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From Nothing to Something: The Nuts and Bolts of Building a Mentoring Program in a Health Sciences College

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In this paper, I report the development of a mentoring program in a College of Health Sciences comprised of schools of nursing, pharmacy, and health professions (which include physical therapy, speech pathology and audiology, applied psychology, and physician assistant programs) at a large private university. Although university-wide mentoring programs were in existence, no college-specific mentoring program was in place to address the professional development needs of the diverse tenure-track and non-tenure-track clinical faculty. In this manuscript, I highlight the importance of mentoring, identify issues specific to institutions with both tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty, and describe the building blocks of a mentoring program four years in the making. Year-by-year program components and evaluation data are included. The importance of faculty mentoring for professional development and academic success is emphasized.

Keywords: mentoring, academic success, faculty, professional development

Mentoring has been defined as supporting the professional growth of academic faculty to promote excellence in teaching, research, and service, and to increase the likelihood of academic success. Mentoring is a positive developmental partnership typically between a mentor (more senior) and mentee (more junior) and the relationship offers a reflective space where the mentee can take responsibility for and discuss his/her development in the academic setting (Bozeman & Feeney, 2007). Some have suggested that the primary aim of mentorship is to build capability and self-reliance in the mentee, while others have highlighted the important aspects of the relationship that lead to professional success including giving advice, offering direction, and providing constructive feedback (Bickel & Rosenthal, 2011; Nick et al., 2002; Schrubbe, 2004). Given this, confidentiality, trust, understanding, and positive expectations are key to a successful partnership between mentor and mentee (Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014). Difficult issues that may arise during the mentoring process, including impasses within relationships, differences related to diversity (e.g. gender, race, and generation), and communication problems are potential challenges to be recognized and addressed should they occur (Bickel & Rosenthal, 2011).

Several theories of mentoring provide guidance for building a mentoring program. Scholars have suggested that social exchange theory and the "norm of reciprocity" (Ensher & Murphy, 2011, p. 254) are useful guiding principles in the context of mentoring (Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Foa & Foa, 1974; Homans, 1961). Social exchange theory

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as applied to mentoring posits that mentors give to their mentees in the form of their connections, networks, skills, guidance, feedback, and experience. In turn, mentors expect reciprocity from their mentees by way of appreciation or new perspectives offered, and *get back* a sense of pride and accomplishment through the success of their mentees (Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Ragins & Kram, 2007). Eby (2007, p. 323) has extended these ideas into an "investment model of mentoring" which proposes that both mentors and mentees evaluate the costs and benefits in the context of their mentoring relationship. If benefits outweigh costs, the mentorship is likely to be successful. Eby further emphasized the importance of mentors viewing their investment as worth the effort. Although not necessarily routinely practiced, using theoretical perspectives to guide the development of mentoring programs is a worthwhile endeavor.

One critical question is whether mentoring actually matters. Does mentoring really promote faculty success? A review of the robust research literature suggests that in fact it does; however, it should be noted that much of the research has been conducted with academic health professionals in academic medical settings or in medical schools (Straus, Johnson, Marquez, & Feldman, 2013); less is known about the effectiveness of mentoring in university settings. For example, survey results from 354 out of 615 University of Minnesota Medical School faculty indicated that informal mentoring was more important for satisfaction and formal mentoring was more important for productivity (Shollen, Bland, Center, Finstad, & Taylor, 2014). Interestingly, regardless of mentor type (formally assigned or informal), Shollen et al. (2014) found that mentoring behaviors (e.g. assisting with networking, giving advice, and advocating for the mentee) were more highly correlated with mentee satisfaction than with productivity. Only one mentoring behavior, characterized as "serves as a role model" (Shollen et al., 2014, p. 1270) was significantly and positively related to the number of papers published by the mentee. In a recent study, Feldman, Arean, Marshall, Lovett, and O'Sullivan (2010), found that having a mentor was associated with greater satisfaction with time allocation at work and with higher academic self-efficacy scores, relative to those without a mentor. In the Feldman et al. study of 464 junior faculty mentees, the most often discussed issues with mentors related to funding, but mentees noted they required most assistance with issues of promotion and tenure. In another university-based study of 123 faculty members, the lack of effective mentoring was identified as a reason for dissatisfaction by 34% of faculty who left their positions at this small private university (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005). In this study by Ambrose et al., qualitative analyses of the interviews conducted with faculty members revealed that three types of mentoring were most important for satisfaction: mentoring in intellectual activities, advice regarding professional and career development, and assistance managing departmental politics. On the whole, the empirical literature emphasizes the key role of mentorship in academic success (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng, & DuBois, 2008).

