development of existing faculty takes on increased importance.

This paper provides a summary of best practices regarding faculty mentoring as found in the academic literature. The sections that follow review the development of mentoring theory, empirical results that test theory, along with case studies describing existing mentoring programs. The current study is intended to highlight additional literature not included in Zellers, et al [41], and to synthesize the relevant literature for development of faculty mentoring programs. Synthesis is useful since as noted by Kirchmeyer [19] the mentoring literature has grown to the point of being unwieldy. “To call mentoring ‘fashionable’ may not be an exaggeration. From a count in the social science and education databases, Colley [8] found the literature on mentoring increased exponentially over the last 20 years exceeding 1,500 articles.”

Definition of Mentoring

There is no consensus definition regarding mentoring. Bozeman and Feeney [7] cited thirteen different definitions for mentoring found in the research literature and proposed a comprehensive definition centered on differential sharing from mentor to protégé. A portion of their definition is,

“ . . . the informal transmission of knowledge, social capital, and psychosocial support . . . between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).”

Based on this definition anyone can simultaneously be both mentor and protégé due to differential knowledge and experience across various domains. Mentor roles include such titles as sponsor, coach, role model and counselor.

Benefits of Mentoring

Zellers, et al [41] cataloged organizational benefits of mentoring including

increased performance,	retention,	cultural diversity,
organizational stability,	preservation of intellectual	leadership capacity,
socialization,	capital and institutional	succession planning and
communication,	memory,	cost effectiveness.

Specific protégé mentoring benefits included increased assimilation, satisfaction, probability of success, probability of promotion, earnings, leadership development and motivation to mentor others. Unique to academe, protégé benefits included increased confidence, scholarship, satisfaction, teaching effectiveness, adjustment and reduced feelings of isolation and alienation. Benefits to the mentor in academe may include increased sense of contribution and accomplishment, personal satisfaction, revitalization, fresh ideas and new perspectives. Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima [3] provided a meta-analysis of the mentoring literature that summarized empirical research mentoring benefits.

Mentoring has also been found to reduce work-family and family-work conflicts. (Nielson, Carlson and Lankau [22]) These authors reviewed work-family conflict theory as well as literature describing social support as a mediator for work-family conflict. The types of social support included informational support (advice and info), instrumental support (resources or services), appraisal support (evaluation and analysis) and emotional support (concern and empathy).

Women and Minorities in Mentoring Relationships

Gender based mentoring concerns include exclusivity and reinforcement of hierarchical, white-male dominated power structures, and the glass ceiling. Lack of female and minority mentors inhibits success of these groups, particularly with informal mentoring programs. Cross-gender mentoring has inherent problems including paternalism, sexual tension, romance, harassment, innuendo and rumor. Mentoring styles, experiences and expectations differ by gender.

One analysis of mentoring of women in academia developed a discriminant analysis to determine important mentor characteristics for three classes of women: women seeking a mentor, women who had a mentor, and women who had been a mentor. [20] Advocating on behalf of women mentors in academia Mason (2009) related the importance of gender role models in the sciences particularly in graduate education and faculty ranks. Allen, Day and Lentz (2005) found that interpersonal comfort mediated gender differences suggesting that efforts to match cross-gender mentoring dyads based on commonalities can help to mitigate gender differences. Through a set of structured interviews with nine women faculty protégés Gibson [12] identified five essential themes of the female mentoring experience including:

- having someone who truly cares and acts in one's best interest

- a feeling of connection
- being affirmed of one's worth
- not being alone
- politics are part of one's experience

Mentoring programs focusing on "feminine" characteristics including caring, achievement, satisfaction and interest appear to be successful. Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller and Marchese [36] provided a theoretical framework for understanding mentoring effectiveness from a relationship perspective. Relationship variables considered include proactivity, openness, perceptions of similarity and perceptions of organizational support. Their results indicated mentor proactivity was related to successful career and psychosocial mentoring.

Cross-race mentoring also has inherent challenges such as protective hesitation, different preconceptions, stereotypes and mistrust. A case analysis of a mentoring relationship between a black female associate professor and a white male professor illustrated six common issues facing academics in cross-race mentoring relationships including [17]

1. trust between mentor and protégé
2. acknowledged and unacknowledged racism
3. visibility and risk pertinent to minority faculty
4. power and paternalism
5. benefits to mentor and protégé
6. the double-edged sword of otherness in the academy

Unstructured in-depth interviews of African American protégés at two research universities were used by Tillman [33] to explore mentoring effectiveness for African Americans. Tillman suggested the following guidelines for mentoring relationships for African Americans, first extra attention should be given to matching the protégé to uniquely capable mentors, second mentoring should regularly be monitored and evaluated, third specific needs of the protégés should be identified and finally where possible same-race mentors should be assigned.

