

## **Survey of Cohort Mentees August 2013**

### **Sample**

Twenty-eight mentees completed the survey from an overall population sample of 48 mentees. Thus, this survey had a response rate of 58.3%.

Of the mentees who provided responses, 11 (39.3%) identified as women, 16 (57.1%) as men, and one (3.6%) did not respond. Fifteen (53.6%) of the mentees identified as White, five (17.9%) identified as Asian, and eight (28.6%) did not respond.

Twenty (71.4%) mentees identified as assistant professors, one (3.6%) as an associate professor, one (3.6%) as a professor of practice, and six (21.4%) did not respond. Additionally, 16 (57.1%) mentees identified as being from STEM colleges, and 12 (42.9%) identified as being from non-STEM colleges.

Finally, in the sample for this evaluation, one (3.6%) of the mentees had been in the FORWARD cohort mentoring group for two years, and 27 mentees (96.4%) stated that they had been in a cohort mentoring group for one year. It is also interesting to note that only three (10.7%) mentees reported that they were informed about the cohort mentoring program when they interviewed for their position.

### **Participation in the Cohort Mentoring Program**

Four (14.3%) mentees responded that they had not participated in a cohort mentoring group during the 2012-2013 academic year. When asked what reason best explains why the mentees did not participate, one (3.6%) mentee responded that s/he chose not to participate this year, one (3.6%) shared that her/his group met during a time when s/he could not attend, and one (3.6%) reported that her/his group did not meet this year. One participant also provided the following response:

- In the first semester, the group meetings were held when I was out of town or too short notice that I could not change prior arrangements, then I was not invited to any meetings in the Spring semester.

While the overall sample for this survey was 28 mentees, four (14.3%) 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 24 mentees and all percentages reported will be based on a sample of 24.

### **Previous Mentoring Experiences**

Of this sample of 24 mentees, six (25.0%) 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:

- I generally do not wait for mentors to be assigned to me, but actively engage with the person(s) I feel most capably can answer my questions. Seen as such, most mentoring programs are of little added benefit to myself.
- I found this experience to be very artificial, but that could have just been my group. I was offended by the gender segregation once I realized that all groups were gender specific.
- It is also good. I am on several research projects with tenure committee members so we do not meet at a formal time because I see them weekly.
- This took more time to get to know each other.
- The majority of the current group does not interact outside of the context of the group. Therefore, the personal element is lacking. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage in that there is no bias in the advice or opinions exchanged but at the same time, it may not be personally applicable. However, this group and the mentors have been at NDSU for a long time and therefore are very knowledgeable about the culture and expectations of the environment.
- The AHSS experience was much better because my mentor scheduled monthly meetings. I now feel that I have a relationship with this mentor and with the other junior faculty member in the group.

### 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:

- 8 (33.3%) mentees responded once a month.
- 1 (4.2%) mentee responded two times a semester.
- 7 (29.2%) mentees responded once a semester.
- 4 (16.67%) mentees responded once per year.
- 1 (4.2%) mentees responded they never met 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	5	20.8	25.0
Dissatisfied	2	8.3	35.0
Somewhat Dissatisfied	4	16.7	55.0
Somewhat Satisfied	1	4.2	60.0
Satisfied	5	20.8	85.0
Very Satisfied	3	12.5	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.40, SD= 1.88

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

- My "group" consisted of two mathematicians and a pharmacist, all male. Surely not the best combination, given the role of FORWARD and the many fields at NDSU.
- I found it offensive. I have much to learn from everyone! I strongly recommend discontinuing this aspect of the grouping.
- My group was all women, but from diverse backgrounds and experiences. I appreciated this group composition.
- STEM with STEM.
- I would like to meet those both inside and outside of my college. However, those kinds of groups would need more than one head mentor to handle situations that are college specific.
- Helpful.
- I have no idea who is in my mentoring group.
- Hard to tell by being a part of such an inactive group.
- It is easier to relate to the experiences of people from similar STEM fields. When they are of the same gender it is easier to discuss gender related issues. However, most of my other mentors have been men who provided very useful guidance even in gender related circumstances.
- Shall get more male faculty involved.
- It allows us to talk about gender specific issues which would probably not come up in a mixed gender group.
- Does not matter.
- Similarities in terms of background and life stage make sense, maybe even field (STEM). Gender concerns might matter where female faculty are underrepresented, but I am not sure what advantage it provides females to be excluded from male groups.
- Had mostly white guys in the group.
- I believe there is something to be learned from individuals of both genders.
- I liked the same gender aspect. But I was glad there were members of the group from different colleges.

