

PATH SCHOLARS MENTORING PROGRAM AND MANUAL

A Project
Presented
to the Faculty of
California State University, Chico

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Marina Fox
Spring 2015

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A Project

by

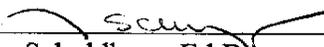
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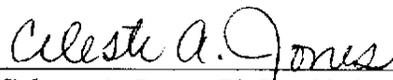
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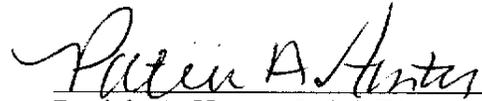
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my parents, Vidal R. Lomeli and Marina Ruiz Lomeli, who came to the United States to provide a better life for their children. I hope that I have made you proud.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Celeste Jones for her dedication and continual support as committee chair for this project. Dr. Jones reignited my passion for learning and being challenged to new levels. Throughout this process, Dr. Jones was patient, kind and remarkably encouraging. I am not sure I could have endured this project without her. Thank you for being *my* mentor!

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ABSTRACT

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The likelihood of foster youth pursuing higher education goals is very slim. Few foster youth will obtain a four-year college degree. Statistics are alarming and illustrate an enormous need to support this population of students with access and retention at the college level. If a former foster youth makes it to college, many factors contribute to intense challenges that often impede their success in the academic environment. Considering all the risk factors that former foster youth face, mentoring can be an effective intervention to assist students through a successful college experience. Mentoring has shown to be an effective intervention for young people, especially foster care alumni, to improve social and academic outcomes. This project provided a framework for a mentoring model and manual to support this population while they work towards their dream of attaining a college degree. This project will focus on former foster youth students attending California State University, Chico.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Project

At CSU, Chico, there were several key individuals who pursued the possibility of providing a campus support program for young adults transitioning from the foster care system. Because of their efforts, in 2012, the Walter S. Johnson (WSJ) Foundation provided an implementation grant to CSU, Chico to begin the process of identifying the specific needs of the campus. Out of this, a campus Foster Youth Committee was formed. Immediately following, the WSJ Foundation awarded a network partnership grant to Butte Community College, Shasta College and CSU, Chico, with Butte College being the principal holder of the grant. Each institution would develop their individual campus support program for foster care alumni and work together to establish a transfer pipeline from the community college to a four-year university. It's important to note that CSU, Chico agreed to the collaboration with the stipulation that funding for the program coordinator position and program would need to be institutionalized by the university. This would ensure program sustainability as opposed to simply being grant funded and services ending with the grant. This strategic provision would be exceedingly critical to the success of the program at this campus, especially from the perspective of the students.

The fall of the academic year 2013 marked the initial phase of the Foster Youth Program for CSU, Chico. The Foster Youth Committee took the charge and began

outreach to students in this demographic. This author was hired as program coordinator and began in January 2014. It was a steep learning curve being new to the university system, but it was also vital that thorough research be conducted on recent policies and existing services impacting this population. Once this foundation was established, the next step was to reach out and begin meeting with students. Soon after, a survey was emailed out requesting that students give their feedback about naming the program. Other CSU programs are commonly known as “Guardian Scholars” or “Renaissance Scholars”. One of the involved students had formulated the name of PATH, which is an acronym for Promoting Achievement Through Hope. Hence, PATH Scholars would be another choice. Overwhelmingly, the students that responded selected the name of PATH Scholars.

The grant included several objectives, aimed at increasing access, retention and graduation rates for foster care alumni. This was the primary goal because research reveals that three percent of foster youth will attain a four-year degree by age 26 compared to 24% of the general population (Courtney, Dworsky, Brown, Cary, Love, & Vorhies, 2011). Two noteworthy features outlined in the grant should be described. First, a two-tier approach was prescribed. Tier I students require a lower level of service, only making contact as needed or attending a workshop or activity, for example. Tier II students are more active participants, meeting with the program coordinator on a regular basis, a minimum of three individual meetings, and attending two or more workshops, events or activities per semester. Second, the grant required a “robust mentoring program” to be implemented in the third and final year of the grant.

Purpose of the Project

While devising a project idea, PATH Scholars was in the initial stages of program development. The grant required a “robust mentoring program” and it seemed fitting to create a formalized mentoring model for PATH Scholars. Perhaps it could also be a framework that other CSU’s and community colleges can institute. During program implementation, it became very evident that a mentoring program would be very valuable and beneficial for students. In many ways, upper division students were naturally acting as mentors to younger students and incoming freshman. This informal mentoring had resulted in an increase in interpersonal connection and stability; a more formal mentoring program would likely achieve these same results, increase academic achievement and improve graduate rates for foster care alumni.

Scope of the Project

This project focuses on the development of a Mentoring component for the PATH Scholars program at California State University, Chico. After a literature review and consideration of other mentoring programs, a model and manual will be designed including essential and fundamental elements. This mentoring model will be supported by research as well as participatory active research by PATH Scholar students. PATH Scholar students will be invited to participate in focus groups to contribute their thoughts, ideas and feedback about how to design the model and manual in order to fit the needs of CSU, Chico. A maximum of 25 students will contribute to the focus groups.

Once all the relevant information and material is collected, a manual will be crafted to formalize and standardize the process of the mentoring framework. The manual

will cover topics such as the mission and goal of the mentoring program, application process, mentor/mentee responsibilities, evaluation, and ending the relationship. Different elements will also be explored, for example, informal versus formal mentoring and essential characteristics of a mentor.

Per grant requirements, the mentoring project will be implemented in year three of the grant, which occurs in the 2015-2016 academic year. The structure created in this project will be the foundation and guide to administer this mentoring component. A formal and standardized manual can be beneficial for other foster youth campus support programs at institutions of higher education interested in incorporating a mentoring component that is supported by research.

Significance of the Project

At the CSU level, there are several mentoring programs in place as part of campus support programs for foster care alumni. While these programs vary, this author wanted to formalize a mentoring model for foster youth participating in PATH Scholars. After exploring other CSU Guardian Scholars (former foster youth) programs, it became apparent that of those campuses that had a mentoring component, it was not standardized. No one could provide this author with a complete framework or manual as a tool to implement this component. It is likely that due to lack of staff, minimal program resources, and high demands from students, the ability to create a formal manual to be utilized throughout the CSU system is challenging. After some investigation, it became clear that it would be beneficial to develop a formal and standardized program that could be implemented and utilized system-wide. The goal of this project is to devise a manual,

supported by the literature, theory and participatory research, which can be shared with other new as well as established programs.

Limitations of the Project

This project involved participatory action research (PAR) conducted in one specific university. PAR methodology was employed in order to accomplish a collaborative approach and empowerment of stakeholders during this project (Allen, 2015). Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of former foster youth college students. Additionally, because there were a limited number of participants, there is a possibility that the model may not be a fit for some students who didn't participate in the focus groups. Also multiple focus groups, as opposed to two, could have been coordinated to capture more students input, but time was limited. There has also been a recognition that this process will be evolving. This is challenging because once the framework is implemented, it will likely change depending on the current needs of the students and program. Furthermore, the model was developed in a unique rural, residential college setting. Perhaps the needs are different for a larger institution. Despite these limitations, the results collected in this research provide valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of foster care alumni attending post-secondary education that will help to inform a mentorship model that is effective.

Definition of Terms

The term "foster care alumni" describes those who spent some time in the foster care system. Children who were removed from the custody of their biological or adoptive parents by a child welfare agency describe the foster care system. According to

the Child Welfare League of America (2013), there are close to 400,000 children in the foster care system currently. Of those children, there are approximately 18,000 youth transitioning out or emancipating from the foster care system when they turn eighteen years of age (Foster Club, 2015).

Guardian Scholars refers to other established campus foster youth support programs, including Renaissance Scholars or Promise Scholars that are currently in place throughout the California State University (CSU) system. The CSU system is comprised of 23 campuses throughout California. Of the 23 campuses, 20 of those declare a campus support program, meaning that there is a designated program specifically in place to assist the former foster youth population. PATH (Promoting Achievement Through Hope) Scholars signifies the campus support program at CSU, Chico. Although different programs and financial aid resources have varying eligibility requirements, PATH Scholars requires that students come from a foster care background at any point in their life and identify with that experience. Furthermore, PATH Scholars has expanded the definition of “foster care” background to include guardianship, kinship care, and homeless or unaccompanied youth. Guardianship is defined as the process when a child or youth is placed with a relative or non-relative “guardian” formally through the court system. When a child or youth is placed with a relative or extended family member, the state recognizes this as kinship care. As with foster care, guardianship and kinship care can be temporary or long-term, even until the youth turns 18 years of age.

The population of homeless or unaccompanied youth has increased in recent years, especially for older teens. Often times, children and youth are homeless with their parents, but it is common that parents “abandon” the older teens to fend for themselves.

