

Effectiveness of a Faculty Mentoring Program: Reflections of A Pilot Project

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Abstract

Numerous faculty members have completed their first year of teaching in the College of Health and Human Services at Fresno State. Developing trust and having a shared experience allows faculty to successfully navigate the unwritten policies and procedures of earning tenure. The informal mentoring that occurred between three faculty from different health and human service disciplines inspired the need for this pilot project and the exploration for creating a more formalized mentoring program for the university. Best practices identified during a literature review and attendance at the University of New Mexico Mentoring Institute provided the framework for the pilot program. Eleven newly hired tenure track faculty across seven academic disciplines in the College of Health and Human Services were strategically assigned tenured mentors. Over a two-semester period of time the mentors and mentees were provided resources and had regularly scheduled meetings to guide new faculty in adjusting to the university. Using a mixed methods design, data was collected throughout the year to assess program effectiveness. Focus groups, individual interviews, and survey data will be discussed from multiple perspectives that include new tenure track faculty mentees, tenured faculty mentors, and one campus administrator. Both graduate and undergraduate students were included to assist with literature review, tool development, data collection, and data analysis. This poster presentation will describe the goals for the program, its structure, methodology, and findings. Recommendations for the implementation of a more formalized mentoring program will be shared.

Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the faculty mentoring program is the establishment of a mentor-mentee relationship that supports and promotes a productive faculty member. Mentor activities should reflect and support the mentees probationary plan. A list of mentor objectives include the following:

- provide professional guidance to mentees
- provide leadership opportunities for mentees
- share research relevant knowledge and experience with mentee
- identify and address potential obstacles to promotion and tenure
- guide mentee in opportunities for research activity
- assist mentee in developing professional networks
- enhance mentees research and publication efforts (joint publication and grant application activities)
- demonstrate/model how a mentee might develop their university and community network
- assist in providing opportunities that empower faculty to further develop their teaching and research skills by connecting them to professional development activities on and off campus