

# Personalized Support Systems Across Varying Higher Educational Settings: Recommendations for Personalized Educator Support

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This mixed methods case study examines the experiences of mentors and mentees in a personalized mentorship support program (PMSP) at a midwestern public higher education (MPHE) institution as the program transitioned from a pilot phase dedicated to historically underrepresented educators (HUE) into year two, which sought to position the program as a viable system of institution-wide faculty support and retention. Results from year 1 and 2 of the program indicate a closing gap between faculty mentors and mentees for the outcomes of career success, intention to stay, and job satisfaction. This study provides recommendations for program strategy at varying higher education institutions to better promote program innovation and future research.

## Introduction

As is true for most new employees entering a profession, new faculty face a myriad of challenges as they adjust to the various demands of higher education. As these new educators work to establish themselves through their teaching, research, and service they also navigate the challenges that arise as they acclimate to the policies, language, norms, and cultures of a new department, campus, and community. The challenges faced by new faculty can often be characterized as obstacles that require more personalized solutions (Etzkorn & Braddock, 2020; Fountain & Newcomer, 2016; Strawser et al., 2022). This study explores the experiences and outcomes of new faculty participating in a personalized mentorship support program (PMSP) and is organized around the phases of mentoring relationships (Kram, 1983; Sugimoto, 2012).

## Literature Review

The personalization offered by mentorship has been explored for its possible benefits in education and the workplace (Desy et al., 2017; Giacumo et al., 2020; Hinton Jr et al., 2020; Weinberg & Locander, 2014). Mentorship provides unique opportunities for employee or student support that can be better tailored to the mentee's experiences and aspirations. A narrative examination of mentorship in higher education provided clear benefits for a faculty mentor and doctoral student mentee across the evolution of their partnership (Hackmann & Malin, 2020). Spanning the phases of mentorship development, this five-year study found benefits that ranged from help in socialization to direct professional preparation resulting from this individualized support. Mentorship has been demonstrated as a useful means for bridging social differences through personalized relationships (Etzkorn & Braddock, 2020; Freeman & Kochan 2019; Zambrana et al., 2015).

The adaptability of mentorship and coaching systems allow organizations to implement broad-

reaching programs while also prioritizing the personalized needs of faculty who bring unique identities and experiences to this educational context. Programs that prioritize this dynamic value of inclusion can be described as being aligned with the goals of public higher education (Lunsford et al., 2018; Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). If organizational inclusion is to occur, an organization must facilitate both belonging and individuation experiences for all members, particularly those who more regularly encounter outgroup or depersonalizing messages (Shore et al., 2011; Thompson & Matkin, 2020). The primary program under investigation in this study was developed with a foundational focus of historically underrepresented educators (HUE) and the intention to provide experiences of inclusion for all new faculty at the institution (Thompson & Guo, 2022). This was a strategic choice made by administration to best provide equitable support to all new faculty members while still prioritizing the personalized needs of underrepresented faculty as they integrate into the organization. In addition to the primary mentorship program, a second higher educational institution was included in the recommendations to provide varied perspective and insights of personalized support in public higher education. Both programs prioritize mentorship/coaching relationships as a personalized method of educator preparation and inclusion.

Various studies illuminate observable trends and stages of personalized relationships (Berlew & Hall, 1966; Sugimoto, 2012; Walters et al., 2019). Kram (1983), in particular, provided a fitting framework for analysis of personalized mentorship through their work titled "The Phases of Mentor Relationships." The exploration of mentoring phases has encouraged the conceptualization of maturation for these partnerships and direct benefits for participants (Missirian, 1982; Turban et al., 2002). These phases afford researchers a time-ordered lens from which to analyze the impact of mentorship programs consistent with the time-bounded priorities germane in

case study research. The phases identified by Kram (1983) are a) initiation, b) cultivation, c) separation, and d) redefinition. These phases offer an opportunity to explore the ebbs and flows of psychological support experienced by mentees or protégés. Outcomes of trust and relatability have been connected to mentorship experiences. As Bouquillon et al. (2005) explain, “protégés need to trust and identify with their mentors to enhance the quality and effectiveness of mentoring relationships” (p. 240). These outcomes can be observed over the natural stages of development introduced by Kram (1983).

The mentorship phases have also been explored as a framework for intentionally developing these dyadic relationships. Sugimoto (2012) surveyed the discipline of library and information sciences (LIS) to determine what import these mentorship phases may have for 200 study participants within that field. The model introduced in their study confirms that “Kram’s mentoring framework provides an adequate foundation for exploring the doctoral process in LIS” (Sugimoto, 2012, pp. 112-113). The personalized mentorship support program (PMSP) investigated in this study chose to adopt these phases across an academic year for data collection and analysis. This timeline accommodated participants’ schedules best and offered a time-focused organization to related research strategies.

