Empowering Academic Leadership: Mentoring Best Practices for Early Career Faculty

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Overview

- Why mentoring is so important today
- The challenges of mentoring
- Excellence in mentoring
- Institutional best practices
Why mentoring is important

- Mentoring provides strong incentive to pursue an academic career
  - 84% of junior faculty agreed in one study (n=175)
    - Steele et al, Med Teach, 2013

- Effective mentorship can play a critical role in professional growth and academic success

- Recognizing generational differences helps align mentoring with junior faculty needs
Why mentoring is important

• Fosters confidence, academic productivity, and career satisfaction

• Faster promotion (1.2 years faster)
  • Morrison et al, Med Teach, 2014

• Better time management skills
  • Feldman et al, Med Ed Online, 2010

• Higher “self-efficacy” -- the feeling that one understands the system and can succeed
  • Feldman et al, Med Ed Online, 2010
Challenges of mentoring

- Formal vs. Informal models

- Multiple mentoring – a range of mentoring exists

Bell & Treleaven, 2010
Challenges of mentoring: Is mentoring equitable?

Gender divisions
• Fewer senior female role models available
• Challenges of balancing career expectations and child/care and other family obligations

Generational divisions
• Not “speaking the same language”
• Differing career aspirations and work-life balance expectations
Challenges of mentoring:
High teaching and patient care responsibilities correlate with less frequent mentoring

- Feldman et al, Medical Education Online, 2010
Why do some mentoring relationships fail?

1) poor communication
2) lack of commitment
3) personality conflict
4) competition (real or perceived)
5) lack of mentoring experience/training

Straus et al, Acad. Med. 2013
Excellence in mentoring: How mentees define outstanding mentorship

- Admirable personal qualities; role model
- Acts as a career guide
- Commits time to regular, quality meetings
- Supports personal/professional balance
- Grant writing and research advice
Excellence in mentoring: Characteristics of an outstanding mentor

- **Altruistic**
  Stay focused on needs of mentee

- **Active listener**
  Don’t jump in with quick solutions

- **Understands the academic system**
  Each institution is unique

Straus et al, Acad. Med. 2013
Excellence in mentoring:
What makes a successful mentoring relationship?

1) Reciprocity
2) Mutual respect
3) Clear expectations/explanations
4) Personal connection
5) Shared values

Straus et al, Acad. Med. 2013
Excellence in mentoring: Incentives for the mentor

- Mentoring as a path to professional distinction and promotion
- Protected time for mentoring
- Opportunities for professional development
- Financial incentives
Institutional best practices:
Qualities of an “ideal” new faculty mentoring program

• Equity
• Sharing of institutional knowledge
• Matches based on shared interests
• Mutual responsibilities are understood
• Department chairs play an active role
• Make the most of existing faculty assets
Institutional best practices:
Suggested topics for mentor training

- Rewards and Challenges of Mentoring
- Communicating Effectively
- Balancing Work and Life
- Understanding Academic Advancement Policies
- Fiscal Realities for Success
- Leadership Skills and Opportunities
- Obtaining Intramural and Extramural Funding

Institutional best practices: Determining mentoring effectiveness

**Questionnaires/surveys**
- prior to entering program with periodic follow-up questionnaires
- *What’s working or not working?*

**Interviews** (phone or in person) to follow up on questionnaires; use trained interviewers
- *transcripts reveal common themes of success or breakdown*

**Institutional outcomes assessment**
- *Time to promotion*
- *Likelihood of obtaining grants*
- *Improved teaching evaluations*

*Straus et al, Acad. Med. 2013*
The road ahead: Steps to advance faculty mentoring

Recommendations:
• Institutional support is critical
• Consider implementation of structured, formal mentoring program
• Leadership training for mentors
• Expand your existing incentives for mentors
• Establish ongoing formal assessment

Bagramian et al, 2011
Audience Q & A
Acknowledgments

ADEA Summer Program for Emerging Academic Leaders

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References


