

ADVANCE at Brown
2010-11 Mentoring Surveys Final Report

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The following report outlines the purpose, methodology, and results of the 2010-11 ADVANCE at Brown Mentoring Surveys.

Purpose

The ADVANCE Program at Brown University initially commissioned an evaluation of their mentoring programs in early spring 2010. The purpose of these surveys was to evaluate the cross-department mentoring program for new tenure-track faculty and the peer-mentoring groups for STEM women faculty. More specifically, the 2009-10 [One-to-One Faculty Mentoring Program](#) participant surveys provide feedback on resources, the process, and experiences in these paired relationships. The 2009-10 [Peer-Mentoring Groups](#) participant survey offers feedback on the structure and perceived benefits of the group meetings, as well as collects information regarding suggestions for the future. The second round of data was collected from 2010-11 participants in spring 2011.

Methodology

The 2009-10 mentoring surveys were constructed during a series of meetings between Krista Hedderich and Amy Robb of the ADVANCE office and Carrie E. Spearin, Ph.D. of the Brown University Department of Sociology and Internal Evaluator of ADVANCE at Brown. The surveys, three in total, were finalized in mid-April of 2010. All three surveys collected basic information about participants, such as faculty rank, discipline, and gender. Additionally, the framework of the surveys is as follows:

- To evaluate effectively the One-to-One Faculty Mentoring Program, two different, but complimentary, surveys were constructed targeting either the mentor or the mentee. These mentor and mentee surveys consisted of 11 open and closed-ended questions. The questions in these surveys centered on six topics: (1) frequency and type of interaction between mentee-mentor pairs, (2) use and value of the *Mentoring Guide for Participants*, (3) setting and achieving career-related goals, (4) topics discussed during meetings, (5) overall value of mentoring in general, and (6) satisfaction with relationship and likelihood of continuation beyond current academic year.
- The survey evaluating the peer-mentoring groups consisted of eight open and closed ended questions and included the following topics: (1) frequency of meetings, (2) topics discussed by peer group, (3) experience within peer-mentoring groups, and (4) suggestions for the future.

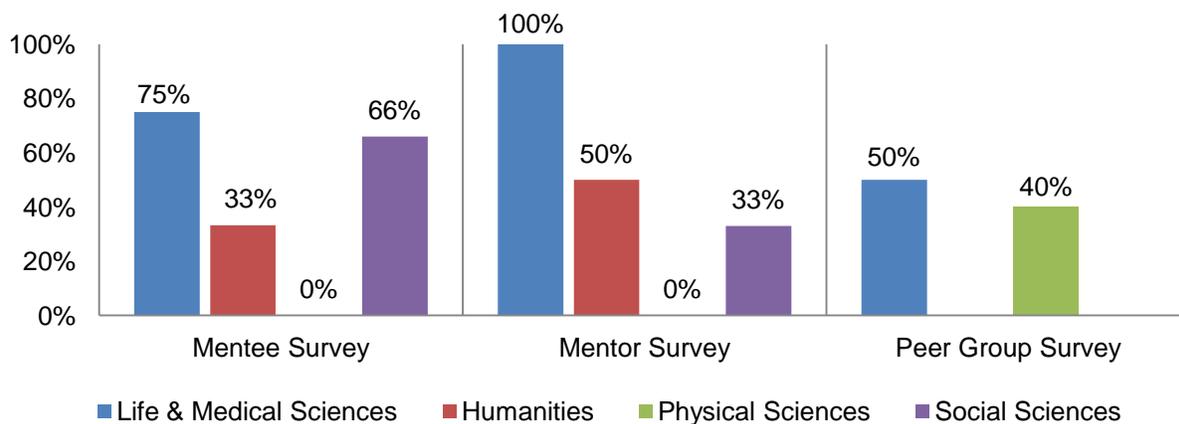
In mid-March of 2011, a follow-up meeting was held between Krista Hedderich, Amy Robb, and Carrie E. Spearin. During this meeting, each of the questions contained in the first round of surveys was critically evaluated. Very few, if any, revisions were made to the original survey questions. The only notable exception is the question evaluating how often and by what means did the mentor-mentee pair interact during the academic year. New questions were developed to clarify and fine-tune this important communication measure.

Two new questions were added to the 2010-11 mentor and mentee surveys. Throughout the year, there was some feedback from previous participants that there would be interest in working as mentor-mentee pairs on a professional project, e.g. writing a grant proposal, during the academic year. A question evaluating this interest was added to both the mentor and mentee surveys. The second additional question further evaluated the mentor-mentee relationship. Beyond assessing level of satisfaction, this new question evaluates whether the mentor-mentee experience met the participants' expectations.

During the final weeks of the 2011 spring semester, Krista Hedderich distributed the surveys of all participants in these two programs. Overall, there were 12 mentor-mentee pairs (24 participants in total)

and 15 faculty mentors involved in the peer-mentoring groups. Unlike in 2009-10 where the mode of collection was paper and pencil, this year's surveys were collected online using Google Docs. Participants were invited via email to respond to the surveys and their responses were collected and retained in Google Docs.