When seeking outcomes suited to a personalized mentorship model, it is helpful to consider studies that layer the analysis of mentorship support with outcomes ranging from identities and experiences to educator practice efficacy. In studying the success of mentorship across gender identity, Noe (1988) states, “proteges did report obtaining feelings of acceptance and confirmation, a forum for exploring personal and professional dilemmas, and beneficial feedback from the assigned mentor” (p. 473). Daniel et al. (2019) provided an examination of mentorship as it interacts with organizational diversity. They state that, “Understanding the cross-cultural mentoring dyad will contribute to the sustainability of positive higher education mentoring outcomes in the increasingly multicultural higher education population” (Daniel et al., 2019, p. 165). Faculty mentorship support has been connected to employee job satisfaction, a known contributor to organizational success (Law et al., 2014; Lumpkin, 2011; Osveiko et al., 2019; Singh & Bhattacharjee, 2020). Job satisfaction, confidence, and competence were all outcomes of a study exploring future faculty preparation through mentorship (Wurgler et al., 2014). This deserves the attention of organizations seeking to secure similar outcomes for their faculty through formalized mentorship systems. Thompson and Guo (2022) identified outcomes that align with the organizational goals of public higher education institutions, namely faculty perceptions of career success (Williams & Anderson, 1991) and intention to stay (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007); together these provide metrics for assessing the impact of a PMSP

in support of new faculty.

The literature reviewed serves as an orientation to those components explored in this present study. Personalized support through formalized mentorship shows promise as a practice and process meriting investigation. The alignment between PMSPs and the context of higher education suggests that such programs localize an environment suited for study. Additionally, the phases of mentorship afford a specific time frame to better analyze program efficiency. Finally, there are clear outcomes that can be used to evaluate the success of a PMSP in this context. These findings will be explored with a research method consistent with the purpose and central questions of this study. This study will also provide a proposal of program structure and analysis to expand the research and provide recommendations to institutions with aligned interests if not varying organizational missions. The next section provides a description of the study and its findings.

## Methodology & Findings

This case study analyzes PMSP in transition from its first-year pilot experience to the second year of the program where it expanded its membership from the pilot group of HUE to all second- and third-year faculty in the primary institution. This mixed methods study was developed to provide a review of participants across the first three phases of mentorship relationships: a) initiation, b) cultivation, and c) separation (Kram, 1983). The separation study was excluded as a data collection stage for this study given the fact that it occurs during off-contract times for participants. The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods case study is to explore how a second-year PMSP supported its new faculty. Instruments on Career Success, Intention to Stay, and Job Satisfaction will be used to measure the relationship between PMSP participation and perceptions of mentorship career support on a five-point Likert scale (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2007; Singh & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Williams & Anderson, 1991). This study utilized participant qualitative responses from varied sources and a validated pre/post survey measure to both explore the experiences of members (n=70) and analyze the program outcomes. These data allow for a blended method of analysis that prioritizes the lived experience of participants as well as metrics directed by program objectives. At the same time, how faculty experience support was explored over two phases of mentorship relationships through participant self-reporting at a MPHE institution. To more holistically explore this research problem this study converges both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data.

This paper utilizes intrinsic case study methodology which provides a suited approach for investigation of a PMSP at this midwestern public higher education institution (MPHE). This methodology has been described as, “the study

of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (Stake, 1995, p. xi). Yin (2018) expands the explanation of case studies, adding that this methodology allows for empirical investigation of a contemporary and underdefined phenomenon with variables and outcomes that can be observed from multiple sources aligning with the present study. Additionally, this study introduces a separate personalized support system for faculty at a medical education center to provide variation in the recommendations offered for organizations seeking to develop similar systems of mentorship and coaching in higher education.

The central question for this study asks, “What are the reported experiences and outcomes of participants in year 2 of a higher education PMSP?” Four primary research questions were derived to strategically collect and analyze data in a manner consistent with the central question:

- RQ1: How did participants self-report their experiences in the initiation phase of this PMSP?
- RQ2: How did participants self-report their experiences in the cultivation phase of this PMSP?
- RQ3a: How did participants self-report their experiences in the separation phase of this PMSP?
- RQ3b: How did the expectations of the initiation phase (RQ1) relate to the reported outcomes of the separation phase (RQ3a)?
- RQ4a: How did the participant reporting in year 1 compare with the transition to year 2?
- RQ4b: What observations can be made between year one self-reporting and year two self-reporting in this PMSP?

The case being assessed is a new faculty mentorship program in its second year at a MPHE. The participants include 35 mentees and 35 mentors engaged in the second year of this PMSP (12 mentees & 12 mentors in year 1 analysis). Program criteria required that all mentees were second- or third-year faculty and mentors were established in their respective organizational rank (Instructor, Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, Chair, Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Dean, Vice Chancellor, etc).

