Mentoring at Critical Transitions: Faculty Readiness from Admission to Completion

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Monterey, CA
2009 ETS/CGS Award for Innovation in Promoting Success in Graduate Education: From Admissions Through Completion
MCT Team

- Dean
- Associate Dean
- Assistant Dean
- Director of Outreach Recruitment and Retention
- Director of Analysis and Policy
- Coordinator of Professional Development Programs
Developing a Vision

- Multiple brainstorming sessions

- Informed by many previous efforts
  - Student and faculty mentoring and wellness reports by Graduate Student Assistants to the Dean and Chancellor
  - Professors for the Future projects
  - Analysis of NRC report data on completion and attrition rates
  - Analysis of UC Davis Doctoral Student Retention Survey

- Focus on academic hurdles/milestones
- Focus on faculty
Doctoral Retention Survey

- Task Force on Graduate Student Retention, authorized by Graduate Council and Office of Graduate Studies
- Administered in 2009 to all 3,400+ doctoral students to assess factors that influence doctoral student retention and success at UC Davis
- 52.7% response rate representative of demographics of student population
- Sections on Admissions Process and Expectations, Academic and Personal Support, Program Environment and Curricular Processes & Procedures, Research Experience, Financial Support and Career Advising
Philosophy of the MCT Program

• Want to create a culture that supports academic socialization, mentoring and inclusivity

• Recognition that faculty are instrumental to the quality of graduate student life and academic success

• Seek to transform the institution in the stated focus areas

• Identify 3 critical transitions:
  1) Applicant to graduate student
  2) Coursework to research
  3) Research to career
Structure of the MCT Program

- Proposals from programs wanting to participate
- Initial 2-day retreat
- Prepare package of information for each program including data for comparison institutions
- Monthly MCT seminars with invited speakers
- Closing retreat and MCT certification
- Mini-grant proposals from participating programs
Proposal Writing Process

- Incorporate information from the literature on student success
- Use data to make a quantitative case (doctoral survey, results of PhD Completion Project, analysis of NRC data)
- Address alignment with institutional goals and current trends in graduate education
- Address program evaluation, sustainability and institutional transformation
- Writing as a team effort, with one lead
Attention to Diversity

- Adopted a broad definition of diversity/inclusivity
- Seminars addressed challenges faced by
  - internationals students
  - underrepresented minority students
  - women in science
  - students with disabilities
  - students from low socio-economic backgrounds
  - LGBT students
Engaging Programs: Mini-grant Proposals

- Each participating program or group invited to submit a proposal for up to $4,000 of funding

- Proposed activities expected to embody concepts learned and developed during the MCT program; also expected to disseminate concepts to colleagues

- Examples of proposed activities
  - Faculty retreat
  - Student retreat to foster community and communication
  - Recruiting events to ensure greater awareness at admission
Timing

• Challenge that award recipient is notified in October, award received in December

• MCT was designed so that final planning occurred during remainder of first academic year and actual program ran during second academic year of award

• Program mini-grants awarded during late spring and summer of second year
Questions?

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University of California, Davis