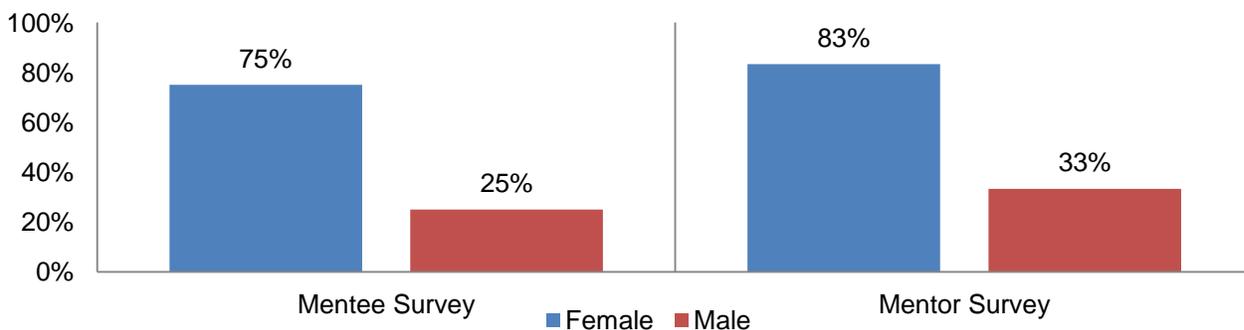
Figure 1. Response Rates by Survey Type and Academic Discipline – 2011



The overall response rates ranged from just under 50% to slightly below 60% (Mentee Survey: 50%; Mentor Survey: 58.3%; Peer Group Survey: 46.7%). Figure 1 describes the response rates by discipline for mentors, mentees, and the peer group surveys. The highest response rates were obtained for the life and medical sciences for both mentee (75%; 3 out of 4 responding) and mentor (100%; all 4 responding) surveys. Response rates were lowest among both mentees and mentors in the physical sciences. No mentor or mentee participants (2 mentees and 1 mentor) in the physical sciences responded to this year's survey. For the peer group survey, response rates varied little by discipline. This year, participants came only from the life and medical sciences and the physical sciences. There were no peer group participants from either the social sciences or the humanities during 2010–11. Of those who participated, slightly under half (46.7%) responded to the survey. Five of the ten participants from the life and medical sciences responded to the peer group survey, and three out of the five peer group participants from the physical sciences responded to this year's survey.

Response rates for the mentor and mentee surveys also vary by gender (Figure 2). Higher response rates were obtained by both female mentees and mentors. The response rate is especially low among male mentees. Only two out of the eight mentee participants (25%) responded to the survey this year. Similarly, only two out of six male mentors (33.3%) responded.

Figure 2. Response Rates by Survey Type and Gender - 2011



Overall, higher response rates would significantly increase the validity of the survey results. Response rates were generally lower in 2011 as compared to the 2010. This may be a result of the mode of collection (web-based vs. paper and pencil). Generalizations formulated from these results should be made with caution. However, these results should be valuable to the Mentoring Subcommittee in terms of evaluating the overall programs and supporting future changes to these two programs.

Mentoring Survey Results

I. One-to-One Faculty Mentoring Program

All of the 6 mentee respondents to the One-to-One Faculty Mentoring Survey were assistant professors and all 7 of the mentor respondents indicated they were full professors. The majority of both mentor and mentee respondents were female (60% of mentees and 71% of mentors). See Figure 2 for response rates by gender. Of the six faculty mentor respondents, five had participated in the One-to-One Faculty Mentoring Program during the previous academic year (2009-10).

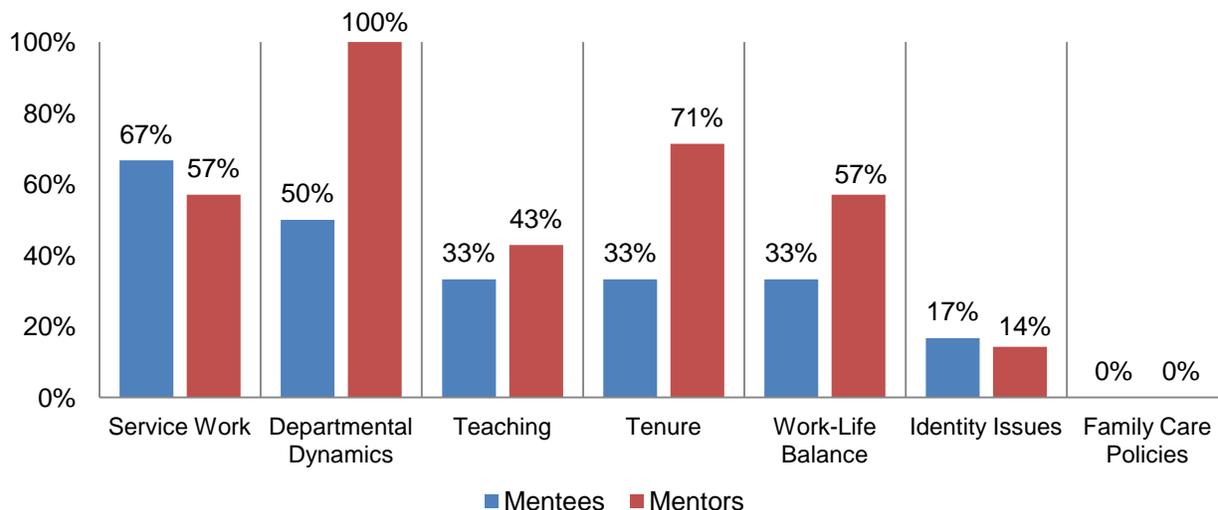
Both mentors and mentees were asked to describe how often and by what means did they interact with their mentee or mentor during the past academic year. Few pairs indicated they interacted over the phone, with the majority communicated either via email or in person. Of those mentees who responded to the question (n=3), two-thirds indicated they interacted with their mentor one to three times per semester or more via email. All of the mentor respondents to this question (n=3) indicated they communicated with their mentee via email once a month or more. Both mentor and mentee respondents report similar levels of in-person interactions. Almost all mentors (86%) and mentees (80%; n=5) reported meeting in-person with their mentee or mentor at least once per semester.

