

Survey of Cohort Mentees August 2012

Sample

Forty-three mentees completed the survey from an overall population sample of 102 mentees. Thus, this survey had a response rate of 42.2%.

Of the mentees who provided responses, 22 (51.2%) identified as female, and 19 (44.2%) as male. Thirteen (30.2%) of the mentees identified as White, four (9.3%) identified as people of color, two (4.7%) identified as “other,” and 24 (55.8%) did not respond.

Nineteen (44.2%) mentees identified as assistant professors, two (4.7%) as associate professors and 22 (51.2%) did not respond. Additionally, 24 (55.8%) mentees identified as being from STEM colleges, 17 (39.5%) from non-STEM colleges, and two (4.6%) did not identify the primary college in which they worked.

Finally, in the sample for this evaluation, 16 (37.2%) of the mentees had been in the FORWARD cohort mentoring group for three years, 14 (32.6%) had been in the cohort mentoring group for two years, eight mentees (10%) stated that they had been in a cohort mentoring for one year, and five (11.6%) did not answer the question. It is also interesting to note that only two (4.7%) mentees were informed about the cohort mentoring program when they interviewed for their position.

Participation in the Cohort Mentoring Program

Twenty-two mentees (51.2%) responded that they had not participated in a cohort mentoring group during the 2011-2012 academic year. When asked what reason best explains why the mentees did not participate, one mentee (2.3%) responded that s/he chose not to participate this year, five mentees (11.6%) were never contacted about being in a cohort mentoring group, and three (6.9%) reported that their group did not meet this year. Other responses included:

- My group hasn't met for two years.
- We stopped having official meetings, but have kept lines of communication open.

Previous Mentoring Experiences

While the overall sample for this survey was 43 mentees, nine (20.1%) did not respond to any further questions after reporting that they did not participate in a cohort mentoring group. Thus, for the remainder of this report the sample will be 34 and all percentages reported will be based on a sample of 34.

Of this sample of 34 mentees, 11 (32.4%) reported that they had been in a mentoring relationship prior to the FORWARD cohort mentoring program. Mentees who had been in a previous mentoring relationship were also asked to compare their experience in the cohort mentoring process with their previous experiences. They provided the following responses:

- Because this mentoring scenario is not a one-to-one relationship, it is hard to compare. I think that the mentors assigned were effective as far as the goals of the program. However, in comparison to my previous mentoring experience, it is not as focused or invested.
- They gave me the college-specific insight I needed for the tenure process and helped me figure out ways to balance teaching and service.
- My department mentoring relationship is more reactive to issues versus the cohort mentoring is a proactive approach to issues.
- I have nothing to compare the Formative Teaching Evaluation Program too, but my mentor/evaluator was very kind, had great suggestions, offered support, and was wonderful to work with.

Functioning of the Cohort Mentoring Groups

The functioning of the cohort mentoring groups was examined by exploring how often groups met, what topics were discussed, and feedback from the mentees on the composition of the mentoring groups.

Mentees were asked how often their cohort group met:

- 4 (11.8%) mentees responded once a month.
- 3 (8.8%) mentees responded two to three times a semester.
- 6 (17.6%) mentees responded once a semester.
- 2 (5.8%) mentees responded once per year.
- 4 (11.8%) mentees responded they no longer meet formally.

Mentees were asked about their satisfaction with the frequency of their meetings using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Dissatisfied to 6 = Strongly Satisfied):

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Dissatisfied	3	8.8	15.8
Dissatisfied	2	5.9	26.3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	8.8	42.1
Somewhat Satisfied	2	5.9	52.6
Satisfied	7	20.6	89.5
Very Satisfied	2	5.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.74, SD= 1.69

Mentees were also asked what their thoughts were about the composition (e.g., same gender, STEM faculty with other STEM faculty) of the cohort mentoring groups and provided the following answers:

- I've said this in many surveys; I think having a mixed composition is useful.
- Personally, I found meeting with all men limiting and counterproductive. I can appreciate the benefits of same gender meetings, but maybe there is a way to have some same gender and some mixed gender meetings to get the best of both worlds.
- Not good.
- Frankly, with the original group I was in, I became discouraged by having all women in the group - especially when they all compared notes on being working mothers frequently, which is an experience I couldn't relate to.
- I was the only non-STEM faculty in the cohort and like I mentioned, it sometimes was hard to relate to what the others were going through.
- I like the same gender although a mix would be good too.
- I truly appreciated the same gender aspect of mentoring and I have greatly appreciated my mentors, although it would be better if one did not have a cohort mentor who was also in one's own department.
- I did like only women in the group. Most of us were STEM, which may have been difficult for the non-STEM individual.
- That's fine.
- I like the same gender composition. I think it is easier to get mentoring from someone in your own college. PTE guidelines vary across campus.
- I think it might not be a matter.
- It was fine.

Mentees were also asked whether or not they discussed certain topics and how helpful those discussions were:

Topic	Have you discussed this topic?	How helpful was this topic to you? 1= completely unhelpful 6 = very helpful
The PTE process at NDSU	14 (41.2%) = yes	Mean = 4.40, SD = 1.45 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6
Starting a research program	10 (29.4%) = yes	Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.24 Responses Ranged from 1 to 5
Networking within your department	12 (35.3%) = yes	Mean = 4.15, SD = 1.62 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6
Issues related to work family life	11 (32.4%) = yes	Mean = 4.23, SD = 1.36 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6
Unwritten or informal rules of the institution	9 (26.5%) = yes	Mean = 3.54, SD = 1.33 Responses Ranged from 1 to 5
Teaching effectiveness	12 (35.3%) = yes	Mean = 4.07, SD = 1.64 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6

Mentees were also asked what topics they think still need to be discussed in their cohort mentoring group:

- Managing students/people; interacting effectively with others; how to set and achieve appropriate goals (prioritizing).
- The chain of command when issue arises.
- PTE process. Unwritten or informal rules of the institution.
- Not sure. I think I have learned a lot.
- The different reactions from students from different colleges were not discussed. It might be helpful to cover this topic in our meeting.
- Issues not discussed above would all be good.

Satisfaction with the Cohort Mentoring Process

The survey included a number of different qualitative and quantitative measures of satisfaction with the cohort mentoring process.

In terms of overall satisfaction with the quality of the cohort mentoring experience, mentees were asked to rate their satisfaction using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Dissatisfied to 6 = Strongly Satisfied).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Dissatisfied	3	8.8	15.8
Dissatisfied	2	5.9	26.3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1	2.9	31.6
Somewhat Satisfied	5	14.7	57.9
Satisfied	4	11.8	78.9
Very Satisfied	4	11.8	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.89, SD= 1.76

Mentees were also asked if being a part of the cohort mentoring process was a good use of their time and responded using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.9	5.6
Disagree	2	5.9	16.7
Somewhat Disagree	2	5.9	27.8
Somewhat Agree	4	11.8	50.0
Agree	8	23.5	94.4
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	16	47.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.06, SD= 1.35

Mentees were further asked if they wished to continue participating in the cohort mentoring program for the next year and again responded using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	2.9	5.6
Disagree	2	5.9	16.7
Somewhat Disagree	3	8.8	33.3
Somewhat Agree	3	8.8	50.0
Agree	8	23.5	94.4
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	16	47.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.00, SD= 1.37

Another measure of satisfaction was the degree to which the mentees felt connected to the members of their cohort mentoring group and their mentors. Mentees responded to the statement “I feel connected to the other new faculty members in my cohort mentoring group” using the same six-point Likert scale.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.9	10.5
Disagree	4	11.8	31.6
Somewhat Disagree	3	8.8	47.4
Somewhat Agree	4	11.8	68.4
Agree	5	14.7	94.7
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.47, SD= 1.51

Mentees also responded to the statement “I feel connected to the mentor(s) from my cohort mentoring group” using the same six-point Likert scale.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	11.8	21.1
Disagree	1	2.9	26.3
Somewhat Disagree	2	5.9	36.8
Somewhat Agree	4	11.8	57.9
Agree	6	17.6	89.5
Strongly Agree	2	5.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.68, SD= 1.73

In addition to reporting a feeling of connection, 12 (35.3%) mentees reported that their mentors were helpful. When asked to explain how their mentors were helpful, they provided the following responses:

- They provide information and advice on professional situations.
- We chatted and talked over specific things coming up from my group.
- I am able to converse with one of them nearly any time I need to.
- The mentors assigned provided different (but complementary) insights on life as a faculty member and how to balance all the responsibilities attached (teaching, research, service).
- Good advice on how to build up the dossier for tenure evaluation.
- They are very supportive and offer excellent advice about all manner of policy and personal issues surrounding work at the university.
- Provided information, but also got ideas and information from my fellow mentees.
- Yes, they impart their knowledge about the College PTE requirements and other policies.
- Relaying personal advice about academic treatment.

