



FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAMS AT ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MENTORING PROGRAMS

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Abstract:

Teaching is the oldest profession in the world. Mentoring program for faculty only began as recently as the 1970's. While there are many types of mentoring programs, there is a clear need for more mentoring programs as the demographics of faculty have changed. Single parent faculty, women, minorities and foreign faculty need mentoring programs. Research has shown that there is a clear link between mentoring programs and retention of faculty. Furthermore, mentoring programs are needed at academic institutions and this paper explains why they are needed and what types of mentoring programs could be implemented to retain faculty.

Keywords: Faculty Mentors; and Mentoring.

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1. Introduction

The United States population is becoming more diverse and so is the opportunities for those wanting to be faculty members. Academic institutions mainly; Colleges and Universities often boast about their diversity at their institutions more than any other business in society, yet underrepresented minorities are lacking the mentoring needed to be successful (Louis, 2015). Mentoring is a specific type of relationship between a senior superior ranked employee (mentor) and a new entry level employee (mentee) (Humbred & Rouse, 2016). At academic institutions, mentoring can be either a formal or informal process for integrating new faculty into the academic institution community (Savage, Karp & Logue, 2004). Teaching is one of the oldest professions in the world (Yirci, 2017). Plato described teaching as participating jointly with another in order to truly learn (Hoffman, 2014). Mentoring can be viewed as a similar concept to teaching as described by Plato because mentors learn just as the mentee learns (Hoffman, 2014).

Informal mentoring programs for teachers began in the 1970's. Mentoring programs have developed since their introduction to higher education. Mentoring programs are a widespread method for teacher training regardless if they are formal or informal in nature. Mentoring is primarily seen as a duty to engage younger teachers (Beech, et al. 2013). Being a mentor means becoming a role model, source of motivation, a good communicator and being a supervisor.

Mentoring relationships are one of the greatest benefits for new teachers or in the case of this study, new faculty at academic institutions (Noble, 2017). In the 1990's mentoring programs began to transcend into formal mentoring systems put in place to pass knowledge from existing faculty to new faculty.

The earliest type of this transference of knowledge from one faculty member to another started with faculty clubs in the 1920's. The oldest school in the United States is Harvard University, and in 1920, they started a faculty club. Faculty clubs are for retired, or active faculty to attend private or social events, university events and to engage in social networking. Faculty clubs at Harvard were exclusively for men, and it was not until 1968 when women were allowed to attend events and be full members. Up until this time, they could join but paid dues and were not allowed to attend events. In 1989 the Provost at Harvard decided to make Faculty clubs a profitable club and opened the access to these exclusive clubs to all employees and staff. In 2009, undergraduate and graduate students were also allowed to join the club. Other notable schools with Faculty clubs include Stanford, Louisiana State University, Ohio State University, and the University of Pittsburgh. Faculty clubs have been on the decline since the 1990's and electronic communication and research demands have been on the rise for faculty (Savage, Karp & Logue, 2004). Faculty mentors are eager to share their knowledge with mentees when it is not seen as a burden (Reis, Strage, & Summit, 2014). Newer faculty members are often different from senior faculty in gender, student loan debts, race, religion, training and backgrounds causing some to not seek senior faculty as mentors (Savage, Karp & Logue, 2004). Junior, pre-tenured faculty do not feel prepared adequately to obtain grants, conduct research, serve on committees, or advise students (Popper, 2007). Often the expectations of mentoring are not clearly identified if the mentoring program is informal. No two mentors undertake the role of being a mentor the same just as no two mentees have the same expectations of mentoring (Popper, 2007).

Without mentoring, faculty often feel disconnected and unsupported. Mentoring programs help with research, retention of faculty and therefore retaining students by creating a richer environment for student learning (Beech, et al. 2013). Mentoring whether it be formal or informal is beneficial to both the mentor and mentee (Fountain & Newcomer, 2016). Fountain & Newcomer (2016) noted that the barriers to mentoring included time restraints, unclear expectations, lack of incentives and rewards for mentoring and insufficient resources. Adjunct faculty or faculty whom teach primarily online may feel even more disconnected to the tenured faculty, the department and the academic institution (Williams, Layne & Ice, 2014). The retention of women faculty has led to mentoring programs being developed in the Engineering, Sciences, Statistics and Biostatistics (Golbeck, 2017). Establishing women faculty mentoring programs is crucial to the retention and career development of women across various disciplines whom have shown to have a slower pace of advancement than their male counterparts (Hammer, Trepal & Speedlin, 2014). Abdul-Raheem (2016) suggested that mentoring of minorities can help non-tenured faculty overcome the cultural, social and emotional isolation minority faculty may feel. Student success has long been associated with positive relations that students have with faculty, therefore faculty retention is important for students and the academic institution (Hoffman, 2014).

