



Peer-Mentoring Groups: 2010 Evaluation Results Summary

[Peer-Mentoring Groups](#) seek to provide STEM women faculty and women faculty of color the opportunity to cultivate a circle of advisors. The networks serve to promote collaborative relationships that foster professional development at different stages of an academic career and decrease women faculty's sense of isolation. We convened three groups in AY 2009-10: STEM mid-career women, women faculty of color, and women in the biological and physical sciences.

Carrie E. Spearin, PhD of the Brown University Department of Sociology and Internal Evaluator of ADVANCE at Brown surveyed 2009-10 participants in spring 2010. The survey offers feedback on the structure and perceived benefits of the group meetings, as well as information regarding suggestions for the future.

Response Rate

The response rate was 54 percent among participants. Figure 1 shows response rates among participants by rank and division.

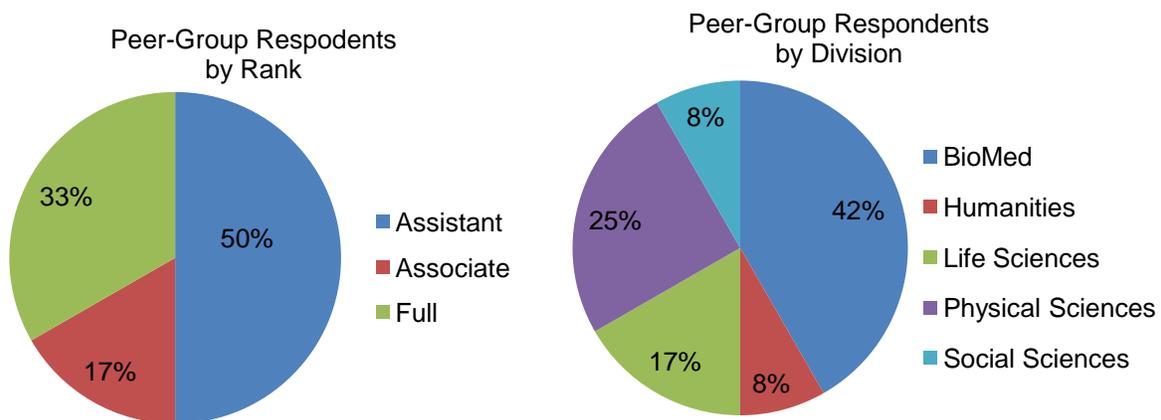


Figure 1. Response Rates among Peer Group Participants by Rank and Division

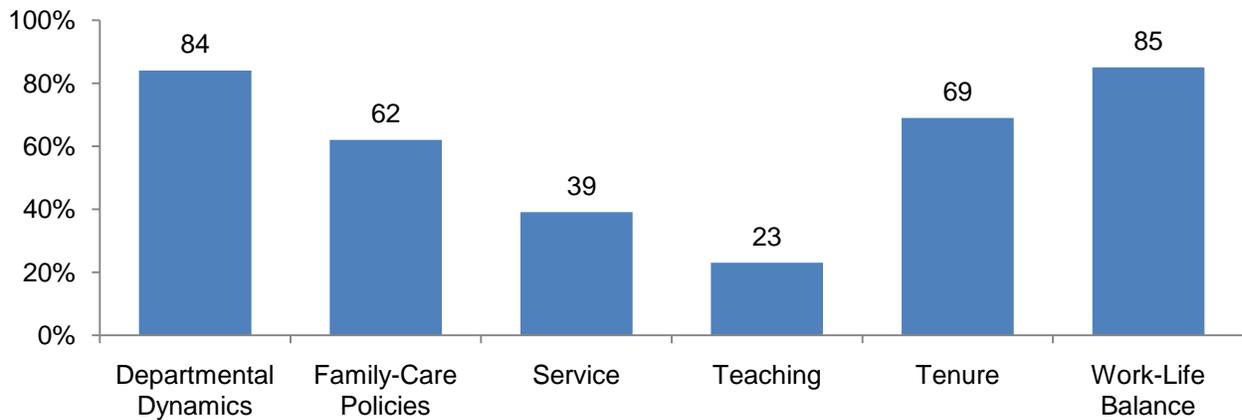
Experience

Most respondents rated their experience in a peer-mentoring group as positive. All respondents indicated they strongly agreed they could participate openly and honestly in groups. Ninety-two percent agreed meetings were productive and 58 percent agreed participation in a group helped them feel less isolated.

Topics Discussed by Peer Groups

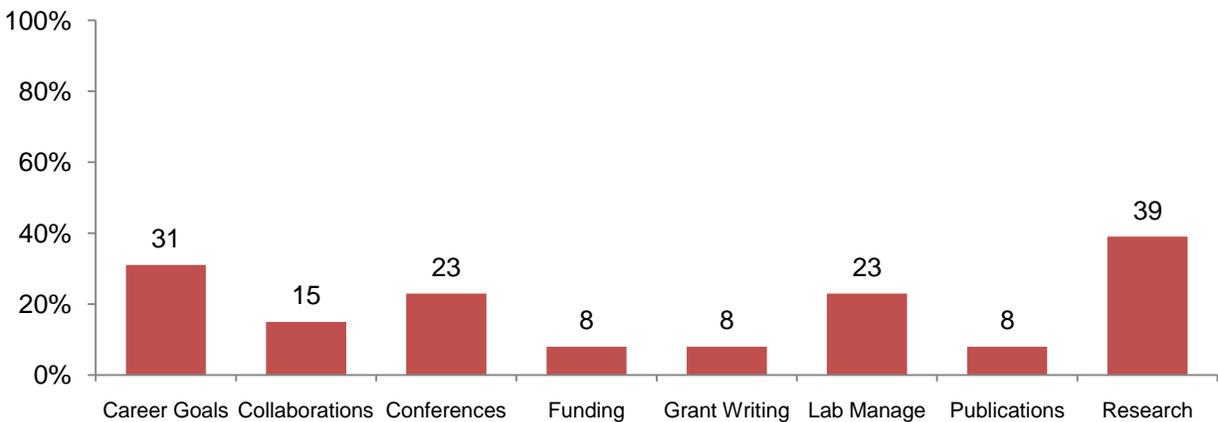
Figure 2 shows the frequency distributions for those topics related to “university life” that were discussed either formally or informally. Peers reported discussing work-life balance and departmental dynamics more than any other topic. Over two-thirds of respondents indicated that they discussed tenure and promotion, and almost as many reported their group addressed university family-care policies.

Figure 2. University Life Topics Discussed within Peer-Mentoring Groups



Peer group respondents were less likely to report discussing a variety of “research” related topics during their meetings (Figure 3). Research and goal identification topped the list of topics discussed. Peer group respondents also indicated conference attendance and laboratory management as frequently discussed topics, but this was only true for less than a quarter of respondents.

Figure 3. Research Topics Discussed within Peer-Mentoring Groups



Suggestions for the Future

Answering in their own words, respondents indicated that groups could have been more useful to them if meetings were more frequent, more structured, focused on pre-agreed upon themes, and managed by a strong group leader.