

CREATING A CAREER CENTER PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

A CREATIVE PROJECT

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BY

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this creative project was to create a career center peer mentoring program for Ball State University's Career Center. However, this program can be adopted to fit any career center at any college and university, with special considerations for size and compensation based on the institutional structure of that particular academic setting. The concept for the project was to provide leadership and career development opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, creatively involve undergraduate students in the career development process, and relieve paid staff members of routine duties. This project will provide specific instructions for how to create a career center peer mentoring program.

The Career Center is underutilized by undergraduate students. Research has shown that students need to get involved early in the career decision making process in order to successfully prepare for careers post graduation. By creating a career center peer mentoring program, Ball State University will have a group of peer mentoring students who will promote and actively participate in career center activities, thus increasing the use of services in the Career Center while providing this group of peer mentors with valuable leadership and personal development opportunities.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Peer mentoring has been a part of colleges and universities since the early 1900s (Ender & Newton, 2000). Students served as resident assistants, hall counselors, and advisors, and student tutors have provided academic assistance to their classmates since the colonial period of American history. Since then, research shows that over 70% of institutions of higher education have one or more peer mentor programs on campus (Winston & Ender, 1988).

Although research on peer mentoring is scarce, the research that has been conducted shows positive benefits to the mentor, the mentee, and institution. Peer mentoring allows mentors to share their knowledge, gain valuable job skills, and increase their social collateral on campus. Mentees benefit from the knowledge and support imparted by their peers, and are often more able to connect with peers than with paid staff members who may be much older than they. Finally, the institution benefits, as peer mentors often relieve paid staff from menial tasks and free their time for larger projects. Additionally, adding peer mentors means that student affairs and other academic departments can increase the number of programs offered to students.

While the majority of peer mentor programs reside in residence life, there are a number of successful programs within career centers on a number of college

campuses. In these roles, students provide career advising to their peers, assisting them with tasks such as career exploration, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

This creative project is focused on the creation and implementation of a peer mentoring program within Ball State University's Career Center. This program will have peer mentors overseeing the drop-in advising function offered through the center. During this time, peer mentors will assist other students with a variety of career related tasks. Graduate assistants in the career center will oversee the peer mentors, providing them training, guidance, and supervision throughout the academic year. A training plan will be developed, along with ethical guidelines, intake/documentation forms, and a calendar/timeline.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this creative project was to develop a peer mentoring program within Ball State University's Career Center, which will provide career development and leadership opportunities for undergraduate students, graduate students, and create increased involvement from the undergraduate student body in career related activities.

Significance of Study

Although students understand the importance of the career center on campus, it is often an underutilized resource. Many student affairs divisions on Ball State's campus employ students in peer mentoring roles; however, the Career Center has not yet adopted this process. The implementation of this program will not only satisfy the objectives listed in the statement of purpose, it will also provide the career center with a student-driven program that can provide outreach to other students and interest in the using resources within the career center.

Scope and Limitations

The peer mentoring program is designed as a way for students to gain valuable experience through mentoring other students and advising them on career decisions. This program is intended for a group of students to provide drop-in advising functions for their peers.

In order for this to function correctly, the peer mentoring program will need the support of the Career Center to move forward. This means that certain staff members would need to reduce the number of hours advising drop-in students, which will create a shift in the workflow within the career center. Additionally, appropriate training will need to be provided to both the graduate assistants and the selected peer mentors in order for the program to be successful.

Organization of the Paper

This creative project is organized into four chapters. The second chapter reviewed the existing literature on peer mentoring and its history on campuses, theoretical foundation, and benefits to both students and institutions. Chapter three is a description of the methodology involved in creating the project. Chapter four demonstrates how the peer mentoring program will be implemented on Ball State's campus.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Summary of the Project

Peer mentoring has been a function of higher education since the early 1900s, where students served as resident assistants, hall proctors, hall counselors, and advisors (Ender & Newton, 2000). Student tutors have provided academic assistance to their classmates since the colonial period of American history. Today, peer mentoring, or the use of paraprofessionals, has increased significantly and expanded into other areas and departments on college and university campuses. A random sample of college student affairs divisions showed that 72% have one or more peer mentor, or paraprofessional, programs (Winston & Ender, 1988). Today, these students fulfill a variety of functions and positions, including academic departments, study skills centers, career and counseling centers, financial aid offices, social and religious centers, student unions, international student services, crisis centers, and judicial offices (Ender & Newton, 2000). However, the majority of student paraprofessionals still work within either residence life or new student orientation (Winston & Ender, 1988).

Definition – What does Mentoring mean?

Much of the research on mentoring programs is centered on mentoring within the professional work environment (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). “The traditional form of mentoring consists of a hierarchical relationship in which the mentor is considerably

older and more experienced than the mentee” (p. 150). In a traditional mentor relationship, the mentor provides acceptance and support, dispenses advice and guidance, coaches on professional support systems, and offers visibility and protection (Jacobi 1991).

Delworth, Sherwood, and Casaburri (1974) defined paraprofessional, a term that includes peer mentors, as a person without extended professional training who is selected, trained, and given on-going supervision to perform a part of a task usually performed by a professional. Paraprofessionals provide information, explain policies and procedures, perform administrative duties, make referrals to other university offices, provide personal counseling, and implement social activities (Winston & Ender, 1988). Paraprofessionals are also often called peer mentors or peer coaches (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002).

