# Survey of Cohort Mentees
## August 2011

## Sample

Twenty-nine mentees completed the survey from an overall population sample of 81 mentees. Thus, this survey has a response rate of 35.8%.

Of the mentees who provided responses, 16 (55.2%) identified as female, 7 (24.1%) as male, and 6 (20.7%) did not respond. Nineteen (65.5%) of the mentees identified as White, 3 (10.3%) identified as people of color, 1 (3.4%) identified as "other," and 6 did not respond. Seventeen (58.6%) mentees identified as assistant professors, 5 (17.2%) as associate professors and 2 (6.9%) as professors of practice, and 5 (17.2%) did not respond. Additionally, 14 (48.2%) mentees identified as being in STEM colleges, six (20.6%) from non-STEM colleges, and nine (31.0%) did not identify the primary college in which they worked. Finally, 3 (10.3%) mentees were informed about the cohort mentoring program when they interviewed for their position.

## Previous Mentoring Experiences

Of this sample of 29 mentees, 5 (17.2%) 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:
- Both were honest, but had different direction. One is for teaching, the other is for treatment of women.
- I think this group mentoring is more proactive. We discuss topics that I may not have thought of but I need to consider for success, whereas the other mentoring is all based on me needing to know which questions to ask.
- My relationship with my career mentor is of course on a more personal level. She can provide deeper, richer advice because she know me, my abilities, and/or limitations.
- Previous mentor relationship can go to special case, for example, writing a proposal to get a grant.
- This has not been a good experience thus far.

## 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:
- 12 (41.4%) mentees responded once a month.
- 1 (3.4%) mentee responded every six weeks.
- 1 (3.4%) mentee responded every other month.
- 1 (3.4%) mentee responded twice a semester.
- 3 (10.3%) mentees responded once a semester.
- 2 (6.8%) mentee responded three times per year.
- 1 (3.4%) mentee responded once per year.
- 1 (3.4%) mentee responded "occasionally."

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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Very Dissatisfied | 4 | 13.8 | 18.2 |
| | Dissatisfied | 1 | 3.4 | 22.7 |
| | Somewhat Dissatisfied | 4 | 13.8 | 40.9 |
| | Somewhat Satisfied | 2 | 6.9 | 50.0 |
| | Satisfied | 9 | 31.0 | 90.9 |
| | Very Satisfied | 2 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| | Missing Data | 7 | 24.1 | |
| Total | | 29 | 100.0 | |

*** Mean= 3.77, SD= 1.68

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:

- It is a good combination, which will have some effective results. At the same time, mentors from other departments can also be useful towards the said goal.
- I would have liked to have different genders and colleges outside of STEM. But as having all females in the group made it easier to communicate and the group develop a friendship among the members over the years that I consider very valuable.
- Gender is not important. But being in STEM disciplines is important.
- I appreciated the gender consistency and attempt at pairing similar disciplines. It was a very valiant attempt that just didn't seem to work for our group.
- I believe that it is really great to be in a mentor group with the same gender. There are different views which are easier to be exchanged within your own 'gender' group.
- I DID NOT LIKE THIS!!! In my group (I am female), so much of the discussion revolved around balancing raising children with career demands. I don't have kids, so this was useless and boring to me.
- I do not think that just meeting between woman faculties is very helpful. There should be common interests and problems, rather just the question of gender.
- I really like the same gender aspect. There are so few tenured women STEM faculty that I feel lucky to get some time to chat with two of them. Right now, I need to have role models. Both the female aspect and the STEM aspect make these women role models for me. It would be less so if the gender or field were different.
- I think a mixed gender group might be better. I say that because I think it will break some of the female/male stereotypes on campus and hopefully facilitate a more balanced environment.
- It seemed that the goal of these groups was to help us with our various roles - i.e., teaching, advising, mentoring graduate students, committee work. Having individuals from different colleges made that task difficult and less than helpful.
- It sounds like a good idea, since gender equity is a real problem at NDSU. It seems that the successful women here could offer some real expertise in how they were able to be successful at NDSU. I think there is a real need for that, even though at the end of the day, it comes down to advice on 'playing the system'. That said, it still has value. I admit that I'm disappointed that women here must 'play the system' while (some) men get a free pass.
- OK, but maybe you should keep faculty in the same academic college together.
- Our group doesn't really talk about gender issues, but we all are comfortable asking about each other families and really don't think about it. I believe I would have these conversations in a mixed gender group as a female faculty or choose to only speak to other female faculty about family.

