

Supporting Faculty Development and Retention: A Mentoring Program for Next-Generation Educators of UP CAMP

Yves Y. Palad, EdD,¹ Rozelle Francesca K. Bentulan, MAEd,²
Rolando T. Lazaro, PhD^{1,3} and Maria Concepcion C. Cabatan, PhD⁴

¹Department of Physical Therapy, College of Allied Medical Professions, University of the Philippines Manila, Manila, Philippines

²Department of Speech Pathology, College of Allied Medical Professions, University of the Philippines Manila, Manila, Philippines

³California State University Sacramento, Sacramento, United States of America

⁴Department of Occupational Therapy, College of Allied Medical Professions, University of the Philippines Manila, Manila, Philippines

ABSTRACT

New and early-career educators face increasing challenges in navigating the complex demands of academic life, often with limited institutional support to thrive and ensure career stability. The current faculty profile of the University of the Philippines College of Allied Medical Professions (UP CAMP) reflects this reality, signaling the need for strategies to support its mostly junior-ranked educators in adjusting to and succeeding in their academic roles. Mentoring has been widely recognized as an effective strategy for supporting faculty transition, scholarly productivity, professional identity formation, and long-term engagement in academia.

This feature article describes the rationale, development, framework, and design of the UP CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program, an institutional initiative designed to support its new and early-career faculty members. The program was grounded in faculty development literature and positions mentoring as a strategy that allows new and early-career faculty to gain support in adjusting to institutional roles and culture, developing career and professional goals, and building relationships within and beyond the university. The program has two tracks: the New Faculty Mentoring Track, which focuses on coaching instructors for role competency and supporting their immersion into the institutional culture, and the Early-Career Mentoring Track, which supports assistant professors in honing their specializations and achieving specific career advancement goals, such as tenure and promotion. At its core, the program is a professional partnership that goes beyond knowledge transfer, offering faculty a space for reflection, dialogue, and guidance as they navigate academic roles and pursue career growth.

The mentoring program is a reflection of CAMP's commitment to nurturing next-generation educators ready to navigate the ever-changing academic environment and lead the college into new frontiers. The program offers a practical framework that may inform faculty development initiatives in health professions education and other academic settings.

Keywords: *academe, early career, mentoring, professional development, program development*



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Corresponding author: Yves Y. Palad, EdD
College of Allied Medical Professions
University of the Philippines Manila
Pedro Gil St., Ermita, Manila 1000, Philippines
Email: yypalad@up.edu.ph
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0388-7984>

INTRODUCTION

Globally, higher education institutions are increasingly relying on early-career and non-tenured educators, placing a heavy burden on them to navigate complex academic environments. Research suggests that, amidst expectations of high performance in teaching, research, and service engagement, early-career educators lack the appropriate preparation and institutional support to thrive and ensure career stability.^{1,2}

Mentoring is a time-proven and pivotal strategy in assisting new and early-career faculty to harness their

potential toward career advancement and productivity in the academe, and ensure faculty retention.²⁻⁴ It helps new faculty build skills, attitudes, identities, and aspirations in the course of their careers and nurture their “hearts, minds, and souls” for academia.⁵ It has been shown to result in behavioral, attitudinal, relationship, health-related, and career-related outcomes, such that mentored faculty are more successful and productive than those who were not.⁶⁻⁸

Mentoring is an interactive, evolving, collaborative process between individuals willing and committed to devote time, energy, and effort. It is characterized by a person (mentor) providing guidance and support and shaping another person’s (mentee) growth and career aspirations.⁹ Drawing from adult learning theory, mentoring works with individuals who are goal-focused on their particular needs and interests.

This feature article describes the rationale, development, framework, and key components of the University of the Philippines College of Allied Medical Professions (UP CAMP) Faculty Mentoring Program, an institutional initiative designed to support new and early-career faculty members.

Institutional Context and Need

The development of the CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program was informed by the profile of the college’s faculty workforce. A 2024 faculty survey implemented by the college revealed that among the faculty (n = 37), over 67% are 35 years old or younger, 80% are junior in status (i.e., instructor to assistant professor in rank), and about 70% are on temporary appointments. In addition, about 40% had been employed by the college for two years or less. In addition, 92% agreed to having a program that can support their development needs, which range from improving teaching skills, enhancing research productivity, achieving career goals, and balancing multiple academic roles.

