Mentoring Support: National and Local Resources for Mentoring

MentorNet
The E-Mentoring Network for Women in Engineering and Science

Winner of the 2001 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring

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The MentorNet Partnership

• MentorNet provides e-mentoring infrastructure for higher education, industry, government, and nonprofit organizations

• Large-scale, multi-institutional online network:
  – More extensive, diverse pools of participants
  – Accesses extensive networks
  – Focused expertise
  – Economies of scale
  – Avoids redundancies

• Partnering organizations provide:
  – Financial resources
  – Marketing channels
MentorNet’s One-on-One Programs

- Primarily pair undergraduate/graduate students/postdocs with engineering/science professionals for 8-month-long, structured, email-based relationships
- Online information & participant profiles
- Bi-directional sorting of protégés and mentors, with protégés opting to select their mentor, or have MentorNet match them with a mentor, based on backgrounds and preferences, using customized algorithms to optimize matches
- Online training:
  - Guides for mentors and students
  - Interactive online case studies
- Email “coaching”
  - customized discussion suggestions sent every 1-2 weeks to all mentors and protégés
  - Support from program staff to address problems and issues
- Online participant surveys to inform evaluations
- ~11,200 pairs matched since 1998
New in 2003-04

- **MentorNet ACE** (Academic Career E-Mentoring) (National Science Foundation, WEPAN)
  - One-on-One mentoring for academic careers, matching graduate students with tenured faculty – 41 pairs this year
  - In Fall of 2004, matching untenured faculty with tenured faculty
  - Biggest challenge so far: recruiting tenured faculty as mentors

- **MentorNet Releases 3.0/3.5**: revised systems for applications/matching/coaching (AT&T Foundation)
  - Gives protégés option of choice in selecting a mentor
  - Allows year-round one-on-one matching
  - Avoids delays in getting protégés started
  - Increases efficiency
Measurable Outcomes for Student Protégés

• Ongoing encouragement, reassurance, and moral support; boosting confidence (known to be strongly related to retention) (66% strongly emphasized)
• Career information, alternatives and inspiration; learning about mentor’s workplace (45-75% emphasized)
• Academic advice and support; relating studies to workplace (52% emphasized)
• Advice for women, and female role models in engineering and science fields (not quantified, but evident)
• Options for balancing family and work (46% emphasized)
Measurable Outcomes for Mentors

- Personal satisfaction in helping develop and advance the next generation (74-81% emphasized)
- Making a positive and important difference in the lives of students (not quantified)
- Impetus for reflections on own career (69% emphasized)
- Variations by mentors’ racial/ethnic groups on outcomes of skills and self-confidence effects