

Virtually Implementing a Novel Structured Team-based Mentorship Program: Lessons Learned

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Background

Scholarly literature highlights the benefits of mentorship with emphasis on:

- improved engagement
- job satisfaction
- academic promotion
- leadership preparation
- skill development
- career advancement
- retention¹

Conversely, a lack of mentoring has been found to decrease job satisfaction, slow career development, and reduce academic productivity for women.²

References:

1. McGuire LK, Bergen MR and Polan ML. Career advancement for women faculty in a U.S. School of Medicine: Perceived needs. *Academic Medicine*. 2004; 79(4): 319-25.
2. Blood EA, Ulrich NJ, Hirschfeld-Becker DR, Seely EW, Connelly MT, Warfield CA, et al. Academic women faculty: Are they finding the mentoring they need? *Journal of Women's Health*. 2012; 21(11): 1201-08. 10.1089/jwh.2012.3529

Methods

- The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTCSOM) Department of Internal Medicine launched the Mentorship Matters 12-month pilot project in January 2022 with the goal of serving 24 mentees and 8 mentors.
- Mentorship Matters utilizes a novel approach to engagement. The program supports faculty in priority areas, aligned with their needs for career advancement, via curated curricular content and development of an individual career map (ICM).
- Mentorship teams, comprised of one mentor and three mentees, meet every month virtually as a full group for specific interactive education.
- Mentorship teams then break into small groups for targeted individual ICM development, session topic discussion, and peer feedback with focus on strategic next steps.

Results

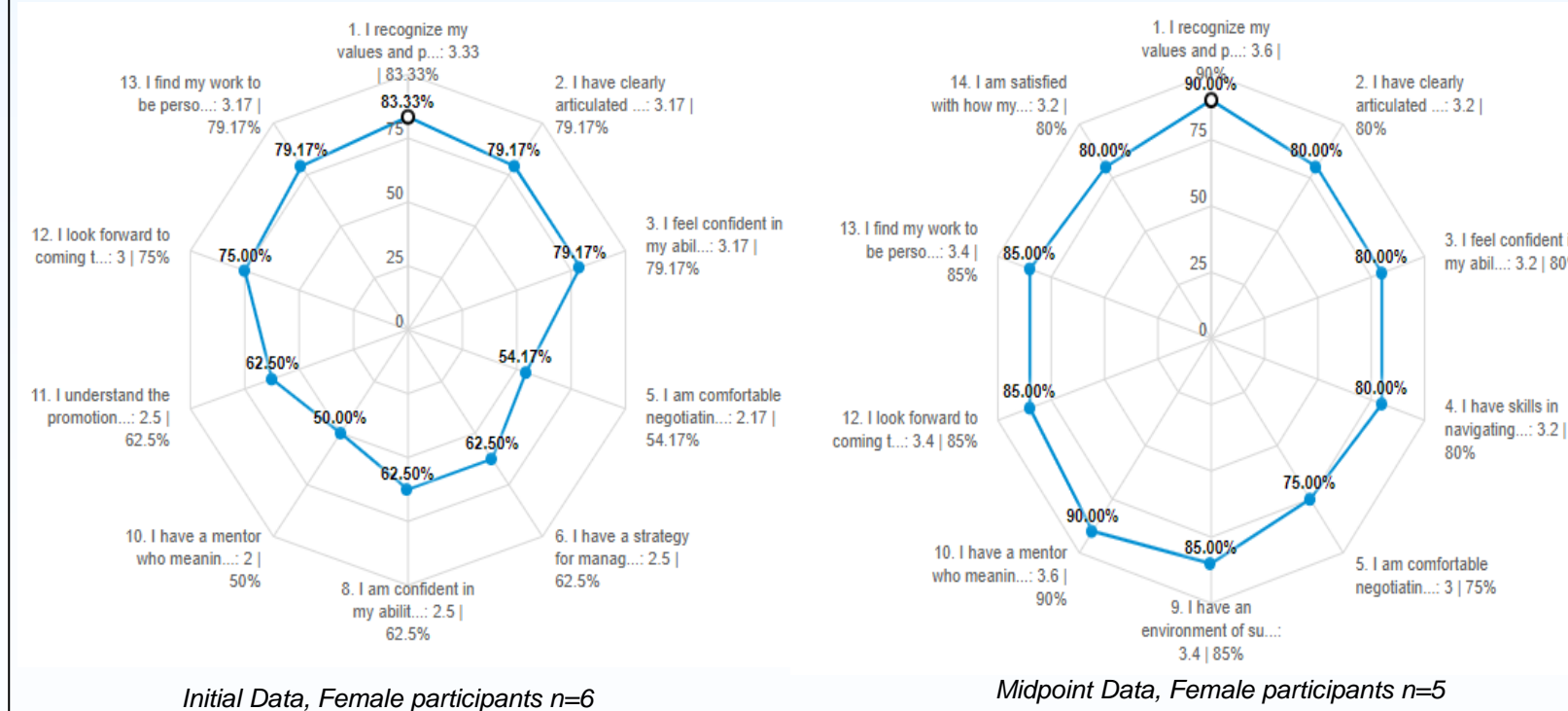
A baseline survey assessing demographic data, knowledge and experience with mentoring, and confidence in career advancement of mentees exposed a lack of mentorship prior to program participation.

Initial data indicated female respondents are less likely than male respondents to:

- ~have clearly articulated career goals
- ~see themselves as having the skills to navigate their own success
- ~understand the promotions process
- ~exhibit less confidence in their ability to progress in their careers or present academic work
- ~feel less comfortable negotiating what they need to succeed in their careers

A midpoint survey demonstrates positive trends for both female and male participants. Female participants noted:

- increased confidence in ability to progress in their careers and to present academic work.
- feel more comfortable negotiating for what is needed to succeed in their careers and have the skills to do so.
- view mentoring relationship as meaningfully contributing to success and creating an environment of support and guidance around career advancement.



Conclusions

1. **Intentionally providing** a structured curricula in a **virtual team-based** format results in positive outcomes, particularly for women.
2. New **mentorship relationships**, across subspecialties, can be **established effectively** in a virtual format.
3. While implemented within the Department of Internal Medicine at VTCSOM, this model is likely **applicable and implementable** to other departments and institutions.

Next Steps

