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FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: BREAKING DOWN THE STAGES, CHARACTERISTICS, RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS IN STUDENT MENTORING

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Abstract: The Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics undergraduate program at the ``Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas`` (UAZ) has a high-quality curriculum, recognized both nationally and internationally. One of the key aspects to maintain this quality is to maintain a high terminal efficiency in the program, which implies paying special attention to the intermediate indicators of inter-semester promotion, graduation, and graduation. In addition to complying with formal curricular activities, mentoring programs are implemented to prevent dropout and support the achievement of the aforementioned objectives. These mentorships seek to obtain curricular recognition and provide institutional support to outstanding students who academically support their peers at risk of falling behind. The research describes the stages, characteristics, rights and obligations of the student mentor; using a qualitative methodology. The literature review is based on theoretical contributions on the interrelationships between mentoring actors, and an analysis is carried out on how educational models must incorporate these actions for their institutional recognition in the future.

Keywords: Mentoring, Stages, Rights, Obligations, Characteristics, Manual.

INTRODUCTION

The Academic Center for School Services (CASE) of the ``universidad autonoma de zacatecas`` (UAZ) and the Academic Unit of Veterinary Medicine and Zootechnics (UAMVZ) collaborate in the implementation of the Mentoring Program, which was established in 2015 with the purpose of providing Orientation for new students. In this study, the procedures used in this program are examined with the aim of proposing improvements. Program participants have expressed that it is very

useful and constitutes an effective support strategy, especially for students who are just beginning their professional training and facing initial difficulties. The UAMVZ mentoring coordination has established systematic procedures for student mentors to carry out their activities in a planned and organized manner, providing academic support to new students. To achieve this, it is important to recognize the characteristics that student mentors must have, in order to offer an optimal service that helps prevent school dropout.

According to Smith (2018), mentoring is a process in which a person with more experience and knowledge provides guidance and support to another person with the aim of promoting their development personal and professional. This approach has gained recognition in various fields, such as education, business and personal development. Mentoring can have a significant impact on the learning, growth, and motivation of the individuals involved.

According to García (2019), mentoring has proven to be an effective strategy to improve academic performance and student retention. Mentors, by providing guidance, emotional support, and practical advice, can help students set clear goals, develop skills, and overcome obstacles in their educational journey.

For Rodríguez (2020), mentoring can have a positive impact on the development of students' social and emotional skills. Through the mentoring relationship, students can build their confidence, improve their communication skills, and develop greater emotional intelligence.

Mentoring is an effective strategy to improve academic achievement and student retention. Mentors, by providing guidance, emotional support, and practical advice, can help students set clear goals, develop skills, and overcome obstacles in their educational

journey (Smith 2019).

According to the author Brown 2017 Mentoring can have a significant impact on the professional development of individuals. Mentors, by sharing their experience and knowledge, can help mentees acquire new skills, expand their network of contacts, and achieve their career goals.

The Academic Mentoring Program has proven to be an effective tool to promote integration and academic success of students. Mentors, through their experience and knowledge, provide personalized support, academic guidance, and necessary resources so that students in danger of failing can overcome difficulties, set clear goals, and develop key skills for their academic and professional development (López et al. 2019).

According to the other authors Martínez and Gómez (2020), the Academic Mentoring Program has proven to be an effective strategy to improve the adaptation and academic performance of students to promote greater motivation and commitment to their educational process.

Considering the teaching experience and the contribution to the training of mentoring students, the authors of this study consider that mentoring is a type of incidental and informal learning. This experience has been seen in any field, where outstanding students provide support to those who face difficulties in the process. This approach of matching mentors and mentees takes place in an informal program, where students establish a trusting relationship and define their respective roles. This creates an environment different from that found in the formal relationship between student and teacher, and allows participants to discover the reality in which they are immersed. In addition, the mentor also learns by observing and getting to know her disciple and friend from her perspective, since there are cultural aspects and other factors that

have led them to that situation. Therefore, in mentoring, the focus is not solely on achieving goals, but on the process that is experienced.

CONCEPTS OF ACADEMIC MENTORING

Academic mentoring refers to a relationship of support and guidance between a mentor and a student, with the goal of promoting the student's academic, personal, and professional development. Below are some concepts of academic mentoring with current authors:

According to Eby et al. (2020), academic mentoring involves a supportive and oriented relationship between a mentor with experience and knowledge in a specific academic field and a student seeking to develop skills and knowledge in that field. The mentor provides advice, guidance, and resources to help the student achieve her academic goals.