The Relationship Between Mentor and Protégé

Young and Perrewe [40] focused on the mentoring process between a senior member of an organization, the mentor, and a novice member, the protégé. Stages of the mentoring relationship include initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. These authors explained that each party has expectations of the relationship, particularly regarding career support and social support and each party brings to the relationship some effort to satisfy the expectations of the partner.

Siebert [30] directly tested the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs and found that protégés with formal mentors reported higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but showed no significant differences in work-role stress or self-esteem at work. Some authors suggest that informal mentoring relationships are more effective than formal programs, and that formal mentoring programs should attempt to mimic the characteristics of informal mentor relationships. The interactions between mentor relationships, supervisor relationships and coworker relationships on an individual were explored by Raabe and Beehr [26] who found that positive leadership behaviors by the supervisor had the greatest influence on positive protégé organizational outcomes. Parise, and Forret [23] tested the effectiveness of efforts to include some characteristics of informal mentoring in formal mentoring programs including voluntary participation and input to the matching process. Results indicated that voluntary participation and input to the matching process were both positively related to some participant perceptions of the

mentoring program. Additional results included the importance of perceptions of management support and training effectiveness.

Problems with Mentoring

Mentoring doesn't always lead to positive outcomes and there are bad mentors. Bad outcomes have been typically associated with bad mentor behavior and/or bad fit. Assumption of mentoring as remediation also decreased effectiveness of mentoring programs. Scandura [29] provided a comprehensive description of the many ways that mentoring can get off track and lead to undesirable outcomes stating, "... when dysfunctional mentoring does occur, its consequences might be quite serious."

After detailing some of the benefits of mentoring, Eby and Lockwood [11] listed a range of mentoring problems from the point of view of both the mentor and the protégé.

- Common problems of mentoring to mentors and protégés included mismatches (didn't get along) and scheduling difficulties (sometimes geography)
- Unique protégé problems included unmet expectations, mentor neglect, structural separation and other (cynical mentor, not enough time)
- Unique mentor problems included feelings of personal inadequacy

One study presented by Ragins, Cotton and Miller [27] examined the correlates of mentoring in the context of mentoring effectiveness. Their research design examined the question: in the typical empirical study of mentoring, are the real potential benefits of good mentoring masked by the real costs of bad mentoring? Their results demonstrated overwhelmingly that for protégés reporting high satisfaction with the mentoring relationship the organizational benefits were positive, while in the case of protégés reporting marginal or low satisfaction with the mentoring relationship, organizational benefits were negligible or negative (costs).

Peer and Network Mentoring

Research results indicated that new mentoring programs should include all organizational members and give equity to all sub-groups. Also, mentoring isn't restricted to a single relationship and professional development isn't limited to mentoring. Mentoring shouldn't occur in hierarchical terms; rather mentoring is a mutually beneficial partnership. A peer mentoring program for senior faculty was described by Huston and Weaver. [16]

Other studies indicated that collective mentoring of new organizational members was especially effective. Hybrid models with multiple mentors and multiple protégés also seemed promising. Baugh and Scandura [5] found that protégés with multiple mentors reported greater organizational commitment, job satisfaction, career expectations, perceptions of alternative employment and lower ambiguity about work roles. However, protégés with more than one mentor also reported greater role conflict indicating possible ambiguity in mentor input. Higgins and Kram [14] set forward a conceptual expansion of the paradigm for mentoring research suggesting that mentoring relationships are often more than a single dyad and that the social network research literature is useful in this endeavor. Mentors were described as one example of what is labeled, "developers," i.e. individuals who take an active interest and act to advance the career of an individual protégé. The authors proposed a typology for structuring future mentoring research with two dimensions, developmental network strength and developmental network diversity. In an empirical study testing the importance of a network of mentors,

Higgins and Thomas [15] found that short-term career outcomes were related to the protégé relationship with a primary mentor, while long-term career outcomes were significantly related to relationships with a constellation, or network, of mentors. Van Emmerik [34] tested the relationships between mentoring, developmental network diversity and strength (see Higgins and Kram [15]) and intrinsic career success (measured by job satisfaction and career satisfaction). The results indicated that the depth and range of the mentoring network was positively related to various measures of intrinsic career success.