To assess the use and value of the [Mentoring Guide for Participants](#), both mentors and mentees were asked, "Did you utilize the Mentoring Guide for Participants?" Almost all (85.7%) of the mentors who responded to the survey indicated that they used the guide. A similar portion of mentees indicated the same (83.3%). Of those respondents who used the guide, almost all specified they guide was "somewhat useful" (100% of mentees, all but one mentor who indicated it was "very useful").

Both mentors and mentees were asked how they worked together to set career-related goals. While two mentees suggested they did not work with their mentor to set career-related goals, others indicated that they did. Some open-ended responses to this question from mentees included, "my mentor very actively offered to help me with grant proposal writing, and we met each month in the fall...with increased contact as my proposal deadline approaches" and "it was good to talk to someone with more experience." Most of the mentor responses echoed those of the mentees, suggesting that they actively worked with their mentee to set career-related goals. A few mentor responses included, "we discussed a major goal and how to best negotiate and communicate that goal with her chair," "we worked on his CV and how to best highlight distinctive features of this scholarship," and "we strategized about publication choices, with a view to what would be most important for tenure." Additionally, mentors and mentees were asked "How successful was your mentor in helping you achieve your career-related goals?/How successful was your mentee at achieving her/his career-related goals?" Four-fifths of mentee respondents indicated their mentor was very or somewhat successful in helping their reach their career-related goals. This same sentiment is true among mentors, the majority (83.3%) indicating their mentees were very or somewhat successful at achieving their career-related goals.

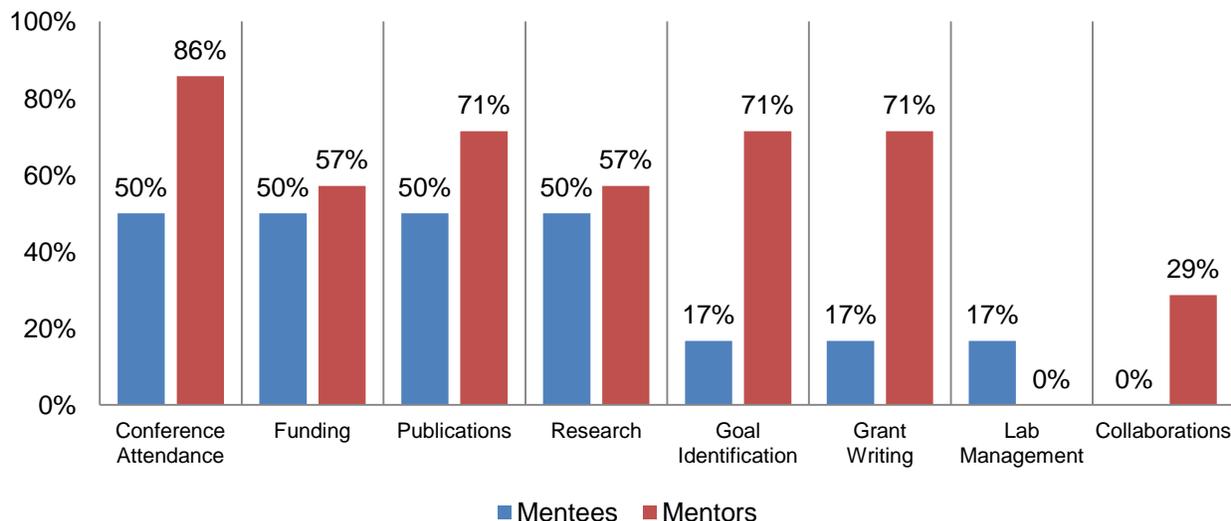
Both mentors and mentees were asked, “What topics/issues were discussed in your mentor-mentee relationship, either informally or formally?” Figure 3 displays the frequency distributions for mentees and mentors for those topics that are related to “university life.” Mentees are most likely to report discussing committee and service work with their mentor than any other topic. No mentee indicated they discussed university family care policies with their mentor. Mentors were most likely to report discussing departmental dynamics with their mentees. Like the mentees, no mentors indicated they discussed university family care policies with their mentees.

