



Faculty Mentoring: A Practical Manual for Mentors, Mentees, Administrators, and Faculty Developers

Phillips, Susan L. and Dennison, Susan T.
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Book Review

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Faculty Mentoring offers a wealth of resources for justifying, planning, implementing, and evaluating faculty mentoring in one-on-one and group settings. Phillips and Dennison, faculty members at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, ground their suggestions in decades of experience directing and consulting with the Faculty Mentoring Program at UNCG and in a comprehensive review of literature about the value of mentoring.

The volume makes clear the benefits of mentoring to all involved: faculty mentees, faculty mentors, administrators, and institutions. Thoughtful mentoring programs aid in the recruitment and retention of pre-tenure faculty, connecting them more deeply to institutional life, orienting them to “the university’s mission and identity,” and helping them shape productive and sustainable attention to teaching, scholarship, and service (35). The authors demonstrate why formal mentoring relationships prove especially important to retain “diverse faculty, including minority and international faculty members” (35). When well executed, faculty mentoring helps “develop an academic atmosphere that mutually nurtures, supports, and further develops all faculty members’ teaching and research skills and assists them so that they feel part of a university/college community” (1).

The book’s first chapter offers guidance to mentors, including logistics of meetings, topics for discussion, and insight about the experiences of new faculty members. Chapter two presents guidelines for establishing mentoring groups for new faculty and includes advice for group facilitators. Chapter three speaks directly to new faculty members and provides tips for having a successful mentoring experience, including selecting an appropriate mentor, setting meaningful and reasonable expectations for the relationship, and “self-assessment of the

mentoring experience” (24). Chapters four, five, and six weigh in programmatically with suggestions for mentoring within departments, guidelines for institutional administrators, and wisdom for directors of faculty mentoring programs. Chapter seven combs higher educational literature and provides an overview of the benefits of, and rationale for, faculty mentoring. A list of references at the end of each chapter is supplemented by an inventory of books and Internet resources in the Appendix. In total, the book’s appendices span sixty-five pages (nearly half the volume) and provide resources easily modifiable to fit specific institutional contexts. The templates, worksheets, checklists, and evaluation tools provided will not only help new programs launch more quickly but also offer existing programs resources for assessing and improving current practices.

This text speaks to a wide audience. The full volume will be useful for planners and directors of mentoring programs; individual chapters form stand-alone resources for their target readers (mentors, mentees, and administrators.) Faculty and administrators at institutions of all sizes will find usable insight in the text for mentoring programs funded at a variety of levels. Though geared toward the mentoring of early career faculty, the tools provided in Phillips and Dennison’s text may benefit even mid-career mentees. Finally, though written with mentoring efforts that are supported by institutions in mind, the volume also offers insight for those seeking or offering mentoring outside of formally run programs.

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