

EDITOR COMMENTARY

Mentorship Supports in Academia: Models and Interventions

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This 2024 Quarterly Summer issue of *The Chronicle of Mentoring and Coaching* titled “Mentorship Supports in Academia: Models and Interventions” presents six articles with different research foci, yet interconnected themes. Book reviews are included for two current, edited volumes, which build upon themes highlighting the power in developmental mentorships for furthering inclusive practices and fostering wellbeing in K-20 institutions.

Content

Articles address issues that are current in secondary education and higher learning and reflect how faculty champion the missions and uphold the values that are pillars in the institutions they serve. Some author-researchers are leaders and mentors in faculty collaboratives from single universities or participants in consortiums whose members are committed to involving and learning from experts within other institutions. Several of the articles reflect the scholarship of engagement through their outreach in local or international settings, and the scholarship of teaching and learning to support faculty development of skills in research and writing for publication. Among themes reflected in these articles are recruitment and retention of diverse students and faculty, professional learning opportunities for faculty, and the wellbeing of students and faculty. The two edited volumes reviewed in this issue are *Mentoring for Wellbeing in Schools* by Kutsyuruba and Kochan (2024), and the open-access book *Making Connections: A Handbook for Effective Formal Mentoring Programs* by Law and Domínguez (2023).

In the first article, “Mentoring Matters When Growing Your Own Educators,” Dr. Miriam Marguerita Gomez Witmer presents a successful journey undertaken by the author and colleagues that established the Future Educator Pathway (FEP) at Millersville University. The process included the design and establishment of a recruitment and retention strategy for secondary students of color to foster their pursuit of careers in education. Witmer includes a rich description to highlight the crucial component of mentoring that promoted students “sense of belonging on a college campus,” encouraged “exploration of careers in education,” supported “mentees’ goal achievement,” and endeavored “to diversify the educator workforce.” Findings suggested

the FEP mentees persist in their programs after participating in two out of four FEP programs and contributed to the mentors greater understanding about the value of cultural responsiveness and “the reciprocal nature of mentoring.” Witmer acknowledges the benefits to all stakeholders as a result of “strong partnerships between the school districts and the university, and the mentees and mentors on both levels. FEP participants indicate that mentoring relationships truly matter when growing your own educators.”

The second article entitled “Personalized Support Systems Across Varying Higher Education Settings: Recommendations for Personalized Educator Support,” is authored by Drs. Herb Thompson III, Sandra Rodríguez-Arroyo, and Connie Schaffer, from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Dr. Carl Rohlfen from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. These researchers reported on two years of examining mentors’ and mentees’ experiences in a personalized mentorship support program (PMSP) at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Specifically, this mixed methods case study was conducted during the transition of the PMSP from its pilot phase for historically underrepresented educators (HUE) to an “institution-wide faculty support and retention” system. Authors present their longitudinal mixed methods case study organized around the phases of mentoring relationships as described in the seminal work of Kram and Sugimoto. The review of the literature includes topics highlighting the benefits of personalized mentoring, the partnership that evolves in a faculty mentor and doctoral student mentorship, and relationships that bridge social differences. Study findings indicate PMSP resulted in closing the “gap between faculty mentors and mentees for the outcomes of career success, intention to stay, and job satisfaction.” Researchers provide recommendations aimed at creating higher education program strategies for the promotion of innovation and future research within the program.

In article three, “Mentoring Online Composition Instruction (ALP/Corequisite Writing) for Faculty and Student Success,” researchers Dolan, Henry, and Kell presented outcomes from several years of teaching in a corequisite writing course at the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI). During the Pandemic, new and adjunct faculty at CCRI received mentoring tools that supported them during the shift to online learning. The support system included considerations of faculty and

student wellbeing. The program was recognized as sustainable beyond the challenges related to COVID-19. In this article, authors outlined continuous support that provided ongoing support for faculty in gaining students' attendance, engagement, and successful completion of work. These authors described changes that occurred in students' confidence levels, academic outcomes, and attitudes toward college. Results of this study were based on analysis of students' entrance and exit surveys, reflections, and pass rates. The mentoring program is now a continuous support system that promotes successful distance learning and faculty and student wellbeing. The critical roles played by mentors during all facets of distance learning are described in detail, making it possible for readers to replicate or adapt many of the strategies.

