TITLE: Moving Beyond a First-Year Mentoring Program: Where Do We Go From Here?

AUTHOR: Kirk, Y.

ORGANIZATION: University of Southern California

**Abstract**

This paper examines the efficacy of a second-year clinical, faculty-to-faculty mentoring program at the University of Southern California in the Marshall School of Business, Center for Management Communication where anticipated growth requires a new vision for the mentoring program. Adjunct faculty participation continues to be an effective group of well-respected educators since the new mentoring program was initiated over a year ago. After a year of successful outcomes for both mentors and mentees participating in the mentoring program, a number of growth issues have come to the forefront. At this point the challenge of moving beyond first-year successes necessitates a plan that does not pigeon-hole adjuncts as needing newcomer training but instead, one that moves them towards significant inclusion in the department. The purpose of this report is to share thoughts concerning the need to move beyond a nascent mentoring program to one that taps into future goals where older faculty are retiring and remaining faculty and adjuncts can assume roles that will one day be the foundation for the department's future. Furthermore, this discussion addresses fundamental issues concerning department relationships, envisioning new programs and exploring continued mentoring program development so both adjunct and full-time faculty can both be engaged in visionary projects. The relevant information for this paper comes from meetings and the open literature on the topic of strategic collaboration and the impact it has on coaching environments that foster academic relationships.

### The University of Southern California’s (USC) mentoring program in the Center for Management Communication (CMC) at the Marshall School of Business (MSB) is now moving into its third year at the start of the 2014 fall semester. Last year’s 2013 Mentoring Conference theme centered on the “Impact and Effectiveness of Developmental Relationships” where the mentoring coordinator evaluated the department’s first-year, faculty-to-faculty mentoring program. The conference presentation provided a history of an evolving mentoring program in the Marshall School of Business and how it became clear that there was a distinct need for two separate faculty committees—for tenured faculty and clinical faculty to oversee tenure and clinical program needs—because of complicated issues and goal complexities of faculty working in their respective programs.

### In reviewing the development of CMC’s mentoring program and how it grew, the early Peer Observation Program (POP) could not be overlooked since it was the kernel that established a mentoring setting that would 1) help align teaching objectives with teaching outcomes, 2) facilitate a method to ensure that class content and professionalism would enrich and fit within the context of Marshall’s and USC’s overall teaching mission, and 3) establish a process for defining expectations for those participating in the program as expressed in a 2009 email to the faculty (Philadelphia, M., Little, S., Hubbard, R.S., Owens, J.). Finally, the paper moved to an explanation of POP’s program goals; the duties that faculty agreed to assume; how mentors and mentees were prepared; and speculation on why support dwindled after a couple of semesters.

### In short, last year’s conference paper introduced CMC’s mentoring program to attendees to describe what the department did to get the ball rolling. Specifically, it explained the rationale behind goals and strategies for the mentoring program; provided a description of structured meetings with tasks to accomplish and how members evaluated the program when it concluded after the first academic year. All in all, the first-year mentoring program was considered a success. A copy of last year’s 2013 mentoring conference paper is available to those who request it.

### Adjunct Faculty Inclusion: 2014 mentoring program challenges

### At the conclusion of the 2014 spring semester, course demand and department growth prompted CMC to advertise for full-time faculty, hire additional adjunct faculty, and promote two adjunct teaching staff to lecturer status. Both promoted (adjunct to lecturer) faculty members consistently received high teaching evaluations for the work they had accomplished in upper-division business writing and strategic business communication core classes. Overall, their students had consistently commented that their instructors’ professional business backgrounds brought added value to student learning. Both have shown competence at interpreting course objectives and learning goals and have easily joined the ranks of the department, earning collegial respect. Both are reliable educators and moved beyond the mentoring that newcomers receive when new to the department. As such, they are new cases for reinterpreting the kind of mentoring that is appropriate for them.

