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RIT Faculty Mentor Questionnaire Results

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Prepared by

Faculty Career Development Services

The Wallace Center

Anne Marie Canale, Cheryl Herdklotz, Lynn Wild

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Appendix A: Mentor Questionnaire Survey Instrument

Executive Summary

In September 2014, the Faculty Career Development Services (FCDS) team in The Wallace Center (TWC) administered a questionnaire to all RIT faculty to learn about their experiences as mentors. While RIT's faculty mentees have been surveyed annually since TWC's [Faculty Mentoring @ RIT](#) program implementation in 2011-2012, faculty mentors had not been surveyed.¹

The mentor survey was intended to gather feedback from RIT mentors regarding their preparation to mentor, their experiences at the department and college level, whether they were recognized for their contributions, to learn the outcomes of mentor-mentee relationships, and solicit feedback on their overall experiences. Questions also covered what kinds of resources the mentors felt they need to build and sustain a more effective mentoring relationship.

The survey was designed with input from deans and other campus partners. Results are being shared to inform others on campus (academic leaders, deans, faculty), as well as to guide the work of FCDS.

Key findings on the mentor's experience at RIT include:

- Overall, faculty mentors find the relationship fulfilling and rewarding.
- Mentors desire recognition and appreciation for their contributions to mentoring and coaching junior colleagues.
- A more formal process, along with structured guidelines for mentors/mentees, is desired from their departments and Colleges.
- Mentor-mentee activities should be included in the Annual Review and Plan of Work.
- Resources and training for the mentor are needed in order to be a good mentor and to build an effective relationship.

Mentoring . . .

- Always keeps me "fresh" – always a worthwhile experience.
- Is the most rewarding and personally satisfying part of my job.
- Provides me with a great sense of accomplishment in helping a new faculty member transition into the RIT environment – and a new friend!

The following report explores faculty responses from the questionnaire. The original survey instrument may be found in Appendix A of this report. The survey guaranteed anonymity; therefore, open-ended responses were summarized with a categorical listing of responses.

¹ See [Faculty Mentoring @ RIT Annual Reports](#);
<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/fcds-reports>

Section 1: Survey Responses

All full-time faculty were invited to respond to the survey if they had served in a mentor role for other RIT faculty. As an incentive, a \$3.00 coupon for Java Wally's was offered to thank respondents for taking the survey. Eighty-two faculty responded to the survey; five results were eliminated because the responders were evaluating their student-faculty mentor relationship, resulting in 77 responses. Results by College and rank may be found in Tables 1 and 2.

CLA	16
NTID	13
COS	10
KGCOE	9
GCCIS	8
CAST	6
SCB	5
CIAS	4
CMS	1
CHST	1
GIS	1
Not answered	3

Professor	31
Associate Professor	28
Assistant Professor	8
Senior Lecturer	2
Lecturer	5
Not Answered	3

Section 2: The Mentor's Experience in the Department/College

The first section of the survey included questions on whether mentees are assigned to a mentor, if the activity is reflected on the plan of work or annual report, if training is provided to mentors, and if they received recognition for mentoring. A summary of findings follows:

- **52% were formally assigned mentees; 48% were not.** "Other" responses included that mentees are assigned only to tenured faculty, and that mentoring was unofficial/informal.
- **35% said the Plan of Work reflects their mentoring activities; 58% said it does not.** "Other" responses revealed that the activity is included on the Plan of Work only if the mentor chose to include it.
- **47% of faculty reported that their department head appreciated their mentoring contributions.** Likewise, 1/3 of respondents claimed that their peers recognized their mentoring.
- **60 mentors indicated that no information or training was provided on how to mentor,** while 17 did receive information training and guidance. The majority of those responses cited the **Faculty Mentoring @ RIT Program** resources offered by the FCDS team in the form of published guidebooks, web-based

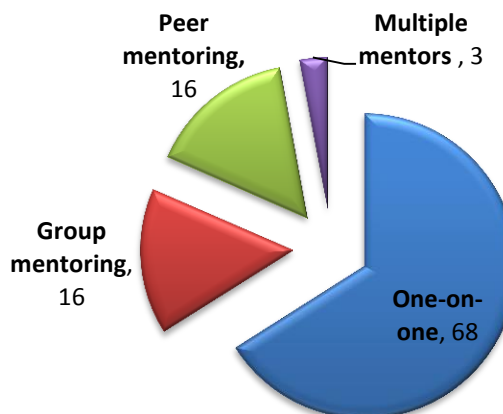
materials, panel discussions, workshops, and New Faculty Orientation.² Many mentors sought resources on their own, used outside connections (e.g., previous employers, former colleagues, etc.), or found guidance at chair/department retreats.