- Our group was rather mixed with having members for the extension service, which made the issues too diverse.
- Relatively random assignment is fine. It is good to hear others concerns. NO segregation needs to be implemented.

Mentees were 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 | 21 (72.4%) = yes | Mean = 4.18, SD = 1.47 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6 |
| Starting a research program | 14 (48.3%) = yes | Mean = 4.06, SD = 1.26 Responses Ranged from 2 to 6 |
| Networking within your department | 9  (31.0%) = yes | Mean = 4.00, SD = 1.48 Responses Ranged from 2 to 6 |
| Issues related to work family life | 15 (51.7%) = yes | Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.37 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6 |
| Unwritten or informal rules of the institution | 16 (55.2%) = yes | Mean = 3.95, SD = 1.39 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6 |
| Teaching effectiveness | 15 (51.7%) = yes | Mean = 4.12, SD = 1.41 Responses Ranged from 1 to 6 |

Mentees were also asked what topics they think still need to be discussed in their cohort mentoring group:
- Dealing with student academic dishonesty.
- General experiences of mentors which are/were discussed in our group.
- Grant application: time schedule, budget, NDSU contacts regarding these questions.
- I think more discussion about NDSU policies would be helpful, especially policies regarding promotion, tenure, grounds for dismissal, grounds for grievances, the grievance process. I think we need to understand better what our rights are and how to exercise them.
- Negotiations for resources in department, committees to serve on or not.
- Seeking multi-disciplinary research partners on campus.
- They have all been covered.  However, we spend a lot of time talking about politics. Although that is helpful I would like to learn more about starting my research program.
- To get a grant.

## 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Very dissatisfied | 6 | 20.7 | 26.1 |
| | Dissatisfied | 1 | 3.4 | 30.4 |
| | Somewhat Dissatisfied | 3 | 10.3 | 43.5 |
| | Somewhat Satisfied | 2 | 6.9 | 52.2 |
| | Satisfied | 7 | 24.1 | 82.6 |
| | Very Satisfied | 4 | 13.8 | 100.0 |
| | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 | |
| | Total | 29 | 100.0 | |

*** Mean= 3.65, SD= 1.92

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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 3 | 10.3 | 13.6 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 13.8 | 31.8 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 2 | 6.9 | 40.9 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 4 | 13.8 | 59.1 |
| | Agree | 5 | 17.2 | 81.8 |
| | Strongly Agree | 4 | 13.8 | 100.0 |
| | Missing Data | 7 | 24.1 | |
| | Total | 29 | 100.0 | |

*** Mean= 3.73, SD= 1.75

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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 3.4 | 4.5 |
| | Disagree | 5 | 17.2 | 27.3 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 1 | 3.4 | 31.8 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 7 | 24.1 | 63.6 |
| | Agree | 5 | 17.2 | 86.4 |
| | Strongly Agree | 3 | 10.3 | 100.0 |
| | Missing Data | 7 | 24.1 | |
| | Total | 29 | 100.0 | |

*** Mean= 3.86, SD= 1.49

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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 4 | 13.8 | 17.4 |
| | Disagree | 4 | 13.8 | 34.8 |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 4 | 13.8 | 52.2 |
| | Somewhat Agree | 6 | 20.7 | 78.3 |
| | Agree | 5 | 17.2 | 100.0 |
| | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 | |
| | Total | 29 | 100.0 | |

*** Mean= 3.17, SD= 1.44

Mentees also responded to the statement "I feel connected to the <u>mentor(s)</u> from my cohort mentoring group" using the same six-point Likert scale.

