

Survey of Cohort Mentors August 2012

Sample

Sixteen mentors completed the survey from an overall population sample of 33 mentors. Thus, this survey had a response rate of 48.5%.

This sample was made up of eight male mentors (53.3%) and seven female mentors (46.7), with one mentor not specifying gender. The majority (75%) of the mentors identified as White and no other mentors reported their race/ethnicity. Moreover, five (31.3%) mentors identified as full professors, seven (43.8%) as associate professors, and four (25%) did not identify their rank. Additionally, nine (56.3%) mentors identified as being from STEM colleges, six (37.5%) from non-STEM colleges, and one (6.3%) did not identify the primary college in which s/he are assigned. Finally, for eight (53.3%) of the respondents this was their second year being a mentor for the FORWARD cohort mentoring program and seven (46.7%) had been a mentor for the last three academic years. One mentor did not respond to the question.

Participation in the Cohort Mentoring Program

In the overall sample of sixteen mentors, 8 (50%) reported that they did participate in the FORWARD cohort mentoring group during the 2011-2012 academic year, while 7 (43.8%) reported that they did not participate.

Of the seven participants that did not participate, one (6.3%) reported that the group met at a time when s/he could not attend, four (25%) reported that their group did not meet this year, one (6.3%) reported that s/he chose not to participate this year, one (6.3%) reported that the group disbanded, as most faculty did not have time to meet regularly, and one mentor shared that s/he had left NDSU.

Previous Mentoring Experiences

While the overall sample for this survey was 16 mentors, one did not responded to any further questions after reporting that s/he did not participate in a cohort mentoring group. Thus, for the remainder of this report the sample will be 15 and all percentages reported will be based on a sample of 15 participants.

Of this sample of 15 mentors, 12 (80%) reported that they had been a mentor prior to the FORWARD cohort mentoring program. In particular, eight (53.3%) reported they had been a mentor to a faculty member within their own department and ten (66.7%) reported being a mentor as part of a campus-wide mentoring experience.

Mentors were also asked what they see as the differences, if any, between the cohort group mentoring process and previous one-on-one mentoring experiences. They provided the following responses:

- A group provides more teachers - everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner.
- Cohort group mentoring is more open to almost any aspect of academic experience.
- Efficiency and the ability of more questions arising from someone's initial question.
- I prefer one-on-one mentoring. I think there is a lot more informal things that get discussed (like family life).
- It is harder to arrange meetings with the group.
- More efficient.
- One-on-one lacks the advantages of inputs from a larger group.
- One-on-one provides more individual attention, group mentoring provides a broader perspective and allows for more information gathering.
- Scheduling is harder, but I like the camaraderie. One-on-one gets old faster; I still like meeting with these women.

- The cohort mentoring program doesn't give much room for discussing individual problems.
- The variety of perspectives is nice, but coordinating schedules is very difficult.
- With multiple mentees, we always have things to discuss. With one mentor-mentee it is easier to overlook things. With a group, the meetings are livelier and more fun. The social aspect encourages more discussion and more meetings.

Mentors were further asked to reflect on how the time commitment for the cohort mentoring process compared to previous mentoring experiences and shared the following answers:

- About the same.
- About the same. But if I was doing a really good job, it'd be more.
- I think if there was a smaller group, I could have made the meetings... too many people oftentimes leads to a more difficult time to set the meeting.
- Less time committed which is unfortunate.
- More time spent on scheduling meetings with the group approach. Otherwise, a similar time commitment.
- More time trying to find a suitable time to meet. Otherwise similar.
- Similar.
- Similar.
- That depends on the group effort.

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 mentors' perspectives on the composition of the mentoring groups.

Mentors were asked how often their cohort group met:

- 5 (33.3%) mentors responded once a month.
- 2 (13.3%) mentors responded once a semester.
- 2(13.3) mentors responded twice a semester
- 2 (13.3) mentors reported never or almost never.

Mentors 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
Dissatisfied	1	6.7	8.3
Somewhat Dissatisfied	3	20.0	33.3
Somewhat Satisfied	4	26.7	66.7
Satisfied	4	26.7	100.0
Missing Data	3	20.0	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.92, SD=0 .97

Mentors were asked whether or not they discussed certain topics and how helpful they felt those discussions were to their mentees.

Topic	Have you discussed this topic?	In your opinion, how helpful was this topic for your mentees? 1= completely unhelpful 6 = very helpful
The PTE process at NDSU	11 (73.3%) = yes	Mean = 4.50, SD = 1.08 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Starting a research program	9 (60.0%) = yes	Mean = 3.78, SD = 1.30 Responses Ranged from 1 to 5
Networking within your department	9 (60.0%) = yes	Mean = 4.50, SD = 1.07 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Issues related to work family life	8 (53.3%) = yes	Mean = 4.57, SD = .98 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Formal and written policy/rules of institution	10 (66.7%) = yes	Mean = 4.56, SD = 1.13 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Unwritten or informal rules of the institution	9 (60.0%) = yes	Mean = 4.25, SD = 1.17 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Teaching effectiveness	10 (66.7%) = yes	Mean = 4.44, SD = .88 Responses Ranged from 3 to 5

Other topics that some of the mentors identified that their cohort mentoring group discussed were: “consulting, starting a business, IP issues,” and “policies related to partners and family, such as leave of absence, child center, spousal hires, health insurance (desirability of coverage for birth control pills).”