Kram (1983) defined peer mentoring as

a helping relationship in which two individuals of similar age and/or experience come together, either informally or through formal mentoring schemes, in the pursuit of fulfilling some combination of functions that are career-related (e.g. information sharing, career strategizing) and psycho-social (e.g., confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, friendship). (p. 609)

Because there are many ways to interpret the mentoring relationship, a major concern in the research is the lack of a standard operational definition of mentor or mentoring standards (Jacobi, 1991). Mentoring experiences have been shown to exist in a number of forms, including informal relationships and more structured mentoring programs, which complicates the research (Crisp, 2010). Crisp stated that research on mentoring suffers from “definitional, methodological, and theoretical flaws” (p. 40)

which in turn make it difficult to effectively measure the impact of mentoring on student success. Jacobi's (1991) research on mentoring programs in higher education showed 15 different definitions of mentoring derived from the literature. Merriam (1983) contended that:

The phenomenon of mentoring is not clearly conceptualized, leading to confusion as to just what is being measured or offered as an ingredient in success.

Mentoring appears to mean one thing to developmental psychologists, another thing to business people, and a third thing to those in academic settings. (p. 169)

Traditional mentoring and peer mentoring share many common characteristics (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002). They are both directed toward specific goals, are formal arrangements with well-defined boundaries, and are grounded in a common homogeneity within the college. Unlike traditional mentoring, peer mentoring pairs mentors and mentees who are nearly equal in age, experience, and hierarchy to provide support. Peer mentoring promotes information sharing, career planning, and job related feedback, but because students are limited in their knowledge, the information sharing piece can be limited as well. On the other hand, because the relationships are mostly equal in nature, peer mentors may offer more confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, and friendships than traditional mentors. In addition, because peer mentors are developmentally equals, they may be better able to offer empathetic support rather than just sympathetic support.

Theoretical Foundation

The practice of mentoring is grounded in theory that touches on the motivational and values functions of those involved. Terrion & Leonard (2010) stated that "mentoring

is a form of planned helping and the helper's decisions about beginning to help and about continuing to help are influenced by whether the particular activity fits with the helper's own needs and goals" (p.87). Nora and Crisp (2007) developed a theoretical framework specific to undergraduate students based on a review of the literature for mentoring theory. Their framework touched on the research from multiple disciplines including psychology, business, and K-12 education. Their theory explained that the mentoring experiences of college students are comprised of four closely related forms of support that include psychological/emotional support, degree/career support, academic/subject knowledge support, and the presence of a role model (Crisp, 2010). Jacobi (1991) found that mentoring provides 15 diverse functions that reflect three components of the mentoring relationship. These include emotional/psychological support, direct assistance with career and professional development, and role modeling.

Terrion & Leonard (2010) indicated that volunteering serves six motivational functions for the volunteer. These include values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement functions. For the values function, the volunteer participates to express or act on his or her own important values. With understanding, the volunteer seeks to learn more about the world or to practice unused skills. Social motivation allows a volunteer to strengthen his or her social relationships. Career-motivated volunteers have goals of gaining career-related experience through participating in volunteer programs. Protective motivation allows the individual to reduce negative feelings, such as guilt, or to address personal problems via volunteering. Finally, the enhancement function allows the individual to grow and develop psychologically through volunteer work.

Based on research by Terrion & Leonard (2010), mentors are primarily motivated to serve their own developmental needs, either through self-enhancement motivation or advancement aspirations. The authors classified the motivations of peer mentors as self-focused (to increase personal learning) or other-focused (to help others). The research showed that a majority of peer mentors participate in programs because of the desire to pass on information and thus facilitate the integration of other students into the university. This desire to pass on wisdom and knowledge to younger generations is called generativity, a term coined by Erikson. Generativity reflects “a concern in establishing and guiding the next generation” (p. 93).

Benefits

As previously mentioned, conducting research on the benefits of peer mentoring are fraught with problems, primarily due to the lack of a standard operational definition of mentoring in the literature (Jacobi, 1991). The studies that are conducted are rare and often exhibit methodological weakness. There is little direct support for the benefits of mentoring, but there are many studies that provide indirect support. The results of these studies show that peer mentoring provides positive benefits to both the mentor and the mentee (Ender & Newton, 2000). Crisp (2010) noted that student performance, intellectual and critical thinking skills, student self-confidence, self-actualization, grade point average (GPA), and persistence rates are all positively affected through mentoring programs. Terrion and Leonard (2007) stated that peer mentoring is seen as an effective way to improve retention, academic success, and the educational experience of students.

Today, mentoring is primarily looked to as a retention and enrichment strategy for undergraduate education (Jacobi, 1991). Tinto (1975) proposed a model of attrition in

which retention or attrition are viewed as outcomes of commitment and integration into an educational institution. Astin (1977) noted that student involvement in the educational process is a good predictor of graduation and academic success. Astin (1984) also stated:

There is now a good deal of research evidence to suggest that the more time and effort students invest in the learning process and the more intensely they engage in their own education, the greater will be their growth and achievement, their satisfaction with their educational experiences, and their persistence in college, and the more likely they are to continue their learning. (p. 297)

Peer mentors, through example, promote school involvement and show mentees the benefits of participating in activities outside of classroom learning on campus, which provides a form of social support (Jacobi, 1991). The social support theory states that supportive relationships help to prevent stress, reduce the harmful effects of stress, and/or help individuals cope with stress effectively. Based on this theory, mentoring helps prevent or negate the effects of stress and, as a result, students are less stressed and therefore more able to focus on their academic success – thus increasing retention.

Mentoring is thought to be a reciprocal learning process, in that both mentors and mentees benefit from the process (Angelique, Kyle, & Taylor, 2002). All participants in the mentoring process typically have something to contribute and gain from each other. Three reciprocal outcomes of traditional mentoring include career advancement, personal development, and professional identification.