Although there is a substantial mentoring literature, particularly in the field of academic medicine, there exists very little that describes the actual development of a mentoring program from the ground up. One notable exception is a paper by Jackevicius et al. (2014) who described the development of a mentoring program in a school of pharmacy. Specifically, this program included mentor training, mentor/mentee matching based on mentees' needs, an orientation session focused on the objectives of the year-long program, and a written agreement signed by both mentor and mentee. Results from a survey sent to 51 mentor–mentee pairs indicated high satisfaction with the program

from both mentors and mentees. This study provides a very detailed description of the development and evaluation of a mentoring program; more typically, mentoring programs at universities are generally described with a detailed list of components on a website, but with little information about how the program was actually developed or how it relates to the makeup of the university, college, or department (see e.g. http://www.adapp-advance.msu.edu/faculty-mentoring-resource-center; http://www.uri.edu/advance/faculty_development/mentor_training_program.html). Moreover, the development of a mentoring program, without the availability of a great deal of resources or funding from external agencies (e.g. National Science Foundation), has generally not been described in the literature. The work of the New England Network on Faculty Affairs is one source for direction in the development of mentoring programs and provides a twice yearly forum covering faculty development issues (Benjamin et al., 2015). Although mentoring programs in specific disciplines in health professions such as physical therapy, pharmacy, psychology, and nursing have been described (de Dios et al., 2013; Hadidi, Lindquist, & Buckwalter, 2013; Law et al., 2014; Pinto Zipp, Maher, & Falzarano, 2015), few researchers detail how to go about developing a health sciences college-wide mentoring program that could be applied broadly and across disciplines in health sciences institutions.

Developing a formal mentoring program can be a daunting project, as there are many needs and a diversity of interests within a university setting. For example, although all faculty ranks are likely to benefit from mentoring, faculty on the tenure-track have different agendas than faculty members who have achieved tenure and may be interested in pursuing promotion to a higher rank. Additionally, faculty who are in non-tenure-track positions generally are not required to engage in a formal research program, but need to excel in teaching and clinical or professional service in order to be promoted, and mentoring in these domains is needed. In this paper, I describe the process of developing a formal mentoring program in a health sciences college at a private university for both tenure-track and non tenure-track faculty (referred to as clinical faculty). Although the university as a whole has a formal program for tenure-track faculty, the specific needs of the college, as well as the recognition that many types of mentoring are key to success, prompted the development of the current program. Although much has been written about mentoring (Hickey et al., 2014; Iversen, Eady, & Wessely, 2014; Shollen et al., 2014), descriptions about how to develop and implement a formal mentoring program are less common and thus is the focus of my paper.

Description of the College

Northeastern University is a global, experiential, private research university that offers a comprehensive range of undergraduate and graduate programs leading to degrees through the doctorate in 9 colleges and schools, with 1,241 faculty members, including over 400 new faculty members hired between 2007and 2015. The Bouvé College of Health Sciences is comprised of the School of Pharmacy, the School of Nursing, and the School of Health Professions. With over 1,500 students, the college offers programs in Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Sciences, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Speech Pathology and Audiology, and Counseling Psychology and School Psychology, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. Importantly, there are approximately the same number of tenured and tenure-track faculty as clinical faculty (non-tenure-track faculty), with a total of approximately 205 faculty members. Between 2011 and 2015, nearly 100

new faculty (both tenure-track and clinical faculty) were hired by the College. Prior to 2011, there was no formal mentoring program in the college, although the university offers many events for tenure-track mentee–mentor pairs sponsored by the Provost's office. While all new tenure-track faculty members are assigned a mentor upon arrival to the university (typically a senior faculty member in their department), anecdotal reports from the faculty indicated that there was a clear need for a more defined and diverse set of mentoring activities for college faculty at all ranks and type.

