

NASPA WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2020



TOGETHER TOWARDS TOMORROW

NASPA WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE
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E-mentoring College Students: Combining Scientific Mentoring With Professional Development Sessions For Student Success

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Why is mentoring so important for college students ?

Mentoring helps students:

- develop their professional identity
- form lasting professional connections
- advance their long term goals (Crisp et al., 2017)
- a 2014 Gallup study found that the most important predictor of students' future workplace engagement and wellbeing was how they experienced college and the type of support and mentorship they received as students (Ray & Marken, 2014)

Professional development

- college students' perceptions of career readiness are increasing year after year, presumably because of their accumulated experiences as they go through college
- however, only 29% (in 2017) and 41% (in 2018) of US college students indicate that they feel "very" or "extremely" prepared for their professional futures (McGraw-Hill 2018)

There is very little literature on mixed methods mentoring programs for college students



Dual Mentoring: Program Development

- During Summer 2020, we developed a well-rounded program that incorporates:
 - alternated sessions of **scientific mentoring** (e.g., read papers, discuss research ideas, design a study, create a poster) and
 - **professional development sessions** (e.g., professional communication, developing one's professional identity - LinkedIn, building intercultural competence, etc.)
- We have implemented this program in a research lab at a large western public university, where 25 undergraduate research assistants and volunteers are mentored during Fall 2020
- Mentors include a research program manager, two graduate students, a scientific research curator, various research professionals, and the lab director and principal investigator



Dual Mentoring: Program Implementation

At the beginning of the semester

- a short survey was administered to students to learn about their goals, anticipated outcomes and challenges, and preferences for the professional development sessions
- the research program manager conducted 1:1 meetings with all the students to follow up on the survey, learn about students' goals and desired outcomes, and set the tone for a potential mentoring relationship

Group mentoring sessions (via Zoom)

- the group meets weekly, for one hour
- the scientific mentoring is conducted by the principal investigator and two graduate students
- the professional development sessions are conducted by the research program manager/ various guest speakers

Individual mentoring sessions (via Zoom)

- graduate students meet with the undergraduate students to help them design research projects
- the research program manager meets with students to help them determine and work on their professional/career related goals

Slack is used to keep in touch, and to exchange information and resources



Preliminary Program Evaluation

- frequency of interactions between mentor and mentee seems to predict student engagement, likelihood to return to the lab for the next semester, and overall student success
- perceived academic/career subject knowledge seems to predict students' engagement with their mentor(s)
- student self-efficacy seems to predict overall engagement in the lab

At the end of the Fall 2020 semester, we will administer an **exit survey**, including

- the College Student Mentoring Scale, measuring psychological and emotional support, degree and career support, academic/career subject knowledge support, and the existence of a role model (Crisp, 2009)
- an adapted version of the learning through e-mentoring and enhanced self-efficacy scale (de Janasz & Godshalk, 2013), and
- general open-ended questions asking about students' experiences with e-mentoring activities in the lab



THANK YOU!

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