Peer Mentoring in Agricultural and Environmental Science majors:
Elements of Effective Mentor Training

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Objectives

• MAPP background
• Format
• Preliminary Data
• Connection to Boundary Spanning Theory
• Mentor Training
• Discussion
**Action Research:**

Stringer (2007) AR is a participatory process that relies on the wisdom of the people, and the knowledge they have of their own situation to provide a basis of action and to provide solutions to challenges within their operating system.

**Action Research Core Process:**

(Coghlan and Brannick, 2010)

**Constructing:** Exploration of context & purpose

**Planning Action:** Describe how to implement the action

**Taking Action:** Plans are implemented and interventions are made

**Evaluating Action:** Outcomes of the action are examined
MAPP PILOT Format

• Pilot
  – Paired with MANRRS; Contact once per month & via social media
  – No workshops; Qualtrics progress report
  – Potluck with MANRRS year end celebration
  – Evaluation: informal interviews of mentors and mentees

• Year 2
  – Mentor workshops with MANRRS meetings
  – Mentee workshops on various freshmen transition topics
  – Mixers
  – Potluck with MANRRS; IRB; Survey & Focus Groups
  – Re-branded the program with a new logo
# Mentors

## 1. Decision to be a Peer Mentor
- To help a freshman
- Recruited by email or CAES faculty
- To build relations

## 2. Building trust with the Mentee
- Becoming friends
- Feeling comfortable
- Mentor role

## 3. Leadership development & Preparation for the role
- Confidence
- The importance of relationships
- Time management
- Importance of training sessions
- Communication and stress training sessions

## 4. Representing CAES
- Adequate representatives
- Recruit active mentors
- Pairing efforts
Mentees

1. Sense of belonging to CAES
   Mentor helped mentees feel welcomed
   MAPP as a community

2. Retention efforts
   Opportunity to meet professors in an informal way
   Learn opportunities in the college
   The mentors motivates mentees

3. MAPP as a positive experience
   MAPP break down barriers
   Help connect mentees with CAES and networking
Student Retention through Peer Mentoring in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at The University Of Georgia

Results suggested peer mentoring helped the mentees feel more integrated and supported in CAES. Data also suggested that their leadership skills were affected beneficially.

• Thoughts about leaving changed
• Positive impact increased confidence to complete degree and cope with problems
PEER MENTORS AS BOUNDARY SPANNERS
BOUNDARY SPANNING

Boundary spanners are a “bridge between an organization [college/university] and their exchange partners, competitors, and regulators [community partners]” (Scott, 1998, p. 196).
Peer Mentors in an Ag College

Office of Diversity Relations

Resources
- Tutoring
- Counseling
- Academic Advising
- Deans Promise
- Study Abroad
- Leadership
- Internships
- Service Learning
- Research

Activities
- Mixers
- Recognition Ceremonies
- Major Madness
- SLICE (career exploration)

Workshops
- Know your CAES Admin
- Transition Tips
- Time Mgt
- Stress Mgt
- Networking
- Undergrad Research
- Affinity Clubs
- Professional Development
- Library Resources
- APA Workshops
- Academic Honesty

Community #2
- Freshmen
- Transfer Students

UGA CAES Administration
Faculty
Staff
Exemplar Students

College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
PEER MENTORING IF-THEN STATEMENT

IF WE KNOW: What supports/factors produce exemplar (flourishing CAES students)

IN WHAT CONTEXT: among students new to the college (freshmen and transfers)

THEN WE CAN: reduce attrition; retain and develop exemplar students/future mentors
BOUNDARY SPANNING THEORY

Product Innovation
Product Research & Development

• Boundary Spanners: “key individuals [who] are able to communicate effectively across boundaries and are, therefore, an important linking mechanism”, (March & Simon, 1958)

• Boundary Spanners: “individuals who are well connected to external information areas and who also are well connected internally and thus able to disseminate new information and new ideas to their more locally oriented colleagues”

(Tushman and Scalan, 1981)
BOUNDARY SPANNING & PROGRAMS

• Boundary Spanning is multi-contextual

• Much of the literature on BS theory originates in the business and management field

• Theory used to investigate boundary spanning roles related to product program innovation research, product program design and product program development
Elements of Effective Training

- **Year 3**
  - New Mentor Training & Program Framework
    - Faculty & CAES Administrator Led Leadership Trainings
    - Ambassador Led Resource Training
    - Program planning training for Mentors (workshops delivery)
    - Mixers, Activities & Study Groups
  - New Manual including college administration pictures/roles/contact
  - New Program delivery model
    - 3 generations of Mentors
    - Buzz around the college
    - Multicultural Participants
Elements of Effective Mentor Training

- Representatives of the CAES
- Representatives of their major
- Know and access resources
- Interaction and engagement with mentees
- ID skills as useful for professional and interpersonal development
- Program development and delivery
- Connection to the College and its faculty & staff
- Belonging = retention and success
Outcomes:

• Sense of belonging in the CAES
  – Familiar with resources, administrators, Faculty, Staff & Students

• Representative for the CAES

• Retain students/majors in the CAES
  – Increase graduates with CAES degrees

• Develop future mentors

• Leadership, professional development, interpersonal and program development skills beyond campus years

• Expand program using success model

• Continue to track retention
Thank You!

Questions/ Comments

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