

Mentorship Matters, A Virtual Team-based Program: One-year Outcomes

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Background

Scholarly literature highlights the benefits of mentorship with emphasis on:

- improved engagement with colleagues
- increased sense of belonging and retention
- development of skillset needed for career progression

Hypothesis: Mentorship curricula focused on defined career needs of faculty could be delivered effectively in a virtual, team-based format.¹

References:
1. Evans, A., Adhaduk, M., Jabri, A., & Ashwath, M. (2023). Is Virtual Learning Here to Stay? A Multispecialty Survey of Residents, Fellows, and Faculty. *Current Problems in Cardiology*, 48(6), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpcardiol.2023.101641>.
2. Tung, J., Nahid, M., Rajan, M., & Logio, L. (2021). The Impact of a Faculty Development Program, the Leadership in Academic Medicine Program (LAMP), On Self-Efficacy, Academic Promotion and Institutional Retention.

Methods

- Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTC SOM) Department of Internal Medicine launched the Mentorship Matters 12-month pilot project in January 2022.
- 24 mentees and 8 mentors were identified to participate.
- Program utilized a novel, completely virtual approach to mentorship engagement.
- Monthly workshops focused on participant-identified need areas listed below:

Curated Curricular Content for Virtual Sessions

Individual Career Map (ICM)
Roles & Qualities of Mentors
Mentoring Agreement & Worksheet
Mentee Needs and Individual Career Map
Toolbox
Personal Branding – Communicating Your Message
Wellbeing and Work-life integration (Panel of presenters)
Difficult Conversations
Institution Promotion Process
Curriculum Vitae Creation
Research, the IRB, and Promotion Portfolios
Leadership: Lessons from Times of Crisis and Stability

- Mentorship teams, comprised of one mentor and three mentees across sub-specialties, met every month virtually for:
 - Large group interactive education.
 - Small group ICM development, session topic discussion, and peer feedback with a focus on strategic next steps.
- Mentors and mentees completed pre-and post-engagement surveys aimed at assessing knowledge and confidence in skills needed for career advancement.

Results

A pre-engagement survey (fall 2021) assessing demographic data, knowledge and experience with mentoring, and confidence in career advancement of mentees, exposed a lack of mentorship prior to program participation. For mentees (n=16):

- 88% reported receiving too little to no mentoring thus far in their professional careers
- 68% agreed that mentorship is valuable for the success of junior faculty

Mentees expressed concern that time would be a significant roadblock to their successful participation in Mentorship Matters.

A post-engagement survey was administered at the conclusion of the program (February 2022). Findings are reflected in the chart below.²

Statement	Pre-Engagement Responses (Agree - Strongly Agree)	Post-Engagement Responses (Agree - Strongly Agree)
I have skills in navigating my own success	69%	100%
I am comfortable negotiating for what I need to succeed	37%	67%
I have a strategy for managing my time and competing demands	56%	100%
I am confident in my ability to present my academic work	50%	100%
I have an environment of support & guidance for career advancement	69%	100%
I have a mentor who meaningfully contributes to my success	38%	100%
I understand the promotions process at my institution	50%	100%
I am satisfied with how my career is advancing	69%	89%
	n=16	n=9

- 89% of mentees (n=9) reported the time commitment for Mentorship Matters was appropriate for their schedule and the virtual format was effective.
- Mentees also shared the one-on-one time with their mentor and the peer-to-peer mentoring aspect had been helpful (78%).

Conclusions

1. Intentionally providing a **structured curriculum** in a **virtual, team-based** format results in positive outcomes, particularly for women.
2. New **mentorship relationships**, across subspecialties, can be **established effectively** in a virtual format.
3. Providing mentees with the opportunity for **continued participation** in formal mentorship is vital.
4. While implemented within the Department of Internal Medicine at VTC SOM, this model is likely **applicable and implementable** to other departments and institutions.

Next Steps