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	17 (70.8%) = yes	Mean = 4.69, SD = 1.08 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Starting a research program	8 (33.3%) = yes	Mean = 5.25, SD = 0.46 Responses Ranged from 5 to 6
Networking within your department	12 (50.0%) = yes	Mean = 4.25, SD = 1.36 Responses Ranged from 2 to 6
Issues related to work life balance	11 (45.8%) = yes	Mean = 4.67, SD = 1.23 Responses Ranged from 3 to 6
Formal and written policy/rules	6 (25.0%) = yes	Mean = 4.63, SD = 1.69 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6
Unwritten or informal rules of the institution	9 (37.5%) = yes	Mean = 4.10, SD = 1.52 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6
Teaching effectiveness	11 (45.8%) = yes	Mean = 4.85, SD = 0.99 Responses Ranged from 1 to 5

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

- There is barely enough time to cover the topics listed even meeting monthly in an organized way so I am happy continuing to discuss the topics listed unless other cohorts bring new topics up. We plan to keep addressing the topics listed in future meetings.
- I can't anticipate things that I haven't encountered yet. That doesn't mean that other topics don't exist. Rather, I'm new so I don't know what issues need to be covered.
- Everything. We only met once.
- Teaching. As a new faculty, I find the students here VERY different from students taught at grad school at another university. I didn't know what to expect.
- Teaching effectiveness.
- We don't need to discuss "topics," per se, we just need someone to check up on us every so often. And we just need face time with each other to get to know each other.

### **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
Strongly Disagree	6	25.0	30.0
Disagree	3	12.5	45.0
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.2	50.0
Somewhat Agree	4	16.7	70.0
Agree	4	16.7	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.29, SD= 1.85

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	3	12.5	15.0
Disagree	2	8.3	25.0
Somewhat Disagree	2	8.3	35.0
Somewhat Agree	4	16.7	55.0
Agree	4	16.7	75.0
Strongly Agree	5	20.8	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.95, SD= 1.79

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	3	12.5	15.0
Disagree	2	8.3	25.0
Somewhat Agree	5	20.8	50.0
Agree	6	25.0	80.0
Strongly Agree	4	16.7	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 4.05, SD= 1.73

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	4	16.7	20.0
Disagree	5	20.8	45.0
Somewhat Disagree	2	8.3	55.0
Somewhat Agree	5	20.8	80.0
Agree	2	8.3	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.10, SD= 1.65

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	6	25.0	30.0
Disagree	3	12.5	45.0
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.2	50.0
Somewhat Agree	4	16.7	70.0
Agree	4	16.7	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.15, SD= 1.84

In addition to reporting a feeling of connection, 14 (58.3%) mentees reported that their mentors were helpful. When asked to explain how their mentors were helpful, mentees provided the following responses:

- Provide sources of information, explain different processes in how different committees, etc. function at the university.
- They help us understand the policy and promote our thoughts.
- We discuss expectations for teaching and publishing as well as recruiting students as examples.
- They answered my questions.
- Answering questions I have.
- When I was concerned about a departmental issue I was able to get an objective opinion from the mentor from another department.
- They give suggestions on my teaching, my research, and advise me on university policies.
- They listened to what I was saying and provided advice even at times when I didn't realize I needed advice.
- Explaining tenure process and getting grant, graduate student mentoring techniques.
- Genuine concern for my tenure advancement and also a place I felt safe to let off some steam.