In the experience of this author, these youth find somewhere to stay; generally with a friend whose family takes them into their home. To document a homeless experience, PATH Scholars has accepted a letter of support by a McKinney-Vento school district liaison to verify his/her status. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 ensures “that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Including a homeless or unaccompanied student in PATH Scholars is important because technically, they could be formally involved in the foster care system. However since often times, they are close to 18 years of age, a youth is sometimes discouraged from entering the system so close to reaching “adulthood”.

PATH Scholars provides services that include individual meetings with the program coordinator as well as opportunities to participate in activities, such as monthly get-togethers, events, cultural activities and workshops to support students in the matriculation process. As described earlier, Tier I students require a lower level of service, only making contact as needed or attending a workshop or activity, for example. Tier II students are more active participants, meeting with the program coordinator on a regular basis, a minimum of three individual meetings, and attending two or more workshops, events or activities each semester.

The foster youth committee was developed in 2011 and acts as an advisory committee for PATH Scholars. Their formation preceded the program and played an instrumental role in creating the vision for the establishment of the program. Key individuals from the committee worked on creating a needs assessment and focus groups

to solicit feedback to inform program implementation. Some foster youth committee members were on the interview panel to hire and appoint the program coordinator. The foster youth committee meets approximately once a semester since PATH Scholars began.

In terms of administrative structure, the PATH Scholars foster youth program, is a program within Student Affairs at CSU, Chico. The program is under the umbrella of *Early Outreach and Support Programs (EOSP)*. Other programs include the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and the Student Learning Center (SLC). In addition, there are three TRIO programs, which are grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Upward Bound came first in 1964, Educational Talent Search (ETS) was formed the following year and Student Support Services (SSS) was originated later in that same decade. With the emergence of SSS as the third program, the term “TRIO” was used to describe them (U. S. Department of Education, 2011). All of the EOSP programs are intended to support the educational needs of disadvantaged and underrepresented students. More specifically, EOP serves first-generation students and students from low-income backgrounds. The SLC provides tutoring services to support the academic needs of students and is offered to all students on campus. Upward Bound provides support in the preparation for college entrance to high school students from low-income backgrounds and families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. ETS is committed to prepare and motivate low-income, first generation junior high and high school students for success in postsecondary education. Finally, SSS serves first-generation and low-income students, but also includes services to students with disabilities.

It's worth noting that some Guardian Scholars programs are a part of EOP at several CSU campuses. In other words, students must be in EOP and receive services in order to receive further assistance from Guardian Scholars. At this time, CSU, Chico has determined to keep the two programs separate. Even still, there are a number of students who applied to EOP and were admitted, and are also part of PATH Scholars. The difference is that it is not a requirement. The primary reason for this decision was there is an early application deadline for EOP and typically, many students including foster care alumni miss that deadline. This would exclude many students from participating in a program for former foster youth, unless the EOP Admissions Coordinator considers an exception. At this time, this has not been determined as the appropriate direction by both the EOP Admissions Coordinator and the PATH Scholars Program Coordinator.

The WSJ Foundation grant is the sole funding source that was provided to develop and implement the campus support program, PATH Scholars. The Walter S. Johnson (WSJ) Foundation “assists youth in Northern California and Washoe County, Nevada, to become successful adults by promoting positive change to the policies and systems that serve them and supporting high impact and promising practices” (The Walter S. Johnson Foundation, 2013). Moreover, the grant was specified as a network partnership with Butte Community College and Shasta College, CSU, Chico region feeder community colleges. The intent for collaboration between a community college and CSU, Chico is to successfully streamline the transfer process to encourage advancement to a four-year university. Butte College lies 20 minutes southeast of Chico and many students begin their post-secondary career at this community college and transfer to CSU, Chico after completing their general education courses. Shasta College

is located approximately 90 minutes north of CSU, Chico. Because of the rural nature of northern California, CSU, Chico is the closest university to Shasta College and many students transfer to CSU, Chico if they want to pursue a four-year degree. The next option would be CSU, Humboldt, which is located close to 3 hours northwest of Shasta College.

The Butte network grant, funded by the WSJ Foundation, also required a “robust mentoring program”. The grant was written such that the mentoring component was not clearly stated, being somewhat left open to interpretation. Consequently, each campus is taking the opportunity to design their mentoring component based on the needs of each institution and the students.

Another component of PATH Scholars is the involvement and partnerships within the community. In particular, there is a strong collaborative group called Fostering Educational Connections. This collective effort in Butte County allows key agencies that play a significant role in the lives of foster youth to stay connected. Participating agencies include Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS), Children Services Division (CSD), Butte County Independent Living Program (ILP), Butte County Office of Education (BCOE), Youth and Family Programs, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and Butte Community College. When CSU, Chico was still forming their campus support program, select representatives from the Foster Youth Committee attended. Once the PATH Scholars program coordinator was hired, she began attending to represent the needs of students enrolled in CSU, Chico.

In regards to the mentoring program, a mentor is a coach, guide and role model who provides support to a mentee within a reciprocal relationship. In general, a

mentor is older than the mentee and has more experience. A mentee is a younger individual who will benefit from the counsel and guidance of a mentor. Scholars in the mentoring field suggest that it's important to offer operational definitions of mentoring to avoid confusion or dubious interpretations, especially in the academic setting. For example, the terms "advisor, sponsor, role model and mentor" have been used interchangeably, and yet even though role models impact students in a positive way, a relationship is not required with modeling (Johnson, Rose & Schlosser, 2010, p. 50). For the purposes of this project, mentorship or mentoring is used to describe a formal relationship prescribed by a structured program.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mentoring in General - Theory

To begin this section, it's important to consider the definition of mentorship as referenced by the literature. According to Kram (1985):

Derived from Greek mythology, the name implies a relationship between a young adult and an older, more experienced adult that helps the younger individual learn to navigate in the adult world and the world of work. A mentor supports, guides, and counsels the young adult as he or she accomplished this important task. (p. 2)

Not only does the mentoring relationship benefit the younger individual as the person receiving support and guidance, but also there are valuable profits experienced by the mentor. Kram (1985) adds:

Through helping others, a mentor gains internal satisfaction, respect for his or her capabilities as a teacher and advisor, and reviews and reappraises the past by participating in a young adult's attempts to face the challenges of early career years. (p. 3)

In the early research, mentoring was primarily focused on the workplace and career environments, but as mentoring gained respect and momentum, it has branched out into the academic setting seeking similar positive outcomes (Johnson, Rose, & Schlosser, 2010, p. 49).

It is also essential to consider the theoretical approaches that further support this intervention. The social network perspective suggests that individuals gain support, information, knowledge and exposure to opportunities by those in their social network

community. Recent literature on this social network application to mentoring suggests the concept of developmental initiation which is defined as “development-seeking behaviors” employed by an individual in order to learn and/or improve “skills, knowledge, task performance and/or personal learning” (Higgins, Chandler & Kram, 2007, pp. 351, 354). This reinforces the notion that individuals and students need various persons in their life to support, guide, and assist them as they grow and transition through different developmental milestones.

Smith (2011) suggests that “social networking” offers the basis for a valuable mentoring approach. Smith (2011) continues, “Social networking provides persons with emotional, informational, and appraisal support that creates a sense of psychological safety (between the mentor and mentee) resulting in more positive attitudes toward changing behavior” (p. 221). Within a college environment, social networking provides students an opportunity to establish a sense of community and build their social support system. This perspective reinforces the idea that providing a social connection within the mentoring dyad will cultivate opportunities for positive change.

Additionally, the literature points to developmental and goal-oriented approaches as a means of establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2010; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). According to Karcher & Nakkula (2010), the developmental or relational approach focuses on activities that promote relationship building, while a relationship that is goal-oriented focuses on accomplishing specific tasks (p. 17). This suggests that utilizing a combination of both developmental and goal-oriented strategies can be most successful.

Effects of Mentoring

There is an abundance of literature on the positive effects of mentoring. According to Jekielek, Moore, Hair, and Scarupa (2002), research has suggested that formal mentoring relationships assist in reducing criminal involvement and substance use, while fostering positive self-esteem, social skill development and academic success. These outcomes are powerful and illustrate the critical nature of this intervention for young people. Despite this, a 2005 poll conducted by the National Mentoring Partnership found, “Of the 17.6 million young people who could especially benefit from having a mentor, only 2.5 million were in formal, one-to-one mentoring relationships” (National Mentoring Partnership, 2006). This leaves an enormous disparity for youth who would like to benefit from this intervention, so the National Mentoring Partnership is working to close this gap. Moreover, the implementation of formal mentorship at the college level would support this goal and provide additional quality mentors to build up, guide and encourage young people.

