Developing a Unified Approach for Growing Research Mentors at the University of Kentucky

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BACKGROUND

- UK research funding has increased substantially over the past 5 years, from $316M in FY16 to $429M in FY20
- UK has hired many early career faculty and post-docs to maintain research funding trajectory and expand research areas
- Hiring has emphasized DEI to enhance workforce diversity and grow diversity/ equity research
- Strong mentors needed to maintain strong research trajectory, support recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, and foster collaborative team science

OBJECTIVES

- Develop strong mentors across 16 UK colleges
- Foster career success of students, trainees and faculty
- Build on existing strengths at UK

APPROACH

- Review of (external) best practices
- Environmental scan of internal mentor development programs at UK
- Formulation of recommendations and key performance indicators (KPIs)

RESULTS

External Best Practices Identified	Entering Mentoring[1]	Entering Research[2]	Mentoring Up[3]
Align Expectations	X		X
Address Equity and Inclusion	X	X	X
Articulate Mentoring Philosophy	X		X
Plan for Assessing Understanding	X		X
Cultivate Ethical Behavior	X	X	X
Enhance Work-Life Integration	X		
Foster Independence	X	X	X
Effective Communication	X		X
Promote Mentee Self-Efficacy	X		
Promote Professional Development	X	X	
Researcher Identity		X	
Practical Research Skills		X	
Research Comprehension/Communication		X	

UK College/ Unit*	Internal Environmental Scan of Current Practices
Communication	JR faculty paired with 1-2 SR faculty - some (but not all) units require
Dentistry	Limited outside of standard 2- and 4-year reviews
Engineering	College-wide peer mentoring group + individual dept mentoring programs for pre-tenure
Nursing	Research mentoring coordinated through ADR; mentoring committees, grant writing workshops and other resources
Medicine	Mentor training based on Entering Mentoring (CIMER); req'd for new regular title series faculty; optional for others; templates for IDPs, Mentor-Mentee Compacts; grant-writing workshops
Public Health	Mentoring committees (3+ members) required for all pre-tenure faculty; optional for associate professors; grant-writing workshops
CTSA	Mentor training workshops based on Entering Mentoring; online resources
VPR	Research Scholars Program; focus on diversity; leverages best practices in growing mentors (including Entering Mentoring) & supporting career success of mentees
Provost/Grad School	Committee Recommendations: Develop repository of IDPs & Mentoring Compacts; training for students & faculty on optimizing mentor-mentee relationships; recognize outstanding mentors; ombud for difficult situations and process for revocation of grad faculty status

*Some colleges did not respond to request for information

DISCUSSION

- Wide variation in mentor development opportunities, by college, suggests opportunities for improvement
- Entering Mentoring curriculum (COM, CTSA, RSP) offers framework and tailorable approach for widespread adoption

NEXT STEPS

- Spread to other colleges: Non-COM faculty attending COM mentor training; plans to tailor curriculum and lead workshops in own colleges
- Integration with Provost/Grad School plans
- Development and tracking of KPIs

COLLABORATORS

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[1] Pfund, C., Branchaw, J., Handelsman, J. *Entering Mentoring*. W.H. Freeman & Company: New York, NY 2014. [2] Branchaw, J. L., Butz, A. R., and Smith, A. R. (2020) Entering Research: *A Curriculum to Support Undergraduate and Graduate Research Trainees*, 2nd ed., Macmillan. [3] Lee, S. P., McGee, R., Pfund, C., & Branchaw, J. (2015). *Mentoring up: Learning to manage your mentoring relationships. The mentoring continuum: From graduate school through tenure*, 133-153.