Mentees were also asked to explain in what ways their mentors were not helpful and provided the following responses:

- I've never met with them, as they have never contacted me about meeting. There's no indication that the group even met this year.
- We only met twice and I feel like each meeting had kind of a negative tone.
- I had two mentors. One of the mentors never showed up to any of the meetings and I had no contact with him at all. I am not even sure if this person replied to any of the emails sent by the other mentor, Jim. Jim made a concerted effort to get the mentoring rolling, however of the 3 mentees under his guidance, one never showed up. I very much value Jim's opinions and experience, but as he is a member of my department, I can get his advice and guidance at any time and had no need of a special mentoring program for this. He should be applauded for his work and time investiture.
- The interactions felt very forced. Not at all natural. I have sought many good mentors on campus and use them as needed, rather than this particular program.
- I have never met with them. I received one email informing me of a planned meeting, which I was unable to attend. I have never heard from them since.
- We only met once during the academic year, in October. In that time, my mentor basically blasted me for not having my doctorate, even though my position as a professor of practice does not require a doctorate. All other advice was based around the assumption that I would soon be pursuing my doctorate, even after I made it clear I had no interest in doing so. After that first meeting, my mentor has not been in contact with me.
- We met only twice the whole year. The two times we met were fruitful, but I don't think they were strategic. We should have met three times: at the beginning of Fall, mid way, and in the Spring. We met twice in the Fall.

Additionally, 11 (45.8%) mentees stated that the cohort mentoring program met their expectations. When asked to explain their answers, the mentees provided the following responses:

- Had no expectations.
- I didn't have any expectations.
- It helps for problem solving.
- I felt my mentors give me sound advice and are friendly and supportive.
- I met people in a similar position to myself.
- Learning from what other young faculty asked. Somebody to compare myself with in terms of productivity and department expectations.
- Get most of advices or answers I wanted.

- Had no expectations.
- Sharing experiences helped.

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

- As noted above, of the five members of my group, two I never met and one mentor I had access to by simply walking across the hall. I gained nothing in this experience.
- I'm sure it is quite helpful to some.
- The cohort allows participants to see that untenured and tenured faculty across departments often have similar experiences and expectations. The way we approach situations is often similar which is reassuring. In contrast, it is also helpful to see how several people approach the same situations differently. This allows us to see how we can be flexible and change our approach from time to time encouraging change and development. As I mentioned previously I had no preconceived ideas about what the mentors would do specifically. Our group was very flexible. We chose a topic each time and were very constructive. Topics to discuss arose based on what the individuals in the group experienced that month. Who chose the topic rotated. This allowed us to get insight regularly and adjust what we were doing based on our needs collectively and individually.
- Learning from what other young faculty asked. Somebody to compare myself with in terms of productivity and department expectations.
- Right now, I see no advantages, having only met once and that one meeting going quite poorly.
- As a new faculty, being able to network more easily.
- Sharing experience.
- Wide perspectives on NDSU and different departments. It was good to talk to people with similar experience.
- Felt like I got to know the plight of other tenure-track faculty and how other areas of the school functioned.
- Any advice that can help me become a better faculty member is more than welcome.
- Making friends with junior faculty in different colleges. Having senior-level contacts in other departments and colleges.

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

- In my case, the mentors were poorly chosen by FORWARD. One never participated and one was a member of my department. While his knowledge of the workings of the university were surely ample, I had access to them at any time. I met the other mentor only twice (or maybe once), this did not lead to any useful or extensive exchange of information or experiences.
- Time away from other endeavors.
- Even better to have a mentor in the same college, I think.
- Every once in a while someone might want to meet one on one to discuss the specifics of getting their teaching evaluated as an example and would not want to take up the other cohorts time with the specifics of their class. We were able to meet with mentors separately in our group. I met with mine to arrange for her to evaluate my class this fall.
- I haven't experienced any drawbacks or disadvantages.
- Somebody might dominate the group, but that did not happen.
- None.
- It's tough to judge this as well, having only taken part in one meeting.
- No drawbacks.
- It depends completely on the willingness of the mentors to engage the mentees, at this point. No schedules nor structure make meeting difficult to arrange and follow through on.
- It was difficult to find time to meet.

