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# Mentoring: The Way to Academic Excellence

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## Abstract

This study is aimed at exploring the rationale behind academic mentor's success, as mentoring is a developmental process involving capacity-building, knowledge transfer and employee retention in organizations. This paper is a conceptual study conducted with an extensive review of relevant literature on mentoring. The reviewed literature centres on meaning, forms and types of mentoring, qualities of a good mentor, stages and benefits of mentoring, challenges of mentoring, mentoring and academic excellence. This study was anchored on the descriptive mentoring theory by Kram (1985). The study found that regardless of how well a mentor and mentee fit together, either in form or in a positive way, the relationship should be professionally structured as well as considered and respected by both parties. The study also concludes that most successful mentorship usually evolve into friendship with both partners learning and providing support for each other. This paper contributes in the existing literature by examining the rationale for successful mentorship and ways to overcoming mentors challenges. No previous research has illustrated the ways mentorship could lead to academic excellence in Nigerian tertiary institution.

**Keywords:** Mentorship, Protégé, Kram's theory, Academic Excellence, Mentoring

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of any country is engendered by the effectiveness of its various institutions. Institutions are the social structure in which people cooperate and which influence the behavior of people and the way they live (Hodgson, 2006). Universities as institutions are the highest level of education outfits where students study for degrees or conduct high-level research (Assié-Lumumba, 2005). Raza (2010) described education as a vehicle for conveying truth and feeling, information, passion, understanding and appreciation to human beings and the development of a self-directed society in line with national norms and aspirations to benefit everyone in society. Okoli & Monanu, (2016); and Monanu, Okoli, Ezeliiora, & Okeke (2014) opined that educational institutions are the foundation on which many successful countries depend and if better expertise are engaged in individuals

through education there will be positive contribution to the economy. The success or failure of any education is always influenced by the vital role that academics play in the development of the country's human resources to help it achieve competitive economic growth, high employment levels, and technological advances (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Idris, Dollard, Coward, & Dormann, 2012). Therefore, many researchers and experts have agreed to present work as a way for people to gain access to expertise, for career developmental purposes and to be more effective by academics (Osezua & Agbalajobi, 2016).

Mentoring is popular at capacity-building, knowledge transfer and employees retention in many organizations especially in the educational sector. It is a link between two people who are often passionate about improving professional goals at the end (Abouria & Albdour, 2017). Higgins & Kram (2001) strongly believe that the teaching profession and the development of social work affect the lives of mentors and mentees. Mentoring produces many work outcomes in the workplace, such as career development and advancement, promotion, pay, job satisfaction, and participation in this organization. Hansford & Ehrich (2006) also argue that mentoring programs have affected many fortunate professions in business, industry, and education. The main goal of mentoring is to help employees understand the nitty-gritty parts of their jobs well on time in order to facilitate personal, career and professional growth necessary for high professional commitment (Ojeaga & Okolocha, 2019).

The Nigerian academia has faced several challenges in terms of effectiveness and global importance. One of such challenges is incessant student enrollment, thus increasing student enrollment in Nigerian universities on annual basis demand for better competent academia that will deliver qualitative learning, research and services that can rival with its peers in the developed world. Osezua & Agbalajobi (2016), posit that one important avenue through which academic standards can be maintained and sustained is through academic mentoring. The creation of a mentoring system for academics is surely a step in the right direction if instituted in the Nigerian university system. However, previous research reveals that the benefits of mentoring have not been highly recognized by both academics and their institutions and the lack of formal mentoring (Ogboju, 2011; Ugwueze, Ngwoke & Aniodo, 2013) or systemic deficiencies of the administration of universities in terms of absence of mentoring relationship-oriented issues (Anijobi-Idem & Archibong, 2012) may have been adduced to be responsible for poor academic excellence. The implication of this may have resulted in the decline of productivity and poor quality of teaching in the Nigerian universities. There may therefore be a need to embrace mentorship relationships in higher educational institutions. The above can go a long way in reducing the weakness that institutions have in terms of human capacity building to seek the fulfillment of their vision. It is upon the above premise that the study seeks to explore the rationale behind academic mentorship success.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Mentors and Nature of Mentoring**

