

ACTION RESEARCH TO ENHANCE THE NORTHBOUND UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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By

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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACTION RESEARCH TO ENHANCE THE NORTHBOUND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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The creation and implementation of holistic educational experiences is invaluable for optimal student and staff development and retention in an institution of higher education. This dissertation involves a participatory action research on one such mechanism: mentorship. This study on mentorship leverages Tinto's (1975 - 2014) theoretical frameworks regarding student integration, aiming to strengthen the Northbound University (NU) student bonds with the collegiate community so that they complete their college career at NU and potentially bridge the gap between degree attainment and professional pursuits as well.

A mixed methods approach with qualitative and quantitative data analytics was utilized to define and develop learnings about mentorship. The study focused on students at the NU College of Business Administration (CBA). The population of students studied was bifurcated into two main groups because of their markedly differing needs. The first group included at-risk students whom I referred to as "fledgling eaglets." Fledgling eaglets were beset by challenges such as financial burdens, academic shortcomings, and university administrative problems. I called the second group of students "soaring eagles." Soaring eagles were more established high potential students who were seeking solutions about possible professions ahead of their college commitments. Both these

student groups needed to “matter” in the college cooperative. They needed to feel individually integrated and welcomed into the extended family in the university society.

My findings resulted in initial interventions that addressed the needs of these two student groups with differing needs. For fledgling eaglets, I included innovative mentorship program features that involved development of academic skillsets in conjunction with contingent financial awards with requisite training. The concurrent but separate soaring eagle program incorporated professional networking and realistic career building opportunities. Furthermore, the soaring eagles suggested enhancements were needed for the current program, but not a total rebuild. Both programs included components that emphasized the concept of student relevance as key members of the university’s social system. Since this dissertation embraces the continual recursive improvement practices borne out of an action research, the NU CBA mentorship program will continually be evaluated and enhanced over its projected three-year horizon.

Ultimately, it is expected that NU and even the larger society will benefit as a function of the enhanced student persistence to complete their college courses and eventually become productive citizens after graduation. In addition, I am hopeful that the improved mentorship program established for the NU CBA might be applied to different colleges at Northbound. This university-wide program expansion could result in more students saved via well-designed and intelligently implemented local mentorship models. This would help solve the problem of practice in this dissertation about the need for NU CBA mentorship renewal to improve NU CBA’s retention rate and enhance NU’s regional preeminence as well. With proper care, the learnings from this study could serve as a basis for mentorships at similarly-constituted institutions of higher learning.

Dedicated to my wife, Maureen, and children Vinnie, Mike, Kris, and Kaitlyn; and all of the wonderful people who have lovingly and wholeheartedly supported this journey. Very special mention to my mother, Athena, who has inculcated in me the passion and persistent excellence in education – may she look upon this noble work with love and appreciation from the high heavens above.

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Finally, I would like to thank my University of Dayton EdD cohort classmates for working with me throughout this adventure. In particular, I want to express my sincerest appreciation to Janet Bolois, Tashana Brown, and Gale Dearmin for their excellent intellectual and motivational interactions with me. I certainly couldn't have gone through this challenge alone!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTATIONS

AOC	Areas of Concern
CBA	College of Business Administration
CBA-AD	College of Business Administration Associate Dean
CBA-D	College of Business Administration Dean
CBA Team	CBA Associate Dean, Two NU Staffers, and Me
CGT	Classical Grounded Theory
DiP	Dissertation in Practice
EdD	Doctor of Education
ERG	Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation
GPA	Grade Point Average
NU	Northbound University
NU CBA	Northbound University College of Business Administration
NUAB	Northbound University Advisory Board
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PLC	Professional Learning Community
POP	Problem of Practice
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
SIM	Student Integration Modeling
SLB	Street-Level Bureaucrat
SLC	Student Learning Community
UD	University of Dayton
WAG	Weighted Average Grade Point Average

CHAPTER ONE

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Topic

Northbound University (NU) aims to be a leading regional independent institution of higher learning with a transformational strategic plan that asks: “What Must Be Done?” (Northbound University, 2021), while still fulfilling its mission statement of developing students to succeed in serving the common good. To achieve this dual objective, NU administration challenged its management and staff to identify key issues and solutions. According to NU’s dean of the College of Business Administration (CBA), improving its freshman retention rate has been determined by university officials as one of its top three plan priorities because first-year retention is one of the key measures of an institution’s overall academic prominence in higher education (Rajuladevi, 2018).

In accordance with the plan priorities, the CBA dean embarked on improving the college’s overall retention rate by forming a committee (called the CBA Team) headed by the CBA associate dean (CBA-AD) and aided by two NU CBA staff members. The CBA dean (CBA-D) also invited me to join this team as a part-time consultant and primary researcher. As a hopeful solution to enhance NU CBA’s retention rate, the CBA Team belatedly incorporated retention features to a pilot mentorship program that was implemented in the Spring 2021 semester. Under direction from the NU Advisory Board (NUAB), the pilot mentorship program was purposely designed to cater to the more senior NU CBA upperclassmen. Although the pilot edition of the NU CBA mentorship

addressed the concerns of the NUAB, the program still needed a redesign. Key to this elemental redevelopment is providing opportunities for all NU CBA students to avail of a wider array of scholastic and practical benefits that would make them persist and thrive at NU and beyond. This should lead to enhancing the overall effectiveness of the program and help NU's efforts to improve its retention rates as well (Tinto, 2012).

The Problem of Practice

The CBA Team realized the problem of program exclusivity and incorporated increased recruitment efforts for the Fall 2021 (Period 1) through Spring 2022 (Period 2) mentorship program. Also, the mentor pool needed to be strengthened to better match the mentees' fields of interest. To enhance its impact on overall NU CBA retention, the program needed to specifically support the needs of the less mature underclassmen. This is based on previous research that have indicated that less mature and underperforming students are usually the most in need of mentoring guidance (Rodríguez-Planas, 2012). Moreover, there is a need for the CBA Team to strengthen and sustain the mentee recruitment process via enhanced program marketing to students in all years, especially its freshmen.

For the pilot and current programs, there were also no formal instructions nor introductions on the content and processes that mentors should employ in the program. Mentees were left unsure of their expectations from the program, while mentors who were external professionals and NU faculty did not have a solid platform from which they should conduct the mentorship. Mentors had to ask their mentees for topics from which they could have discussions and mentees were confused as to what subjects to ask from their mentees. Another need identified by the CBA Team was that beyond the meet and

greet opportunities between mentees and mentors, the program should provide practical benefits such as internships or employee-shadowing for the students. These benefits would be most attractive to the high-performing and upperclassmen as they would normally seek critical career outlooks and opportunities to source and build on their potential employment (Mullen & Larson, 2016).

In summary, the NU CBA Team should strengthen the mentorship program with a better operational structure. The NU CBA mentorship program also needs a plan for continuity so that both mentees and mentors are able to strengthen their bonds as a learning partnership. Tinto (2012) argued that in order to promote the successes of its studentry, a university's administration and staff should inculcate and practice a mindset of proactive responsibility in building programs with intentional and proper structuring. This is because many students, especially the newest on campus, need guiding help on how to carry on the burdens, challenges, roles, and tasks that college life brings.

