

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Matthew R. Tradewell for the degree of Master of Science in College Student Services Administration presented on May 10, 2019.

Title: Making Sense of Co-Mentoring Relationships: Peer Mentor Perspectives.

Abstract approved:

Larry Roper

This mixed methods qualitative thesis examined the relationships between co-mentors in the Faculty Student Mentor Program at Oregon State University through the reported experiences/perceptions of peer mentors. The researcher gathered information for this study utilizing data from two focus groups, a survey of peer mentors, and a review of relevant literature. The data analysis yielded three themes surrounding the experiences of peer mentors in this co-mentoring program; (a) power dynamics, (b) mentoring structures, and (c) peer mentor perspectives. As mentoring programs continue to expand and evolve within the realm of higher education, the findings provided by this study will hopefully encourage institutions to break the traditional mold of one-on-one faculty mentor programs and embrace new mentoring practices that utilize the expertise of faculty, students and staff in collaboration with one another. In addition, this study provides researchers with new knowledge surrounding the relationships of co-mentors within a formal mentoring program that will hopefully spark future research that examines the relationships of co-mentors from varying perspectives. *Keywords: co-mentor, peer mentor, faculty mentor*

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Making Sense of Co-Mentoring Relationships: Peer Mentor Perspectives

by
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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Science

Presented May 10, 2019
Commencement June 2019

Master of Science thesis of Matthew R. Tradewell presented on May 10, 2019.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

Matthew R. Tradewell, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to express my sincerest appreciation to all of my committee members, Larry Roper, Gloria Crisp, Thomas Scheuermann, and Stephanie Bernell for their dedication to my success and encouragement. I would also like to thank Kayleen Eng, for being my rock, research partner, and motivation through Graduate School. You pushed me farther than I ever thought I could reach, and your support, friendship, and senselessness mean the world to me.

I would also like to thank my CSSA cohort. Each of you have an enthusiasm and commitment to the field of higher education that continues to inspire me every day. I would also like to thank several of my co-workers in the Graduate School; Jessica Beck, Karen Hanson, John McQueen and Melissa Almanza. You all have played a tremendous role in my education, and I am so thankful for the mentorship you have all provided me over the past two years.

I would also like to thank my parents, Ken and Lorri Tradewell. I am the person I am today thanks to your unwavering love, support and guidance. Lastly, I would like to thank my partner, Connor Laurion for being my best friend, for joining me on this graduate school journey, and for believing in my potential.

I would not have been able to succeed without you all and am forever grateful to have had you in my life.

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Making Sense of Co-Mentoring Relationships: Peer Mentor Perspectives

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Learning structures in the realm of higher education continue to evolve, with an increased responsibility being placed on universities to mold and engage the development of students in ways that extend beyond the classroom door. Over the past three decades, new perspectives on learning have challenged the notion that learning is an individual process, with knowledge development now widely being accepted as a social process (Christie, 2014). Among these new perspectives, mentoring continues to gain traction as a way to enhance both the personal and professional development of students. Across higher education institutions, innovative mentoring practices are being implemented in an effort to enhance student wellbeing, improve professional skill sets, and promote positive identity development for students navigating the transition to collegiate life (Laverick, 2016). Within this evolving landscape of mentoring structures, research surrounding these opportunities has focused primarily on the benefits of mentoring and the experiences of the mentees within traditional one-on-one mentoring programs (Allen & Ebby, 2003).

While non-traditional mentoring practices are increasingly gaining notoriety, mentor experiences within these relationships are often ignored. However, the role of the mentor is essential to successful mentoring relationships. Across varying institutions, mentees often attribute their perseverance, improved self-esteem, and increased connection to the university to once having had a mentor (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to highlight the experiences of mentors in a hybrid co-mentoring model to better understand how they perceive their co-mentor relationship and its subsequent impact on their mentees. More specifically, the primary focus of this

narrative inquiry is to gain a better understanding of how mentorship roles are established between peer mentors and faculty mentors by examining peer mentor perspectives on their mentoring relationships with faculty mentors in the Faculty Student Mentor Program (FSMP) at Oregon State University.

Definition of Terms

Across varying institutions and mentoring programs, the term mentor takes many different forms. For the purposes of this study, a mentor is someone who is in, or perceived to be in, an 'expert position' to introduce an inexperienced mentee into the university environment (Christie, 2014). The role of the mentor is to be a 'guide, a map in a sense, who transmits wisdom by leading the mentee on a journey' (Laverick, 2016). Opposite the mentor in these relationships is the mentee; an individual who is unfamiliar with the university environment and is transitioning into the roles and responsibilities of being a college student. There is often an assumption that age determines mentee status, with those who are younger perceived as the mentee (Christie, 2014). In this study, age is not considered when determining mentee status.

There are several categories of mentors that are pertinent to define as well; peer mentors, faculty mentors, and co-mentors. *Peer mentors* are essentially upper division students (sophomore, junior, or senior status) who have been selected as peer mentors to share their experiences as students and valuable insights into campus life with their mentees (Budny, Paul & Newborg, 2010). *Faculty mentors* are faculty members who mentor students beyond traditional academic supporting roles such as an advisor, professor, or supervisor. Faculty mentors also share their experiences and understanding of the university with their mentees, while serving as resources/keepers of knowledge.

Co-mentors, are mentors that work in tandem to mentor a student or groups of students, with each mentor bringing their own set of skills/perspectives to share with their mentees. Co-mentoring can be effective as “no one individual possesses the skills or abilities to be all things to all people” (Baker & Griffin, 2010).

Faculty Student Mentor Program

Grown from an undergraduate student success initiative at Oregon State University, the Faculty Student Mentor Program is a two-year pilot mentoring experience for first year and transfer students navigating the transition to college. The program was implemented in the fall of 2018, with the pilot set to end in the spring of 2020. The program aims to serve students from low-income backgrounds, those who are first generation, as well as students from underrepresented identity groups; however, all first-year and transfer students are welcome to participate. Within this mentoring framework, the FSMP matches groups of up to five student mentees with two co-mentors; a peer mentor and a faculty mentor. Peer mentors are upper division students from varying majors and backgrounds and are compensated financially for their participation in the program throughout the year. Faculty mentors come from various programs across campus and are volunteering their time/expertise to the program. Together, these co-mentors are expected to work in tandem to mentor their students through their first year at OSU. Research has shown that mentees can benefit from each of these relationships and should have access to them in their collegiate developmental network (Baker & Griffin, 2010).

In its pilot year, the FSMP cohort included 334 student mentees, 124 peer mentors, and 124 faculty mentors. The co-mentors were provided with limited mentor

training and given guidance to meet with mentee groups at least every other week throughout the year. Scheduling, coordination, and discussion topics are left to the co-mentors to establish together. Supporting the mentoring groups, the FSMP is run through an initiative in the Provost office with a committee of higher education professionals from varying backgrounds meeting monthly to review the program, evaluate its effectiveness, and provide resources/training to the mentees/mentors. The co-mentors receive some guidance from the FSMP committee in regards to potential discussion topics and best practices for mentoring, however, the FSMP committee focuses primarily on matching the mentor groups and ensuring that the logistics of the program run smoothly.

The Mentor Perspective

Research shows that mentoring interventions positively contribute to a student's successful transition and retention in college (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). There is evidence that mentoring has positive effects on a student's transition into higher education and helps retain not only first-year students, but also faculty and staff by introducing supportive frameworks that impact the quality of experiences available to the university community (Laverick, 2016). Within these mentoring interventions, learning is a situated process where students develop understanding of their particular institutional environments through participation and engagement with others (Christie, 2014). Human connection is essential to a student's ability to "thrive and succeed," and within mentoring frameworks, mentors serve as role models that guide students through individualized instruction and conversations (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). However, the ways in which these mentoring interactions take place vary across institutions, with new mentoring initiatives taking form across the country. The design and implementation of new mentoring programs can be critical determinants of successful mentee outcomes and

overall effectiveness (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). Therefore, it is essential that a deeper understanding about the specific contexts of mentoring and ‘about the ways in which mentors and mentees construct their roles’ be established (Christie, 2014).

While mentoring is conceptualized as a “mutually beneficial relationship,” the research surrounding these benefits is often one-sided; focusing primarily on the mentee’s experiences/perceptions (Beltman & Schaeben, 2012). However, as Christie (2014) states:

Being put into a position of expertise is a risky space for mentors to inhabit precisely because there are myriad ways in which the trusting relationship can be breached. (p.962)

Arguably, a mutual commitment is then necessary for effective mentoring relationships to occur. To avoid nonmutuality, or situations where a mentor or mentee is either more committed or less committed than their mentoring counterpart, more research is needed surrounding the mentor’s perspectives, outcomes, and benefits associated with their mentoring experiences as there is a paucity of research currently on this topic. The greatest levels of well-being and achievement are reported to occur when partners in a relationship are equally committed to one another (Poteat, Shockley & Allen, 2009). For example, in the ‘networking-mentoring model,’ there is an implicit expectation that all members of the mentoring relationship will at one point act as the mentor to the other, while also receiving benefits as if they were the mentee (Dodson, Montgomery & Brown, 2009). This demonstrates how mentoring relationships should be reciprocal and everyone involved should benefit in some way (Christie, 2014). As noted by Zachary (2002):

Motivation drives participation in a mentoring relationship and directly affects behavior, attitude, and emotional resilience in mentoring relationships. It also can potentially affect the quality of the mentoring interaction. Those who hold a deep

understanding of why they are doing something end up being more committed to it and, because of that, focus their energy better and probably save time in the long run. (p.30)

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the relationship between co-mentors in the FSMP to better understand their motivations, challenges, and successes with mentoring to formulate a better picture of how these groups benefit from working together to mentor their mentees.

Research Questions

The purpose of this narrative inquiry study will be to better understand how connections are formed between faculty mentors and peer mentors in the Faculty Student Mentor Program. To understand how mentorship roles are established between faculty mentors and peer mentors, the study examines peer mentor perspectives on their mentoring relationships with faculty mentors in the FSMP. The following research questions guide the study: (1) How are connections formed between peer mentors and faculty mentors within a faculty student mentor program? (2) What mentoring approaches are peer mentors and faculty mentors implementing to establish relationships with their mentees in a faculty student mentor program? And (3) How do peer mentors perceive the relationships with their faculty mentors in a faculty student mentor program?

