

**The R.I.S.E. Model for Transformative Mentoring: A Comprehensive Training Program
for Graduate Faculty Mentors**

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Introduction

Graduate students are a unique group of developing leaders who benefit immensely from quality relationships with faculty (Lechuga, 2011). Research shows that the dyadic relationship between graduate students and their faculty advisor is instrumental in developing these aspiring professionals as it improves student retention, completion, and satisfaction (Hall & Liva, 2021; Lamm et al., 2017). To this end, faculty must have the tools to support graduate students through graduate school's technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skill development stages. This innovative idea outlines a faculty mentor training program that uses the R.I.S.E. Model for Transformative Mentoring as the conceptual model for developing the professional learning experience. This model is informed by motivation theories and strategies related to transformative leadership (Lamm et al., 2017; Northouse, 2019). R.I.S.E. stands for Respect, Influence, Support, and Empower, and it provides an accessible way to remind faculty mentors how to manage the capacity-building relationship between faculty and student.

How it Works

The training consists of six 90-minute interactive modules where participants will explore ways to identify and leverage their unique leadership abilities to encourage high-impact faculty relationships. By the end of the professional learning experience, faculty member will identify strategies that lead to increased engagement and academic satisfaction. An innovative component of this training is that it works well for all mentoring relationships and provides mentors with tools to work with traditionally underrepresented and disenfranchised members of the graduate student population. Universities or departments can implement the entire program or use an a la carte approach and implement modules that address the biggest developmental needs of faculty. The modules are as follows:

Module 1: *Culturally Responsive Capacity Building* helps the mentor develop respect for various identities. It serves as an introduction to the R.I.S.E. Model while providing a basic understanding of the Mentor-Mentee relationship.

Module 2: *RESPECT* assists the mentor in identifying strategies for building trust and helping the mentee identify developmental goals in the areas of technical skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual skills.

Module 3: *INFLUENCE* teaches the mentor to work with the mentee to identify social capital or the support systems needed to accomplish the student's developmental goals. More specifically, what people and experiences should the mentee engage with to learn about academic and professional standards of excellence.

Module 4: *SUPPORT* prepares the mentor to appreciate the different ways in which people collaborate and help the mentee identify strategies for effectively collaborating with others to reach their developmental goals, particularly when their collaboration style is different from the person(s) their teammates or partners.

Module 5: *EMPOWER* guides the mentor in implementing coaching strategies that will help the mentee become an independent and critical thinker and not overly dependent on the mentor. This module will walk the mentor through steps for running a mentoring meeting when coaching the mentee through a roadblock in reaching their developmental goals are needed.

Module 6: *Mentoring Relationship Planning, Maintenance, and Transition* educates the mentor on implementing a mentoring plan. It walks mentors through contract development, how to address pitfalls in mentoring relationships, and how to transition out of a mentoring relationship when developmental goals are accomplished, or the relationship is no longer effective.

Results to Date

The modules have been piloted at the University of Georgia with faculty and graduate students in several departments across campus. Approximately 100 individuals have received training in one or more modules over three years. The most requested modules to date are Module 1 and Module 4. The least requested Module is Module 6, as it is most impactful when conducted as part of the comprehensive program. The feedback received on the modules has been positive, and word of mouth has increased the requests for this training across campus, including units interested in staff and undergraduate mentoring.

Future Plans

Currently, the trainings are only available for in-person or synchronous online facilitation. The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia has provided a mini-grant to design asynchronous modules delivered on-demand. The goal is to complete these asynchronous modules by summer 2022 and offer them to other institutions on a fee basis. In addition, I will conduct impact studies on mentor self-efficacy after training, the fidelity with implementing the RISE Model, and mentee perceptions after working with a trained mentor in the future. Data from 100 previous participants regarding implementation, development, and retention will be collected to assess the training impacts.

Costs

To extend this effort and address demand by developing a comprehensive mentor training program with accompanying materials, I plan to hire a graphic designer to redesign the six modules, including the R.I.S.E. Mentoring Program logo design that will tie all deliverables to one brand. This update will also include the graphic redesign of six PowerPoint Presentations, graphic design of a mentor training workbook (includes training slides, training activities, and activity facilitation notes for activities in the mentee activity), and graphic design of a mentee activities journal (2-3 activities for each of the R.I.S.E. topics). This redesign is budgeted at \$10,000. The costs for participants vary from \$10-35 per person, plus facilitator's consulting fees. The cost of materials for each participant is \$10 for Modules 1, 3, 5, & 6 and \$35 per participant for Modules 2 & 4, which require fee-based personality assessments.

References

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