Session Evaluations Contest

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Rethinking Graduate Student Mentoring at an HSI:
A Digital Approach to Faculty-Student Communication

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Rethinking Graduate Student Mentoring at an HSI: A Digital Approach to Faculty-Student Communication

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Associate Professor, History
Director, Graduate Net Initiative

Associate Professor, Educational Leadership

California State University, Fresno
Presentation Overview

This presentation focuses on the e-mentoring of graduate students at a Hispanic-serving, masters-intensive institution.

We will address:

1. the nature of e-mentoring
2. benefits and challenges of e-mentoring
3. best practices for e-mentoring
Presentation Outcomes

At the end of this presentation, attendees will be able to

1. Define e-mentoring and discuss the differences between it and f2f mentoring
2. Identify the benefits of e-mentoring
3. Discuss best practices for effective e-mentoring
4. Identify and troubleshoot the challenges in e-mentoring
5. Discuss the role and importance of cultural competency in e-mentoring
6. Consider existing infrastructures and possibilities for effective implementation of e-mentoring at their own institutions
Defining Mentoring

- Mentoring, broadly speaking
  - A unique and reciprocal relationship between a mentor and protege/mentee (Garvey & Alred, 2003; Kram, 1985)
    - Involves the acquisition/exchange of knowledge (Roberts, 2000)
    - Provides also support/guidance from mentor to mentee (Jacobi, 1991)
  - Two major types: Psychosocial and Instrumental (Jacobi, 1991)
- Academic mentoring, more specifically
  - In and out-of-classroom relationship based on the apprentice model
    - Faculty impart knowledge, provide support, and offer guidance on academic/non-academic issues (Jacobi, 1991)
- Impact for graduate students
- Impact of technology
e-Mentoring

- A mentoring relationship mediated through electronic means
  - Email, text, teleconference, learning platform
  - 75% digital interactions (Hamilton & Scandura, 2003)
- Qualitatively different from traditional f2f mentoring
  - Paradigm shift: from faculty-centered to student-centered
  - Methodological modification: leading with the instrumental
- The impact of e-mentoring
  - To graduate students
  - To faculty
- A context driven choice?
e-Mentoring in Context

• Fresno State
  • Diverse (Hispanic Serving Institution)
  • Research intensive
    • Masters intensive (43 out of 47 programs)
  • Regionally focused
    • Serving over 17,000 square miles
    • 25% of our graduate students commute over 1.5 hrs.

• Title V, the Graduate Net Initiative, & faculty development
  • “Selling” e-Mentoring
    • Faculty participant survey
    • Adoption rate (48% adopted; 15% tried but did not adopt)
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Benefits of E-mentoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Benefits</th>
<th>Mentee Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility (92% for Mentor / 100% for Mentee)</td>
<td>Time Saving Possibilities (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling Flexibility (50%)</td>
<td>Affordability (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of collaborative work (i.e., screen sharing, 33%)</td>
<td>Availability of broader mentor network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personality alignment</td>
<td>Minimization of cross-gender/cross-race issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency (50%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction / Better student service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fresno State Faculty Survey Sample (N=26)
- 57% Assistant Profs
- 65% Males
- 44% White, 52% Non-White
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## E-mentoring Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Challenges</th>
<th>Mentee Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical issues (40% for Mentor / 56% for Mentees)</td>
<td>Technical Support in Rural Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical competencies (20% for Mentor / 67% for Mentees)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of personal immediacy (40% for Mentor / 22% for Mentees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs assessment difficulties</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group mentorship limitations (40%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Role modelling limitations (30%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Best practices for E-mentoring and E-environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best practices: E-mentoring</th>
<th>Best practices: E-environments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Be intentional in recognizing and maintaining the relational aspect of traditional mentoring</td>
<td>• Make a short tutorial or troubleshooting guide available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set a F2F foundation, if possible</td>
<td>• Have a test run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss purpose and goals</td>
<td>• Have a standing backup plan in case of technical failure (text, call, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish expectations and methods for communication</td>
<td>• Know who to contact for assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Include recurring synchronous meetings for visual contact (using Zoom, Skype, etc.)</td>
<td>• If applicable, have a document sharing / storage site for assignments or recommended materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet more often than you would in f2f mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Record your e-mentoring sessions, if possible, for later access / review</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Embed assessment of e-mentorship (both relational and technical)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Importance of Cultural Competency in Faculty-Student Mentoring Relationships

A. What do we mean?

Defining cultural competency
Our context and intentionality

B. What does the research tell us?

C. Our experiences

D. Our recommendations

Be informed and aware of your institution’s demographic and cultural makeup
Come to the relationship from an asset-based perspective
Adjust in response to each mentee’s needs: one size does not fit all

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