Benchmark and Research of Mentoring Programs at Colleges/Universities

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This report was compiled from responses that were shared regarding information on various mentoring programs at peer and aspirant institutions.

Research Started June 15, 2016

Phone Calls Started July 5, 2016

Email Reminders Sent July 8, 2016

"The Learning Dialogue: Mentoring"

Mentoring as a function of educational institutions can be defined as a one-to-one learning relationship between an older person and a younger person that is based on modeling behavior and extended dialogue between them. Mentoring is a way of individualizing a student's education by allowing or encouraging the student to connect with a college staff member or a member of the community who is experienced in a particular field or set of skills. The relationship has formal and informal aspects.... What seems to confirm a mentoring relationship is its informal dimensions, which give greater significance to the contact between the two persons involved. The student must have respect for the mentor as a professional and as a human being who is living a life worthy of that respect. The mentor must care enough about the student to take time to teach, to show, to challenge, and to support. In some elusive fashion, the mentor must embody values, aspirations, wisdom, and strength that the student respects and perhaps wishes to attain as well (pp. 50-51).

By Lester, V., and Johnson, C. "The Learning Dialogue: Mentoring." In J. Fried (Ed.), New Directions for Student Services: Education for Student Development, no. 15. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981.

University Profiles


- Public: 12
- Private: 4
- Christian-Based: 1
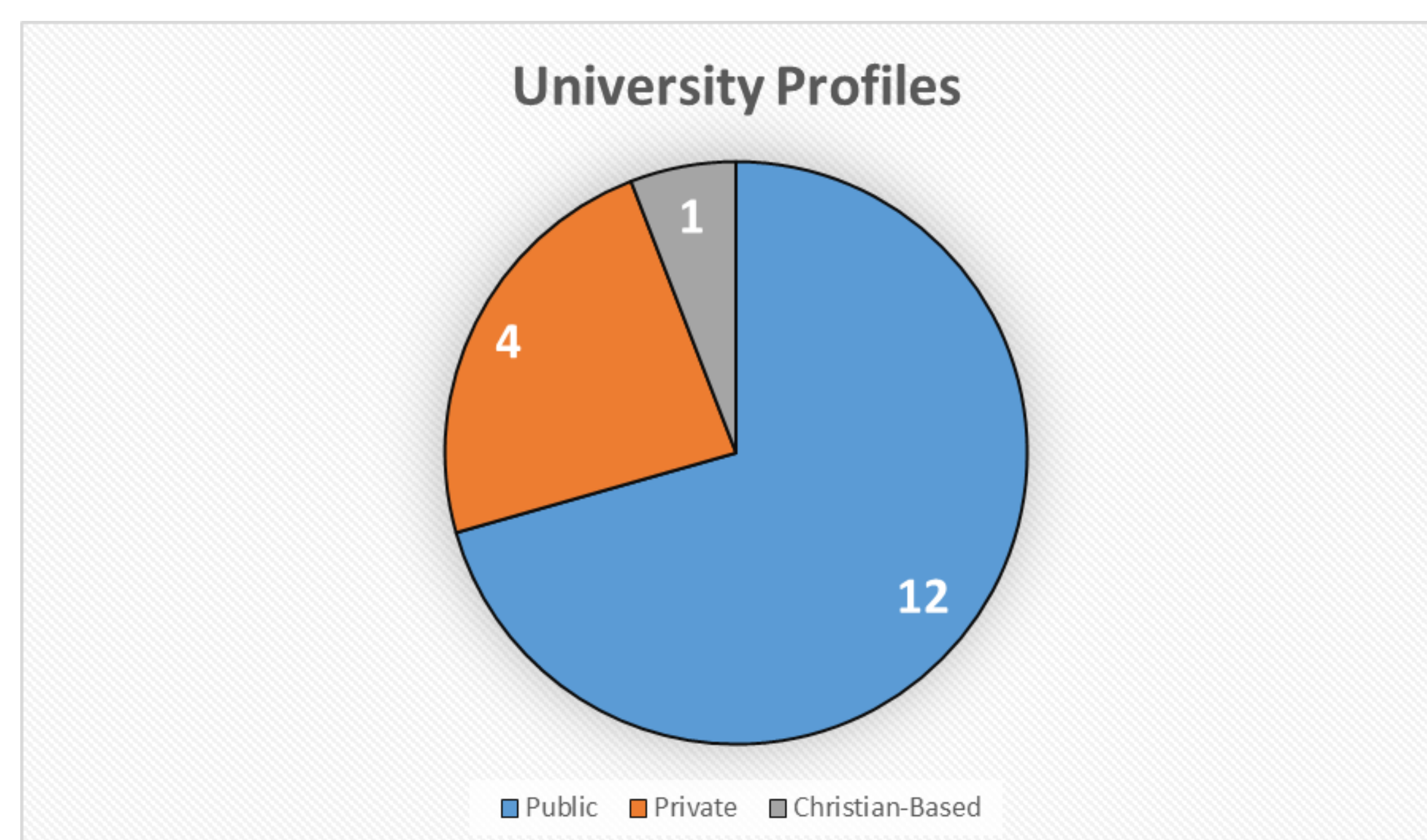
Learning Outcomes

