



TLEF Small Projects – Final Report

*To be completed for Small Projects upon completion of the project.
Please limit this report to a maximum of 2 pages.*

Project Title:

Student's Perspectives on Graduate Student Mentoring

Report Submission Date:

(2015/09/21)

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Wendy Hall

Project Initiation Date:

(2014/03/31)

Report Submitted By:

Dr. Wendy Hall

Project Completion Date:

(2015/08/31)

Summary of Work Accomplished

Describe if and how the project has significantly contributed to the enhancement of teaching and learning, as well as if and how the project outcomes constitute sustainable benefits to students.

Quality graduate mentorship can be transformative for students and is linked with acquisition of necessary career skills and improved mental health. Concerns from the UBC Graduate Student Society (GSS), Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS), and Office of the Ombudsperson (OOS) about graduate students' progress and the existence of limited UBC graduate mentorship resources and programs prompted initiation of this project. We aimed to develop knowledge about the types of mentorship graduate students desire, with potential differences, their experiences, and how they understand mentorship to support enhanced mentor/mentee training and mentorship practices at UBC. This project has contributed in the short-term to graduate student and faculty learning through sharing the findings and involving graduate students in the project. In the long-term, the knowledge derived will enhance the mentorship education of faculty and students through UBC workshops and indirectly enhance graduate student teaching and learning as mentors apply this knowledge.

After receiving ethical approval, we hired graduate students to moderate, record, and transcribe focus groups, and conducted a scoping review of graduate student mentorship material across all faculties. We identified limited available UBC resources to support graduate student mentorship. We reached out to all UBC graduate programs and groups and recruited participants representing diverse faculties (Arts, Science, Education, Applied Science, Land and Food Systems, Law, and Medicine), conducting 12 focus groups with UBC graduate students to learn about their perspectives of graduate student mentorship.

This project directly benefitted the 54 graduate student participants who shared their perspectives. Through efforts to promote the project (e.g., at GSS council meetings, brown bag lunches, student town halls, and contacting faculty departments), other students and staff were able to offer perspectives on ways to improve mentorship practices at UBC. The 7 graduate research assistants hired for this project received focus group research training, an opportunity to hear students' perspectives and experience with: recruiting, conducting, recording, and transcribing interviews.

The project has sustainable benefits by contributing to a Graduate Pathways to Success workshop about teaching graduate students about supervision and mentorship. Those students will become supervisors. Students benefit indirectly from enhanced mentorship practices in the longer term. Also, G+PS will use the findings to inform faculty mentorship workshops with faculty supervisors.



Evaluation of Project Outcomes

Describe the outcome-based criteria used to evaluate the project's success or performance.

We developed the following 7 indicators of project success: **1) Timely completion of 15 focus groups.** We completed 12 of the 15 focus groups and succeeded in reaching diverse groups of students across a range of disciplines, including those who worked primarily off-campus at research institutes. Despite extensive efforts to reach out to 141 graduate department contacts and over 70 graduate student groups, few students volunteered to participate. Of the 77 students who expressed interest to participate, 54 participated, 16 withdrew promised attendance due to pressing demands, and 7 were lost to follow-up; **2) Identification of themes that capture students' mentoring perspectives, including any sub-group differences.** Our major theme was paying forward mentoring as a transformative experience. Students expressed different expectations based upon their graduate level program (Master's or PhD), year of program, exposure to the Canadian system, nature of the discipline, and type of program. **3) Development of manuscript.** We have started a draft manuscript to submit to Nurse Education Today and submitted an abstract to an international nursing education conference. **4) Development of 2 faculty mentorship workshops; 5) Development of graduate student workshops; and 6) Incorporation of findings in the work of the office of the Ombudsperson for students.** We have shared a summary of the findings with the Dean and Associate Dean of G+PS, and head of Graduate Pathways to Success, and the Office of the Ombudsperson offices; Susan Porter, Theresa Rogers, Jacqui Brinkman, and Shirley Nakata, respectively. They will assist in applying the findings through development of faculty and student workshops, and application at the UBC Ombuds office. **7) We will share salient themes** through G+PS and GSS e-communication and potentially planned GSS mentoring workshops. We have already shared project findings in a number of venues. Specifically, we presented in October 2014 for the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology, Teaching and Learning Week, in January 2015 to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Supervision Leaders Cohort, a course to develop excellence in supervision at UBC, provided findings to the Applied Science School Directors and Heads of Departments for Engineering at their September 2015 graduate education retreat.