We're All in This Together: Gendered Role Identification in Mentor-Protégé Relationship?

Leigh Ann Danzey-Bussell, Ball State University
Brenda Riemer, Eastern Michigan University

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Following our roundtable discussion at NASSM in London, Ontario, (2011) it became evident that further investigation into the mentor-protégé relationship would be beneficial to sport management practitioners. As has been articulated in the literature, the more we learn from experienced faculty, the more success we will have in our careers (Farren, 2001; Baker & Andrew, 2007). Without this process we may continue to see the same results that Dooris and Guidos (2006) found when they reported that only 53% of faculty hired at research universities became tenured while 42% resigned prior to the tenure decision.

Berberet (2008) reported that less than half of the junior faculty believed they were sufficiently prepared for grant writing, researching, teaching, advising students or service to the institution. A 2008 University of Maryland study supported this claim, noting that navigating the intricacies of a faculty member is critical. This report went on to state that mentoring programs not only aid in the retention of high quality faculty members, but aids in the recruitment of them as well. Felder (2002) contended that becoming a successful faculty member at a research university is no trivial undertaking. People are not born knowing how to prepare and deliver effective lectures, make good use of the growing power of instructional technology, write rigorous but fair assignments and exams, help students deal with a bewildering array of academic and personal problems, build a world-class research program, manage research and teaching assistants, and balance the endless and often conflicting time demands imposed by teaching, research, service, and personal life (p.1).

This research pursued the identification of significant elements of the mentor-protégé relationship, through identifying expectations for each role and assessed the outcome of the relationship as identified by both mentor and protégé. A total of 156 current sport studies faculty completed an on-line mentoring survey. Gender was used as a control variable in an effort to establish various differences that might be critical to the creation of our mentoring framework. Preliminary data indicate that female faculty members receive mentoring about the tenure process, but that male faculty members receive more informal mentoring about grant writing, and other skills that lead to tenure and promotion.

This investment in our future is critical, but research on mentoring within sport studies remains elusive to some extent. Current faculty need to be aggressive in establishing a formalized system for mentoring new faculty as we are responsible for the future of our discipline; especially mentoring our own endangered species, tenured female faculty (Massengale, 2009; Pastore, 2002; Weaver & Chelladurai, 1999). But what does this “system” look like? We will present an innovative framework that supports the collegial obligations to prepare not only our students for the future, but our junior faculty as “the future” of sport management education.