Method

As no information was available about current mentoring in the college, the first task in developing a mentoring program was to survey the faculty to assess their satisfaction with mentoring, mentoring needs, and mentoring experiences to date. A survey design was used to gather this information as it is an easy-to-use and accessible method of data collection. The survey was composed of two parts: The first part included demographic questions and was informational in nature (e.g. gender, current rank, and years at the university); the second part of the survey included the *Ragins and McFarlin Mentor Role Instrument* (Dilmore et al., 2010; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990), which assesses both the career dimension (15 items) and psychosocial dimension (18 items) of mentoring using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Examples of questions from the career dimension included: *My mentor creates opportunities for me*, *My mentor helps me attain desirable positions*, and *My mentor suggests specific strategies for achieving career aspirations*. Examples of questions from the psychosocial dimension included: *My mentor serves as a role model for me*, *My mentor is someone who guides my personal development*, and *My mentor serves as a sounding board for me to develop and understand myself*. Data were collected by sending the survey electronically to the email addresses of all junior faculty in the College using Qualtrics software ($N = 105$). Faculty members were guaranteed anonymity in their responses. Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to examine means for survey item responses. The project was approved through expedited review by the Institutional Review Board at the university.

Results

The response rate to the survey was 28% (29/105) and included 20 female (69%) and 9 male (31%) faculty respondents. Sixty-six percent of respondents reported they had a mentor at the university; 52% said they had an outside mentor. The mean score on the career dimension items was 4.2 and the mean score on the psychosocial dimension was 4.1. A score of 4 falls into the *neutral* response category on the 1 to 7 scale. Such scores would indicate that there was neither strong agreement nor disagreement with these items, which unfortunately, was not particularly informative.

However, in response to the question *Indicate the overall degree to which you are satisfied with your mentor,* junior faculty responded with a mean of 6.7 on a scale of 1 (unsatisfied) to 10 (completely satisfied). That noted, nearly 70% of the junior faculty who answered the survey said they had unmet mentoring needs. In response to the question, *In which of the following areas do you need additional mentoring (check all that apply)*, 53% of respondents checked teaching, 84% research, 58% visibility/reputation, and 79% further career development. Faculty provided many qualitative comments in response to the open-ended question that asked participants to describe their sources of

satisfaction/dissatisfaction with mentoring. This information was instructive and indicated significant mentoring issues that need to be addressed. A few illustrative examples are provided below:

> I only met with my mentor once in the first month after I was hired and then never saw her again so really haven't been mentored by this person.
> I am fairly satisfied but I think the mentoring could have been more productive had we met more often.
> We work very well together and I respect my mentor. However, she has not helped me with professional development or scholarship.
> My mentor does very little to help me get further in my career or to achieve tenure. Little small bits of help have been given but there is never focused and strategic advice in how I can best move to the next step.
> I do not feel my mentor has taken a great interest in my career development and mostly I initiate our interactions. My mentor does not reach out to me or set up regular meetings with me. I know I can ask her for advice, but I would appreciate more of an active role on her part.

Given the growth of the faculty with the addition of nearly 100 new faculty members hired between 2011 and 2015, the diversity of the faculty, survey results, and conversations with department chairs and faculty, the decision to implement a faculty mentoring program was made and supported by the college administration. Theoretical perspectives which focus on the mentor/mentee relationship, the costs and benefits of mentoring to both parties, the need for multiple mentors, and the developmental process of mentoring were considered as guiding principles in designing the program (Ragins & Kram, 2007). The Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs was charged with developing and overseeing the program, with a modest budget for programming (approximately $1,000/year).

The Bouvé College Faculty Mentoring Program was designed from theoretical perspectives to address several aspects of faculty development. One, positive and sustained mentoring relationships lead to faculty success. Two, mentorship training and commitment are key aspects of any mentorship program. Three, recognition of the diversity of faculty interests, particularly distinctions between clinical and tenure-track faculty, is critical. Four, mentoring occurs in a variety of capacities, and mentoring networks, i.e. multiple mentors, are likely to be instrumental for academic success. Finally, engaging all levels of faculty (junior, senior, untenured, clinical, and post-tenure) is important for a successful program.

With these overarching principles in mind, the program began in 2012, with new offerings added each year. In the following section, the program components will be reviewed, year-by-year, providing the evaluative feedback obtained where available. In each year of the program (Years 1 through 4), components were aimed at a variety of faculty groups (e.g. tenure-track, clinical faculty, and tenured associate professors). Components are described below by year and are summarized in Table 1.

Year 1 (2012–2013) Program Components

College-wide formal meetings about mentoring: Two formal meetings focused on mentoring were developed and implemented in Year 1; one conducted by the Associate Dean and the second by two faculty members. Both meetings were open to all faculty

Table 1
Summary of Mentoring Program Components.