Figure 3. Issues discussed with Mentor/Mentee – University Life - 2011



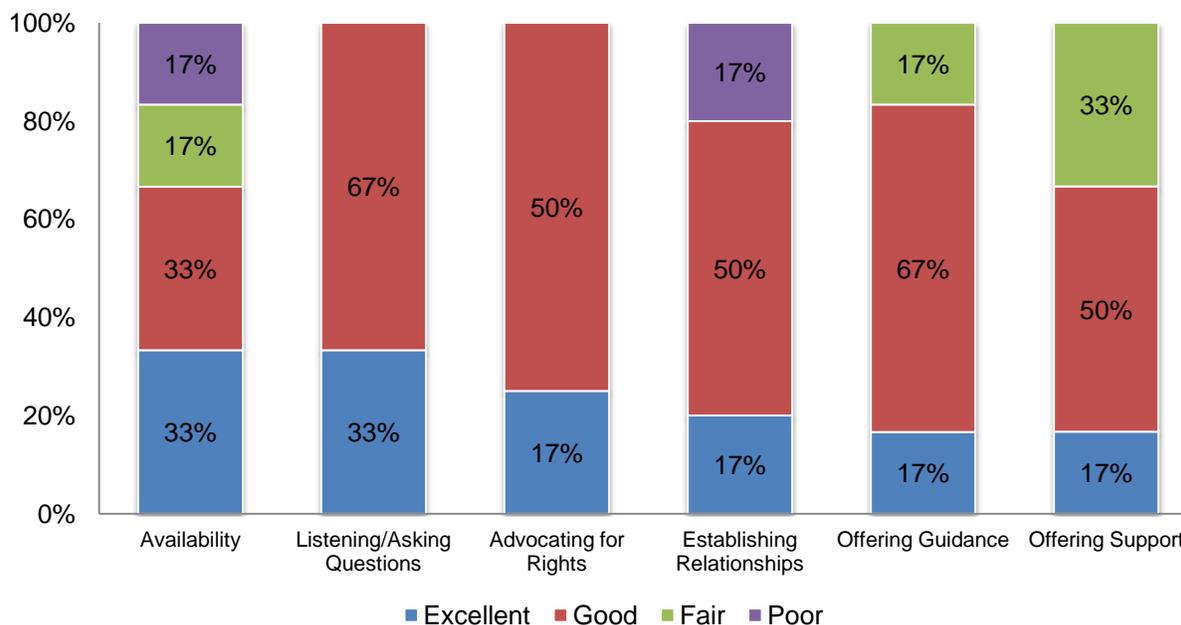
Mentees also indicated they discussed a variety of “research” related topics with their faculty mentor (Figure 4). Mentees’ conference attendance and presentations, funding opportunities, publications and writing, and research topped the list of topics discussed with mentors. Mentors indicated conference attendance and presentations as the most discussed topic, closely followed by discussion of career goal identification and development, grant proposal writing, and publications.

Figure 4. Issues discussed with Mentor/Mentee – Research - 2011



While it is interesting to note the differences between mentees and mentors and the topics reportedly discussed during their meetings, this should be done with caution. The unit of analysis for this report is the individual, not the mentor-mentee pair. For example, if we were studying mentoring pairs, we could compare the level of agreement within the pair for each topic. If there was a discrepancy, it may indicate that mentors and mentees viewed or interpreted their discussions differently. While it may be possible to create mentoring pairs from this data, in the future, at this time the data remain at an individual unit measure. These data only reflect what those mentees who responded discussed in their meetings, and likewise for mentors.

Figure 5. Mentees' Ratings of Mentors - 2011



Mentees were asked to specifically rate their faculty mentor on a variety of qualities (Figure 5). These qualities were derived from the *Best Mentoring Practices*¹ of the URI ADVANCE Program. Overall, mentees highly rated their mentors, especially in terms of their availability, listening and asking questions, and offering guidance and advice. Just over 90% of mentees rated their mentor as “*excellent*” or “*good*” in terms of offering support. Mentees were least likely to indicate favorable responses of the mentors when it came to helping them establish relationships and advocating for rights.

A new question was added to the mentee and mentor surveys this year to assess how interested mentors would be in working together with their mentee on a profession project (e.g. writing a grant proposal) during the academic year. Of those who responded, there was little interest in such a mentor-mentee project. Only one of the seven mentors responded indicated they would be “somewhat” interested and only two of the mentee respondents indicated the same. All others responded indicated they were “not interested at all.” Through an open-ended response to this question, one faculty mentor offered the following: “[it] is difficult to imagine since you are pairing people from different fields. It does not really fit, in that we do such different things. I’d love to have a way to collaborate, but cannot imagine how ...”