The PMSP investigated in this case study focused on developing inter-departmental partnerships and prioritized the support of diverse connections and social networks. The procedures of this mixed methods case study were concurrent and exploratory in nature. Multiple two-way ANOVAs were performed to analyze the effect of mentorship role (2= mentee, 1= mentor) and pre-post experience (1= pre, 2=post) for the dependent variables of job satisfaction, career success, and intention to stay. The model with mentorship role, pre-post experiences, and the interaction of the two predictors significantly predicted job satisfaction,  $F(3, 102) = 4.33, p = .006$ . Job satisfaction differed by mentor/mentee role such that mentees ( $M = 3.46$ ) were significantly less satisfied than mentors ( $M = 3.83$ ),  $p = .003$ . There was no main effect of pre-post experience,  $p = .436$ . Results show that there was a significant interaction between mentorship role and pre-post ratings,  $F(1, 102) = 1.72, p = .043$ . The effect of mentorship role at time one was significant such that mentees ( $M = 3.28$ ) were significantly less satisfied than mentors ( $M = 3.91$ ),  $p = .050$ . Yet at time two there was no significant difference between mentees ( $M = 3.64$ ) and mentors ( $M = 3.75$ )  $p = .366$ . Taken together this suggests that the experience in the PMSP for mentees served to increase their level of satisfaction similar to that of their mentor counterparts.

The model predicting career success was significant,  $F(3, 101) = 4.91, p = .003$ . There was a significant main effect of mentorship role such

**Table 1**

*Mean Estimates of Mentor & Mentee on Job Satisfaction, Career Success, and Intention to Stay over years 1 and 2*

Variable		Post Yr 1 M	Pre Yr 2 M	Post Yr 2 M
Career Success (CS)	Mentee	4.58	3.9	4.17
	Mentor	4.59	4.41	4.43
Intention to Stay (ITS)	Mentee	3.08	2.77	3.11
	Mentor	3.50	3.5	3.49
Job Satisfaction (JS)	Mentee	3.73	3.28	3.63
	Mentor	3.97	3.91	3.75

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**Table 2**  
*Data Collection by Stage*

Stage	Stage Description	Data Sources	Research Question
Initiation	“Work on common business tasks, recommendations from significant others, and discussions of performance or departmental concerns cause each to develop an increasingly positive expectation of the value of relating to the other” (Kram, 1983, p. 615)	Mentorship Application Pre-program Survey	RQ1: How did participants self-report their experiences in the initiation phase of this PMSP?
Cultivation	“career development, role modeling and psychosocial mentoring functions are proposed to be at their highest” (Bouquillon et al., 2005, p. 241)	Check-in Survey #1 Check-in Survey #2	RQ2: How did participants self-report their experiences in the cultivation phase of this PMSP?
Separation	“structural and psychological separation between the mentorship partners when the functions provided by the mentor decrease and the protégé acts with more independence” (Chao, 1997, p. 16)	Post-program Survey  Future Plans Survey & Testimony	RQ3a: How did participants self-report their experiences in the separation phase of this PMSP?  RQ3b: How did the expectations of RQ1 relate to the reported outcomes of RQ3a?
Redefinition	The movement of the relationship to a peer dynamic characterized as a friendship (Sugimoto, 2012).	* Redefinition data collection will be implemented in future iterations of this longitudinal study.	

that mentees ( $M = 4.03$ ) perceived lower career success than mentors ( $M = 4.42$ ),  $p < .001$ . There was no main effect of pre-post experience,  $p = .198$ . Further, no significant interaction emerged,  $p = .246$ . The model predicting intention to stay was significant,  $F(3, 101) = 4.19$ ,  $p = .008$ . There was a main effect of mentorship role such that mentees ( $M = 2.94$ ) perceived lower career success than mentors ( $M = 3.50$ ),  $p < .001$ . There was no main effect of pre-post experience,  $p = .322$ , nor an interaction,  $p = .305$ . These results suggest that mentees and mentors tend to differ on perception of career success and intention to stay which may be due to the length of tenure difference between the two groups. Table 1 illustrates the changes in outcome reports from year one to year two as the program nearly tripled in membership from 24 participants to 70.

While there is not a significant interaction between mentorship role and pre-post experience on Career Success and Intention to Stay, there were increases in mentee scores. Tied with the significant interaction for job satisfaction, there appears to be a “closing of the gap” or “pulling up” of mentees closer to the mentor-reported levels. The level of mentees from pre to post test demonstrated an acceleration of outcome more consistent with the levels of their more established

counterparts (mentors). This result was a focal point in the explanatory qualitative methods that sought to examine how participants expressed their experiences in mentorship across the phases of mentoring relationships. The data collected was organized according to the phases in order to localize the analysis to recognizable stages in the maturation of this dynamic relationship. Time-ordered analysis focused the interpretation of the participants’ description of personalized support in light of their reported levels of job satisfaction.

