

## Mentoring programme for academic staff enrolled in a PGDipE(HE), University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

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	<b>Institution</b> <b>Faculty</b> <b>Department Degree Level</b> <b>Course/module Level</b> <b>Pedagogical purpose of mentoring</b>	<b>University of the Witwatersrand: Faculty Humanities</b>  <b>Centre for Learning Teaching and Development</b>  <b>PGDipE (HE)</b>  <b>8</b>  <b>The aim of the mentoring programme is:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to provide a coherent structure for mentoring on the PGDipE (HE);</li> <li>- to offer coaching and mentoring skills for mentors;</li> <li>- to expand a Community of Practice among Wits mentors and provide a network that could strengthen the PGDipE (HE) programme.</li> </ul>

### 1. Introduction to the course

In this course, mentors participate in a series of workshops on mentoring and coaching; they choose the ways in which they would like to contribute. They complete an information form as do mentees. Mentors and mentees are paired and negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding where they commit to a set number of mentoring sessions. Mentors have regular check-in *Mentoring Cafes*.

#### Mentor profile

First year cohort (2015): 8

Second year cohort (2016): 9

## Student profile in 2015/2016

32 students from all five faculties in the university, including two external candidates.

13 from 2015 cohort and 19 from new 2016 cohort.

Demographics of mentees:

Year	Black female	White female	Black male	White male
2015	3	4	5	1
2016	6	2	7	4
Total	9	6	12	5

For the 2015 intake of students the mentoring project has comprised of 9 mentors and 14 mentees. An additional 6 mentors joined in 2016.

## 2. Mentoring workshops

The mentoring aspect of the programme is intended to support course participants in a number of ways: ensuring improved completion rates, providing a more meaningful application of learning in their disciplines and fostering a culture of collegiality in the University.

Mentoring workshops consist of:

- An initial meeting
- Three half day workshops
- Monthly *Mentoring Cafes*
- Year-end workshop by an external coach.

Strengths evident in the mentoring programme, based on evaluations are:

- matching of mentors and mentees;
- workshops for mentors;
- contribution of mentors in the teaching;
- flexibility of models of mentoring;
- asking mentors to develop a mentoring agreement with mentees (MOU);
- language and ICT mentors were available for all mentees.

Payment for mentees has not been a significant motivating factor for mentors but the payment is certainly appreciated and seen as an acknowledgement of the work done.

Weaknesses included two students who did not participate in the mentoring; specialist mentors were under-used.

### 3. Evidence of the value of mentoring to students

The mentoring project was evaluated in the first quarter of 2016, using interview data from mentors and mentees. Three meetings were held with an external evaluator to clarify and plan the evaluation research on the mentoring project. From previous data gathered earlier in 2015, we noted different models of mentoring that had emerged. These included:

- Academic modelling; sharing research into teaching and learning.
- Peer mentoring through a *Whatsapp* group and weekly meetings, in which course work is discussed, but emotional support/friendship is also provided.
- Critical friend.
- Coaching: this includes being clear about goals, keeping on track, accountability, and addressing concerns.
- Formal academic mentoring: discussing course work.
- Holistic mentoring: strong academic and emotional support.
- Specialist mentoring; eLearning and language support.

The data collected includes: mentoring evaluation from mentees, focus group interviews with participants and facilitators (2015); mentor workshop flipchart comments (Dec 2015), quarterly reports for steering committee, mentees' reflections from their assignments where they are asked to write about the experience of being mentored, mentor workshop documents, e.g. agreements and mentors' lists of 'interest in mentoring' and 'needs for mentoring' from students. Individual interviews with mentors and mentees by external researcher, 2016.

#### References:

Geber, H. and Keane, M. (accepted for publication - forthcoming). Mentoring in South Africa. *The SAGE Handbook of Mentoring*. David Ashley Clutterbuck, Frances K. Kochan, Laura Gail Lunsford, Bradley Smith, Nora Dominguez (Eds). Sage Publications.

**This case was compiled by Dr Moyra Keane, Centre for Learning Teaching and Development (CLTD), University of the Witwatersrand.**

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