



ADVANCE 2008 Faculty Mentoring Survey

Results Summary

Thanks to Karen Stamm, Ph.D., Barb Silver, Ph.D., and the URI ADVANCE Faculty Development Committee for their efforts in producing this report.

ADVANCE conducted a mentoring survey at the University of Rhode Island, which targeted both senior faculty mentors and new faculty mentees, during the months of May and June 2008. The main purpose of the survey was to measure the levels of satisfaction with the mentoring relationship. ADVANCE has been increasingly promoting mentoring in the last two years by developing college policies, offering mentor training workshops, and carrying out mentee “check-ins” for faculty hired since 2006. The survey was web-based with data collected from Survey Monkey.

MENTEES

The Mentoring Survey was distributed to 100 untenured faculty mentees who were matched with at least one mentor at the URI. A total of 46 mentees responded to the survey: 30 female (65.2%) and 16 male (34.8%). The response rate was 46%. The college distribution is shown below. Over half of the respondents were hired in 2006 or later (N=27, 58.7%), while 39.1% (N=18) were hired before 2006. One participant didn’t indicate hiring date.

College of Mentee	N	%
Arts & Sciences	12	26.1%
Business Administration	5	10.9%
Environment and Life Sciences	10	21.7%
of Engineering	3	6.5%
Graduate School of Oceanography	2	4.4%
Human Science and Services	6	13%
Pharmacy	2	4.4%
Unknown	6	13%
Total	46	100%

Are you satisfied with the level of mentoring you are receiving?

Yes 56.6%
No 30.4%

The average number of formal mentors assigned to the participants was 1.22. In terms of level of mentoring over the past year, a little over half (N=26, 56.5%) reported they had just enough mentoring. However, almost a third (N=14, 30.4%) didn’t have enough mentoring, 10.9% (N=5) didn’t really want nor need a mentor, and no one reported they had too much mentoring.

Mentor Scale

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with 12 statements regarding their primary or most effective mentor. Response choices ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

In terms of the quality of the relationship with their mentors, 65% of the respondents reported having a positive relationship, and 74% reported feeling welcome to go to their mentors for advice. A majority of participants (65%) want to continue their current mentoring relationship, and 76% reported that they would encourage others to participate in mentoring programs.

Men were significantly more satisfied with their mentoring relationship than women in several ways.

In terms of gender, men reported a higher overall level of satisfaction with their mentoring relationship ($M = 4.22$) than women ($M = 3.49$). Men reported significantly higher agreement with the following specific items: men had a positive relationship with their mentors, found it easy to get together with their mentors, felt

welcome to go to their mentors for advice, felt understood by their mentors, and their research was enhanced by their mentoring relationship. There were no significant differences by college.

There were significant differences between the mentees hired before 2006 and those hired on 2006 or later in some of the items. Faculty hired in 2006 or later agreed more that it was easy to talk to their mentors, and that they were able to put mentors' suggestions into practice. We are encouraged that this indicates the ADVANCE Mentor Program is having a positive impact. No other significant differences were found.

Has the ADVANCE mentor program improved mentoring? Hires after 2006 report more positive outcomes than those hired prior to 2006.

Is it Helpful to Have Multiple Mentors?

Respondents were asked to compare the experience they had with their most effective mentor and their experience with other mentors. Most of the participants ($N=27$, 58.7%) reported having only one mentor. Three mentees (6.5%) found the experience to be comparable and similarly effective, while 2 (4.7%) found the experience similarly effective but in different and complementary ways. Five mentees (10.9%) reported that the experience with other mentors was not quite as effective, while 4 participants (8.7%) reported that the experience wasn't at all as effective.

ADVANCE Influence

Respondents were asked to report how many times they accessed the ADVANCE office, they participated in any ADVANCE activity, or an ADVANCE team member contacted them over the past academic year. The average number of times was 1.22. Also, mentees were asked to report if ADVANCE has been helpful to them as faculty members. Response choices ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The average score was 3.49 out of 5.