Research Question

The primary research question this study seeks to address is: how can the Northbound University College of Business Administration's mentorship program be improved to meet its objectives of expanded overall student development and success?

Justification of the Problem

Because the NU CBA mentorship pilot program had a narrower focus of NU CBA students, mentorship was insufficient in providing the needed guidance and therefore upliftment of its general student population. The minimized beneficial impact on NU's student body meant reduced accretion of gains towards the university's efforts to enhance its academic prominence. Millea et al. (2018) presaged about the pitfalls of

this situation in that a university's success is strongly tied to the attainments of its students while at the institution and beyond as well.

Moreover, the special needs of freshmen must be considered when enhancing the NU CBA mentorship program. The 2020 NU CBA freshman retention rate of 80% represents a significant incumbrance on NU's current overall freshman retention rate of 85% (Northbound University, 2021). Consequently, the NU CBA's lower freshman retention rate has contributed to the lagging NU overall freshman retention rate compared to other institutions of higher education in the region. NU's overall freshman retention lags the rates of top Northeastern US institutions with pseudonyms such as the University of Bay at 87%, the Ray Technical Institute at 89%, and the University of Romans at 95% (College Factual, n.d.). Given the overwhelming importance of university student retention, especially freshmen, from an academic prominence standpoint (Easley et al., 2021), it is vital for the NU CBA Team to undertake appropriate steps in upgrading its mentorship program to accommodate more of the freshman's needs as part of NU's overall retention strategy. An upgraded mentorship program should help NU's dual objective of maximal development of its students and staff while also ameliorating its attrition issue which, in turn, should enhance its overall institutional standing in the communities it serves.

Deficiencies in the Organizational Knowledge Record

NU's vision of enhancing its academic standing in the Greater North region while helping its students and staff succeed is a dual objective that a proper mentorship program should address (Hoffer, 2010). In a two-year longitudinal study on Walla Walla University students conducted by Hoffer (2010), quantitative evidence showed that

students, especially the low-performers and freshmen, who participated in the university's mentoring program had better retention rates compared to those who did not engage in mentorship at the university. The Walla Walla University program was based in large part on the guidance theories from Astin (1975, 1984). These theories specified that developing the academic assets of all students, especially those in their first year at the university, while also strengthening their social belongingness into the institution would be critical in retaining them. According to Vivekananda-Schmidta and Sandars (2018), belongingness is an integral component in the education of college students because it develops their positive mental health which would lead to increased motivation to complete their studies.

Because the NU CBA mentorship program was originally designed to solely focus on mentoring the college's more senior students, the CBA Team did not possess a concerted energy on helping build the academic achievement nor social relationships for all NU CBA students. This is a demonstrated deficiency because there is an opportunity to expand the CBA Team's knowledge and skill sets in developing an improved mentorship program that would be inclusive of all NU CBA studentry. Furthermore, there is the prospect for NU leadership to learn about institutional and structural issues that can be addressed to improve student and staff successes. Such learnings from the College of Business Administration could be used as a model for other NU colleges to follow when developing their respective mentorship programs. Overcoming such deficiencies could lead NU to successfully facilitate success of a much broader array students at all colleges of the university and quite possibly beyond.

Audience

The stakeholders who stand to benefit from this study include the Northbound University College of Business Administration (NU CBA) dean, associate dean, faculty and non-faculty staff, students, and corporate sponsors. The enhanced mentorship program should help NU's administrators accomplish their dual goals of advanced academic prominence and strengthened student development (Hoffer, 2010). Because of the overall learning environment provided by mentoring, the CBA co-educators and co-mentors would potentially gain enhancement of their teaching practices, student servicing skills, and knowledge sets (Broughton et al., 2019). The professional and personal betterment of NU's faculty and non-faculty staff could also augment NU's academic standing in the higher education community (Buskirk-Cohen & Plants, 2019). Most importantly, the NU CBA students' participation in the improved mentorship program should help them persist and thrive at the university and beyond (Hoffer, 2010). Additionally, company sponsors would gain exposure to NU studentry for potential interns and full-time employees. Their companies could also be offered university-wide marketing opportunities such as naming rights and corporate banners at NCAA Division I games held at NU's premises.

Overview of Theoretical Framework/Methods/Research Question

The abstract framework underlying this research study is based in large part on Tinto's (1975) theoretical model on student departure which stated that students must be integrated well into the college community in order for them to stay at that university. Essentially, Tinto's (1975) theoretical attrition model described the process as a series of interactions between the student and the communal systems within the university that

continually mold the student's dedication or indifference to carry on at that institution.

Limitations

Since the research study will be conducted at the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA), the limitations of this study include the small sample size from the CBA studentry available to join the mentorship program. Of the 600 total number of first-year enrollees, about 25% enter the CBA (Northbound University, 2021). Furthermore, the research effort's findings will not be specific to any gender, race, religious affiliations, nor other demographic characteristics. Therefore, conclusions can only be generalized, if at all, to NU CBA students as a wholistic composite grouping. As summarized by Stahl and King (2020), it must be noted that qualitative research findings such as contained in this dissertation are not intended for replicability, but rather meant to serve as a basis for co-construction of ideas with other research studies.

Although the NU CBA professorial staff will be encouraged to take part in the updated mentorship program, their participation is voluntary. Thus, the educator development component will also be limited to the participating professors. However, I still intend to offer the learnings from this dissertation to any NU educator who would be willing to partake in the potential training component of the program. Lastly, the overall findings and conclusions from this study may not be applicable to institutions that do not have similar characteristics such as student size and demographics, campus facilities, and overall staffing and structure such as Northbound University.

Review of Related Literature

Frameworks Informing the Study

The theoretical framework that underscores this study is from Tinto's (1987) seminal work on the "Principles of Effective Retention" wherein he postulated that a successful retention program is not really all about aiming, single-mindedly, at how to retain students, but rather owning a strong commitment and executing a process to successfully educate its students. In other words, the main focus for institutions of higher learning should be educational excellence for its students instead of just retention per se. Tinto (1987) further stated that successful education is arrived at by fostering a community of social and intellectual development for and around the student.

In 1993, Tinto redeveloped an intricate model of student attrition that concentrated on the construct that student decisions to stay or leave are based on their academic and social experiences at the university. These experiences either comply with their personal attributes and dispositions regarding a set of intentions and commitments before and after they leave the university. Nora (2002) indicated that there are plenty of studies from both qualitative and quantitative viewpoints that validate Tinto's (1975, 1987) theoretical models. Furthermore, in a review of Tinto's reworked retention theories, Braxton (2019) reaffirmed the enduring propositions of Tinto's attrition model by specifically championing the criticality of students' environmental existence and experiences at the university.