2. Methodology

A literature review of mentoring programs and a historical background of mentoring was utilized in this research. The methodology was a best practices approach. Mentoring programs have evolved in various ways and informal and formal mentoring programs both provide positive benefits to the mentee and mentor alike. As stated by Humbert & Rouse (2016) mentoring has shown to impact career development and can affect faculty retention therefore affecting student retention (Beech, et al. 2013). Some mentoring relationships are low quality and not effective in their purpose. Relational mentoring theory suggests there are three types of mentoring relationships and that these three are based on the quality of the relationship. The three types include dysfunctional are the lowest quality, traditional is medium quality, and relational are of the highest quality (Humbert & Rouse, 2016). Mentoring is about building trust and establishing a good relationship (Popper, 2007). Career development can be affected by mentoring (Humbert & Rouse, 2016)

3. Results and Discussions

Medical faculty are one of the highest paid in academia, thus the retention of women medical faculty should be important to administrators at academic institutions due to their relative low numbers of women faculty (Chang, et al. 2016). Women faculty spend more time than men on campus, serving on committee and mentoring students, thus less researching and publishing less. Women faculty are less represented in Higher Ranks at research Universities. Furthermore, women faculty are more likely than male faculty leave their academic positions before achieving higher rank (O'Meara, Kuvaeva, & Nyunt, (2017). Trevino Balken & Gomez-Mejia (2017) noted that masculinized organizational practices in Business schools in the U.S. have created an imbalance of gender equality leaving female professors lacking in promotion and advancement. Women faculty representation in academic fields is actually slightly higher than in Business programs. Trevino, Balken, & Gomez-Mejia (2017) suggest that female faculty are evaluated more harshly than male faculty and it takes longer for female faculty to be promoted to full professor, along with male faculty having more pay increases due to reviews and publications. Data from 541 institutions in 38 countries shows that while women make up half of the students in Science programs they represent only 1 out of every 4 professors Women represent half of the graduate in the U.S. from medical schools yet are still underrepresented in senior ranks and leadership positions are academic institutions (Grisso, et. al., 2017).

Distance education or online education has become a long-term strategy for many academic institutions causing many faculty members to be fully online faculty members and these faculty members can feel isolated, disconnected and unsupported. Online mentoring programs have become a reality for larger academic institutions as some schools are fully online and hire remote faculty to teach online (Williams, Layne & Ice, 2014). A good mentoring program will provide guidance and training to the mentors on how to become a good mentor.

Mentoring programs also need to take into consideration the work-life balance especially of single-parent faculty or female faculty. Faculty who are parents struggle with demands for time and energy and may feel overwhelmed when they are not mentored or supported (Hammer, Trepal & Speedlin, 2014).

Beech et al. (2013) noted that underrepresented racial and ethnic minority faculty are unaware of the rewards of mentoring because they have had to use their own self-reliance to navigate their own education and job paths and have isolated themselves in the end. Louis (2015) noted that white faculty members who find themselves in minority positions struggle with their status primarily at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Positive effects within classrooms and student perspectives are noted when minority faculty are present (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). Retention of minority faculty helps recruit other minorities and it helps academic institutions who claim to be culturally diverse remain truly diverse with not only student population but faculty (Abdul-Raheem, 2016). A lack of diversity in STEM programs, (Math & Science) in particular can be further impede female faculty who are also a minority.

3.1. Characteristics of Good Mentoring Programs

Feldman (2017) states that effective mentors having three characteristics which include having competence, confidence and commitment. Nayman (2013) suggested that the best mentors have these 6 characteristics: Admirable, Reflective, Connected, Relatable, Rationable and Respectful. Good mentoring programs will include mentoring for women and minorities and is especially important in fields where men are dominating like engineering and the sciences (Wild, Canale, & Herdklotz, 2017). Mancini & Lee (2016) stated that foreign faculty often face isolation and feel a lack of support.