Mentors 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 am fine with it.
- I am open to any arrangements. My group was same gender.
- I like all women.
- I think it is better to do STEM with STEM-- I don't think my advice for PTE was good for the non-STEM.
- I very much like the same gender group. Our group was non-stem from a variety of disciplines both humanities and social sciences. Worked well.
- I wasn't aware that there was any specific composition set up.
- I would suggest smaller groups and more closely matched for college and discipline. It is challenging (although interesting) to mentor someone from a different college.
- It's difficult to ascertain what an appropriate composition might be as it's more about having relationships where people 'click.'
- Like same gender for cohort mentoring but need to be from same college not just STEM.
- Seemed to work well with our group.
- That seemed fine.

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, mentors were asked to rate their satisfaction using a six-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Very Dissatisfied to 6 = Very Satisfied).

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Dissatisfied	1	6.7	9.1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	2	13.3	27.3
Somewhat Satisfied	2	13.3	45.5
Satisfied	3	20.0	72.7
Very Satisfied	3	20.0	100.0
Missing Data	4	26.7	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean = 4.45, SD = 1.37

Mentors 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
Disagree	1	6.7	8.3
Somewhat Disagree	3	20.0	33.3
Somewhat Agree	2	13.3	50.0
Agree	6	40.0	100.0
Missing Data	3	20.0	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.08, SD= 1.08

Mentors 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
Disagree	2	13.3	16.7
Somewhat Disagree	2	13.3	33.3
Somewhat Agree	1	6.7	41.7
Agree	5	33.3	83.3
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	100.0
Missing Data	3	20.0	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.25, SD= 1.42

Another measure of satisfaction was the degree of connect to the members of their cohort mentoring group. Mentors responded to the statement "I feel connected to the members of my cohort mentoring group" using the same six-point Likert scale.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	20.0	23.1
Somewhat Agree	4	26.7	53.8
Agree	4	26.7	84.6
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	100.0
Missing Data	2	13.3	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.15, SD= 1.41

Additionally, mentors were asked to identify the advantages of the cohort mentoring program. Their responses are below:

- Broader discussions than one-on-one mentoring.
- Developed relationships with people I would not have otherwise met/had contact with. Nice to 'give back' and foster the development/success of others.
- Exchange of experience.
- Faculty can bring concerns to the group that they might not be able to share elsewhere.
- I met some new people.
- I think that it was good that there was a cross section across campus-- this led to some advice that may not have been relevant (a disadvantage), but some of the things that work in my discipline were not the norm in others, so it was a good thing.
- If you're unsure of an answer, the other mentor often can address the question. Mentoring more than one is more efficient.
- It brought us close together. One of our members had surgery, and we all took turns bringing her family meals. It was a no-brainer.
- Meeting, working with, and learning from the newer faculty members.
- More people get to know each other. There's more diversity of opinion among mentors.
- The friendships that the members of the group develop. They are interdisciplinary and seem to be lasting, which is a wonderful thing. Also, it is good for the mentees to be able to compare notes given the fact that they come from different departments. Comparisons range from teaching strategies, policies and procedures, expectations, etc.

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

- I don't see any disadvantages.
- It was difficult to find a time to meet. Some people were not interested in meeting. I'm not sure if the meetings were helpful to those who met.
- It's hard to know sometimes how to help someone from outside your own area.
- Must have some regulations; I could not convince other members to meet.
- Not all discussion topics are relevant to the group. All-male cohorts lack input from women (and presumably vice versa). Hard to get seven people together. In our third year, we decided to plot into sub-groups.
- Scheduling is almost impossible.
- Those problems that require mentoring cannot well be discussed in groups.
- Time is the only disadvantage for me, and that is not a huge disadvantage at all.
- We are all so busy, with disparate schedules, and childcare issues in late afternoon.
- Women on our campus are asked/expected to do so many things. While mentoring is very important and ideally I'd like to be more involved, the reality is that I can barely keep up with existing commitments.
- I do have a couple of comments: 1) I started communications several times, but mentees never expressed interest. 2) My team mentor wasn't interested in participating. 3) Little guidance was provide from Wendy and Don on this process.

Mentors were also asked how the role they expected to play matched the role they actually played and they provided the following feedback:

- During the third year, we asked the mentees to tell us which issues they wanted to the group to address.
- Expected to be more active/engaged, but none of the members of our group had time to meet. We had good intentions, but couldn't coordinate schedules etc.
- I initially thought the mentoring was more related to teaching rather than moving toward tenure.

- I thought I'd be talking more about academic issues, but we talked a lot about childrearing.
- In the first year I tried to alert mentees how to prevent problems and they seemed to think that was out of place since everything was going so well. As of year 2 some had got themselves into the types of problems I was going to try to prevent.
- It was what I expected.
- Matched pretty well.
- Quite similar.
- There was a good match.
- Very close.

