



TO: Members of the College of Electors

SPONSOR: Working Group for the Evaluation of the Mentoring Program
Carol Bisnath, Tiffany Chow, Celeste Francis Esteves, Victoria Hurlihey, Jason Marin

DATE: April 27, 2011 for May 4, 2011

TITLE: **Report of the Working Group for the Evaluation of the Mentoring Program**

ACTION: For discussion

The Mentoring Program is a valuable facet of the College of Electors and should be continued; however, in order to improve the future success of the program, it is recommended that some modifications to its format are necessary. At the April 21st, 2011 meeting of the Mentorship Program Working Group, the feedback generated from a survey soliciting feedback from members of the College was reviewed and discussed. Survey results were used by the Working Group on Mentoring to formulate recommendations to the College as to how the Mentorship Program should be repositioned and re-organized for the upcoming year.

Summary of Survey Results:

Respondent experience levels with the College ranged from inexperienced to highly experienced (3 are first year representatives and 4 are in their last year of service). 6 participated in the Mentorship Program as either mentors or mentees and 4 had no experience with the Program. Respondents who did not participate in the Program indicated that it was not offered when they first joined the College or opted not to join because of time constraints and sought informal help from other members.

Pertaining to quality of experience with the Program, most respondents were satisfied. 80% of respondents rated their experience 1, 2, or 3 – with 1 being excellent and 5 being poor. Some cited lack of commitment from either the mentor or the mentee as being the reason for dissatisfaction with the Program.

Two questions on the survey solicited suggestions for how the Mentorship Program could be improved in the future. Notable suggestions included:

- Reviewing the role of mentorship within the College – i.e. for information sharing or for guidance and comfort
- Developing a guidebook/outline/FAQ that includes the role of mentors, benefits of the program to mentees, the inner workings of the Colleges and other important information about the College or Program that mentors and mentees could refer to throughout the year
- Holding an additional mentor-mentee specific event held at the beginning of the year to introduce newcomers to the College and to their mentors

Summary of Discussion:

It was noted that not all survey respondents completed every question, some members were unclear about the intent of some questions and other members did not complete the survey due to being “timed-out” by the system. Members discussed the purpose of the Program, noted that it served more of a resource and training function than a true mentoring function as well as discussing how the Program might be used to provide leadership opportunities for participants. It was also noted that, with the increased focus on the College’s role in the identification and recruitment of prospective alumni governors, participants could perhaps work together to take active steps towards recruitment.

Given that there would be a smaller pool of experienced members of the College who could serve as mentors in the 2011 term, perhaps groupings rather than pairings of participants should be considered – i.e. one senior member could be matched with two new members. Such a combination might also facilitate more dynamic exchange of information. Feedback from past participants indicated that pairings/groupings of members from different divisions would be preferable. Members felt there was less opportunity to exchange ideas and learn new information from others who belonged to the same alumni association. Matching across campuses would also be desirable, whenever possible.

To assist in matching, it would be helpful to gather information about past mentoring and recruitment experiences, background and interests from members who wished to serve as mentors in order to make the best possible matches. To that end, it would be preferable to use a separate form to gather information from prospective mentors, rather than the biography template that had been used for the past few years and that had a different purpose.

Members decided that it would be best for the matching process to occur close to the time of the first meeting of the College in the fall. By that time, the Secretary would be informed of new members of the College by the various alumni associations and would also be in contact with continuing members of the College who wished to participate in the Program.

An initial meeting of all program participants would be helpful in outlining the purpose and goals of the program. An icebreaking exercise, small group discussions, and a guest to speak about an aspect of current University affairs, could be possible components of such a meeting. An appropriate location as well as the cost of such a meeting would need to be determined. At the meeting, input on a subsequent activity for the participants could be sought. Ideas could include a guided campus tour, attending a lecture/event on campus, or a joint event with the University of Toronto Alumni Association. The purpose of such activities would be to provide greater context of the University functions, to increase visibility of the College of Electors by networking with the broader University community, and to make participation in the Program more appealing to mentors.

It was also suggested that more research should be gathered about existing mentorship programs. One member spoke with Elaine Preston from the University's mentorship program. Ms Preston recommended the following resource: Murray, M. & M. A. Owen. *Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring: How To Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Program*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991. <http://www.amazon.com/Beyond-Myths-Magic-Mentoring-Facilitate/dp/0787956759>

Summary of Recommendations:

Renaming:

The current name of the “Mentorship Program” does not fully reflect the purpose of the program. The word “mentorship” is often used to describe a relationship which is formed in order to assist an individual who is seeking career advice from an advisor who has experience in his/her field of interest. Since the Mentorship Program is meant to orient new members to the purpose and goals of the College, the relationship is not entirely based on a traditional mentorship approach. Therefore, we recommend that a more suitable name be adopted, such as “Orientation Partnership Program.”

Matching:

When matching mentees with mentors, the main point of consideration should be diversity. Diversity may be achieved by matching individuals from different constituencies. The advantages of such a pairing include the sharing of different experiences and viewpoints on alumni affairs and greater camaraderie between members from different constituencies.

Resource Materials:

In order to facilitate a better understanding of the goals of the Mentorship Program, members participating in the program should receive an information package. The package should include guidelines about the purpose of the mentorship pairing and suggested activities for the mentors and mentees.

Group Meetings:

A group introductory meeting should be held for the mentors and mentees as a group. This initial group meeting would be held in October in a location outside of Simcoe Hall, and would be facilitated by the Executive Committee and possibly by the Secretariat. During the meeting, the resource materials would be distributed, explained, and discussed. The format of the meeting would be casual with refreshments served. Mentorship pairs would be encouraged to interact with other members. In order to “break the ice” and to facilitate discussion, the resource materials could contain questions which the pairs could ask each other and others. The questions could include the following: “How does your alumni group recruit potential Alumni Governors?”; “What is your understanding of the purpose of the College of Electors?”; What is your understanding of Governing Council and the role of Alumni Governors?; etc. The pairs would also be asked to exchange contact information and to arrange to meet or communicate electronically if the mentee had further questions about the College of Electors.

It was also suggested that, at the end of the year, a final meeting for all mentors and mentees should be held outside of Simcoe Hall. During this final group meeting, the members would be asked to share their impressions of the College of Electors and to provide feedback about the Mentorship Program.

Recruitment:

The role of the members of the College of Electors has been under review. It has been strongly suggested that the members of the COE should be more engaged in the identification and recruitment of potential Alumni Governors from their constituencies. In order to facilitate the recruitment function of the members of the College, the Mentorship Program should also focus on identification and recruitment. It is suggested that the resource package should contain information about identification and recruitment and that the mentorship pairs should share how their constituencies approach individuals who show potential for serving as an Alumni Governor. The goal of this information sharing about recruitment would be to strengthen and improve the recruitment skills of members of the College.

Management of the Program:

In order to reduce the administrative demands placed on the Secretary of the College of Electors, it is recommended that one of the members of the Executive Committee should lead the program. Duties would include reviewing the resource package, meeting with the Secretary of the College to match mentors with mentees, and leading the initial and final group meetings. Other duties may arise as needed.