Transitioning from Mentee to Mentor for Sport Management Faculty: Understanding Barriers and Needs

Marlene Dixon, Texas A&M University
Donna Pastore, The Ohio State University
Jess Dixon, University of Windsor
Jennifer McGarry, University of Connecticut
Nefertiti Walker, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Jim Weese, Western University
Dan Mahony, Winthrop University

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In sport management, mentoring has been studied from the perspectives of student-athletes, coaches, doctoral students, and athletic administrators (Beres & Dixon, 2014, 2016; Chester & Mondello, 2012; McDowell, Weaver & Chelladurai, 2002; Pastore, 2003; Young, 1990). A recent study on mid-career sport management faculty found that post-tenure faculty members perceive they lack opportunities for further career development once they earn tenure (Pastore et al., in press). One of those opportunities is to be involved in mentoring relationships that would benefit their career progression, while affording them an opportunity to give back.

High quality mentoring relationships greatly benefit both junior and mid-career faculty in the short- and long-term (e.g., Ghosh & Rejo, 2013; Kram & Ragins, 2007). However, mid-career faculty members are often hesitant to become mentors, and many who take on these roles are not effective in their implementation (Carey & Weissman, 2010; Waxman, Collins, and Slough, 2009). Why is this transition problematic? How could we remove barriers to transitioning from mentee to mentor? How can we better demonstrate to mentees the benefits of becoming a mentor and encourage faculty to make this transition? Finally, how can we better understand effective mentoring, and thereby train and develop effective mentors?

The purpose of this interactive symposium is to explore mentoring relationships for mid-career sport management faculty with a particular focus on enhancing the transition from mentee to mentor. In doing so, we first explore the concept and roles of mentoring, then the benefits of mentoring for both mentees and mentors, and finally we explore potential avenues for moving forward.

Background and Development of Mentoring Concepts
The concept of mentoring derives from Greek mythology, where Odysseus entrusted the care of his son, Telemachus, to his friend Mentor when he left to fight the Trojan War (Wright & Smith, 2000). In this relationship, Mentor provided guidance, teaching, and developmental assistance to the young man. In early work in the study of mentoring, concepts largely followed this original derivation, where mentoring was largely seen as a relationship where mentors “go out of their way to successfully help their protégés [i.e., mentees] meet life goals” (Schweitzer, 1993, p. 50). The focus was top-down, and primarily interested in the benefits that protégés received from the relationship.

Research on mentoring has consistently revealed benefits that junior faculty accrue from being mentored. Well-documented outcomes include career development and satisfaction, increased interest in academic careers, enhanced faculty productivity, improved success for women and underrepresented minorities in particular, increased likelihood of promotion in academia, improved self-efficacy in teaching, research and professional development, increased the time clinical educators spend in scholarly activities, and decreased work-family conflict (Chao, Waltz, & Gardner, 1992; Kram, 1985; Palepu et al., 1998; Ragins & Cotton, 1999; Scandura & Williams, 2004; Wasserstein et al., 2007).

More recent work, however, has revealed that mentors also benefit from mentoring relationships. In fact, it has been suggested that mentoring should be more appropriately viewed as dyadic, reciprocal, both personal and professional,
and mutually beneficial (Allen, 2007; Carey & Weissman, 2010; Eby, et al., 2006). In fact, mentors report both instrumental and relational benefits from mentoring relationships. These benefits include job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, developing a personal support network, information and feedback from mentees, satisfaction from helping others, recognition (e.g., accelerated promotion), and improved career success (e.g., Ghosh & Reio, 2013).

Despite the strong evidence of mentoring benefits, only one third to one half of faculty report having a mentor (Ramanan et al., 2002), and much evidence suggests that faculty face numerous barriers to becoming mentors (Carey & Weissman, 2010; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Waxman et al., 2009). For example, Carey and Weismann (2010) posited that potential mentors might be uncertain about what successful mentoring entails, underestimate what they have to offer, and lack training and development to enhance their skills as mentors. Waxman and colleagues (2009) suggested that mid-career faculty feel unable to relate to this new, very different cohort of junior faculty. Ragins and Scandura (1999) argued that potential mentors, especially those who were not mentored themselves, overestimate the costs and underestimate the benefits of mentoring.

### Purpose and Benefits of the Symposium

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Given even the brief background on mentoring provided in the current narrative, there is a clear need to help potential mentors understand the benefits of mentoring, and provide encouragement and support for them to become effective mentors. The proposed symposium will address both of these topics. The panel is comprised of a diverse selection of associate and full professors, current and former department chairs in sport management, as well as a current Vice-Provost and President from a variety of institutions across the US and Canada. Each of the panel members has experience both as a mentee and a mentor. In addition, several have experience as university policy makers, and others conduct research in mentoring.

We will first discuss, from the literature and our personal experiences, the benefits that mid-career faculty accrue from engaging in mentoring relationships, and what is understood as effective mentoring. Attendees will learn about the benefits of being a mentor and be able to engage in dialogue regarding their own perceptions, anxieties, and experiences with mentoring.

Second, we will review best practices in mentoring development based on benchmark studies, related literature, and personal experiences. In this section, we will discuss how to provide support so more people will transition to mentoring roles and be more effective in those roles. Again, active audience engagement is welcome and encouraged for this discussion of best practices.