- She sat in my classes twice. And each time she gave me detailed comments and suggestions to my teaching. It is very helpful.

Additionally, ten (29.4%) mentees stated that the cohort mentoring program met their expectations and when asked to explain their answers the mentees provided the following responses:

- Many issues in work environment have been solved.
- I met a couple new people with whom I now keep in contact with.
- Very helpful.
- My mentors and fellow mentors are now trusted friends and my exposure to other departments through the cohort program really helped to expand my circle of interaction at the university.
- It was great to meet other new faculty outside my college and feel you knew someone when I went to pedagogical luncheons.
- Well, the unorganized meeting is not working. I prefer the meeting that was held in the MU at NDSU.
- I think our mentors have been very helpful and dedicated to our group.
- The mentor gave me very good comments and suggestions on my teaching.
- It didn't last obviously. The first meeting or two were helpful, but by the 3rd meeting everyone was kind of steeped in teaching and no questions about research really came up. Those questions, (especially 3rd year review things) would've been great with a mentoring group.

Mentees were also asked to identify the advantages of the cohort mentoring program and provided the following responses:

- Share experiences, information and ideas; identify potential problems or difficulties others are having or might have.
- Suggestions can be solved in the administrator's level.
- Finding others who are going through similar experiences.
- As a junior faculty, it was good to have an external support group in addition to the one I had within my own department.
- The early relationships that were cross-departmental.
- Great place to get information that may not be bias from outside one's college.
- I think that the advantages are that it is a more neutral experience and you get multiple perspectives. Previously, when I had a mentor within my department I was thought to be under my mentor's control and this led to some difficulties when interacting with my colleagues in the department. It is nice not to be thought of as being dominated or controlled by someone because s/he is your mentor (It wasn't true but it was the perception). I also like getting a variety of perspectives instead of just one person's idea of how things work.
- I think it is very helpful program. I was lucky to participate in it in Spring 2012. I would also appreciate the efforts from the mentor.
- I thought it might just be a bitch session, but it wasn't really. People had concerns, or they just didn't say anything.
- I was able to meet people I normally would not have had the opportunity.

Mentees were further asked to identify the disadvantages of the cohort mentoring program and provided the following feedback:

- Took time away from other things I should have been doing.
- I'm not sure, maybe just the time involved in participating?
- Getting discouraged by hearing of all the concerns/issues others have within their positions.
- If the members of the cohort are from widely different fields (each with varying expectations on the teaching/research/service measures of performance), it sometimes becomes hard to relate to each other.

- I think people generally struggle with coordinating schedules, and everyone is too busy. This is viewed as a peripheral time commitment.
- One of the major drawbacks was the segregation between males and females. My department has very few females to begin with so it would be nice to get senior male insight to the tenure process since inevitably they will be making my tenure decision, not a female professor in the College of Humanities.
- In the past three years, with arriving babies, illnesses, and other issues, we're spread out along a career-stage spectrum which means we're no longer dealing with the same issues re: stage of career.
- Some problems individuals brought to groups were specific for their department.
- It's harder to schedule times to meet that fit a group's schedule.
- I think it might be better if the mentor is from the same college as I am with. However, the mentor from different college probably can widen my vision of teaching. I am not so sure.
- They didn't last long enough into my tenure-ship to provide assistance or support when there were uneasy times. I'm not sure how to fix that. People have issues come up at different times. It's hard to know how often to have meetings.
- It is difficult to build a mentor/mentee relationship with a large group.

Impacts on the Mentees

To begin to assess the impact of the cohort mentoring program on the mentees, they were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree).