Year	Audience	Activity
1	All faculty mentors and mentees	Two-hour interactive session: "What's mentoring and Why is it a good thing?"
	All faculty mentors and mentees	Two-hour interactive session: "Good Mentoring: An Example"
	All faculty	All-day presentations by external expert
2	Clinical faculty	Review of promotion guidelines
		Workshop by recently promoted clinical faculty
	Tenured associate professors	First Monday meetings to discuss career development
3	Tenure-track faculty	Tenure and promotion workshop
		Peer mentoring group
		Individual year-end review meetings
4 (Planned)	Tenure-track faculty	Annual tenure and promotion workshop
	Clinical faculty	Annual promotion workshop
	Tenure-track faculty	Peer mentoring group
	Associate professors	Workshop on "Mapping Your Goals toward Full Professor"
	Late-stage faculty	Panel discussion on later career faculty transition

members in the College. The first was titled *What's Mentoring all about and Why is it a Good Thing? Mentors and Mentees Working Together.* In this two-hour interactive workshop, the presenters highlighted key elements of good mentoring relationships and described the tasks of both mentors and those they mentor. Prior to the program, attendees received the article titled *Mentoring 101: Building a Mentoring Relationship* (Lipscomb & An, 2013). Topics covered included: (a) how to know what you need to know, (b) how to keep mentoring on track during the busy academic year, and (c) making the most out of mentorship throughout an academic career. Ample time for questions and discussion was allotted at the end of the formal presentation. The program was attended by all faculty types (clinical, tenure-track, and tenured).

Evaluations were quite positive, with 95% agreeing with the statements *I understood and got a better sense of the mentoring process* and *I learned about the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee*. Qualitative comments highlighted the need for mentorship training and the wish for more networking time during and after the presentation.

The second meeting was conducted during Year 1 by a senior faculty mentor and a pre-tenure faculty member and was titled *Good Mentoring: An Example* with a focus on the process of mentoring that occurred between this dyad and the ways they built their positive and productive mentoring relationship. During this 90-min presentation, the senior faculty mentor described his philosophy of mentoring and how he viewed his mentoring role; the mentee described how he had benefited from the relationship and some of the issues that arose over the three-year period related to stylistic differences and expectations.

Evaluations indicated that 89% of the audience agreed that they got *a good sense from the mentor of what he did to make his relationship a good and productive one* and 77% agreed with the statement *I got a good sense from the mentee*.

Program conducted by external expert: A third component in Year 1 was an all-day workshop that included three separate two-hour presentations. All presentations were

given by a nationally renowned expert in the field of mentoring and the day was designed to address mentoring from a variety of perspectives (Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007, 2009). An outside expert was brought to the university in order to emphasize the importance that the institution placed on mentoring. The day began with a presentation titled *Why Should Mentoring End at Tenure? Mentoring for Midcareer Faculty: A Session for Associate Professors.* In the presentation, the speaker focused on the unique needs of midcareer faculty and the vital contribution mentoring can make at this stage of an academic career. She focused on the emergence of new, more flexible approaches to mentoring in which faculty build a network of multiple mentors who can address a variety of career competencies. In this interactive session, she highlighted potential roadblocks to success in an academic career, explored emerging models of mentoring, and engaged the audience in mapping their mentoring networks and discussing best practices in mentoring, including how to be your own best mentor. Evaluations from midcareer faculty noted the value of learning about the concept of mentoring networks, the importance of being proactive to obtain mentoring, and the idea of searching for mentors targeting specific areas of need.

The lunchtime session was designed for both junior faculty and faculty mentors with a focus on the *Mutual Mentoring Model* (DeCastro, Sambuco, Ubel, Stewart, & Jagsi, 2013). In this session, the pressing concerns of the junior faculty (*How do I find a mentor? How do I get help learning what I need to know? How do I navigate the difficult issues that come up, particularly as a new junior faculty member?*) and issues raised by mentors in previous programs, including how they can be trained to be effective mentors, how the institution can greater value the work of mentors, how mentorship fits in to busy teaching, research, and service responsibilities, and how mentorship can be rewarded and acknowledged, were addressed.