In a study conducted by Miller (2010), pre-adolescent girls mentored younger girls with the purpose of increasing physical activity to improve overall physical health and boost self-esteem and confidence. This project found that there is a clear advantage of mentoring, particularly “near peer” mentoring, where positive developments were observed with the younger girls. In addition, the mentors were able to further enhance their skills as a result of their mentorship role (Miller, 2010, p. 474). This study supports the positive outcomes for near peer mentoring and could be applied to a peer-mentoring model in the university setting.

Effects of Mentoring in Foster Care

There is growing literature on mentoring for children and youth in foster care. With the many barriers and challenges that face this population, having a mentor is critical. Hudson (2013) conducted a study with foster youth to explore their perceptions of mentoring. She found that participants not only wanted to have a mentor with a career focus, but it was also important for them to have other types of mentors depending on the situation. Participants in the study “stated that individuals need a spiritual mentor, an adult/personal mentor (i.e., Big Brother, Big Sister), peer mentors, and most of all, a career mentor” (Hudson, 2013, p. 134). It is likely that a non-foster youth generally meets those needs with family, community and other social networks. It would be extremely ideal to offer a variety of supports through mentorship, as found by Hudson, to college students who are at a critical life transition stage.

Another project by Clayden and Stein (2005) yielded a wealth of information on the benefits described by foster youth leaving care. One key point found that “mentoring helped them with important practical advice, particularly in relation to maintaining their accommodation, discussing education, employment and training, and finding work” (Clayden & Stein, 2005, p. 75). In addition, results demonstrated that mentees found value in areas of emotional health, self-esteem and relationship building (Clayden & Stein, 2005, p. 76). This research further supports that mentoring is particularly advantageous for youth transitioning out of the system as they gain a great deal in areas in regards to adulthood and independence.

A different study found that “non-kin natural mentors” were very instrumental to foster youth transitioning out of the foster care system. In this analysis, results showed

that participants experienced “fewer depression symptoms, less perceived stress and greater satisfaction with life six months later, at age 18½” (Munson & McMillen, 2009, p. 109). Furthermore, having a long-term mentor also contributed to a lower probability of involvement with the criminal justice system by the age of nineteen (Munson & McMillen, 2009, p. 109). This study further suggests that mentoring assists foster youth transitioning out of care in areas of mental health and well-being. Consequently, a stable and long-term mentor can increase hope and promote better opportunities and outcomes for this demographic.

With the growing research to support mentoring for foster care children, key individuals advocated for policy to address this need. One significant piece of legislation is the Foster Care Mentoring Act of 2007, which was sponsored by Louisiana Senator Mary Landrieu. The bill was introduced on January 24, 2007 and set forth “to support the establishment or expansion and operation of programs using a network of public and private community entities to provide mentoring for children in foster care” (Civic Impulse, 2015). Unfortunately, Congress never enacted the bill even though attempts were made again in 2009 and 2011. Even still, it is hopeful that policy makers are taking note and working towards implementing mentoring models to meet the needs of a systemic gap for foster care alumni.

Mentors at the University

Posa (2011) investigated the benefits of the peer mentor role in a higher education setting. Her research of 317 peer mentors suggests that they felt an improvement in skill areas such as communication, problem solving and decision-making as well as collaboration

and academic success (Posa, 2011, p. 79). This reinforces the concept that both the mentor and mentee will likely experience positive results from this relationship.

Yet another study considered peer mentorship within higher education and found that participating mentees displayed better academic performance (Leidenfrost, Strassnig, Schabmann, Spiel & Carbon, 2011). This particular project looked at specific mentoring styles and how this impacted the mentees. Additionally, they focused more on psychosocial functions, such as support, guidance and role modeling and felt it was more appropriate in the context of higher education (Leidenfrost et al., 2011). This theme suggests that the benefits of mentorship are two-fold. The mentors focusing on psychosocial functions will benefit young people not only with character and skill building, but academic achievement as well.

Mentoring Foster Youth at the University

The study by Merdinger, Hines, Osterling, and Wyatt (2005) is the first to focus on former foster youth attending a 4-year university. This study had a sample size of 216 and presented many interesting results. One key finding showed that 64% of participants felt they were ill prepared for college by the foster care system. Furthermore, there was a strong correlation to their social support system and their college attendance. Eighty-seven percent stated that they had someone in their life that they could turn to for assistance or guidance, demonstrating the immense need for mentorship. This finding demonstrates the extreme necessity for the foster care system to re-examine this matter of college under preparedness and integrate an intentional focus of college exposure and preparation into the objectives for children and youth. This way, college is perceived as

an option and an attainable direction for them. By introducing mentorship into the lives of children and youth, the mentor can be an additional person to direct and support this aspiration.

In a study conducted by Havalchak, White, O'Brien, Pécora, and Sepulveda (2009), foster youth participants reported the importance of a teacher, family member or a mentor to their academic career. The researchers also recommended the need for continued evaluation of postsecondary rates as a strategy to improve outcomes for this population. This author believes that a mentoring program can be highly effective as a supplementary component of a campus support program for former foster youth.

According to the literature, best practices for implementation of a mentoring program include screening potential mentors and using mentors with some experience in a helping role. Training is another essential component of best practices. It is important to train mentors before matching with their protégés as well as providing regular training, support and oversight of the mentor relationships. Additionally, clearly defining the frequency of contact between mentor and youth and the overall duration of the relationship is key. Finally, it is necessary to provide mentor-mentee pairs with structured activities (Spencer, Collins, Ward, & Smashnaya, 2010, p. 229). In order to comply with best practices, these fundamental elements will be integrated into the framework of this mentoring program.

Conclusion

The literature informs several structural directions for the creation of the PATH Scholars Mentoring program. On the most basic level, it's extremely evident that

mentoring will prove to be valuable and useful to foster care alumni in the college setting. Relevant theories, such as social network theory and developmental theory as well as strengths-based goal directed approaches, will guide the perspective and operation of the mentoring relationship. Best practices will also be essential to incorporate. All of these elements will result in better psychosocial and academic outcomes for a population that typically lack caring, deeply involved and stable adults during critical, developmental life stages. Even with the abundance of literature on this topic, it was necessary to augment the research with respective data collection from CSU, Chico students in order to fill in some of the gaps and design a successful program appropriate for this institution. Thus, developing a PATH Scholars Mentoring Program and Manual based on literature and participatory action research was the appropriate direction for this project.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This project was conducted at CSU, Chico, employing participatory action research with participants recruited from the PATH Scholars program. Because students were included as part of this project, it was necessary to undergo the Human Subjects in Research Committee (HSRC) process through the Office of Graduate Studies at CSU, Chico. A Human Subjects Review Application (HSRA) (Appendix A) was submitted, an HSRA amendment (Appendix B), a consent form (Appendix C) and focus group questions (Appendix D) that would be used to solicit ideas and feedback from the participants.

Participatory action research (PAR) was selected to emphasize participation of foster youth college students and action. According to Dr. Will Allen (2015), PAR is a research method that utilizes a collaborative approach and “encourages a simultaneous focus on four basic themes: collaboration through participation; development of knowledge; social change; [and] empowerment of participants”. This type of research methodology seemed most appropriate for this project as the themes aligned incredibly well with the goals of this project.

Participants

A complete list of students that are eligible for services because they have been identified and verified as former foster youth at CSU, Chico is generated at the start

of each semester by this author. As such, participants were recruited via email by informing them of the upcoming mentoring program and requesting that they participate in a focus group to provide their feedback on a mentoring program that may have a positive impact on them (See Appendix E for email invitation). In addition to emails, personal communication with students that meet more regularly with this author was also utilized to recruit students. Food from a local restaurant was the only incentive offered to students to thank them for their participation in the focus group.

Instrument

Next, focus groups were scheduled in order to collect insights, ideas and feedback from a variety of students. Due to class schedule conflicts, two focus groups were scheduled on different times and days of the week to capture more student availability. Both focus groups followed a list of fourteen questions, which were intended to solicit specific information about program model, format and design (See Appendix D). This author facilitated the two focus groups and provided additional prompts as needed when asking the questions.

Focus Groups

For the first group, a PATH Scholars student intern took detailed notes on a laptop computer, recording student responses to the focus group questions while this author documented highlights of feedback on a large flip chart. For the second focus group, one of the participants who is highly involved in PATH Scholars, recorded detailed notes in the same format as the first focus group.

The first focus group had eight students sign up. That day, six students attended but when one student found out that there was another focus group the following week, she stated that she had a lot of homework to do and asked if she could participate in the next group. Consequently a total of five students attended the first group. The following group had ten students sign up with six being present on that day. Multiple reminders by email and text were sent to students prior to the groups. Both focus groups were held in the EOP Conference Room, in the same office where PATH Scholars is located.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Characteristics of the Sample

There were eleven total PATH Scholar students that participated in the focus groups. Seven (63.6%) of the participants were female and four were male. In terms of age, there was a wide range, with the youngest being 19 and the eldest was 58 years. Four (36%) focus group participants identify as Hispanic/Latino and two (18%) identify as Black. The majority (5, 45%) student participants identify as “white” or Caucasian. There were four First-Time Freshmen (FTF), one Sophomore, five Juniors and one Senior graduating at the end of this semester. Of those students, six (54.5%) started as First-Time Freshmen and five (45.5%) transferred from community colleges throughout northern California. See Table 1 for a complete overview of participant demographics.