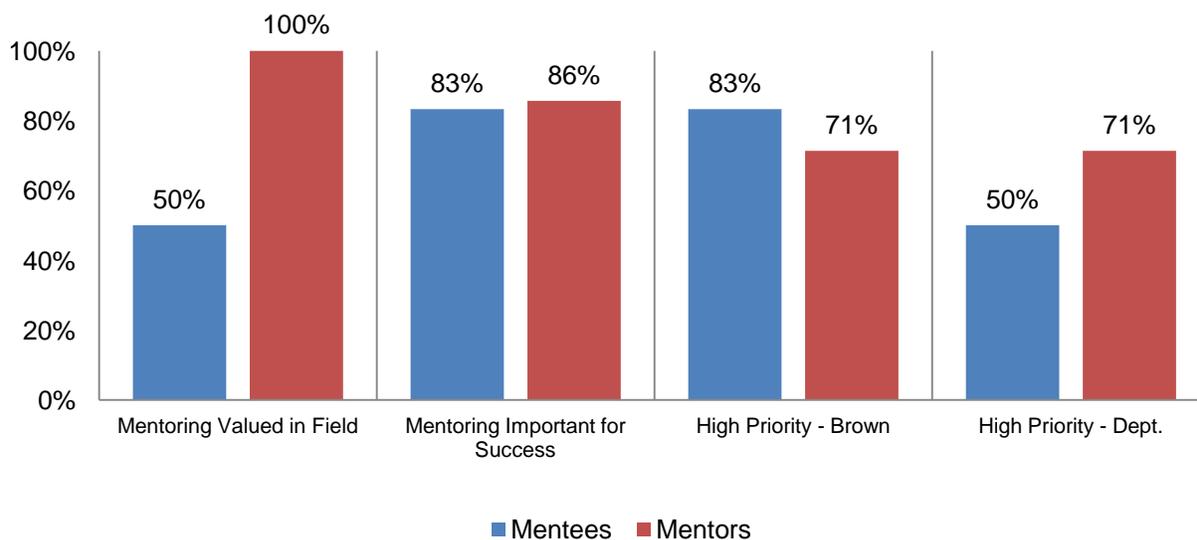
¹ University of Rhode Island ADVANCE Program. *Faculty Mentoring 10 Best Program Practices*. <http://www.uri.edu/advance/10%20Best%20Mentor%20Practices%20NN.pdf>.

In terms of overall satisfaction, over two-thirds of mentees (66.7%) and over four-fifths of mentors (83.3%) were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their mentoring relationship. When asked, “In which ways could your mentor-mentee relationship been improved?” many mentees echoed one mentees sentiment, “it went as well as could be expected.” One mentee offered the following, “the mentor could be a little more invested and interested in the relationship. As it was, I did not feel comfortable asking the mentor for advice, since there was no regular contact.” Many mentors suggested the relationship was fine the way it was, but did indicate that finding the time to meet and meeting more often, maybe in “larger groups to compare notes” would have improved the relationship. The majority of mentees and mentors indicated that their mentor-mentee experience “met” or “exceeded” their expectation (100% of mentees; 85.7% of mentors). Only one mentor responded that their experience “did not meet expectation.”

One important goal of the mentor-mentee program is to create ties between faculty members that will be sustained beyond the conclusion of the formal program. All but one faculty mentor who responded to the question indicated they were “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to continue their mentee-mentor relationship in the future (83.3%). Similarly, over 80% of mentee respondents indicated the same likelihood of continuation.

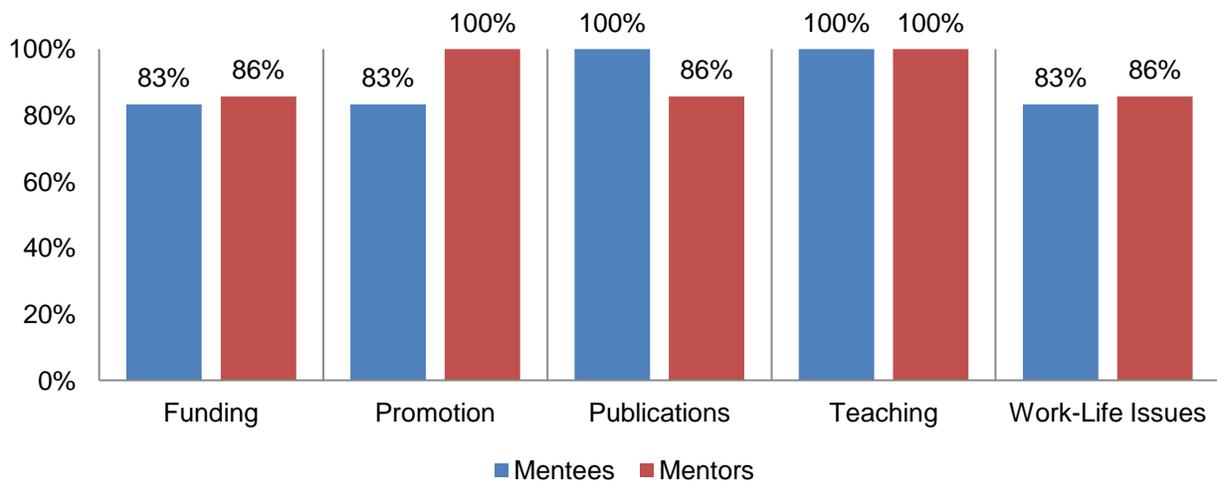
The last set of questions asked of both mentees and mentors assesses the mentoring climate at Brown University, the perceived importance of mentoring topics, as well as the role of mentors. Mentees and mentors were asked, “In regard to your experiences as a mentor at Brown, to what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements:” (1) “I believe that good mentoring is important to the success of most faculty members,” (2) “Brown places a high priority on quality mentoring,” (3) “My department, in particular, places a high priority on quality mentoring,” (4) “My discipline or field values mentoring,” (5) “Mentoring about teaching is important,” (6) “Mentoring about the promotion process is important,” (7) “Mentoring about publications is important,” and (8) “Mentoring about funding resources is important,” (9) “Mentoring about work-life issues is important,” (10) “It is important that a mentor make the first contact and set a mutually agreed upon schedule of meetings,” (11) “It is important for mentors to assist mentees in establishing a balance between teaching, research, and service,” and (12) “It is important for mentors to help mentees set goals short terms and long term.”

