MENTORING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AN EXPERT AND A NOVICE IR PROFESSIONAL: THE ESTABLISHMENT, DEVELOPMENT, EVALUATION, AND THE RESULTS

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Let’s Start with a Question

When you go to visit an IR office, what are the features that you are looking for in order to tell whether it functions well and does what it is supposed to do?
What ..... 

- is the reason why the office is sometimes called institutional research, institutional research and planning, institutional research, planning, assessment, grant,....... (you name it)

- do I need to do in order to prepare myself to work in an IR office?

- is .... add another thousand questions here.....
The Purpose of the Presentation

- Sharing our experiences regarding a semi-structured mentoring program
- Providing suggestions on the building of a similar program both formally or informally in other IR offices
- Discussing other alternative ways to learn about the functions in an IR office
What is Mentoring?

- Mentoring can be divided into three types: youth mentoring, academic mentoring (faculty mentoring students), and mentoring in the workplace (Allen and Elby, 2007). In this presentation, we focus on the last type of mentoring, the workplace mentoring.

- Mentoring refers to a relational process whereby a more experienced individual, usually more senior, contributes to the professional development of a protégé by providing three distinct types of functions: psychosocial support (e.g., counseling, friendship), career-related support (e.g., coaching, sponsorship), and role modeling (Wang, 2010).
The SanFACC Mentoring Program

- The goal of the SanFACC (San Gabriel/Foothill Association of Community Colleges) Mentor Program is to identify future community college leaders and pair them with a mentor whose background and expertise correspond to the mentees’ professional development needs, to help them prepare for administrative leadership positions.

- Participation in the program requires a strong commitment to professional development. Mentees will be expected to communicate at least once a month with their mentors, and make progress on their learning objectives throughout the academic year.

- The mentoring program does not incur a cost.
The Mentoring Relationship

Mentor
Nurture and share their knowledge

Mentee
Guided in a new system and gain work values and skills

Goals/objectives

Final Outcomes

Social and Organizational Benefits

Based on the Vocational and Developmental Theory (Kern, 1998)
Strategy 1– Aiming High

"Keep repeating to yourself: I am a high flyer, I will not dive for the salmon."
Strategy 2 - Do It With Clear Outcome in Mind

I hear, I forget; I see, I remember;
I do, I understand

-Confucius
The Journey of Our Mentoring

- In about 10 months’ time, we did:
  - Submit AIR conference proposal and got accepted, so we are here 😊
  - Submit a research grant proposal supported by NSF, NECS, and AIR, but we were not funded and we’ll try again next year
  - Collaborate on a Basic Skills student tracking project
  - Communicate monthly on the key IR functions
  - Set up future plan to further the journey
Career-related support

- Achieve a better understanding of the functions of an IR office
  - e.g. Accreditation, Strategic Planning, Program Review, Student Learning Outcomes, Enrollment Management, External Reporting, and Student Assessment
- Develop leadership and management skills
  - e.g. People management skills and conflict resolution
- Improve communication and network skills
  - e.g. Small Talks, Job Shadowing, Interview Preparation etc.
Psychosocial support

"Everyone was there to shake my hand, when I won the Spelling Bee, but you were there to hold my hand when I was practicing for the Spelling Bee."
Role modeling

TOM, MENTORING IS ABOUT MORE THAN ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO BE JUST LIKE YOU!
Sustainability

- Although the mentoring program can end, the mentoring relationship never ends 😊

- For example, the expert and the novice can continue collaborating on research projects and publishing articles

- The expert can also set up numerous opportunities for the researcher to engage with other IR professionals across the state/nation
Suggestion on Establishing a Mentoring Relationship -1

- Step 1: Collaborate in inter-campus IR projects
- Step 2: Identify potential mentors (e.g. judging by experience, knowledge, willingness to help, seniority, etc.). It would be the best if the mentor is from a different campus in order to avoid conflict of interest
- Step 3: Invite the potential mentor(s) for mentoring activities (e.g. monthly lunch meetings)
Suggestion on Establishing a Mentoring Relationship -2

- Step 4: Design a plan including clear goals/objectives for the course of the agreed mentoring period

- Step 5: Prepare for each meeting with questions, handouts, examples, etc. in order to maximize the limited meeting time

- Step 6: Be sure to not only focus on the technical perspectives of the job functions (e.g. how to track students), but also focus on non-technical topics such as communication skills, management skills, research request handling, working with various constituencies at campus
Suggestion on Establishing a Mentoring Relationship -3

- Step 7: Collaborate with the staff in the mentor’s office as well because they may have different sets of skills that you can learn

- Step 8: Be creative and the mentoring potential is unlimited

- The above steps can be easily transferred into a formal program
Other Training Opportunities

- AIR educational opportunities (e.g. Webinars, Resources, IR professional Certificate, etc.)
  [http://www.airweb.org](http://www.airweb.org)

- Local IR training opportunities (e.g. the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges Summer Institute)
  [http://rpgroup.org](http://rpgroup.org)

- Join List Serves

- Network with peers by participating in conferences and collaborating on projects

- Job shadowing with several people who already have the job that you’d like to have (e.g. a week with one person would provide you with a lot of information in a quick period of time)

- Others
Q&A

- Thank you for coming to our presentation!
- Any questions?
- Please let us know if there are other potential IR training opportunities that we did not present in our presentation. We’ll post your comments and suggestions with our slides so that people can learn more from our presentation (e.g. we’ll add an additional slide for audience’s suggestions). Thank you very much for sharing.
Please send us your suggestions and comments:

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