Thematic Analysis

Overwhelmingly, the focus group participants expressed strong interest and a need for a mentoring component as part of the PATH Scholars program. Most of the participants stated that they have experienced a mentoring relationship as a mentee, mostly through informal methods. There were a few students that have been part of formal mentoring programs. In addition, a couple commented that they themselves were mentors for younger children during high school. From the two focus groups, four major

Table 1.

Participant Demographics

Focus group participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Academic standing	Began as FTF or transfer
1	19	Female	Black	Freshman	FTF
2	19	Female	Black	Freshman	FTF
3	19	Male	Caucasian	Freshman	FTF
4	20	Male	Latino	Freshman	FTF
5	20	Female	Latino	Sophomore	FTF
6	21	Female	Latino	Junior	FTF
7	24	Female	Latino	Junior	Transfer
8	37	Female	Caucasian	Junior	Transfer
9	38	Male	Caucasian	Junior	Transfer
10	55	Male	Caucasian	Junior	Transfer
11	58	Female	Caucasian	Senior	Transfer

themes concerning program purpose, structure and design emerged from the data: both mentor and mentee will benefit from the relationship; design elements, such as duration and consistency, were very important; a hybrid model of mentors would be ideal; and it is not necessary for mentors to come from a foster care background.

Mentor/mentee benefits. Focus group participants recognized a significant benefit for the mentee, but also expressed the value for the mentor, especially in a peer mentor model. They stated that mentors would “build leadership skills” and gain “a sense of responsibility”. They added that both mentor and mentee would “learn time management, communication and organization skills”. One participant commented that both would gain satisfaction out of the relationship. This completely aligns with the existing literature on mentorship.

Design elements. Focus group participants emphasized the importance of duration and consistency within the mentoring relationship. They expressed that the

timeframe should be one academic year, at the very minimum. The majority of students stated that the relationship could be longer than that if the dyad agrees to continue.

Students also suggested that it would be wise to begin the mentor relationship at the start of the summer to further provide support to new students during that transition period.

Consistency was another major factor that was extremely essential for the participants. Students commented that weekly or biweekly would be necessary. They added that even though schedules are very busy for everyone involved, regular contact is imperative for the relationship to be successful. One student commented in regards to a past experience as a mentee and meeting weekly, “The time commitment was good, I learned to manage my time”. The focus group participants also expressed the desire for monthly group activities with other mentor/mentee pairs as part of their regular meetings. Focus group participants expressed that both duration and consistency were exceedingly essential factors, which is also heavily supported by research.

A hybrid model ideal. Focus group participants expressed a value in having a variety of mentors, including peer, staff, faculty and community members. The consensus was that the mentee could have a choice during the application process, of what type of mentor he/she would like. The younger students commented that a peer mentor “could be fun” and they might be able to relate better to an older, but near-peer mentor. Older or re-entry students felt that it might be awkward for them to have a peer mentor so they expressed a desire to have a staff, faculty or community member mentor. The bottom line was that students want an experienced mentor, who has successfully navigated the university system, to assist and support them primarily in their educational goals.

Mentors can be from various backgrounds. The overall consensus from focus group participants is that they felt they would benefit from mentors from all sorts of backgrounds and experiences. Surprisingly, they commented that it was not necessary for mentors to have experienced the foster care system first hand. One student stated that the program should “give other people who are not foster youth the chance to be a mentor.” Another shared that she wanted to “learn from others that had a normal life”. Despite this general agreement, one student suggested that this question be on the application process so that each student can decide what is most important to him/her. The other participants agreed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The formation of the PATH Scholars Mentoring framework is supported with literature by Posa (2011) and Leidenfrost et al. (2011) in that a supportive relationship with a strong academic focus in higher education will produce benefits. As Merdinger et al. (2005) suggests, because foster youth characteristically feel ill equipped for college, their support system becomes even more vital to assist and guide them through their journey. With this foundation, data from CSU, Chico students was collected in order to fill in some of the gaps with student insight and expertise and to design a program accordingly. The majority of student feedback was congruent with current research findings.

CSU, Chico has made a commitment to institutionalizing a campus support program to increase access, retention and graduation rates for foster care alumni. A mentoring program can enhance the needed support to properly assist these students in reaching their post-secondary goals. Moreover, the additional support of a mentor pool will alleviate lack of time and resources that the program coordinator is currently available to offer. As more mentors are able to provide further support, assistance and

guidance to students, mentees get their needs met and increased graduation rates emerge as a natural consequence.

PATH Scholars Mentoring Program and Manual

A thorough literature review was completed to examine and incorporate the most essential components of an effective mentoring program, and particularly mentoring for foster youth. It was also appropriate to employ participatory action research to collect data from PATH Scholar students in order to complement and reinforce design features from existing research. Out of this process, a mentoring program and formal manual was created to inform and guide the implementation of a “robust mentoring program” at CSU, Chico (See Appendix F).

Conclusions

Research has demonstrated that current outcomes for foster care alumni are very bleak. It is also evident that mentoring is an effective intervention and even more so for this population. Furthermore, the literature indicates that the mentoring relationship can improve psychosocial and academic outcomes for foster children and youth. The findings of this project indicate that mentoring can be utilized as a strategy to increase post-secondary graduation rates of foster care alumni to be comparable to the general population. When included in this project, CSU, Chico students felt strongly about the desire to have a mentoring program and expressed certain components to be most essential for this program.

With that, it is critical to include key aspects of the field by applying a social work lens to this project. *Research* and *Evaluation* has been covered in the literature review and demonstrates the competency to inform the design and structure of the PATH Scholars

Mentoring program. This also includes best practices and ongoing evaluation to maintain efficacy and fidelity by constantly examining areas to improve.

In terms of *Human Behavior and the Social Environment Theory*, it is fitting to have an Ecological Systems Approach when considering a foster child/youth and their growth and development in the foster care system. It is essential to recognize that certain experiences have gravely impacted foster youth, such as trauma and instability within a variety of systems. This guides *Social Work Practice* with application of a strengths based goal oriented approach and informs program design to most effectively connect with and support this population.

Diversity, Social Justice and Values/Ethics are represented in several areas as well. There is enormous diversity within this population. For example, involvement in the formal system compared to relative guardianship or unaccompanied homeless youth are all very distinct experiences. Culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age also contribute to this area. Striving to improve outcomes for this population furthers social and economic justice and the commitment to advance human rights. Ultimately this leads to social work values and ethics which guide practitioners to value service, the dignity and worth of others and the importance of human relationships (National Association of Social Workers, 2015). This project aligns perfectly with these principles as the goal aims to promote reciprocal service, human connection and enhance self-worth.

Finally, *Policy* has been addressed in several areas. In particular, legislation specific to formalizing mentoring has been attempted but unfruitful to this point. Nonetheless, organizations such as the National Mentoring Partnership continue their efforts to expand and standardize mentoring across the country. It is crucial to stay current and

maintain involvement on a local and federal level in regards to services, policies and advocacy efforts.

Recommendations

The findings in this project highlight that mentorship is effective and would be useful as a corresponding strategy within a campus support program for foster care alumni. However, additional investigation might be necessary to determine the validity of the program framework. It would be important to continue searching for existing mentoring models of established campus support programs in higher education. During the process of completing this project, this author connected with a colleague from a University of California who stated that they have a manual for a mentoring program. Even though a request was made by this author to share the manual, it has yet to be provided. Attempts will continue to examine and review other established mentoring programs for college scholars for ongoing assessment and evaluation of the PATH Scholars Mentoring program. This will also ensure an evolution process. Since this project was comprised of a small sample of eleven students, ongoing evaluation will assist in constant program improvement.

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APPENDIX A

Submission Checklist
**APPLICATION FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS
IN RESEARCH CLEARANCE**

The attached form is to be completed by those using human subjects in research. Please refer to the attached "Requirements for Research Using Human Subject", to help define the category of exemption that you are applying for. If, after reading the attached information you have questions, contact Marsha Osborne 898-5413 or HS&AC@csuchico.edu. Return your completed application to Marsha Osborne, Student Services Center (SSC), Room 460.

Each of the items below must be included on your form. Please mark each item on the checklist below when it is completed.

1. Application Category

- a. Exempt
- b. Expedited
- c. Joint Review
- d. Full Board Review
- e. Psychology

2. Copy of Survey or Research Instrument attached

3. Copy of Informed Consent form attached

4. Obtain (Page 5) signature of the Department Chair, or thesis committee chair for thesis project, or faculty supervisor for group or individual class project(s) or other campus unit supervisor for research originating in non-academic units.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will not be processed. Incomplete forms will be returned for the required information before any further processing, which may result in a delay of clearance.