Therein lies the important value to Northbound University of the proper conception and implementation of its mentorship program. According to Tinto (2014),

student success requires the institution to create intentional, structured, sustained, and coherent courses of action in programs such as mentorships. A well-designed formal mentorship program that is exceptionally executed could immensely improve students' propensity to persist in their collegiate endeavors by providing students the ideal academic and social climate from which they can be educated (Hoffer, 2010).

This research study also leverages a key tenet of Tinto's (1987) "Theory of Departure". This theory suggested that students relate the overall costs they incur in investing their total resources against the academic and social benefits they experience at the university. Their propensity to stay at the university is ultimately based on how much greater the benefits are versus the associated costs. Consequently, the reworked NU CBA mentorship program must be able to provide students with significantly more benefits than costs to create a convincingly positive experience for each student involved in the program so that they are firmly inspired to stay at NU. To this objective, Tinto (2004) reiterated that institutional actions such as mentorships are necessary to retain students, especially freshmen, at the university. Moreover, Hoffer (2010) theorized that an effective mentorship program not only enhances the freshman's success in college, but also that person's life beyond the university. It is of utmost importance that NU retains and graduates its freshmen at their institution. Research findings from Levitz et al. (1999) established that freshmen attrition has a snowballing effect on overall institutional attrition. In this study, attrition rates were observed to halve annually such that, if the freshman to sophomore attrition rate was 40%, the sophomore to junior rate would be 20% the following year, and so on.

In the end, creating and implementing programs like mentorships that help many students, especially its freshmen, succeed at their institution and even beyond their college career is a truly worthy undertaking. Tinto (2004) further explained the rationale for instituting such programs that help complete college education. By graduating its students, the university not only increases its academic prominence in the community, but it also provides the positive productivity from its graduates which eventually contributes to society's well-being and growth. Given this responsibility and noble intention of creating a successful mentorship program, a good starting point would be the formulation of appropriate mentorship features. According to the pivotal study undertaken by Yorke (2004), these can be summarized into elements that help students deal with (a) personal problems (despair caused by isolation from social environment, immaturity, etc.); (b) poor choices in class courses; (c) financial difficulties; (d) academic needs; and (e) internal and external administrative issues. These basic components are detailed in the following thematic literature review.

Related Research

Addressing Personal Problems

To attend to a student's need for personal psychological guidance, a mentorship program must incorporate and sustain social support elements in its design that are aimed squarely at enhancing the student's attitudes and self-confidence (Hoffer, 2010).

According to Tinto (2014), one of the key drivers of retention programs such as mentorships is based on the psychology of integrative ability afforded to students by the university community. Essentially, a successful student mentorship program that retains its mentees is predicated on how the students, especially freshmen, are able to form deep

and enduring relationships within the institution. Such relationships would bind them to faculty, staff, and other students (Tinto, 2014). The result is that students ultimately affiliate themselves unequivocally with the university. Students who form such networks via mentorship are more likely to obtain and retain lasting persistence that allows them to succeed at the university and thereafter (Tinto, 2014).

A key mentorship feature that has been found to help a student's personal psyche by contributing critical social capital is the provision of a role model who can be emulated by the student, especially the freshman (Brooms et al., 2015). Role modeling has been observed to be one of the most important and effective psychosocial functions in mentoring (Bradley, 2018). Role modeling develops the student's confidence in their capabilities and self-image by mirroring their role model or mentor (Perez, 2014). Developing self-assurance, especially for first-year students, is beneficial in helping stamp out the students' insecurities that could lead to academic failure (Cox, 2009). Multiple academic failures could eventually lead to student attrition if not properly prevented or at least controlled by the institution.

Another feature that would serve to ease the mentee's personal challenges is the adoption of the "mattering" advisory role by the mentor (Flett et al., 2019). Mattering is a process which helps establish a student's value by promoting that person's sense of belonging to the university community. This attribute of belongingness is a strong antidote to feelings of isolation that students, especially freshmen, encounter upon entering the totally new-to-them college environment (Strayhorn, 2019). Especially important for minority and non-traditional students, the mentorship program must have a harmonizing environment for students who are from diverse backgrounds (Lau, 2003).

Mentors must enthusiastically make the diverse students feel at home (Reichert, 2006).

Thus, creating a caring and validating multi-cultural institutional environment extensively enhances the mentee's mental well-being (Waalkes et al., 2021).

The feelings for belonging can be considerably fostered by providing new students with a physical safe harbor to congregate in. According to Hatch (2018), physical spaces can be utilized to influence, in a rather meaningful manner, the behavioral objectives of an organization. Hatch also proposed that the physical proximity that accommodates people in a brick-and-mortar structure allows tighter interactions between them. The physical facility fosters the creation of an evocative environment for both mentees and mentors (Lau, 2003). In a closed tangible setting, the dyadic relationship between mentor and mentee would be facilitated by their physical proximity. This is because they are able to reach stronger psychological ties when they are closer to each other as compared to when they are in more wide-open spaces (Allen et al., 2006).

In addition, Hatch (2018) asserted that the symbolic perspective of housing people together in an enclosed physical space allows these people to cross-culturally commingle and build common value sets that create belongingness and community. Tinto (2006) further emphasized that incoming students need their pre-collegiate cultures to be preserved even when they are in their new environment at the university. Doing so allows these new students to feel integrated into their new community. Hence, conducting mentorship meetings and activities in a designated common physical place for mentors and mentees would be very conducive to building belongingness of the participating parties within the confines of the university.

Drawing on the concept of institutional habitus from Thomas (2002), a mentorship program must incorporate features that help students develop social groupings at the university that can replicate or complement their familial relationships from home. Thomas (2002) postulated that one of the most important contributors to student belongingness to an institution is based on the strength and constancy of mutual support from social networks that a student receives from the institutional environment. To this point, providing students with familial networks through social organizations in the university can help students, especially the underclassmen, get more seamlessly assimilated into the institution (Lau, 2003). These student organizations not only provide social comfort, but also fertile grounds for collaborative learning amongst student members.

Thus, it is advantageous for the mentorship program to co-coordinate and conduct activities, specifically those involving professional development, in partnership with on-campus student organizations (Lau, 2003). Moreover, involvement in student organizations is not only a prerequisite for improving undergraduate education, but it also serves as an incubator for many aspiring student leaders (McCannon, 1996). Therefore, these collaborations with collegiate organizations must be incorporated into the mentorship program to foster the formation of surrogate familial relationships and ultimately improve the students' educational experience and leadership potential.

Another component that should strengthen the mentee's psyche and therefore inspire the mentee to persevere to stay at the institution is using peer students to provide real-world advice on university life (Yomtov et al., 2017). Such peer mentors would be pre-selected for their advanced academic and personal maturity. They could be close in

age or share common characteristics and experiences with the mentee (Yomtov et al., 2017). These characteristic commonalities cement the bonds between the mentee and mentor students to nourish and sustain the relationship building process.