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 5 | 17.2 | 21.7 |
|  | Disagree | 2 | 6.9 | 30.4 |
|  | Somewhat Disagree | 2 | 6.9 | 39.1 |
|  | Somewhat Agree | 3 | 10.3 | 52.2 |
|  | Agree | 7 | 24.1 | 82.6 |
|  | Strongly Agree | 4 | 13.8 | 100.0 |
|  | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 |  |
|  | Total | 29 | 100.0 |  |

*** Mean= 3.74, SD= 1.86

In addition to reporting a feeling of connection, 20 (69.0%) mentees reported that their mentors were helpful. When asked to explain how their mentors were helpful, they provided the following responses:
- This has been a very informative and helpful activity for me.
- The mentors are somewhat helpful. But most of the advice ends up being pretty much common sense.
- Very willing to answer questions, very encouraging, always prepared for our meetings, and very candid about the processes we need to go through as junior faculty.
- Yes and no, I really only met with mine 3 times, and the experience wasn't all too helpful, though I really liked the mentors I was assigned.
- Yes and No. She helped me by sharing one of her strategies and which I followed but as it turned out, it didn't make any difference. Actually, nothing she had done could make much of any difference because the program was started in fall of 2010 which was too late for me. Mostly, she could only listen and agree that the treatment of me by my superior (which as is typical at NDSU, has been supported by the chain of command) has been unfair.
- Yes in some ways. No in others.

Mentees were also asked to explain how their mentors were not helpful and three people responded:
- Unfortunately, not much.
- Intercampus mentors were unhelpful. NDSU should set up department mentors so we better know who they are and share common interests
- Over the last two years we have met 3 times. I feel that it is impossible to cultivate a mentor/mentee relationship with this few of meetings. Usually the meetings are spent getting re-acquainted with each other.

Twelve (41.4 %) mentees stated that the cohort mentoring program met their expectations and when asked to explain their answers the mentees provided the following responses:
- It exceeded my expectations since I didn't have any. I really didn't know what I was getting into, but I am glad I was asked to join the groups.
- But, I did not have any expectations.
- During our meetings we were exposed to problems/issues that we either had or that we needed to be aware of.
- I did meet one person with whom I developed a friendship outside of work. But the rest of the people in the group didn't really resonate with me.
- I didn't really have high expectations, but the expectations of creating relationships with other new faculty did not come to fruition because we hardly ever found meeting times where everyone would meet. I frankly do not even know the names of the rest of the members of my cohort, although I do know and appreciate the two mentors.

- I had no expectations, but was hoping it would at least be focused on professional issues. It seemed there was much discussion of juggling children and work, which didn't apply at all to my life.
- I participated as much as was possible. As mentioned there was no regular meeting of the group.
- I still do not understand what this program is all about.
- In both years we only met a few times and did not cover any helpful topics.
- It exceeded my expectations. I had expected it be a process of the leader providing us information that may or may not be relevant. It turned out that our group could really tailor our discussion to our own interest.
- It was good to see that others had the same questions and thoughts about their transition to NDSU.
- It was very limited, but I do not think this was the program's fault, nor was it the fault of the mentors.
- More or less.
- The cohort doesn't necessarily provide additional information. The key information is gleaned from the mentors.
- To some degree, yes. However, I think it would have been better if we were in the same or relative field. A lot of the pressures or difficulties they were experiencing were not something I can relate to as most are field-related.
- We shared experiences at our meetings.
- Well, I guess perhaps yes, since I had no expectation and it met that.

