There is No Magic to Mentoring

Definition of Mentoring

- Experienced professional assists another in developing knowledge and skills to enhance mentees professional and personal growth
- Someone who helps another with professional development or transition, to assist in professional growth and experience
- Helping relationship where one invests time and knowledge in another person’s growth, knowledge, and skills to prepare for academic career, advancing or promoting a career
- Dynamic, collaborative, reciprocal, relationship focused on mentee’s personal and professional development

Why mentoring?

- Faculty competitiveness for tenure
- New and early investigator opportunities
- Foster faculty development, enhance academic excellence
- Develop the next scientists/future scientists
- Develop faculty, quicker time to productivity
- Build a stronger faculty with increased productivity
- Encourage and support high flyers
- Support ethnic minorities and disadvantaged
- Support women – through glass ceiling
- When organization changes or new leadership, new roles (helps with transitions)

Why Mentoring at a University or Organization?

- To meet higher standards
- Understanding of institutional values
- Improves retention/stability
- Strengthens units / better prepares and productive faculty

Why Mentoring at Unit Level

- Facilitate progression and career advancement in rank – promotions, tenure, merit
- Leadership development
- Faculty member satisfaction / morale
- Develop or enhance areas of excellence
Types of Mentorship

- Traditional / one-on-one (exclusive)
- Specialization focused
- Committee / group / collaborative
- Rolling
- Career mentor

**Individual Model of Mentee-Mentor Relationship (McCorkle)**

![Individual Model Diagram]

**Collaborative Model of Mentee-Mentor Expertise (McCorkle)**

![Collaborative Model Diagram]
Benefits of **Collaborative** Approach

- Enhanced collaboration within disciplines
- Exposure to other disciplines, knowledge and resources
- Review of mentee’s work from multiple perspectives
- Ability of mentor to oversee research process and reach mentee’s goals with experts
- Socialization to develop and use a team
- Research/scholarly – presentations, publications, funding
- Project – limited

**Career mentor**

![Diagram of mentorship network]

**Career Mentor (Like Collaborative)**

- Responsible for guidance and support
- Best if not the **direct** supervisor
- Co-mentors – team of different content and different expertise
  - Lead mentor – major leadership role
- Adopting academic values
- Managing an academic career over a long period
- Establishing and maintaining a productive network of colleagues
Principles of the Role

- Different kind of mentoring at different stages of a career / academic
  - Pre tenure
  - Tenure
  - Post tenure
- Different needs and different challenges by diversity
- Know that conflicts may occur but should be a safe environment
- Routine of evaluation of effectiveness by both mentor and mentee

Roles of Mentor

- Advisor
- Role model
- Coach
- Protector
- Supportive
- Advocate
- Challenger/motivator
- Companion
- Resource
- Teacher
- Counselor
- Navigates the unwritten rules

Desirable Characteristics of a Mentor

- Chooses to be one - volunteers
- Belief in importance of development
- Commitment to next generation of scientists
- Exemplifies excellence and integrity
- Ability to give constructive feedback
- Accessible / commits time
- Sustained optimism
- Listens actively/responds, hearing, interprets
- Has organizational skills
- Has interpersonal skills
- Has the respect of others
- Has knowledge and influence
- Willing to share
- Trust worthy (consistent, competent, confidentiality)
- Encourages independent behavior
- Provides constructive feedback
Mentors Behavior

- Provide information
- Facilitative—alternative views and options
- Confrontative—challenges explanations, probes
- Help mentee vision—to envision future of a good scientist
- Helps assess needs and establishes a development plan
- Building mentee’s confidence

Challenges of Being a Mentor

- Assessing mentee’s background (knowledge and skills)
- Identifying mentee’s motivation
- Dealing with mentee’s inexperience (knowledge and skills)
- Addressing mentee’s misconceptions
- Setting reasonable goals
- Keeping mentee engaged
- Fostering mentee’s independence
- Setting limits and boundaries
- Giving negative feedback to the mentee on lack of progress
- Allocating time
- Finding resources