According to Campbell et al. (2012), the instructive interactions with mentors in a mentorship program builds the social skills of mentees and cultivates their ability to lead by the modeling of leadership proficiencies shown by their mentors. Therefore, mentor quality is also an important component in the mentorship program's capacity to develop its mentees more fully. To ensure mentors can fulfill the responsibility of students' social and leadership development, the NU mentorship program should incorporate selected guidance on effective mentoring techniques for its mentors. Among the more important training topics that should be offered to mentors include cogent communications (Pfund et al., 2006) and effective evaluation skills to help mentors determine the content and levels of mentorship they should administer to the student mentee (Gotian, 2016).

Guidance on Course Choices

It is imperative for the NU mentorship program to have a strong student counseling component on gateway courses. A gateway course is defined as an introductory credit-bearing course that acts as a gatekeeper for a student to progress in a series of subjects (Lewis & Terry, 2016). Gateway courses are particularly slippery slopes that could cause student failures (Cox, 2009) and thereby trigger student attrition. Flanders (2017) proposed that college choices based on freshmen norms and values had significant impact on whether freshmen would continue onto their sophomore year. The study specifically concluded that freshmen who completed a gateway course in the field in their major had better retention rates than those who did not complete such a course.

Tinto (2009) further stated that students are significantly benefited by institutions that give clear and consistent advisement about a university's requirements and the corresponding choices students make about their courses, programs, and even eventual career paths. Bloemer et al. (2017) affirmed that a selective set of gateway courses is key to student success and that a proper program on mentorship must feature advisement on correct course placement to match the mentee's precise point in the academic life cycle (i.e., whether the mentee is on the first term and so on). This is to prevent students from attempting difficult gateway courses that are beyond their current capabilities and too far ahead of their levels in their collegiate careers. The guidance should relate to a mentee's academic standing as indicated by measures like overall grade point average and must be aligned with their career choices and cultural backgrounds (Bloemer et al., 2017). Ultimately, students stand to gain significantly from the advisors' wealth of experiences on academic course advisements (Lau, 2003).

A properly designed mentorship program should incorporate a sound orientation program for the university's newest students, especially its freshmen, primarily because orientations can address many of the categories of student problems presented in this study. Martin (2017) suggested that orientations are valuable to incorporate into instructional programs such as mentoring because they are effective in informing the new student about the overall keys to scholastic success. New students typically lack the proper or complete information needed to flourish in their academic pursuits at the university. In fact, a continuous mentorship program conducted throughout the academic year, instead of the traditional one-time orientation at the beginning of the year, has been found to increase the students' campus connections. These enhanced relations built over a

prolonged period go a long way in retaining these newer students at the university (Martin, 2017).

Financial Support

Walke (2010) indicated that financial aid was a strong contributor to a freshman's success. More specifically, Kerkvliet and Nowell (2005) concluded that financial grants, in comparison to borrowings, were among the most impactful types of assistance that positively influenced freshman retention. As St. John et al. (2005) explained, the provision of financial aid, especially to students in dire need, enhances their ability to persist by giving them the practical means to stay at the university. In fact, financial aid enhances not only retention, but also the recruitment of freshmen because of its admiration appeal to potential students (Lamb et al., 2019). Thus, an advantageous feature to include in the Northbound University (NU) mentorship program would be creative forms of funding assistance to mentees.

To help offset the burden of a financial package offering in the NU mentorship program, a partnership between local businesses and the university can be formed. Stokes and Marks (2008) affirmed that an application of the relationship concept whereby local businesses and schools collaborate is a winning formula for both. This is because corporate patrons gain goodwill and valuable marketing opportunities in the communities they serve, and the schools obtain the sought-after fiscal support. Undeniably, a good feature to include in the NU program is the mentoring participation of the business leaders from these organizational sponsors. Students could benefit from the interaction with these professionals whom they may also look up to as role models (Boldureanu et al., 2020). In turn, business leaders may find potential interns and future employees for

their companies. At the same time, mentees would then be able to secure their future career paths by proving themselves as interns and employees at these very same companies. Thus, the NU mentorship program is an excellent platform to introduce students to the work opportunities from these companies.

One feature of financial support that may not entail direct funding assistance to the student involves a more comprehensive financial education of the student. Van Duser et al. (2020) indicated that many incoming college students are not fully financially literate. Even in an era of rising costs for higher education, new college students are basically uninformed. They are in dire need of instruction on how, when, why, and where to obtain the economic resources to go through college. Moreover, Leppel (2005) indicated that many freshmen have a disconnect about their future financial success versus the real challenges presented by the courses they must take to earn their degree. This cognitive detachment causes them to get discouraged when they perform poorly in their courses and subsequently triggers them to leave the college. A study conducted by Eitel and Martin (2009) supported a need to incorporate financial literacy for its students in the university's educational protocols. As such, financial coaching aimed at increasing all facets of financial literacy for new students must be a feature incorporated into the NU mentorship program.

Academic Coaching

Tinto's (1993) second principle of effective retention programs underlines the importance of the institution's total commitment to education of all students. In this principle, the author explained that for programs such as mentorships to succeed, a new student should be provided with every opportunity to gain the knowledge and skillsets

needed by the student to meet the academic demands of the university. To this point, Skoglund et al. (2018) concluded that academic tutoring was effective in providing erudition and scholastic wherewithal, especially for students with lower high school grades, to meet the challenges of higher education. One of the main driving forces as to why academic tutoring helps is that the mentee's level of academic confidence is boosted as a function of the consistent coaching and positive interactions with the mentor.

In fact, the mentor's experience and proven methods of cogency could help expand the mentee's thinking processes as well (Carmel & Paul, 2015). The mentorship's academic coaches should leverage their knowledge and expertise in the field where the mentee needs further assistance. The mentor would then be called upon to share their experiences on how they overcame their own academic challenges to guide the student's learning struggles (Deiorio et al., 2017). In this manner, a mentorship program that incorporates academic assistance outside the regular classroom setting should prove invaluable to NU's mentees, especially those who have depressed academic credentials coming into college.

Academic coaching also involves advising the student in many key academic proficiencies. These range from scholarly habits such as time management and studying skillsets to strategies on how to best leverage the university's various student services for career decision-making (Fares, 2020). Academic advising, as a holistic process, is therefore an important ingredient in the mentoring program (Lo et al., 2018). Tinto (1993) added that academic support is not a static, but rather, an active process. This means that academic coaching in a mentorship program must continually monitor the mentee's progress and provide the student sufficient feedback in a manner that promotes

their learning. Seidman (2005) added that on top of this continuous monitoring method, the mentoring program must strive to adopt an early identification process that seek out at-risk students so they can be administered academic assistance as thoroughly and as early as possible in their collegiate careers.

Academic coaching for mentees can be bifurcated into two main groupings: one for students with academic deficiencies and another for students who are far more academically advanced (Lau, 2003). Thus, the mentorship program must include academic advising for these two separate student tranches. For example, students with poor academic performance (low GPAs, course completions, etc.) may need specialized individual support services designed and administered purposely for students with learning disabilities. The individual needs may vary for each these students and the mentorship program must therefore be able to cater these specific needs (Lau, 2003). For the students with high academic performances, the mentorship program may need to incorporate an honors program to facilitate the advanced learning capacities of these students so that they are cultivated to achieve their fullest potentials.