Mentoring Networks and the Academic Career

The importance of a professorial network of mentors was described by de Janasz and Sullivan. [9] They built a case for the need of multiple mentors across an academic career to answer knowing why, how and whom. Another study which explored the role of mentoring across an entire academic career was provided by Kirchmeyer. [19] This study examined the research question: does mentoring improve organizational performance; specifically, how does mentoring affect political and social outcomes and how does mentoring affect desired performance?

Academic Faculty Mentoring

In studies from the academic setting, perceptions of success were linked to self-selection of mentor, shared interests, frequency of meetings and organizational success. Faculty in mentoring relationships reported greater satisfaction with socialization. Overall results suggest a culture of mentoring across an academic department is critical for success of formal mentoring relationships.

One particular case study reported by Johnston and McCormack [18] described a structured mentoring program pairing experienced research faculty with developing research faculty to improve research productivity. Harnish [13] also related four unique mentoring cases including:

1. An associate professor of nursing with top-notch clinical skills mentored two nursing faculty whose hospital skills had deteriorated over time.
2. A senior social science professor was mentored by a learning skills specialist regarding teaching methodology.
3. Experience biology professor mentored newly hired adjuncts regarding all aspects of the teaching endeavor.
4. An experience master teacher mentored two poorly rated teachers regarding improvements in teaching effectiveness.

Issues discussed in the article included formal vs. informal mentoring, instructional mentoring and impacts of peer mentoring.

General Guidelines and Conclusions

The broad support of mentoring both from a conceptual and empirical point of view suggests that the continued interest in mentoring is justified as a method for improving organizational outcomes. This conclusion holds for faculty in an academic setting. Given that mentoring appears to encourage faculty success the following section provides a summary of general guidelines that emerge from the mentoring literature.

The trained department head plays a primary role in monitoring and managing developmental mentoring networks for all faculty members. The assumption that faculty will independently develop effective professional mentoring networks flies in the face of reality and puts the most valuable academic

resource at risk of turnover due to either failure or success. Failing faculty leave the institution and perhaps the academy due to poor performance, while successful faculty leave the institution for higher salaries and better support. It is not in the best interest of the institution to leave faculty mentoring up to chance.

1. As described by Watson and Grossman [37] faculty mentoring efforts should be part of a broader faculty development program.
2. Faculty mentoring, as part of a broader faculty development effort, should be part of the formal supervisory responsibilities of the department head. DiLorenzo and Heppner [10], Sorcinelli [31]
3. Faculty mentoring should be managed appropriately for all faculty members and viewed from a network perspective across the entire academic faculty career. The mentoring network should be deep and broad and should include internal and external mentoring relationships to provide faculty vitality at all career stages.
4. Formal internal institutional mentoring programs should link mentors to protégés flexibly and appropriately at all career stages. Some suggestions are noted below:
 - New faculty are assigned a “developer” (3-5 years) to get them through the first year.
 - All other untenured faculty have tenured mentors for socialization and to get them to tenure.
 - Newly promoted associate professors have senior faculty mentors to establish internal/external developmental networks
 - Newly promoted full professors have senior faculty mentors to role model academic leadership.
 - All mid-career associate and full professors have internal/external collegial academic networks.
 - Selected mid-career associate and full professors are trained as faculty mentors.
5. Some generalizations regarding mentoring programs include (adapted from Zellers, et al [41]):
 - Participation of protégés in mentoring programs should be required
 - Where possible the protégé should have a voice in selecting the mentor
 - Consensus success factors included:
 - Support of senior admin
 - Alignment with mission/vision/goals/objectives
 - Linked to performance appraisal, promotion, reward and recognition
 - Sufficient resources
 - Inclusive design with cultural integration
 - Input from participants in program design
 - Voluntary participation of mentors
 - Identification of developmental needs of participants
 - Criteria and process for mentor qualification; mentor training
 - Orientation for both mentors and protégés
 - Clarity for mentors/protégés regarding program goals, expectations and roles
 - Contingency planning
 - Formal program assessment, oversight and support
 - Formative evaluation for continuous improvement
 - Summative evaluation to determine outcomes

This paper was edited to meet the proceedings guidelines. A full copy of the paper with references is available from the author, braymond@montana.edu