Effective Mentors and Mentoring: Insights from the Faculty Inclusion Study of Underrepresented Faculty

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Motivation for Study

- 2009 Faculty Work Environment Survey
  - Low response rate for faculty of color
  - More negative responses for Black, Hispanic, and American Indian faculty than White faculty

- Goal: Gather more information about experiences of faculty of color

Study Design

- Qualitative Study: 1-2 hour interviews
- 118 Participants
- Phase 1: Black, Hispanic, American Indian faculty
  - Invited all faculty to participate in interviews
  - N = 62, 35% response rate
- Phase 2: Asian faculty
  - Stratified Purposeful Sampling
    - Sampled to get a range of responses based on faculty gender, nativity, STEM or non-STEM
  - N = 56, 23% response rate

Sample Characteristics

- **Sex**: 57 Females (48%), 61 Males (52%)
- **Race**: 30 Black (25%), 25 Hispanic (21%), 6 American Indian (5%), 57 Asian (48%)
- **Nativity**: 91 U.S. Citizens (77%), 26 non-U.S. Citizens (22%)
- **Rank**: 42 Assistant (36%), 35 Associate (30%), 41 Full (35%)
- **STEM**: 76 STEM-related (64%), 42 non-STEM (36%)

Mentoring Questions

- Do you have someone who mentors you formally or informally?
- Is this mentoring effective?
  - What makes them good mentors?
- Do you have any mentors who differ from you along gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, or citizenship?
  - How would you describe those mentoring experiences?
- What type of mentoring would you most like to receive? What type of mentoring would you find most helpful in your career?

Effective Mentoring Themes

- Traits and Skills of an Effective Mentor
- Effective Mentoring Relationship
- Mentoring Challenges
- Cross-Group Mentoring

Effective mentor skills and traits

- 38% - Respected scholar/successful in field
- 34% - Skilled at navigated and understanding the academic system
- 23% - Wise or insightful
- 17% - Good listeners
- 12% - Communicate well

Effective Mentoring Relationship

- 31% - Mentor acts in the participants' best interests
- 26% - Mentor provides honest feedback
- 15% - Mentor is trustworthy

Mentoring Challenges

- 27% - Problems in relationship with mentors
  - Poor advice
  - Conflicting advice
  - Lack of involvement by mentors
- 23% - Mentoring not formalized and not valued
  - Mentoring not present
  - Need for mentor training
  - Funding of mentoring activities

Mentoring Challenges

- 21% - Difficulty finding mentors
  - Identifying mentors
  - “Making the approach”
- 19% Lack of fit between mentor and protégé
  - In research topic
  - In mentoring style

Cross-Group Mentoring

- 32% - No impact on mentoring
- 15% - Described positive aspects of cross-group mentoring:
  - Exposure to diversity of perspectives
  - Gain unique skills
  - Making the relationship work
- 14% - Described problems associated with cross-group mentoring:
  - Lack of understanding in research
  - Lack of understanding of difference in backgrounds
  - Limited questions

Same-Group mentoring

- Ability to talk about minority group issues
- Higher quality of relationship

Differences Across Groups: Gender

- Women emphasized:
  - Need to formalize/value mentoring
  - Difficulty finding mentors

Differences Across Groups: Race

- Asian participants were <u>less</u> likely than others to say:
  - Effective mentors give honest feedback
  - Effective mentors are respectful
  - They had poor mentoring relationships
  - They had difficulty finding appropriate mentors
  - Formalization/valuing of mentoring is needed
  - That cross-group mentoring matters
  - Same-group mentoring relationships are higher quality

Differences Across Groups: Race

- Black participants felt effective mentors:
  - Were skilled at navigating the academy
  - Are respectful
- Hispanic participants:
  - Had more trouble finding appropriate mentors

Differences Across Groups: Citizenship

- US Citizens were more likely to say:
  - Effective mentors are skilled at navigating academia
  - Mentoring needs to be formalized and valued
  - Same-group mentoring relationships were higher quality

- Non-US Citizens were more likely to say:
  - Effective mentors act in the protégés best interests
  - Cross-group mentoring does not matter

Differences Across Groups: Rank

- Assistant professors were more likely to say:
  - They had negative mentoring relationships
  - There were limited questions they could ask cross-group mentors

- No STEM vs. non-STEM differences in these areas

Suggestions from Results

- Mentor training should focus on:
  - Helping protégés meet their personal career goals
  - How to deliver feedback respectfully
  - Mentoring across difference
  - How to discuss protégé with others
- Not everyone should be a mentor
  - Valuing mentoring by those who do it well
- Programs to aid in matching protégés with mentors

Thank You!

Thank you to the ADAPP-ADVANCE grant and project staff, our faculty participants, our project staff, and the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives.

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