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This literature review will evaluate the landscape of mentoring in higher education today, including an overview of common mentoring program structures, various mentor types, and current knowledge surrounding mentoring relationships. As noted in Chapter 1, there is very little research which examines the perceptions, roles and/or experiences of the mentor. However, this chapter will bring forth narrowed perspectives surrounding mentoring in general to offer insight into this often overlooked aspect of the mentoring relationship. The literature review is organized into four sections: (a) mentoring as a tool for success, (b) the successful mentor, (c) mentors and mentoring structures, and (d) making sense of mentor relationships. These topics will provide context for the data and discussion posed at the end in Chapters 4 and 5.

Mentoring as a Tool for Success

Mentoring has many different forms and functions that make the chances of pinpointing an exact definition of mentoring challenging. In fact, as noted by Crisp and Cruz (2009) in their monograph on mentoring, over 50 varying definitions of mentoring were used in the research literature by 2007 alone (Crisp & Cruz, 2009). Although an exact definition varies from institution to institution, the outcomes/perceived outcomes for mentoring are similar throughout the literature. Encompassing most of these definitions is the idea that mentoring in higher education is a process by which students or mentees are socialized into the institution by mentors who can serve multiple roles for the mentee; role model, resource, friend, guide, etc. (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). As noted by Christie (2014), within these mentor structures:

[a] hierarchical relationship is built into the mentoring process, where the mentor is perceived as being in an expert position, and as being willing to induct the inexperienced mentee into the learning environment of the university. This is achieved through the mentor drawing upon tacit knowledge and understanding of the norms and practices of the university, and using this to encourage mentees to learn to work effectively within this community. Not surprisingly, a common theme in studies of the mentoring relationship is the power of the mentor to ensure the mentee's success by passing on cultural values and norms which help them to succeed at university. (p.960)

Mentoring provides the opportunity to highlight the best aspects of an institution through knowledge development and productive/constructive introductions to institutional norms not readily understandable to those unfamiliar with university life (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). These mentoring experiences offer professional development opportunities for students through networking, and when done successfully, provide models for students to gauge what it means to be an effective scholar (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). Mentoring is not new to higher education, and is well-established as a social support strategy that encourages the social, academic, personal and professional development of mentees (Beltman & Schaeben, 2012). Therefore, mentoring can be framed as a type of developmental relationship where goal development and personal growth are encouraged (Campbell, Smith, Dugan & Komives, 2012). When done effectively, mentoring establishes an “enhanced sense of competence, clarity of identity, and effectiveness” for mentees navigating an institution (Campbell, Smith, Dugan & Komives, 2012).

Although not a new concept within higher education, mentoring has continued to evolve and adapt overtime. For example, Zachary (2002) mentions how:

Mentoring practice has shifted from a product-oriented model, characterized by transfer of knowledge, to a process-oriented relationship involving knowledge acquisition, application, and critical reflection. The hierarchical transfer of

knowledge and information from an older, more experienced person to a younger, less experienced person is no longer the prevailing mentoring paradigm. (p.28)

Within mentoring practices lies an inherent need to create enduring and meaningful relationships with others. There is both a focus on learning, but arguably more important to the development of students, is a focus on creating interpersonal skills that center on mutual respect, sharing of knowledge, and a willingness to learn from others outside of familiar social structures (Salinitri, 2005). The relationships established through mentoring contribute to “reciprocal and collaborative” learning between mentors and mentees who develop a shared responsibility for guiding mentees towards achieving clearly defined goals (Zachary, 2002). This learning takes place through mentor willingness to reflect on their own experiences with failure within academic or social contexts and identifying skills or resources they now possess to persevere (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014). Mentoring practices act as opportunities to establish safe learning spaces where mentees can wrestle with difficult topics such as social and intellectual isolation (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). Mentoring allows for an embrace of varying forms of knowledge where mentors can “broker opportunities for their [mentees] professional advancement within the traditional, constrained pathways to success as young scholars” (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015).

Overall, mentoring programs with a shared purpose, mutual support, and collaborative training can greatly increase the persistence of mentees and support higher graduation rates (Smith, 2017). Studies have shown that students who were mentored as undergraduate students tend to have “higher GPA’s, higher retention rates, and more units completed per semester as compared to their un-mentored colleagues” (Wilson et al., 2012). Mentoring creates opportunities for student engagement, which is important to

note as disengaged students are less likely to build connections and have a “lower sense of belonging and satisfaction” (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). By diversifying one’s development network, mentors and mentees are co-creating developmental opportunities, expanding critical skills, and learning how to navigate important educational milestones that ultimately facilitate success in higher education (Baker & Griffin, 2010). For students who are from underrepresented groups, mentoring can address “key facets of student identity and social integration” into an academic community network of support; providing students with a sense of belonging at their institution (Wilson et al., 2012). Through mentoring, this sense of belonging is created by shared learning of the institutional culture and through an established support system to combat challenges related to ‘fitting in’ or socialization (Laverick, 2016). Other purported benefits of mentoring, as noted by Bell & Treleaven (2011) include:

Developing collegiality, networking, reflection, professional development, support and assistance, and personal satisfaction. Additional benefits for mentors can include higher rates of retention and promotion, higher success rates in receiving external research grants, higher publication rates and better perceptions of themselves as academics. (p.3)

When first-year students understand where to go for help, or have an avenue to ask for help, they reported having better coping skills to meet the demands of college and ultimately had a better outlook on their own college experiences as a direct outcome of having a mentor (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014). With guidance from their mentors, students learn how to adapt to the foreign environment of their college campus and gain valuable skills that cater to their abilities to learn and work more ‘efficiently and effectively’ (Edgcomb et al., 2010). These skills often translate into establishing more realistic expectations for their remaining collegiate years, which mentees have described

as an important determinant for lower levels of frustration and confusion (Budny, Paul & Newborg, 2010). In fact, mentees have even reported how mentoring has improved their own standing within their discipline or social structures as these relationships allow students to build trust and rapport with individuals that are influential in their areas of interest (Bell & Treleaven, 2011).

With an increasingly diverse population of students entering the realm of higher education each year, structured mentoring programs offer increased opportunities to support student transitions for student groups with an increased risk of failure due to a multitude of factors such as prior academic preparation, financial support and demographic background (Smith, 2017). This changing landscape of students entering college and the importance of mentoring opportunities is noted by Baker and Griffin (2010):

Today's college students are from increasingly diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and it is anticipated that students of color will be approximately half of all college attendees by 2020. Women and students of color are often in search of faculty members who understand and connect with their social and educational experiences, which may differ significantly from those of the white males who dominated college campuses in the past. First-generation college students are also on the rise; they will need support from a variety of relationships yet may be unable to fully articulate their needs. (p.1)

Insights from mentors can ease personal transitions that often overwhelm first-year students, who are unable to focus on their university experiences due to what are seen as "insurmountable personal changes" (Budny, Paul & Newborg, 2010). Research shows that student persistence is directly linked to the availability of appropriate support, mentorship, and university personnel to assist with the fears, change, and challenges associated with first year transitions (Budny, Paul & Newborg, 2010). Generally, students with mentors reported having a more positive outlook on their college experience, a

stronger understanding of available resources on campus, and better coping strategies to meet the academic and social demands of their institution; even mentioning an eagerness to earn higher grades so they too could one day become a mentor for other students (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014). Overall, the current literature regarding mentoring shows positive outcomes with those receiving mentorship reporting higher levels of persistence, success, and retention throughout their educational tenure.

The Successful Mentor

Although relevant literature shows a positive correlation between mentoring programs and student success, the overall effectiveness of a mentoring relationship is dependent on the mentor's ability to positively engage and socialize their mentees. Therefore, for new mentoring programs to be effective, much like the FSMP, a critical look at what characteristics are attributed to a successful mentor is needed to guide the development of future mentor programs.

First, it is important for a mentor to understand the context in which their mentoring relationship is taking place. Within higher education mentoring programs, there are levels of power in place from the institution which places the mentor in a position of power/influence over their mentees (Christie, 2014). Therefore, an emotional commitment is needed from the mentor that involves sharing of information as well as caring for their mentees personal and professional development (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Mentors must demonstrate this commitment to their mentees from the beginning of the mentoring relationship, with clear expectations and guidelines for the relationship being fully understood by both parties in order to avoid confusion, distrust or disappointment (Laverick, 2016). As discussed by Poteat, Shockley and Allen (2009):

Overall, findings have shown greater mentor commitment to be associated with positive outcomes such as mentor and protégé reports of relationship satisfaction and formal mentoring program effectiveness. (p.332)

The mentor must be someone that mentees feel comfortable reaching out to, someone who acts as a support system for students to confide in for questions and problems as mentees often are tackling the transition to college without their usual support systems in place (Laverick, 2016). Listening is essential for mentors so they can process student concerns and questions without assuming what they think the mentee needs is the only way forward (Baker & Griffin, 2010). To build this relationship, a mentor must demonstrate a genuine commitment and willingness to assist their mentees to ensure that mentees feel valued and not as nuisances wasting their mentor's time (Laverick, 2016). For this to occur, mentors must understand that their mentees' lived experiences matter and that the goal of the mentoring relationship is to remind mentees of their own narrative/goals, rather than placing undue expectations on them based on the mentor's perceptions of how that narrative should read (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). As noted by Baker and Griffin (2010):

The most important conditions for a successful mentor-mentee relationship are respect, an interest in understanding one another, and a willingness to engage in such a relationship. (p.4)

In positive mentoring relationships, there must be a development of mutual trust that exists with both the mentor and mentee, where both are able to learn, share ideas, and confide in one another (Laverick, 2016). Successful mentors must establish their relationship with mentees through opportunities for reflection, a mutual transaction of ideas, and experiences that encourage growth of both academic knowledge and interpersonal skills (Laverick, 2016). The mentor might inquire about their mentee's

interests both in and out of academia, while also suggesting additional opportunities or topic areas that may correlate with the mentee's demonstrated interests (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Mentoring relationships should strive to be both personal and reciprocal, creating an environment where both parties are benefiting in some way or another (Christie, 2014). Mentees with successful mentors leave the relationship feeling proud of their educational pursuits, and with an encouragement to continue developing without the direct guidance of the mentor (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014). The mentor must find ways to de-mystify the university for the mentee and leave the mentee with a sense that they understand the processes and structures of collegiate life (Christie, 2014).

