

## **Nursing Education Research Conference 2020**

### **Interprofessional Mentoring: Innovative Strategies for Developing and Sustaining Effective Clinical Faculty**

**Elizabeth A. Fitzgerald, EdD, APRN-CNS**

*College of Nursing, The Ohio State University-Columbus, Columbus, OH, USA*

Carolyn Schubert, DNP, CNE

*College of Nursing, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, USA*

#### **Purpose:**

A long-standing and successful career in professional practice doesn't necessarily equate to a successful career as an educator. Novice faculty who practice with excellence clinically are often ill-equipped to teach, and must be professionally 'developed' through strong and effective mentoring. Pairing junior clinical faculty with senior clinical faculty who display excellence in the teaching role is an important initial step during that first year. This multifaceted collaboration between the junior and senior faculty has the primary goal of nurturing the junior educator's development (Campus Council on Faculty Life, 2017). In addition, the exchanging of ideas with peers in the absence of competitiveness can also prove advantageous and valuable (University of Michigan, n.d.). Crucial skillsets form through such mentoring, and lead to quality performance and retention of the best and brightest (Fleming et al., 2017).

#### **Methods:**

Because effective mentoring increases the likelihood that faculty members will be successful, designing and implementing a robust mentoring program is an essential part of campus leaders' duties (Alford & Griffin, 2017). Successful mentoring programs must be strongly and visibly supported by the organization's leadership (Fountain & Newcomer, 2016). At the Ohio State University, this support and visibility are evidenced by a newly developed 'University Institute for Teaching and Learning', which recently unveiled a mentoring program called "FIT" or Faculty in Training. To support that program, seasoned faculty from across campus were chosen to serve as senior faculty mentors to their junior colleagues. Two College of Nursing faculty were chosen by the Dean to serve as 'FIT' mentors, primarily due to their teaching expertise and clinical backgrounds. They were then matched to six mentees who also had clinical backgrounds and were practice (clinically) based professionals prior to becoming educators.

All mentees were new to their academic roles and represented multiple colleges, departments, and professions (Emergency Medicine, Urology, Neuroscience, Biomedical Informatics, Clinical Law, Mechanical Engineering). Each mentee was on the clinical faculty track as opposed to the tenure track. Clinical faculty are defined by Ohio State University guidelines as having fixed term contract appointments that do not entail tenure, and are teachers/practitioners engaged primarily in teaching activities related to: a) courses or instructional situations involving live patients or live clients, b) courses or instructional situations involving the simulation of live patients or live clients, or c) courses or instructional situations involving professional skills (OSU Faculty Handbook, 2019).

#### **Results:**

Meetings of these eight clinical faculty were held at the campus 'Faculty Club' which was a central location and convenient for all eight individuals. Topics of discussion included the transition from a practice based to an academically based environment, clinical and classroom teaching strategies, university policies on annual reviews, faculty roles and responsibilities, and student challenges. Multiple disciplinary backgrounds made for rich conversations and diverse perspectives on blending professional practice into an academic role.

**Conclusion:**

The commonality of practice based professions and clinical track appointments enhanced their ability to connect with the special challenges presented in such a transition.

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**Title:**

Interprofessional Mentoring: Innovative Strategies for Developing and Sustaining Effective Clinical Faculty

**Keywords:**

faculty development and retention, interprofessional mentoring and junior clinical faculty

**Abstract Summary:**

A successful career in professional practice does not necessarily equate to a successful career as an educator. Novice faculty must be professionally 'developed' through strong and effective mentoring. This presentation describes an innovative interprofessional mentoring program pairing junior and senior clinical faculty in a structured program for one year.

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First Primary Presenting Author

***Primary Presenting Author***

Elizabeth A. Fitzgerald, EdD, APRN-CNS  
The Ohio State University-Columbus  
College of Nursing  
Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing  
Columbus OH  
USA

**Author Summary:** Dr. Elizabeth “Lizzie” Moran Fitzgerald is an Associate Professor of Clinical Nursing at The Ohio State University. She is certified as a Transcultural Nurse and a Nurse Scholar in the Transcultural Nursing Society and certified as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Child and Adolescent Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. She was the recipient of the Sigma Theta Tau International Epsilon Chapter’s Educator Award in recognition of excellence in teaching in 2018.

Second Secondary Presenting Author

***Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author***

Carolyn Schubert, DNP, CNE, CNE  
The Ohio State University  
College of Nursing  
Assistant Professor of Clinical Nursing  
Columbus OH  
USA

**Author Summary:** Dr. Carolyn Schubert received her BSN and MSN from the University of Maryland and her DNP from Chatham University. She has been a nursing educator for 22 years and has taught at the undergraduate and graduate level. Her clinical background is in acute care nursing and her scholarly interests focus on the innovative use of simulation and clinical informatics.