The word "mentor" comes from Greek mythology when Odysseus, king of Ithaca, entrusted the care of his son to his friend, Mentor, as a tutor and teacher, a man who could raise his son, Telemachus, as he himself if he were there he would not have fought in the decade of the Trojan War (Carey & Weissman, 2010). Since then, the issue has begun and the practice has become more popular. A mentor is therefore more experienced, wise and trustworthy who provides help and advice to young and inexperienced people over time. The mentor is a real value to the young team. An experienced mentor can save a business from major mistakes and costly mistakes in a few short words (Cull, 2006). American Psychological Association (2006) defined a mentor as an expert who can help develop the function of the mentee. Kram (1985) suggests that a mentor usually has two roles for mentee; work-related function as well as psychosocial function. Work-related function assists the mentor as an adviser to enhance the professional performance and development of service providers whereas psychosocial function places the mentor as an example and support system for the mentee. The relationship with which the person with experience or expertise assist in guiding the inexperienced or unintelligent person is called mentorship and the process needed to be is known as mentoring.

Wright & Smith (2000) defined mentoring as a dynamic, interpersonal relationship between work situations, involving a person with more experience in a particular discipline (mentor) and someone with less experience,

usually a beginner in that discipline (mentee). Johnson (2002) sees university-based mentoring as a personal relationship between two professionals where an experienced professional (usually an adult) or professional role as a leader, model, teacher and sponsor of a graduate student (minor) or scholar. It is also a development process related to the structure of teaching, facilitating, training and counseling, with the aim of disseminating knowledge and encouraging individuals (Renshaw, 2008). Mentoring has been considered as one person's own self-improvement strategy that facilitates the development of the other by sharing knowledge, ideas, learning, skills, values, skills, ideas, proficiencies and professional competence (Klinge, 2015).

Mentoring is a powerful system that helps people develop and add value to their personal and professional abilities regardless of their field of work (Ongek, 2016). In his leadership study, Klasen & Clutter (2002) found that mentoring is very important in aiding young school leaders learn, grow and become more professional. In the environment, mentoring is considered important by many scholars to reduce work pressure and assist reduce conflict that may arise as young academics struggle to get a good job-life, improves performance and stability (Winesfield & Jarret, 2001). Connor & Pokora (2007) emphasized that mentoring is an educational partnership that helps people control their own development, release their energy, and achieve their potential. Megginson (2006) describes mentoring as a gift from one person to another and a necessary change in knowledge, activity, or thinking, or support from senior colleague and with the purpose to support learning rather than provide answers that will add value to the career development of the younger fellow.

### **Types of Mentorship**

There are two basic ways a person can show up at university. They are formal and informal mentoring (Tetty, 2006; Buell, 2004). Murray (2001) argues that in formal mentoring, mentor-mentee relationships are regulated. The administration of the university is responsible for the purpose of selecting and connecting the mentee and its mentor with the aim of helping the mentee grow and develop certain abilities. Formal mentoring is viewed in line with its features as a kind of relationship in which goals of the relationship are well established from the beginning by the organization or institution; whose results are measured; access to mentoring is communicated to all that meet the criteria; both the mentor and mentee interact based on compatibility; training and support are provided in the mentoring process and the mentor, mentee and the organization all benefit directly from the mentoring (Murray, 2001). Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett (2003) identify six aspects of the formal mentoring process that can make this program more effective: (a) program objectives, (b) selection of participants, (c) compatibility of mentors and mentees, (d) training for mentors and mentees, (e) procedures for meeting time, and (f) a goal-setting process.

Informal mentoring, being the opposite of formal mentoring, does not reflect the purpose of the relationship; does not specify results; relationships can be acquired and counseled and can be alone; the mentor and the mentee choose themselves based on a combination of strong personal emotions that are unpredictable and can last a long time or even a lifetime; and the focus is on mentee where the organization benefits indirectly (Mentor/Mentoring Partnership, 2005). Informal mentoring relationships are dynamic by nature through acceptance, desire, values and interests. In informal mentoring relationships, mentors and mentees choose who they would like to work with (Afolabi, Faleye & Adeola, 2015). It involves a self-motivated mentor making sure that the mentee develops the skills, abilities, values, attitudes, expertise and knowledge needed to be successful, to have a successful career well and donate as much as possible to organizations, communities and countries (Peretomode & Ikoya, 2019).