### **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	4	16.7	20.0
Disagree	2	8.3	30.0
Somewhat Disagree	2	8.3	40.0
Somewhat Agree	6	25.0	70.0
Agree	4	16.7	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.50, SD= 1.67

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	20.8	26.3
Disagree	1	4.2	31.6
Somewhat Agree	7	29.2	68.4
Agree	3	12.5	84.2
Strongly Agree	3	12.5	100.0
Missing Data	5	20.8	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.58, SD= 1.84

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	20.8	27.8
Disagree	3	12.5	44.4
Somewhat Disagree	2	8.3	55.6
Somewhat Agree	5	20.8	83.3
Agree	2	8.3	94.4
Strongly Agree	1	4.2	100.0
Missing Data	6	25.0	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 2.94, SD= 1.63

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	20.8	25.0
Disagree	6	25.0	55.0
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.2	60.0
Somewhat Agree	4	16.7	80.0
Agree	3	12.5	95.0
Strongly Agree	1	4.2	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 2.85, SD= 1.63

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

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	25.0	30.0
Disagree	3	12.5	45.0
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.2	50.0
Somewhat Agree	4	16.7	70.0
Agree	4	16.7	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.15, SD= 1.84

**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	6	25.0	30.0
Disagree	3	12.5	45.0
Somewhat Disagree	1	4.2	50.0
Somewhat Agree	6	25.0	80.0
Agree	1	4.2	85.0
Strongly Agree	3	12.5	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.10, SD= 1.80

**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	4	16.7	20.0
Disagree	2	8.3	30.0
Somewhat Disagree	2	8.3	40.0
Somewhat Agree	4	16.7	60.0
Agree	6	25.0	90.0
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	4	16.7	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 3.60, SD= 1.73

**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	4	16.7	21.1
Disagree	6	25.0	52.6
Somewhat Disagree	3	12.5	68.4
Somewhat Agree	1	4.2	73.7
Agree	3	12.5	89.5
Strongly Agree	2	8.3	100.0
Missing Data	5	20.8	
Total	24	100.0	

\*\*\* Mean= 2.95, SD= 1.81

Additionally, 12 (50.0%) mentees identified that participating in the cohort mentoring program had a positive impact on their own experience of the climate here at NDSU. Ten (41.7%) mentees felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program had an impact on their decision to remain at NDSU. Moreover, three (12.5%) mentees felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program gave them greater access to academic administrators and five (20.8%) mentees felt it increased their comfort with academic administrators. When asked to elaborate, mentees responded:

- [No] Not applicable to what we have covered as a cohort.



- [No] I wasn't that uncomfortable to begin with. I don't always know what I'm going, but I figure I'll learn.
- [No] Had no discomfort to worry about.
- [No] Should it have?
- [Yes] Lowered the perceived barriers to accessing them.
- [Yes] More understand and appreciate their responsibility and their time.

### **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:

- Someone from FORWARD should monitor whether the groups are actually meeting. It doesn't do any good if the groups don't even meet.
- In my case, there was almost no participation and I was paired with a faculty member in my faculty. I see no advantage in this.
- Provide opportunities for mentor/mentee relationships to happen naturally and coaching to both.
- Increased frequency of meetings.
- None at the moment.
- It is excellent. Continue.
- I would like to be contacted about any meetings that are occurring. Also, to be useful, the group needs to meet more than once a year. As far as I am aware, my mentoring group met once, last semester.
- We have to meet more than once a year. And even if we don't, I would like my mentor to at least follow up with me. These seem obvious.
- Quite good already.
- Structure! Schedules! It is too wide open, and that makes meeting regularly unlikely.
- Better guidelines for mentors so that each group has the same expectations. Also do not have mentors who are about to go on sabbatical participating in the program. Some of the mentors are just too busy and not fully committed to mentoring.
- Meet more frequently.
- Program administrators should put more pressure on mentors to meet regularly with their groups. Or make sure that mentors are committed to the program.