Section 2: The Mentor – Mentee Relationship

Section 2 covered the types of relationships in which mentors were involved most often, the mentor’s desired outcomes from the relationship, resources and support received for mentoring, and examples of activities they participated in with their mentee.

Most Common Mentor Relationships

Respondents reported that most often their relationships are one-on-one, followed by two close favorites: group mentoring and peer mentoring.



What Did the Mentor Hope to Achieve?

When asked what the mentors were hoping to achieve with the mentor-mentee relationship, faculty indicated a strong passion and enthusiasm about their relationships as mentor.

Many saw their key role as one who provides support to their new colleagues toward success, professionally and personally, and to acclimate them to the campus culture. Responses are organized by major theme in Table 3.

Table 3: What Mentors Were Hoping to Achieve with Mentees

<p>Acclimate mentee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RIT culture ▪ Department/College culture ▪ Academia in general 	<p>Professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career development/career path ▪ Time management ▪ Work-life balance ▪ Self-promotion
<p>Teaching support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building student relationships ▪ Course development and design ▪ Classroom management 	<p>Personal development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boost confidence/emotional support ▪ Job satisfaction ▪ Goal setting
<p>Tenure and promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance/support ▪ Advice/feedback support ▪ Preparing for annual reviews 	<p>Publishing and research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance/support ▪ Advice/feedback ▪ Funding

² See [Faculty Mentoring @ RIT Website, https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/mentoring/overview](https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/mentoring/overview)

Did the Mentoring Relationship Meet Mentor's Expectations?

Mentors were asked questions on the particulars of their mentor-mentee relationships during the most recent academic year (2013-2014).

- 58% of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed that the mentoring relationship met their expectations.
- 66% claimed that they were "happy with the type of mentoring in the relationship."

Resources Needed for Effective Mentoring

Mentors were asked for their suggestions on resources needed to build and sustain effective mentoring relationships. The top requests were for more time (e.g., reduced course load); funds (coffee or lunch money, funding for conferences, etc.); guidelines/training for the mentor; more formal structure; and recognition for their efforts (e.g., some concrete reward, overload pay, appreciation, merit reviews).

Resources Needed for More Effective Mentoring Relationships

- Time
- Funds
- Guidelines/Training
- Formal Structure
- Recognition/Reward

Most Beneficial Mentoring Activities

Of those responding, the most common answer to the mentor's most beneficial mentoring activities were on **teaching and course development**, followed by **mutually beneficial partnerships/collaborations**. Several respondents indicated that their most beneficial activity was the simple fact that they maintained regular meetings with their mentee. It was at these formal/informal meetings where important topics were discussed and information to guide/support the mentee and feedback was offered. In most cases, these were the times the mentor found the experience fulfilling.

Selected excerpts from the questionnaire responses follow:

Teaching and course development

- Course development, curriculum design, syllabus review, course preparation
- Discussions on teaching issues and strategies
- Classroom observations (peer)
- Helping to advise mentee's students

Partnerships/collaborations

- Attended conference together/regular research meetings
- Published paper together
- Co-writing: manuscript, grant proposal, conference paper
- Supervised research projects together
- Presented at conferences/Co-organized a conference
- Submitted a mentoring grant together

"I worked with my mentee on scholarly research. This benefited both my mentee and myself. It was enjoyable. It enriched our scholarly and professional selves."

Review/provide feedback

- Course materials
- Grants and other proposals
- Curriculum Vitae
- Tenure packages, third year pre-tenure review, annual review

Regular meetings and informal discussions

- Tenure and promotion preparedness/process
- Challenges/goals of the department, and how those relate to individual professional goals, particularly in terms of leadership
- Lunch (“not a joke -- I actually think these kinds of casual meetings are very useful”)
- Research and writing club
- Book club on topics about academia/women in academia
- Discussions on teaching, professional issues, successful scholarship

“I have done for others what I wished people had done for me when I was just starting out.”

“I mentor informally. It is just my responsibility as a senior faculty member.”

How Might your Mentoring Relationship be More Effective?