Ugwueze, Ngwoke & Aniodo (2013) argued that some individuals have lauded the flexibility of the informal mentoring; however, they have also argued that it is less successful in achieving desired outcomes. Tetty (2006), averred that those in support of formal schemes argued in favour of the structured interaction in the relationship as there is clear expectation, set time for meeting, and transmission of organizational culture, as against the uncoordinated and non-committal characteristics of the informal schemes. Irrespective of the direction of the argument, universities can be exposed to both schemes in order to achieve success in academic effectiveness and efficiency especially in addressing the global challenges.

Ugwueze, Ngwoke & Aniodo (2013) emphasized that some people praised the changing nature of informal mentoring; however, they also found it unsuccessful in meeting the requirements. Tettey (2006) averred that legal advocates support social interactions as a clear expectation, set time for meetings, and transfer cultural contexts, as opposed to unrelated and non-affiliated identities of the informal schemes. Despite the direction of the debate, the university can be exposed both initiatives in order to make progress in academic excellence and performance in addressing global issues.

### Forms of Mentoring

This study identified the following forms of mentoring to include; (Mentor and Mentoring Partnership, 2005):

- 1) Traditional mentoring,
- 2) Group mentoring,
- 3) Team mentoring,
- 4) Peer mentoring, and
- 5) E-mentoring.

1) Traditional mentoring: This includes one-on-one counseling applied to an elder and a relationship with a younger person. They meet often for at least four hours a month for at least a year. The mentor and mentee know the expected time in the relationship and adjust their expectations (Mentor & Mentoring Partnership, 2005).

2) Group mentoring: Group mentoring as the name suggests, usually appears in groups as mentors may wish to choose. It usually involves a team of one or more mentors working with at least two people but not more than thirty-two mentees (Kuperminc & Thomason, 2014). Group mentoring may vary in size, number of mentors and mentee reached (Kuperminc, 2016; Jones, 2016). These programs focused on mentors who interact with a small group of mentee groups and can develop several fruitful relationships at once (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002). Group mentoring differs from other mentoring systems in that it encourages two relationships; mentor-to-mentee and mentee-to-mentee (Kuperminc, 2016). Group mentoring programs are usually available in organized environment such as schools or other youth-serving organizations in the area. As a result, mentees have opportunities to a vast range of adults including teachers, youth workers and other adults willing to serve as educators (Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe & Taylor (2006).

3) Team Mentoring: This includes more than one mentor working with one mentee or a group of mentees. Team mentoring enables mentors to work co-operatively or separately to assist mentees attain development goals (Ayodeji & Adebayo, 2015). Mentor & Mentoring Partnership (2005) stated that this type of mentoring includes many adults (mentors) working in small groups of young people with adult-to-adolescence levels of one to four. The mentor may work with a mentee or group of mentees with the purpose of communicating constantly, disseminating information and ideas. Williams (2000) showed that team mentoring emerges when a leader is a mentor and takes this team through coaching, psychosocial support and role models. A leader who is not always a mentor leads his team to guide each other. In other words, team mentoring is dyadic in that the team focuses on building connections between team leaders and team members as well as between team members.

4) Peer Mentoring: With this type, loving youth develops leadership/teaching relationships as well as learning from youth or skill development programs and serve as a role model (Mentor and Mentoring Partnership, 2005). Young people at least 2 to 3 years older than their mentees and fulfill similar tasks led by adults (Noam, Malti, & Karcher, 2013). This form of mentoring focused on adult youth can serve well as a role model and also as a mentor. Peer education often occurs in schools or community settings, as well as high school youth who are in middle school or elementary school. These programs are well organized and managed, with at least six to eight meetings (Karcher & Berger, 2017). The advantage of peer mentoring is that it seeks to promote its learning and knowledge for behavioral and social change. In addition, young adults can benefit from serving as mentors, where it can help them meet their relationship needs (Smith, 2011).

5) E-mentoring: E-mentoring refers to the practice of using electronic systems, in whole or in part, as the primary means of communication between mentors and mentees (Kaufman, 2017). The main difference between

e-mentoring and other types of mentoring is while the later is based on personal contact with each other, the first is purely electronic. E-mentoring builds relationships by relying on the internet or social media to connect mentees and mentors. Contact conversations can take place via email, chat, web, message boards, or other popular social media platforms among mentees. E-mentoring offers many opportunities that can be useful to others.