There is more research on the benefits for peer mentors than there are for their mentees. The mentors show enhanced growth of knowledge, self-worth, and interpersonal skill development (Ender & Newton, 2000). Peer mentors “gain confidence

in facilitating small group focused learning, a deeper understanding of the subject matter covered, and enhanced problem solving skills” (p. 86). (Terrion & Leonard, 2010). The mentoring experience has been shown to enable peer mentors to establish and maintain networks, or social capital, throughout the university. Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh, and Wilss (2008) described the following benefits for peer mentors: a sense of satisfaction and self-worth, enjoyment in sharing expertise and gaining new personal insights, and the development of two-way communication between the mentor and mentee. In one study, the authors solicited feedback from peer mentors, who described the benefits of mentoring as personally rewarding, increased satisfaction/enhanced self-worth, and personal and professional growth. Olian et al. (1988) stated:

Based on the Kram, Noe, and Olian et al. findings, it appears that protégés who have close contacts with a mentor see two primary dimensions to the benefits obtained from the relationship: job and career benefits through information and external brokering provided by the mentor, and psychological benefits from the emotional support and friendship obtained within the relationship. (p. 19)

Although the research on the benefits for mentees is scarce, evaluations of mentees who participated in a peer mentoring program showed that there are positive effects on transitions to college, a sense of belonging, retention, and skill development. Research also showed that first-year students were more willing to approach their peers and related better to other students than to paid staff (Heirdsfield et al., 2008).

In addition to the personal and professional benefits for the students involved in mentoring, there are benefits for the institution as well (Giddon & Thomas, 1988). A primary goal, according to Ender (1984), is the extension of services to students. Peer

mentors, by providing service to students at a reduced cost, allow the expansion of existing services by allowing professional employees to pursue other duties (Giddon & Thomas, 1988). They also share special skills or expertise that professionals may not possess, resulting in more effective and expanded service. Peer mentors can add a unique perspective to the services offered through a department by providing input on the special needs of the student population. Winston and Ender (1988) noted that using peer mentors or paraprofessionals benefit departments because they are less costly than professional staff, often more effective than professionals at providing student support, and enable the institution to provide more services to students. Finally, peer mentors can bring enthusiasm and excitement to a job that professional staff may have grown bored with, bringing new life to these tasks and to their mentees (Ender, 1984).

Characteristics of a Successful Peer Mentor

Thomas (1988) identified seven personal characteristics that make a successful peer mentor. These include a genuine desire to contribute to the social/personal development of others; good communication skills; the ability to create an emotional climate leading to growth; sound personal judgment; capacity to manage one's own school life successfully; leadership skills; and the capacity to profit from training/supervision. Ender and Newton (2000) cited communications and relationship qualities such as empathy, respect, specificity, genuineness, and warmth as important personal characteristics of peer mentors.

A research study interviewed institutions to determine what they found important in their peer mentor staff (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). Twenty-six percent of respondents noted that the mentor's ability and willingness to commit time to their mentees was

important, primarily because mentors and mentees often use lack of time as an excuse for problems in the mentoring relationship. Other respondents noted university experience as important in order to navigate the educational system along with academic achievement and prior mentoring experience. Similarly, research by Winston and Ender (1988) showed that university staff selected peer mentors based on previous leadership experience, recommendations from faculty and staff, grades, and academic major. Another study showed that race and gender matching was important for mentoring relationships, particularly for under-represented groups (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). However, additional studies show that this is not an important factor when matching mentors with mentees.

Universities with peer mentoring programs indicated that the actual selection process consisted of the evaluation of a variety of factors (Winston & Ender, 1988). These included a formal application, an essay, letters of reference, transcripts, and a resume. After the initial selection process, candidates were narrowed down through group interviews, simulations/role play, and completion of training.

Compensation

A study of peer mentor programs showed that more than 75% provided compensation for between 6 – 20 hours a week of work (Winston & Ender, 1988). However, research on compensating peer mentors showed that although payment may be a motivator for mentors, it is not likely to be the only thing that attracts people to a mentoring program (Terrion & Leonard, 2010). In fact, research showed that compensation to mentors could negatively affect the quality of the work and relationship between the mentor and mentee. Terrion & Leonard (2010) noted that:

paying mentors . . . for taking part in a structured mentoring programme may result in poorer quality mentorships than if one were to ask for volunteers, thus ensuring that those who volunteer are much more likely to be motivated for intrinsic satisfaction reasons . . . ideally, mentors should have a desire to engage in a mentoring relationship for the intrinsic satisfaction it may offer them, as opposed to engaging in [it] for the sake of gaining extrinsic rewards. (p. 88)

Terrion and Leonard's (2010) statements are supported by the literature of social psychology, which has posited that extrinsic rewards can negatively impact intrinsic motivation. According to self-determination theory, if the reward (i.e., compensation) becomes the motivation for performing a duty, that activity will be viewed as less enjoyable. Additionally, this theory states that when people are compensated for work, they perceive greater external control over their behavior, thus reducing their sense of self-determination and autonomy.

Students' perceptions of receiving payment or compensation for acting as mentors correlate with the aforementioned ideas (Terrion & Leonard, 2010). Sixty percent of students in one study who were compensated for their work stated that they would do the same job as a volunteer. Students surveyed who were not compensated worried that being paid to perform duties might make them perform their jobs less effectively. As one unpaid student noted, "perhaps if I was being paid, and working on a schedule, and trying to fit a whole bunch of people in and feeling obligated to fit more people into my time, I might do worse of a job" (p. 97). This sentiment echoes the idea behind the self-determination theory.