Internal and External Administrative Issues

A well-designed and properly-executed formal mentorship program, especially targeting academic and social support for all students, could immensely improve their propensity to persist in their collegiate endeavors (Skoglund et al., 2018). This means that the mentoring program must cover all grounds in supporting students, especially for systemic issues that arise before, during, and even after the students' stay at the university. Martin (2017) stressed that students, especially new ones, find it hard enough to navigate their ways through college and institutional bureaucratic factors tend to

exacerbate their miseries such that these organizational problems could cause the student to leave altogether. The internal and external administrative issues that may need attention would include, but not limited to, admission, registration, and verification holds (Northbound University, 2021). These decidedly preventable administrative holds result in incomplete student files and records that could cause freshmen to miss out on classes and subsequently snowball into attrition.

Furthermore, one of Tinto's (2012) most salient suggestions was the creation of a formal team comprised of university leadership and staff who will study, design, and implement the appropriate action plan aimed at making the student's experiences at the university as exceptional as possible. This concept helps justify the creation of the Northbound University's CBA Team. It is incumbent upon this team to proactively redevelop and reimplement the NU CBA mentorship program. Furthermore, mentorship does not become successful by its mere presence in the university's system and just by being made available to students (Bernier et al., 2005). It must be continuously managed and creatively refined to fit the needs of mentees and mentors. The NU CBA Team must strategically and continually focus on incorporating and updating features that would help develop all NU CBA students by serving multiple student tiers so they can become the best possible versions of themselves. This would truly enhance student retention at all levels and subsequently help NU attain its primary goal of enriching its academic prominence in the regions it serves.

Summary

It is critical for NU to reimagine and reapply its mentorship program to be able to create an academic and social environment that helps its students thrive at the institution. The improved mentorship program should help hold sacred the opportunity and responsibility to educate students who have chosen the institution and retain its studentry which would, in turn, enhance its emerging eminence as an independent institution of higher learning in the northeastern region. In addition to the prestige factor, improvement of NU's student retention rate has the potential for economic gain. NU's vision of enhancing its academic standing in the Greater North region while helping its students succeed is a dual objective that can be addressed by improving student retention (Levitz et al., 1999). The attainment of both NU goals guides my intention to implement a successful mentorship program at NU. This is based on the positive impact that mentorship has on retention as a result of the enhanced affinity to the university community of all students, notably its freshmen, through academic, social, and professional development (Hoffer, 2010; Moore-Brown & Waites, 2002; Salinitri, 2005; Tinto, 1987). Furthermore, in private universities like NU, where students pay tuition and fees, higher retention rates translate into keeping more revenues from the students that stay (Hoffer, 2010). More importantly, successful mentorship at the institution would help Northbound University attain its main mission statement of developing its students by helping them complete their collegiate education and guiding them to succeed in their future professional careers.

Action Research Design and Methods

Positioning My Study

The overall research approach of this study was to conduct a participatory action research project on the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA) mentorship program. The overall action research approach was applicable to my study because it has a dynamic and open epistemology in investigating the problem of practice; it makes use of critiques by all stakeholders, as well as value-laden exploration over a recurring process (Pine, 2009). The evolutionary nature of action research is important because as a street-level bureaucrat (SLB), I needed to continually collaborate with a team of internal and external stakeholders whose joint expertise, knowledge, values, and overall support were invaluable for the success of a program aimed at an organizational change (Lipsky, 2010). In accordance with Creswell and Guetterman's (2019) definition of a participatory action research, I aspired to address the specific improvements needed for the NU CBA mentorship program to succeed while in close collaboration with the CBA Team and all other project stakeholders as well.

Mertler (2020) emphasized that participatory action research is an approach that is directed towards taking care of the specialized needs of a community, an objective that this research intended to achieve. According to Mertler (2020), this research approach affords the main provisions of: (a) determines the nature of the investigation to embark on; (b) allows for development of teaching and learning praxis while solutions to the problem of practice are being designed and implemented; and (c) creates focused efforts in problem solving. Using these action research processes should help fulfill NU's deliverables on mentorship. In turn, the strengthened support for NU students'

community demands would help their retention at the university which is a concept initially proposed by Tinto (1987). In the end, the recurring upgrades to the NU CBA mentorship program from a participatory action research leads to a practice wherein constant progress happens reciprocally over time such that all participants, including both mentees and mentors, improve on their learning and teaching knowledge and skill sets which is validated in a theory proposed by Lofthouse (2018) and Van Marrewijk and Dessing (2019).

Site and Population Selection

Northbound University

Northbound University (NU) is a private not-for-profit institution that has been continuously managed by its Catholic founders since the 1800's. Located in a campus in the northeastern United States, NU is strategically located near the Canadian and US borders. To leverage its proximity to Canadian students, NU recently expanded geographically with the addition of a campus in southeastern Canada. Over the last five years, NU has made significant strides to become a more comprehensive and prestigious institution. For example, NU reaffirmed its accreditation by one of the most preeminent regional accreditation organizations in the United States (NCES, 2018) in 2017. In addition, its various colleges have also earned major accreditations. Most notably, the NU College of Business Administration (CBA) earned its accreditation with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International in 2019 (AACSB, 2021).

Ultimately, NU is proactively and organically strengthening its status as one of the leading independent institutions of higher learning in the communities it serves. NU serves a student population of nearly 4,000 enrolled in over 50 disciplines (NCES, 2018)

with a faculty staff of over 400. In the Fall 2018 semester, NU accepted over 80% of its undergraduate applicants. There were over 2,600 applicants accepted, of which just under 600 enrolled as NU freshmen. Of the total number of first-year enrollees, about 25% enter the university's College of Business Administration (Northbound University, 2021).

NU CBA Student Participants

The participants for this study were sampled from the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA) students. However, the pilot and current mentorship programs included the more mature NU CBA students. For the current program that was implemented in the Fall 2021 (Period 1) and Spring 2022 (Period 2) semesters, a total of 31 mentees participated. There were 11 freshmen in this current mentorship group. NU freshmen typically score between 1,100 and 1,270 in the new SAT combined Reading and Mathematics testing with each entering group composed of approximately 60% women and 40% men (College Factual, n.d.). In addition, another group of 20 upperclassmen were selected to participate in the current program in Periods 1 and 2. I leveraged the purposeful sampling methodology (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019) to understand the best practices over time of the NU CBA mentorship. These mentored students were solicited for their feedback and suggestions resulting from their collective mentorship experiences. According to Harvey et al. (2017), such a customized feedback and improvement approach caters to the students' needs and should help ensure a meaningful evolution of whatever the NU mentorship program brings as it is being implemented at the university. This sampling process is also described by Creswell and Guetterman (2019) as opportunistic.