### **Qualities of a Good Mentor**

For mentors to achieve their goals they must possess certain key qualities (Peretomode & Ikoya, 2019):

- 1) Ability and willingness to express clearly their values, skills, knowledge and expertise.
- 2) Always be ready for each mentoring session.
- 3) Be ready to demonstrate faith in his mentee's ability and readiness to learn.
- 4) Should be available, be approachable, flexible, and be a good listener.
- 5) Be honest, truthful, and straightforward whenever mentee questions.
- 6) Should provide feedback and practical guidance to the mentee.
- 7) Always be prepared to follow up to find answers to questions asked by a mentee that he does not know.
- 8) Be objective and positive with the relationship.
- 9) There should be plenty of space and no hidden agenda involved in the relationship.
- 10) He should show be compassionate.
- 11) Mentees should be honoured whenever possible.
- 12) He should be willing to leave his comfort zone and dedicate himself to other victories.
- 13) The mentor will be able to allow the link to focus on the needs of the mentee.

### **Roles of Mentors in Mentoring Programs**

A mentor perform certain responsibilities on two levels, both assisting the mentee in meeting pertinent job roles and aiding them envision and take measures toward their desired career. A mentor combines instruction in professional behaviour and tasks with affective support. Also, a mentor may fulfill all or a combination of these roles. The mentor combines teaching with professional behavior as well as related support. Also, a mentor can complete all tasks or combine them. The mentor:

- 1) Advocates - provides support, offer exposure and visions within the organization.
- 2) Acquires resources - provides rigorous readings, avenues, or expertise to the attention of the mentees.
- 3) Acts as a role model – provides insights on how to “do it” in an organization.
- 4) Advises - shares organizational and work wisdom, antagonize performance, and make recommendations.
- 5) Coaches - helps the mentee learn new expertise and perform new activities.
- 6) Protects - helps a mentee seek new opportunities and challenges within the organization while protecting him or her from unhealthy and “dead” work.
- 7) Support - listen with empathy, explain unwritten rules, and acknowledge disappointment and victory.

### **Stages of Mentoring**

According to Kram (1988), there are four definable stages of mentoring. There are:

**Initiation:** This is the stage where mentor and mentee can establish common ground where they get to know one another. This is the stage to build relationship and establish integrity with mentee. Informal meeting can be used to developed strong connections. At this period, mentor may determine the learning needs of mentee. During this time, peer observation can also be carried out. It takes about 6 to 12 months for mentoring relationship to establish.

**Cultivation:** At this stage, there are frequent interaction opportunities leading to possible mutual development. Relationship is further forged. It is the longest stage in the mentoring program that usually last from 2 to 5 years. During this stage, mentor and mentee can work together to produce projects that can lead to professional development. There can also be a numbers of problems as the relationship is being tested through actual work.

**Separation:** At this stage, mentee is given autonomy and there will be less frequent meeting with the mentor. At this point, it would be good to share self management strategies with mentee. Unattainable goals and objectives can create disappointment and frustration for mentee when he/she has more autonomy and need to handle things

independently. Have an open idea where mentee can meet mentor on a need basis to provide a good listening ear as well as guidance to guide them back to focus.

**Redefinition:** During the redefinition stage, both mentor and mentee understand that their relationship may continue but may not be the same as their relationship. If the mentor and mentee are to succeed in terms of separation, the relationship can develop into friendship. Unlike the cultivation stage, part of the relationship does not focus on the development of mentee career. The former mentor can interact with new mentees. Similarly, a former mentor can serve as a mentor to others.

### **Benefits of Mentoring**

Mentoring programs are considered because of the positive impact they can have on the people involved, that is, the mentor, the mentee and the institution. Thus, the following are possible benefits of mentoring (Ekechukwu & Horsfall, 2015; Mentor/Mentoring Partnership, 2005; Gibb, 1999):

For the Mentor:

1. Improved teaching skills
2. Intellectual challenge of working on issues which may take them into unfamiliar territory
3. Mentors receive recognition and incentive for their mentoring skills by the department and the University.
4. Motivation from self development and responsibility
5. Satisfaction at the success of the mentee
6. Reinforce the knowledge in the future practice
7. Opportunities for increased collaboration