Career Specific Peer Mentor Programs

The use of student employees in career centers got its start in the 1970s (Ender, 1984). Since then, a number of universities have implemented career peer mentor programs in their career centers. Because of the unique nature of providing career services to students, the authors determined that there are certain specific things to consider when hiring students and implementing programs. The authors emphasized that it is important to look for students with a great deal of interpersonal sensitivity and skills. Terrion and Leonard (2007) found that mentees are more satisfied with their experience if their mentor is in the same academic field. Ender (1984) recommended that the peer mentor program be constructed so that the final selection of peer mentors is not made until after the students have received some training and can be evaluated for their ability to learn the required skills. Their suggestion is that the training course be offered for academic credit so that the students not selected will still gain something from the experience.

The training for career peer mentors should address the following: basic helping skills, ethics and standards, agency mission, policies, and functions, and general or specific training for the function to be performed (Ender, 1984). Because the ethics of career services and all counseling professions are central to the work performed, students should be provided the ethical guidelines consistent with the profession and given a deep understanding of their importance. Ender recommended that experienced peer mentors can assume co-training responsibility, therefore gaining new competencies and relieving professional staff of training duties.

Systems Issues

While there are numerous benefits to peer mentoring programs on college and university campuses, several authors noted potential problems with the model (Ender, 1984). First, there can be resistance from highly educated professional staff who believe that their jobs are threatened by “unqualified” peer mentors performing their tasks. Additionally, the authors noted that there are ethical and legal implications, and that training should address all applicable documents for peer mentors. Angelique, Kyle, and Taylor (2002) stated that mentoring relationships can sometimes lead to a “recycling of power” within an institution, and that mentoring can have the potential to be exploitative. According to Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh, and Wilss (2008), peer mentors cited frustrations with the mentoring relationship, including the difficulty of establishing and maintaining contact with mentees, scheduling meetings, mentee disengagement, and the time commitment. The authors noted that appropriate training could help mentors learn to cope with these frustrations and find ways to circumvent their occurrence.

Summary

As evidenced from the lack of literature on peer mentoring programs, there is still much research to be conducted on the benefits of implementing such programs on college campuses. Yet even with the lack of concrete evidence to support peer mentoring initiatives, there is much in the research that has been conducted that points to the benefits to both the mentor and the mentee.

Peer mentoring programs can help institutions achieve their goals in a less costly manner, providing additional opportunities for students at little to no cost. Additionally, these programs provide career and personal development for mentors that assist them in

becoming more prepared for life after college. Because the negative implications of peer mentoring programs are so few, it makes sense for colleges and universities to consider adding these types of programs into multiple departments across campus.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this creative project was to develop a peer mentoring program within Ball State University's Career Center, which will provide career development and leadership opportunities for undergraduate students, graduate students, and create increased involvement from the undergraduate student body in career related activities.

Methodology

The initial steps involved creating a literature review of the existing research on peer mentoring programs within colleges and universities, which included information on benefits to students and staff, evaluation of specific programs, and whether or not mentoring programs should be paid or unpaid. Research gathered from the literature review was used in the creation of this project. Next, various schools were researched to determine colleges and universities that appeared to have successful peer mentoring programs within their career centers. These schools were identified based on the criteria of having successful peer mentoring programs, and a variety of different schools, including public, private, large, and small were evaluated in order to provide a breadth of perspective. After these schools were determined, the staff members leading these

programs were interviewed regarding the structure of their programs. The information gathered included student tasks, expectations, application process, and whether or not their students were compensated for their work. Finally, a meeting was called with the professional staff in the Career Center at Ball State University to gather their thoughts on how such a program might work on campus and their thoughts regarding the structure of the program.

Design of Project

The Career Ambassadors Peer Mentoring Program was designed for several reasons. First, the Career Center has historically struggled to involve students in its programs. Although students understand the importance of careers, they do not typically see the Career Center as something they need to take advantage of until their senior year. Research shows that this is, in fact, too late for a lot of students, as they may have missed out on an opportunity to discover interests, change their major, or obtain an internship. Having peer mentors in the Career Center will increase the visibility of the center and hopefully other students on campus will begin to recognize the importance of participating in career related activities. Secondly, all of the full time staff members currently participate in programs and activities that could be fulfilled by peer mentors, such as drop-in advising and the delivery of presentations. Not only will the addition of peer mentors free up valuable staff time, according to research, students often respond better to advice given by their peers as opposed to that given by professionals. Third, this program will provide leadership and career development activities for students. Finally, the structure of this program will allow Graduate Assistants in the Career Center to lead a

program and gain valuable supervisory experience that will assist them in securing a job post graduation.

The Career Ambassadors team will consist of no more than 10 student peer mentors, who will primarily oversee drop-in advising in the Career Center, but will also be responsible for outreach and providing presentations to classes and student groups. Mentors from all majors and colleges are welcome to apply, and a diverse student population from different areas of the campus will benefit the advising process. Career Ambassadors will go through a formal application process and submit recommendations from professors or supervisors at the beginning of the spring semester. The Graduate Assistants will review the applications, and select students to interview. Initially, the pool of applicants will be small enough that the Graduate Assistants should consider interviewing all students who apply.

The formal interview process will consist of approximately 30 minutes of interview questions, during which time the Graduate Assistants will evaluate the students' GPA, work history, recommendations, and motivation to become a peer mentor. After the program has been successful for several years, it will make sense for the current Career Ambassadors to be involved in the recruitment and interviewing process. Based on discussions with other colleges and universities with successful career peer mentoring programs, one of the critical criteria for choosing successful peer mentors is the evaluation of the amount of time a student has to devote to the program. Scheduling conflicts tended to be an issue cited by other colleges and universities, so the interviewees should ask students about conflicts, including their involvement in other activities and student groups on campus. Overall, Graduate Assistants should select

students who are professional, ethical, empathetic, and can display good counseling and advising skills.

