

Mentoring, a review of literature

Sorcinelli, M.D. (1992). New and junior faculty stress: research and responses. In M.D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.). *Developing new and junior faculty* (New directions for teaching and learning. No. 48) San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

- Tenured faculty report lower levels of academic stress when compared to non-tenured faculty.

Stressors for new, non-tenured faculty include:

1. Not enough time to get work done and finding balance between work, which includes teaching and research, and non-work. The degree of work stress contributes to myriad of physical and mental health problems.

2. Inadequate feedback, recognition, and reward. A common complaint across the board includes unclear criteria for evaluating teaching, research, and service; insufficient recognition for accomplishments and contribution to a profession; and poor pay. Many new faculty have requested more informal, supportive reviews during the first year.

3. Unrealistic expectations. Many early career faculty experience stress caused by their inability to achieve the degree of self-determined professional success aspired to during early careers. "Hit the ground running" is an expectation of both new faculty and their administrators.

4. Lack of collegiality stemming from "political divisions and professional jealousies" and conflict with department heads. New faculty rank collegiality as a high priority but are most often disappointed when unable to achieve the desired association. Perhaps the diverse nature of departments makes it difficult for new faculty to find the peer relationship they are seeking. However, many new faculty identify department head as advocates and perhaps the most important contact during their early career. It seems that support from colleagues leads to improved work satisfaction over time. The conclusion of the study is that new faculty benefit greatly from supportive environments that limit academic and social isolation

5. Balancing work and life outside of work. Considerable stress is generated by the fact that work intrudes with personal life and is a major contributor to job dissatisfaction.

Olsen, D., Sorcinelli, M. D. (1992). The pretenure years: A longitudinal perspective. In M.D. Sorcinelli & A. E. Austin (Eds.). *Developing new and junior faculty* (New directions for teaching and learning. No. 48) San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

The probational years for new faculty are stressful yet vitally important to future professional development and success. However, understanding the challenges and stresses of new faculty can provide a framework for shepherding early career faculty through the system.

- Frequent reviews of work are important. Early career employees need to know what they are doing right and especially need to know what they need to do to improve. Committee

and administrative review letters need to be direct and evaluative in nature using less neutral language that is ambiguous and hard to interpret.

- Faculty need support and recognition by colleagues and administration. The development of positive relationships within departments leading to social support is important especially at tenure time.
- New faculty expect recognition and support from senior faculty. However, the reality of the situation seems to be that many new faculty have more regular contact and support from outside their university than from senior faculty within departments. One early career faculty was told by a senior faculty to “. . .go into my office, close the door, and pound on the computer until tenure.” New faculty need a mentor to help them understand what to do and how much is enough.
- Junior faculty seek and find social support from junior colleagues but look to senior faculty for advice about seeking external funding and review of journal articles. The reality is that junior faculty reported that most of the time senior faculty could not be relied upon to provide the sought after advice in a timely manner.
- The bottom line is that Extension and universities in general need to grow an environment in which expectations and development of new faculty can flourish. This environment needs to pay attention to social support as well as the academic support for new faculty and the development of a collegial atmosphere.

Kutilek, L.M. & Earnest, G.W. (2001). Supporting professional growth through mentoring and coaching. *Journal of Extension* [On-line].39, (4). Available : <http://www.joe.org/joe/2001august/rb1.php>

- Peer coaches and mentors are trained through participation in a 2-day leadership training program that focused upon, organizational skills, interpersonal skills, sensitivity, communication skills, change management skills, diplomacy, decision making skills, conflict management skills, collaborativeness, self directedness, visionary skills, and assertiveness.
- Coaching and mentoring works well for about 3-4 months, then follow-up needs to occur to insure mentoring happens for at least one year.
- Stipends are not necessary
- A mentoring handbook needs to be developed and used for training.

Mincemoyer, C.C. & Thomson, J.S., (1998). Establishing effective mentoring relationships for individual and organizational success. *Journal of Extension*. [On-line], 36, (2). Available at : <http://www.joe.org/joe/1998april/a2.php>

The conclusions of Mincemoyer and Thompson include:

- The most successful mentoring relationships result when mentor and mentee have the same or similar programmatic responsibilities.
- To facilitate the building of a relationship geographic proximity was considered beneficial. However, in 2014, IVC and other technology could be a facilitating factor.

- Communicating frequently facilitated the development of a successful mentoring relationship. It is also important that the mentor have skills and knowledge to share with the mentee for the relationship to be successful.
- It is important that mentors initiate contact with the mentee as soon as possible. If a mentor waited too long to establish contact with a mentee, the relationship was less successful.
- The social aspect of mentoring is important. The mentor/mentee relationship that develops into a friendship is more likely to be successful.

Safrit, R.D. & Owen, M.B. (2010). A conceptual Model for retaining county extension program professionals. *Journal of Extension*. [On-line], 48, (2). Available at : <http://www.joe.org/joe/2010april/a2.php>

The most often stated reason for employee turnover in many state Extension programs is the requirement to work many nights and weekends that may lead to a conflict between work and family. Other reasons for employee turnover includes low salary, lack of collegiality informal and social structures and lack of spousal support. Safrit and Owen cited Branhan in recouping seven reasons employees most commonly leave jobs. Those reasons include: "job or workplace not as expected; mismatch between job and person; too little coaching and feedback; too few professional and advancement opportunities; feeling devalued and unrecognized; stress from overwork and work-life imbalance; and loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders." This article presents a model the authors call R.E.T.A.I.N.S. with each letter relating to a concept or component focused on retaining Extension employees.

- R: recruit authentically. Communicate to candidates responsibilities, critical aspects, and workplace cultures critical to success. Stress non-traditional hours, expect evenings and Saturdays. Flexible workweek if expectations are met. Describe the job instead of sell the job.
- E: expand on new employees' experiences and abilities; Hire the right employee whose personal interests and goals work well with the total organization and workplace. Assign each new employee a personal mentor and individualize training and development.
- T: train, train, train. Providing the professional and social support necessary for success is critical. (knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations) Make professional development a job expectation that is addressed during performance reviews.
- A: Advocate for the employee and the position. Ensure that the employee and position evolve together as the organization grows and changes. Allow for flexible schedules.
- I: Inspire, invest in and empower employees. Get to know employees as individuals and develop a workplace environment where the person thrives. Develop training for mentors and job coaches. Develop shared programs and shared planning. Support activity within professional organizations.
- N: Nurture connectivity among employees. Build and support linkages between people + people, ideas+ideas, and people + ideas to strengthen people and the organization.

Encourage staff teams that work together on a common idea or issue. Incorporate families in annual events

- S: Show appreciation through effective recognition. Recognize excellence. Establish monthly recognition programs.