For the Mentee:

1. Support and challenge in formulating a clear sense of personal direction
2. Understanding of the formal and informal culture and structures of the institution
3. Collaborative efforts towards meeting global challenges
4. Develops a sharper focus on things that will help him grow professionally
5. A source of knowledge and experience to tap into
6. Learns specific knowledge and skills necessary for personal goals
7. Increased self confidence and motivation

For the Institution:

1. Introduces stronger partnerships, such as intelligent staff relates with new and young people.
2. Increase commitment and productivity in the institution and reduce turnover among employees.
3. Employers use their own staff more than external consultants as internal experts for professional development in their work.
4. Costs associated with mentoring are seldom compared to other types of employee development services.
5. Sharing of knowledge and experiences and best practice as standard working practice
6. Innovation and continuous improvement in the way that employees approach their work
7. More profound academic interaction among colleagues (Collegiality)

### **Challenges of Mentoring**

There is no doubt that mentoring offers wide range of benefits to mentors, mentees, and the institutions but even the foremost mentoring programs with committed participants can face problems. Atkinson & Mitchell (2008) lists some challenges to include; high pressure on working hours, requirements and duties of a mentor, understanding and expectations, position and categories of staff, unwillingness of mentor or mentee to participate in mentoring, as well as culture and work environment. Wright & Wright, (1987) highlighted five setbacks to mentoring that can be applied in higher education: a mentor may lose his or her strengths or emotions, the mentee may be limited to only one person's view, the mentor may leave the organization, the male mentor may want sex from a female mentee, and the mentee may approach the poor mentor.

Long (1997) identified thirteen problems with mentoring. These concerns are, time-consuming for all involved, poor planning for the mentoring system, poor coordination of mentors and mentees, lack of understanding of the

mentoring system, lack of capacity for mentoring to create employment tensions, fewer mentors - mostly women, excessive use of available mentors, lack of access to mentoring for women in small groups, and the development of a mentor's role in unhealthy relationships between mentor and mentee. Others are high vision of a mentoring program, lack of understanding as to whether mentoring is leading to career advancement of the mentee and paucity of fund or cancellation of funding before the program can depict potential benefits.

Ehrich & Hansford (1999) stated some of the barriers affecting mentoring in organizations to include incorrect matching of mentors and mentees, lack of top-down support, creation of false promotional expectations, resentment felt by those not involved in the scheme or the perception of favouritism, gender issues and blurring of role boundaries. Others include leadership and management styles of the organisation, credibility of internal mentors and poor communication skills. Similarly, the other common challenges in mentoring relationships are meeting as scheduled, excessive time and energy commitments, unrealistic expectations, overdependence on the mentor or mentee, unfair manipulation on the part of the mentor or mentee, resentment or jealousy from others, ineffective mentoring pairs.

### **Overcoming Mentoring Challenges**

Individuals and institutions can take responsibility and commitment to overcome difficult challenges from the start. Individuals, both mentors and mentees, should consider whether giving them appropriate mentoring is important. If so, steps can be taken to ensure safety. These mentoring challenges can be overcome through:

- 1) Acknowledge the intentions of the mentoring relationship from the beginning, and write them down.
- 2) Follow up on recommended program and organization meetings.
- 3) Set time as a goal, and monitor your progress from time to time. Each mentoring relationship has a process - including its termination to formal mentoring. This does not mean the breakdown of the relationship, but changes in the relationship and frequency.
- 4) Mentors must keep their pride in check and remind themselves that this relationship is about the mentee, not the mentor. Mentees should remind themselves that it is they who want the experience. They should make their own decisions and remember that their mentors are basically for support and feedback.
- 5) Protect the mentee from mistakes or principal errors, and also allow the person to learn from his or her experiences and mistakes. Remember that a successful mentoring relationship is one where the mentee will continue and no longer need support. Make sure the mentee is not overly dependent.
- 6) Education is the best. Mentors and mentees can share information about this program with peers and other important people.
- 7) Recognize that women and other minorities within the institution face additional barriers to advancement. Have proper education and understanding about the issues and respect their different diversities, experiences, ideas, and goals.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Descriptive Mentoring theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. The Descriptive Mentoring theory was propounded by Kathy E. Kram in 1985. Kram (1985) stated that mentoring is a social interaction between a mature co-worker (mentor) and a junior professional (mentee) in which the mentor gives instructions, support and feedback to the mentee on career planning and personal development. Kram (1985) stated that a mentor support guides and advises an adult as he or she engages in the best or most important part of the adulthood or career world. Kram, (1985) also observed that a mentoring relationship is a type of workplace relationship that is slightly different for the two types of functions it offers. These are career functions and psychosocial functions. Career functions include support, exposure and vision, teaching, safety, providing critical services, and delivery of professional standards and ethics. Kram (1985) emphasized that career-related functions are those aspects of a mentoring relationship that involves a mentor leading and imparting knowledge to the mentee. Psychosocial functions include role models, acceptance-and-acknowledgement, advice, and friendship. Psychosocial functions are one of those areas of mentoring that supports the mental development of the mentee's capacity and effectiveness.