Responses to this question mirrored the answers provided to the earlier question on the types of resources desired: **mentors would appreciate more recognition for the mentoring activity, more resources, more structure, guidelines and training on how to mentor.** See excerpts below.

Reward, recognition, acknowledgement:

- Acknowledge and give release time for mentoring - make it more "official."
- Establish it as an important part of annual reviews/plans of work; develop and integrate a more solid strategy on mentoring.
- Offer resources so that mentee/mentor can participate in professional development.
- We (the unit) ought to develop a more solid strategy on mentoring and plans of work.

Guidelines and resources:

- Information on how my mentees would be evaluated in the tenure process and what would be expected of them.
- An outline of what topics could be covered that we (mentor/mentee) could review and discuss.
- Not only knowing how to mentor, but also have RIT's backing on resources (e.g., travel funding) for needed support for mentees to succeed.
- If there were a more structured process in place, where mentors work to their strengths and mentees know where to go for what advice, it would be more productive.
- Would have been nice to have guidelines for being a mentor.

Mentor – Mentee selection:

- Allow to develop on a more natural basis.
- Let mentors and mentees choose each other.
- Develop a way for the mentor-mentee relationship to form organically.

Section 3: Outcomes for the Mentor

The final set of questions covered what the mentors felt they personally and professionally gained from the mentoring process and the mentor-mentee relationship(s). Responses overwhelmingly dealt with comments on the satisfaction that came from working with their junior colleagues in this capacity. For many the experience was not only gratifying, but outcomes were more tangible such as publishing together, co-presenting, or working on student research projects together. The chance to help a junior colleague experiencing many of the problems that the mentors experienced at that stage of their careers was evident. In fact, 70% responded that they would be involved with mentoring again if given the opportunity.

Of special note were the following comments:

- First and foremost, I gained friends! On a secondary level (the intent of the mentoring process), I saw my mentees attain tenure and successfully assimilate into the RIT culture -- **at the same time getting a more refined sense of what should be the focus of my own professional development.**
- This is the **most rewarding and personally satisfying part of my job.**
- A sense of **helping someone else in a way I was first helped** when starting at RIT.
- **A great sense of accomplishment** in helping a new faculty member transition into the RIT environment; and a new friend!
- In watching (and helping) someone else navigate learning about the faculty, students and college, I learned a lot more about how this place works. **I think I have a better sense now of how to help faculty** and what typical stumbling blocks might appear in their pathways.
- Renewed sense of accomplishment and **realizing I do have a lot to offer others.** I also felt I was **able to keep up with my younger colleagues in a positive manner.**
- Helped me to **reflect on my own research and course development activities.**
- An **increased sense and respect for collegiality** among faculty.
- Helped me realize **what I have accomplished** in 18 years.
- The feeling of being useful. **It feels good to help.**

Conclusion

It is clear from this survey that RIT's faculty mentors would like improvements to the mentoring program relative to a more formal structure, guidelines, training and resources. Many will need to be implemented at the department/College level. Using feedback from this mentor survey, as well as the mentee survey, FCDS will continue to lead, develop and improve the **Faculty Mentoring @ RIT** program. Departments and Colleges are encouraged to provide feedback and take advantage of these resources.

The **Faculty Mentoring @ RIT** program includes resources, funding, awards, and events designed to support faculty in building and fostering mentoring relationships.

- **Resources** include the website, online guidebooks for mentors, mentees, and department/unit heads. See **Faculty Mentoring @ RIT** website: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/mentoring/overview>
- **Mentoring Grants** provide funds to support the professional development efforts of formal and informal mentoring groups. See previous mentoring grant recipients: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/mentoring/faculty-mentoring-grant-recipients>
- **Provost's Excellence in Faculty Mentoring Award** recognizes an RIT faculty member who demonstrates an outstanding commitment to mentoring. See **Excellence in Faculty Mentoring Awards**: <https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultyawards/provost-mentoring-award.php>
- **The FCDS Faculty Success Series** at (<https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/faculty-success-series>) provides events/opportunities where the mentor and mentee can engage together to foster their relationships. The Success Series includes the "So You Want to be a Mentor" panel, where mentors can join their colleagues to learn about being a mentor. The **Wiley Learning Institute** (<http://wileylearninginstitute.com/rit>) webinars may also be useful as a mentoring activity shared with a mentee.