In terms of learning outcomes, these categories/themes emerged most frequently:

•Acquire basic mentoring skills and apply them in assigned mentoring relationships

•Serve as a role model for first-year college students through mentoring relationships and other mentoring activities

•Provide guidance: Helping find the balance between school, work, and friendships

•Provide support: Help find ways to learn information better and find the resources that will help you become a better student

•Connecting students to the community

•Help students use the method of understanding, exploring, and taking action

•Aid in the overall positive experience of your mentee

Plans to Implement
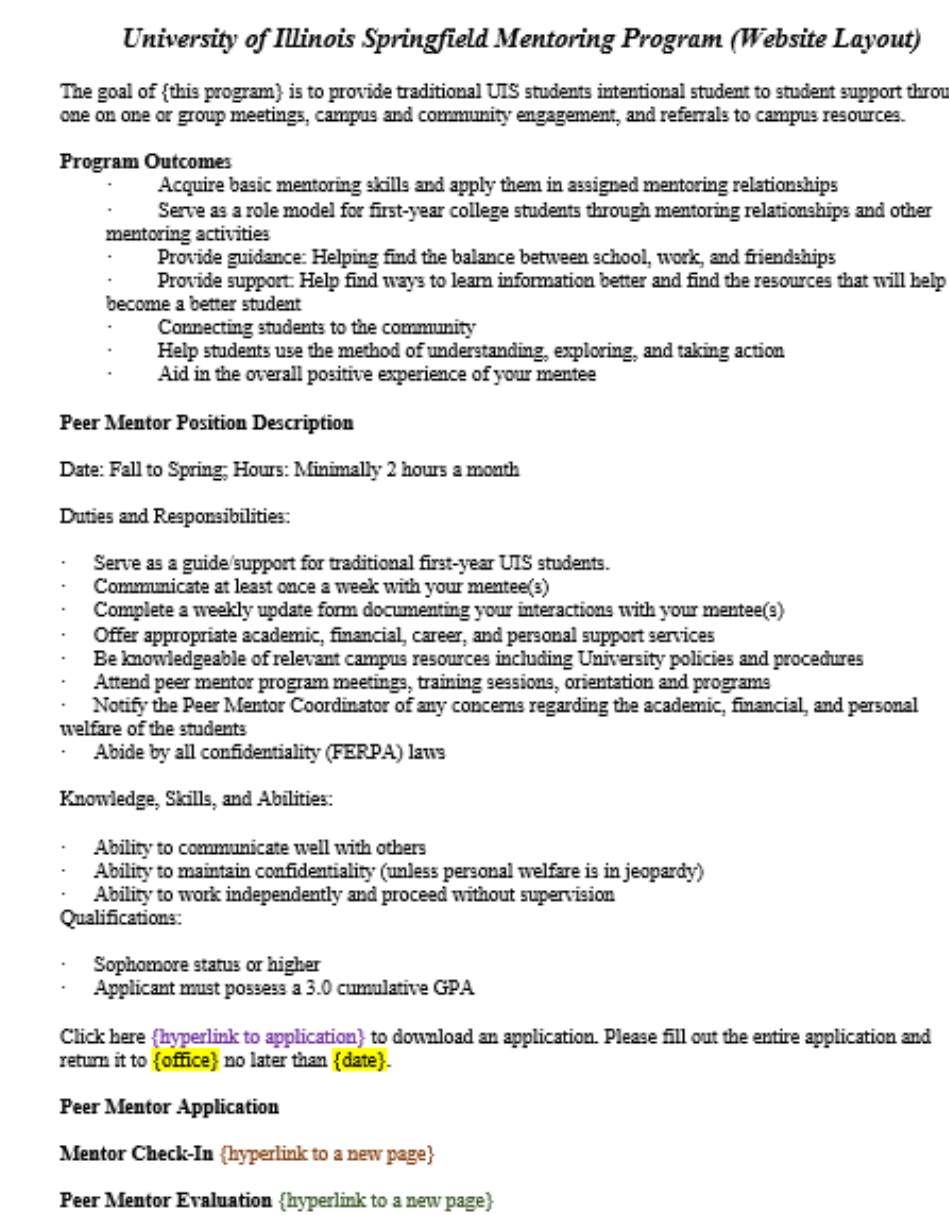
With data collected from various institutions both peer and aspirant, I came up with a design to implement a mentoring program for traditional students. This included a website that housed all information about the program (see right).

