
MENTORING FACULTY: Retaining and Developing a Diverse Faculty

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Outline

- Lesson on Diversity from the EDGE Program for Graduate Women
- A Diverse Community
 - Impact on Individuals
 - Community Characteristics
- Mentoring for Faculty Retention and Development
- The Challenges of Institutional Leadership
- Mentoring Structures
 - Three Examples
 - Special concerns for faculty from under-represented minority groups

EDGE

Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education

A national transition program for women entering graduate mathematics departments (1998-)

Primary Goals:

1. To reduce first year attrition
2. To create a more diverse mathematics community

Objectives:

- Preparation in algebra and analysis
- Introduction to graduate culture
- Networking and community building
- Follow-up mentoring



2005 EDGE students and staff

Creation of a Diverse Community

Lesson from EDGE: ‘Diversity by the numbers’ is necessary but not sufficient to generate a spirit of diversity and a sense of community.

EDGE structures to create community within each class-year:

- “Difficult Dialogues” seminar
- Study groups
- Living arrangements that enhance communication
- Thursday night dinners
- Planning of Talent Show



A problem session

Impact of a Diverse EDGE Community on Graduate Students

- Students gain confidence and are more comfortable in working in new and challenging settings.
- Students take the initiative in organizing group study and in networking.
- Students are more comfortable learning from and helping study partners who are different from themselves.
- Subsequent collaborations develop across racial and cultural lines.
- Students appear to thrive in an atmosphere that is supportive and tolerant.

The Supportive Diverse Community

Community Characteristics:

- A culture of inclusion where each person feels a sense of belonging.
- Members should feel respected for their abilities and valued for their contributions.
- Each member should be able to focus on developing her/his own potential, not on competing with others.
- All members should find acceptance and an appreciation of their differences.
- People should sense an atmosphere of trust.
- Each should feel a level of comfort in sharing good news and should be able to find resources in times of crisis.

The Challenge for Institutions: To Assess and Act

- How do chairs and deans help faculty to address the common concerns of new faculty?
 - Assess the climate for new faculty.
- How can institutions create a diverse community and use it to help develop faculty potential?
 - Promote diversity in rhetoric, policies and funding.
 - Model diversity in the administration and staff.
- How can mentoring programs be structured to meet the needs of new and advancing faculty?
 - Clarify the role of department chairs in providing information.
 - Invite new faculty input in the mentoring program structure.

Adapted from: USC Strategies for Improving Diversity in Graduate Education.

Developing Faculty Potential

Overall Goal: To help capable people succeed.

- Who is capable?

All students can fly, but some need a longer runway than others.

- Faculty, Dept. of Statistics, U. of Iowa (AMSTAT, 2007)

- What is your definition of success for faculty?

To thrive and flourish (World Book Dictionary);

To emerge as a confident and active participant in your field. (Sylvia)

Developing Faculty Potential

- Important to build confidence and leadership skills at the graduate level

I want the EDGE students to earn doctoral degrees but I want them to emerge as healthy contributors to the community and not to be beaten down by the process.

-Rhonda Hughes, Co-Director of EDGE

- What do we desire for emerging faculty?

Grantsmanship skills

Teaching innovations

Skills in oral and written communication

Networking

Knowledge of resources

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Mentoring for Faculty Retention

Five Common Concerns of New Faculty

- Balancing teaching, scholarship and service
- Developing and sustaining an on-site research program
- Finding faculty development opportunities
- Balancing work and the rest of life
- Negotiating departmental politics

How can departments help faculty to thrive in spite of these challenges?

Mentoring for Faculty Retention and Development

Mentoring structures: Examples

- The Center for Scientific Applications of Mathematics (CSAM) - Spelman College
- Center for Biomedical and Behavioral Research Junior Faculty Mentoring Program – Spelman College
- Regional Mentoring Clusters (in mathematics)

Special Concerns for Minority Graduate Students and Faculty

Stress and isolation have a particularly negative effect on under-represented minorities.

- What can mentors do to reduce both?
- What can department chairs and administrators do?

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