Mentoring
College of Arts and Letters Mentoring Report

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COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS STAFF MENTORING PROJECT

PROJECT OBJECTIVE
The objective of the Staff Mentoring Project is to assess the interest within the College of Arts and Letters to participate in a mentoring program and to develop formal mentoring procedures for such a program.

BACKGROUND
Due to staff turnover, the need for onboarding, training, coaching and mentoring has become a priority for CAL. The CAL Training, Onboarding and Mentoring Team (TOM) identified the lack of procedures and documentation of mentoring in the College, and therefore the TOM Team invited us to manage the Staff Mentoring Project.

GOALS OUTLINED IN THE PROJECT CHARTER
- Determine what mentoring support is currently being provided to support staff.
- Create a definition of successful mentoring.
- Create a means of measuring successful mentoring.
- Make a recommendation for participation selection.
- Identify how the mentoring process will build personal connections and networks within the College and across campus.
- Identify how the mentoring process will cultivate practices of inclusion as a matter of institutional habit.
- Identify and prioritize mentoring needs.
- Create mentoring recommendations, including a plan and timeline.

PROJECT COMMITTEE
Nick Adkins, Fiscal Officer/Supervisor, Writing Center, College of Arts & Letters
Heather Bentley, Human Resources Manager, Lyman Briggs College
Kathy Dorshimer, Fiscal Officer/Supervisor, Department of English, College of Arts & Letters
Melissa Staub, Project Manager, Office of the Dean, College of Arts & Letters

PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS
The Staff Mentoring Project hinges on there being enough interest in staff participation to justify building a program. If the Project Committee determined that there was little or no interest in a staff mentoring program, our goals would need to be re-evaluated. Essentially, the two viable options would be to either forego the effort altogether or to find ways to engage staff by building the perception of the program’s value for staff development and career growth.
EVALUATION PROCESS

Our first objective as a team was to develop a common understanding and a definition of what mentoring is and what it is not; for the purposes of the project, we defined for ourselves how mentoring is different from training, as well as how it is different from coaching. Training, we determined, is the process of learning one’s job and the daily and cyclical responsibilities it entails and, simply, how to get it done. Coaching, on the other hand, is typically used to improve performance where there may be underperformance, inefficiencies, or skill deficiencies. Often, coaching is suggested, recommended, or mandated by a superior or supervisor. In contrast, mentoring, for the mentee, should be geared toward those who are eagerly and willingly seeking challenges, process improvements, and upward mobility in their careers, and are doing so by learning through the expertise of others who are willing to share their knowledge and experience. Mentoring is a relationship between individuals based on a mutual desire for development towards career goals and objectives; it is an ongoing process of providing guidance and counseling for employees at any stage in their career.

Effective mentoring helps further academic and professional excellence, create/retain a creative and diverse workforce, and develop and maintain a respectful and positive work climate in which all members of the college community can succeed.

Our evaluation process consisted of carefully constructing an anonymous Qualtrics Survey for the entire staff of the College of Arts & Letters that would result in. The survey was intended to serve three purposes: 1) to gauge staff interest in participating as either a mentor or a mentee; 2) to determine the type of mentoring in which staff would be most interested participating; and 3) to discover what barriers may prevent a staff member from participating in a mentoring program. Purpose number 1 would tell us whether we should continue to consider a mentoring program in the College of Arts & Letters, and the results of numbers 2 & 3 would serve as important considerations in developing a successful program if we discovered that enough interest exists to proceed.

GENERAL FINDINGS

STAFF INTEREST
The survey that was distributed to CAL Staff had a 58% response rate. From those responses we had 42% expressing interest in being a mentor, and 42% interested in being a mentee. Participants could select both options. 79% of respondents show interest in participating in a mentoring program, yet 82% of respondents have actually never participated in a formal mentoring program.
This suggests to us a critical need for the development and implementation of a formal mentoring program.