Students will be selected from the applicant pool in the spring semester for a fall semester appointment. Once students are identified as peer mentors, they will be notified of a weekend retreat at the end of spring semester that will prepare them for their upcoming positions. This weekend retreat will focus heavily on career topics such as resume and cover letter preparation, interviewing skills, and appropriate advising and counseling techniques. In addition, the students will use the weekend to get to know one another through ice breakers and team building activities. Lunch and snacks will be provided by the Career Center.

Part of the creation of this program was for the benefit of Graduate Assistants in the Career Center. The structure of the peer mentoring program is such that it will allow Graduate Assistants to gain valuable experience training and supervising students. However, Graduate Assistants also need time to learn the workings of the Career Center and advising standards and techniques before they can train other students. For this reason, the program is structured to recruit in the spring, as the Graduate Assistants will have had a full semester to become acclimated to the Career Center and better equipped to impart this knowledge to peer mentors. In order for the incoming fall Graduate Assistants to feel comfortable working with a new group of students, it is important that Graduate Assistants arrive a week prior to the peer mentors and go through an extensive training with the professional staff in order to adequately supervise students.

Peer mentors will return to campus at the end of the week prior to classes starting fall semester to become reacquainted with the material and to meet the new Graduate

Assistants. During this time, they will be introduced to the office staff and welcomed to the department. There will be an informal “get to know you” picnic so that the Graduate Assistants feel comfortable with the group, and peer mentors have time to ask questions about the program. During the first week of classes, peer mentors will be scheduled to observe advising sessions conducted by professional staff. The following Monday, peer mentors will begin regular advising sessions with students.

Monthly professional development meetings with all Career Ambassadors and Graduate Assistants will commence in September and continue throughout the year. Additionally, individual meetings between Career Ambassadors and Graduate Assistants will happen once in a month in order to address any professional development or other issues that the Career Ambassador would like to address. In this way, the Graduate Assistant becomes a sort of mentor as well, preparing the student for their own career and academic success.

It is important that Career Ambassadors feel appreciated and respected for their work. This group of students should function as a volunteer group and not be paid for their work. For this reason, the Career Ambassadors should be provided with benefits such as occasional holiday parties and give aways from the marketing team. This should help to create a reputation that the Career Center only hires the best for their Career Ambassador program, therefore making it more enticing to students. For example, it would be my recommendation that Career Ambassadors have their own group t-shirts and business cards that they can give to other students and student groups on campus. In this way, they are appreciated and seen as a highly respected group by faculty, staff, and other students on campus.

As this group continues to evolve, more involvement by the Career Ambassadors will be used to help shape the program. They might act as a “board of advisors” to the Career Center staff, providing them with valuable information about how to shape programs to better serve the student population. Additionally, students with special talents might be appointed to special positions within the Career Ambassadors group, in order to provide additional leadership opportunities for students. There might be a need for someone to act as Group Leader or Marketing Outreach Coordinator based on their own talents and interests.

Summary

The Career Ambassadors program will operate as a volunteer group of peer mentors who provide leadership, counseling, and outreach to students on campus. The creation of this program will act an opportunity for additional leadership development for students and Graduate Assistants while freeing up time for professional staff to focus on more strategic initiatives.

CHAPTER FOUR

CREATING A CAREER PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Project Summary

This creative project created a peer mentoring program for the Career Center at Ball State University to provide additional opportunities for student leadership and involvement, to make the career center more visible to undergraduate students, and to allow the Career Center staff relief of advisory duties in order to focus on larger projects in the department. This project is designed that it can be implemented at any college or university that has the structure to support such a program. The project provides readers with specific instructions on how to implement a peer mentoring program in a career center. Through the implementation of this program, the Career Center will benefit from the addition of paraprofessional staff while students will benefit from learning valuable advising and counseling skills.

The project contains the following items:

- Timeline of Events, page 25.
- Career Ambassador Job Description, page 27.
- Career Ambassador Interview Questions, page 29.
- Marketing Flyer, page 31.

- Career Ambassador Training, page 32.
- Career Ambassador Confidentiality Statement, page 35.
- Career Ambassadors Advising Procedures and Standards, page 36.
- Career Center Acronyms, page 39.
- Programs, Outreach, and Special Events, page 40.
- Developing a Mentoring Perspective – Article I, page 43.
- Developing a Mentoring Perspective – Article II, page 45.

Timeline of Events

January 2012

- Monday, January 9: semester begins
- Tuesday, January 17: Graduate Assistants advertise Career Ambassador positions. Career Ambassadors Peer Mentors available. During this week, Graduate Assistants have an outreach table at the Atrium and the Student Center to let students know about this opportunity.

February 2012

- Friday, February 10: applications for Career Ambassadors due
- Monday, February 13: review of applications and applicants begins
- Monday, February 27: applicants are finalized and selected for interviews

March 2012

- Monday, March 12 - Friday, March 16: Graduate Assistants conduct in person interviews with Career Ambassadors
- Monday, March 26: Applicants are finalized and notified of their acceptance

April 2012

- Saturday, April 14 and Sunday, April 15: Two-day training/retreat for Career Ambassadors

July 2012

- Reminder email sent out to selected Career Ambassadors about their refresher training on Friday, August 10 (Assistant Director)

August 2012

- Wednesday, August 1: new Graduate Assistants arrive on campus

- Thursday, August 2 and Friday, August 3: training for new Graduate Assistants by Assistant Director
- Monday, August 6 – Wednesday, August 8: continued training for new Graduate Assistants, including review of 2012 – 2013 Career Ambassadors
- Thursday, August 9: Graduate Assistants prepare for meet and greet/office visit with Career Ambassadors
- Friday, August 10, 10 am – 3 pm: Meet and Greet with Career Ambassadors
- Saturday, August 11, 5 pm – 7 pm: Get to Know You Picnic with Graduate Assistants
- Monday, August 13: Classes begin
- Monday, August 13 – Friday, August 17: Career Ambassadors shadow drop-in advising sessions
- Monday, August 20: Career Ambassadors begin regular working hours

September 2012

- Monthly professional development meeting

October 2012

- Monthly professional development meeting

November 2012

- Monthly professional development meeting

December 2012

- Monthly professional development meeting
- Holiday party for Career Ambassadors

Career Ambassador Job Description

Ball State University Career Center

Basic Function: Provide mentorship, career advice, and information to student peers during advising sessions. Participate in Career Center functions such as marketing outreach, job fairs, and presentations. Act as a representative for the Career Center to other departments and student groups on campus.