Faculty Career Development Services: Mentor Survey

Dear Faculty,

We are currently seeking information about your experience at RIT as a mentor. If you have served in this role for faculty either formally or informally at RIT, please respond to the survey below. Information collected will be used to enhance our [Faculty Mentoring @ RIT](#) program and your responses will be held in strict confidence. Please submit your survey by Tuesday, September 23, 2014.

Once you have completed the survey, **print the ending page and take it to Java Wally's for a \$3.00 credit towards an item of your choice** as a thank you from Faculty Career Development Services in The Wallace Center.

Thank you for your time.

Lynn A. Wild, PhD
Associate Provost for Faculty Development and The Wallace Center
lawetc@rit.edu

QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6 ARE ON YOUR MENTOR EXPERIENCES WITHIN YOUR COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT:

1. Does your college or department assign mentee(s) to you?

- Yes
 No
 Other:

2. Does your current plan of work reflect mentoring related activities?

- Yes
 No
 Other:

3. Did you receive information/training on how to mentor?

- Yes
 No
 Other:

4. If you answered "yes," to the previous question, where did you obtain this information/training?

5. Have you used the online mentoring related resources available on the Faculty Mentoring@RIT Program website (<http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/facultydevelopment/mentoring/overview>)?

- Yes
 No
 Was unaware of its existence

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements that describe your experiences with your department and peers on mentoring:

	Not Applicable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My department head appreciated my contributions to mentoring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My department head recognized my mentoring contributions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Not Applicable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
in my annual evaluation.						
My peers recognized my contributions to mentoring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My peers sought my input on how best to mentor others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

QUESTIONS 7 THROUGH 14 ARE ON YOUR MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP(S):

7. What type of mentoring relationship(s) have you provided at RIT? Please select all that apply:

- One-on-one (one mentor, one mentee)
- Group mentoring (one mentor, several mentees)
- Peer mentoring (group of mentees)
- Multiple mentors (with a group of mentees)
- Other:

8. What were you hoping to achieve with your mentee(s)?

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements that describe RIT mentoring activities and your RIT mentoring relationship(s) during

the most recent academic year.

	Not Applicable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My mentee developed a plan including goals to be met under my direction/guidance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee met or made satisfactory progress towards meeting his/her goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee and I discussed how we would evaluate the success of our mentoring relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My mentee and I established guidelines defining how often or when we would meet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was satisfied with the frequency of our meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This mentoring relationship met my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, I am happy with the type of mentoring in our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Have you mentored a mentee(s) of a different gender, race, ethnicity?

- Yes
 No

11. Were you able to provide enough resources and assistance to your mentee(s)?

- Yes

- No
- Other:

12. If applicable, what kinds of resources/support would be helpful in your role as mentor?

13. What were two of the most beneficial professional development activities you did with your RIT mentee(s) during the most recent academic year?

14. If applicable, offer suggestions on how your RIT mentoring relationship(s) could be more effective.

QUESTIONS 15 THROUGH 24 ARE ABOUT YOU:

15. What did you gain from the mentoring process/relationship(s)?

16. Have you RECEIVED mentoring at RIT?

- Yes
- No

17. Given the opportunity, would you be involved in mentoring again?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided
- Other:

18. What is your primary College or Academic Unit?

- Center for Multidisciplinary Studies (CMS)
- College of Applied Science and Technology (CAST)
- College of Imaging Arts and Sciences (CIAS)
- College of Health Sciences and Technology (CHST)
- College of Liberal Arts (CLA)
- College of Science (COS)
- Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences (GCCIS)
- Golisano Institute for Sustainability (GIS)
- Kate Gleason College of Engineering (KGCOE)
- National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)
- Saunders College of Business (SCB)

19. What is your rank at RIT?

- Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor

- Principal Lecturer
- Senior Lecturer
- Lecturer
- Other:

20. What is your hearing status?

- Deaf
- Hard of hearing
- Hearing
- Prefer not to answer

21. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to answer

22. What is your race/ethnicity?

- Asian (non-Hispanic)
- American Indian/Alaska Native (non-Hispanic)
- Black/African-American (non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)
- Two or more races
- White
- Nonresident Alien
- Race and/or Ethnicity Unknown
- Prefer not to answer

23. Are there any more comments or suggestions you would like to share?

24. If you are interested in being more involved with the Faculty Mentoring@RIT program (e.g., panel discussions, etc.), please provide us with your name and email address.

Thank you for your time!

You will have the chance to print your Java Wally's coupon on the next page.

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