The afternoon session brought administrators (Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs) into the mentoring discussion with a talk titled *The Important Role of Administrators in Faculty Mentorship* which was designed to help them assess the needs of faculty for mentoring, explore the benefits and challenges of networked mentoring, discuss best practices in mentoring, and identify how effective mentoring can be encouraged.

Mutual Mentoring Grant Opportunity: As a result of the success of this day-long workshop on mentoring and based on the work of the presenter (Center for Teaching & Faculty Development, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2014), a program was implemented by the Provost's office to provide Mutual Mentoring Grants to pre-tenure faculty. The grants were designed to provide pre-tenure faculty members an opportunity to design a mentoring experience that would involve groups of peers and/or senior colleagues from within and/or outside their home institution based on the mutual mentoring model, which is described as follows:

> Mutual mentoring distinguishes itself from the traditional model by encouraging the development of a broader, more flexible network of support that mirrors the diversity of real-life mentoring in which no single person is required or expected to possess the expertise of many. Within this model, early-career faculty members build robust networks by engaging multiple mentoring partners in non-hierarchical, collaborative partnerships to address specific areas of knowledge and experience, such as research, teaching, tenure, and work-life balance. (p. 1, from http://www.umass.edu/ctfd/mentoring/guidelines.shtml)

Within the College, the Associate Dean worked with faculty members interested in submitting proposals, two of which were successful (out of four funded across the university). The goal of one of the successfully funded grants was to assemble a team of mentors with experience in industry and academia, so as to engage them in collaborative partnerships to address specific ways to excel in research, such as soliciting feedback on grant proposals and manuscripts, and identifying sources of external funding. The goal of the second successfully funded proposal was to create a mentoring team to support the submission of an early career award to the National Institute of Health and to develop collegial relationships to assist with the collection of pilot data. The end-of-year reports from these projects highlighted the success of the junior faculty members in meeting their mentoring goals. As one stated,

> Overall, this grant helped me to go outside my comfort zone in establishing collaborative projects with both internal and external collaborators. By having a specific grant I was working to fulfill deliverables for, I was more motivated to show accomplishments such as posters and manuscripts.

Of note, this program has been institutionalized across the university and continues now into its third year. The beneficiaries of the grant have indicated the substantial contributions of the mutual mentoring teams they developed in reaching their goals toward tenure.

Year 2 (2013–2014): Focus on Clinical Faculty (Non Tenure-track) and Tenured Associate Professors

In year 2 of the program, programmatic planning focused on two groups: non tenure-track faculty (referred to in our College as *clinical faculty*) and associate professors with tenure.

Focus on Clinical Faculty: Mentoring for faculty who are on the clinical track has received less attention in the literature than for those whose academic goals include tenure (Reevy & Deason, 2014). Further, because the criteria for promotion on the clinical track does not require a systematic and formal program of research, mentoring for this group is not focused on obtaining external funding or publications, but instead on excelling in teaching, clinical service, and professional service. Mentors who can provide guidance in these areas may be more difficult to find or engage. Clinical faculty can feel that tenure-track faculty members are viewed in higher esteem at research institutions and that their own professional development needs are often neglected in lieu of programs geared toward tenure-track faculty. As this group comprises over half of all the faculty in the College, the Dean encouraged the Associate Dean to focus on this group in our mentoring program and I did so in three ways.

First, an ad hoc committee was convened to review and revise the guidelines for clinical faculty promotion, which were eventually reviewed and voted on by all faculty in the college and distributed college-wide. Greater specificity in the criteria for promotion and more explicit guidelines for the preparation of promotion materials were the focus of the revised version. Second, a panel discussion titled *Recently Promoted Clinical Faculty* was developed with two faculty members (one recently promoted to full clinical professor and one to associate clinical professor within the past year) who shared their insights about the preparation, process, and outcome from their recent promotion experience.

Evaluations indicated that 85–100% of participants came away with a better understanding of the promotion process, learned more about deciding when to go up for promotion, and obtained a better understanding about career paths and timelines toward promotion. Qualitative comments included the suggestion to divide the topic into two workshops (one on determining when to go up for promotion and a second on developing the dossier) and a request to provide a better understanding of expectations beyond the department level for the criteria for promotion on the clinical track.

In response to this feedback, a third component for mentoring for clinical faculty was added to the Year 2 offerings: a workshop is provided each semester that includes an outline of the promotion process, instructions on how to prepare a dossier and obtain external review letters, and a detailed description of the procedures for promotion. During this workshop, the guidelines for promotion were reviewed with ample time for questions. This workshop is provided once per semester.