Internal Stakeholders (Northbound University Faculty and Staff)

The main internal stakeholders or NU collaborators included the NU administration, the CBA-D and his CBA faculty and staff which include the CBA Team members. The NU administration were composed of all officials and staff that have authority on policy-making and general guidance on the project such as the NU Internal Review Board, NU Provost and NU President. The CBA-AD reports directly to the CBA-D who, in turn, is under management of the Provost who reports to the President. Because they are accessible to the research team, some NU faculty and staff were consulted about the program. Although I was the primary researcher for the participatory action research project under the supervision of the CBA-AD, the overall responsibility of the design and implementation of the NU CBA mentorship program improvements were undertaken with the collective capacities of the CBA Team.

External Stakeholders

The group of external stakeholders included executives from local businesses in the surrounding regions. The list of individuals who have been and will continue to be invited to join the NU mentorship program was based on the CBA Team's professional and personal contacts. The CBA Team and external contacts have existing relationships that can be leveraged in the design and implementation of the program. These externalists provided professional and financial support. They also presented experiential overviews and guidance on the topics of education and careers. They attended regular mentorship interactions and provided program feedback and enrichment. In addition, they will continue to be instrumental in solicitations for additional financial resources by tapping into their respective organizations for donors to the mentorship cause.

Researcher Role and Positionality

Positionality is a concept wherein a researcher's comprehension of the subject being researched is inescapably influenced by that person's axiology, experiences, and ideologies (Ungvarsky, 2021). Because the positionality of researchers shapes the knowledge and skills creation process, it is important to acknowledge these influences when conducting formal research (Holmes, 2020). Thus, I wrote this dissertation in practice (DiP) from the perspective of a full participant and mentor who advised, observed, and analyzed mentees and mentors in the Northbound University mentorship program. In addition, I have been an informal mentor for my employees throughout my management career in the financial services sector and as an adjunct professor at NU as well. Through these lived experiences, I have discovered my true passion in life at work. I find it both enjoyable and rewarding to help develop people within my sphere of influence to become the best versions of themselves.

At first glance, my academic and professional backgrounds of over 35 years in engineering and business analytics might suggest that I have an objectivist ontology, a predisposition for positivist epistemology, and an axiology that appreciated value-systems aligned with the singularity of inductively-derived truths. But as my career progressed from individual contributor into management and along with my extended experiences in the field of education, I have slowly shifted my beliefs into becoming more of a subjective interpretivist. In line with Walliman's (2011) social co-construction concepts, I continue to find that my perspective of realities is shifting into built partnerships with the people I am surrounded with.

My current role as an adjunct professor at NU's CBA is that of a street-level bureaucrat (SLB). Lipsky (2010) stated that SLBs, such as educators like me, are closest to the students who would be positively or negatively impacted by teacher-student interactions. My positioning, in terms of authority levels at NU, is that I exercise power over the student-mentee. I am also below the power levels represented by the NU administrators who have traditionally practiced a top-down hierarchical management approach. However, I have built trusting relationships and earned some ready-access and invaluable rapport with NU CBA's leadership and colleagues over my 20-plus years as an adjunct. I recognize that I have a modest amount of intellectual influence on NU leadership even without titular power at the university. Moreover, as the primary researcher for the CBA Team, I have access to two top leaders at NU, the CBA-D and CBA-AD, who can provide the requisite clearances needed to complete my studies. In fact, as a result of the rapport I have built with both leaders, the CBA-AD has accepted my invitation to become my external committee member for my dissertation in practice (DiP). I have also built solid relationships with some of my CBA co-teachers and students to whom I can share and source ideas about the program.

Additionally, I was dependent in accessing internal student data (e.g., student demographics, GPAs, course completions, etc.) through NU staffers, two of whom were part of the CBA Team. As such, I have recursively reviewed my dealings, observations, findings, and conclusions with all project participants to continually clarify any potential misunderstandings in the research effort (Peshkin, 1988). The contributions from multiple voices should lead into a more coherent co-construction of knowledge and best practices for the NU mentorship (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). According to Creswell and Guetterman

(2019), this helps build trust among all stakeholders because when collaboration between team members is maximized, bonding between them is solidified as a function of the sincere communications and cooperative relationships exercised by everyone. Robertson (2000) proposed that a key outcome of action research is that it should result in direct benefits for the study's participants. My ultimate objective in conducting this research was to help improve the academic and social well-being of the mentee-students and build-up the knowledge sets and teaching praxis of teacher-mentors. Thus, there has been reciprocity in this research project between completing my DiP requirements and the beneficiaries noted.

Ethical and Political Considerations

According to Hesse-Biber (2017), even as the general ethics involved in a research study are well-defined, the actual practice of these standards can be complex and fraught with challenges. As such, although I would consider myself to be a moral person as a function of my educational, familial, and religious upbringing, I accepted that my status as a mentor should be exercised within the formal ethical standards of the University of Dayton and Northbound University. I endeavored to ensure minimal risk exposure for my mentees, co-mentors, and superiors. For example, although I value and seek accuracy and depth of information, I was vigilant that my research did not break the trust between mentor and mentee and all other stakeholders by not including personal details in my study that the involved did not want to share. I also enhanced the trust created with participants and collaborators by seeking formal consent and confirming with them any information and implications that the study produced through transparent informal and formal member checking methods.

Lastly, I am an educated, middle-class urbanite, and multi-ethnic male who is hard-working and singularly focused on positive outcomes. I tend to seek solutions expeditiously, albeit sometimes too quickly. Given these traits, I may have unintended and unconscious practices or implicit biases (Olive, 2021) that might marginalize people I work with who may not share similar values. For example, I might have insentiently expected my mentees to conform to my strict timeframes, instead of considering their own busy schedules. Moreover, I had to carefully monitor to see if my mentoring adversely affected the group dynamics of the persons involved in the study (Hesse-Biber, 2017). As an example, in my earnestness to drive positive results for NU's mentorship program, I was initially inclined to unilaterally use mentorship features exclusively based on my perceptions and initial literature review without proactive solicitation of what the mentees and mentors might really want and need from the program. This altogether could have discouraged the participants to actively contribute to the research. However, to the extent possible, I requested for inputs from all stakeholders during the research process.

I have also built close and mutually respectful relationships with key executives in the northeastern regions served by NU. Some of these top regional managers committed to becoming mentors and sponsors for the NU program. I had to make sure that their personal and corporate cultures and politics were astutely managed and were in alignment with NU's culture and politics. For example, I obtained approval from the CBA-D so that these corporate donors obtain a mutually beneficial relationship with NU by helping them market their companies to the NU community and campus, while sharing their valuable resources to NU as well.

Data Collection Methods

As the primary researcher in this study, I collected both quantitative and qualitative data in support of each other. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered irrespective of the collection timing of each other such that data sourced from both methods were compared, contrasted, and combined to formulate findings for the study. The ultimate understandings generated allowed for the creation of knowledge and praxes that produced solutions to the problem of practice. This joint sourcing of quantitative and qualitative data also helped cross-check findings from both collection processes and therefore further enhanced the reliability of the study's findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). In addition, I sourced both primary and secondary data to evaluate both the implementation effectiveness and program outcomes of the NU mentorship program. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) differentiated primary data from secondary data with the latter coming from existing sources.