Good mentoring programs will also provide training, expectations and suggest activities that the new faculty member and their mentor can do together to build the relationship. Poor and Brown (2013) noted that women faculty were retained when programs that provided encouragement, structured opportunities and programs that helped with the feelings of isolation and intimidation that women engineers often feel. According to Golbeck (2017) statistics and biostatistics programs have been addressing women's issues in a mixed-gender environment. Female faculty mentoring as researched by Hammer, Trepal & Speedlin (2014) reported that female faculty mentees are looking for a mentor relationship that focuses on work-life balance. Words the mentees used to describe the ideal mentor relationship included and affirming, safe, supportive, helpful and inspiring.

Riel (2017) suggested activities for new faculty and their mentors to include attending campus events together, discuss career goals, the tenure process and academic institution procedures and how to get information regarding classes, students and services the school offers.

Gandhi and Johnson (2016) noted that mentors need formalized training in order to fully understand their role as a mentor and for mentees to see them as competent. Furthermore, mentor training improves the mentor/ mentee relationship. Gandhi & Johnson (2016) recommend 6 areas of competency that a mentor needs which include effective communication skills, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, fostering independence, addressing diversity and promoting development.

3.2. Types of Mentoring Programs

3.2.1. Formal Mentoring

A good mentoring program will be a formal one, include all faculty and adjunct faculty and will be reviewed often and changes made towards positive changes (Sheridan, Murdoch & Harder, 2015). Establishing a system for documenting and tracking mentor/mentee relationships, having mentors attend mentor training annually, conduct ongoing qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the program annually (Feldman, 2017). Formal mentoring programs can be organizationally sanctioned and be well structured. Formal mentoring is when a mentor/ mentee is paired or appointed by someone that supervises both faculty members such as a Dean or Department Chair.

3.2.2. Ad-Hoc Mentoring

One type of traditional mentoring is known as ad-hoc mentoring. Ad-hoc mentoring process is informal, and the guidance one receives is when needed, or mentoring in the moment (Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007).

3.2.3. Mentoring Network

According to Sorcinelli & Yun (2007) a mentoring network is best suited for an academic institution because it is inclusive of all faculty and adjunct faculty whom are often forgotten. In faith-based academic institutions research results has pointed to a stronger connection between the mentee and mentor when faith is intertwined in the mentoring. Positive mentoring relationships can help to retain faculty, therefore students, can help predict promotions, increase research activities within the department, improve the success of women and minorities in academia (Feldman, 2017).

3.2.4. Informal Mentoring

Informal mentoring happens when the mentee selects their own mentor. Informal mentoring programs are spontaneous and develop as relationships evolve.

3.2.5. Online Mentoring

Online mentoring can be described as being in pairs, or partnerships. Online forums are where mentees can ask a question and any mentor who chooses to answer the thread can do so, it is basically ad-hoc mentoring via online. This type of mentoring is usually a single-exchange, there is no relationship. Online mentoring is growing in capacity due to the growth of online education at academic institutions and the use of online faculty and adjuncts.

3.2.6. Two-Member Approach Mentoring

Kohn (2014) noted that a two mentor approach to mentoring new faculty members is an ideal approach. The new mentee has a faculty member as one mentor for things that are academic and a

mentor outside the academic community as a mentor for the cultural and organizational mentoring that a new faculty member must learn.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Four themes emerged from the literature review. First that mentoring takes many forms, formal, informal, ad-hoc and online mentoring. Mentoring is crucial to the career development and retention of new faculty members. It is crucial for cultural, social and emotional development of new faculty and helps academic institutions retain students. Second there is a lack of mentor training for those faculty members selected to become mentors. Only institutions with formalized mentoring programs have training and the training is limited. Third the absence of mentoring programs for women, foreigners and minority faculty is clear at many institutions. This can be for white faculty who find themselves the minority at a (Historically Black College or University) HBCU or women, minorities and foreign faculty at any primarily white institutions. Finally, the fourth takeaway is that there is a lack of literature regarding how administrators and deans at academic institutions select mentors and mentees.

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