For Sánchez-Campillo et al. (2021), academic mentoring is a personalized accompaniment process in the educational field, where a mentor provides guidance, support, and practical advice to a student, helping them develop study skills, set academic goals, and overcome obstacles in their educational trajectory.

According to Ragins and Kram (2020), academic mentoring focuses on the academic development and support of students, where a mentor provides guidance in course choice, career planning, research and study skills development, and offers constructive feedback. to improve academic performance.

METHOD

The present study was mainly based on a qualitative approach, focusing on a literature review. From this review, the importance of continuous training of student mentors in higher education is highlighted. Likewise, the necessary characteristics are highlighted so that these students can effectively carry out

their role as mentors.

In this sense, it is observed that integrity and independence in curricular development are key aspects that contribute to knowledge management and decision-making by student mentors. These aspects seem to be decisive for their profile as prominent mentors within the institution. In other words, these students excel in objective terms of knowledge, specific skills, and attitudes in their discipline. In addition, they show qualities of socialization, human warmth, ease of interaction and teamwork, leadership attitudes, as well as a willingness to manage both their own affairs and those of their dependents in an organized manner.

MAIN STAGES OF THE MENTOR

First stage: Mentoring team training

A specialist education coordinator, who may be a teacher, is appointed to lead the mentoring team.

Volunteer students are recruited who wish to play the role of mentors, demonstrating an attitude of service.

A final selection of mentors is made based on their academic performance, considering those who are in the third to eighth semesters.

Second stage: Mentor training

Mentors receive training provided by the mentoring coordinator. This training aims to establish a dynamic interaction, where students with learning difficulties are guided by outstanding and trained mentors.

The team of mentors is trained through regular meetings.

The first work session is held, which consists of an induction workshop. The purpose of this workshop is to familiarize first-year students and mentors with the physical and virtual environments of the new educational context, as well as to learn about the methodological strategies used by teachers and present the academic programs.

Regular meetings are established between the mentors and the students they mentor, systematically following the schedule established in the mentoring program.

Third stage: Subject assignment

The mentoring coordinator assigns the mentor the subjects corresponding to the first and second semester, according to the study plan.

Prior to assignment, a preliminary dialogue is held with the student mentor to identify in which subjects they feel most comfortable advising and in which areas they can provide the most help to new students.

Fourth stage: Diagnosis of new students

Newly admitted first and second semester students are recruited.

A test is applied to these students to determine their attention needs and to know their areas of weakness.

Fifth stage: Mentee Assignment

The attention needs of the students are defined, such as academic, vocational, personal, social, economic aspects, preferences, family and administrative situation.

Based on these identified needs, the coordinator assigns mentees who require academic advice in specific subjects.

It is important to verify compliance with activities in these stages and follow the formats established by the institution, as well as submit a final report (Rochin et al., 2020).

MENTOR RIGHTS

- To be part of the group of outstanding students
- To obtain a certificate certifying participation in the Institutional Mentoring Program
- To maintain direct communication with the Mentoring Coordination
- To receive ongoing training from the Mentoring Coordination

OBLIGATIONS OF THE MENTOR

- To transmit the values and institutional culture.
- To support and dedicate time and effort to the process of integration and development of the mentored student in their academic, social and emotional trajectory.
- To communicate assertively and provide constructive feedback.
- To orient, guide, provide information and explore different options to achieve good results.
- To establish a trusting relationship with the mentored student.
- To design an action plan for the accompaniment process.
- To identify the needs and interests of the mentee student.
- To inform the tutor about the relevant cases that must be included in the student's file.
- To prepare reports on the results of the communication established with the mentored students.
- To maintain direct communication with the Mentoring Coordination (Rochin et al., 2020).

MENTOR CHARACTERISTICS

The requirements to be a UAZ mentor, as verified through the Kardex, official document of academic progress, are the following:

- To have a minimum GPA of 8.5.
- To demonstrate experience in the area in which they are going to act as a mentor, with a command of the processes and knowledge in those areas where a high failure rate is reported or extraordinary support is requested from students of

grades lower than or equal to that of the mentor.

