

UC SANTA BARBARA

Gaucha Mentor Connection Program

Year-End Report
2019-2020



MISSION STATEMENT

The Gaucho Mentor Connection program provides participants the opportunity for personal and professional development, networking, and skill acquisition through peer-to-peer mentorship. The program encourages an atmosphere conducive to learning and exploring new ideas whereby participants develop untapped potential, to the benefit of the individuals and the campus as a whole. The mentorship program empowers staff to be active contributors to UCSB's culture of interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening interdepartmental networks across the university.

HISTORY

The Gaucho Mentor Connection (GMC) program was born out of a Gaucho U project cohort. Gaucho U was a cohort-based training and development program founded on the UC Core Competency Model, where each cohort was charged with selecting and developing a project throughout the year. Cohort U of the 2013-14 year of Gaucho U elected to develop a campus mentorship program, and, upon receiving full funding for its first year from the Office of the Vice Chancellor, Administrative Services, the GMC kicked off its inaugural year during 2014-15.

Since its formation, the program has served nearly 200 career staff members. Mentors with various types of experience, both on-campus and off-campus, are paired with mentees forging their careers at UCSB.

GMC is entirely volunteer-based. Participants volunteer their time and energy into the mentorship relationship, and the planning committee consists of volunteer staff from all over campus, including many who previously participated as a mentor or mentee. In Summer 2019, UCSB HR hired an Employee Engagement Specialist, part of whose job duties involves coordination with the GMC committee, enabling a more permanent staff presence in the program.

Our mentor and mentee applicants continue to come from an ever-growing range of departments/units on campus—approximately 42 central offices and close to 41 academic departments/ORUs. This indicates that awareness of our program is

continuing to spread. This increased diversity of departmental representation allows for greater professional perspectives and opportunities.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Early July-Mid August	Information Sessions, Application Submission, Review and Admission to Program
September	Welcome Mixer: Mentor/Mentee Pairing
October-May	Mentor/Mentee Engagement
January	Winter Midpoint Mixer
April	Spring Midpoint Mixer
June	Graduation Ceremony

Information Sessions, Application Submission, Review and Admission

The summer kicks off with various tabling and information sessions designed to spread the word about the program and answer potential participants' questions. We advertise these info sessions and application details in the staff newsletter (GVSE), and once we begin accepting applications, a new program year starts afresh!

GMC opens applications to participants at the beginning of the summer. All UCSB career staff are eligible to apply. Once applicants are selected, the program kicks off with a Welcome Mixer in the Fall.

Welcome Mixer: Mentor/Mentee Pairing

The Welcome Mixer facilitates mentor/mentee pairing by allowing participants a chance to meet each other and offer feedback on pairing preferences. Currently, a "speed dating" type model is employed whereby each mentee has a chance to briefly chat with each mentor. Based on application information and feedback from the Welcome Mixer, the committee finalizes mentor/mentee pairing assignments and sends an introductory Welcome Packet to help facilitate the first meeting.

Mentor/Mentee Engagement

Throughout the year, mentors and mentees are given free rein to establish the kind of relationship that fits their goals, whether it's general career advice, concrete job-seeking coaching, specific skills development, or just a cheerleader to talk things through. The committee provides guides to help jump-start this establishment (via the Welcome Packets). A few times throughout the year, reminders and talking point prompts are sent to participants via newsletters, but largely, participants are given the freedom to direct their mentorship experience as they see fit.

Winter and Spring Midpoint Mixers

The formal mid-point mixers and informal gatherings, which provide another opportunity for mentors and mentees to meet, are also designed to encourage networking opportunities outside assigned mentor/mentee pairings. Mixers take place during the lunch hour, and food is provided by the committee.

Graduation Ceremony

At the end of Spring, a graduation ceremony celebrates participants' accomplishments throughout the year. Some participants elect to join the committee, broadening the committee's view on the actual program experience, and helping us further refine the program.

Surveys and Program Assessment

Throughout the year, the committee solicits feedback from participants in the form of surveys given out at each of the mixers. That feedback is used to modify practices and procedures during future events. We are able to constantly improve and adapt our events and interactions with participants to better suit their needs.

CHALLENGES

Below are the notable recurring challenges that GMC faces each year:

Inconsistent Funding Model

Like many staff organizations, GMC has operated with a funding model based on requesting support from various departments for each fiscal year. This results in

unpredictable and inconsistent funds since departments will sometimes offer financial support for one or two years, with varying levels of funding. Due to this, short-term and long-term program planning proves to be difficult. This issue is currently being addressed by the aforementioned Staff Engagement Specialist, in partnership with the Department of Human Resources. We hope that this particular challenge will be resolved by the next GMC cycle.

Incentivizing Mentors

Each year, GMC receives many more applications from staff seeking to be mentees than from staff interested in serving as mentors. This reflects the growing enthusiasm that staff have for taking advantage of the mentorship resources offered by their peers, and presents the GMC committee with new opportunities to find ways to recruit a larger number of staff willing to act as mentors. The GMC committee is working on recruitment tactics to incentivize staff to apply to be mentors so that we can continue to grow the program and serve the many staffers who are seeking guidance and professional development.

Deferring Applicants

As interest in GMC grows on campus, the planning committee has had to make the difficult choice to defer applicants over the last 6 cycles. An average of 3 applicants across 5 cycles were put on the waitlist and an average of 19 applicants across 4 cycles were denied from the program. While these applicants are offered priority placement in the subsequent mentoring cycle, the GMC committee is looking at ways to keep these future mentees engaged with the program until the next cycle commences. This could include possibilities such as welcoming them to attend some of our unstructured, informal gatherings throughout the year (i.e., not the winter or spring mixers), or keeping them on the listserv for the GMC newsletter so they can continue to keep informed about the program. We are hopeful that our efforts to incentivize more staff to serve as mentors (as discussed in the previous item) will help to one day eliminate the need to defer applications at all.

Obtaining Robust Feedback From Mentors and Mentees

Since the GMC program involves a large cohort of participants each year who operate independently in their mentoring partnerships, it has been difficult to get programmatic feedback from our past and current participants. The GMC committee has tried providing paper surveys that participants can fill out during our quarterly cohort-wide events, but the response rates have not been robust.

We are exploring new ways to elicit feedback so that we can: identify any areas for improvement within the program, get new ideas for professional development that may be helpful to our participants, and find out if the mentorship pairings are working.

Challenges Relating to Mentoring During COVID-19

With the onset of COVID-19 and the transition of campus staffing largely from on-site to remote, GMC has had to pivot to entirely online outreach. In addition to mentors and mentees struggling with new or changed job responsibilities, the bandwidth of many staffers to continue with mentorship activities has, in some cases, decreased or been eliminated.

The GMC committee has responded to these fluid situations quickly and adeptly. The committee has pushed out updated content to mentors and mentees with suggestions on how to mentor remotely and links to resources that are available during this transition. Most significantly, the committee held the GMC Spring Mixer entirely over Zoom, incorporating activities like Kahoot, polling, and breakout sessions to try to make the experience as interactive as possible. While our participation rate was much lower than in past mixers, the mentors and mentees who did attend were engaged and grateful for the opportunity to connect.

Finally, the committee has had multiple discussions about the issue of remote recruitment for the 2020-2021 mentor cycle. With the understanding that some version of social-distancing and/or entirely remote work is very likely for the coming year, the GMC committee is dedicated to brainstorming ways to fill vacant committee seats, identify new mentors, and recruit new mentees in the coming months.

PROMOTING MENTORSHIP

The GMC committee is continually brainstorming ways to promote mentorship across campus, especially since the need for this type of staff support has been identified in past Employee Engagement Surveys. A particular area of need is engagement for staff early in their UCSB careers, who have reported less connection and professional investment in the campus.

To address these needs, we have significantly increased our tabling activity throughout the past year, ensuring that GMC is a visible presence at large staff events like the quarterly Administrative Town Halls, the Professional Women's Association annual

conference, the Staff Celebration Week luncheon, and the Winter Warmer Fair, among many other examples. We also attempted informal tabling prior to this year's application cycle, camping out at the Arbor during the lunch hour on one day, and at the UCen another day, to promote the program.

For the first time, we also held a structured informational session for interested staff, where we were able to engage with staff, encourage them to join the program, and answer any questions they had. Additionally, members of our committee staff attend each New Employee Orientation coffee hour to mingle with newly hired staff and provide them with information about the GMC program.

We collaborate closely with other staff groups such as the Chancellor's Staff Advisory Council and Staff Assembly, both of which have representatives who regularly attend our meetings and events. We have also initiated a partnership with UCSB Toastmasters to explore potential areas for collaboration. By staying in close contact with these other staff resources, we hope to continue to recruit mentors and spread the word about the benefits of the program.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Gaicho Mentor Connection's goals for the upcoming years are: to enrich the quality of the programming, expand our reach to more staff, and build a lasting organization for years to come.

We are ready to face our challenges and grow the organization the way that we envisioned. This year, we accepted a total of 48 participants (26 mentees and 22 mentors). We have a goal to grow membership by 10-20% in the next cycle. With increased funding, we can reach this goal and also move Gaicho Mentor Connection forward to have more wholesome programming.

Together we have put together a budget proposal that outlines not just our standard costs but also new strategies that we hope to implement for a better program.

Increase Quality and Quantity of Events

To enrich the quality of our programming, we want to develop our mixer events to have more variation. Our mixers partially serve to provide professional development opportunities. In the past, we have had speakers facilitate workshops like Crucial

Conversations and the Clifton Strengths Finder. We want to continue to carry out events like this, but we also want to expand outside what is available to us. Our goal for future mixers is to increase quality by providing variety in workshops/presentations.

In our budget proposal below, we proposed an approximate cost for a professional speaker to present and coordinate a workshop for the Spring Mixer. We value having an in-person led training because we want our participants to be engaged with the material and be immersed in the experience of learning. This type of workshop would be geared toward enhancing communication skills. One possibility for this workshop is Emotional Intelligence (EQ) training. Enhanced EQ is associated with better problem solving, managing emotions under pressure, greater empathy, improvement in listening skills, and providing constructive criticism. Another possibility is Improv Skills training which is useful for workplaces that rely on adaptability. Improv Skills teach people to be present in a situation, to be a careful listener, and an active contributor.

With these options, we want the mentors and mentees to experience a new type of professional development and walk away with skills that they can utilize in their mentorship and work setting. The cost that we approximated below was calculated with the presumption that we would be hiring someone from outside of campus and that person may need travel and lodging. We also included an expected service fee and material costs.

Furthermore, we also want to enhance the experience of our mentors/mentees by providing more informal gatherings. Our participants have previously expressed a desire to have more networking-type meet-ups and more interactive programming. We want to increase the number of our events to provide fuller programming that will keep the staff engaged.

Outreach

To expand our reach to more staff on campus, we want to utilize the following tools:

- Promotional items
- Committee shirts
- Committee name badge

Promotional items and identification through attire and name badges will boost our visibility on campus. It will help staff members to recognize our organization and the resources that we offer.

Incentives

To build a lasting organization, we want to utilize incentives to reward and recruit mentors as well as recognize mentees for their active engagement.

To motivate our mentors to keep on with their commitment, we plan to use monetary incentives like dining commons meal tickets and campus coffee cards. These would be given away in the middle of the year as small boosts to complete an activity or encourage engagement.

Additionally, we want to reward individuals with a service award for their continued commitment as a mentor. We would call this the "Pay it Forward" Award. We have campus staff who have been serving as mentors in our program for years and we want to recognize their dedication to helping other staff on campus. In turn, we hope that having this type of reward will aid in recruiting prospective mentors to join.

Furthermore, we want to recognize active engagement on campus by giving a selected mentee the "Staff Engagement" Award. This is to honor mentees for taking responsibility for their professional growth and making the most out of their UCSB resources.

Lastly, we want to encourage the act of establishing a relationship between mentors and mentees by providing an incentive to facilitate their first meeting. One idea we want to apply is a coffee gift card. This is intended to serve both as a reward for joining the program and for starting their mentorship journey.

PROPOSED BUDGET AND FUNDING

Expenditure Areas	Cost
<p>Quarterly Mixers</p> <p><i>These costs were calculated with the anticipation of a 10-20% increase in total participants (~60 people). Each mixer varies in attendance depending on the time of year and that was also taken into consideration when calculating costs.</i></p>	
Fall Welcome Mixer Food	\$840
Winter Mixer Food	\$600

	Winter Professional Development Ex: Clifton Strengths \$11.99/Assessment	\$479
	Spring Mixer Food	\$600
	Spring Professional Development: Guest speaker and material costs	\$1,000.00 (Rough Estimate)
	Graduation Mixer Food	\$770
	Graduation Gifts	\$600
Quarterly Coffee		
<i>These costs were projected for lower attendance as we hypothesize that informal networking gatherings will have smaller attendance compared to more formal events like the mixer. Anticipated Attendance ~25 people</i>		
Fall	Old Town Coffee	\$150
Winter	UCen Catering \$7.25/person	\$185
Spring	Other coffee/bagel place TBD	\$150
Participation Incentives		
<i>These costs were calculated with the anticipation of a 10-20% increase in total participants (~60 people).</i>		
	Dining Commons Meal Tickets (60) @ \$12/each	\$720
	Campus Coffee Cards (60) @ \$10/each	\$600
Staff Appreciation Awards		
	"Pay It Forward" Award	\$50.00
	"Staff Engagement" Award	\$50.00
Committee Member Recognition & Graduation Certificates		
	Certificate Paper (100 pack)	\$25.00
	Foil Seals	\$10.00

	Printing	\$10.00
	Name Badges for Outreach (cost for 12 badges and setup - after set-up \$10.05/each)	\$129
Marketing & Promotional Items		
	T-Shirts	\$350.00
	Brochures (printing)	\$125.00
	Bookmarks (printing)	\$125.00
Annual Estimate Expense Total		\$7,568

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Winter Mixer

Overall the presenter and topic were well received and found useful by participants. Several mentioned they were glad to know about the Office of the Ombuds to use in the future. Many were happy to have a meaningful topic which is why they attended. Others were glad for the connection to the mentor/mentee or networking in general. For future events there is a wish for more interactive activities or rotating of tables. Some hoped for happy hours or weekend activities to network. At this point in the program, the feedback for the program is overwhelmingly positive. There were a few suggestions for more structure, as well as feedback from certain participants that their partner could have been more involved.

Spring Mixer

Overall our first online mixer was viewed as a success. There were a few technical glitches that were noted, but most people enjoyed re-connecting with the community. Kahoot worked well and might be used to facilitate polls to expand the discussion in future sessions, and the breakout groups were a success. Overall, the program still is viewed as a success despite going online. Most commented on how Covid-19 has changed their lives and made it more difficult to connect or find time for the commitment to the program.

TESTIMONIALS

Winter 2020 Mixer

- “I loved connecting with other mentees/mentors and I loved the presentation!”
- “I love the mentor program. I adore my mentor and am so thankful that this program is being offered. I really appreciate the work and effect that is involved.”
- “I have had a great experience thus far and I am excited for the rest of the year!”

Spring 2020 Mixer

- “Always great to reconnect with folks in the program. It is a program I am solidly behind.”
- “I loved everything about [this remote mixer] - the Kahoot activity, the LinkedIn Learning video, and especially the breakout groups. It was really cool to have those small discussion sessions, and then to rejoin the group after.”

YEAR HIGHLIGHTS



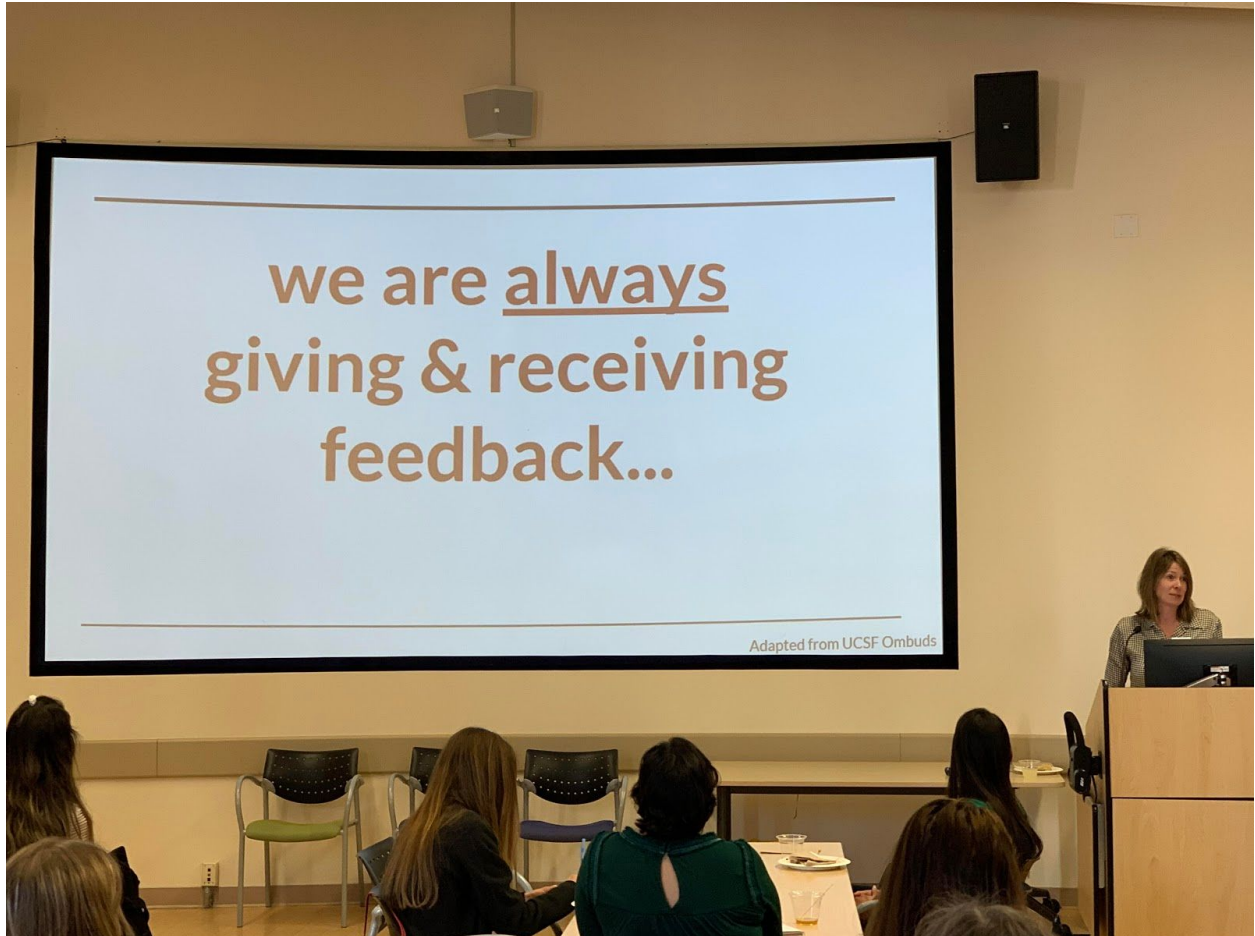
GMC Welcomes 2019-2020 Cohort; Welcome Mixer, September 2019.



GMC Lunch @ Lagoon, Faculty Club Lawn, November 2019. From left: Carli Ruskauff, Mentee; Alana Beal, Mentee; Tahna Hekhuis, Mentor; Adriana Kouns, Mentee.



GMC Winter Mixer, January 2020.



GMC hosts Caroline Adams, Director and Campus Ombuds, to deliver *The Psychology of Feedback* in January 2020.



GMC Committee ZOOMs in to plan for the 1st Virtual Spring Quarter Mixer. From left: Heather Gardner, Financial Officer; Adriane Hill, Digital Engagement Officer; Ruby Gutierrez, Co-Chair; Helly Kwee, Administrative Officer; Maritza Fuljencio, Staff Assembly Representative; Lauren Mart, Programming and Events Co-Officer; Alana Beal, Programming and Events Co-Officer; Denise Umland, Application and Participant Co-Officer; Jane Noyes, HR Representative