### In researching information for this paper, it was surprising to learn how many universities across the nation undervalue adjunct faculty by not providing new faculty with mentors or mentoring programs; not furnishing office space for doing work or a place to meet with students; no telephone access or office support; denying access to department meetings or other services that can easily put a drain on their ability to get their work done. In contrast, other universities and colleges do provide adjunct faculty with good working environments that allow them to concentrate on teaching. This paper explores the notion that inclusion is an important concept that acknowledges that there is value that every faculty member brings to a department. More specifically, departments must find ways to indicate that non-full time faculty are valued. Mentoring programs ought to take up the challenge of inclusiveness since these programs have the capacity to affect department morale. And this paper explores what can be done.

### Adjunct faculty are professionals in their own right but could “enjoy” further department inclusion to acknowledge that they are excellent complements to academic departments because they contribute to the health and growth and take on the challenges of teaching overloads. This is sometimes easy to forget when departments give more acknowledgement to faculty who are publishing, attending conferences, and serving on committees. So, part-time faculty can often feel neglected, even left alone to accomplish their work, while others are taking on more attractive work to help build their profession. It’s vital that good mentoring programs impact morale in positive ways, provide encouragement and give a nod to the idea that not only do adjuncts contribute to teaching efforts but they also fill needed teaching roles, sometimes without much preparation time to do so.

### It is important to remember that adjuncts can easily be forgotten and this paper addresses the issue of inclusion. How can bringing adjuncts “into the fold” be implemented; why is this issue essential; and how does this specific community of educators get recognized for the work they do? And, is there a way to reward this group of educators appropriately? It can’t be denied that adjunct faculty have a high sense for the importance of teamwork and are glad to help out and do pitch if asked. But, is there a point when volunteering to help out becomes abusive when compensation is not a part of the equation? G. Bradley (2007) senior program officer at the American Association of University Professors provides thoughts for compensating adjuncts, among them by “offering some funding for part-time faculty to develop a new course, supervise an independent study course, […] even keeping up membership in disciplinary associations (cited in Bergmann, 35).

### Mentoring teachers is an on-going, complex process and should not involve adjuncts alone. It is well-known that good educators believe they can always do better and that the quest for self-development is an active part of their career. The ones who are successful are the ones who look for ways to develop their expertise so they can remain open-eyed, positive and willing to accept the fact that teaching encompasses the notion that change is necessary. In the 2012 inaugural issue of the *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, Andrew Hobson professor at the University of Brighton, UK and the journal’s Editor-in-Chief defines mentoring as a conscious effort to help participants:

### […] through difficult transitions; it is about smoothing the way, enabling, reassuring. It should unblock the way to change by building [on] self-confidence, self-esteem as well as directing, managing and instructing. Mentoring is concerned with continuing personal as well as professional development […] and professional values come under scrutiny and are subject to change. (pp. 1-2)

### Thus, engaging full-time faculty and asking them to seek and participate in a mentoring environment, in essence, to become a mentee by encouraging them to return to the days when teaching was new and exciting and provided an environment for trying something new is an important mindset for all faculty to maintain. The bottom line is that mentoring programs allow departments to reinterpret the meaning of mentoring. And, every faculty member should be part of a mentoring program.

### Mentoring programs are offered to individuals of all ages to meet a wide variety of purposes that reach across many professional disciplines. In fact:

### Mentoring can be found in almost every professional context. Each context has its own unique characteristics influencing the mentoring that occurs. For example, many community and government agencies use it to foster personal and professional growth. Mentoring in business and industry has become a common practice as a strategy for recruiting, retaining, and promoting high potential talent. Schools of medicine and nursing implement mentoring programs to enhance individuals’ socialization into the profession. […] and veteran teachers can receive on-going support at any point in their careers. (Brondyk & Searby, 2013)