The success of the mentor is not only dependent on the positive outcomes realized by the mentee, but also based on the benefits and perceptions realized by the mentor. Mentors report successful mentoring relationships when they see characteristics of themselves reflected in their mentees (Allen & Ebby, 2003). This is a process of mirroring where mentors desire to see a "mirror image" of themselves in their mentees; or a desire for generativity (Allen & Ebby, 2003). However, as stated by Baker and Griffin (2010):

While similarities in background between mentor and mentee can strengthen their relationship, the individuals involved do not necessarily need to share gender, race, or ethnicity in order for a mentoring relationship to be successful. A mentor's interest in working with a student can be spurred by seeing that student as a younger version of himself or herself. (p.4)

Rewardingly for mentors, a reported benefit from mentoring relationships occurs when they see the success of their mentees integrating into their desired collegiate circles; mentioning a sense of joy from witnessing the development of their mentees (Laverick, 2016). Mentors need to proceed with sensitivity, as their work is not to simply

reproduce themselves in their mentees, but more importantly to encourage complex relationships that represent unique perspectives and individuality among both the mentor and mentee (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). Mentoring therefore is a mutually beneficial relationship that is centered around learning and teaching from one another (Salinitri, 2005). For the mentor, this relationship allows them to engage and interact with new individuals in their field, and can help build rapport between students, staff, and faculty of varying levels of development within the institution. As noted by Beltman and Schaeben (2012) when discussing the outcomes of their mentoring program:

Mentors also enjoyed the opportunity to get to know and interact with new students in their field, which built rapport between students from different years. Some stayed in touch with their mentees, and some developed friendships. Mentors also got to know other mentors through the training and the meetings with the staff coordinator, expanding their social networks. The experience of mentoring contributed to the mentors' emotional and personal growth as they gained confidence, taking pride in their role as a mentor and being a role model for their mentees. Many mentors reflected on their own experiences as a first year and subsequent progress. By getting insight into their mentees' issues, mentors developed empathy with their mentees and were made aware of the problems of first year students from different backgrounds. (p.40)

These mentor experiences are further supported by findings that suggest these relationships develop the professional skills of mentors as well, helping them to gain confidence in their roles as mentors as they begin to view themselves as “capable leaders” and academic professionals (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014). Mentors are exposed to increasingly diverse and inimitable perspectives through interactions with their mentees, which in turn improves their listening, leadership, and professional skills; contributing to what some mentors consider a rejuvenating professional connection to the institution (Zachary, 2002). At the conclusion of these mentoring relationships, mentors reported stronger working relationships from their experiences assisting students through

their initial transitions to higher education, finding the interaction rewarding for their own development (Bell & Treleaven, 2011). A common theme found among successful mentoring relationships is the inevitable transfer of power from the mentor to the mentee as a result of the complex and intrinsic activities that occurred during their mentoring tenure (Shojai, Davis & Root, 2013). These skills and experiences are then transferred on to the mentee, which creates a positive feedback loop that can continue to develop and mold mentees year after year through formal mentoring structures supported by the institution.

Mentors and Mentoring Structures

There is no standardized protocol outlining the perfect mentor or mentoring program structure, therefore, institutions for higher learning rely on faculty, students, staff, and varying mentoring arrangements to meet the needs of their undergraduate student populations. In this section of the literature review, different mentor types and mentoring structures will be reviewed for their relevance in higher education and influences on the development of students.

Faculty Mentors. Faculty members have traditionally been relied on as the typical mentor resource for students. Due to their influence at the institution, expertise in certain subject areas, and relative age in comparison to incoming undergraduate students, faculty mentors fit the stereotypical mold of the 'ideal' mentor. Although new perspectives on mentoring have broadened the scope of who can and who should be a mentor, faculty still play a significant role in the development of students in higher education and are often relied upon to fulfil mentoring roles and needs at their respective institutions. These professors are sometimes a student's first role model and through their

mentoring relationships they establish a desire among students to pursue life-long learning (Laverick, 2016). Faculty mentors promote positive faculty-student relations and can serve as both role models and career advisors for students as they assist them through academic difficulties and institutional policies (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). As noted by Baker and Griffin (2010):

Interactions between faculty and students have long been lauded by practitioners and researchers as critically important to college student learning and development. Given that learning is a social process, relationships—especially those with faculty—are powerful tools that aid in students’ personal and professional development. (p.2)

Faculty mentors create opportunities for students to seek advice, develop new insights into their academic interests, and provide guidance on how to be successful within a given academic field (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). A faculty mentor can have a direct impact on a student’s ambition to learn and has potential to weave life-long learning opportunities into their mentees future career aspirations and daily life (Laverick, 2016). Guiding students to be positive role-models, faculty mentors assist their mentees with identifying new areas for self-improvement and demonstrate the value of working with individuals from diverse backgrounds and interests (Campbell, Smith, Dugan & Komives, 2012). When undergraduate, first-year students are actively involved in mentoring relationships with faculty, research has shown that they are more likely to return for their sophomore year and have increased persistence to graduation (Laverick, 2016). The Faculty Student Mentor Program will be evaluating these same metrics throughout the pilot phase of the program to monitor the effectiveness of the mentoring program/structure.

Prior to becoming faculty members, these educators once fulfilled the role of

the student, garnering their own set of lived experiences which can inform their mentoring practice (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015). Through interaction with faculty mentors, students are able to learn from their mentors lived experiences and improve their own development as scholars and community members at their institution (Baker & Griffin, 2010). This mentor-mentee interaction has been shown to develop confidence among students, increasing opportunities for meaningful engagement and socialization into academia, areas that have proven to increase interest in graduate education; an immeasurable benefit to the retention/recruitment efforts for universities (Baker & Griffin, 2010).

Unfortunately, the landscape of higher education is changing, with more rigorous, time intensive pressures being added to faculty members already loaded schedules. This changing environment means that faculty have fewer opportunities to engage with students outside of the classroom due to research demands, tenure policies, and increased course loads (Baker & Griffin, 2010). These factors all contribute to a faculty member's ability and/or willingness to participate as a mentor, meaning institutions need to prioritize mentoring within faculty contracts or job expectations. As noted by Zachary (2002), "teachers who prepare themselves as mentors increase their potential to enhance student growth and development, help students maximize education experiences, and enrich their own teaching experience and professional development" (p.27). However, a successful mentoring relationship is a time-intensive commitment and should only be pursued if a faculty mentor is able to balance their time with students, otherwise, an undesirable mentoring experience can have negative effects on a mentee's view of the institution. Additionally, in informal mentoring relationships not prescribed or monitored

by the institution, faculty should not automatically assume that students desire to have a mentor or mentoring relationship with them (Baker & Griffin, 2010). Faculty must find a balance when planning their time with students and meeting their academic requirements, but also be aware of their important role in developing student learning both in and out of the classroom (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015).

Peer Mentors. Expanding in popularity, peer mentoring programs have been gaining recognition as an effective means to socialize new students to college communities and promote positive development from a non-traditional mentoring perspective. Peer mentors are usually upper division students, with previous and tangible experiences within the institution, who help their mentees navigate the transition to collegiate life through the lens of a fellow student. More specifically, peer mentoring has been defined as a “helping relationship in which two individuals of similar age and/or experiences come together” to fulfill the needs, development, or concerns of the peer transitioning into a role previously or currently held by the other peer (Beltman & Schaeben, 2012). These relationships are hierarchical in the sense that the more developed, “mature,” students will be assisting less experienced students with their initial transition, progression, and commitment to the new collegiate environment (Christie, 2014). Undergraduate peer mentors serve as a positive influence on their mentees level of engagement and success both in and out of the classroom (Smith, 2017). Peer groups are even thought of as the single most important influence on a student’s growth and development throughout their undergraduate careers (Smith, 2017). Within established peer-mentoring programs, peer mentors have been shown to play an important role in enhancing student experiences, creating smooth transitions, and

improving academic success for their mentees (Carracher & McGaughey, 2016). As noted by Smith (2017), the ultimate aim of these peer mentor relationships is to:

Further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor's psychosocial and vocational skills in order to aid in their successful transition to college life. (p.81)

Peer mentors can fill roles not easily attained by faculty or staff by providing relative emotional support, individualized feedback, and a level of camaraderie that influences a mentee's sense of belonging (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). This sense of belonging has proven to encourage a mentee's willingness to share with their peer mentors their challenges, successes, and goals for the future which in turn can foster new opportunities for peer mentors to offer valuable advice, personal experiences, and resources; all contributing to the mentees overall academic success (Smith, 2017). With the guidance of peer mentors, mentees are able to adapt to their new collegiate environment, and find it easier to integrate into their institution's culture/community which leads to higher retention rates and easier transitions (Collings, Swanson & Watkins, 2014). As noted by Collings, Swanson and Watkins (2014), "extra support from a peer mentor may act as an integrating agent, introducing new students to one another and helping them feel more at ease within the university social environment" (p.940).

In university research environments, peer mentoring has been gaining traction as an influential strategy to provide higher quality research experiences by introducing mentees to individuals with students who have various levels of research experience (Edgcomb et al., 2010). Beyond just the research and collegiate experience that peer mentors bring to the table, these relationships within peer mentoring groups have shown to develop the communication and organizational skills of the mentees as well (Beltman

& Schaeben, 2012). Although the peer mentoring relationship is reciprocal, there is very limited research within higher education that focuses on the experiences of the peer mentors (Smith, 2017). However, the peer mentoring experience is seen as a tool to empower “skilled students to serve as role models” to their mentees; an invaluable benefit to the leadership development of peer mentors that lends itself well to advocating for holistic approaches to student leadership development opportunities beyond the classroom (Zevallos & Washburn, 2014).