Focus on tenured associate professors: Additionally, during year 2, there was encouragement from the university to assist tenured associate professors to pursue promotion to full professor. Thus, we added an additional focus to our year 2 activities to create programming for our tenured associate professors, a group whose mentoring needs may be less emphasized (Golper & Feldman, 2008; Helitzer et al., 2016). Because they have already obtained tenure, and can remain at rank for as long as they wish at many universities, this faculty group appears to receive less attention with regard to mentoring. However, as several authors have recently suggested (see Baldwin, DeZure, Shaw, & Moretto, 2008; Rockquemore, 2015), this is a group for whom mentoring is important as they focus more on questions of meaning, identity, leadership, and legacy—in addition to the path to promotion to full professor for some. In light of these issues, we implemented two programs for associate-level tenured faculty. The first was *First Mondays* in which the Associate Dean led a discussion with associate professors on the first Monday of each month. This drop-in group focused on a variety of issues, including criteria for promotion to full professor, difficulties obtaining funding, the demand for greater service once tenured, and the balance between work and family life, particularly by the *sandwich-generation* with both children at home and aging parents to care for. The second program was a panel of *Recently Promoted Full Professors* directed toward those associate professors who might be anticipating and planning for promotion. Two professors spoke about their journey through the promotion process and the criteria by which full professorship is granted.

Year 3 (2014–2015): Focus on Tenure-track Faculty

Faculty on the tenure-track are the focus of most mentoring programs, given the investment of the institution in their success and the importance of excellent teaching, funded and productive research, and university service needed for tenure in research-intensive institutions. To that end, three specific mentoring activities were devoted to this group in Year 3.

Tenure and Promotion Workshop

During the spring term, a workshop titled *Tenure and Promotion: All you need to know* was presented by the Associate Dean to describe the details of the tenure process, the development of the dossier, the determination of names of external reviewers, and the

writing of teaching, research, and service statements. The process of review was high-lighted and ample time was available for the many questions that arise for a faculty member who may not fully understand the process from start to finish. This workshop will be offered each year.

Peer Mentoring for Tenure-track Faculty

In recent years, scholars have suggested that peer mentoring is an increasingly important component of academic success (Fleming et al., 2015; Mayer, Blair, Ko, Patel, & Files, 2014). Although all tenure-track faculty have a senior faculty mentor, the additional sup-port and guidance from peers is thought to be an important source of mentoring. To that end, an email message was sent to all tenure-track faculty members ($N = 35$) in fall 2014 with the following descriptor:

> The Associate Dean is organizing a facilitated peer mentoring group for pre-tenure faculty which will focus on achieving tenure and include conversations about what's needed to get tenure, strategies toward this goal, and research-related content. The group will decide on the topics for discussion and will be supported in their discussions with each other by the Associate Dean. This peer-mentoring group is designed to help junior faculty help each other through mutual support and sharing.

Ten faculty members indicated interest in the group and ultimately eight (all female) were able to commit to monthly meetings. The group met monthly January through July and topics were decided upon by the group at each meeting for the subsequent meeting. The Associate Dean sought topics of interest from the group and provided relevant read-ings for the topic one week in advance of the meeting which served as a springboard for discussion at the meeting. The topics covered (and associated readings) were as follows: (a) *Getting tenure at major research university* (Carroll, 2011); (b) *Motherhood and aca-demia* (Birken & Borelli, 2015); (c) *Grant writing and obtaining grant funding* (Basken, 2015); (d) *Productive publishing* (Markin, 2015; Powell, 2010); (e) *Social media and academia* (Englehardt, 2015; Van Noorden, 2014); and (f) *Writing and making summer a productive period* (Brandon et al., 2015; Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006; Howard, 2015; Pinker, 2014). These group sessions were highly interactive among the group of eight pre-tenure women faculty. Over time, several of them developed research collaborations and also organized a summer writing group. Although the readings served as a spring-board for conversation, group members discussed their own personal situations and often sought guidance and advice from each other. When questions were asked of the Associ-ate Dean, they were redirected to the group for discussion after providing a brief response. Group members were reminded that the group was a peer support group, with the Associate Dean functioning more as facilitator than leader. In some cases when an individual group member had a more involved situation or questions particular to her, an individual meeting with the Associate Dean was set up to address the issues. The group decided to break for July and August and wanted to resume for monthly meetings in the following academic year. Much discussion about writing and productive summers occurred in the final group meeting in June and readings were sent to the group which served as an impetus for a summer writing group which the members initiated (Brandon et al., 2015; Cable, Boyer, Colbert, & Boyer, 2013; Elbow & Sorcinelli, 2006). Reports from the group indicated the writing group, and the entire experience, was viewed as

useful and productive. The group resumed in September the following year and continues monthly with the same members.

