Report on YouChoose Award

Mentoring as a Two-way Street: A workshop on Advancing Mentor-Mentee Relationships with Merlin Walberg

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We used our YouChoose Award to organise a mentoring workshop at RSMAS, facilitated by Merlin Walberg of Pheonix Consultancy. With Merlin’s guidance and leadership the workshop was transformative for many faculty and students. From our own perspective, the workshop has shown us a path to transforming the culture at RSMAS to one that empowers all faculty and students to reach their full potential. We would like to continue the momentum for change with more workshops on similar themes in the future.

**Goals of the workshop**

1. To build relationships and understanding between faculty and students
2. To identify issues and strategies related to mentoring
3. To provide practical skills and tools for mentoring
4. To identify ways to continue the momentum for further improvement

**Workshop Program**

9:00 Breakfast
9:30 Introduction to the day, overview, goals, creating ground rules, introductions of delegates.
10:00 What is mentoring?
11:00 First skill: Listening on Three Levels – theory and practice
12:00 Group work: What is working and why? What is not working and why not? If mentoring was better at RSMAS what would be different?
12:30 Report to full cohort of group work, debrief and comments
13:00 Lunch and Interactive Theater skit on Graduate Student Mentoring
14:15 Second skill: Coaching and Mentoring Behaviors – theory and practice
15:00 Debrief and comments
15:15 Group work: What needs to happen at RSMAS to create the best mentoring program possible?
15:45 Report to full cohort
16:15 Looking at priorities and next steps
16:30 Close

**Outcomes**

Eighteen faculty and ten graduate students attended the workshop. They worked together to better understand mentoring from the perspective of both mentor and mentee and to learn some concrete skills to improve their mentor-mentee relationships.
The most significant things learned for faculty were listening skills and for students that they can drive their relationships with their advisor. Both students and faculty said they came away with a greater understanding and empathy for each other’s role in the mentor-mentee relationship. All participants bar one felt the workshop provided concrete methods for improving mentor-mentee relationships. Most participants would like to see regular mentoring workshops in the future with more participation from students.

**Follow Up**

In reports from break-out groups several common priorities were identified to improve mentoring at RSMAS. In particular, to create student and faculty guidelines for effective mentor-mentee relationships, and to encourage students/faculty to develop a mentoring plan together, including ground rules. A grass-roots mentoring group was convened to push forward on these initiatives.