You will be notified when your application is approved, at which time you may proceed with data collection. A Post Data Collection Questionnaire will be mailed to you along with your letter of approval. After completing data collection, you will need to fill out and return the Post Data Collection Questionnaire in order to be fully cleared. Failure to provide this may result in academic delay.

Signature

12.12.2014
Date

Marina Fox
Name (print)

This application is also available on-line: <http://www.csuchico.edu/resp/formspoltravel/form/hsrc/hsrapplication.doc>

APPLICATION FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH CLEARANCE

Complete **ALL** items below: If an item does not apply, indicate N/A. Incomplete and unsigned applications cannot be processed.

Primary Investigator: Marina Fox CSU Chico Portal ID# 001095550

Select a, b, c or d: a. Undergraduate: b. Graduate c. Faculty d. Staff

If a. is selected: Faculty Advisor _____

If b. is selected:

Graduate Coordinator Jean Schuldberg Thesis Chair Celeste A Jones

If c. is selected: Application is required for a grant or proposal? Yes No

If Yes—Name of Funding Source: _____

College/Department of Primary Investigator:

College Behavioral Social Sciences / Dept School of Social Work

Home Address of Primary Investigator: 1393 Nord Avenue

Street Address or P.O. Box

City Chico State CA Zip 95926

Home Phone: 530.680.5952 Work Phone: 530.898.6831 Email: msfox@csuchico.edu

Secondary Investigator: Celeste A Jones

(Faculty Advisor or Theses Chair is required to be Secondary Investigator if a student is primary investigator)

College Behavioral Social Sciences / Dept School of Social Work

Application Category

Exempt

Project Title: Path Scholars Mentoring Program and Manual

Briefly describe the project purpose and methodology: After reviewing existing mentoring models, this author will use surveys & focus groups to solicit feedback from current PATH students. It will be important to obtain step-by-step feedback from students. Qualitative data will be utilized to refine how mentors will be identified and selected, criteria mentors have to meet, training that mentors will go through, etc.

Project's: Beginning Date 12-15-14 Ending Date 4-30-15

Begin date can't precede approval mm/dd/yy mm/dd/yy

Select one: New Project Modification Substudy

If Modification or Substudy, please list project title and name of primary investigator from previous study.

Complete all sections (If a section is not applicable to your project, indicate N/A)

Subject population: Current/former foster youth students involved in the PATH Scholars Program

Subject source: PATH Scholars Program

Number of subjects: 25

How subjects will be contacted: 25

Note: In most research, subjects MUST give written (usual), oral (sometimes), or written AND oral informed consent. A copy of your Informed Consent form must be attached to this application, (See page 4 of the attached, Requirements for Research Using Human Subjects, for detailed information about Informed Consent requirements.)

Specify types of instruments to be used (e.g., tests, questionnaires, interview guides, etc.)

Focus groups with structured group questions

A copy of all instruments to be used must be attached. If they have not been completely developed, please attach a draft.

How administered: Phone Mail Face-to-face Email Internet

Length of subject participation: between 1-23-15 and 3-11-15

Frequency of subject participation: Possibly two focus groups

Data will be recorded using (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Audio tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Film |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe _____) | |

Subjects' confidentiality must be preserved. This requires that their identity and the fact and the nature of their responses be kept in confidence. Please indicate all measures you will take to insure the protection of subjects' confidentiality including where all data will be stored and when it will be destroyed:

The participation is completely voluntary and the respondents can choose to deny participation in this study any time and quit either the volunteer participation and/or the surveys and interviews. If they choose not to participate in the focus groups, they will experience no penalty. The responses they provide will be kept confidential in a password protected file on the principle investigators computer, which is password protected as well. Paper copies of the the written notes from the focus groups will be kept in a locked cabinet in the PI's office. The data will be destroyed after two years.

Consent form attached.

RECOMMENDATION

This activity has been reviewed in accordance with Federal regulations, including its relevant subparts. In compliance with these guidelines,

I concur I do not concur

that this project is **exempt** from review of the Institutional Review Board or the Unit Regulatory Body.

Department Chair or other Supervisor (Faculty & Staff)

Date

Faculty Supervisor or Thesis Chair (Students)

Date

I concur I do not concur

that this project is **exempt** from review of the Institutional Review Board or the Unit Regulatory Body.

Chair, Institutional Review Board

Date

Comments: _____

Human subjects are involved, but this activity qualifies for an **Expedited** Review.

Chair, Institutional Review Board

Date

Comments: _____

Full Board Review

I concur I do not concur

that this project has gone through the Institutional Review Board or the Unit Regulatory Body and the required modifications have been completed.

Chair, Institutional Review Board

Date

Comments: _____

APPENDIX B

HUMAN SUBJECTS IN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Amendment

Under Federal law relating to the protection of Human Subjects, this amendment is to be completed by the Principal Investigator if there are any changes to the original, approved application. Please return to HSRC Chair, c/o Marsha Osborne, HSRC Assistant (898-5413), Office of Graduate Studies, Student Services Center, Room 460, Zip 875.

Name: Marina Fox Empl ID #: 001095550

Phone(s) and Email: 530/680-5952 msfox@csuchico.edu

Faculty Advisor (If student): Celeste Jones

Phone and Email Address: 530/898-6204 cajones@csuchico.edu

College/Department: School of Social Work

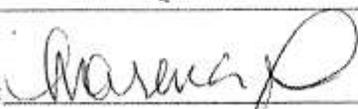
Title of Project: PATH Scholars Mentoring Program and Manual

Changes to Original Approved Application: Added to Focus Group Interview Questions:

How would you define "mentoring"?

Is it important for you to have a mentor who has been in foster care?

I would also like to provide food/snacks for the focus group participants.

Your Signature:  Current Date: February 23, 2015

Approved By:  Date: 2-24-15
John Mahoney, Chair

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

INVESTIGATOR'S NAME: MARINA FOX

PROJECT #

DATE OF PROJECT APPROVAL:

Study Title: Mentoring Program

INTRODUCTION

This consent may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand.

This is Graduate School Project that involves focus groups. *Focus groups* include only people who choose to participate. As a participant you have the right to know about the procedures that will be used in so that you can make the decision whether or not to participate. This information is presented as simply an effort to make sure you are informed of your rights to withhold your consent to participate in these focus groups.

Please take as much time as you like to make your decision. You are being asked to take part in these focus groups because you are a current PATH Scholars student.

In order to participate in these focus groups, it will be necessary to give your written consent.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of these focus groups is to obtain your opinion regarding a mentoring program for PATH Scholars.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

The focus group will be open to all Path Scholars the maximum of 25 students.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?

If you take part in these focus groups, you will be asked to participate in one or two focus groups. The focus group interview will be designed to collect information regarding your thoughts about a mentoring program for the PATH Scholars.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

You will be asked to participate in one or two focus groups. The focus groups will take approximately 1-2 hours. The results will be compiled and completed by April, 30, 2015.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

The risks in this study are minimal. Some individuals may experience slight frustrations with some questions in the focus group. Please do not hesitate to direct your questions or concerns to the researcher.

ARE THERE BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?

There is likely no direct benefit to you by taking part in this study. However, you are contributing to the knowledge for the CSU, Chico PATH Scholars Program. I hope that the information obtained in the focus groups will benefit individuals who participate in the PATH Scholar's Program.

WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE THERE?

You may choose not to participate in the focus groups.

WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

No personal information will be collected. The results of these focus groups will be used for the project learning purposes only. You can get a copy of the project results through the researcher.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

There is no cost to you for participating in the focus group.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

We appreciate your contribution to the development of knowledge but there is no compensation for participation in these focus groups.

WHAT IF I AM INJURED?

It is not the policy of the California State University, Chico to compensate human subjects in the event the focus group results in injury. CSU Chico, in fulfilling its public responsibility, has provided medical, professional and general liability insurance coverage for any injury in the event such injury is caused by the negligence of the CSU system, its faculty and staff. This is not an admission of liability.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Participation in these focus groups is voluntary. You do not have to participate in these focus groups. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind and drop out of the study at any time. If you wish, you may receive a copy of the completed project by email.

WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the primary investigator, Marina Fox at (530) 898-6831.

For research related questions about the study, or a copy of the completed project, you may contact the primary investigator at any time.

A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

SIGNATURE

I confirm that the purpose of the focus groups, procedures, the possible risks, and discomforts as well as potential benefits that I may experience have been explained to me. Alternatives to my participation in the study also have been discussed. I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study.

Subject

Date

SIGNATURE OF STUDY REPRESENTATIVE

I have explained the purpose of these focus groups, procedures, the possible risks and these focus groups to the best of my ability.