Other data collected included appropriate staffing, budget, qualifications of a mentor, duties/responsibilities for participants, incentives to be a mentor. and ways to collaborate the program with academic affairs.
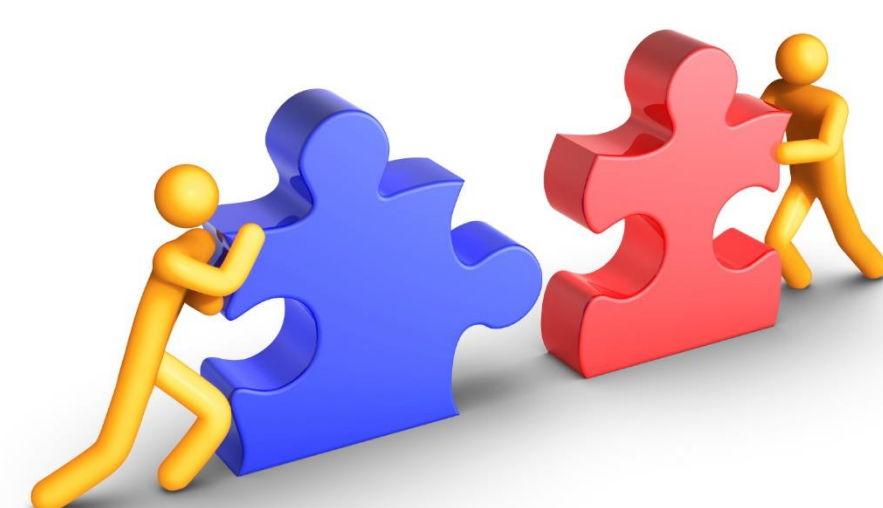
Research

- Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence (Chickering)
- Student realizes that he or she needs the instruction and help of others, most notably, a mentor
- Those students who had a faculty mentor "attained a higher grade-point average equivalent to between .2 and .3 of a grade point" (Campbell and Campbell, p. 738)
- A peer mentor "can serve as one source of support to reduce the stress experienced by a younger and less experienced student" (Terrion and Leonard, p. 156)
- The effect of mentoring to ethnic minorities is significant where mentors aid mentees specifically by performing "the role by offering words of advice when too many obstacles seemed to prevent the university students from moving forward" (Cruz, 2008, p. 38).
- When peers learn from each other, key terms such as "inclusive," "authentic," "democratic" and "mutual" (Mavrinac, 2005, p. 399) are used, indicating an equal access to knowledge.
- Students participated in mentoring programs "to meet people, to get more involved, to give something back to the university and to develop skills and personal attributes such as mentoring skills, communication skills, confidence levels and leadership skills" (Muldoon, p. 210).
- In a study conducted by Mee-Lee and Bush (2003), both mentors and mentees thought the most desirable characteristics of student mentors were to be "(1) 'understanding & sympathetic', (2) 'accessible to students', (3) '[able to] communicate well' and (4) 'enthusiastic'" (p. 268).
- "…the undergraduate peer mentor's placement or attachment to a credit course and its instructor(s), his or her identity as a near-peer to students enrolled in that course, the wide variety of peer mentoring roles that may be instructional yet differ from authoritative instruction and grading, and the existence of a program that coordinates and supports the learning of peer mentors and their host instructors" (Smith, p. 27).
- In a longitudinal study of nearly 50,000 undergraduate students using 192 measures of college student experiences, Astin (1993) found that "the student's peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years" (p. 398).
- Peer mentoring in particular has been linked to increased post-secondary grades (Rodger & Tremblay, 2003).
- Structured, academically focused peer mentoring has also had a significant and positive influence on cognitive gains and decreased psychological distress for first-year student participants (Fantuzzo, Riggio, Connelly, & Dimeff, 1989).

References

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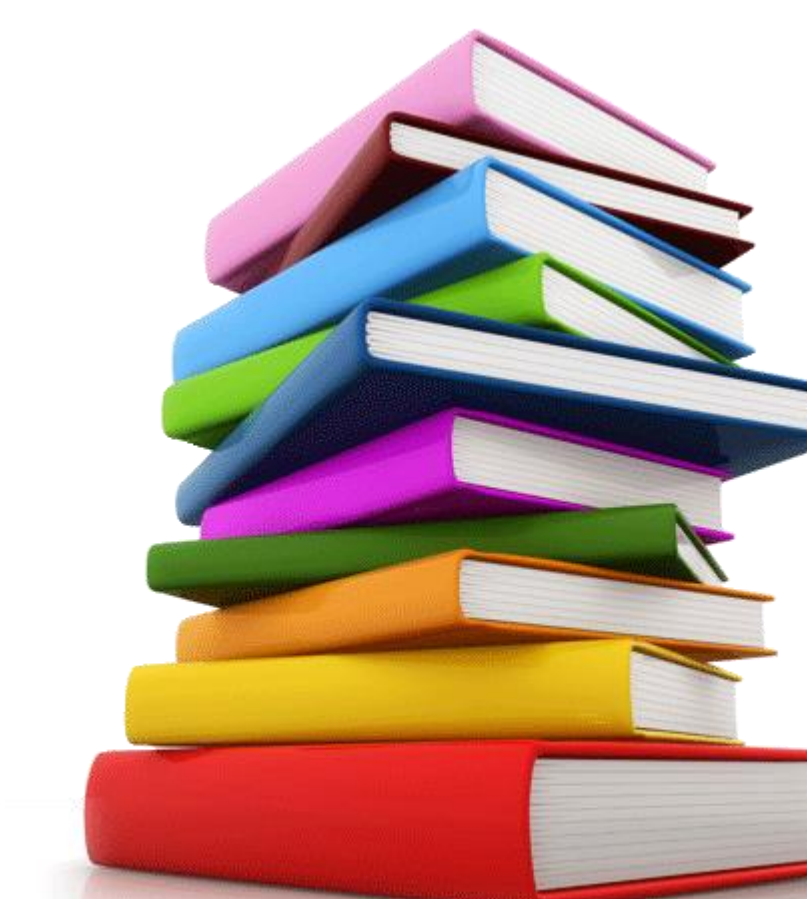
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