Staff Mentoring Program Guide

2014
MENTORING PROGRAM FOR NEW STAFF

Mentoring is all about learning. The value and purpose of a mentoring program for new employees is to increase employee retention and transition new employees into an organization. Networking, whether formal or informal, is key to the transitioning and retention of employees. Employees who have mentors are more likely to have greater job satisfaction. Mentoring programs can help eliminate obstacles, difficulties, or stumbling blocks new employees might encounter. Effective mentoring programs should allow new employees to freely ask questions and express themselves in order to gain the information necessary to effectively perform their jobs.

Mentoring is also a critical component in the retention and success of women and minorities. A mentor can help a new employee discover how to survive in an environment that may not be entirely welcoming to him/her. Mentoring is a valuable tool which can be used to build an effective and diverse organization as it assists to ensure that all employees are equally given the opportunity to be successful.

Goals

The goals of new employee mentoring are to:

- Accelerate an employee’s perspective/understanding of the college and adaptation to a new position;
- Increase employee loyalty;
- Promote diversity;
- Connect employees with one another (formal and informal/professional and social networking);
- Open the lines of communication;
- Look after new employees’ welfare and provide employees with a person to listen to concerns as well as successes;
- Safeguard the college’s new hire investment; and,
- Enable employees to feel welcome and to believe they have a career or career path.

Informal Program

What little research exists related to community college mentoring does support the idea that informal mentoring programs are more successful than formal programs. Informal mentoring programs are not rigidly structured. Informal mentoring programs tend to be more successful for the following reasons:

- Informal mentoring relationships last longer than formal relationships
- Mentor/mentee relationship is not subject to evaluation
- Different types of networking occur, both professional and social
• No time limits are given as to when specific activities within a mentoring relationship must occur
• More commitment to the relationship exists, which can lead to more coaching
• One-on-one interactions across the college occur
• More friendships are built from a natural mentor/mentee match as opposed to a forced match

Scope of Participation

Participants would include all new and recently hired employees in the following job classifications:

• Full-time and Part-time Administrative Classified Staff
• Full-time and Part-time Support Staff

Mentors & Choosing Mentors

It is vitally important that the relationship between a mentor and mentee be based on four key factors:

• Trust
• Respect
• Commitment
• Confidentiality

Individuals who are mentors should possess the following characteristics:

• Leadership qualities
• People oriented behavior
• Successful in their job performance
• Knowledge of the college’s mission, values, vision, and strategic priorities
• Commitment to developing staff
• Willingness to share personal experiences
• Willingness to assist others to be successful

The Mentoring Program will be coordinated through the collaborative relationship between the Classified Staff Executive Council (CSEC) and Human Resources (HR). Communication of the Mentoring Program will occur as follows:

• Current BVCTC staff will be informed of the program via the college’s various communication venues.
• A SharePoint site devoted to the New Staff Mentoring Program will be created and maintained. The site will be a central location for all things related to the mentoring program, including various forms.
• New staff members will be made aware of the Mentoring Program by a representative from Human Resources during the initial orientation session.

The CSEC is responsible for maintaining the mentor database. All mentors must have training prior to beginning a mentoring relationship with a new staff member. Training will be provided to mentors through the HR Department.

Qualifications for a Mentor

• Must be a full-time staff member as defined by this document and have at least one (1) year of employment at BVCTC
• Familiarity with the policies and programs available at BVCTC
• Convey a positive image of the college (committed to the college’s mission and purpose and exemplifies its expectations and core values)
• Must not be new employee’s supervisor and preferably not employed in the same department
• Participation in a mentor training session provided by the HR Department
• Commitment to a three (3) to four (4) month mentoring relationship, allowing two (2) to four (4) hours per month to meet with the new employee
• Available to the new employee by telephone, email, and in person

Process

All new staff members will be made aware of the Mentoring Program by a representative from Human Resources during the initial orientation session.

• Candidates for staff mentors must be willing to volunteer and obtain their supervisor’s approval prior to HR review.
• HR will select a mentor for the new staff member based on their position from a pool of approved employees.

The mentor will make contact with the new employee within seven (7) days of appointment to begin the mentoring relationship.

Classified Staff Executive Council will sponsor at least one mentoring meeting during the first three months of the new employees’ employment.

The mentor and mentee will evaluate the mentoring relationship and program after a period of 3 – 4 months.