Principle Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Interview Questions

1. What are your thoughts about a mentoring program for PATH Scholars?
2. What do you think would be beneficial in having a mentoring program for PATH Scholars?
3. How would *you* define “mentoring”?
4. What are the “essential” characteristics of a mentor?
5. How often would mentors meet with their mentee (s)?
6. How should mentors be matched with mentees?
7. Should there be more than one mentee with a mentor?
8. What would be some activities that the mentors and mentees do?
9. Should there be a timeframe for the mentor/mentee relationship?
10. How long should the timeframe or commitment be?
11. What are your thoughts about a peer-mentoring model?
12. Would you prefer a staff/faculty mentor for you as a student?
13. Would you prefer a community member as a mentor?
14. Is it important for you to have a mentor who has been in foster care?

APPENDIX E

Email Invitation to Students

Dear _____,

Next year, PATH Scholars will be implementing a mentoring component to our program, per grant requirements. For my thesis/project, I will be developing a model and manual to be used for our program. Because other campus support programs do not have a standardized model, perhaps it may be used for other CSU's and community colleges. I have done A LOT of research on mentoring and in creating our model – I want YOUR feedback on how this should be developed. Thus, I am scheduling a focus group on **Wednesday, February 25th from 4-5pm, in the EOP Conference room (SSC 306)** but I need as much participation as possible! If you are available, please consider participating and being part of this very important research and model development process. I will also provide snacks ☺

Please RSVP by replying to this email so that I can get an accurate headcount. Because some of you may have class during that time/date, I will likely schedule another one the following week. If you're interested, please suggest a time/day that you are available. Thank you!

Many appreciations,
Marina

Marina Fox
PATH Scholars Program Coordinator
EOP – Student Services Center 310
California State University, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0710
530.898.6831
msfox@csuchico.edu
www.csuchico.edu/fosteryouth/

“Promoting Achievement Through Hope” for Foster Care Alumni at California State University, Chico

APPENDIX F

PATH Scholars

Mentoring Manual



This manual was designed for *PATH Scholars*,
a campus support program for foster care alumni
at **California State University, Chico**.

Copyright © 2015 by Marina Fox.

Dedication

This manual is dedicated to all foster youth who honor us and teach us about how we can support them through post-secondary education. I also want to dedicate this to foster care alumni who have and will participate in the Path Scholars Program at CSU, Chico.

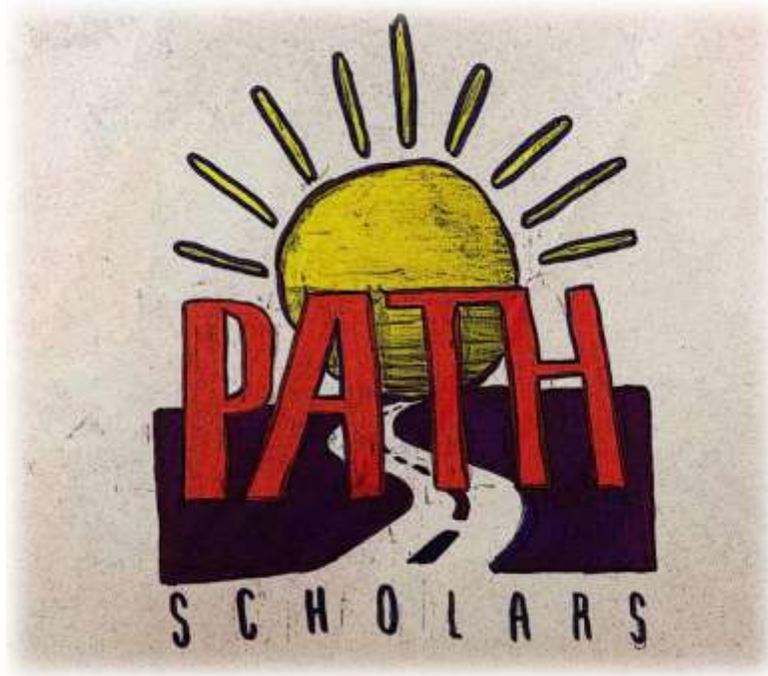


Preface

The PATH Scholars Mentoring Program was designed to provide a complementary strategy to increase retention and graduation rates of foster care alumni. Students participating in a campus support program, such as PATH Scholars, will benefit from additional services and supports provided by a mentor. The following manual is a research-based framework to facilitate the mentoring relationship in a post-secondary setting within a structured, formal program. This manual offers a solid foundation, fundamental guidelines, clear expectations and essential training components needed for an effective mentoring experience.

The PATH Scholars Program is funded by the Walter S. Johnson (WSJ) Foundation for a three-year grant. In addition to the development of this campus support program, the grant required the implementation of a “robust mentoring program”. The WSJ Foundation provided the opportunity for the formal creation of this manual.





PATH Scholars Mission

PATH Scholars in conjunction with the campus Foster Youth Committee is dedicated to the higher educational needs of former foster youth. We will enhance access to the California State University, Chico community through collaborative efforts with our college network and community partners. For those identified as former foster youth, we will develop stability by acting as a liaison with campus and community resources. Our goal is to cultivate successful, proficient, and self-aware citizens in pursuit of their degree.

Purpose

The purpose of this formal and structured mentoring program is to support students during their post-secondary educational experience. This mentoring framework will be an integral part of the PATH Scholars Program, a comprehensive strategy to improve student outcomes and increase graduation rates for foster care alumni at CSU, Chico.

Mentoring Program Goals

- Provide support to students
 - Promote personal development and social skills building
 - Promote leadership development
 - Engage students in the CSU, Chico community
 - Increase self-confidence and self-efficacy
 - Improve academic performance

Thus, increasing retention and graduation rates.

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I. What is Mentoring?

A. *Historical Background*

The story of Mentor comes from Homer's *Odyssey*. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, fights in the Trojan War and entrusts the care of his household to Mentor, who serves as teacher and overseer of Odysseus' son, Telemachus.

After the war, Odysseus is condemned to wander vainly for ten years in his attempt to return home. In time, Telemachus, now grown, ventures in search of his father. Athena, Goddess of War and patroness of the arts and industry, assumes the form of Mentor and accompanies Telemachus on his quest. Father and son reunite and cast down would-be usurpers of Odysseus' throne and Telemachus' birthright.

The word Mentor evolved to mean trusted advisor, friend, teacher and wise person. History offers many examples of helpful mentoring relationships: Socrates and Plato, Hayden and Beethoven, Freud and Jung. Mentoring is a fundamental form of human development where one person invests time, energy and personal know-how in assisting the growth and ability of another person.

History and legend record the deeds of princes and kings, but each of us has a birthright to actualize our potential. Through their deeds and work, mentors help us to move toward that actualization.

*From Shea, Gordon F. (1997) *Mentoring* (Rev. Ed.). Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications. *Taken directly from the Website:*

http://www.learningservices.emory.edu/mentor_emory/mentorstory.html



.....
 "Mentoring is a brain to pick, an
 ear to listen,
 and a push in the right direction."

- John C. Crosby

B. Mentor/Mentee Defined

A Mentor is a:

- **Guide**
- **Cheerleader**
- **Coach**
- **Role model**
- **Self-esteem booster**
- **Link to other cultures, attitudes, and behaviors**
- **Good Listener**
- **Sounding board**
- **Confidant**
- **Visionary "seer"**
- **Wise and trusted teacher**

A Mentor is also someone who:

- Inspires you
- Believes in you
- Advocates for you
- Gives encouragement
- Provides new experiences
- Challenges you in a positive way

A Mentor is NOT a:

- Savior
- Foster parent
- Therapist
- Parole officer
- Cool peer

II. Types of Mentorship

A. *Formal vs. Informal*

- Formal: formally connecting a youth and an older adult through a structured program, and who meet on a regular basis.

- Informal: develops more naturally, without a structured or formal program.

B. *Natural*

- Unrelated adults to youths but sustain meaningful connections over time.

- Older, non-parental adults encountered in their community and form meaningful relationships.

- Natural mentors can include youth service professionals and friends of their families who served in a variety of roles. (Career Mentoring Needs of Youths in FC article)

¶ The PATH Scholars Mentoring program Defines a Mentor as a guide, role model, trusted adviser and experienced leader. This Mentoring program will include a *Formal* type of mentorship. Mentors and mentees will go through an application process and will be matched through a structured program. In addition, the mentor/mentee pairs will meet on a regular basis. ¶

¶
¶

A. Key Characteristics:

1. Duration

- The benefits of mentoring accrue over time.
- Positive effects of mentoring grow progressively stronger the longer the relationship continues.
- Relationships that lasted at least one year experienced the greatest benefits, with important improvements in:
 - Self-esteem
 - Perceived social acceptance
 - Perceived academic ability and value of school
 - Quality of relationships
- Relationships that lasted less than three months reported negative outcomes, such as decreases in self-worth and in their view of academic ability.
- According to research, relationships that end prematurely have the potential to make matters worse for already vulnerable youths.