These findings highlighted an important reality within the college. A substantial proportion of CAMP faculty members were still in the early stages of their academic careers and were simultaneously learning to navigate the multiple responsibilities associated with university life. Beyond teaching, faculty members were expected to engage in research, extension and service activities, administrative responsibilities, and professional leadership. For many, these expectations represented a significant shift from previous professional experiences and required the development of new competencies and professional identities.

Faculty retention is another consideration that influenced the development of the program. The potential contribution of mentoring to faculty retention may be particularly relevant within the Philippine context. Health professions education continues to face challenges related to the migration of health professionals and educators to international settings and non-academic sectors where opportunities for career advancement and compensation

may be perceived as more favorable.¹⁰ In CAMP, the yearly faculty turnover is approximately 10%.

As institutions work to develop the next generation of educators, retaining talented faculty members becomes increasingly important. While mentoring alone cannot address the broader structural factors that influence workforce migration, it may strengthen faculty members’ sense of belonging, professional growth, and long-term commitment to the institution.^{4,7} By providing guidance, support, and clearer pathways for career development, mentoring may serve as one component of a broader strategy to sustain a stable and productive academic workforce within the college in particular and the health professions in general.

The profile described above affirms that CAMP must champion the professional growth and development of its new and early-career educators, as they are the next-generation faculty who are envisioned to lead in carrying on the college’s mission and goals in the future. Supporting their advancement is crucial to retaining talented educators and sustaining a prolific and collegial academic culture.³ One strategy to address faculty development and progress is mentoring.

Mentoring was identified as a practical and evidence-informed strategy for addressing these needs. By creating opportunities for guidance, professional support, and career development, mentoring offers a means of helping faculty members navigate the complexities of academic work while fostering inclusivity and a sense of belonging within the institution.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMP FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM

The previously described contexts formed the basis for the inception and design of the *CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program*. The program was developed following the creation of a Faculty Mentoring Steering Committee composed of faculty members of the college who reviewed mentoring literature and consulted with college administration and department leadership to design and conceptualize the initiative.

The central purpose of the program is to support new and early-career faculty in becoming university- and future-ready CAMP educators, able to adapt and respond to the ever-changing academic landscape. Through leadership and adaptability, the next generation of CAMP faculty is envisioned to ensure that the college keeps pace with global advancements and remains committed to its mission of nation-building. At its core, the program views mentoring as a professional partnership between faculty members. While mentors share their knowledge and experiences, mentoring extends beyond the transfer of expertise. It provides a space for reflection, dialogue, and guidance as faculty members navigate their academic roles, clarify career goals, and work toward professional growth.

Program Framework

The mentoring program is predicated on the belief that faculty development is a process that develops through experience, academic relationships, and professional formation.^{2-5,9} The program framework (Figure 1) positions mentoring as a mechanism that allows new and early-career faculty to gain support in three interconnected areas: (1) adjustment to institutional roles and culture, (2) professional goals and career development, and (3) relationship building within and beyond the university, enabling them to adapt and respond to the ever-changing academic landscape.

The CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program, therefore, aims to guide and support CAMP's next-generation faculty members in:

1. transitioning and adjusting to academic and non-academic roles, responsibilities, and expectations, and institutional culture;
2. gaining the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, professional identity, and aspirations toward academic advancement; and
3. building appropriate professional relationships and networks within and beyond the college and the university.

As a result of the program, the next-generation CAMP faculty could have clarified career goals, better navigation and management of workplace expectations, balanced teaching, research, service, and other non-academic roles and responsibilities through smart decision-making, a developing professional identity, and a beginning professional network, to name a few.

Ultimately, the program views faculty development through mentoring not just as individual achievement, but as a mechanism for nurturing university- and future-ready

educators who can lead the college into new frontiers while maintaining stability and excellence within the academe.

Program Design

Mentoring programs for academic faculty have been described and reported in the literature, with wide variations in format and structures.¹¹⁻¹³ For this program, specific design elements were incorporated to ensure that the program reflects college-specific faculty development needs while incorporating evidence-based principles related to effective mentoring programs in academic medicine and higher education.¹² This initial iteration of the program also adopts a one-on-one mentoring approach, following an exploration of possible mentoring models.^{6,14} This decision was determined by the program's feasibility and the resources available at the college. The program design elements are discussed in the following sections.