The interpretive methods of this study explored participant responses during the first three phases of development in the mentorship relationship: a) initiation, b) cultivation, and c) separation (Kram, 1983; Randel et al., 2021). Table 2 provides a description of each phase, the data sources utilized, and the research questions developed for each stage.

Coding software was utilized to generate the stage-specific codes which were then categorized, grouped, and themed in response to connected research questions. The research team met regularly to discuss emergent themes for cases, groups, and then across cases and groups for the sample for each phase. The abbreviated findings of this process are provided in Table 3 along with representative quotes from participants illustrating

the selected themes.

The research question for the initiation phase explored how self-reports in this rapport-building and expectation-focused stage of the partnership. In these reports the mentees and mentors prioritized goals and expectations related to a) career advice,

b) personal development, c) network/connection, and d) institutional knowledge. Responding to the central question of this study, it can be said that voiced expectations in the initiation phase focused on direction, development, network, and organizational knowledge.

**Table 3**  
*RQ Directed Coding by Stage*

Stage	Research Question	Categories & Themes	Frequency	Selected Descriptive Statements
Initiation	RQ1: How did participants self-report their experiences in the initiation phase of this PMSP?	Career Advice Expectations	33	"[I want to] learn how to adjust to the demands of research, service, and teaching" (Mentee Application)
		Personal Development	94	"[I want to] help them calibrate [to the] high hurdles are and what their priorities are" (Mentor Application)
		Network & Connection	89	"Make new friends locally and establish long-term friendships/mentorship" (Mentee Application)
		Institutional Knowledge	37	"...ensuring the mentee is appropriately connected within the UNO Campus community in terms of resources and potential partners/collaborators" (Mentor Application)
		Interactions for Mutual Satisfaction	23	"We agreed that this is a partnership where both of us add to the discussions and relationship" (Mentee Check-in 1)
Cultivation	RQ2: How did participants self-report their experiences in the cultivation phase of this PMSP?	Range in Interaction Frequency	42	"Have had a hard time meeting this spring due to illness and travel. Hoping to meet twice before the end of the semester" (Mentor Check-in 2)
		Interaction Value by Topic	158	"We discussed work-life balance and being a woman in academia, especially the difficulties and challenges instructors face not being on the tenure track." (Mentee, Check in 2) <u>Subtopics:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance</li> <li>• Social Identity and Diversity</li> <li>• Organizational Challenges</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Career advice</li> </ul>
		Emotional Bonds	121	"I am already appreciative of the bond that we've started and I'm excited to grow that connection further" (Mentor Check in 1) <u>Themes of Emotional Bonds:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation for partner</li> <li>• Enjoyment</li> <li>• Connection Issues</li> <li>• Personalized support</li> </ul>

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<b>Separation</b>	RQ3a: How did participants self-report their experiences in the separation phase of this PMSP?	Outcome of Belonging & Network	33	“The goals of the program and the leadership of the program made me feel more connected and accepted” (Mentee, Post Assessment)
		Outcome of Career Direction	24	“renewed connection with our institution’s mission, at the personal level. ...[this] has helped me re-connect with other initiatives that also exist on campus...which are beneficial for me. (Mentor, Post Assessment)
		Outcome of Program Support & Appreciation	99	“I love this mentorship program” (Mentee, Post Assessment) “The experience has reinforced my understanding that I can be an additional asset...by mentoring new hires and thus strengthening BIPOC presence and impact [here]” (Mentor, Post Assessment 23)
		Outcome of Feedback for Future	49	“More gathering events” (Mentee, Post Assessment) “Hard to be matched to someone who has such different research requirements. (Mentor, Post Assessment)
	RQ3b: How did the expectations of RQ1 relate to the reported outcomes of RQ3a?	Reported Expectations	253	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Advice Expectations</li> <li>• Personal Development</li> <li>• Network &amp; Connection</li> <li>• Institutional Knowledge</li> </ul>
		Reported Outcomes	205	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of Belonging &amp; Network</li> <li>• Outcomes of Career Direction</li> <li>• Outcomes of Program Support &amp; Appreciation</li> <li>• Outcome of Feedback for Future</li> </ul>

In the cultivation phase, the emphasis turns to frequency of interactions on those topics that support career growth, interpersonal trust, and organizational opportunities (Bouquillon et al., 2005). The analysis of check-in self-reports indicated evidence of development in these areas for participants. In response to RQ2, the PMSP mentees and mentors reported experiences in the categories of a) mutual satisfaction, b) interaction frequency, c) valuable interactions, and d) emotional bonds. Of particular interest were the varied ways that members indicated the value of their mentorship interactions. Those interactions deemed notable/valuable by members were grouped and themed as interactions about a) work-life balance, b) identity/diversity, c) organizational challenges, d) networking connections, and e) career advice. The interactions were expressed as positive by members during this stage. In

contributing to the central question of this study it can be said that faculty mentees and mentors reported PMSP support through more frequent and valuable interactions on topics of a) balance, b) identity, c) connection, and d) career advice resulting in a) shared satisfaction, b) enjoyment, and c) deepened emotional bonds during their experiences in the second year of this program.