Characteristics of a Mentee

- Eagerness to learn and desire to learn
- Seriousness in the relationship
- Flexibility and an understanding of mentor’s schedule
- Promptness for all appointments
- Provides feedback (a report) even if nothing is requested
- Interest: Discusses personal and professional life
- Respect for mentor
- Motivated

Benefits to a Mentee

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- Interest: Discusses personal and professional life
- Respect for mentor
• Motivated
• Leads to personal and professional growth
• Job enrichment
• Technical skills and expertise
• Develops self confidence
• Protected relationship
• Development of ideas and learning

Mentee Role Includes Understanding

• Tenure and promotion
• Policies of institution
• Sort out priorities / balance in life
• How to say “no”
• Personal and confidential
• A no fault opt out clause
• More than a social role
• What is the culture?
• Unwritten rules of behavior

Good Mentoring Communication

• Descriptions not evaluative
• Specific not general
• Focused on behavior not person
• Need focused
• Focus on behavior that is modifiable
• Well timed
• Sharing info not giving advice
• Check for clear communication

Phases of Mentorship Relationships

• Building relationship (bonding), tentative
• Developing common expectations (work style, boundaries, eager to please)
• Developing mentee professionally (motivation)
• Developing independence
• Reflection
• A "second nature" comfort in communication with the mentor
• Ending formal phase – termination
• Redefine relationships
Establish a Mentoring Relationship

- **Mutual Interests**: Faculty will want to know if have research, scholarly, academic and/or creative interests similar to theirs
- **Goals**: State goals as seen now
- **Initiative**: Take action rather than wait to be told what to do
- **Skills and Strengths**: Show why mentor should invest in mentee
  - Availability
  - Expectations
  - Potential support
  - Roles and responsibility

Requirements of a Mentor/Mentee Relationship

- Expectations should be clear
- Interaction should be clearly defined
- Time span should be defined
- Boundaries should be agreed upon
- Guide not a gatekeeper
- A mentor is a unique individual - neither friend, nor colleague, but something of a combination of these and more

Dysfunctional Mentoring Relationship

- Primary needs of one or both partners are not being met
- Long-term costs for one or both partners outweigh the benefits
- One or both partners are suffering distress as a result of being in the relationship
- Constant surprises

Predictors of Dysfunction

- Poor mentor-mentee match / expectations
  - Personality
  - Communication style
  - Relationship preference
  - Career stage
  - Career interest
  - Impatience
- Mentor technical incompetence
- Mentor relationship incompetence
- Mentor neglect
- Relational conflict
- Boundary violations / unclear
• Exploitation
• Unethical or illegal behavior
• Abandonment / disappear
• Becomes dependent
• Mentee traits and behaviors
• Misdiagnosis of needs
• Mentor fatigue / toxic mentors
• Co-dependency
• Breach of confidentiality
• Overzealous mentor
• Work style lack of congruence

Questions & Quibbles for Mentors

• Effort allocation
• Documentation of mentoring activity
• Evaluation of effectiveness
• Compensation and incentives (lack of)
• Resources to help
• Recognition (lack of) / incentives
• Lack of targets for success

MSU Research Mentor Program

• Teaching and research mentors until tenured
• 1, 3, 5 year goals (reappointment at 3 yrs, tenure at 6 yrs)
• Goals used at annual review with performance indicators
• 1:1 sessions at regular intervals at least monthly until reappointment
• External mentor for grant reviews and manuscripts; and to visit team
• Until reappointment / tenure
• Contracts and agreements
• College Policies and Indicators for promotion and tenure – reviewed regularly
• University Development Program for both teaching and research
• Internal mentor – not a supervisor but more senior faculty

Tools for Mentoring

• Contracts (Letters of Agreement)
• Policies and procedures
• Guidelines and evaluation indicators
• Training materials and opportunities
• Evaluation forms - annual
• Documentation process / portfolio
• Targets of success / report cards
• College and campus wide recognition
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Mentoring References


National Lead for Nursing Faculty Mentoring Toolkit
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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Mentoring Opportunities www.newcareersinnursing.org/scholars/career-central/mentorship


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