

Introduction

- University life is a period of transition where students learn to adjust to diverse human relationships all while meeting academic expectations.
- Not only do these stressors affect the student's physical and mental health, they often lead to falling grades and bring about maladjustment to school life (Magnussen and Amundson, 2003), which tend to negatively affect the student's university life and academic achievement.
- Many universities have implemented mentoring programs as a preventive measure against these stressors (Hall and Jaugietis, 2011). Mentoring programs have been described to lead to academic performance improvement and to have an added motivational effect on learning (Benigni and Petrosky, 2011, Frei et al., 2010).
- Several studies (Benigni and Petrosky, 2011, Eby et al., 2008, Frei et al., 2010, Garmel, 2004) have focused on the positive effects of mentoring on mentees rather than on mentors. However, mentoring practice involves development of a mutual relationship between mentors and mentees (Gregoric and Wilson, 2015), therefore it may possibly lead to a positive impact on mentors as well.
- Previous studies (Campbell and Dardis, 2004, Foster et al., 2015, Smith et al., 2005) have analyzed the quantitative aspects of mentoring programs. Subsequently, a recent study (Won and Choi, 2016), focused on the development of an inductive and qualitative methodology to assess not only what nursing academic mentors experience during their mentoring activities but also how they interpret their experiences as mentors.
- A review of the literature yielded a limited understanding of why and how the mentoring experience affects the mentor's retention, persistence, and 4 year .

Purpose

- The purpose of this qualitative longitudinal study is to explore the factors that inspire students to apply to be a Student Peer Mentor . Retention, persistence, and 4 year graduation rate is used as a metric for overall performance assessment.

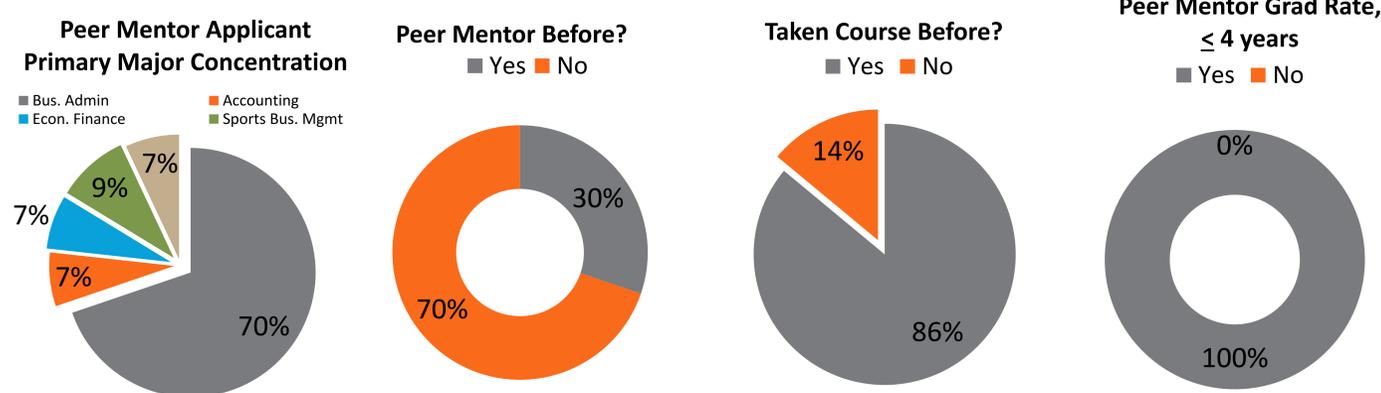
Objective

- Determine the factors associated with mentor's experience..
- Quantify the retention, persistence, and 4 year graduation rates of both mentors and mentees to determine if mentorship model has a positive effect on overall student success efforts specific to retention, persistence, and 4 year graduation rates.

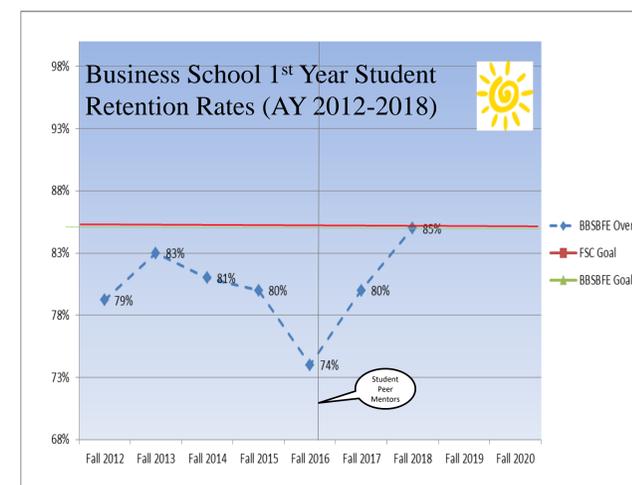
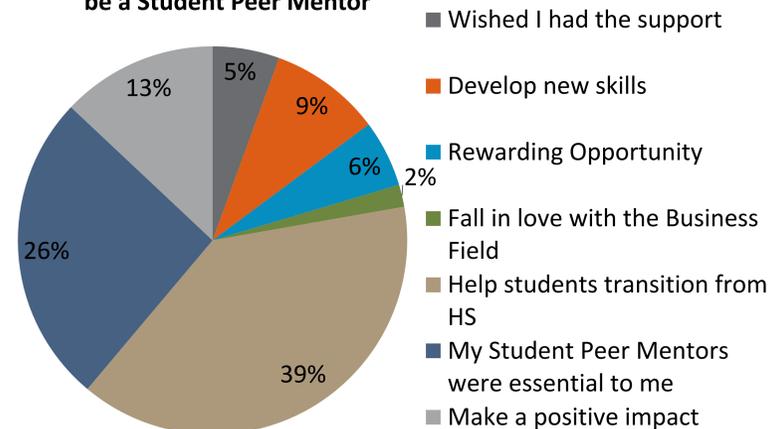
Methods

- Commencing the fall semester 2018, all students who declared a business career path (Accounting, Business Administration, Economics & Finance, Healthcare Administration, and Sports Management) are enrolled in an introductory business course which is part our Florida Southern College's Learning Community initiative.
- The course is designed for taking a first look at the dynamics of business and free enterprise. This course is unique in that it is the only business course that incorporates Student Peer Mentors focused on helping students navigate university life.
- The Student Peer Mentor job application is made available via a shared drive towards the end of each spring semester. All business students who are in good academic standing and have a GPA of 3.0 or better are eligible to apply. Prior mentorship experience is not required. Students can apply more than once and can serve as mentors more than once.
- All applicants must submit a resume and a cover letter explaining the reasoning for applying for the Student Peer Mentoring position. As part of the work study program, students receive minimum wage hourly rate
- A qualitative content analysis of transcribed cover letter was conducted to describe and explore the factors described by undergraduate business students regarding their decision to apply for the Student Peer Mentor position.

Preliminary Results



Cited Contributing Factors to Apply to be a Student Peer Mentor



Conclusions

- Altruistic and "pay it forward" Factors were more valuable in decision to apply for the Student Peer Mentor position.
- The majority of the students applying to be mentors are Freshman and Sophomore students perhaps driven by the immediacy of their experience as mentees.
- The decision to apply to be a Peer Student Mentor did not solely rest of prior experience as a mentor or mentee.
- Although other variables may be at play, the Student Peer Mentor initiative as part of the Business Freshman Learning Community seems to be contributing to increased student retention rates.
- Applicants to Student Peer mentor positions (whether selected or not) enjoy 100% of student persistence and 100% graduation in less than or equal to 4 years.

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Special Thanks to:
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