The separation phase data were collected from the post-program assessment which measured outcomes and solicited responses to open-ended questions about their experiences in this stage. The survey was administered at the conclusion of the PMSP as partnerships were formally ending, affording an opportunity to review their overall experiences. In relating their experiences to the outcomes of Career Satisfaction, Intention to Stay, and Job Satisfaction four categories emerged, a) belongingness and network, b) career direction,

**Table 4**  
*Longitudinal Cross-Case Analysis by Stage*

Research Question	Sub Questions by Stage	Category	Results and/or Selected Descriptive Statement(s)
RQ4: Observations can be drawn between the support experienced in the first and second years of this PMSP.	<u>Initiation</u> RQ4a: How did the participant reporting in year 1 compare with the transition to year 2?	Year 1 Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentee Expectations: a) belonging, b) perspective, and c) feedback”</li> <li>• Mentee Aspirations: a) guidance/direction, b) support, c) connection, and d) growth”</li> <li>• Mentor Expectations (of themselves): a) balanced input, b) relationship building, and c) advocacy</li> <li>• Mentor Aspirations: a) growth, b) capacity, and c) a chance to pay things forward to others they might mentor. (Thompson &amp; Guo, 2022, p. 147)</li> </ul>
		Year 2 Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Advice Expectations</li> <li>• Personal Development</li> <li>• Network &amp; Connection</li> <li>• Institutional Knowledge</li> </ul>
	<u>Cultivation</u> RQ4b: What observations can be made between year one self-reporting and year two self-reporting in this PMSP?	Year 1 Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency of meetings (avg of 3.5 times over 4 months)</li> <li>• Limited Interaction data available</li> </ul>
		Year 2 Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freq: 4 (M)</li> <li>• Categories               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual Satisfaction</li> <li>• Interaction Frequency</li> <li>• Interaction Value (IV)*</li> <li>• Emotional Bonds</li> </ul> </li> </ul> IV*: Balance, Social Identity & Diversity, Challenges, Networking, Career Advice
RQ4c: What differences can be observed in the separation phases of year 1 and year 2 of this PMSP?	<u>Separation</u>	Year 1 Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback: “Keep doing it!” (Mentee, Post Survey)</li> <li>• Interest in on-going involvement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 yes, 2 unsure, 0 no</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
		Year 2 Outcomes	<u>Outcomes of...</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belonging &amp; Network</li> <li>• Career Direction</li> <li>• Program Support &amp; Appreciation</li> <li>• Feedback for Future</li> </ul> <u>Interest in on-going involvement (cur-rent):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 yes, 2 no, 7 no longer eligible, 45 yet to respond</li> </ul>
RQ4d: How did the expectations of RQ4a relate to the reported outcomes of RQ3a?	<u>Expectation</u>	Year 1 Expectations	<u>Expectations &amp; Aspirations</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentee Expectations: a) belonging, b) perspective, and c) feedback”</li> <li>• Mentee Aspirations: a) guidance/direction, b) support, c) connection, and d) growth”</li> <li>• Mentor Expectations (of themselves): a) balanced input, b) relationship building, and c) advocacy*</li> <li>• Mentor Aspirations: a) growth, b) capacity*, and c) a chance to pay things forward to others they might mentor.</li> </ul>
		Year 2 Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of Belonging &amp; Network</li> <li>• Outcomes of Career Direction</li> <li>• Outcomes of Program Support &amp; Appreciation</li> <li>• Outcome of Feedback for Future</li> </ul>

c) PMSP support/appreciation, and d) feedback for the future. Mentees reported that PMSP accelerated levels/perceptions of career success, intention to stay, and job satisfaction. The mentors also reported that program elements contributed to perceptions of increased career success and job satisfaction with limited responses to indicate increased intention to stay. The quantitative findings explored these outcomes to identify how the mentoring relationship may contribute to this accelerated change for mentees. Finally, a cross-case analysis was conducted between the pilot year of the PMSP (Thompson & Guo, 2022) and the second year of the program. Table 4 provides an overview of this comparison of the stages for both years to examine convergences or divergences between expectations, interactions, and outcomes.