The fourth article, "Creating a Mentoring Community through Faculty Writing Retreats at a Teaching Intensive, Minority Serving University: The HUI Scholars Program" presents National Institutes of Health and the National Institutes of General Medical Sciences funded research by authors from Hawaii Pacific University, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Morgan State University, and the Council on Social Work Education. Drs. Phan, Vizza, Lim, Elson, Jackson, Horgen, Vakalahi, and Okamoto, with medical doctor Sheikhattari, and colleague Kaumatule, reported on a mentoring intervention that addressed challenges experienced by faculty researchers at their minority-serving and teaching-intensive institutions. Authors highlighted supports provided by mentoring that focused on faculty members' wellbeing and their abilities to thrive despite challenges. As described in the article, considerations were given to boosting faculty members' professional growth in mentoring students in research and career goals. The article reports on research from a series of writing retreats, which are also one aspect of the HUI Scholars Program. The writing retreats fostered professional development to build community in a supportive environment. Findings included benefits to faculty and student participants who engaged in the mentorship training focusing on scientific writing, grantsmanship, and career progression. Following the "writing retreat" mentorship intervention, faculty participants reported increased confidence in research skills, improved publication and grant-writing abilities, and reduced writing anxiety. Authors emphasized the benefits of aligning mentorship training with faculty research.

In article five, "From Research Design to Publication: Empowering Faculty in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," Drs. Naumann, Jewell, and Rider, present a comprehensive program designed to address the challenges faced by faculty at Nevada State University related to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Authors describe a professional development and mentoring program that expanded an existing

scholarly programming at NSU with funding from a National Science Foundation ADVANCE award to "address the full lifecycle of research—design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation." Authors make a strong case, supported in their literature review, for the SoTL as a valid form of scholarship recognized at teaching-intensive institutions. Common challenges for faculty to fully engage in the SoTL includes professional development options addressing their gaps in knowledge around research methodology, "data analysis and interpretation," and writing for publication. The study presented in this article features participant excerpts from the three programs that successfully met faculty gaps in knowledge via the SoTL and promoted expert and collaborative mentoring -- the 60 Speaker Series, the Summer Scholarship Institute-Data Analysis Track, and the SoTL Fellows Program.

Article six, "Measuring Faculty Mentoring Competency - Establishing the Validity of a Short Form" by Shujin Zhong, PhD, Assistant Professor at the University of North Florida, and Nicole M. G. Maccalla, PhD, Academic Administrator in the Department of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles, presents authors' research related to reviewing, adapting, and validating a short forms for measuring faculty mentoring competency based on the Fleming et al.'s (2013) Mentoring Competency Assessment (MCA) scale. A purpose of the study reported in this article was to identify a MCA-short form based on two sets of competencies to measure mentoring skills, and identify what is needed for mentor development. The purpose included identifying mentor and mentee perspectives, as well as to track changes over time. The MCA-short was designed and validated to be used "to measure faculty mentoring for the Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) program." Based on results from data collected in 2017-2018, researchers found that mentoring skills maintain similar psychometric properties of the original scale when measuring "faculty mentoring the Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) program." Competencies included skills under six topics: maintaining effective communication, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, fostering independence, addressing diversity, and prompting professional development. Statistical analyses of the research indicated that the MCA-short is both reliable and valid. Further, it is appropriate to offer the MCA-short as an alternative to the MCA.

Conclusion

Included are examples of mentorships that promote recruitment and retention of racially and culturally diverse candidates for education and health sciences professions. Authors passionately impart their research findings that overwhelmingly underscore the roles mentors fill in furthering an understanding about the importance of mentoring

competence for establishing inclusive practices. This issue brings the mentoring community current examples of programs and the individuals within the institutions who attend to the wellbeing of students, practitioners, and professionals as they strive for excellence in leadership and service to those institutions and communities.