Individual Year-end Meetings with Pre-tenure Faculty

The final mentoring activity directed toward pre-tenure faculty conducted in Year 3 was individual 30-60 min individual meetings with faculty that occurred toward the end of the academic year. Faculty who had been hired within the previous three years were invited via email by the Associate Dean to meet to discuss how their year had gone, how they viewed their progress toward tenure, and to answer any questions about the third year review or tenure process. Eighteen faculty members scheduled such meetings, during which time they discussed their progress toward tenure and asked questions about the specifics of the tenure process, expressed concerns about the difficult funding climate, and described their goals for the coming year.

Year 4 (2015–2016): Looking Ahead

A number of additional plans are being developed for future mentoring activities, based on feedback from programs conducted during the first three years. One, faculty asked that workshops related to tenure and promotion, for both faculty tracks, be regularized and be offered during the academic year. Two, the peer mentoring group for pre-tenure faculty was very successful, and informal conversations among those who participated in the first group indicated they had colleagues who were interested in such a group. Thus, a second group was initiated, with eight regular members, and the first group continued with previous membership. Three, Associate Professors asked for more specific attention toward promotion to Full Professor. Thus, a workshop titled *Mapping your Goals toward Full Professor,* is in the planning. Four, faculty feedback indicated that mentees sometimes did not meet regularly with their mentors, and when they did, topics for the conversations were sometimes difficult to identify. Thus, we recently implemented a system for prompting mentors and mentees with reminders to meet at least monthly and offered topics for discussion. This pilot program, termed SOS (System of Support) is currently being piloted across the university with 60 mentor–mentee pairs (Franko et al., 2016). Finally, faculty members who are in the later stages of their career have not been the focus of any mentoring activities in the College. Planning is currently underway for a program titled *Later-Career Faculty Transitions: Planning the Next Chapter* which will involve bringing back to campus a panel of recently retired faculty members who will discuss the process by which they made their decision to retire, what they've learned as they transitioned into retirement, and opportunities they have discovered for retired faculty.

Lessons Learned

Building a mentoring program from the ground up can be a formidable project, although one that is extremely worthwhile and important for faculty success. Three lessons learned may be of use to others who may be considering developing and implementing mentoring programs. First, consider your audience and learn about their needs. Who in your institution could benefit most from mentoring? What type(s) of mentoring currently

occurs, and how might it be improved? What do faculty members actually need most from mentors? The second is related to resources. Putting together programs, whether they are conducted by internal or external experts, requires time and (in some cases) financial resources. In this regard, providing a proposal to decision-makers about proposed plans for a mentoring program and obtaining support and buy-in from those in leadership positions are key to success. The third lesson learned is the importance of obtaining evaluative feedback from your audience. After implementing any program, take a few minutes (before people are getting ready to leave) to ask a few pertinent questions about the experience. Ask particularly what the audience learned, and what they would have liked to see in the program that they did not, as this information can be used for future programming. Doing so sends a very clear message about your genuine interest in their experience and also provides information for what will be of most value to your audience.

Conclusions

In this paper, I described the development and implementation of a health sciences college-wide mentoring program over a four-year period. The variety of activities geared toward disparate faculty groups resulted in a robust program that utilized few financial resources and resulted in successful outcomes. Mentoring for faculty in academia, and particularly in health sciences colleges, is more important than ever before, given the pressures on faculty to obtain external research funding, to provide high quality education that gives students a *personalized* experience, and the increasingly higher standards for tenure and promotion. Given what is known about the relationship between mentoring and academic success for faculty, it is critical that institutions of higher learning create opportunities for excellent mentoring for their faculty even when resources may be directed toward other important domains (e.g. research administration, centers for teaching and learning). However, the empirical literature is compellingly clear: Faculty members who are successfully mentored are more likely to succeed. Developing a mentoring program, while challenging, is critical for faculty success.

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Disclosure statement

Notes on Contributor

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