Primary data were sourced from surveys and interviews that were based on the instruments used in the mentorship works of Fleming et al. (2013), Gayrama-Borines (2017), and Jackevicius et al. (2014). All instruments used for the primary data collection included appropriate confidentiality provisions to protect the respondents' privacy and clear instructions for completion. Informed consent was requested from each respondent for all instruments used in this action research (samples are shown for mentees and mentors in Figure 1 in Appendix A). Secondary data were sourced from internal records of the respective NU departments involved (e.g., NU's Records Office, Financial Aid, Office of the CBA-D, and Health Services). I collected, cleaned, analyzed, and securely

stored all data (e.g., electronic data captured will be password-protected and kept for a period of 10 years).

Quantitative Data

I collected quantitative information from NU CBA students who participated in the current mentorship program over the Fall 2021 (Period 1) and Spring 2022 (Period 2) semesters. In addition, quantitative data were collected over Periods 1 and 2 for some students who were not mentored and were considered at-risk by the CBA Team. Thus, quantitative data were collected from NU records for both mentees and non-mentees. I compiled data from the respective NU departments to source secondary data for two main student groupings. The first group was composed of students whom the CBA Team identified as at-risk students who encountered major issues in Periods 1 and 2 that could cause them to attrite from the university. To decrease the negative connotations from the terminology of “at-risk” students, I relabeled this group as “fledgling eaglets.” These students have not yet been formally mentored. The second group of students for whom I collected secondary quantitative data involved the students who were mentored in the current program in Periods 1 and 2. I named this group of students as “soaring eagles” because of their more established status at Northbound University and to differentiate them from the first group.

Student Metrics. The quantitative secondary data collected for both fledgling eaglets and soaring eagles included demographic information such as gender and year at NU. Also tracked for the fledgling eaglets were the different problems they were challenged with over Periods 1 and 2. The soaring eagle GPAs were also tracked because they were used to measure the effectiveness of the current mentorship in terms of

academic performance over the semesters involved. GPA data were collated from the Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2020 semesters. For ethical and practical reasons, the selection of students included in the study utilized both purposeful and convenience sampling because I could not control which NU CBA students were recruited and joined the current mentorship program. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) defined purposeful sampling as the intentional selection of participants and convenience sampling as non-randomized selection of participants based on availability and accessibility.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were assembled from the mentors and mentees in the current NU mentoring program over Periods 1 and 2. Because of the extremely busy schedule of our mentors, most of whom are top executive from local companies, they were surveyed only once after Period 2. The mentees from Periods 1 and 2 were interviewed after the current program concluded. I also surveyed many of the same interviewees and the survey processing is discussed in a separate mixed methods section. Because the mentees who responded to the interviews and surveys were comprised of mainly the same individuals, this approach allowed me to observe consistency and changes in their responses. Examining the same group of people using different instruments is a process recommended by Creswell and Guetterman (2019) because it helps improve the qualitative of data being collected and processed.

Surveys for Mentors (Post-Mentorship). In collaboration with my teammates from the CBA Team, a qualitative survey was co-developed and administered electronically via email to all mentors at the end of the current mentorship program. The

self-designed mentor surveys were intended to extract the best practices learned from the mentors' perspectives. Each post-mentorship mentor survey included seven open-ended questions as shown in Figure 2 of Appendix A. Each mentor survey was designed to be completed in 10 - 15 minutes, in recognition of the extremely busy schedules of our mentors who were mostly executive-ranking officers in their respective companies. Two weekly follow-up emails were sent to the involved mentors after the initial survey was sent to remind them to complete the survey.

Interviews with Mentees (Post-Mentorship). Although all soaring eagle mentees were invited to participate in the interviews, the selection of interviewees used both purposive and convenience sampling from the mentee-student group as explained earlier. After the current program ended in Period 2, I met each interviewee individually via video-recorded Zoom sessions, with each student interview averaging about 40 minutes to complete. Several interview dates were spread over three weeks to individually accommodate the students' schedules as they were headed for the final exam week of the semester.

The interview questions were loosely semi-structured and open-ended to allow freer and honest responses from the student-mentees. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) suggested that open-ended questioning allows for deeper understanding of responses obtained from the closed-ended questioning of the quantitative surveys administered. This interview instrument is illustrated in Figure 3 of Appendix A. I used the OtterAI transcription software to extract text files of each interview recorded in Zoom. The qualitative data collected from the interviews were matched with the mentor survey data

to further help uncover deeper narratives on the students' and mentors' experiences during the program.

Observations and Journal Notes. As the primary researcher and a program participant (i.e., mentor), I also kept video-recorded observations (with appropriate permissions) and journal notes of my mentorship interactions. My mentorship interactions were conducted via Zoom and I used the OtterAI software to transcribe the Zoom recordings. In addition, all mentors were requested, but not required, to record their observations and provide their journal notes as well at the end of the mentorship. I organized and summarized all these additional data and all submissions were kept confidential and securely stored as noted.

Mixed Methods Data

To add further depth to the data collection and analytics performed for this dissertation, I also utilized a mixed methods instrument via a post-mentorship survey with quantitative and qualitative questions meant for mentees who attended the current program. The quantitative section of the survey aimed to ask respondents about their overall satisfaction about the current mentorship program and the mentors they interacted with. The quantitative section also attempted to measure their positive and negative reactions about specific features of the current mentorship program. This section of the survey utilized a mix of yes-or-no and Likert-type items in Questions 2 – 30 shown in Figure 4 of Appendix A. The qualitative section attempted to extract the mentees' thoughts regarding the current program. The questions were open-ended and inquired about the mentees' reactions on the topics of the current mentorship's marketing, mentorship features, and as well as their overall NU experiences thus far. This qualitative

section of the survey are Questions 31 – 34 as shown in Figure 4 of Appendix A. The mentee survey was conducted after Period 2 and was offered to all mentees who joined the current mentorship program.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Data

I checked and cleaned quantitative data collected by inspecting for outliers. I eliminated and filled-in missing data as outlined by Creswell and Guetterman (2019). All quantitative data were collated, assembled, and then organized in Microsoft Excel files. Once the Excel files were completed, all quantitative data were loaded into the SPSS v.28 software. Descriptive statistics with graphical and tabular data representation and analytics were used, leveraging the respective SPSS functionalities.

Student Metrics. The quantitative secondary data collected regarding all student metrics measured program outcomes. For the fledgling eaglets, the quantitative data collected focused on the problems they encountered over Periods 1 and 2. Data for these students were examined for the occurrences of issues they encountered by gender and year at the university. Analysis of the secondary quantitative data collected for the soaring eagles involved a comparison of their academic performances using GPAs before and after they completed the current mentorship program. The timeframe for this comparison included the Fall 2020 through Spring 2021 semesters marking the pre-mentorship period and the Fall 2021 through Spring 2022 semesters denoting the current mentorship periods. Furthermore, for quantitative data analytics purposes, the soaring eagle population was bifurcated into two subgroups: (a) freshmen and (b) upperclassmen (sophomores, juniors, and seniors). The reason for this separation is that freshmen who

participated in the current mentorship program would not have a pre-mentorship experience nor student metrics data at NU (i.e., they were not yet enrolled at NU prior to Fall 2021).