MENTORS

The Mentoring Survey was distributed to 89 faculty mentors who were assigned to at least one mentee at URI. A total of 42 mentors responded to the survey: 24 female (57.1%) and 17 male (40.5%). One participant (2.4%) didn't indicate gender. The response rate was 47%. The average number of mentees assigned to the participants was 1.43. The college distribution of the mentors is shown below.

College of Mentor	N	%
Arts & Sciences	8	19%
Business Administration	2	4.8%
Environment and Life Sciences	12	28.6%
of Engineering	4	9.5%
Graduate School of Oceanography	2	4.8%
Human Science and Services	5	11.9%
Pharmacy	3	7.1%
Library	2	4.8%
Unknown	4	9.5%
Total	42	100%

Mentor Scale

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with statements regarding their relationship with a primary mentee and their experience serving as mentors. Response choices ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Overall, respondents indicated a mean of 4.05 on their experiences serving as mentors, and 3.65 on their relationship with a primary mentee. There were no significant differences by gender. In terms of the quality of the

Mentors overwhelmingly reported positive outcomes from their mentoring relationships.

relationship with their mentee, 85% of the respondents reported having a positive relationship, and 74% responded they wish to continue their mentoring relationship. Most mentors (83%) perceived that their mentees' understanding of URI was enhanced as result of the mentoring, and the same proportion of the sample (83%) reported that the time spent mentoring was worthwhile.

Is it Helpful to Have Additional Mentees?

Respondents were asked to compare their most effective mentoring relationship with a specific mentee and their experience with other mentees. Most of the participants (N=26, 61.9%) reported having only one mentee. Five mentors (11.9%) found the experience to be comparable and similarly effective, while 5 participants (11.9%) found the experience similarly effective but in different and complementary ways. Three mentors (7.1%) reported that the experience with other mentees was not quite as effective. No mentors reported that the relationship with other mentees wasn't at all as effective.

ADVANCE Influence

Respondents were asked to report how many times they accessed the ADVANCE office, they participated in any ADVANCE activity, or an ADVANCE team member contacted them over the past academic year. The average number of times was 5.89. Also, mentors were asked to report if ADVANCE has been helpful to them as faculty members. Response choices ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The average score was 3.30 out of 5.

On a scale of 1-5, how helpful has ADVANCE been to you as a faculty member?

Mentors:	3.3
Mentees:	3.5

SUMMARY

Are untenured faculty satisfied with their mentoring?

It appears that while about half of all untenured faculty responding to the survey are satisfied with their level of mentoring, a third are not. Over 10% did not feel they needed or wanted a mentor. Because of the topical nature of the survey, there is a stronger possibility of self-selection bias, with those unhappy, unaware, or uninterested in a mentoring relationship being many of the 54% not responding. Regardless, having a third of respondents report low satisfaction is cause for concern. Mentoring relationships should be regularly monitored, and changed when the fit is not right. As an untenured faculty member may not feel in a position to be proactive in this regard, it is the responsibility of the mentor and chair to remain engaged in this process.

Why are men untenured faculty more satisfied with their mentoring relationships than women?

It is striking how consistent the differences were between men and women untenured faculty across several dimensions of satisfaction. These findings should not be taken lightly, as mentoring is known to be a significant factor in faculty career advancement. This is especially relevant for faculty who are underrepresented in their disciplines, such as women in science and engineering. Are men satisfied with less mentoring? Do men enter the faculty role better prepared? Because of traditional gender role expectations, are men more reluctant to express a need for better mentoring? Do women expect a more proactive relationship with their mentors? Do women and men evaluate the same relationship according to different criteria? Or are women simply being poorly mentored? These and other questions are worth pursuing, but in any event, chairs and mentors should stay attuned to the varying expectations and needs of all untenured faculty.

Are additional mentors needed?