Tiered Mentoring. While the Faculty Student Mentor Program at Oregon State University is unique in its approaches to mentoring, research surrounding tiered mentoring programs offer significant insight into a similar mentoring structure that can be useful for systematically enhancing the program in the future. In tiered mentoring programs, mentees are paired with a peer mentor who in turn is paired as a mentee with a faculty or staff member at the institution. This hierarchical approach to mentoring allows for the development of the mentee, peer mentor, and faculty mentor to occur at varying levels based on the associated needs, desires, and goals of the mentee depending on their level/status at the institution (Fowler & Muckert, 2004). Research indicates that these upper level students, fulfilling both the peer mentor and mentee role simultaneously, gain from a range of developmental benefits including enhanced leadership, learning, and professional skills (Fowler & Muckert, 2004). As noted in the study conducted on tiered mentoring programs by Fowler and Muckert (2004):

The upper year level students also reported a range of positive outcomes as a result of their participation in the program. Students were clear about which benefits related to their role as mentor (to first year students), mentee (to professionals), and to the experience of being in both roles simultaneously. In regard to their role as mentor, students identified four key benefits: a sense of reward through assisting and/or supporting; opportunity to share knowledge and experience; increased self-awareness and learning about how to work with

others; and personal and/or professional development in particular skills areas. In regard to their role as mentee, upper level students reported six main benefits: developed networks and contacts; understanding of employers' expectations; knowledge about chosen profession; guidance with career choices; seeing issues from another perspective; and psychosocial support. (p.159)

Within these programs, the transfer of knowledge from mentor, to mentee, to the lower-level tier mentee creates a top-down holistic approach to mentoring which gives students the opportunity to continue their pursuit of knowledge while developing their own skills as leaders through the sharing of relevant experiences with their mentees. What is most important/relevant within the tiered mentoring structure is the focus on continued development of the mentors as well as the mentees, as learning is a continuous process and development does not cease at the end of a student's first year on campus (Smith, 2017).

Formal Mentoring. Mentoring approaches are often categorized into two types; informal and formal mentoring practices. Within informal mentoring, the mentoring relationship is often organic, stemming from a non-prescribed desire to connect and learn from another individual. In formal mentoring programs, like the FSMP, the mentoring relationship is structured through a formal program where mentees are paired with mentors based on a plethora of criteria relevant to each mentoring program's outcomes. For this section of the literature review, an examination of formal mentoring structures is provided to gain insight into how these prescribed relationships are viewed/received across varying mentoring programs.

Within formal mentoring programs, the mentoring relationships are arranged by a third party, and mentors and mentees have often not met prior to being matched by the third party coordinator (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). These programs often have

designated outcomes, coordinated mentoring goals, and training provided for mentors to ensure consistency among mentoring relationships across the program's participants. Research has shown that well-designed formal mentoring programs positively influenced the mentoring relationship for both the mentor and mentee due to the structured nature that formal mentoring provides (Cornelius, Wood & Lai, 2016). Within these structured mentoring formats, the outcomes tend to be more focused around academic support and resilience, with socialization to the institution being an added byproduct for successful mentoring relationships (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). In contrast with informal mentoring relationships, these formal programs typically focus solely on the developmental needs of the mentee, with little emphasis given to the development of the mentor (Allen & Ebby, 2003). Since most formal mentoring programs rely on the third party for the matching process, the mentor usually has little to no say on which mentees will be assigned to them, creating less of a learning opportunity for mentors than in informal mentoring relationships (Allen & Ebby, 2003). However, with structure provided in formal mentoring programs, roles are clearly defined and the mentor is expected to "scaffold understanding" for the mentee by taking the lead in facilitating the mentoring relationship (Figueroa & Rodriguez, 2015).

However, formal mentoring does not come without some reported constraints and concerns. There are negative aspects associated with a third party matching process as this can create inequality in the mentoring relationship as mentees may develop expectations for the mentor to lead all conversations, have similar and congruent personalities, and have readily available information about the mentee's academic interests/questions (Bell & Treleaven, 2011). In addition, mentors in formal mentoring

programs may have varying reasons for joining/volunteering for the program, as some mentors may have been coerced or recruited for the role and thus have little to no motivation for fostering the success of their mentees (Allen & Ebby, 2003). This phenomenon transforms the mentoring relationship into a job, where it becomes more difficult to build connections and incite joy from creating effective mentoring outcomes that encourage the success and perseverance of their mentees (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). Therefore, it is essential that in these formal mentoring programs, all participants have the agency to help shape the program and their relationships beyond the prescribed mentoring 'lesson plans' provided by the formal structure (Bell & Treleaven, 2011).

Making Sense of Co-Mentor Relationships

As noted in Chapter 1, within the Faculty Student Mentoring Program there is a co-mentor relationship that is critical to the success of the program. However, there is little research surrounding this relationship and what motivations, factors, and skillsets are needed to create a successful mentoring practice. Although the research is nil surrounding co-mentoring, there is a similar structure within higher education that can be referenced to gain a better understanding of how co-mentors establish their roles within a co-mentoring program; co-teaching. Through the lens of co-teaching, insights can be gained into how to improve co-mentor relationships. Once again, there is little research that has been published on the relationships of these co-teachers in a college setting, but the research that is available provides recommendations for how relationships are formed/perceived through the experiences of co-teachers in their classrooms (Morelock et al., 2017).

Co-teaching has numerous definitions throughout the literature, but one of the most cited definitions is provided by Wenzlaff, et al. (2002) whom agree that co-teaching is defined as “two or more individuals who come together in a collaborative relationship for the purpose of shared work...for the outcome of achieving what none could have done alone” (Wenzlaff, et al., p. 14). Co-teaching is a collaborative relationship with opportunities for both instructors to engage in diverse discussions, planning, and curriculum design with their teaching counterparts (Lock et al., 2018). Co-teaching is a genuine learning relationship among peers in which instructors must learn to work, interact, trust, and engage with one another in order to establish an effective learning environment for their students (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008). And research demonstrates that this teaching model is effective, with one collegiate co-teaching program having improved student retention among first year students by over 10 percent (Turkich, Greive & Cozens, 2014). As noted by Morelock et al. (2017):

[Co-teachers] felt they were often able to develop a better course through their combined teaching experiences with partners of differing expertise and perspectives. They were able to explain topics differently and interact more with students, benefitting student learning. (p.187)

Relationships between co-teachers are nurtured through respect and commitment to a free exchange of ideas and reciprocation of trust (Lock et al., 2018). The body of literature on co-teaching shows that successful co-teaching environments are grown from both partners’ commitment to developing their relationships with one another and the continuation of education-focused reflection (Turkich, Greive & Cozens, 2014). Co-teachers each make available different ideas and unique perspectives for their students, allowing for productive discussion and reflection around diverse viewpoints from the perspectives of each teacher (Morelock et al., 2017). When reflecting on their co-teaching

experiences, many reported that the most noticeable learning outcome was actually for themselves, with the co-teaching experience granting them insight into how to improve their own teaching by identifying their own strengths, weaknesses, and teaching styles (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008). Consequently, co-teachers also noticed the development of a more desirable learning environment for students because they were able to provide a more in-depth exploration of the curriculum through various, and sometimes conflicting, viewpoints (Morelock et al., 2017). Again, Morelock et al. (2017) note:

All of our participants described co-teaching as helping them to grow as instructors, providing them opportunities to reflect on and discuss ideas, perspectives, and approaches that a solo teaching assignment may not offer. Co-teaching helped shape their pedagogical approaches through mentoring or co-learning, supporting the notion in existing literature that co-teaching offers benefits not only to students but also to those involved in the co-teaching relationship. (p.186)

While mentor training is often touted as the best way to familiarize mentors with the mentoring process, co-teaching shows that an interactive, hands-on, co-teaching model can be preferable to attending training sessions. Through interactive learning from one another, co-teachers are able to respond to the immediate needs of one another, which allows for real-time support and engagement which ultimately benefits the students (Turkich, Greive & Cozens, 2014). Importantly, these relationships among co-teachers must have a commitment to respect but also a lack of competitiveness, where the success of the students is directly related to the successful nurturing of the co-teacher relationship (Lock et al., 2018). Co-teachers need to develop trust so rich dialogue can occur about what is and what is not working in the teaching dynamic (Lock et al., 2018).

In these co-teaching relationships, a hierarchy is often reported with the less experienced teacher usually finding themselves less apt to take ownership or freedom within the classroom setting (Morelock et al., 2017). In these circumstances, an interesting dynamic is formed where the more experienced teacher is seen as the knowledge keeper/leader of the course, and the less experienced teacher finding more opportunities to establish stronger relationships with the students (Morelock et al., 2017). Course 'ownership' is usually determined by experience, however, the purpose of co-teaching and its ultimate success is dependent on removing barriers for leadership and co-creating learning environments together. This experience is further explained by participants in the study conducted by Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2008) where:

The experience of sharing the planning and teaching with a colleague allowed them to utilize different teaching strategies along with expanding their knowledge base about the subject. The co-teaching pairs also felt they became more reflective about their teaching since decisions about how and what to teach had to be negotiated rather than prescribed by one individual. The teams reported that the co-teaching experience helped them to improve their teaching and that they enjoyed the time spent discussing their work. The co-teaching experience provided an energizing opportunity for faculty to renew their passion for their profession. (p.14)

Interestingly, these relationships have a strong tie to mentoring, with mentor relationships organically rooting from the co-teaching model. Mentoring usually occurs when the dynamic between co-teachers is buffered by previous experiences with facilitating the course (Morelock et al., 2017). The more experienced teacher sometimes takes on the role of mentor for the other co-teacher, allowing for enhanced development of the less-experienced co-teacher to take place within these learning structures (Morelock et al., 2017). At all levels, these relationships continually mention communication as the most important contributing factor as either a pathway or barrier to

success; with greater levels of communication resulting in optimized learning experiences for both the teachers and students (Morelock et al, 2017).

Through the experiences of co-teachers, co-mentoring relationships can be viewed as dynamic learning development opportunities that offer numerous benefits for both students and co-mentors. Co-teaching models demonstrate that establishing effective relationships through trust, communication, and intertwined motivations can help bring clarity to the roles and responsibilities of co-mentors in formal co-mentoring structures.

In summary, by identifying successful mentoring practices, reviewing mentor types and structures, achieving better understanding of mentoring practices at higher education institutions, and utilizing co-teaching as a model for co-mentoring, this literature review provides an in-depth overview of the importance for gaining further knowledge about how co-mentors establish their relationships within co-mentoring models.