### Much of the open literature for mentoring resides in the health profession because of the unique mentoring models and concepts that are used for developing the careers of students, practitioners, and other health science professionals through interprofessional education (IPE) which is defined as, “occasions when two or more professions learn from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care” (cited in Gilbert, 2005). Because of the collaborative (or perhaps blurred) nature of medical/health and teaching/learning settings, the combined mentor/mentee roles all serve as models for excellence. Think about the situational value that V.T. Brown mentions in her 2009 article “Interprofessional Education—Benefits and Barriers”:

### As a new practitioner, I often wish I understood more about the training of other healthcare professionals. More so, I often wish they understood more about my training. […] As a student, I took two elective interprofessional courses. One of the courses focused on creating services for an urban middle school. The other course was an ethics course in which interprofessional groups discussed various ethical dilemmas related to patient scenarios. In neither of these courses was I leaning pathophysiology or drug therapy alongside my colleagues in medicine or nursing. However, at the end of the course, I left with an appreciation for their thought process[es] and experiences. When providing patient care together, these insights may be more valuable than knowing we learned similar scientific information.

### The aim in asking all levels of faculty to experience working together in programs and even inviting adjunct faculty to take on some unlikely roles is not generally seen in department settings but can set the stage for true “inclusion” by establishing a sense of belonging in the department:

### In short, colleges and universities must either work to create an institutional culture that embraces part-time faculty as credible, legitimate members of the academic profession or else not hire them at all. Failure to create an institutional culture that enables part-time faculty to be effective not only compromises the educational experience of students, it is not equitable. […] Absent in such a culture, any non-use of part-time faculty risks undermining the integrity of the institution. Higher education institutions cannot afford to marginalize adjunct faculty. (Bergmann, 34, 2011)

### So, what does this all mean? Two points are specifically central to the discussion in this paper. First, that adjunct faculty ought to be encouraged to teach in a once-in-a-semester setting where the adjunct and another educator are able to share a classroom experience so teaching and career background are seen as useful, valuable, instructive, even reciprocal so each has an opportunity to teach in the others classroom. And second, that adjunct faculty have an opportunity to develop their careers by participating in a number of environments where they generally have no access in order to encourage career development so every educator in a department can contribute to its health and growth. Research indicates that academic health programs and mentoring models are used on a number of levels that involve placing senior and faculty in a variety of combined learning/teaching situations. And, other educators might take their lead on this.

**Developing opportunities for adjunct faculty professional growth**

### Back in the mid-nineties when I returned to school to complete my education, I had the opportunity to enroll in a highly competitive teaching program where, as a teaching associate, I was encouraged to attend academic/professional conferences as part of my graduate study program completely funded by my English department. I was struck by the immediate value conferences provided to my education in both professional and academic ways. Although I was guided by classroom experts known for their composition and theoretical expertise while in this teaching program, the conference setting increased my awareness for the significance and value that mentoring provided, both in the classroom and at the conference.

### In retrospect, I came away energized from having met new colleagues who freely shared their experiences, in addition to benefitting from fresh perspectives on the latest theoretical concepts gained from sessions I attended, and the lively discussions which ensued during the meals we shared. Being in a different learning venue had much to do with my reactions and since then, I have thought about the two or three conferences I attended while I was in graduate school. With this in mind, it was the exposure to a wide variety of topics over the course of, in most cases, three to four days that I had not considered prior to attending that influenced how I began to think about my education and what I might do as I approached the teaching profession. Over time, I have reflected on the conferences I attended, the papers my mentors encouraged me to deliver and the ensuing sessions that I participated in that have caused me to think about the value of attending conferences. But most of all, I have concerns about adjunct teaching professionals who don’t attend conferences mainly because they are not given the means to do so.

