



CENTER FOR URBAN AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

School of Education
IUPUI

**The Enhancing Mentoring Program with Opportunities
for Ways to Excel in Research
(EMPOWER)**

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Prepared by

The Center for Urban and Multicultural Education
CUME
School of Education
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

Shanna M. Stuckey, M.S.
Brian T. Collins II, M.A.
Shawn M. Patrick, M.A.

Executive Summary

From 2011 through 2016, 118 individuals (mentors and mentees) have participated in the program. Overall, participants in the study (N = 44) viewed their participation in the EMPOWER Program as positive. Eighty-eight percent of mentees and 95% of mentors Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they would recommend the EMPOWER Program to a colleague based on their experiences. In general, mentors and mentees shared that their expectations of the program were met and often they received information, guidance, and assistance in areas they had not originally considered.

Overwhelmingly, mentors and mentees felt that the EMPOWER Program provided them with numerous direct benefits. These benefits included a structured/formalized mentoring program, and support in sponsored research and external funding, scholarly activity, and career advancement. Mentors and mentees reported having a dedicated time and space for mentorship was beneficial. The goals and deliverables associated with the program were also valuable as it held participants accountable. According to mentors and mentees, participation provided support in sponsored research and external funding. Mentors provided assistance by providing encouragement, offering advice on where to submit articles and presentations, reviewing proposals, and co-creating proposals with their mentors. The majority of mentees (84%; N = 21) felt that participation in the EMPOWER Program improved their productivity of scholarly activity. While fewer mentors agreed with this sentiment (38%; N = 8), several mentors did feel that their role helped them as professionals as it pertained to scholarly activity. Mentors were also able to help mentees with their career advancement by sharing information related to promotion and tenure.

In addition to the direct benefits, participants shared there were a variety of indirect benefits associated with their participation as well. Indirect benefits included the timing of participation, networking opportunities, general professional development, a better understanding of organizational politics, acculturation to the IUPUI campus, and resources and additional support. Most participants felt that the year they participated in the EMPOWER Program was ideal, based on where they were in their career. Networking was one of the most highly discussed indirect benefits of participation. Mentors and mentees were able to create, maintain, and expand their professional relationships and networks within the campus, at other university campuses, and/or with the local community. Participants were thankful for the opportunities afforded by the EMPOWER Program to network as a cohort, but thought this was an area that could be strengthened in the future. Professional development often times encompassed the mentors motivating and encouraging the mentees, as well as helping them better define and be able to explain their research interests and goals. New faculty felt that participation in the EMPOWER Program helped them to acclimate to the IUPUI campus. Sharing information related to the organizational politics (i.e. insider secrets and tricks of the trade) of a department or school was an indirect benefit that mentees identified. Lastly, participants shared numerous supports and resources provided by the Program including developing a plan for career advancement, balancing personal and professional demands, and identifying funding opportunities. Resources and support also came from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR), the Office for Women, and recommendations of colleagues from mentors and mentees.

There were instances where mentor/mentee pairs were from the same department (N = 26; 56.5%), while other pairs were from different departments (N = 20; 43.5%). Participants discussed advantages and disadvantages of both scenarios. Advantages of being paired with someone from your school/department included a common language and knowledge of the background related to the specific area of study. Disadvantages included apprehension regarding sharing information about others within the department and interdepartmental conflicts. Advantages of being paired with someone from a different school/department included being able to share information without the fear of possible consequences and being able to see situations from a different point of view. Disadvantages included a disconnect in perspectives related to research in different fields.

Mentors and mentees described their relationship as a safe space. This safe space afforded both individuals with the opportunity to discuss areas they were struggling with related to promotion, colleagues, or other personal and professional challenges. These relationships often continued past the formal one-year participation in the EMPOWER Program. Eighty-three percent of participants who completed the survey stated that they still had a current professional relationship with their mentor/mentee. Several mentors felt the mentor/mentee relationship was mutually beneficial; however, others viewed their role as a service to the individual and the broader campus and did not expect, or feel like they gained, any personal benefits.

While there is research in higher education that conveys mentoring does not always account for the intersections of differences across gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, ability, linguistic differences, national origin, etc., participants in the EMPOWER Program did not feel like this was an issue as it related to their experiences. However, several mentors and mentees shared that having a mentor with the same gender was beneficial.

Although there were several recommendations for improvement; overall, mentors and mentees described the multiple benefits of the program in depth and felt that this program was one that not only benefited the participants, but the IUPUI campus community as well.