2. Consistency

- Regular contact is another factor of effective mentoring relationships.
- Consistent contact provides more opportunities for mentors to be more directly involved in the life of a youth.
- Ongoing and regular contact creates stability from a caring adult, which cultivates better coping skills and promotes healthy and positive relationships.

3. Close Emotional Connection

- The bond that develops between the mentor and the youth is central to the mentoring process.
- The presence of a solid emotional connection is linked to better outcomes.
- Relationship attachment between mentors and youth has a primary impact on the benefits of mentoring, as opposed to quantity of contact and types of activities.

B. Essential Qualities

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| ✓ Approachable | ✓ Understanding |
| ✓ Easy-going | ✓ Trustworthy |
| ✓ Empathetic | ✓ Consistent |
| ✓ Committed | ✓ Supportive |
| ✓ Compassionate | ✓ Patient |
| ✓ Respectful | ✓ A sense of humor |

¶ In order to *Understand the Mentor/Mentee Relationship* within the PATH Scholars Mentoring program, these key characteristics will be incorporated. *Duration* will include one academic year and longer if possible. *Consistency* will comprise of weekly or bi-weekly meetings, including a monthly group activity where all mentor/mentee dyads attend. A *Close Emotional Connection* is fundamental and will be addressed during trainings. Monthly reporting logs, completed by mentors, will monitor connection. *Essential Qualities* will also be addressed and reviewed during mentor trainings. ¶

IV. **Mentor Training**

Understanding Your Role as a Mentor

Expectations

a. Being a mentor provides benefits and the satisfaction of helping a younger person. An effective Mentoring Relationship requires that Mentors and Mentees have:

- ✓ Commitment
- ✓ Mutual trust
- ✓ Understanding
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ A connection
- ✓ A sense of humor

b. The mentor role is voluntary and is not compensated.

2. **Approaches**

a. Relational (sometimes termed Developmental)

- The primary focus of the mentoring relationship is on building and sustaining the connection.
- The mentor intentionally emphasizes relational development even though structured activities (recreational or skill building) are employed.
- Even when mentoring interactions include goal achievement/completion and skill building, the focus still remains on strengthening the relationship development.
- This in turn is the primary means of fostering the emotional well being of the mentee, such as self-worth, connectedness, and resilience.

b. Goal-Oriented

- The primary focus of the mentoring relationship is on goal-oriented outcomes.
- The relational development and support is a way to achieve a specific goal, outcome, skill, or other concrete result.
- Indirectly, this leads to building character and competencies, which strengthen the youth's emotional well being, like self-worth, connectedness, and resilience.

3. Mentor Legal/Liability Issues Awareness

- a. Confidentiality
 - Respect and keep information confidential
- b. Respect values and privacy
- c. Be wise in planning activities
- d. Exercise caution
- e. Report any suspicion of the following to the Program Coordinator:
 - Abuse of any kind
 - Threat of suicide
 - Threat of homicide or threat to another

The PATH Scholars Mentoring program will include a *Mentor Training* before being matched with a student. The training will cover key concepts in order to effectively *Understand their Role as a Mentor*. This will include a discussion on *Expectations*, and the importance of understanding the need for commitment, trust and connection, to name a few. In addition, mentors will volunteer their time and will not be compensated. The training will also review the significance of both relational and goal-oriented *Approaches*. Because research suggests that a balance between these two approaches was found to be most effective in impacting outcomes of mentees, the PATH Scholars Mentoring program will follow that model. Finally, it's imperative to include *Legal/Liability Issues* to address confidentiality and safety.

“In a battery, I strive to maximize electrical potential. When mentoring, I strive to maximize human potential.”

- Donald Sadoway

V. Mentee Overview

A. Benefits of having a mentor

1. The mentor serves in various roles to the student including advisor, coach, and advocate. Specific benefits include:

- Meet new people
- Develop as a person
- Individual recognition, encouragement, and support
- Experience in networking
- Perspective
- Get access to campus and career resources
- Assistance with balancing school, work, and other responsibilities and setting priorities
- Develop academic and career potential
- Assistance in achieving your personal, academic, and career goals and exploring alternatives

B. Expectations and Responsibilities

1. For the relationship between the mentor and mentee to thrive, it is essential to understand and be accountable of the responsibilities. Being responsible in any relationship means adhering to common and professional courtesies such as:

- Being considerate and committed
- Returning phone calls and emails
- Scheduling the next contact each time you meet
- Attending all scheduling meetings and events
- In the case you need to cancel, provide at least 24 hours notice and always set a new meeting date and time for the next meeting.
- Notify any change of contact information (e.g. phone, email, address)
- Follow through on agreed upon responsibilities
- **Minimum Requirements:** Meet face-to-face weekly or bi-weekly and participate in a group activity once a month; mentors/mentees may meet more often if both agree but this is the *minimum* we ask you to connect/meet.
- Give your relationship time and patience to work. If you are not satisfied, feel free to contact the Program Coordinator.

VI. Mentor/Mentee Matching

A. Process

Matching mentees with the appropriate mentor is crucial and fundamental for mentoring to be successful. Research suggests that supervision of the match is an effective practice and is most associated with close mentoring relationships. To determine the compatibility of mentor and mentee, the Program Coordinator will consider the following criteria:

- Preference of the mentor/mentee
- Preference of certain characteristics (male/female, foster care background, peer/staff/faculty mentor, etc.)
- Common goals and interests
- Similar personalities
- Career interests

B. Application

i. Mentor Questionnaire

ii. Mentee Questionnaire

¶ The PATH Scholars Mentoring program will provide *Benefits* to both the mentor and mentee. The Mentee will need to adhere to certain *Expectations and Responsibilities*. In this Mentoring program, mentors/mentees will be Matched in a structured format by the Program Coordinator, using a formal application process. ¶

VII. Potential Topics/Themes to Explore

A. *Examples include:*

- Personal empowerment
- Coping skills
- Career exploration
- Goal setting
- Enhancing well-being through health promotion
- Pride in ethnicity and race

VIII. Evaluation

A. *Best Practices*

- Screen potential mentors.
- Use mentors with some background and experience in a “helping role”.
- Provide mentor training before being matched.
- Provide mentors with continual training, support and supervision.
- Provide clear guidelines for frequency of contact and overall duration for mentor/mentee matches.
- Provide mentors/mentees with structured activities.

B. *Throughout the Relationship*

- *Mentors/mentees will record brief details of each meeting by completing a session log.*
- *Trainings will be provided on a quarterly basis, and will address themes and trends that arise from session logs or Program Coordinator observations.*

C. *The End of the Relationship*

- The mentor/mentee pair will participate in a closing session to celebrate the relationship and goals achieved throughout their time together.

D. *Additional Evaluation*

- Pre/Post Survey

¶ The PATH Scholars Mentoring program will include *Evaluation* as part of the framework. *Best Practices* will inform the process and will be integrated into the program. Evaluation measures will be utilized from the beginning of the mentor relationship, with a pre-survey, *Throughout the Relationship*, with session logs for each interaction, and at *The End of the Relationship*, with a post-survey. ¶

Bibliography

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Karcher, M. F., & Nakkula, M. F. (2010). Youth mentoring with a balanced focus, shared purpose, and collaborative interactions. *New directions for youth development*, 126. doi: 10.1002/yd.347.

Platt, S. & Woodbury, C. (2002). 4-H Mentoring: Youth and Families with Promise. Utah State University Extension. Retrieved from <http://extension.usu.edu/yfp/files/uploads/Mentor%20Manual.pdf>

Smith, L. H. (2011). Cross-age peer mentoring approach to impact the health outcomes of children and families. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing*, 16, 220-225.

UC Davis Guardian Scholars (Mentor/Mentee Questionnaires)

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/mentoring.html>

PATH Scholars Mentor Questionnaire

The PATH Scholars Mentor Program is a valuable and rewarding process to support students through their educational experience.

Name: _____

Department: _____ Position: _____

Preferred email: _____ Preferred phone: _____

Have you served as a mentor before? Yes _____ No _____

Briefly describe your experience:

Describe your educational and career background:

What recreational and leisure activities do you enjoy?

Please list 3 – 5 characteristics which you feel best describe your personality:

Check the factor(s) by which you would like to be matched with a mentee:

- _____ Gender
 _____ Academic focus
 _____ Career interest
 _____ Hobby or other activities
 _____ Other (please indicate):
 _____ It doesn't matter

Time available/preferred to meet with student (ex. Weekends only, afternoons, anytime):

Do you anticipate any changes in the next year that may interfere with your ability to meet your commitment as a mentor such as marriage, childbirth, new job, moving? If yes, please explain.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering as a mentor for the PATH Scholars Program. To help us best match you with a student, complete and return the questionnaire to the Program Coordinator in SSC 310. This will provide a more detailed profile of you and your interests. Feel free to use as much space as you need.