### Thus, as a department mentoring coordinator, I believe it is time to give teaching adjuncts an opportunity to derive benefit from the influence they exert to “expand the talent pool […]. Often, they have a broad background of experience, deep and productive career records, and highly specialized knowledge that is scarce in the overall faculty work force (cited in Bergman, 6). Having listened and spoken with adjunct faculty, especially those employed for three or more years, departments might consider providing them with an opportunity to attend a conference at least once a year, upon the approval of a director, a chair or whatever additional authorization channels are needed, in recognition for the good they do. In terms of inclusion, attending a conference could easily provide the opportunity to share new insights with faculty colleagues—a positive aspect that is easily dismissed or forgotten by faculty who enjoy attending conferences on a regular basis.

### On the topic of attending conferences, Catherine Cherrstrom (2012) a Texas A&M educator of human resource development on graduate through doctoral levels states that:

### […] making connections at a professional conference, the making connections opportunities and best practices also apply to seasoned professionals. [And that the] professional has the opportunity to experience multiple connections and benefits. […] Social cognitive theory contends the learning process is social, involving the interaction and observation of others, and constructivist leaning theory contends meaning is constructed from experience. Conferences offer formal and informal methods of socializing and a variety of experiences with colleagues.

### Attending a conference also falls into several valuable categories: career- and self-development, collegial experiences, and networking opportunities. The experience can, in turn, promote employee loyalty and university exposure that easily motivates other future conference goals such as delivering a conference paper, writing a collaborative paper, contributing to a round table session, even chairing a session or in a practical sense, giving them an opportunity to move on. In a down-to-earth sense, providing adjuncts an opportunity to attend conferences adds to department goodwill and the belief that the adjunct is doing a good job at work. In other words, it is a logical way to give a “pat on the back” and energize careers.

**Expertise sharing in the classroom**

While much of this paper has dwelled on offering adjunct faculty access to conferences and other amenities, inclusion can be promoted in a number of other ways like inviting an adjunct faculty member to deliver a short lecture in another colleague’s class and, in turn, asking the colleague to reciprocate at another time. Many see this kind of teaching as only useful during the hiring process but it doesn’t have to be. In fact, this inter-professional collaboration would allow both instructor and adjunct guest to develop a dialog highlighting two perspectives in the classroom which is a valuable educational tool for both instructors doing the teaching and students receiving it. This is informal mentoring on another level (as opposed to formal mentoring) where both might profit from another’s insights, background credibility or even result in both educators coming to new realizations.

Bergmann (2011) also suggests that inclusion might be realized by:

▪ Inviting adjuncts with specified areas of expertise to share their training and skills in

workshops, seminars, or at convocation.

▪ Providing opportunities for adjunct faculty to share research and pedagogical strategies

with one another and with their full-time colleagues. (34)

If only these two suggestions are implemented, the potential for establishing department loyalty cannot be underestimated and the benefits to other adjuncts and senior faculty can be far reaching.

**Moving on: Technology and e-mentoring**

Adjunct faculty can utilize technology to informally mentor colleagues by showcasing their best teaching practices. Many utilize TED Talks to energize class sessions in ways that depart from traditional teaching methods and to enhance, even generate, classroom discussion. On the other hand, even seasoned educators report using TED Talk sessions to invigorate their own teaching by self-mentoring themselves. A resourceful adjunct instructor can easily take advantage of technology to boost visibility in the department by creating resources they make available to their colleagues. An adjunct colleague might suggest that faculty meetings take a few minutes to discuss what part-time colleagues are doing...and then spearhead the idea. An activity like this has the potential to enhance an adjunct’s visibility who is easily distanced from full-time faculty members during faculty meetings. Why not ask adjunct faculty to emphasize their best teaching skills by capturing their class sessions and making videos available to faculty through a department website or department video library? At the very least, it would be easy to post a list of available videos on a department bulletin board. An adjunct might even enlist the help of a colleague to push an idea forward. Or, why not institute an internal department conference where adjunct faculty are encouraged to submit papers for consideration on an agreed upon theme?