Figure 6. Importance of Mentoring Overall and Climate – Percent of Mentees and Mentors who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” – 2011



Over 80% of both mentees (83.3%) and mentors (85.7%) agreed that mentoring is important to the success of most faculty members (Figure 6). Only one mentor respondent was in disagreement with this statement. While there is almost total agreement about the importance of mentoring, mentors and mentees differ in their perceived importance of mentoring both at Brown and within academic disciplines. Almost all mentees (83.3%) either “strongly agree” or “agree” Brown places a high priority on mentoring, but a slightly less proportion on mentors indicated the same (71.4%). Responses between mentors and mentees also varied in terms of assessing the importance of mentoring within departments. Slightly less than three-quarters (71.4%) of mentors and only half (50%) of mentees were in agreement that their department places a high priority on quality mentoring. Similar responses were captured in regards to the value of mentoring in one’s specific discipline. All the faculty mentors (100%) and only half of the mentees (50%) were in agreement that mentoring is valued in their field or discipline.

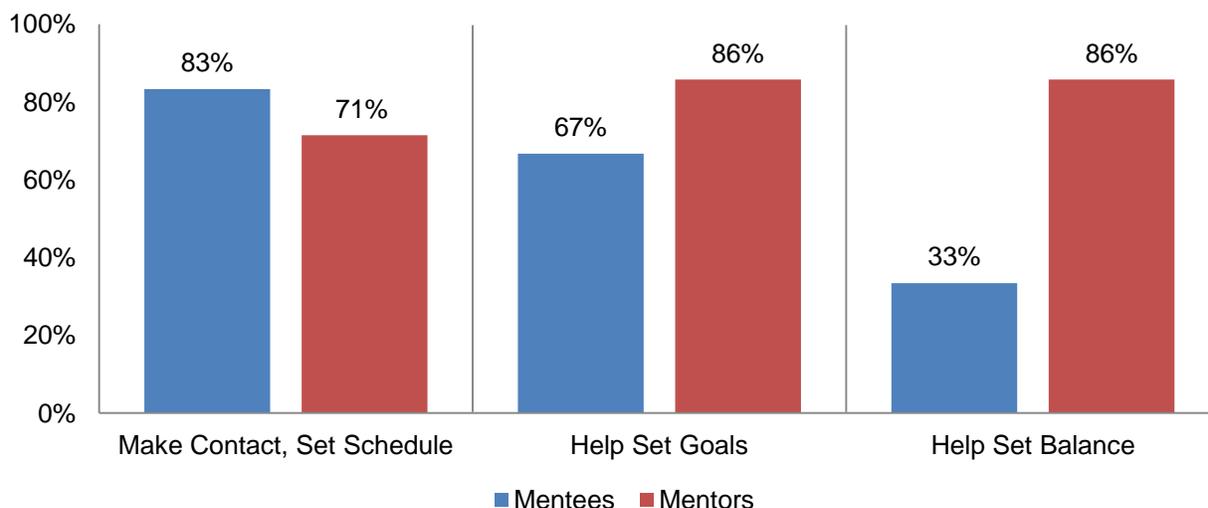
Figure 7. Importance of Specific Mentoring Topics – Percent of Mentees and Mentors who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” – 2011



Responses varied slightly in regards to the importance of specific topics that are important to discuss within mentoring relationships (Figure 7). Mentees were most likely to report mentoring about teaching (100% in agreement) and publications (100%) as the most important issues on which to receive mentoring support. Mentors reported similarly in regards to teaching (100%), but all mentors were in agreement that mentoring about the promotion process (100%) is an important topic to discuss within the mentoring relationship.

Mentors and mentees were also asked a series of question related to the role of mentors in creating and fostering the mentoring relationship (Figure 8). There is a slight disagreement among mentor and mentee respondents in terms of the role of mentors. While almost three-quarters of mentees (71.4%) strongly agreed or agreed that it is important for mentors to initiate contact and create a schedule, the proportion of mentors in agreement to this statement was slightly higher (85.7%). Mentors were more likely to agree that it is important for mentors to assist mentees in establishing in a balance (85.7%) and helping mentees set goals (85.7%) than mentees. Mentees were less likely to be in agreement with these statements (balance 33.4% and goals 66.7%).

Figure 8. Role of Mentors – Percent of Mentees and Mentors who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” – 2011

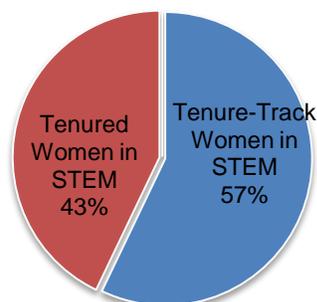


The final question only asked mentees to assess their satisfaction with the level and quality of mentoring they are currently receiving. Half of all mentees either strongly agreed or agreed that they are satisfied with the level and quality of current mentoring. One respondent indicated they were “neutral” in regards to the level of mentoring they were receiving. Finally, a third of mentees were indicated they “somewhat disagree” with the statement, “I am satisfied with the level and quality of mentoring I am currently receiving.”