Chapter 3 – Materials and Methods

In order to better understand how connections are formed between faculty mentors and peer mentors in the Faculty Student Mentor Program at Oregon State University, a mixed methods qualitative study was conducted on peer mentors within the FSMP program during their first term serving as peer mentors. Qualitative research focuses on examining real-world settings where certain ‘phenomena’ of interest are analyzed through natural observation and inquiry (Patton, 2001). As noted by Merriam (2002), qualitative research is an influential means of research because:

The world, or reality, is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. Instead, there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality that are in flux and that change over time. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding what those interpretations are at a particular point in time and in a particular context. Learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world, the meaning it has for the world, is considered an interpretive qualitative approach. (p. 1)

The methods of the study, outlined below, aimed to address the following research questions (1) How are connections formed between peer mentors and faculty mentors within a faculty student mentor program? (2) What mentoring approaches are peer mentors and faculty mentors implementing to establish relationships with their mentees in a faculty student mentor program? And (3) How do peer mentors perceive the relationships with their faculty mentors in a faculty student mentor program?

Study site and participants

The study was conducted at Oregon State University during the fall term of the 2018-2019 academic year. Oregon State University is a public, land grant research institution located in Corvallis, Oregon. The participants chosen for the study were

selected from the roster of peer mentors who were participating in the first year of the pilot FSMP program. These peer mentors range in demographics, varying in sex, age, educational level, socioeconomic status, ethnicities, and academic interests. For the purpose of this study, no demographic information was collected from the peer mentors as demographic information was not used for matching purposes within the FSMP program and demographic information was not collected on peer mentors when accepting them to the program. For both data collection procedures outlined below, all peer mentors were invited to participate, with participants then self-selecting to participate with no repercussions for lack of participation. This is important to note as the peer mentors in the FSMP are financially compensated for their time and work as peer mentors, however, participation in the study was not correlated to their compensation. Participants in the study were given pseudonyms or were referenced to as 'peer mentors' within the results section of this study. In all, 32 peer mentors participated in one of the two focus groups hosted, while 43 peer mentors participated virtually through the online survey.

Data collection and analysis procedures

For this qualitative mixed methods study, two data collection procedures were conducted; focus groups and an online survey. A mixed methods qualitative study, or multi-method research, is an 'approach to investigating the social world' through multiple forms/techniques of data gathering (Greene, 2006). As noted by Patton (as cited by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007) mixed methods approaches involve:

inquiring into a question using different data sources and design elements in such a way as to bring different perspectives to bear in the inquiry and therefore support triangulation of the findings. (p. 120)

Interwoven throughout the mixed methods approach, a phenomenological approach was used to illuminate specific phenomena within the FSMP program. This approach was essential to the research as phenomenology studies the experiences of individuals through their own perceptions and perspectives (Lester, 1999). As noted by Lester (2009),

Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions. Adding an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, enabling it to be used as the basis for practical theory, allows it to inform, support or challenge policy and action. (p. 1)

With the goal of gaining an understanding of the perspectives of peer mentors within the FSMP program, and understanding how phenomenological and mixed-methods approaches could aid the researchers in gaining insight into their perspectives, the researchers' hosted focus groups and surveys with the peer mentors. Focus groups are a form of qualitative inquiry where group interviews are conducted to collect data from several people simultaneously (Kitzinger, 1995). This method of inquiry is useful for exploring individual and group experiences, interactions, and "can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way" (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 300). Alternatively, the researchers also chose to conduct surveys with the peer mentors to not only gain further insight into their perceptions, but to allow for peer mentors to participate in an alternative form of inquiry in case scheduling or personal reasons kept them from participating in the focus groups. Surveys, contrastingly to focus groups, are individual forms of data collection that allow for analysis into an individual's meaning of their lived experiences (Jansen, 2010). In qualitative survey analysis, the survey determines the diversity of thought/understanding of a certain topic among the respondents and establishes meaningful variation within the responses provided (Jansen, 2010).

Two focus groups were conducted in the Memorial Union Multipurpose Room on

November 27th and 28th of 2018. Each focus group was conducted for one hour, with the first focus group hosting 14 self-selected peer mentors and the second focus group hosting 18 different self-selected peer mentors. The focus groups were conducted by two researchers, each facilitating one of the focus groups. The focus groups were recorded so transcriptions could be created afterwards. Participants were notified that their names, and any identifiable information would not be included in the study, and that their participation was completely voluntary. The participants were arranged in a circle, and were asked the following open-ended questions pertaining to their relationships with their faculty mentors:

Can you tell us about your mentor-relationships with your faculty mentor?

What strategies have you and your faculty mentor, together, used to engage your mentees?

What were your expectations about the relationship that you would have with your faculty mentor and are those being met?

What successes have you had with your faculty mentor in mentoring your students together?

What challenges have you had with your faculty mentor?

At the conclusion of the focus groups, each researcher transcribed the focus group content from the focus group they facilitated. The transcription process occurred in Microsoft Word using tables to identify individual responses. In addition, the researchers used an Alto Edge Transcription Foot Pedal to aid in the transcription process. Once the results were transcribed, they were shared among the researchers and pseudonyms were given to each of the peer mentor participants. It is important to note that during both of the focus groups, one of the FSMP coordinators was present to provide information about the FSMP if peer mentors had questions or concerns related to the logistics of the

program. Data analysis for the focus groups was conducted from a grounded perspective based on the researchers own interpretations of the data rather than from a theoretical or framework perspective. Grounded perspectives, or grounded theory, are research methods that are systematic yet the analysis allows for the researcher to determine /construct theories from the data on their own (Straus & Corbin, 1997). As noted by Strauss and Corbin (1997),

Grounded theory begins with inductive data, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, uses comparative methods, and keeps you interacting and involved with your data and emerging analysis. (p. 8)

Data was then sorted into themes that are outlined in the results section of this study. The sorting process of the data began by correlating each response to the question it was referencing, and then grouping responses into categories based on specific themes that emerged. From there, the researcher collected all of the groups/themes from each question, and then cross-reviewed the question themes to create larger themes which then guided the results outlined in Chapter 4. This initial sorting process was done in Microsoft Word, and then the initial review/themes were printed, cut and organized into a larger scale ‘map’ of similar/interconnected responses. Additionally, the themes were then assigned to a narrative that the researcher developed based on the findings and grounded theory methodology where the researcher developed theories/results from rigorous analyses of the overall data (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

The second form of data collection was through an online qualitative survey administered through Google Forms. The survey questions were created by the researchers and sent to one of the FSMP coordinators to distribute to the FSMP peer mentor list serve. In the email message, peer mentors were notified that the survey was

optional and peer mentors were instructed that their responses would remain anonymous. Peer mentors were sent an initial email, and a follow up email two weeks later encouraging them to participate. Again, participants were assigned pseudonyms for their responses. The survey was also conducted during the fall 2018 term at Oregon State University and participants were given over one month to provide responses. Within the survey, the following open-ended questions were asked in regards to the peer mentors experiences/relationships with their faculty mentors:

Please describe the quality and frequency of communication with your faculty mentor.

Can you tell us about your mentor-relationship with your faculty mentor?

What strategies have you and your faculty mentor used together to engage with your mentees?

What successes have you had with your faculty mentor in mentoring your students?

What challenges have you had with your faculty mentor?

Is there anything else you would like to add about the Faculty Student Mentor Program or your role as a peer mentor?

The data collected from the surveys was then downloaded and separated for analyzing based on each question. Much like the focus groups, data analysis for the survey was conducted from a grounded perspective based on the researchers own interpretations of the data rather than from a theoretical or framework perspective. Data was first reviewed/organized in Microsoft Excel and sorted by question. Once the data was sorted by response to each question, the researcher then printed each of the responses. The responses were then organized by emerging themes and then cross-analyzed with responses to the other questions from the survey. This allowed for the development of larger themes that are outlined in the results section of this study.

These themes from the survey were then matched with the themes from the focus groups to provide a full picture of the data collected.

Limitations

Through the focus groups and survey, the data gathered yielded thorough and comprehensively rich responses that were used during the data analysis/results section of this study. However, the study has several limitations which restrict the conclusions and outcomes that can be made from the data. While peer mentors were not required, nor instructed, to participate in either the focus groups or survey, the nature of their employment within the FSMP establishes a dynamic that may have affected the quality/truthfulness of the responses received. Peer mentors may not have wanted to share any frustrations or difficulties they were facing within the program in fear of losing their employment; although they were instructed that any responses given would remain anonymous.

Additionally, the researchers chose to only gather data/perspectives from one member of the co-mentoring relationship; the peer mentor. This limitation means that the perspectives of the effectiveness of these relationships and associated challenges/successes are skewed to one side of the co-mentor relationship. With time constraints and the limited availability of faculty mentors in the program, the researchers felt it was best to gather data solely from the peer mentors; with full knowledge that future studies could compare the data collected with perceptions/perspectives of faculty mentors. Another limitation of this study is that no demographic information was received/used in the study as demographic information was not used in the selection process for peer mentors in the FSMP program. This greatly reduces the ability to consider the results in a

broader perspective as certain demographics such as race or gender may have positive correlations to the outcomes perceived by the peer mentors and their faculty mentors. In addition, it should be noted that the focus of the study was on peer mentor perceptions of their relationship with faculty mentors, and peer mentor perceptions of their mentees experiences, not of either groups' actual experiences. Further research would be needed to understand if these perceptions actually align with the non-peer-mentor groups perceptions. Despite these limitations, the researchers were able to gather detailed responses from the peer mentors that can be used to create a baseline for recommendations surrounding best mentoring practices and future research.

Chapter 4 – Results

This study aimed to explore the relationships between peer mentors and faculty mentors within the Faculty Student Mentor Program. Within this chapter, an overview of the findings from the mixed method qualitative study and its participants is discussed. The results have been arranged into three general themes, with additional subthemes woven throughout:

1. Power dynamics
 - a. Balancing act
 - b. Faculty mentor support
 - c. From co-mentor to mentee
2. Mentoring structure
 - a. Communication
 - b. Scheduling
 - c. Co-mentor roles
3. Peer mentor perceptions
 - a. Challenges with co-mentoring
 - b. Successes with co-mentoring
 - c. Peer mentor experiences with faculty mentors

Themes were developed through an examination of direct quotes and survey feedback from the peer mentor participants in the study. These themes, although common among the participants, do not speak to every peer mentor experience. However, the selected themes and supporting quotes represent the most common responses/experiences received from the peer mentors.

Power Dynamics

While examining the relationships between peer mentors and faculty mentors within the FSMP, responses often referred to power dynamics that shape the relationships and experiences of the co-mentors within the program. This theme can be further

explored by examining three sub-themes a) balancing act, b) faculty mentor support, and c) from co-mentor to mentee.