Many full-time faculty members forget that socialization and bringing adjunct faculty “into the fold” are part of their responsibility in facilitating inclusion and developing more reciprocal mentoring relationships. Using a 10–15 minute slot during a faculty meeting would provide credence to all adjunct members who could use recognition in their departments. This is an ideal situation where an adjunct member might easily participate in an informal mentoring process with other department faculty. With technology reaching into realms that depart from the usual presentation resources, departments might make use of a talented adjunct faculty member in their midst who would gladly demonstrate that there’s more to presentations than using PowerPoint slides in the classroom. Futurists like Steven Mintz (2014), Executive Director of the University of Texas System’s Institute for Transformational Learning and a Professor of History at the University of Texas at Austin has stated that universities will, “embrace technology in ways that are very different from today’s PowerPoint slides or digitized lectures. Next generation uses of technology include personalized, adaptive learning pathways […] embedded diagnostics and remediation to address gaps in understanding […]. Having a faculty member who embraces new technology has the potential to change the face of a department by being an immediate resource for all.

Educators and pundits are now attempting to envision what the future holds for education over the next five to ten years. However, with technology advancing in ways that are reminiscent of “future shock” concepts of the seventies, the fact is that for some, the future is here. In predicting what higher education might look like in ten year, S. Mintz (2014) states that mentoring is poised to take on a greater role “in faculty members’ professional lives. Faculty members are most likely to remain essential if they focus on precisely those roles that that only they can offer. These include directing research project […and] modeling professional practice.” As we move past 2014, research indicates that the fast-changing backdrop of mentoring is bound to be affected by technology.”

The purpose of this paper has been to realistically examine the many complexities of faculty-to-faculty mentoring relationships, specifically as they apply to adjunct faculty in higher education. In addition, in identifying issues that adjunct faculty face, there has been an attempt to provide suggestions as to how departments might address the issues that exist when all departmental faculty are not provided an environment for approaching inclusion for part-time, adjunct faculty. The issue of inclusion is complicated by the unpredictable ways that people relate to each other. No one remedy exists to circumvent the fact that “people are people.” In suggesting ways to combat adjunct faculty exclusion, universities have varying policies and funding concerns that may preclude accomplishing suggestions made in this paper. Mentoring continues to be a growing concern in a field that is challenged by many theories and a lack of standardized vocabulary and definitions. And although suggestions for perfecting mentoring do exist, the fact is that a scientific system for analyzing the many concepts involved and results has yet to be established.

References

Bergmann, D. M. *A study of adjunct faculty*. Montana State University. Proquest. UMI

Dissertations Publishing, 2011. 3468611

Brondyk, S., & Searby, L. (2013). Best practices in mentoring: Complexities and possibilities. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 2 (3), 189-203.

Brown, V.T. (2009, December 3). Educational theory and practice. *Interprofessional education— Benefits and barriers*. [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://edtheory blogspot.com/2009/12/12/by-victoria-t.html

Butler, A.J., Whiteman, R.S., & Crow, G.M. (2013). Technology’s role in fostering

transformational educator mentoring. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in education*, 2 (3), 233-248.

Fletcher, S. (2012). Editorial of the inaugural issue of the International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education. International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education 1.1: 4-11.

Gilbert, J.H.V. (May 2005). Interprofessional education for collaborative, patient-centered practice. *Nursing Leadership*, 18 (2), 32-38. doi: 10. 12937/cjnl.2005.17181

Keel, M.I. (Ed.). (2009). Mentoring: Program Development, Relationships and Outcomes. New York: Nova Science.

Leclaire, M.L. (Ed.). (2011). *Mentor and protégé guides and programs*. New York: Nova

Science.

Lutterbuck, D. & Lane, G. (2004). The Situational Mentor: An International Review of Competences and Capabilities in Mentoring. Burlington, VT: Gower.

Mintz, S. (2014, July 8). The shape of higher ed to come. InsideHigherEd.com. Retrieved July 8,

2014, from <http://www.insidehighered.com/higher-ed-beta/shape-higher-ed-yet-come#sthash>.JJXDEs8c.dphs