- To adapt to the pace of learning of the mentee student.
- To have time availability without neglecting your own academic progress.
- To organize your activities to dedicate time to continuous training.
- To be able to handle difficult situations, showing empathy towards the mentor student and being willing to listen and clarify any academic needs that arise.
- To show interest in helping others and solidarity with the mentee student.
- To maintain impeccable conduct both inside and outside the institution.
- To have passing grades in all subjects and have no extraordinary exams pending.
- To know the academic rules and regulations of the institution, especially those related to the admission, permanence and graduation of the degree in MVZ.
- To possess charisma and empathy towards fellow mentees, understanding the situations that are faced in today's world, such as economic, health and learning problems.
- To have interpersonal skills, such as leadership, listening skills and teamwork.
- To have values of social commitment, honesty, justice, democracy, critical-scientific thinking and adherence to a code of ethics.
- To maintain discretion in relation to the information shared by the mentored student (Rochin et al., 2022).

RESULTS

The results of implementing a mentoring program and manual in an institution can be diverse and beneficial for both mentors and mentees, such as improved academic performance: Mentees can experience an improvement in their academic performance by receiving support and guidance from experienced mentors. This can translate into higher grades and greater success in courses.

Greater student retention: The implementation of a mentoring program can contribute to greater student retention by providing additional support and a sense of belonging to the institution. Mentees may feel more motivated and committed to their education, which reduces dropout rates.

Personal and Professional Development: Mentees can benefit from the development of personal and professional skills through the mentoring program. Mentors can guide them in identifying goals, planning careers, and developing key skills for their future.

Greater student satisfaction: Participation in a mentoring program can generate greater student satisfaction by providing a space for support and personalized guidance. Mentees can feel supported and valued, which contributes to their well-being and overall satisfaction.

Strengthening of the student community: The implementation of a mentoring program fosters the creation of a solid and collaborative student community. Mentors and mentees can establish bonds of friendship and collaboration, which contributes to an environment of support and camaraderie among students.

In general, the implementation of a mentoring program and manual can have a positive impact on the educational experience of students, promoting their academic success, their personal and professional development, and strengthening the student community in

general.

DISCUSSION

In the article “The Impact of Mentoring Programs on College Student Mentors: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis”, Allen et al. (2019) state that “mentoring can have a positive impact on the development of leadership skills, student satisfaction, and the sense of belonging of mentored students.”

According to Eby et al. (2016) in the study entitled “The Long-Term Impact of College Student Mentoring Programs: A Meta-Analytic Review”, conclude that “mentoring programs can have lasting positive effects on academic achievement, student retention, and the professional development of mentored students.”

Sánchez and collaborators (2020 stand out in their article “The Role of Mentoring Relationships in Promoting College Student Mental Health: A Literature Review”), where “mentoring can play a crucial role in supporting the mental health of college students, providing them with a safe space to discuss their concerns and providing guidance and resources”

The aforementioned authors highlight and agree on the positive impact of mentoring programs on the development of skills, student satisfaction, academic performance and mental health of mentor students, these studies support the importance and benefits of mentoring in the context academic.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of a mentoring program and the continuous training of mentors in higher education can have numerous advantages and benefits, such as better academic performance, greater student retention, personal and professional development of students, strengthening the community student education and the

improvement of mental health and well-being. Mentoring programs provide personalized support and guidance to students, which can help them achieve greater academic success. Trained mentors can provide study strategies, time-management tips, and support in developing academic skills, which can translate into better performance in subjects. Additionally, mentoring can play a crucial role in student retention by providing additional support and a sense of belonging to the institution. Trained mentors can help students overcome academic and emotional challenges, which reduces dropout rates and promotes school completion. In addition, mentoring programs offer students the opportunity to develop important personal and professional skills. Trained mentors can guide students in identifying goals, planning careers, and developing key skills for future success. In addition, mentoring fosters the creation of a strong and collaborative student community

by providing a space to establish relationships of trust and mutual support between mentors and mentees. Lastly, mentoring programs can have a positive impact on students' mental health and well-being. Trained mentors can provide a safe space for students to share concerns and provide guidance and resources to address emotional and psychological challenges. In summary, implementing a mentoring program and providing ongoing training to mentors in higher education can have a significant impact on academic performance, student retention, personal and professional development, strengthening the student community, and well-being of students. These findings support the importance of investing in effective mentoring programs and ongoing mentor education to promote the success and well-being of college students.

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