II. Peer-Mentoring Groups

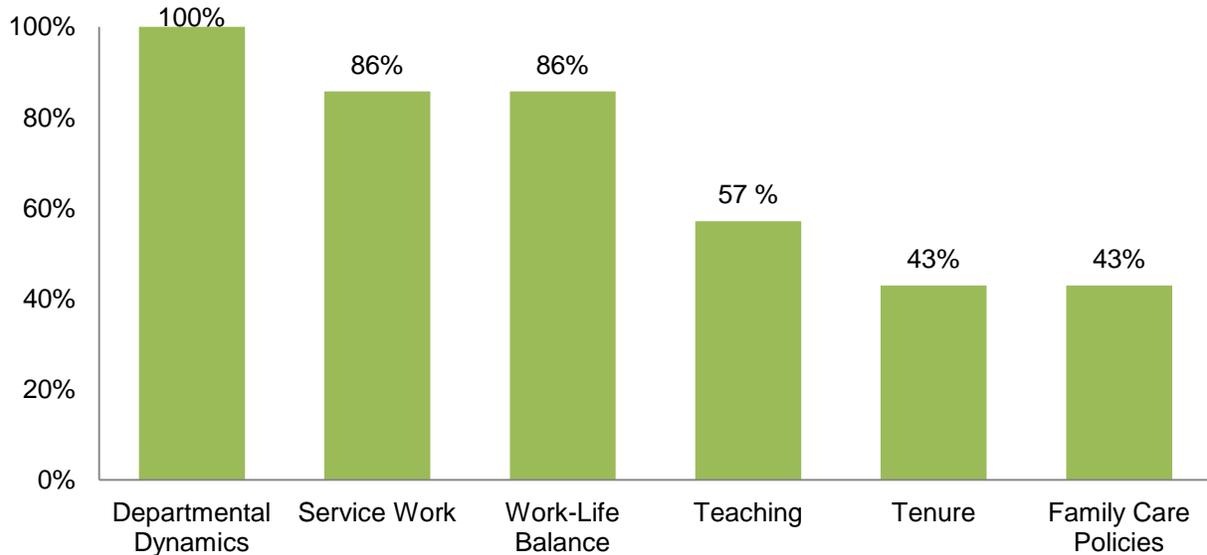
In total, there were 7 respondents to the 2011 Peer-mentoring Groups Survey (see the Methodology section for response rate details). The majority of respondents were assistant professors (57.1%). One of the remaining three respondents was an associate professor (14.3%) and the last two were full professors (28.6%). Slightly less than half (42.9%) of all faculty who responded to this survey participated in a peer-mentoring group during the previous academic year (2009-10). Unlike last year (2009-2010) when there were three different peer-mentoring groups, this year there were only two. Faculty could participate in a peer-mentoring group for either tenure-track women in STEM or tenured women in STEM. The majority of respondents to this survey participated in the tenure-track women in STEM peer-mentoring group (Figure 9). Overall, respondents report they attended somewhere between one and 5 meetings during this academic year, with one faculty responding, “nearly all.”

Figure 9. Peer-Mentoring Group Participation – 2011



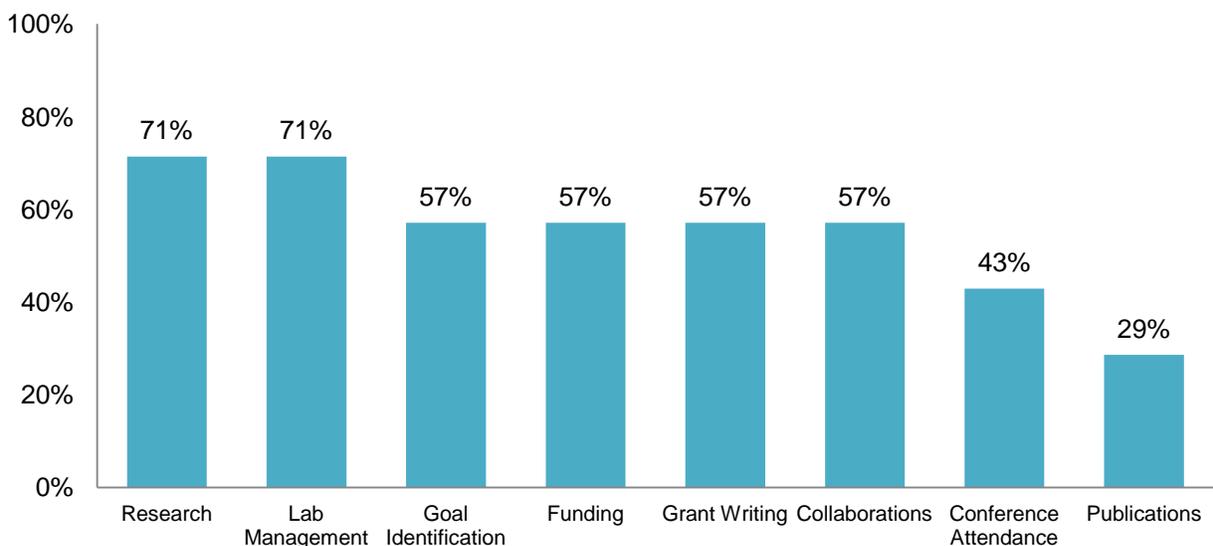
Peer-group survey respondents were asked to indicate the issues or topics their group discussed, either informally or formally during their meetings. Figure 10 displays the frequency distributions for peer-group participants for those topics that are related to “university life.” Peers are most likely to report discussing departmental dynamics, work-life balance, and committee and service work than any other topic. Just over half of respondents reported they discussed teaching and classroom dynamics, and almost as many reported their group addressed tenure and promotion and university family care policies.