General Job Duties

1. Meet with undergraduate/graduate students and alumni to assist them with resume, cover letter, and internship preparation.
2. Mentor peers in helping them explore their career aspirations and provide them with resources for career exploration.
3. Deliver presentations to classrooms, student groups, and through special Career Center events.
4. Represent the Career Center through marketing and outreach to other students and student groups.
5. Assist with event planning for events such as the Etiquette Dinner and Cardinal Career Fair.
6. Participate in weekly meetings.

Required Skills/Experience

1. A strong desire to help and mentor others.
2. Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
3. Must be a team player.
4. Maintain at least a 3.0 GPA.

5. Willingness to learn and understand advising/counseling techniques and Career Center services.

Time commitment: Four hours each week (three advising hours plus one hour for weekly meetings), plus occasional extra hours for special events, presentations, and outreach.

4. Tell us about a time that you had to give a presentation to a large group, including the topic, audience, preparations you made, etc. What was the most difficult aspect of the experience?

5. What personal characteristics do you think are necessary to be a successful peer mentor?

Marketing Flyer

Want to learn all about careers, work with an awesome department, and gain experience as a peer mentor? Apply to be a **Career Ambassador** with the Ball State Career Center!

As a Career Ambassador, you will:

- Help other Ball State students decide on a major, find an internship, and write a resume
- Promote the Career Center's events
- Give presentations to classrooms and student groups
- Participate in Career Center activities such as the Cardinal Job Fair and the Etiquette Dinner

What are the benefits?

- Gain in-depth knowledge from the experts about your own career
- Get first-hand knowledge about internships and job opportunities before your peers
- Learn skills about counseling and advising
- Feel great about helping your peers
- It looks great on your resume

So, how do you get on this awesome team?

- Fill out an application online at www.bsu.edu/careercenter by February 10th

Questions? Contact [Graduate Assistants]

Career Ambassador Training

Spring 2012

Saturday, May 2012

9:00-10:15 am

Welcome and Introductions

- Getting to know you
 - Introductions
 - Ice breakers
 - PCA bios
- What is Career Services?
- Office tour

10:15-11:30 am

Being a PCA

- Training
 - Expectations
 - Mock counseling
 - Evaluations
- Ethics and confidentiality
- Volunteer hours per week
 - Expectations during PCA shifts
 - Monthly trainings/staff meetings
 - 15 minutes per drop-in
- Ask questions!

11:30 am – 12:45 pm **Lunch at the Student Center**

1:30-2:30 pm

Resume Writing 101

- Formats
- General guidelines
- Sections headings
- References

2:30-3:30 pm

Career Planning and Self-Assessment

- CMAP (4 year plan)
- Exploring your values, interests, skills and abilities
- TypeFocus & Quest

3:30-4:30 pm

Interviewing 101

- Preparation
- Attire
- Do's and Don'ts

Sunday, May 2012

9:30-10:30 am

Cover Letter Writing 101

- Is a cover letter necessary?
- Components of a cover letter
- Do's and don'ts
- Cover letter critiques

10:30-11:00am

Campus Recruiting

- On-campus recruiting and job fairs

11:00-11:30 am

Documentation

- Cardinal Career Link
 - CARD
- 11:30–12:45 pm **Pizza Lunch!**
- 12:45-1:45 pm **Job and Internship Search**
- Preparing for a job/internship search
 - Proactive vs. reactive search
 - Networking
 - Working with Human Resources/Recruiters
 - Follow-up
- 1:45-2:15 pm **Career and Experiential Learning Lab**
- Tour
 - Online Resources
- 2:45-3:00 pm **Snack break**
- 3:00-4:00 pm **Communication, Advising, and Counseling Skills**
- Conversation starters
 - Listening vs. talking
 - Ask questions and clarify
 - Biases, judgments, and inner voice
- 4:00-5:00 pm **Resume Critiquing 101**
- How to counsel students on their resumes
 - Unique resumes: education, nursing, etc.



Career Ambassador Confidentiality Statement

I am a Career Ambassador in the Career Center. I am aware that the data and materials to which I may have access are to be treated in a professional and confidential manner. I agree herein, as a consideration of my commitment to the Career Center, that I will not disclose or cause to be disclosed any confidential and private information that I may have knowledge of at any time. Such information includes, but is not limited to, student records to which I have access. Examples of confidential information are student grades, information about where a student works, details about termination of employment, class schedule information, whether a student is currently looking for employment, and information about financial status.

I certify that I have received a briefing on university policy as well as appropriate state and federal laws about the confidentiality of records, the improper release of information, and the alteration or destruction of student records.

I am aware that any breach of the confidentiality of this material or any abuse of my position, including but not limited to alteration of records, destruction of records, or other similar acts, will constitute a basis for termination of employment and may result in further disciplinary action.

Career Ambassadors

Advising Procedures and Standards

Remember our essential philosophy: self-directed job-search and career planning, using current information, having a plan (C-MAP), and networking.

