

***Mentorship, Global Readiness, and Student Success at South Carolina State University
(SCSU): A Descriptive Study of the Emergence of the New Student Mentor***

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Introduction

Mentorship has been viewed as a role played to advance useful advice for success to the freshman student enrollee. It can be seen as a title that identifies a person who has shown a high credibility of accomplishments in a highly respected place of leadership. When used as a label or title, the nonverbal reference of *mentor* given to this person is often times intended to show that the person is knowledgeable about forces that can impact perceived success of students in the classroom or workplace. This reference of *mentor* is a word often used to convey encouragement, regardless of its use, whether in the home, in school, in the community, or in the global arena. Usually, the person who carries such as title is a person who has gained a recognizable image of success, especially after having been labeled as "best." (Brown)

Hypothesis

The Tenured Faculty Member and the New Student Mentor can have a positive impact on student retention at the undergraduate level of study. The author believes that tenured associate professors and professors can help create a new kind of student leader or reengineer the making of what can be defined as the **New Student Mentor (NSM)** on the college campus. The writer believes that tenured associate professors and professors will be able to help the NSM create a plan of success-accomplishment for the new college enrollee. Effective interpersonal communication strategies and focused-groups will be used by both the tenured faculty member and NSM. These two types of talking-skills and writing skills will be important tools in student success. These soft skills and usage of technical skills are supported by professionals and academic winners, especially in world of business, academia, and in all levels of American Armed Forces.

Methodology

Feedback on research questions were collected via survey monkey (Survey Monkey, 1999-2018). Throughout data collection on an experimental portion of this study, the researcher and student experimenter for this descriptive study asked questions that elicited "pen and paper" responses as well as survey ratings. Subjects were students either at home or housed in internship programs away from the campus or abroad. While not the best experimental tool for assessing data for variability, the student researcher believed that significant percentages on research questions could be found using the experimental approach with data collection. Subjects were incoming freshman and upperclassmen.

There were two separate surveys created to receive feedback; the freshmen (SCSU only) and upperclassmen had their own survey with different questions. To make the experiment more accurate, comparisons were made across other Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU's).

Results

100 percent of participation student enrollees participated in data collection. The survey confirmed the following findings on the role of the New Student Mentor (NSM) in social, interpersonal, and group assistance to peer students on the college campus. Here are the findings.

1. Incoming freshmen showed signs of nervousness and a concern about navigation on campus.
2. Students seemed to trust a special program-setup for better campus navigation and consultation for peer students. For example, programs similar to the Honors College (HC) and newly established Student Admissions Ambassador Program (SAAP) were helpful in reducing stress and cognitive dissonance for new student freshmen enrollees at South Carolina State University.
3. The freshman believed that success would follow help and assistance given during enrollment.
4. Data showed that 93% percent of the freshmen enrollees believed comfortability and success were enhanced by the SAPP.
5. Freshmen enrollees trust more the help of student mentors who treated them like a peer and not like a parent.
6. Upperclassmen stated that one of their reasons for attending the college was based on the appeal of academic program and connection with student mentors.
7. Most students believed that qualities of trustworthiness, dependability, assertiveness, communication skills, respectful, positive self-image, confidence, knowledgeable of the campus, leadership skills, initiative, non-judgmental attitudes, patience, listener skills, and integrity of faculty were influential reasons for continuing toward the completion of academic program.

Implications for the New Student Mentor

While statistical findings were non-significant in the experimental portion of data interpretation, researchers found that results were meaningful and could be used to implement the strategic use of the New Student Mentor (NSM) as a meaningful human catalyst in the study of retention and enrollment at the college campus. Here are the meaningful administrative projections and research findings.

- A. NSM and tenured faculty member will be a dyad and could play formal part of overall plan of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).
- B. NSM will be work across departments and programs, on and off campus, to achieve set objectives launched to increase the attainment of success for the undergraduate student at SCSU.
- C. NSM will work in areas of academic programs that center around common major and student programs mostly.
- D. NSM will create (with advice from tenured faculty member) ways to measure progress and process of the attainment of success. Pools of students and cohorts may be used in data collection.
- E. NSM will learn how to use the “electronic portfolio” and how to share that knowledge with students.

- F. NSM (with recommendations and help from tenured faculty member) will use the General Education Core (GEC) to tap a pool of students who may not have chosen a major area of study in academic programs offered at SCSU.
- G. NSM will use the “survey instrument” to record the benefits of findings on success. Item-questions will be included in the survey that can be spoken in conversation as well as recorded for meaning and measurement on paper.
- H. NSM will be aware of research on success that is relevant in social, global, and spiritual communities.
- I. NSM will advocate to other student-enrollees the importance of beginning and building an effective business and/o academic resume.
- J. NSM will learn more about CIVTAS INSPIRE—an instrument used in predictive data analysis. NSM will be assisted by the tenured faculty member to use this measuring tool effectively. This type of data collection might be one way to allow the faculty and NSM to track “factors of student success.
- K. NSM and the tenured faculty member will inform students about the benefits of writing and publishing manuscripts and/or stories of success-accomplishments while enrolled as an undergraduate student at SCSU.
- L. NSM will be paid a stipend or moneys for services and data collected that show tangible accomplishments of success in the measurement of student retention and enrollment.

Conclusion

The New Student Mentor can truly help to enhance retention and success on the college campus. By providing an expertise, stipend, and administrative understanding of the role that could be played by the learning and employment of student mentorship to support freshmen enrollees, the New Student Mentor could be a key player in the growth of retention and enrollment.

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