Mentoring at Critical Transitions: Faculty Readiness from Admission to Completion

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2014 CGS Summer Workshop
Portland, Oregon
2009 ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admissions Through Completion
Original MCT Team Planning Team

- Dean
- Associate Dean for Students
- Assistant Dean
- Director of Outreach Recruitment and Retention
- Director of Analysis and Policy
- Coordinator of Professional Development Programs
Developing a Vision

• Multiple brainstorming sessions

• Informed by many previous efforts
  • Student and faculty mentoring and wellness reports by Graduate Student Assistants to the Dean and Chancellor
  • Professors for the Future projects
  • Analysis of NRC report data on completion and attrition rates
  • Analysis of UC Davis Doctoral Student Retention Survey

➢ Focus on academic hurdles/milestones

➢ Focus on faculty
Philosophy of the MCT Program

- Create a culture that supports academic socialization, mentoring and inclusivity

- Recognize that faculty are instrumental to the quality of graduate student life and academic success

- Seek to transform the institution in the stated focus areas
MCT Program Focuses on 3 Critical Transitions

1) Applicant to Graduate Student

2) Coursework to Research

3) Research to Career
Initial Structure of the MCT Program

- Proposals from programs wanting to participate
- Prepare package of information for each selected program including data for comparison institutions
- Initial 2-day retreat
- Monthly MCT seminars with invited speakers
- Closing retreat with an externally facilitated program assessment
- MCT certification on website
- Mini-grant proposals from participating programs
Engaging Programs: Mini-grant Proposals

- Each participating program or group invited to submit a proposal for up to $4,000 of funding

- Proposed activities expected to embody concepts learned and developed during the MCT program; also expected to disseminate concepts to colleagues

- Examples of proposed activities
  - Faculty retreat
  - Student retreat to foster community and communication
  - Recruiting events to ensure greater awareness at admission
Current Structure of the MCT Program

• Open invitation to all faculty
• Faculty seminars and corresponding student seminars
• 1-2 MCT seminars per quarter
• Mixture of internal and external speakers or panelists

• Topics include:
  • Ensuring First Year Graduate Student Success with Hugh Kearns
  • Mentoring First-year Graduate Students
  • Creating an Individual Development Plan with Bill Lindstaedt
  • Training Mentees to Pro-actively Manage their Mentoring Relationship
  • Mentoring Graduate Students through Diverse Career Pathways
  • Mentoring Diverse Graduate Students
  • Students Out of Sorts: How to Help
Engaging Programs: Mentoring Fellowship

• Up to five $10,000 fellowships will be awarded for faculty mentors to help support one or more of their graduate student mentees.

• To be eligible, faculty must attend at least 3 of the 4 MCT workshops or panels offered during 2014-2015.

• Eligible faculty must submit a proposal, written with their mentee(s), showing how the mentor-mentee relationship can be enhanced from the skills or concepts shared from one or a combination of MCT workshops to benefit their graduate students’ successful and timely completion of their degree objective.

• Winning faculty will be recognized with a plaque for excellence in mentoring at a special awards presentation during the Week of Orientation and Welcome (WOW).
Proposal Writing Process

- Incorporate information from the literature on student success
- Use data to make a quantitative case (doctoral survey, results of PhD Completion Project, analysis of NRC data)
- Address alignment with institutional goals and current trends in graduate education
- Address program evaluation, sustainability and institutional transformation
- Writing as a team effort, with one lead
Attention to Diversity

• Adopted a broad definition of diversity/inclusivity

• Seminars addressed challenges faced by
  ▪ international students
  ▪ underrepresented minority students
  ▪ women in science
  ▪ students with disabilities
  ▪ students from low socio-economic backgrounds
  ▪ LGBTQIA students
Challenges

- Timing is challenging in that award recipient is notified in October, award received in December

- MCT was designed so that final planning occurred during remainder of first academic year and actual program ran during second academic year of award

- Program mini-grants awarded during late spring and summer of second year, but programs extended expenditures

- Initial program workload was not sustainable

- Faculty participation is reasonable, but could be higher
Questions?

MENTORING AT CRITICAL TRANSITIONS
University of California, Davis