Being in the cohort mentoring program has increased my sense of connection with other faculty on campus.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.9	10.0
Disagree	2	5.9	20.0
Somewhat Disagree	4	11.8	40.0
Somewhat Agree	6	17.6	70.0
Agree	4	11.8	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	5.9	100.0
Missing Data	14	41.2	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.70, SD= 1.45

Being in the cohort mentoring program had decreased my sense of isolation on the NDSU campus.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	8.8	15.0
Disagree	3	8.8	30.0
Somewhat Disagree	2	5.9	40.0
Somewhat Agree	7	20.6	75.0
Agree	4	11.8	95.0
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	14	41.2	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.45, SD= 1.50

Being in the cohort mentoring program has decreased my sense of isolation within the Fargo-Moorhead community.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	11.8	20.0
Disagree	7	20.6	55.0
Somewhat Disagree	2	5.9	65.0
Somewhat Agree	6	17.6	95.0
Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	14	41.2	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 2.65, SD= 1.27

Being in the cohort mentoring program provides me with helpful social opportunities.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	8.8	15.8
Disagree	4	11.8	36.8
Somewhat Disagree	5	14.7	63.2
Somewhat Agree	2	5.9	73.7
Agree	4	11.8	94.7
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.16, SD= 1.54

I feel I have a support system I can trust in my mentoring cohort group.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	8.8	15.8
Disagree	3	8.8	31.6
Somewhat Disagree	3	8.8	47.4
Somewhat Agree	4	11.8	68.4
Agree	5	14.7	94.7
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.42, SD= 1.57

Due to my participation in the cohort mentoring program, I have developed relationships that I expect will continue throughout my career at NDSU.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	8.8	15.8
Disagree	3	8.8	31.6
Somewhat Disagree	3	8.8	47.4
Somewhat Agree	5	14.7	73.7
Agree	3	8.8	89.5
Strongly Agree	2	5.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.42, SD= 1.61

Being in the cohort mentoring program has increased my comfort level with the promotion and/or tenure process here at NDSU.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.9	10.5
Disagree	5	14.7	36.8
Somewhat Disagree	3	8.8	52.6
Somewhat Agree	4	11.8	73.7
Agree	4	11.8	94.7
Strongly Agree	1	2.9	100.0
Missing Data	15	44.1	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.32, SD= 1.49

If I was having a problem in my job, I would seek out one of the mentors from my cohort mentoring group for help.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	8.8	15.0
Disagree	3	8.8	30.0
Somewhat Disagree	3	8.8	45.0
Somewhat Agree	4	11.8	65.0
Agree	7	20.6	100.0
Missing Data	14	41.2	
Total	34	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.45, SD= 1.51

Additionally, 12 (35.3%) mentees identified that participating in the cohort mentoring program had a positive impact on their own experience of the climate here at NDSU. Twelve (35.3%) mentees felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program had an impact on their decision to remain at NDSU. Moreover, three (8.8%) mentees felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program gave them greater access to academic administrators and one (2.9%) mentee felt it increased her/his comfort with academic administrators.

Improvements to the Cohort Mentoring Process

Mentees were asked what changes they would recommend to the cohort mentoring program to improve its effectiveness. Their responses are below:

- The mentors need to be better selected, better trained. There need to be activities and opportunities beyond meeting in the small group. There needs to be check-ins with groups during the year so when a group tanks, fixes can be made. Don't let us hang for 9 months!
- In my limited experience, the benefits of the program are extremely dependent on who you end up with. If you get a good group, things go well, if people are just not interested, it fizzles out. Maybe there could be a way to meet with more than one group, or somehow take advantage of other situations so that your entire involvement doesn't have to end (if you don't want it to) just because the other people aren't really interested in doing it anymore.
- Make sure you don't lose the mentees, and reassign them if they are in a group that has dissolved.
- Limit mentors to tenured faculty and ensure that no one in this program has a mentor from their own department.
- Please contact those who indicate interest. If they cannot be placed for some reason, explain the reasons.
- The cohort group should have more formal meetings on campus. The members of the group can choose the time.
- I think our group works well.
- It would be good if the mentee could sit in the classes of mentor to learn the teaching techniques.
- Working with different models of scheduling activities, I'm sure some of them have been going strong. Hopefully they work!