Figure 10. Issues discussed in Peer-Group Meetings – University Life – 2011



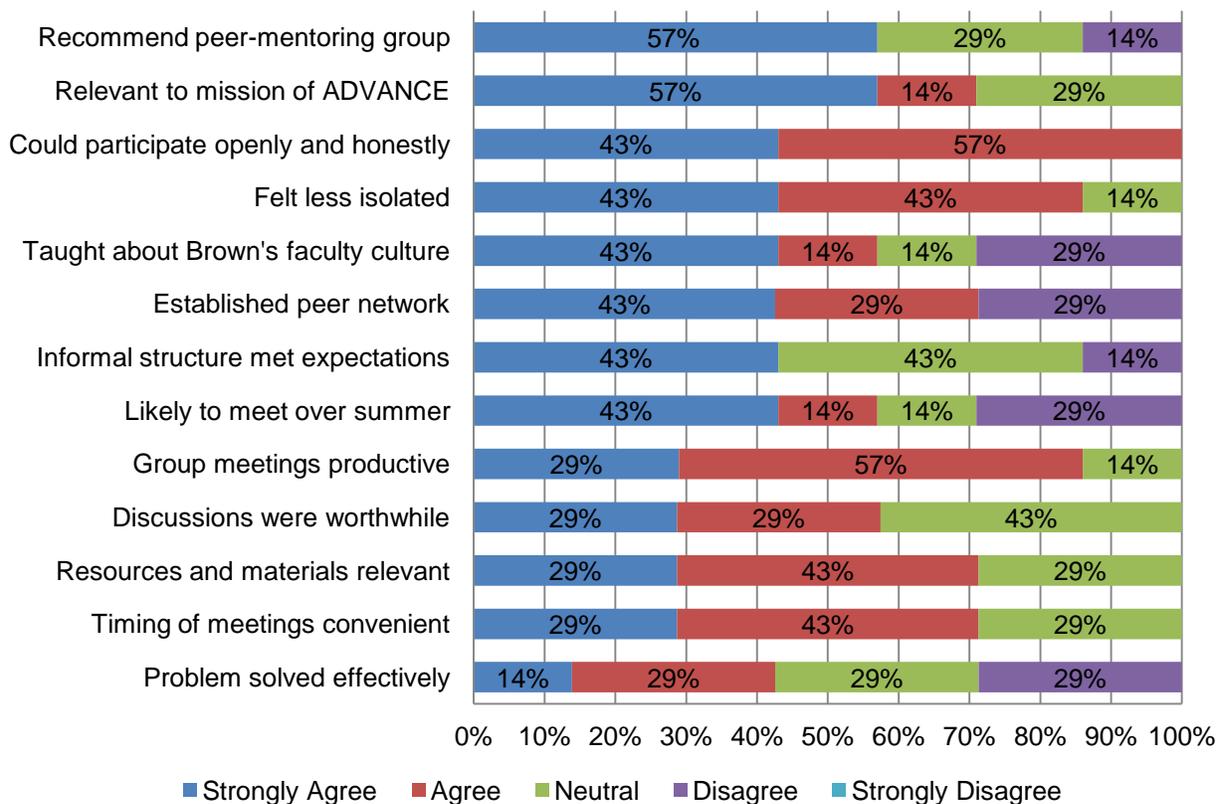
Peer-group respondents were less likely to report discussing a variety of “research” related topics during their peer-group meetings (Figure 11). Peers’ research topped the list of topics discussed during the peer-group meetings (71.4%). Peers also indicated career goal identification and development, funding opportunities, grant proposal writing, and research collaborations as frequently discussed topics (57.1%).

Figure 11. Issues discussed in Peer-Group Meetings – Research – 2011



Participants of the peer-mentoring groups were asked to rate the group on a variety of characteristics (Figure 12). Most respondents rated their experiences in the peer-mentoring groups positively. All respondents indicated they “agreed” they could participate openly and honestly and almost all (85.7%) agreed that participation in the group made them feel less isolated and that group meetings were productive. Almost three-quarters (71.4%) of respondents agreed group participation established or expanded their peer network and the timing of group meetings was convenient. The same proportion of respondents also indicated that the peer-mentoring groups were relevant to the goals and mission of ADVANCE and that the resources and materials provided by ADVANCE were relevant and informative. Just over half (57.1%) of this year’s peer-mentoring group respondents indicated that would recommend an ADVANCE peer-mentoring program to other faculty.

Figure 12. Peer-Mentoring Group Meetings – Rating of Experience – 2011



Answering in their own words, the final two questions asked respondents to indicate how the peer-mentoring group could have been more useful to them and in what ways were the peer-mentoring group meeting not useful. Both of these questions yielded similar results. A few respondents indicated that the timing of meetings and more meetings would have been more useful. For example, one peer-mentoring participant suggested, “attendance was very low, so this year’s group was not terribly functional.” Lack of a “strong” leader was given as something that was not useful: “there was little leadership...because all members are stretched thin with responsibilities.” One other faculty member stated, “we didn’t discuss any new topics or issues that had not been discussed in previous meetings. These meetings were more social than any else, while enjoyable, not clearly a good use of time.”