Program Tracks

For its initial iteration, the program was designed for new and early-career faculty. New faculty are newly appointed instructors and have been with the college for two years or less. Early-career educators are assistant professors, who may or may not be tenured, and have been with the college for more than two years. Recognizing that faculty members experience different developmental needs across career stages, the mentoring program was designed with two distinct tracks (Figure 2). This decision to establish separate mentoring tracks reflects that new faculty and early-career faculty encounter different challenges and therefore benefit from different forms of support. New faculty often require assistance with academic socialization, role transition, and understanding institutional expectations, while early-career

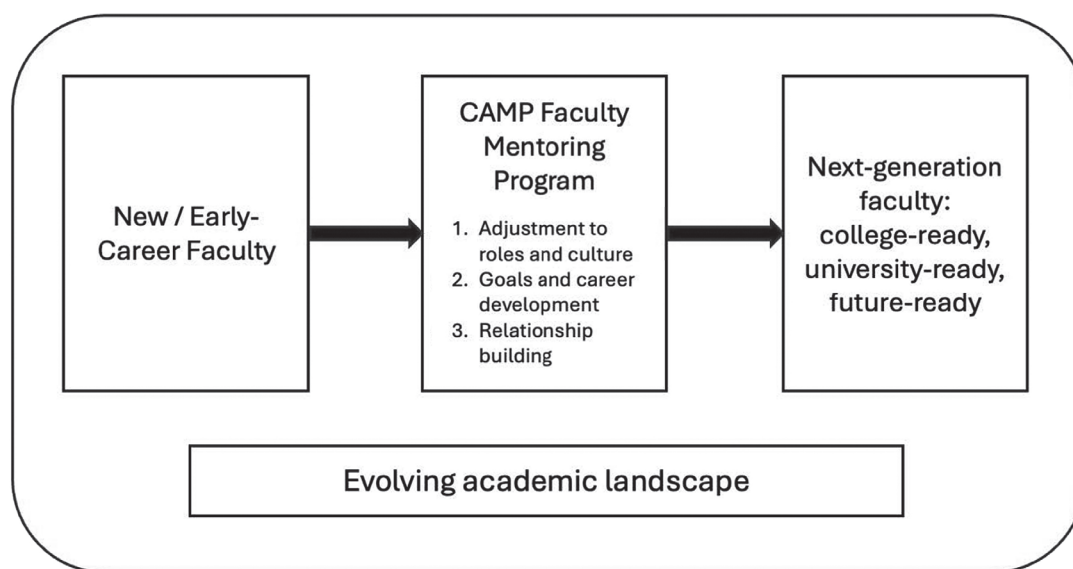


Figure 1. CAMP Faculty Mentoring Framework.



Figure 2. Mentoring Program Tracks.



Figure 3. Mentoring Program Phases.

faculty are more likely to seek guidance related to scholarly productivity, career and professional advancement, and leadership development.²

Track 1: New Faculty Mentoring Track

The New Faculty Mentoring Track is intended for newly hired faculty members who have just started their academic careers and are yet to become familiar with the academic environment. Mentoring for this track is focused on coaching for role competency in teaching, scholarship, service engagement, and potential administrative duties, and providing support for career development and socialization into the culture of the college and the university.

Track 2: Early-Career Faculty Mentoring Track

The Early-Career Faculty Mentoring Track focuses on strategic and targeted career progression for faculty

members who have been with the university for some time. It includes supporting development toward a specialization, productivity toward specific career goals (e.g., tenure, promotion, assumption of specific roles), and expansion of their professional network.

Program Phases

This program adopts a phased structure, recognizing that mentoring relationships develop over time through stages characterized by relationship formation (birth phase), goal setting (engagement phase), relationship progression (sustainment phase), and eventual transition or redefinition of the partnership (transition phase) (Figure 3). These phases were developed to reflect the specific needs and contexts of CAMP faculty, while incorporating concepts and principles from established mentoring frameworks such as Kram's Phases of the Mentor Relationship.^{15,16} This structure is

not meant to be a “one-size-fits-all” scheme. Rather, ample flexibility is offered to meet the individual needs of faculty.