Mentees were also asked to identify the advantages of the cohort mentoring program and provided the following responses:
- As I've mentioned, moral support  - guidance provided by mentors.
- Advantages: Meet others from across campus and get ideas.
- As a group, questions were asked that I would not have thought to ask and we were also able to share our own experiences of how we solved problems that either worked or didn't.  It was also great to meet a number of people outside our departments to get an outside perspective on your situation/issue and create friendships.
- Being aware of the problems and processes that we will encounter on our way to tenure
- During the first year, other mentees asked questions that I had not thought of but that were valuable.
- Get to know other colleagues from other departments and colleges how have they build up a successful academic career. Their example is of great help to me.
- I am a reserved person, and I am also not very good at asking for help or realizing my needs. However, with other people there to ask my mentors questions I am able to get a lot out of the meeting. It is also helpful to see what other new faculty are struggling with.
- I have met one junior faculty member from another college and I could see that being a good, working relationship.
- I met some of my colleagues in the college that I would not normally have met.
- I think that it could be advantageous for assistant faculty if begun in their first or second year.
- Learning from the experiences of the mentors, learning to get to know more people on campus, getting questions answered, learning about the difficulties mentors encountered.
- Realize that you're not alone in starting a new faculty position and that most new faculty need to overcome similar hurdles.
- The advantage is hearing other's perspectives and issues.
- Understanding the University system better through the experiences of others in the group.
- Yes, we have mentors to support if we have questions.
- You could learn some nice 'insider' knowledge, and get some tips.

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

- I don't see any.
- At times it was difficult to match schedules, and being careful that no one person dominated the group during discussion.
- Differences between departmental expectations of faculty, and how to find common ground for discussion.
- Difficult to always get everyone to the meetings. Differing requirements/experiences at different colleges.
- Disadvantages: It is impossible to address specific needs when departments are so different with their promotion and tenure requirements.
- Everyone is too busy for this, it seems. While well intentioned, it doesn't seem to have any priority in the grander scheme of things, just another thing on the checklist.
- I felt there wasn't any real connection to the mentoring group.  I felt more isolated and disconnected by try to participate in the mentoring group than if I had just sought out advice.
- It is more useful if the mentees are all in the same disciplines (STEM).
- It was difficult to get everyone together at each meeting.
- No disadvantages.
- None.
- Not found yet.
- Practices in each college differ widely and having the perspective of someone from a different school is not necessarily helpful when you're trying to figure out what the advising expectations are, what the PTE guidelines are, etc.
- Sometimes I think one on one discussions are better for some people, including myself. Sometimes I have met with one mentor alone for coffee and that is more helpful to me than the group thing.
- Taking my time for nothing.
- There is no support for individuals. Neither of the groups I participated in met very often or were very helpful.
- There is one mentee who tends to monopolize conversation, and her issues are very different from mine.
- There seemed to be many disadvantages. Finding times to meet were extremely difficult since we had a group of 8 who were all over campus and had very different schedules. I don't believe we ever did meet as a full group. The differences between us meant that there was a lot of wasted time in the meetings. Some has heavy teaching loads, others purely research and thus our needs from mentors were very different. Also, the disciplines of the mentees was so distinct that it was at times hard to find common ground. While it was interesting to learn about different disciplines on campus, it seemed to interrupt the mentoring goals. Some members of the group dominated conversation, and made it difficult to have balanced sessions. Finally, some issues that I'd like to discuss with a mentor are more personal or confidential in nature, and I felt uncomfortable addressing those issues in a group mentoring session.
- They issues of gender are still severely prominent at NDSU, particularly in administration.  The appearance of putting these groups to address the problem, does not address the core problem- which is in administration, there is still severe bias treatment and harassment.

## 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 |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 3         | 10.3    | 13.0               |
|       | Disagree          | 1         | 3.4     | 17.4               |
|       | Somewhat Disagree | 4         | 13.8    | 34.8               |
|       | Somewhat Agree    | 5         | 17.2    | 56.5               |
|       | Agree             | 7         | 24.1    | 87.0               |
|       | Strongly Agree    | 3         | 10.3    | 100.0              |
|       | Missing Data      | 6         | 20.7    |                    |
|       | Total             | 29        | 100.0   |                    |

