Using Fanghanel’s (2007) Framework to Explore the Micro, Meso, and Macro Factors Influencing Undergraduate Student Mentoring Programs

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Abstract

Successful undergraduate mentoring programs have the potential to help at-risk students achieve academic success, retention, and ultimately graduation (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). In most instances, the success of such mentoring programs at the university level not only relies on the effectiveness of the mentor-mentee relationship, but also the effectiveness of the coordinator of the program (Plund, 2016). However, the role that the coordinator plays in the effectiveness of these programs is often overlooked. In order to better understand these dynamics, this exploratory, theoretical case study will use Fanghanel’s (2007) framework (i.e., Micro, Meso, and Macro levels) to draw conclusions from observational data collected from one semester on two undergraduate mentoring programs from the coordinator’s perspective. Specifically, the results of this analysis indicate that at the Micro level, issues pertaining to approach, networking, training, and expectations are important, whereas at the Meso and Macro level, feedback, logistics, listening, and holistic planning are valuable. The implications from this study provide actionable items that can be used to improve these programs from the perspective of the coordinator’s responsibilities.

Data and Approach

To answer the research questions posed, this study takes a primarily exploratory, theoretical case study approach that focuses on the role of the coordinator in two undergraduate mentoring programs. Data for this study comes from coordinator observations made on these programs for one semester of their implementation. The data collected were analyzed (see Table 1) against Fanghanel’s (2007) framework (see below).

Framework

Figure 1: Fanghanel’s Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Resources/needs</th>
<th>Mentoring style</th>
<th>Feedback/communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Mentee mentees</td>
<td>Dyad</td>
<td>Feedback/review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso</td>
<td>Disciplinary background</td>
<td>Mentoring mentoring</td>
<td>Mentoring/feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro</td>
<td>University policy</td>
<td>Government policies</td>
<td>Government policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Studies

Program 1:
The first program in this study is a program that helps to empower students to strive for good academic standing through additional advisement meetings, regular peer mentor meetings, online webinars, and participation in student orientation seminars. The design of this program strives to foster effectiveness in student retention, graduation, and success. Students are paired with older student mentors and must meet frequently throughout the semester to address academic issues, personal concerns, and other items relevant to their academic success. In this program, the coordinator helps to facilitate communication between the mentors and mentees.

Program 2:
The second program in this study aims at bridging the Colleges of Education and Engineering together as a larger mentoring community to retain and graduate a more diverse population of students in both colleges. This is done through engagement, retention, and success strategies implemented in first year students’ careers pursing high demand STEM majors in Education and Engineering. Third year students in the same majors mentor the first year students. In this program, the coordinator helps implement these meetings, evaluate effectiveness, and plan curricular.

Results

Two college mentoring programs were analyzed against Fanghanel’s (2007) framework to better understand the challenges that mentoring program coordinators face at the Micro, Meso, and Macro levels of implementation. These results reflect recommendations that are based on the challenges, traits, and observation identified in the analysis. These results provide knowledge concerning training, networking, and communication to mentoring program coordinators that want to improve the program’s effectiveness.

Significance

Two college mentoring programs were analyzed against Fanghanel’s (2007) framework to better understand the challenges that mentoring program coordinators face at the Micro, Meso, and Macro levels of implementation. These results reflect recommendations that are based on the challenges, traits, and observations identified in the analysis. These results improve mentoring programs by providing knowledge concerning training, networking, and communication to mentoring program coordinators that want to improve the program’s effectiveness.

Program Culture

Empathy:
- Having empathy for another person is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another
- One on one: Taking someone aside and talking to them can be viable

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to use Fanghanel’s (2007) framework (i.e. Micro, Meso, and Macro) levels to draw conclusions from observational data collected from one semester focusing on two undergraduate mentoring programs. As presented, eight results from a three level analysis and their related implications were generated to improve the efficiency of these programs from the coordinator’s perspective. Conclusions found from this analysis can potentially improve the relationship and operational capabilities between a coordinator and their mentor/mentees. Future research will involve exploring these topics from the mentee’s perspective to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.

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References