Guidelines for a Mentoring Relationship

Mentors should provide a support network for a new employee. They should encourage participation in college meetings and activities, pass on information about the college
and experiences the mentor has encountered, help the mentee navigate office politics, and encourage professional development. A Mentor Checklist is provided to mentors to assist them with the mentoring process.

- The mentor will welcome the new employee, respond to questions that have arisen, and set a time for their first meeting (this should occur during the first month of employment.

- Based upon the needs of a new employee, the mentor may provide a campus tour, introductions to other college employees, and assistance with becoming familiar with college policies, programs, mission, priorities, activities, events, etc.

- The mentor and mentee should meet a minimum of once per month to discuss the new employee’s experience at BVCTC and to address any concerns or issues that the new employee has. The mentor should actively schedule meetings since the mentees aren’t familiar with the campus yet.

- The mentor and mentee may wish to attend college meetings and events such as President’s Advisory Council, lectures, or other activities offered on campus.

- The mentor should provide encouragement and inspire dedication to BVCTC and its mission.

- If either the mentor or the mentee is not experiencing a positive relationship, both have the option of selecting another partner and are to contact Human Resources.

- If the mentor is aware of any negative experiences or issues that the new employee may have encountered, he or she should contact Human Resources provided the sharing of this information does not compromise the confidentiality agreements established between the mentor and mentee.

- Confidentiality is a very important aspect of a mentoring relationship. Both the mentor and the mentee may learn personal information about each other that if revealed might have serious consequences. Both the mentor and mentee should use the college’s checklist to define how confidentiality will be defined in the mentoring relationship. (Refer to the Confidentiality Checklist document.)

**Suggested Mentoring Activities**

To help provide a support network for a new employee, the mentor may want to engage in some of the following activities:

- Meet for breakfast or lunch
- Tour the campus
- Visit various departments on campus
• Attend a college meeting
• Introduce employee to other faculty and staff
• Explain college procedures
• Discuss emergency preparedness procedures
• Discuss various employee events and accompany the new staff member to them
• Review the college’s mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities
• Review benefits and staff orientation
• Discuss the mentoring program and what the responsibilities and expectations are
• Discuss each other’s background and professional development/career goals

Coordinating Program and Training

The Classified Staff Executive Council and HR will be responsible for coordinating the Mentoring Program and completing the duties listed below:

• Communicate the program to current staff
• Maintain a database of potential, qualified mentors
• Coordinate and provide training to mentors
• Contact the chosen mentor to gain his/her agreement to be a mentor and follow-up with a confirmation notice
• Communicate the program to new staff members during orientation
• Conduct an informal yet organized introductory meeting to the program with the mentor (and mentee, if possible) to provide necessary information and forms
• Sponsor at least one mentoring meeting during the first three months of the new employees’ employment
• Evaluate and assess the Mentoring Program (distribute, collect, log, and analyze participant feedback) and make recommendations for refinement and improvement

Measuring Success

To assess the value of the Mentoring Program, mentees and mentors will be asked to complete evaluation forms. Refer to the New Staff Mentoring Program Feedback forms. Activities that have promoted successful mentor relationships will be referenced in future training sessions and orientations.

• Retention (annual turnover report and exit interview analysis from HR)
• Employee engagement (surveys)
• Career success of mentee (performance evaluations from department supervisors)
• Feedback from mentor and mentee (participant feedback forms)
Addendum One

Mentor Training Overview and Training Objectives
A mentor is someone who serves as a counselor or guide. Being asked to serve as a mentor is an honor. It indicates that the organization has confidence in the person’s abilities and trusts him or her to have a positive impact on another person.

Mentoring for new employees not only helps employees settle into their jobs and the organization's environment, but also increases employee retention. The use of a mentor may be an informal, short-term situation or a more formal, long-term assignment. Moraine Valley Community College utilizes an informal program.

In an informal mentoring program, the mentor helps the new employee for a limited period of time. Advice from the mentor may include the most basic of information about everyday routines including tips about “do’s and don’ts” not found in the employee contract or handbook to helping the employee learn job responsibilities. A mentor available to answer routine questions also saves time for the supervisor or manager. In addition, new employees often feel more comfortable asking questions of a mentor instead of a supervisor.