1. Use waiting room feature in CARD to monitor arrivals for drop-in or receive notifications by telephone from LU220 staff.
2. Greet student in LU220; desk staff will give you the completed drop-in advising intake card. Note *Assistance Required*.
3. Use the advising office (LU223) for the advising session and take students to the Career and Experiential Learning Lab as needed.
4. Establish rapport with the student. Confirm student's *Assistance Required* issue or what they want to accomplish during the session.
5. Clarify the student's immediate objective (choosing a major, career planning, internship, full-time job search, etc.).
6. If appropriate, ask what research or preparation they've already done.
7. Use open-ended questions to elicit responses from the student (e.g., who, what, when, where, why, how, etc.).
8. **Résumé review**: make notations on the résumé (ask permission first) and provide student with a copy of the *Job Search* book or tip sheet as appropriate. Printed resources are available in the lab for industry-specific résumés and other samples.
9. **Interview preparation**: clarify student's concerns about the interviewing process. Refer student to tip sheets, *Job Search* book, print resources, or Web material. Recommend a practice interview.

10. **Major and career exploration:** explain Quest program on the Career Center Web site, reference to other assessment tools on the Web, print media in the lab, or college tip sheets. Referral may also be necessary to the Counseling Center for more structured testing and assessment. Freshmen and undeclared majors should be encouraged to stay in contact with their academic advisor in University College.
11. **Overall Career or Job Search Process:** refer them to C-MAP and explain steps appropriate to their level of need. If job seeking, describe Cardinal Career Link.
12. **Job or Career Change for Alumni:** refer them to the *Career Success Plan for Alumni and Experienced Job Seekers* and explain steps appropriate to their level of need. If job seeking, describe Cardinal Career Link. Alumni may also be referred to the Career Alumni Network, a service of the BSU Alumni Association.
13. **If the individual needs in-depth help,** refer them to their professional staff advisor for a one-on-one advising appointment.
14. **Confirm that you have answered the student's questions.** Ask if they need additional information or assistance. If a résumé review, they may need to bring a revised draft back to drop-in. DO NOT encourage them to come back to you personally; tell them to see the advisor-on-duty. Discourage students from e-mailing or calling you directly.
15. **Provide student with additional Information about Career Center Events.**
Give the student a calendar book mark or other materials appropriate to promoting job fairs, OCI, jump-start workshops, etc.

16. **Record advising notes in CARD.** Destroy the drop-in card when you're finished. A shredder is in LU209.

Typical Drop-In Topics:

- Résumés
- Cover letters
- Interview preparation
- Interview apparel
- Negotiating salary or benefits
- Internships or career-related experiences
- Specific career/job information
- Indecision about major or career
- Indecision about jobs that go with specific majors
- Concerns about job loss or career dissatisfaction
- Career Center events (job fairs, OCI, workshops, etc.)
- Finding job leads
- Networking
- Professional etiquette
- Relocation
- Part-time or seasonal employment
- Special situations (dual career couples, sexual orientation, disabilities, felon, etc.)

Career Center Acronyms

AAEE	American Association of Employment in Education
BBC	Building Better Communities Fellows
CA	Career Assistant
CCL	Cardinal Career Link
CDPI	Career Development Professionals of Indiana
CJF	Cardinal Job Fair
CVJ	Cardinal ViewJobs (on-campus student job-posting system)
EEC	Electronic Employer Communication
FCF	Fall Career Fair
FWS	Federal Work-Study
FWS-CS	Federal Work-Study Community-Service
GA	Graduate Assistant
JLD	Job Location and Development
NACE	National Association of Colleges and Employers
NSEW	National Student Employment Week
OCI	On-Campus Interviewing
OCR	On-Campus Recruiting
PCA	Peer Career Ambassadors
PCG	Program Coordinating Group
PED	Professional Etiquette Dinner
PIC	Practice Interview Clinic
TF	Teacher Fair (spring job fair for teaching candidates)

Programs, Outreach and Special Events

Program Coordinating Group

The Program Coordinating Group (PCG) meets every two weeks to discuss planning efforts for all Career Center programs. Members review marketing plans, program objectives, staffing, learning outcomes, and other issues relevant to ensuring successful and well-attended programs. The group meets on Tuesdays from 8:30 to 10:30 am.

Professional U Series

Held during the fall and spring, this series of programs helps students and alumni learn essential job search skills for obtaining internships, part-time, and full-time jobs. The programs topics include résumé and cover letter writing, interviewing, how to work a job fair, mixing and mingling, and employment portfolios.

Library Programs

Held in cooperation with Bracken Library, these programs focus on resources useful in conducting a successful job search, typically using online resources.

Professional Etiquette Dinners

Don't know a fork from a faux pas? Professional Etiquette Dinners help students learn what it takes to make a great first impression and how to navigate through a formal dinner with style. Dinners are held each semester. Each meal is preceded by a networking session in which participants get to practice juggling hors d'oeuvres and punch while greeting people and carrying on conversation. Networking tips are given during this part of the program.

During the meal, students learn the basics of proper dining, from use of the napkin, silverware, and glassware to what to do at the conclusion of the meal. During the three- or four-course meal, a member of the Career Center professional staff guides participants through the fine dining experience. Students pay a modest fee to help defray the cost of the meal.

Late Nite

Billed as the “Best Party on Campus,” Late Nite is offered every Saturday night in the BSU Student Center through fall and spring semesters. The program is designed to provide students with an alternative to drinking and off-campus partying. Free food is provided as well as entertainment, bowling contests and giveaways, and arts and crafts. The Career Center generally participates in two programs a year to promote the center and our services. We’ve made popcorn, conducted quiz shows, facilitated button-making and many other activities.

Graduate School Programs

The Career Center provides information, advising assistance, and programming to help students considering graduate school. The Career and Experiential Learning Lab has a variety of resources about selecting schools, preparing for entrance exams, writing personal statements for admission applications, and general preparation for the graduate school experience. Some graduate schools will attend the Fall Career Fair.