Balancing act. As peer mentors learned to navigate through their mentoring roles, they mentioned ways in which they and their faculty mentors worked together to meet the needs of their mentees. For example, the following quotes portray the ways in which these co-mentors approach and view their mentoring duties with their faculty mentors:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 1: We [faculty mentor and peer mentor] piggyback[ed] on each other's own experiences...trying not to seem like we are teaming up against our mentee.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 2: I think the balance between the student and faculty mentor perspective are very useful, and additionally by sharing our own experiences related to the topic we are showing how answers can vary of be very similar even though we have differing backgrounds.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 3: It [mentoring relationship] is very efficient and straightforward, he is really good at asking my opinion and making sure that my input is also seen. I feel respected and on the same level as the faculty mentor.

Within this balancing act, the scale of mentoring responsibilities tends to sway towards the more experienced faculty mentor when addressing mentee needs. As noted by the following responses:

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 1 RESPONSE 13: So my mentor like, the faculty mentor like stepped in and took charge of that [scheduling] and actually got people to come to the things. So I was really grateful that my mentor, I don't know, they seemed like more of a figure of authority than me to actually get people to come to meetings. I thought that was really helpful.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 4: He [faculty mentor] is much more knowledgeable than I am in what these specific mentees need so it's great to have him there for them.

Although some peer mentors perceived their faculty mentor as having more experience than them, others found that co-mentoring was a team effort where each

mentor brings something to the relationship with the mentees:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 5: We tend to take turns asking questions of our mentees, going in a back and forth...shape so everyone gets a chance to respond while the mentor and I are able to still lead the discussion towards the weekly goals.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 6: My faculty mentor has given challenges to our mentees, including "go to office hours once" and "study with a friend", and I've reminded the students in our regular emails.

Each co-mentoring relationship established their own approaches to mentoring that required utilizing the expertise and assistance of both the peer and faculty mentors together.

Faculty mentor support. Peer mentors found the support they received from their faculty mentors did not meet their expectations when first starting in the program.

The following three quotes demonstrate how peer mentor expectations were challenged:

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 12: My faculty mentor was a lot more engaged than I expected. He was really excited to be like helping the students and it was really great to see.

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 8: I kind of expected to be not as valued in my opinion because I'm younger, but, um, actually my faculty mentor has been really great and he's been like 'I think that your opinion matters the most because you've recently been through what they're going through. I went through this but 50 years ago.'

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 36: I expected to have a professional relationship, but you know kind of be close, like you have to talk about what these students need to hear and stuff, um, and I've only ever talked to my like faculty member's assistant and she couldn't make the first two meetings...And you know I really feel like me and my mentees have really good relationships but my faculty member, I feel like I have to run everything and when she shows up she's kind of late and so I feel like I've dealt with a lot of challenges with my faculty member.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, one peer mentor mentioned how her faculty mentor came into the program with expectations of her abilities to support the mentoring

relationship within her role as a peer mentor:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 7: I'm not as organized as my mentor. I'm frustrated with the high level of expectations he had for me to schedule meetings and get our mentees to respond to emails.

However, this response above is unique, with most peer mentors mentioning a high level of support from their faculty mentors towards them as peer mentors and with the mentees within their mentoring groups. The following quotes support this theme:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 8: My faculty member is great! He is very approachable and is a great person to work with. We had a schedule for our meetings well in advance and he has respected that schedule so far. I am very comfortable around him, and I believe our mentees are too.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 9: I really enjoy our faculty member...He has been punctual to the meetings and engaging with the group. He is able to hold conversations well and start up new topics when the conversation appears to dull.

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 1 RESPONSE 15: Our mentee was struggling with like registering for classes and I think that it was really helpful having somebody that knows how to register, when to register, what your course load should kind of look like...and so having kind of my academic advisor [faculty mentor] as like a back-up was really helpful and I think it helped relieve a lot of stress that she was having.

Also found in the responses were experiences where the co-mentors developed a mutually beneficial support system for their mentees, as noted by the response below:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 10: We both decided to be easy-going and open. We want our mentees to feel comfortable on campus and in Corvallis, so we usually go somewhere and do an activity instead of just sitting and talking.

From co-mentor to mentee. Many of the peer mentors discussed an evolving power dynamic within their co-mentor relationship where their faculty mentor ended up becoming a mentor for them as well, rather than just a co-mentor or faculty member. There were numerous responses addressing this phenomenon, with several provided below for context into this relationship shift in power:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 11: He [the faculty mentor] has been able to help mentor me as well. I'm graduating this year and always appreciate advice. He has also been a great partner when leading our group meetings.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 12: She [the faculty mentor] is great, and has experienced a lot in life. In many ways she has also become my mentor.

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 1 RESPONSE 16: I think, in a slightly selfish way that the faculty relationship has been super beneficial for myself...we were able to just meet and talk, and I think, I don't know if that was really a goal of having the faculty too, but it has been beneficial for myself as we were able to talk about adding a minor and just how I was able to benefit from the experience too.

Peer mentors mentioned how while working with their faculty mentors, they were able to identify resources and advice that benefited their own development/academic growth. This outcome is relatively similar to the structure promoted by tier mentoring programs as noted in chapter two of the study. This valuable support for the peer mentors own development is present in the responses below:

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 9: Well I sort of came in expecting that I wouldn't really get like a very, uh, similar mentor but I actually, my mentor is really similar to me. like she's, her job is in my major, so it's really helpful to sort of be able to ask her questions about like what I'm sort of wanting to do with my life and also ask her about like how she got there and like how she interacts with other people in the same field, which is like really helpful.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 13: I think our faculty mentor is a good fit for our group, I am going to take one of his classes this spring. I admire his input.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 14: My faculty mentor has been a great resource for me and I have had very positive experiences.

Mentoring Structure

The FSMP relies on both the peer mentors and faculty mentors to establish mentoring guidelines and structure within their own mentoring groups. This structure, when discussed by the peer mentors in the study, consistently touched on three main

topics, a) communication, b) scheduling, and c) co-mentor roles. These items created both pathways and barriers for success for the peer mentors as they navigated their relationships with their faculty mentors.

Communication. When asked about their communication with their faculty mentors, peer mentors were split on the frequency and quality of their communication with their co-mentoring partners. Much of the communication mentioned by the peer mentors centered on organizing meetings, as discussed in the responses below:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 15: We communicate well to organize meetings and figure out what needs to be done, we communicate well during meeting bouncing ideas and points off of each other.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 16: We communicate often about meeting times and that is about it!

Other peer mentors discussed the communication styles present within their mentoring groups while working in tandem with their co-faculty mentors:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 17: During FSMP meetings with our mentees, our communication feels natural and comfortable.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 18: We have similar communication styles and can read off of each other well to take turns speaking to the group. I am glad he is the faculty rep in our group.

Lastly, peer mentors cited the frequency of communication as a relationship factor worth addressing when discussing their interactions with their faculty mentors. The frequency varied widely between mentoring groups as reported in the responses below:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 19: Our communication is infrequent, and quality of communication bounces between remarkably personable to nearly nothing between each week.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 20: We communicate more than I do with the mentees.

Scheduling. Peer mentors consistently mentioned scheduling as a trouble point within their mentoring groups, with scheduling faults often attributed to the faculty mentor. As noted by over half of the peer mentors, scheduling continued to be the responsibility of the peer mentor with little to no support from the faculty mentor. The responses below support this experience:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 21: His intentions are in the right place, and I can tell he has a good heart, but there is absolutely no follow through on planning and actually mentoring these students, and it is infuriating.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 22: Our biggest issue to tackle was scheduling which hopefully will be easier next term!

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 23: Again, I think the biggest issues come from the disjointedness of having biweekly meetings. It's very hard to coordinate with both mentor and mentees when the times that we meet are so infrequent. Additionally, our times for our meetings have been subject to change, which only leads to further issues with cohesiveness.

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 37: It's been a lot of like 'oh yes that time works for me [faculty mentor] but email my assistant' and so I'm like emailing that assistant and calling that assistant and trying to figure it out and then sometimes like we'll have a meeting and a time for the next one and then 'oh my assistant double booked me, that's not going to work,' and then my mentee and I are kind of like lost.

However, not all experiences related to scheduling were troubling, with some faculty and peer mentors reporting success in this area due to organization or innovative coordination efforts. The responses below highlight these different approaches to scheduling:

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 35: My faculty member and I sat down at the very beginning and created our own schedules for the weeks. Um, because we didn't particularly relate to the schedule that was on canvas and then we went the first couple of weeks and our mentees started asking if we could cover like specific things in the coming weeks and I was like 'yeah!'

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 1 RESPONSE 21: He was also, he's also been really helpful with organizing, with all the organization issues with trying to get all of our people together... So through all of the organization issues with that and trying to navigate five people or seven people total its been helpful. Like, he was emailing some people for a while and trying to contact them and then we, and then he was like 'okay, I haven't heard from these two people in a while if you could contact them' and then we made doodle polls and so it was a nice, it was nice to have a, that strong organization relationship to try and coordinate everybody.

Co-mentor roles. To better understand the relationship between peer mentors and faculty mentors within the FSMP, a deeper look into the roles established by the co-mentors in the program is needed. Many peer mentors discussed the roles that faculty mentors are taking within their co-mentoring relationship with their mentees. These faculty mentor roles range across relationships, with some of them explained in the responses below for consideration:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 24: My mentor prepares himself to ask questions both inside and outside of school that make me and my mentees critically think. I feel as if he is very dedicated to the time he has to spend with us, and I appreciate his enthusiasm to help students succeed.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 25: My faculty mentor talks more of the lead in our meetings (since both she and my mentee are poli-sci majors) which I am perfectly fine with.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 26: Both of us (mostly my faculty mentor) have prepared questions either mentally or physically on paper to make the time we spend in meetings meaningful and efficient. It has made our conversations more enjoyable and continuous.