*** Mean= 3.91, SD= 1.56

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

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Valid | Not Applicable    | 3         | 10.3    | 13.6               |
|       | Strongly Disagree | 1         | 3.4     | 18.2               |
|       | Disagree          | 6         | 20.7    | 45.5               |
|       | Somewhat Disagree | 3         | 10.3    | 59.1               |
|       | Somewhat Agree    | 3         | 10.3    | 72.7               |
|       | Agree             | 4         | 13.8    | 90.9               |
|       | Strongly Agree    | 2         | 6.9     | 100.0              |
|       | Missing Data      | 7         | 24.1    |                    |
|       | Total             | 29        | 100.0   |                    |

*** Mean= 3.00, SD= 1.87

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

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------|
| Valid | Not Applicable    | 5         | 17.2    | 21.7               |
|       | Strongly Disagree | 2         | 6.9     | 30.4               |
|       | Disagree          | 6         | 20.7    | 56.5               |
|       | Somewhat Disagree | 4         | 13.8    | 73.9               |
|       | Somewhat Agree    | 5         | 17.2    | 95.7               |
|       | Agree             | 1         | 3.4     | 100.0              |
|       | Missing Data      | 6         | 20.7    |                    |
|       | Total             | 29        | 100.0   |                    |

*** Mean= 2.22, SD= 1.56

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

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 3 | 10.3 | Valid |
|  | Disagree | 4 | 13.8 |  |
|  | Somewhat Disagree | 4 | 13.8 |  |
|  | Somewhat Agree | 6 | 20.7 |  |
|  | Agree | 4 | 13.8 |  |
|  | Strongly Agree | 2 | 6.9 |  |
|  | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 |  |
|  | Total | 29 | 100.0 |  |

*** Mean= 3.43, SD= 1.53

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

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 3 | 10.3 | Valid |
|  | Disagree | 5 | 17.2 |  |
|  | Somewhat Disagree | 3 | 10.3 |  |
|  | Somewhat Agree | 4 | 13.8 |  |
|  | Agree | 5 | 17.2 |  |
|  | Strongly Agree | 3 | 10.3 |  |
|  | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 |  |
|  | Total | 29 | 100.0 |  |

*** Mean= 3.52, SD= 1.67

**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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Disagree | 1 | 3.4 | 4.3 |
|  | Disagree | 4 | 13.8 | 21.7 |
|  | Somewhat Disagree | 6 | 20.7 | 47.8 |
|  | Somewhat Agree | 5 | 17.2 | 69.6 |
|  | Agree | 4 | 13.8 | 87.0 |
|  | Strongly Agree | 3 | 10.3 | 100.0 |
|  | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 |  |
|  | Total | 29 | 100.0 |  |

*** Mean= 3.70, SD= 1.43

**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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Disagree | 4 | 13.8 | Valid |
| | Somewhat Disagree | 7 | 24.1 | |
| | Somewhat Agree | 4 | 13.8 | |
| | Agree | 4 | 13.8 | |
| | Strongly Agree | 4 | 13.8 | |
| | Missing Data | 6 | 20.7 | |
| | Total | 29 | 100.0 | |

*** Mean= 3.87, SD= 1.39

Additionally, 12 (41.4%) mentees identified that participating in the cohort mentoring program had a positive impact on their own experience of the climate here at NDSU. Seven (24.1%) mentees felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program had an impact on their decision to remain at NDSU. Moreover, two (6.9%) mentees felt that participating in the cohort mentoring program gave them greater access to academic administers and four (13.8%) mentees felt it increased their 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:
- It's a great idea!! Maybe we should share with other cohort groups twice a year to get to know people -- other faculty and their approach.
- To list a few mentors, from which we can choose our own.
- Encourage greater mentee participation in the second year.
- I really can't say. There weren't many meetings. If there has been such a mentoring program for more than one year, I would recommend getting the word out about it. It can't help people if they don't know it exists.
- Think it's good as it is.
- Make it more personal and one-to-one relationship.
- Maybe better match between responsibilities on campus? That is, everyone has similar work responsibilities such as teaching/research balance.
- Maybe give people a choice about whether they would like a single or mixed gender group.
- Mixed gender groups.