In a program of this type, mentors are volunteers. Forcing someone who does not want to serve as a mentor to do so can quickly create problems. Individuals with a negative attitude, who might encourage a new employee to gripe and complain, should not serve as a mentor.

Parameters

Both a mentor and the new staff member (mentee) need to understand the parameters of the mentoring relationship. These may be more important in a long-term, formal mentoring situation, but can also influence the success of short-term, informal mentoring.

- The mentor’s role is to teach, advise, and help transition the new employee into the college. The mentor does not interfere with the supervisor or manager’s decisions. The new employee, while expected to seek the mentor’s advice on various issues, is not bound to accept that advice.

- Confidentiality is important. Both parties need to feel confident that discussions remain between them—not immediately relayed to a supervisor or manager.

- Certain areas may be considered off-limits. The mentor needs to outline these areas at the beginning.
• Decide in advance how you will communicate. Will you have regularly scheduled meetings? Will discussion be face-to-face, over the telephone or even via Email. Both parties need to make their preferences known at the beginning and reach an acceptable compromise if the preferences are different.

• Discuss time limits. If the mentoring period has a time limit the mentor should state that at the beginning.

• Discuss time commitments. Again, this may be more critical for the long-term, formal mentoring. The mentor must expect to give the new employee adequate time, but the newcomer should not expect excessive amounts of time. Setting a schedule at the beginning (example: meet once a week the first month, then once a month after that) avoids irritating misunderstandings later.

• Openness and respect. Both the mentor and the person being mentored need to be open and honest, yet respect the other. A mentor who withholds important information or comments does not contribute to the other person’s success. However, such comments should be delivered with tact and courtesy--and (even if somewhat hurtful) received with an open mind.

• Professional relationship. The relationship between the mentor and his or her mentee is a professional one, not a personal one. This is particularly important for the new employee to understand.

• Compatibility. It would be helpful to use some kind of matching system for the mentee and mentor. This will help both understand each other’s communication styles, strengths, and limitations.

Expected Outcomes

At the end of training, a mentor should be able to:

• Practice active listening skills to help assist in the new employee’s transition
• Practice asking a variety of questions to help new employee resolve issues
• Provide non-judgmental feedback
• Make directive comments and provide suggestions appropriately
• Identify effective ways to help a new employee deal with change and adjust to a new environment
• Convey a welcoming and positive representation of the college

Addendum Two

Confidentiality Checklist
CONFIDENTIALITY CHECKLIST

Confidentiality is a very important aspect of a mentoring relationship. Both the mentor and the mentee may learn personal information about each other that if revealed might have serious consequences. Both the mentor and mentee should use the college’s checklist to define how confidentiality will be defined in the mentoring relationship.

Which of the following assumptions about confidentiality do you hold?

- What we discuss stays between us for as long as we are engaged in our mentoring relationship.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- If asked by your supervisor, I can freely discuss our conversation.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- After our 3-4 month initial mentoring relationship has ended, it is okay to talk about what we discussed or how we related.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- If there is a demonstrated need to know, I can appropriately disclose our conversations, my impressions, or anything else that pertains to the relationship.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- What we say between us stays unless you give me permission to talk about it with others.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- Some issues will be kept confidential, while others will not.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- It is okay to discuss how we related to one another but not the content of our discussions.
  
  □ Yes □ No

- It is okay to talk about what we talk about as long as it is positive.
  
  □ Yes □ No
Addendum Three

Participant Feedback Form
NEW STAFF MENTORING PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK - MENTEE FORM

1. Did you feel that you gained knowledge and information from the mentoring program?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

2. Did you feel that the program provided a meaningful introduction to BVCTC?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

3. Did you feel that you were provided with networking opportunities?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

4. How would you describe your mentoring relationship?
   - [ ] Positive
   - [ ] Somewhat Positive
   - [ ] Negative

5. Briefly describe what your experience has been like as a participant in the New Staff Mentoring Program and the aspects of your experience in the Mentoring Program that were most beneficial to you.

6. What form of communication do you feel worked the best in interacting with your mentor? (i.e., via telephone, in-person, etc.)

7. What are some do’s and don’ts you experienced in establishing the mentoring relationship with your mentor?

8. If you had a positive experience with your mentor, list three reasons why the relationship worked.

9. If you had a negative experience with your mentor, list three reasons why the relationship did not work.

10. Please provide any comments or suggestion for improvement to the Mentoring Program.