The shared expectations between year one and year two were a) belonging/network/connection, b) perspective/advice, c) growth/development, d) relationship building, and e) feedback. Theme divergences between the years were a) feedback, b) support, c) balance, d) capacity, and e) advocacy. Of these, only capacity and advocacy did not emerge as themes elsewhere in the results. The interaction topic themes from year two align with the expectations of year one, specifically the topics of a) balance, b) identity/diversity, and c) career advice. Analysis of both separation phases reveal similar positive feedback for the PMSP and high levels of interest for ongoing involvement. In responding to the central question of this study it can be said that this PMSP demonstrated alignment between the expectations of years one and two with the outcomes reported in the second year of the program. This observation of continuity in support of mentees between the pilot phase of the program (which strategically prioritized HUE) and the second year (which opened the program to all new faculty at the institution). The interpretation of these findings is detailed in the coming conclusion.

This case study explored a PMSP in its second year and the experiences and outcomes reported by faculty participants at a MPHE institution. Validated instruments (Career Success, Intention to Stay, and Job Satisfaction) were used to explore the relationship between PMSP outcomes and participant perceptions of personalized support. The phenomenon of new faculty support was explored over the first three phases of mentoring relationships. This layered analysis informed this focused response to the study's central question.

So, what then, are the reported experiences and outcomes of participants in year two of a public higher education PMSP? Mentees achieved more clear outcomes of support from the PMSP than did mentors which can be reasonably expected given the program goal of providing personalized mentorship support to new faculty. The continuity between expectations and outcomes from the first year to the second year suggests new faculty support may look similar for a variety of social groups when personalization is prioritized in the

program design. Mentee/mentor interactions were most credited when participants reported experiences of personalized support. This study helped to identify the types/topics of interactions that were most frequently reported as supportive, namely a) balance, b) social identity/diversity, c) organizational challenges, d) networking, and e) career advice. Additionally, the theme of emotional bonds formed during the cultivation phase indicated the benefit of social connection, networking, and bond-forming when intentionally implemented through the elements and structure of the PMSP.

The implications of this study can be categorized theoretically, practically, and institutionally. When positioning this paper to the fields of mentorship, leadership, and communication the phases of relationships yield a framework helpful for the investigation of this PMSP and future similar cases. The phases of development in these partnerships allow for a more nuanced perspective of personalized support, affording mentorship researchers a trusted process that more reliably organizes the experiences of participants.

In agreement with Bouquillon et al. (2005), these stages demonstrate clear markers of progression for mentees and mentors alike. Given the expectation divergences reported by mentors, there is merit in further exploring methods of leadership development for mentors, who are tasked with leading new faculty through this personalized support system. The results reported by mentors illustrated no significant increase in desired outcomes of Career Success, Intention to Stay, and Job Satisfaction. Researchers exploring the support needs of mentors can advance the understanding of this phenomenon. The cultivation phase demonstrated rich potential during these research efforts. Interaction value was a key component of the findings and further attention should be paid to the content and delivery of these communication functions within the partnership. Models such as those explored by Buell (2004) might prove helpful in this endeavor. In summary, this present study aligns with mentorship, leadership, and communication literature in phase focus, mentorship support, and partnership interaction value.

There are several practical implications highlighted by the findings of this study. First, connections may be drawn between the stated expectations, interactions, and outcomes reported by PMSP participants. In the initiation phase, it is recommended that mentee and mentor pairs outline and cocreate expectations that can reasonably span the agreed-upon time frame of the partnership. Practitioners of mentorship are encouraged to review the role interactions and emotional bonds play in the PMSP experiences. Those interested in methods of effective mentoring may also benefit from the intentional introduction of bonding experiences to further the goals of personalized support. Practitioners within higher education and beyond may find it beneficial

to formalize expectations, develop meaningful interactions, and nurture bonds through the partnership. In summary, there appears to be a “pulling up” in outcomes for mentees, most notably, in the outcome of job satisfaction which is consistent with the literature (Lunsford et al., 2018; Strasler et al., 2022). There are several themes from the cultivation phase analysis that demonstrate exploratory value for future inquiry, namely interaction topics and the means by which meaningful bonds are created. What becomes evident, most glaringly, is the evidence pointing to the possible benefits of personalized support merits in higher educational settings.

There are three institutional recommendations resulting from this study. Future iterations of analysis on this program should prioritize ongoing accumulation and review of stated expectations for participants. The participant expectations observed in this study suggest that personalized support may be better achieved when the stated expectations of participants inform the design and implementation of the program. This institution should consider providing additional leadership support to mentors to develop their capacity and efforts of advocacy to better meet the stated expectations of mentees. It is recommended that personalized support also be extended to later career educators. There is evidence to suggest that mentors and other mid to late-career faculty may benefit from personalized support given the divergences reported in this study. A final recommendation for the program is the development of phase-specific mentorship resources to encourage more focused and intentional success for mentees and mentors. The many resources offered by this PMSP include a) a HUE responsive mentorship matching system, b) training materials, c) orientation and training sessions, d) mentorship books, e) support

emails, d) related media resources, f) networking events, g) compensation/rewards for members, h) vocalized support from top leadership, i) summary celebration event programming, and j) program assessment. These resources might be better organized around the initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition phases to provide more organized support and assessment. These institutional implications form the basis of the recommendations provided next.