It is generally thought that having multiple mentors is helpful, as rarely can one person provide the breadth of support and guidance a new faculty member might need, and multiple perspectives from inside and outside the department can be beneficial. The ways a mentor can be helpful are many, and include teaching and research guidance, navigating university systems, helping make professional connections, conflict and time management, work-life balance issues, lending a sympathetic ear, and providing general “insider” local knowledge. Interestingly, while most mentees only had one mentor, about 20% (N=9) of those mentees who had multiple mentors did not find it somewhat or at all effective, and only 5 found it effective. This perception of untenured faculty, and the fact that most only had one assigned mentor suggests that more efforts could be made to assigning multiple mentors who remain actively engaged with the relationship.

Conversely, while most of the mentors also only had one mentee, 10 (24%) of those who had multiple mentees found the experience effective, and only 3 (7.1%) found it not quite as effective. The difference in perception between mentors and mentees about the level of effectiveness raises some interesting questions about the awareness level of mentors, the possible influence of a self-enhancing perceptual bias, and a possible need to improve straightforward communication between the two parties.

Why do mentors perceive their relationship more positively than do their mentees?

Like the multiple mentor comparison above, of interest is the difference in the reported level of satisfaction with mentoring relationships between mentors and mentees. There was a 20% gap between mentors and mentees regarding how positively they viewed

their mentoring relationship, as well as other differences, suggesting that mentors overall have a more positive view of their effectiveness than do the untenured faculty. This is not an uncommon finding in the social science literature on self-perception bias.

Different perceptions in quality of relationship	Mentors	Mentees
We have a positive relationship	85%	65%
I would like to continue my current relationship	74%	65%
Understanding of URI has been enhanced	83%	63%

In addition, or alternatively, it is also known that untenured faculty often do not openly express their needs, and so it is possible that mentors may be unaware of gaps in mentoring. Several important considerations inform this issue. First, it must not be assumed that new faculty know all the things they need to be successful at their institution, or what to expect from a mentoring relationship, or even that they deserve to be actively mentored. Also, critiquing relationships with a senior faculty member or requesting a change is often an uncomfortable option for untenured faculty who perceive themselves as vulnerable until the tenure decision is made. Finally, while occurring less often, mentoring can still be erroneously viewed from a deficit model standpoint, with mentors seen as providing remedial help to those unable to make it on their own.


Recommendations

1. *Mentoring education* should occur annually. It is not only highly useful for mentors, who may not be attuned to the multiple aspects of mentoring, but also for untenured faculty, who can become more aware of what to expect and request from a solid mentoring relationship.
2. *Multiple mentors* are a good idea, and should be assigned more conscientiously, with more active awareness of their complementary roles and responsibilities.
3. *Mentoring men and women faculty* may have different characteristics that may be influenced by a variety of role expectations. Chairs, mentors, and mentees need to be aware of this and explore avenues to ensure both men and women are receiving what they need to be successful.
4. *Assessing the mentoring relationship* should be a normal and expected occurrence, as needs and preferences do naturally evolve. Chairs, mentors and mentees should approach this openly and feel comfortable seeking alternatives if helpful.

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM POLICY

All URI colleges shall implement a mentoring policy that provides for effective mentoring for their new faculty. This mentoring shall consist of career-advancing guidance, as well as social and psychological support for the new faculty member. College policies shall include the provision of one or more mentor(s) to each new faculty member, some form of mentor training, and regular "checking in" to ensure that the needs of junior faculty are being met.

-- Approved by URI Provost Beverly Swan, December 2006



URI ADVANCE FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM COMPONENTS

1. Visible, overt, regular communication from leadership that good mentoring is a department priority
2. Formal program management
3. Thoughtful mentor matching at hire, and prior to arrival on campus
4. Multiple mentors, one outside department, until T&P decision
5. Provision for training of mentors
6. Provision for training of untenured faculty (mentees)
7. Opportunities for untenured faculty to network/meet as a group
8. Opportunities to check on success of mentoring relationships for every untenured faculty, and re-assign/augment, etc., as needed
9. Evaluation of program as a whole on a regular basis
10. Provision of formal recognition, acknowledgment, awards, etc., for mentoring