In this context, the junior academics in the university are the newcomers and experience high levels of confusion, anxiety and difficulty in getting into the academic system. It is hoped that mentoring provide opportunities to assist them in engaging with senior experienced academics will help reduce their ambiguity, prepare them for problem-solving as well as promote their knowledge and skills in the world of education. This opportunity prepares them to address the challenges facing communities, leading to prosperity and job development. Social interaction can also help experienced seniors expand their knowledge and skills for future teaching careers. All of these factors can lead to the excellent higher academic requirements for quality academic competition between universities within and outside the country as well as the enormous wealth of gifts for national and international development.

### **Mentorship and Academic Excellence**

Academic excellence is a proven ability to work, produce and /or excel in academic learning. It can be identified by obtaining better scores and higher performance in academics. It is also considered to be the highest development of intellectual capacity and skills and employment for human beings. Academic excellence also hinges on the need and desire for higher levels of education to tackle some technologically demanding professions (Peretomode & Ikoya, 2019; Csu Fresno.edu, 2020). Higher educational institutions are usually concerned with maximizing academic competencies and skills in order to stay within or ahead of the competition. The kind of talents required to accomplish institutional goals and objectives often demand that academic institutions provide mentoring programs. Therefore, mentorship is a critical ingredient to academic excellence that can be use to improve intellectual capacity of mentees.

Altbach & Salmi (2011) posit that in making a world class research, modern universities are great opportunity for the creative process of scholars to seek new ideas and the spirit of free research and mentorship plays significant role in this regard. Since mentoring is a unique academic enhancing process upon which protégées acquire skills, knowledge, expertise, experience and refined attitudes, it is undoubtedly an effective form of education that add values to personal, intellectual and professional development of the mentee. Mentoring is a valuable process in educational reform for academics (Genser, 1996). It is used by senior academics as a key professional development strategy to enhance teaching (Mtetwa & Thomson, 2000) and academic excellence. Mentoring creates a sense of collegiality (Dantonio, 2001) enables less experienced academics to have the peace of mind, self-discipline, and sharing skills with others. A number of empirical studies (Karanja & Gukingu, 2014; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jekielek & Moore, 2002; Thomson & Kelly-Vance, 2001; Campbell & Campbell, 1997) have shown that mentorship has positive and significant effect on academic performance, experience and productivity of mentees and thus enhanced academic excellence.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Mentoring is a powerful and important tool for career development and academic excellence and should worth the time, money and effort at the various units and departments of the institution. Regardless of how a mentor and mentee(s) are matched, either formally or informally, the relationship should be conducted in a professional manner with consideration and respect for both individuals. It is however necessary that both mentor and mentee(s) must exhibit mutual acceptance and this is necessary to command the needed respect, especially if it is formally matched. The above notwithstanding, grabbing should not be encouraged, situations where senior academics are completely overlooked by junior ones and are not given the opportunity to have access to mentees. Mentorship as developmental process which involves training and counseling, aimed at sharing knowledge and encouraging individual development and academic excellence and, older academics should be recognized as having these in richer reserves, unless of course the contrary has been proven in particular cases.

Most successful mentorships often develop into friendships with both parties learn and provide support to the other. This stems from the initial understanding on which the relationship was founded and built. The benefits and usefulness of mentorship in leading to academic excellence cannot be over-emphasized and it should therefore be encouraged and embedded as part of the culture of higher educational institutions.

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