Mentor Surveys

Graduate Programs surveyed graduate students on the quality of the mentorship within the graduate program. Feedback can be used by program leadership to recognize outstanding mentorship, but also identify mentorship gaps or issues to address. [Sample Mentor Surveys](#).

Student Feedback

A majority (94%) of students surveyed indicated they did feel comfortable providing feedback on mentoring to their graduate programs. A majority (93%) are interested in providing feedback to their program on mentorship annually or on an ongoing basis. The surveys were anonymous and students appreciated this approach. One graduate student indicated apprehension in providing feedback since some criticisms provided in the mentor survey could be identifiable. This particular student emphasized that collecting mentorship feedback through a variety of methods could allow graduate students to select the feedback mechanism they prefer. Other feedback methods mentioned were focus groups, individual advisor meetings, and interviews. However, a majority of the students indicated they liked the anonymous survey format:

> *"I like this format, where my identity is concealed. It helps me to feel protected, as I am concerned about the politics within the program"*

> *"(I prefer feedback to be collected) via anonymous survey. However, I do believe that there should be a well-established and publicized way for students to provide feedback to programs regarding issues they have with advisors and other faculty. Faculty outside of primary advisors provide mentorship to students and there are not any avenues outside of course evals for students to provide feedback. Course evals never seem to be acted upon."*

Graduate students emphasized their desire for mentorship feedback to be incorporated into the program and acted upon by program leadership. Graduate students would like their feedback shared with faculty and for the program to follow up with graduate students on how they will address issues (e.g. provide additional mentor training).

> *"Faculty should be made aware of the student perspective regarding the mentoring experience."*

> *"I would like to see (the program) change or improve their approach to mentorship based on the feedback students provide."*

The feedback stressed that there is also a need to assess consistency across mentoring relationships to ensure equity in the quality of mentorship provided by a program. Graduate students would also like to see consequences for abusive or toxic behaviors.

Summary

Mentor surveys allow graduate students to provide feedback on mentorship that supports mentor development and recognizes mentorship as a critical component of a graduate program. There is currently often no protected mechanism for graduate students to provide mentorship feedback during their graduate studies and due to the power dynamic of working with faculty, they do not often feel they can directly confront their mentors. While mentors should solicit feedback on their mentorship

directly, it should also be collected at a program level to acknowledge that many graduate students will not feel secure sharing feedback directly. Graduate programs should summarize and share feedback with faculty to recognize positive examples of mentorship, but to also identify areas for improvement or intervention.

Graduate programs should consider many factors as they approach designing and distributing a mentor survey. While many students prefer providing feedback anonymously, this can prevent graduate programs from intervening in specific situations, identifying mentors who need interventions, or effectively reporting harassment or abuse. Graduate program leadership should prepare to be accountable to any challenges or needs that arise from the feedback. Graduate Program Chairs should seek support and training from Graduate Studies on how to approach mentoring interventions and conflict mediations with their fellow faculty.

The faculty merit and review process should incorporate mentoring service and quality of mentorship to incentivize and reward positive mentoring. Feedback from surveys such as these could be incorporated into this process if mentor names are collected.