TYPES OF MENTORING
The survey asked if those interested in being a mentee had a preference for a mentor in CAL, one from an outside college or department, or no preference. 94% chose no preference.
The survey offered 7 mentoring types. Participants could choose multiple options:

- One-to-One: one mentor meets with one mentee at a time - 20%
- Peer: mentor at the same rank/level as mentee to provide guidance and feedback. Typically used for sharing job related knowledge or insight on challenges/experiences the mentee may encounter - 16%
- Group: one mentor meets with multiple mentees at a time who typically have a common or similar goal - 15%
- Team: multiple mentors work a single mentee - 15%
- Situational: generally a short-term mentoring relationship where the mentee wants to learn a specific skill or proficiency in a certain area - 14%
- Reverse: junior team member has more experience or knowledge in a particular area than a senior team member; helpful when a senior member needs to learn about a particular kind of new technology or process -12%
- E-Mentoring: one mentor works with a single mentee via the internet; helpful for organizations that have participants in multiple locations - 8%

PERCEIVED BARRIERS
Whether a respondent chose to be a mentor or a mentee, they overwhelmingly found time to be the largest barrier to participation in a formal program, 36% and 25% respectively. Beyond the issue of time, 16% of potential mentees believe confidentiality may be an issue, and 12% are concerned about the the possible effect on their annual evaluation. Of potential mentors, 18% indicated that they are concerned about who to talk to if the mentoring relationship isn't working out.

DESIRED OUTCOMES FROM PARTICIPATION
Survey participants were offered several areas of interest to select for a mentoring experience, and we found that a large variety of experiences are desired, both as mentors and mentees. It is interesting to note that leadership or moving into a leadership role was the most popular choice by mentees, followed by management or moving into a management role. This indicates a desire from CAL staff to have future opportunities and upward mobility. This comes as no surprise, as almost 73% of staff surveyed have been in CAL for 5 years or less, and 51% have been in CAL for 2 years or less. 47% have been at MSU for 5 or less years.
The potential mentors look forward to sharing their skills and expertise around coping with change and adaptability, problem solving and projecting assertiveness and confidence, among many other skills.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on our findings, the Committee recommends implementing a limited, pilot mentoring program using a phased approach as presented in the following Next Steps. The pilot period will allow the Committee to explore a mentoring program and allow us to monitor its success and make adjustments before opening up a College wide program. The goal is to put forward a program that participants find enjoyable, manageable and beneficial to their overall career goals. By first running a pilot program, we hope to address issues that could affect the overall success of the program and future interest and participation.

NEXT STEPS
We explored staff interest in mentoring and identified our mentoring needs through the Qualtrics survey. Since those who participated in the survey indicated an overwhelming support for participating as a mentor, a mentee, or both, we are excited to move to Phase One using the results of the survey as a guide.

Phase One: Build the foundation of a solid pilot mentoring program for the staff of the College of Arts & Letters.
- Select the types of mentoring CAL staff are seeking as a starting point for the pilot.
- Design both mentor and mentee applications and develop a submission process.
- Make a recommendation for participation selection that establishes ground rules and expectations, taking into consideration barriers that the survey results revealed.
- Identify and communicate how the mentoring process will build personal connections and networks within the College and across campus.
- Identify how the mentoring process will cultivate practices of inclusion as a matter of institutional habit.
- Develop a set of standards and/or tools to measure the success of the program

Phase Two: Implement the pilot mentoring program
- Distribute & collect applications and select the pilot participants
- Include an orientation for mentors and mentees
- Communicate with participants at various checkpoints that will be determined in Phase Two.
- Run the pilot program for a length of time that will be determined in Phase Two.

**Phase Three:** Evaluate the pilot program for process improvements.
- Use the tools we developed in Phase Two to measure the success of the pilot program.
- Based on our findings, we will make adjustments to address areas of concern or areas that present new opportunities.

**Phase Four:** Introduce the full mentoring program with a model that embraces and incorporates evolution and the changing needs and environments over time.