

A qualitative analysis of SNEB Mentorship Program participant feedback surveys

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Introduction. Mentorship programs in professional organizations can benefit both mentors and mentees by providing support, community, networking, and knowledge-sharing. The current virtual environment provides a novel opportunity to expand the dimensions of the mentorship program for years ahead.

Objective. To conduct a secondary qualitative analysis of survey responses from former SNEB Mentorship Program participants as part of formative research for the development of future programming.

Methods.

Data Source. Satisfaction surveys were completed by mentors and mentees who participated in the mentorship program at SNEB Annual Conferences between 2012-14 and 2016-17.

Pertinent Survey Questions.

- What aspects of the SNEB conference mentor program did you like **best**?
- What aspects of the SNEB conference mentor program did you like **least**?
- Did your mentor successfully contact you prior to conference?
- Please rate the level of structure of this program.
- Did your mentor make a difference in your conference experience?
- What could we have done to make our program a better experience for you and/or your mentor/mentee?

Analytical Method. Two independent coders performed an inductive thematic analysis of responses to the open-ended survey questions to determine program characteristics associated with participants' satisfaction to inform program expansion. Findings were reviewed by two additional researchers and final themes were agreed upon by all the researchers.

Results.

- Themes touting program benefits emerged from an analysis of survey responses (n=112) including "flexibility", "networking", "welcoming personalities of mentors", "impact of the program", and "appropriate matching of mentors and mentees".
- "Structure" and "communication" were themes that emerged from coding both mentor and mentee responses (n=85) regarding program improvements.
- Mentees desired longer mentorship periods, whereas mentors proposed having a designated session to meet and greet the mentees and having substitute mentors available.

Many mentors and mentees expressed interest in expanding the mentorship program beyond the conference.

Future mentorship programs should offer flexibility and guidance for communication to promote a meaningful mentor-mentee relationship.

More "Karmically awesome pairings" to come...

Flexibility with Schedules. Many participants enjoyed being flexible to arrange their own meetings.

"We had to be a little flexible about getting together because of both of our schedules, but that worked out fine. I enjoyed talking with the mentee and she seemed to appreciate the insights I had about the conference and SNEB. We also talked about career pathways, etc. which we both enjoyed. It worked out just right."

Networking. Mentees garnered benefits from networking with mentors. Mentors enjoyed providing networking support.

"The person I was connected with was practically perfect for me to talk with about professional goals. I appreciated networking with her."

Here's what one mentor liked best about the program: "Connected me with another professional and can extend my network."

Welcoming Personalities. Mentors showed hospitality to help mentees feel included and welcomed into conference activities.

"I felt welcomed into the organization and had a connection before I arrived at the conference. My mentor was especially kind to me and continued to check with me each day to see if I had questions. It was great!"

"..we went out for dinner, with 3 others, so I was able to chat with a lot of people all at once. This meant that in just about every presentation I went to there was a friendly face across the room that I could recognize. It also meant that we could chat in passing and they all asked me if I was okay, did I know where I was going to etc. It was a big cheerleading squad – not too much, just a friendly face, a smile and a wave and a comment in passing. Awesome!"

Program with Impact. Mentors held a special feeling of making a difference with mentees' experiences.

"Feeling as though I made a difference for a young professional, and hopefully helped encourage her to stay with SNEB throughout her career."

A Good Match. Mentors and mentees were paired by SNEB conference coordinators based on interests and education level.

"I received a karmically awesome pairing that fit exactly with the current focus of my life. I doubt that always happens. So, this year, it was GREAT!"

Need for More Program Structure. Many participants preferred more guidance and structured activities.

"Without structure or guidance, potential interaction/resources shared is limited and restricted to what is thought of on the spot. If there was a more structured program or a list of questions, both mentor/mentee is able to provide each other with helpful information and additional questions."

Improve Communication. Participants identified a variety of communication issues, some of which could be improved upon through program guidance.

"It might be that the requirement is you contact your mentee once each quarter minimum or twice a year. I think you should set some expectations and have a mentor/mentee list which would help guide."



Acknowledgments
The authors would like to thank the SNEB Staff for their generosity in providing the data for this study.