Alternatively, peer mentors also discussed which roles they share with their faculty mentors and how they work together to meet the needs of their student mentees. These collaborative roles vary across groups but usually center around communication within the mentoring groups as noted in the responses below:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 27: We ask questions about classes, plans for the future, and ask what he [mentee] wants to improve upon. We [co-mentors] then give multiple strategies and discuss which could work for the student.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 28: My faculty mentor is really good about starting thoughtful conversations about all things college related, and I contribute my experiences in college since they are more recent than my faculty mentors.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 29: I think it is great to have both a faculty member and a student mentoring the other students because I have a direct insight into student life, while my faculty mentor knows a lot about college in general and has a lot of life experience as well.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 30: I think the faculty mentor and I have done well to communicate the expectations associated with being a student to our mentees, both from a student's point of view and a faculty member's point of view.

Peer Mentor Perceptions

The final theme that I gleaned from the data centers around the peer mentor's perceptions of the FSMP program and their relationship with their faculty mentors. The co-mentoring structure of the program creates relatively unexplored relationships that bring their own challenges, successes and experiences to the mentoring relationship. Therefore, this theme is broken down into three subthemes for further exploration; a) challenges with co-mentoring, b) successes with co-mentoring and c) peer mentor experiences with faculty mentors.

Challenges with co-mentoring. Unfortunately, there were multiple challenges reported by the peer mentors in regards to their relationships with their faculty mentors and the FSMP program structure. One common theme centered on the motivations of the faculty mentor, and the peer mentors perceived responsibility to take ownership of the mentoring relationship. This challenge is highlighted in the responses outlined below:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 31: It's pretty awful, but that's because he's left all of the scheduling and logistics to me (which I don't mind), but he's never able to make any of the meeting times. It's not going well at all and I am so frustrated.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 32: I wish I had a mentor that had actual availability and made time to be a part of the program. I've made many doodle polls for everyone in the group to list their availability for meetings, and he is consistently the /only/ one who cannot make it. He is the reason we haven't met with all of our students. The meeting I held was with two of the students WITHOUT him! I didn't like the feeling of going over his head, but these students deserve much better than this. They deserve someone who has time to devote to being a mentor, not just sign up for it as a thing to do.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 33: I would love to actually do my job, but my faculty mentor partner is making it really difficult to follow through.

Other challenges noted by the peer mentors in regards to their relationship with their faculty mentor stem from differing academic backgrounds at the institution. This made building connections with the faculty mentor difficult as noted by the responses below:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 34: I don't really know all that much about my faculty mentor. We are not in the same field of study.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 35: Sometimes we communicate well and are pleasant, but it's hard when the students and myself share different knowledge bases (i.e. all of us are Kinesiology while our mentor is HDFS). I think this is where our communication hiccups the most.

One final challenge noted by one peer mentor relates to the faculty mentors understanding of power dynamics within higher education. As discussed by the peer mentor:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 36: Sometimes he [faculty mentor] forgot that some things such as meeting with professors or advisors can make students nervous.

Successes with co-mentoring. Despite the challenges noted above, peer mentors provided overwhelmingly more feedback in regards to the successes they were

experiencing in both connecting with their faculty mentor and mentees. These positive outcomes range from academic success, mentee satisfaction with the co-mentoring model, and beneficial mentoring relationships between the peer and faculty mentors. A few of these successes, which are representative of the successes overall, have been provided below for review:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 37: The student said that his test scores are improving after seeing professors and studying more in advance. He is very open to hearing what myself and the faculty mentor have to say.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 38: We have had successes in building a great connection between the three of us, and have built a comfortable space to talk about worries we may have.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 39: We have had success talking with them about where to go for certain resources. Opportunities on campus, or certain events that are happening appear to be a well-liked conversation starter. Often, there are fun events happening on campus that people have not heard about yet. Sharing the opportunities each of us know of allow us to be exposed to a wide variety of events and happenings around the local Corvallis area.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 40: They seem to enjoy coming, which is great! They have opened up to us about their families, what they are doing to stay busy here at school, how they are doing in their classes, etc.

Other successes noted by the peer mentors relate to how well they work together with their faculty mentor counterparts when mentoring their mentees. The responses below focus on how discussions are formed, resources are provided, and needs are met for the mentees as a result of positive mentor collaboration:

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 19: I felt that my [faculty] mentor and I have worked well in kind of meeting the needs of the mentees who have participated, in the sense that um, one of them is interested in education...so the faculty mentor is useful in that and then the other one is interested in my major...so I feel like we've worked well together to kind of meet both spectrums of the students focuses on their studies.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 41: We've been able to help two of our students take advantage of other helpful programs on campus.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 42: We [co-mentors] use the time to talk more about life and what is going on outside of academia. Sometimes it's good to take a little break from school for a second and simply have some time to talk with others.

Peer mentor experiences with faculty mentors. Lastly, throughout the data collected from this study, peer mentors provided numerous insights into their relationships with faculty mentors that are crucial to understanding what makes a successful peer mentor and faculty mentor relationship. A common theme among these experiences was the peer mentors reported enjoyment from witnessing their faculty mentor care for their mentees' success. This experience is highlighted below through the following responses:

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 43: I really enjoy my faculty mentor, he seems like he really cares about students and wants all of our mentees to succeed. He has offered his help, connections, and time to all of our mentees.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 44: It [the mentoring relationship] is good, I feel like my faculty mentor really wants the mentees to succeed, so it is nice to see that the faculty really cares about the success of students.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 45: I think it is a pretty good relationship. It definitely is a professional relationship but I have really enjoyed getting to know my faculty member, he really is an interesting guy who has had a lot of awesome experiences that he loves sharing with my mentee and which I appreciate tremendously.

Other peer mentors noted how their relationship with their faculty mentor is professional in nature with the faculty mentor viewing them as equals in the relationship as noted in the responses below:

PEER MENTOR FOCUS GROUP 2 RESPONSE 10: I mean our meetings are definitely dedicated towards the peers but whenever we talk or just have moments to discuss the next week, we talk about professional life. It's nice to have that one on one and then we incorporate that into the peer meetings where we are able to bounce ideas off of each other and it just flows very naturally so I think our mentees really feel comfortable cause if we're comfortable together then it's easy

for the mentees to feel included.

PEER MENTOR SURVEY RESPONSE 46: My mentor-relationship is akin to a friendship. We discuss our meetings and scheduling like coworkers but treat each other as equals while doing so.

Narrative Summary

From the data collected, peer mentors expressed profound excitement, moderate frustration, and unexpected outcomes from their experiences as peer mentors during the first year pilot of the Faculty Student Mentor Program. As students, navigating collegiate life themselves, peer mentors were challenged to meet the needs of their mentees all-the-while developing professionally in the new role of the mentor. If that wasn't enough of a role reversal, they were faced with navigating this transition with their co-mentoring counterparts; faculty mentors. This navigation was rocky for some and extremely meaningful for others. Peer mentors had to develop skills for communicating effectively, scheduling large groups of busy individuals, and find ways to bridge the gap between being a peer and being a resource of institutional knowledge. Peer mentors found invaluable ways to work effectively with their faculty mentors and took steps to becoming leaders and colleagues with their co-mentors. Some peer mentors struggled with this dynamic, while others relinquished control to become mentees of the faculty mentors as well. There was no 'right way' to function as a peer mentor, and through the experience, many developed their own perspectives on what it means to be a mentor. From this data and peer mentor feedback, the next chapter aims to produce guidelines for future peer mentors and faculty mentors when establishing their roles as mentors.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

The overall aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of how connections are formed between faculty mentors and peer mentors in the Faculty Student Mentor Program. To understand how these relationships are established, the following research questions guided the purpose of the study, research design, and overall results garnered from the peer mentors within the FSMP program; (1) How are connections formed between peer mentors and faculty mentors within a faculty student mentor program? (2) What mentoring approaches are peer mentors and faculty mentors implementing to establish relationships with their mentees in a faculty student mentor program? And (3) How do peer mentors perceive the relationships with their faculty mentors in a faculty student mentor program? Through the data collected and results proposed in Chapter 4, answers/guidance related to these research questions will now be reviewed so that future recommendations for co-mentoring recommended practices, research, and suggestions for mentoring practitioners can be addressed.

Recommendations for Mentoring Practices

Peer mentors identified numerous ways in which their relationship with their co-faculty mentor was affected by either their expectations for the mentoring program, interactions with their faculty mentor, and roles prescribed to each mentor in the co-mentor relationship. However, none of these items was relevant to or reported by each peer mentor; meaning varying mentor structures exist within the FSMP. Although variation is allowable, and certainly encouraged when dealing with the diverse development needs of student mentees, clearer guidance and structure regarding mentoring practices, roles, and expectations should be established to ensure the program

is successful for future years to come. Therefore, a set of recommended practices is provided below based on the responses received from the peer mentors in this study. Provided with each recommended practice below is a summary of how to best support this practice/recommendation from both mentoring and mentoring coordinator viewpoints.

Encourage peer mentors and faculty mentors to develop a joint mentoring philosophy which guides their mentoring practice. Far too many peer mentors reported that their mentoring practice persisted as an organic process where they were continuing to learn/adapt with their faculty mentor to meet the needs of their students. However, there was no mention of co-mentors establishing an agreed upon definition of mentoring or their roles as co-mentors within the FSMP. Therefore, it is suggested that co-mentors meet prior to being matched with their mentees to identify their mentoring philosophy, a guiding document that both mentors can reference when addressing student concerns, when motivation levels for mentoring differ among the co-mentors, and to ensure their mentees are provided with a clear expectation of what to expect from the mentoring relationship.

Establish expectations and clearly defined roles for communication between co-mentors as well as with mentees. Communication was cited as a serious challenge for peer mentors as they attempted to navigate their roles as both peer mentor to mentees and co-mentor to faculty mentors. This often left peer mentors frustrated or confused regarding whose responsibility it was to communicate with students, spark conversations with the faculty mentor, and lead discussions during their mentoring group meetings. If the purpose of the peer mentor is to serve as the logistical practitioner in the mentoring

relationship, then this expectation should be clearly defined, so as to not raise animosity towards faculty mentors who are seen as ‘not doing their duty.’

Establish expectations and clearly defined roles for scheduling meetings with mentees. Similar to establishing clear communication guidelines, scheduling follows suit in the sense that peer mentors need a better understanding/guidance related to their role within the FSMP program. If no one from the co-mentoring relationship is directly tasked with managing the scheduling aspects of the program, then meetings may take place at a frequency less hoped for by the FSMP committee. In addition, since some students mentioned the difficulties associated with trying to schedule meetings with their faculty mentors due to travel or having to work through an assistant, I recommend that all peer mentors participating in the program be given a direct line of communication with the faculty mentor to avoid scheduling confusion, miscommunication, and scheduling conflicts that can negatively affect the FSMP mentees.