PATH Scholars Mentee Questionnaire

If you are interested in having a mentor, please complete the attached questionnaire. Your answers will help us best match you with a mentor. Please submit to the Program Coordinator in SSC 310.

Name _____

Major _____ Year in school _____

Wildcat email _____ Phone _____

Describe your education and career goals:

What recreational and leisure activities do you enjoy?

List a few characteristics, which you feel best describe your personality.

Time available/preferred to meet with mentor (ex. Weekends only, afternoons, anytime):

What characteristics would you like to have in a mentor:

List additional information about yourself or your goals that would help us best match you with a mentor:

What factors are important for you when selecting a mentor?

_____ Academic Focus	_____ Career Interest
_____ Gender	_____ Type of Mentor: Peer/Staff/
_____ Hobbies/Interests	Faculty/Community Member
_____ Foster Care Background	_____ Other:

Potential Topics/Themes to Explore

Personal Empowerment Activities

Source: <http://www.empowermentforgirls.com/2013/07/29/raise-your-self-esteem-with-these-10-empowering-activities/>

1. BELT OUT THOSE AFFIRMATIONS / INCANTATIONS... “What is an affirmation?” you might ask. An affirmation is a phrase that you come up with that reminds you how truly talented, blessed, beautiful, wonderful and precious you are and also reminds you that you can achieve ANY goal you desire. Incantations just up the ante!... Incantations are these affirmations said with Oomph! A.k.a. a strong emotional feeling. Some examples are: **I AM AWESOME. I ROCK !!!! I AM BEAUTIFUL INSIDE AND OUT, JUST AS I AM! I AM SO SMART! I SOAK UP KNOWLEDGE LIKE A SPONGE! I AM PERFECT JUST THE WAY I AM! EVERYDAY IN EVERY WAY I AM GETTING BETTER AND BETTER! EVERYTHING I NEED TO CHANGE IS WITHIN ME NOW!** These affirmations can be said and felt over and over throughout the day. These are just a few. You can make tons of different ones and personalize them to fit with your goals.

2. MAKE A LIST OF YOUR ASSETS! It doesn't matter who you are or what talents you have or do not have. Everyone has tons of assets. You just have to learn to look within and SEE them. **Here's your assignment:** Get out your journal and write at the top of a new page, MY ASSETS. Now, start to list them. Here are some examples that may inspire you: I am an excellent reader, and I love books. I am a talented tennis player. I connect with dogs in a very special way. I am a creative cook or baker in the kitchen. I am passionate about video and computer games. I know how to make a great party. I am there for my friends. I love and support my family members. I love belonging to my spiritual community. I am a great role model for a certain person in my life. I have tons of enthusiasm and I can energize my team, my friends, my class. I am funny. I can make other people laugh. ... Your list should be LONG. Get down to the details of what your true unique assets are.

3. GRATITUDE = GREAT ATTITUDE ... Gratitude will pump you up like nothing else! When you can feel grateful for the people, situations, events (even events that have challenged you and weren't exactly what you wanted to happen), then chances are you will be more likely to love your life and love yourself! Some people keep a **Gratitude Journal**. I also like the GRATITUDE ABC's. (I do this on long drives or by myself. I go through the alphabet and I let each letter remind me of what I can feel gratitude for). With gratitude, no matter what is going on in your life, you can lift yourself out of fear or depression and see how truly good things are! P.S. Gratitude is a phenomenal way to close your day. *****Assignment:** Every night this week, just before you fall asleep, think of 5 things for which you are truly grateful.... Don't just think, but feel each one of them so much so that you smiling! This practice will guarantee a positive start to your next day!

Coping Skills

Source: <http://www.thehelpfulcounselor.com/18-coping-skills-strategies-for-children-and-teens/>

1. Deep breathing: Everyone says to take deep breaths, but not all breaths (even deep ones) are equal. Expanding the diaphragm is important to get the full effect. I love the Teacher Tipster's Hot Chocolate Breathing technique!!! Not sure if I love using the technique to teach deep breathing or that I get to working in a delicious cup of hot chocolate (when appropriate...sometimes we just pretend).

2. Breathe2Relax App: Displays relaxing pictures and sounds while the user takes deep breaths. It's **FREE!** <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/breathe2relax/id425720246?mt=8>

3. Five Senses: List/think of two things for each of our senses. 2 things you see, 2 things you hear, 2 things you feel, 2 things you smell, and 2 things you taste. This activity can be very intense when used to explore traumatic events. I prefer to use it for them to revisit a happy memory. For instance my happy memory is going to the cabin with my kids:

2 things I see: sunsets and my kids jumping off of the dock

2 things I hear: the waves of the water and laughter

2 things I feel: the warmth of the sun and the coolness of the water

2 things I smell: suntan lotion and fresh cherry pie

2 things I taste: hamburgers cooked over charcoal and (did I already say) cherry pie

Ahhh...I feel better already! :)

4. Fluidity App: Use your finger to make the shapes move and change colors. Very soothing! Also **FREE!** <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fluidity-hd/id399403909?mt=8>

Career Exploration

1. Visit the CSU, Chico Career Center! <http://www.csuchico.edu/careers/> or call them at (530) 898-5253 to schedule an appointment together.

2. Encourage your mentee to Job Shadow and guide/assist with the process of setting it up. Job shadowing is an activity in which youth gain an up-close look at the world of work by accompanying a professional or professionals in the workplace as they do their work. Job shadowing provides an opportunity to see firsthand what tasks a professional does, to learn what skills and knowledge it takes to do the tasks, and to get a feel for what the work environment and routine is like. *Source:* <http://www.nwd-youth.info/innovative-strategies/practice-briefs/career-exploration-in-action>

Goal Setting

1. Five fun Goal Setting activities: <http://www.schedulehopper.com/5-fun-goal-setting-activities/>

2. Goal Setting Worksheet: There is real power behind *writing down your Goals!*

My Goals

Goal Statement	Steps I will take to make this happen	To be completed by: (Date)	Who is responsible? Who can support me?
	1. 2. 3.		
	1. 2. 3.		

My Strengths, Talents, Assets & Resources that will help me achieve this:

Enhancing Well Being Through Health Promotion

1. Visit the CSU, Chico Counseling and Wellness Center and learn about the services provided! <http://www.csuchico.edu/counseling/>

Also check out UMatter for Tips on Self Care for the Mind, Body & Soul:
<http://www.csuchico.edu/umatter/>

2. Visit the CSU, Chico Student Health Center and learn about the services provided!
<http://www.csuchico.edu/shs/index.shtml>

3. 101 Health and Wellness Tips for College Students; topics include Exercise, Sleep, Sexual Health, Illness, Stress, and Mental Health: http://www.rncentral.com/nursing-library/careplans/101_health_and_wellness_tips_for_college_students

4. Balance – Academics, Work and Social Life:
http://www.healthservices.camden.rutgers.edu/topics_balance

Pride in Ethnicity and Race

1. Racial and Ethnic Identity and Development – Article to spark conversation:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic551690.files/Chavez%20and%20Guido%20Debrito.pdf>

PATH Scholars Mentor Weekly/Biweekly Session Log

Month/Year: _____

Mentor:	Mentee:
Date of Meeting: _____	
Topic of Meeting: <input type="checkbox"/> Skill Building <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Setting <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please list: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Activity	
Details of meeting:	

Mentor:	Mentee:
Date of Meeting: _____	
Topic of Meeting: <input type="checkbox"/> Skill Building <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Setting <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please list: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Activity	
Details of meeting:	

Mentor:	Mentee:
Date of Meeting: _____	
Topic of Meeting: <input type="checkbox"/> Skill Building <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Setting <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please list: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Activity	
Details of meeting:	

Mentor:	Mentee:
Date of Meeting: _____	
Topic of Meeting: <input type="checkbox"/> Skill Building <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Setting <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Development	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please list: _____) <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Activity	
Details of meeting:	

Please submit your logs at the end of each month to the PATH Scholars Program Coordinator via email: fosteryouth@csuchico.edu

Mentor/Mentee Pre/Post Survey

1. I believe a mentoring relationship is most effective when facilitated through a structured *Formal Program*.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. The *Training* provided is/was sufficient in this mentoring program.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. *Expectations and Responsibilities* in this mentoring program are/were clearly stated.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. The mentor/mentee pair should *Meet Regularly* (weekly/biweekly).

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. The mentor/mentee *Matching Process* should be facilitated.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I believe that I have the ability to form or formed a *Close Emotional Connection* with my mentor/mentee.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. I believe it is important for the mentee to select which *Type of Mentor* (peer, staff, faculty, community member) he/she wants.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I believe there is a *Value* to the mentoring relationship.

Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I believe I can make or made *a Difference* through my mentoring relationship.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

10. Please provide any additional feedback that would improve this mentoring program:
