Does Dyad Match Make a Difference in a University Mentoring Program?

Bradley C. Greiman
University of Minnesota

Carly Tremain
University of Minnesota

2012 NACTA Conference
Transformation in Colleges of Agriculture

- National Research Council (2009)
  - “Reform undergraduate curricula and students’ experiences to meet the needs of a changing world”

- University of Minnesota
  - College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences
    - Undergraduate Strategic Plan
      - Experiential learning
      - Interdisciplinary learning
      - Curricular flexibility
Experiential Learning

- University of Minnesota Mentor Connection Program
  - Year-long program
  - Alumni and business professionals
  - Nonformal learning opportunity
  - Career exploration
  - Professional networking opportunities
  - **Dyad match decisions** managed by professional staff in each college
College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS)
College of Science and Engineering (CSE)
Carlson School of Management (CSOM)
Kram’s Mentor Role Theory (1985)

- Career functions
  - Knowledge and skills to be successful
- Psychosocial functions
  - Emotional support to build self-concept
    - Acceptance
    - Counseling
    - Friendship
    - Role Modeling
    - Social (Greiman, 2002)
Purpose & Objectives of the Study

- Investigate the dyad relationship involving students and mentors participating in the University of Minnesota Mentor Connection Program
  - Describe students’ perception of psychosocial mentoring and compare by dyad match criteria
  - Describe students’ perception of dyad satisfaction and compare by dyad match criteria
  - Describe students’ perception of mentor connection program satisfaction and compare by dyad match criteria
Methodology

- Comparative survey research design (Krathwohl, 1998)
- Target population
  - Undergraduate students who participate in the Mentor Connection Program
- Accessible sample
  - $N = 998$
  - Five cohorts from 2006-07 to 2010-11 school years
  - Respondents were a representative time and place sample (Oliver & Hinkle, 1982)
    - Inferential statistics
    - Alpha level set *a priori* at .05
Data Collection Instrument

- Psychosocial mentoring
  - Modified MRQ (Greiman, 2002)
    - Acceptance
    - Role modeling
  - 5 items, 5-point Likert-type scale
  - Cronbach’s Alpha = .94

- Dyad satisfaction
  - Modified MRQ (Greiman, 2002)
  - 4 items, 5-point Likert-type scale
  - Cronbach’s Alpha = .88
Data Collection Instrument

- Program satisfaction
  - Researcher developed
  - 3 items, 4-point Likert-type scale
  - Cronbach’s Alpha = .83

- Study part of a larger project
- Electronic data collection
## Psychosocial Mentoring (Objective 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFANS</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOM</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = not at all, 2 = small extent, 3 = some extent, 4 = large extent, 5 = very large extent

$F = 1.61, p = .20$
Dyad Satisfaction  (Objective 2)

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOM</td>
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<td>.65</td>
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</table>

1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

$F = 1.78, \ p = .17$
# Program Satisfaction (Objective 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>CSE</td>
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<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOM</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = agree

$F = .61, p = .54$
Conclusions

Regardless of college match criteria……

- Students receiving a large extent of psychosocial mentoring
- Students generally agree they are satisfied with their dyad and the Mentor Connection Program

………Why?
Discussion

Why? What can be learned about dyad relationships? Perhaps……

- Each college has selected a dyad match process that fits the culture of their discipline
  - There are various ways to select dyad members for a relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CFANS</th>
<th>CSE</th>
<th>CSOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Essay application</td>
<td>• Online matching program</td>
<td>• Student selects mentor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

- The Mentor Connection Program clearly identifies expectations
  - Both students and mentors *want* to participate
- Mentors may be highly altruistic
  - Alumni
  - Experienced mentors
Recommendations

- Findings provide academic advisors with basis to confidently recommend the Mentor Connection Program to their students
  - Nonformal learning
  - Experiential learning

- Future research
  - Career benefits of Mentor Connection Program
  - Perspective of mentors
  - Relationship dynamics
  - Experiential learning
Thank You

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