## Conclusion

The results of this study were instrumental in the development of a recommended system of personalized support for faculty in higher education and the assessment of success for similar programs. Drawing from the institutional implications provide above, a program recommendation is provided here for those higher education organizations interested in providing personalized support for new faculty. In addition to the previously reviewed research site, an additional personalized support system is included in this program recommendation.

This additional mentorship and coaching program was included given its alignment with primary institution in the areas of program purpose, timeline, and outcomes. Participants at the secondary site were medical resident students and fellows who were preparing to become clinical educators. The second campus is unique in that it provides mentorship and coaching to these clinical educators in a blended system. Table 5 provides further description and comparison of these institutions.

Research collaborations between the two institutions identified similar themes and findings regarding the value of personalized support for new faculty in higher education. Both programs

**Table 5**  
*MPHE Institutions and Program Comparison*

Institution & Program	Description of Institution	Description of Program Purpose	Participants	Program Methods
<b>Institution #1 (Public University)</b>	Metropolitan Public Higher Education in Midwest with around 15k students and 500+ faculty.	Designed to provide new faculty with personalized support in Teaching, Research, & Service.	All new faculty (yrs 2-3) at the institution and matched mentors with experience (yr 1 n=24, yr 2 n=70)	This is a mentorship program that supplements mentoring partnerships with training and networking opportunities
<b>Institution #1 (Public Medical University)</b>	Metropolitan Public Higher Education in Midwest focus-ing on Medicine for around 4.4k students.	Designed to support clinical educators in a) effective bedside teaching, b) reflective teaching practice, & c) clinical educator identity formation.	Selected Residents and Fellows from applications for the program (yr 1 n=26, yr 2 n=30)	This is an interdisciplinary mentorship and coaching program that provides instructional and leadership skill development for post-graduate medical trainees before as they transition into careers as clinical educators.

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**Table 6**  
*Phase-Directed Strategy & Recommendations by Program*

Program Phase	Program Design Elements (by program)	Program Assessment (by pro-gram)	Connection to Expectations and Desired Outcomes
<p><u>Initiation:</u> “Work on common business tasks, recommendations from significant others, and discussions of performance or departmental concerns cause each to develop an increasingly positive expectation of the value of relating to the other” (Kram, 1983, p. 615)</p> <p>RESOURCES: (Cho et al., 2011)</p>	<p><u>TANDEM:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalized matching survey</li> <li>Intentional partner matching by program staff based on self-selected social identity, values, and/or priorities.</li> <li>Participant Orientation &amp; Training Session</li> <li>Mentorship Guidebook developed by this institution</li> </ul> <p><u>HEAL:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalized matching survey of mentor interests in medical education</li> <li>Meet and greet with mentors at orientation</li> <li>Onboarding expectations for frequency of mentor meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personalized matching survey</li> <li>Pre-program survey for specified outcomes</li> </ul> <p>OSTE (observed structured teaching encounters)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“goals and expectations related to a) career advice, b) personal development, c) network/connection, and d) institutional knowledge”</li> <li>Training sources will prioritize these elements</li> <li>“direction, development, network, and organizational knowledge”</li> <li>Orientation/Training will be focused on these outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Possible Outcomes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job Satisfaction, Career Success, Intention to Stay</li> <li>“2.2.3. Mentoring provided by the leader Noe’s (1988) scales were used to assess followers’ perceptions of the psychosocial support (10 items) and career support (7 items) they receive from their leader...” (Lapierre et al., 2012, p. 770)</li> </ul> <p>Specific interest in clinician educator goals were surveyed from HEAL mentees as a needs assessment before finalizing the seminar series (e.g. direct teaching skills, curriculum development, educational research, quality improvement, simulation, etc).</p>
<p>Cultivation: “career development, role modeling and psychosocial mentoring functions are proposed to be at their highest”</p> <p>(Bouquillon et al., 2005, p. 241)</p>	<p><u>TANDEM:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Events for Social Networking</li> <li>Supplemental Mentorship Training</li> <li>Resource Development &amp; Distribution</li> <li>Mentor &amp; Mentee specific events for networking &amp; feedback</li> <li>Check-in surveys #1-2</li> <li>Mentor &amp; Mentee specific events for networking &amp; feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check-in surveys #1-2</li> <li>Mentor &amp; Mentee specific events for networking &amp; feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“mentees and mentors reported experiences in the categories of a) mutual satisfaction, b) interaction frequency, c) valuable interactions, and d) emotional bonds.</li> <li>“Those interactions deemed notable/valuable by members were grouped and themed as interactions about a) work-life balance, b) identity/diversity, c) organizational challenges, d) networking connections, and e) career advice”</li> <li>“faculty mentees and mentors reported PMSP support through more frequent and valuable interactions on topics of a) balance, b) identity, c) connection, and d) career advice resulting in a) shared satisfaction, b) enjoyment, and c) deepened emotional bonds”</li> </ul>