When asked what outcomes the mentors anticipated their mentees had received from participating in the cohort mentoring program, the following responses were provided:

- Assurance that they are on the right track.
- Different perspectives.
- Perhaps a better way to prepare the PTE document
- Support from one another, advice, a place they know they can turn to.
- They expressed some level of satisfaction with the gained experience.
- They have learned from other's 'stories' regarding diverse topics. They feel more comfortable as a newer faculty member at NDSU.
- They made friends and had a support group to call on. They received information from multiple sources.
- Understand the tenure process better. Understand some of the problems they may encounter.

Impacts on the Mentor

Another goal of the cohort mentoring program was to have a positive impact on mentors' careers. To begin to assess the impact of being a mentor on these faculty members, 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 allowed me to form significant relationships with other faculty.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	6.7	7.7
Somewhat Agree	3	20.0	30.8
Agree	6	40.0	76.9
Strongly Agree	3	20.0	100.0
Missing Data	2	13.3	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.77, SD= 1.09

Being in the cohort mentoring program provides me with a good opportunity to network with other faculty at NDSU.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	6.7	7.7
Somewhat Agree	5	33.3	46.2
Agree	5	33.3	84.6
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	100.0
Missing System	2	13.3	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.54, SD= 1.05

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Somewhat Disagree	1	6.7	7.7
Somewhat Agree	6	40.0	53.8
Agree	3	20.0	76.9
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	92.3
N/A	1	6.7	100.0
Missing Data	2	13.3	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.69, SD= 1.11

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	4	26.7	30.8
Somewhat Disagree	1	6.7	38.5
Somewhat Agree	3	20.0	61.5
Agree	2	13.3	76.9
N/A	3	20.0	100.0
Missing Data	2	13.3	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.15, SD= 1.95

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	20.0	25.0
Somewhat Agree	7	46.7	83.3
Agree	2	13.3	100.0
Missing Data	3	20.0	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 3.67, SD= 1.07

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
Disagree	2	13.3	16.7
Somewhat Disagree	2	13.3	33.3
Somewhat Agree	2	13.3	50.0
Agree	4	26.7	83.3
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	100.0
Missing Data	3	20.0	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 4.17, SD= 1.40

If applicable, being in the cohort mentoring program has had a positive impact on my own promotion process.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	2	13.3	15.4
Somewhat Disagree	2	13.3	30.8
Somewhat Agree	2	13.3	46.2
Agree	1	6.7	53.8
N/A	6	40.0	100.0
Missing Data	2	13.3	
Total	15	100.0	

*** Mean= 5.00, SD= 2.08

Additionally, six (40.0%) mentors identified that participating in the cohort mentoring program had a positive impact on their own experience of the climate here at NDSU. Two (13.3%) mentors felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program had an impact on their decision to remain at NDSU. Seven (46.7%) mentors felt that they were also mentored during the cohort mentoring process.

Mentors were also asked about what impact being a mentor had on their own leadership skills. They provided the following answers:

- Expanded my understanding of what the climate is like for people in other departments and the challenges they face. More attuned to what is going on in my own department/college and how things might be perceived.
- Given me a chance to exercise them.
- I became more connected to issues facing NDSU faculty.
- I believe others have come to see me as a helpful resource and leader.
- It opened my eyes to the different kinds of challenges that other faculty have. I feel that I may have been isolated to these challenges.
- It's not why I did it.
- No particular impact.
- Provided the needed confidence.

One (6.7%) mentor reported that being involved in the cohort mentoring program had provided her/him with greater access to academic administrators (e.g., chairs, heads, and deans). Other mentors provided the following responses:

- Administrators expect me to be involved in these activities.
- How would it? Administrators were not involved.
- I am not at all reluctant to make my voice heard :)
- We have had no contact with administrators.

When asked if being involved in the cohort mentoring program had increased their comfort with academic administrators (e.g., chairs, heads, and deans), the mentors provided the following responses:

- I am already quite comfortable.
- I hope they appreciate the work I do.
- I was never uncomfortable.

Improvements to the Cohort Mentoring Process

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

- Have a general meeting or conference at the beginning of each academic term. Groups can exchange ideas and discuss progress.
- I preferred the individual mentoring, since it seemed far more effective.
- I would like a one-on-one group.
- It might be nice to have a meeting once a year of the cohort mentoring groups to discuss the program.
- It wasn't strong this year - we need nudges.
- Male-female integration.
- None.
- None at this time.
- One-on-one mentoring might be better. I think there should be more structure to it.
- The group needs to be from the same college.

Mentors were also asked what additional information related to being a mentor they would like to receive and provided the following responses:

- Concise summary.
- Difficulty to know the expectations of other colleges, so either keep all members in the same college or provide information.

- How to encourage the group to meet.
- I think I was adequately informed.
- I would be nice to know what other groups are doing.
- Nothing at this time.
- There is so much focus on early-career mentoring. I would appreciate learning more about mid-career needs and strategies. How is mentoring different with those who are mid-career?