Best Mentor Program Practices for College/UnitLeaders

The "best" formal mentoring program is one that is designed to meet the needs of an individual college or unit. Different models exist and deciding which model is best requires aligning the unit’s particular needs, goals and available resources. However, there is general agreement in the literature that successful formal mentor programs share the following key attributes:

• Top-level Sponsorship
  o College expectations for mentoring and leadership are clearly reflected in the college’s strategic plan, allocation of resources, and communications.
  o College-level person is appointed to oversee and facilitate mentor related programming
  o College-level support is available in the form of centralized services for efficiency, e.g. arrange orientations, organize workshops that all units can utilize, locate mentors.
  o Chair/director support and leadership for mentoring is clearly reflected in the unit-level strategic plan, budget, resources, communications, and time allowed for participation.
  o Unit-level person is appointed to oversee and champion program as part of job description.

• Formal programs are designed by each college/unit based on their individual needs, strengths and constraints, and that comply with the university mentor policy.

• Expectations for annual review and promotion are clearly stated and match disciplinary norms.

• Mentor program policies, goals, and expectations that clarify role of mentors/mentees are clearly identified and communicated. Examples:
  o Role of mentor in RPT (can affect trust; need for “safe” place)
  o Duration of match (e.g., one year, renewable, opportunity for reassignment as needed)
  o Expectation for regular meetings (mentoring won’t happen if people aren’t meeting)
  o Confidentiality

• Clear and effective process for identifying and matching mentors and mentees exists.

• Program addresses diversity through an inclusive process vs. singling out groups by identity.

• Orientation/Training is provided for mentors/mentees to clarify program goals, expectations and policies; to review best practices; and to provide practical tips and resources.

• Recognition is given to active participants, both mentors and mentees.
  o Recognition for mentors is included in annual review, e.g. service to the department.
  o Awards, special events and other forms of recognition are given regularly. Check ADAPP website for extensive list of incentive and recognition ideas.

• Evaluation plan exists to regularly assess attainment of goals, effectiveness of processes, and measurable outcomes consisting of both formative and summative evaluations.

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