Fall Outreach

This outreach activity generally takes place during Welcome Week. Career Center staff set-up at various campus locations to answer students’ questions about

programs and services and distribute materials including promotions for Fall Career Fair and on-campus interviewing.

Fall Career Fair and Cardinal Job Fair

These fall and spring job fairs are provided to allow employers to network with students and for students to learn more about internship, part-time, summer, or full-time employment. The events are held in Worthen Arena.

Teacher Fair

This spring, two-day event provides opportunities for Ball State teaching candidates to network with school districts from around Indiana and across the nation. The program begins with a networking fair on Wednesday evening followed by a full day of interviewing on Thursday. The fair is coordinated by a committee.

Departmental Job Fairs

A number of Ball State academic departments plan and conduct their own job fairs (e.g., Marketing and Management, Natural Resources, Criminal Justice, etc.) The Career Center will typically assist by registering students and providing nametags using the CARD system. Staff members also network with the employers and share information about Career Center services.

Developing a Mentoring Perspective

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities/What a Mentor Is . . .

By Dr. Gordon Nakagawa

Mentor roles and responsibilities are varied and complex. Serving as a guide, facilitator, role model, and/or ally to the mentee, a mentor must be prepared to take on a range of roles and responsibilities that may change as the mentor/mentee relationship develops over time, as the needs and goals of the mentee shift, and as specific contexts and situations require different strategies. Although it's not possible to pigeonhole any mentor, mentee, or mentoring relationship, a mentor will generally enact a number of common roles and responsibilities. It's worth emphasizing that whatever role the mentor may take, the mentor's principal goal, as Paulo Freire reminds us, is to invite and nurture the "total autonomy, freedom, and development of those he or she mentors."

A mentor is . . .

- **A knowledgeable and experienced guide who teaches** (and learns) through a commitment to the mutual growth of both mentee and mentor.
- **A caring, thoughtful, and humane facilitator** who provides access to people, places, experiences, and resources outside the mentee's routine environment.
- **A role model** who exemplifies in word and deed what it means to be an ethical, responsible, and compassionate human being.
- **A trusted ally, or advocate**, who works with (not for) the mentee and on behalf of the mentee's best interests and goals.

[Adapted from Mentor Training Curriculum, National Mentoring Working Group]

convened by United Way of America and One to One, 1991, in *One to One*
“*Mentoring101*” Curriculum, The California Mentoring Partnership.]

Developing a Mentoring Perspective

Mentor Roles and Responsibilities

What a Mentor Is Not

By Dr. Gordon Nakagawa

Mentors and mentees should understand that mentors cannot be all things to their mentees. A role model is not a flawless idol to be mindlessly emulated by the mentee; an experienced guide is not a surrogate parents who stands in as a mother or father figure; a caring facilitator is not a professional therapist who is capable of treating serious personal problems; a trusted ally or advocate is not a social worker or a financier. Often, mentors and mentees encounter problems in their relationships due to different ideas about the appropriate role(s) and responsibilities of either the mentor, mentee, or both. There are boundaries in virtually any and all relationships, and the mentor/mentee relationship is no exception. While there are no hard and fast rules, and while there may be rare exceptions, there are guidelines for what a mentor is (or should be) and for what a mentor is not (or should not be).

A mentor is *not* . . .

- **A (surrogate) parent.**
- **A professional counselor or therapist.**
- **A flawless or infallible idol.**
- **A social worker.**
- **A lending institution.**
- **A playmate or romantic partner.**

As a Peer Mentor, your principal objectives should be to:

1. Establish a positive, personal relationship with your mentee(s).

- Avoid acting as if you were nothing more than a professional service provider (“I’m here to do a job. I’m a tutor/peer advisor/student office worker; I’m *not* here to be your friend!” Make a proactive effort to act as a guide, a “coach,” and an ally and advocate.
- Once a positive, personal relationship is developed, it is much easier to realize the remaining three goals.
- Trust and respect must be established.
- Regular interaction and consistent support are important in many mentoring relationships.

2. Help your mentee(s) to develop academic and life skills.

- Work to accomplish specific goals (e.g., tutoring assistance on a homework assignment or peer advising about the best use of “free” time).
- When and where appropriate, emphasize life-management skills, such as decision-making, goal setting, time management, dealing with conflict, values clarification, and skills for coping with stress and fear.

3. Assist mentee(s) in accessing academic and university resources.

- Provide information — or better yet, help your mentee(s) to find information — about academic resources (faculty, staff, academic support services, student organizations, etc.). Assist your mentee(s) in learning how to access and use these resources — don’t assume that just because they know where their professor’s office is that they also understand how to talk to their professor.

4. Enhance your mentee's ability to interact comfortably and productively with people/groups from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Your own willingness to interact with individuals and groups different from yourself will make a powerful statement about the value placed on diversity. Model the attitudes and behaviors that you emphasize.
 - Contrary to popular belief, we are *not* “all the same.” It is important to acknowledge and understand, not ignore, our differences. We need to learn how to use our differences as resources for growth. Respecting our differences is necessary but not sufficient; we need to know how to negotiate our differences in ways that produce new understandings and insights.
 - Everyone holds particular preconceptions and stereotypes about one's own group and other groups. Take special care that you are not (intentionally or unintentionally) promoting your own views and values at the expense of your mentees' viewpoints. Work at understanding and critically examining your own perspectives on race, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, sexual orientation, etc.
- [Adapted from Mentor Training Curriculum, National Mentoring Working Group convened by United Way of America and One to One, 1991, in *One to One “Mentoring101” Curriculum*, The California Mentoring Partnership.]

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