	<p><u>HEAL:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video-based coaching sessions</li> <li>• Seminar series led by mentors, coaches, and local medical education experts</li> <li>• Directly observed mentor feedback on teaching opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>Mentorship meetings each semester included meeting minutes of short / long term career goals (including plan for future semester educational activities)</p>	<p>Reflective writing assignment (1-2 pages) per semester to consolidate feedback received from mentors and coaches throughout the semester to promote a rhythm of reflective practice in teaching.</p>
<p>Separation: “structural and psychological separation between the mentorship partners when the functions provided by the mentor decrease and the protégé acts with more independence”</p> <p>(Chao, 1997, p. 16)</p>	<p><u>TANDEM:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective Videos</li> <li>• Year End Celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post- Survey</li> <li>• Future Plans</li> <li>• Check-In</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “In relating their experiences to the outcomes of CS, ITS, and JS four categories emerged, a) belongingness and network, b) career direction, c) PMSP support/appreciation, and d) feedback for the future.”</li> <li>• YR 2</li> <li>• Outcomes of...             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Belonging &amp; Network</li> <li>· Career Direction</li> <li>· Program Support &amp; Appreciation</li> <li>· Feedback for Future</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><u>HEAL:</u></p> <p>Dilution of mentorship with broader exposure to the community of practice (exploration, imagination), including options to receive feedback from peers or other faculty/coaches on directly observed teaching opportunities or seek out broader vs more targeted mentorship during second year of the program</p>	<p>Mentor-ship meetings each semester included meeting minutes of short / long term career goals (including plan for future semester educational activities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes of confidence in teaching/feedback, belonging, wellness, and reflective practice.</li> <li>• ~80% of HEAL participants have pursued an academic career, most at the institution of HEAL.</li> <li>• Educator exploration and identity formation supported by focus group comments.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Redefinition:</u></p> <p>The movement of the relationship to a peer dynamic characterized as a friendship (Sugimoto, 2012).</p>	<p><u>TANDEM:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Analysis</li> <li>• Focus Groups</li> </ul>		<p><u>Expectations &amp; Aspirations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YR 1</li> <li>• Mentee Expectations: a) belonging, b) perspective, and c) feedback”</li> <li>• Mentee Aspirations: a) guidance/direction, b) support, c) connection, and d) growth”</li> <li>• Mentor Expectations (of themselves): a) balanced input, b) relationship building, and c) advocacy*</li> <li>• Mentor Aspirations: a) growth, b) capacity*, and c) a chance to pay things forward to others they might mentor.</li> <li>• YR 2</li> <li>• Outcomes of             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Belonging &amp; Network</li> <li>· Career Direction</li> <li>· Program Support &amp; Appreciation</li> <li>· Feedback for Future</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

HEAL:

- Networking, graduation events, awards ceremony
- Participatory evaluation that spurs scholarly projects with re-negotiation of goals and roles.
- Possible Outcomes
  - Burnout rates (pulse survey wellness, intention to leave)
  - Pubs per FTE
  - “2.2.3. Mentoring provided by the leader Noe’s (1988) scales were used to assess followers’ perceptions of the psychosocial support (10 items) and career support (7 items) they receive from their leader...” (Lapierre et al., 2012, p. 770)

have organized and represented their mentorship processes across the phases of mentoring relationships to provide clear recommendations for system development at similar organizations. This has been done to provide more nuanced insights for those higher educational institutions interested in implementing personalized support systems for new faculty at various campuses.

The program strategies are provided to encourage future discussion and research on the value of personalized support for new faculty through mentorship and coaching systems. The program recommendations are organized by the phases of mentor relationships given the focus it offers for program development, research strategy, data collection, and program assessment. Table 6 provides an overview of program recommendations organized by mentor relationship phases.

### Recommendation

This work sought to explore the outcomes, structures, and recommendations for personalized support of new faculty in higher education. The findings of this study encourage further exploration of personalized support as a system suited to the unique demands experienced by faculty of varying fields, identities, and experiences. Consistent with the stated intention of this study, these findings and recommendations contribute to the broader and ongoing exploration of mentoring/coaching and any impact it may have on the experience of those who engage in it.

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