Provide mentoring training opportunities for both peer and faculty mentors throughout the year. Mentoring, as noted in the literature review in chapter 2, is an evolving process where new information and mentoring best practices are updated daily. Therefore, the co-mentors participating in the FSMP should be given access to quarterly trainings that refresh their understandings of the mentor relationship and various needs of mentees that are participating in the program. There are numerous online resources available to assist with training both faculty and peer mentors. The researchers in this study recommend that the FSMP look into CIMER and MentorCore Software. CIMER is an online resource that offers training for mentors in various fields and provides data driven mentor workshops to appeal to the ‘data-minded’ faculty in the FSMP. This

program is also known as ‘training the trainer’ and provides an online database of mentoring learning outcomes, training, and resources for mentors. These experiences are linked to a sense of belonging and self-efficacy for both mentors and mentees, while also increasing persistence, productivity, satisfaction, and an enhanced understanding of the roles mentors must accommodate (CIMER, 2017). CIMER has multidisciplinary training modules that are centered on undergraduate student mentee relationships and also provides individualized faculty mentor training opportunities (CIMER, 2017). Additionally, MentorCore Software provides information/resources for application design, data warehousing, reporting and meeting evaluation. The software can assist with automated reporting tools, attendance tracking, matching processes, and captures important information such as mentor/mentee demographics, participating data, mentee goals and other essential mentoring documents (Civicore, 2018). This tool can help streamline the mentoring process and ensure co-mentors are receiving updated knowledge regarding their roles as mentors. In addition, this tool would be extremely valuable for the FSMP committee as the software would replace much of the individualized reporting, tracking, and monitoring that is currently taking place. Plus, the prices are reasonable when comparing to other mentoring resources and the costs associated with the labor currently being put into the FSMP program.

Ensure faculty mentors understand their roles as both co-mentors and as potential mentors to their peer mentor counterparts. Since a large majority of the peer mentors reported the faculty mentor as becoming a mentor for them as well, the FSMP committee should ensure that faculty mentors are aware of the roles that may be prescribed to them through participation in the FSMP as a co-mentor. Many students

reported successful co-mentoring relationships with individuals they were able to build connections and establish trust with. Therefore, the faculty mentor should be made aware that their mentoring role may extend beyond the mentees with additional focus being given to the development of the peer mentors as well.

Coordinate quarterly check-ins with peer mentors to review potential difficulties/challenges being faced with faculty mentors and their motivations to mentor. There were several peer mentors who reported that they had tremendous difficulty meeting with and communicating with their faculty mentors. This unfortunate scenario placed a strain on the mentoring relationships with the mentees and co-mentors. Therefore, the FSMP coordinators should continue to host quarterly, if not monthly, check-ins with peer mentors to ensure the role of the faculty mentor is being fulfilled. Otherwise, peer mentors are placed in unfortunate predicaments where they must choose between ‘outing’ their faculty mentor for poor motivation/follow through and potentially negatively affecting their mentoring relationships with mentees through continually poor faculty involvement.

Create opportunities for cross-collaboration and interaction among co-mentors from various groups. Peer mentors in the focus groups mentioned how much they appreciated the opportunity to listen to their peers and learn from their experiences. This opportunity to engage and explore their mentoring relationships and roles should not occur in a research silo. Instead, there should be built in opportunities/events where co-mentors are invited to get together, share their successes, ask questions, and learn from each other. Through facilitated interactions, co-mentors can find ways to enhance their own relationships which will in turn improve the relationships they have with their

mentees. In addition, these co-mentor facilitated events can serve as informal opportunities for the FSMP committee to hear common questions, concerns, and feedback from the co-mentors that can then be used to create new training resources and important program evaluation materials.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was limited in the sense that only the perspectives of peer mentors were gathered in these three pronged mentoring relationship. Therefore, future research should be conducted which explores the mentees perspectives on the dynamic of having two mentors, as well as research focused on faculty mentor perspectives on the dynamic, relationship, and effectiveness of the co-mentoring model. Peer mentors offered valuable insight into their perspectives related to the program, however, their experiences cannot be generalized to faculty or first year students experiencing the FSMP through the lens of the mentee. In addition, future research should be conducted where demographic and background information is reviewed/examined in combination with mentor or mentee perspectives. It would be beneficial to see how students from varying backgrounds perceive the usefulness of the co-mentoring model through their respective developmental needs, perceptions and understanding of their collegiate experiences.

Suggestions for Mentoring Practitioners

The FSMP is coordinated by a team of higher education professionals through an initiative put forth by the OSU Office of the Provost. Therefore, it is additionally beneficial to provide recommendations for these mentoring practitioners as their involvement within the FSMP is unquestionably related to the experiences of the mentors and mentees participating in the program. Suggestions for the mentoring practitioners

include a systematic review of the mentor/mentee matching process and increased training opportunities for the mentor program participants. The matching process was noted by several peer mentors as both an area of frustration and growth. While some individuals found the varying, diverse perspectives to be refreshing, others mentioned a disconnect that occurred from being an outsider in their own mentoring group due to different academic interests. Therefore, more care should be taken when considering mentor groups. Additionally, increasing training opportunities for mentors, as mentioned in the recommended practices listed above, will provide the FSMP with assurances that their mentor/mentee relationships are grounded in similar mentoring approaches supported by research and best practices. These mentor trainings should continue to explore topics like brief motivational interviewing, how to align co-mentor expectations, ways to address equity and inclusion, how to promote professional development, and how to successfully and effectively articulate your mentoring philosophy.

Overall, these recommendations have one main focus, to better prepare co-mentors for the mentoring relationship. While the research from this study cannot be generalized to all mentoring relationships, it is important research that can guide the pilot Faculty Student Mentor Program into its final year. Additionally, the co-mentor relationships explored in this study can be used as catalysts for future mentoring programs at other institutions.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This study examined the relationships between co-mentors in the Faculty Student Mentor Program at Oregon State University through the reported experiences/perceptions of peer mentors. The information from this study was collected through two focus groups with self-selecting peer mentors in the FSMP program as well as from an online survey. Peer mentors in this study shared their insights into the first year pilot of the FSMP program and provided valuable data that should be referenced to successfully and effectively advance the program into future years.

The results from this study raise further questions for exploration. How do faculty mentors perceive their relationships and interactions with peer mentors in this co-mentor structure? How do mentees feel about having co-mentors? Is mentee satisfaction, persistence, and institutional knowledge increased by having two mentors? While this study had several limitations in the research that it generated, the results still have numerous implications for the Faculty Student Mentor Program moving forward into its second year. Through the eyes of the peer mentor, the co-mentor structure is filled with possibilities, uncertainty, and professional growth. Although the peer mentors are first and foremost students of the university, their professional development as leaders and mentors deserves further understanding. For if the program is to be successful, both the success of the mentees and that of the mentors needs to be considered.

As mentoring programs continue to expand and evolve within the realm of higher education, the findings provided by this study will hopefully encourage institutions to break the traditional mold of one-on-one faculty mentor programs and embrace new mentoring practices that utilize the expertise of faculty, students and staff in collaboration

with one another. In addition, this study provides researchers with new knowledge surrounding the relationships of co-mentors within a formal mentoring program that will hopefully spark future research that examines the relationships of co-mentors from varying perspectives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Peer Mentor Survey

5/5/2019

FSMP Initial Feedback - Peer Mentors

FSMP Initial Feedback - Peer Mentors

As a peer mentor, you play a critical role in the Faculty Student Mentoring Program. For this program to grow and be successful, your input regarding your role as a peer mentor is important! Please use this survey to reflect on your experiences, interactions, and mentor-relationships within the FSMP so far. Your feedback is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your contributions to the FSMP and Oregon State University community.

* Required

Peer Mentor and Mentee Questions

For the following questions, please reflect on your experiences with your mentees.

1. Have you met with your student mentees? (at least once with at least one mentee)

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 Other: _____

2. Please describe the quality and frequency of communication with your mentees.

3. Tell us about your mentor-relationship with your mentees.

4. What strategies have you specifically used to engage with your mentees?

5/5/2019

FSMP Initial Feedback - Peer Mentors

5. What successes have you had with mentoring your mentees?

6. What challenges have you had with mentoring your mentees?

Peer Mentor and Faculty Mentor Questions

For the following questions, please reflect on your experiences with your faculty mentor.

7. Have you met with your faculty mentor?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Other: _____

8. Please describe the quality and frequency of communication with your faculty mentor.

9. Tell us about your mentor-relationship with your faculty mentor.

5/5/2019

FSMP Initial Feedback - Peer Mentors

10. What strategies have you and your faculty mentor used together to engage with your mentees?

11. What successes have you had with your faculty mentor in mentoring your students?

12. What challenges have you had with your faculty mentor?

Final Feedback

13. Is there anything else you would like to add about the FSMP or your role as a peer mentor?

14. Your Name (Names are being collected in order to identify program participation statistics, only. Your name will not be associated in any other way with the feedback you provide.)*

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Appendix B IRB Approval



Oregon State University
Research Office

Human Research Protection Program
& Institutional Review Board
B308 Kerr Administration Bldg, Corvallis OR 97331
(541) 737-8008
IRB@oregonstate.edu
<http://research.oregonstate.edu/irb>

Date of Notification	07/13/2018	Study Number	8713
Notification Type	Oversight Determination		
Principal Investigator	Daniel Newhart		
Study Team Members	Gloria Crisp		
Study Title	Efficacy of OSU's Faculty Mentor Program		
Funding Source	None	Cayuse Number	N/A

DETERMINATION: NOT RESEARCH

It has been determined that your project, as submitted, **does not** meet the definition of research under the regulations set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services 45 CFR 46.

Note that amendments to this project may impact this determination. Please submit a new request if there are changes (e.g., funding, data sources, access to individual identifiers, interaction with research subjects, etc.).

The federal definitions and guidance used to make this determination may be found at the following link: [Research](#)

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

Can you tell us about your mentor-relationships with your faculty mentor?

What strategies have you and your faculty mentor, together, used to engage your mentees?

What were your expectations about the relationship that you would have with your faculty mentor and are those being met?

What successes have you had with your faculty mentor in mentoring your students together?

What challenges have you had with your faculty mentor?