The *birth phase* was initiated by the Mentoring Steering Committee and the Department Chairs, identifying and matching mentees and mentors from the pool of faculty members of the college. All mentees were given the chance to indicate their top three preferred mentors, which were considered during the official matching process. New Faculty Mentoring Track pairs were composed of a newly hired faculty mentee and a mentor with at least three years of CAMP work experience under the same department as the mentee. On the other hand, Early-Career Faculty Mentoring pairs consisted of a mentee with at least an assistant professor rank and a mentor with a higher rank and considerably more experience. Mentors for this track need not be from the same department, but preferably share similar professional interests or directions with the mentee. Towards the end of this phase, mentors complete a one-day capacity-building workshop to prepare them for this new role.

During the *engagement stage*, the pairs officially begin their mentoring relationship by establishing rapport, discussing expectations, and identifying the mentee's developmental needs and goals. Through conversations about professional goals, expectations, strengths, facilitators, and barriers to growth, mentors and mentees develop a shared and collaborative understanding of the mentee's developmental needs. This phase culminates in the creation of a learning contract that documents their commitment to the mentoring process and provides direction for subsequent mentoring activities.

The third phase is *sustainment*, focused on both parties performing their respective roles and tasks to ensure that the mentee is progressing according to set goals and timelines. During this phase, the mentor and mentee engage in regular interactions that provide opportunities for feedback, reflection, and professional guidance, allowing the mentoring relationship to adapt to the mentee's evolving needs and career aspirations.

The *transition stage* involves evaluating the achievement of goals and identifying the next steps for the mentee, which may include extending or concluding the mentoring relationship. During this phase, the mentor and mentee collaborate in completing a report that details the mentee's progress in achieving their goals, challenges in their mentoring relationship, and corresponding resolutions, and plans for the mentee.

The use of learning contracts, regular mentor-mentee meetings, and ongoing review of goals was drawn from recommendations in the mentoring literature articulating intentionality, accountability, and shared expectations as important features of successful mentoring relationships.^{2,17}

Possible implementation challenges were also anticipated. Effective mentoring requires sustained commitment from both mentors and mentees. Faculty workloads, competing priorities, and time constraints may limit opportunities for

meaningful engagement. Identifying mentors who possess both the experience and willingness to support colleagues may also become more challenging as the program expands. In addition, mentoring relationships vary in quality and effectiveness depending on factors such as communication, compatibility, expectations, and level of engagement.² For this reason, the program includes mentor preparation and emphasizes flexibility in how mentoring relationships are developed and maintained.

Future Directions of the CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program

The CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program should continue to evolve alongside the needs of its faculty workforce. To ensure this, a periodic evaluation will be implemented to ascertain its responsiveness to faculty development and institutional priorities. In particular, it will help determine whether the program continues to contribute to desired outcomes related to faculty adjustment to the academic environment and culture, productivity, career progression, and retention. A mixed-methods approach will be utilized to provide a comprehensive view, allowing for data-driven decisions about the program, including procedural improvements for a more sustainable and effective implementation.

To determine program impact, faculty-level outcomes to be measured or described include teaching effectiveness, scholarly productivity, self-efficacy in target competency areas, and achievement of development goals. At the program level, outcomes such as perceived effectiveness of the mentoring relationships and overall satisfaction with the program design will also be measured.

Mentoring models may expand to include peer and group mentoring. Opportunities may also emerge to extend mentoring support to mid-career and senior faculty members navigating leadership roles, new responsibilities, or career transitions.

CONCLUSION

The future of an academic institution depends on the growth and success of its faculty. In addition to formal training programs, faculty development is also shaped by the conversations, guidance, and professional relationships that help faculty members navigate the challenges and opportunities of academic life. The CAMP Faculty Mentoring Program was developed in response to the needs of a predominantly new and early-career faculty workforce and reflects the college's commitment to nurturing its future educators, scholars, and leaders. Through structured mentoring relationships, the program seeks to support faculty transition, professional growth, and career advancement while contributing to a collegial and supportive academic community.

The institutionalization of a mentoring program is a reflection of CAMP's commitment to developing next-

generation educators ready to navigate the ever-changing academic environment and lead the college into new frontiers. This mentoring program may provide a useful framework for other academic units that are seeking to strengthen faculty development, support career progression, and cultivate a culture of mentoring.

As CAMP continues to invest in its faculty, mentoring offers a promising pathway for developing academicians who will advance the shared mission of the college and the university to develop competent, socially responsive health professionals through education, research, and service that improve the lives and well-being of Filipinos.

Statement of Authorship

All authors certified fulfillment of ICMJE authorship criteria.

Author Disclosure

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