Qualitative Data

I leveraged the Classical Grounded Theory (CGT) design to explain how a properly designed and implemented NU mentorship program would help develop and retain its students. Hesse-Biber (2017, pp. 43-44) justified the use of grounded theory analytics in that the iterations used in analyzing the information collated provide an inductive method to continually cultivate fresh concepts being formed as more data are accumulated and analyzed. In addition, Creswell and Guetterman (2019), stated that meanings and understandings of qualitative data emerge during data collection and analysis in an inductive coding process. I believe that CGT's recursive processing provided an effective way to discover and filter findings about mentorship features and benefits that deliver the most positive experiences to mentees. According to Charmaz (2000), CGT has the advantage of being a flexible self-correcting analytical method wherein I can redirect construction of codes and themes from each set of collected data. Qualitative data were also compared with the quantitative data to create consistent and clear interpretations of the collected and analyzed data (Wronowski, 2021). I coded qualitative data in collaboration with the CBA Team to confirm the emergent themes.

Following the CGT steps outlined by Kenny and Fourie (2015), I started with a substantive open-coding phase involving a line-by-line analysis of the collected data which were coded from the transcript using key words and phrases. Once dense phrases were accumulated from the initial coding, the second phase of CGT on selective coding

was performed. This is the phase where I associated basic themes that positively related with mentorship based on the literature review performed. Initial themes included the main topics of mentorship acceptance, mentee satisfaction, mentorship value appraisal, mentee-mentor engagement, and plan implementation accomplishment. Then, for the last CGT step of theoretical coding, I recursively reformulated my coded data into even bigger themes that eventually led to the findings. This last step involved identifying key themes that surfaced from the coding exercises. I then layered the main themes revealed and wove together thick in vivo (i.e., in exact words from participants) descriptions of the narratives from the data collected into interrelated themes. I also wrote memos to establish the bases for the grounded theories I formulated. The qualitative analytics model used for this study was consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) where theme development is based on codes that evolve from patterns of shared meanings resulting from a focal concept. The coding process involved in RTA is unstructured and is renewed as my understanding of the data expanded (Braun & Clarke, 2021). These CGT steps are summarized in Figure 5 of Appendix A.

Surveys for Mentors. The post-mentorship mentor surveys were meant to assess the mentors' perspectives on the program implementation plan and program outcomes such as overall mentee-mentor interaction performances, program features and benefits that mentors found most useful, and mentors' general program satisfaction. I used the CGT inductive analytical process in conjunction with reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to come up with qualitative findings. The survey findings were also compared to the analytics performed from the mentee interviews to gain a more complete understanding of the potential solutions to the problem of practice.

Interviews for Mentees. The qualitative data collected from mentee interviews uncovered deeper narratives on the mentee-mentor experiences while they were engaged in the program. The interviews were also used to triangulate the data from the quantitative analysis and the other qualitative sources as well. As mentioned, the CGT inductive coding process and the RTA's reflexive thematic analytics (i.e., thematics) were used to develop findings and conclusions. According to Mertler (2020), the inductive analysis entails organizing, transcribing, and coding the qualitative data; the resulting information is then reduced into meaningful patterns and themes to formulate the framework for key findings of the action research. The qualitative thematics focused on the mentorship design elements and the implementation processes provided promising that effective and efficient outcomes.

Observations and Journal Notes. The analysis of data from observations and journaling also followed the inductive methodology outlined previously for the qualitative interview and survey thematics. The observation and journal results will be compared to the outcomes from the other data sources to support and affirm the final findings in this study. Data analysis from observations and journal notes will help triangulate the other qualitative data collected.

Mixed Methods Data

Surveys for Mentees (Post-Mentorship). The post-mentorship mentee surveys that were conducted towards the end of Period 2 were summative and involved both quantitative and qualitative sections. The quantitative section included among others, measures on how much the mentees adhered to the program implementation plan, how many of the mentees had overall positive or negative affectations towards the program,

which program features and benefits were most attractive to mentees, and the participants' subsequent inclination to have positive overall views about Northbound University. The quantitative items involved single-item scoring, summed scoring, and descriptive statistics to analyze the pre-mentorship quantitative data collected to ascertain and help interpret mentee responses, general tendencies, and spread of scores obtained (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The qualitative section involved items that were aimed at extracting the formative progress of the current mentorship program from the lens of the mentees. Analysis of the qualitative data from the post-mentorship mentee survey adhered to the principles of CGT and RTA using rich, thick in vivo quotations to inductively formulate findings.

Procedures to Address Trustworthiness, Credibility, and Transferability

Quantitative Data Validity

Student Metrics. Minimal group comparisons were made in this study because of the limited sample sizes and student populations involved. Moreover, limitations of the study's quantitative findings will be offered for further research going forward to help mitigate the limitation of small sample size of this study. Furthermore, the generalizability of this study is limited to other colleges at Northbound University and at most, to institutions with identical cultures, structures, and student demographics as a function of the small sample sizes available in the research effort.

Quantitative Data Reliability

Student Metrics. The reliability of the quantitative research on student metrics were enhanced by leveraging the interrater process. As such, the CBA Team members were tasked with confirming the interpretations of the student metrics that I collated to

ensure that the scoring of the students' performances were consistent between each different rater or CBA Team member. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), the correlation of viewpoints and reflections from different raters help mitigate the biases that a singular rater may have regarding the observations.

Qualitative Data Trustworthiness – Credibility

Surveys for Mentors. The mentor survey questioning process referenced the existing research work of the prior authors mentioned in my literature review to help with research credibility. In addition, each mentor's survey responses were triangulated with my accumulated observations and journal notes to compare for consistency in the findings derived from the survey data. According to Shenton (2004), the use of triangulation methods should strengthen the study's credibility regarding data and findings from the mentor surveys. To allow the mentors to comfortably express their opinions, a singular point of contact and member of the CBA Team whom they already knew and trusted was maintained during the research process. Lastly, a summary of findings were member-checked with my colleagues in the CBA Team.

Interviews. The overall qualitative interview effort leveraged the well-documented steps in the interview checklist from Creswell and Guetterman (2019, p. 223). In addition, and as mentioned previously, the interview instrument itself used an agenda that is grounded on the prior academic works of Fleming et al. (2013), Gayrama-Borines (2017), and Jackevicius et al. (2014). Also, based on my background as an adjunct professor at the university of over 20 years, I processed and reported on the NU mentee interviews in consideration of the NU culture of which I am familiar with. For example, I followed the NU communications protocol, wherein the NU CBA-AD was the

main communicator to the CBA-D, who in turn, was the primary liaison between the NU CBA Team and NU senior leadership. The NU CBA Team continued to be the main communicators with the students and corporate mentors-sponsors. However, inter-level communications, especially within the internal NU environment, were supported as needed. In addition, I leveraged the built relationships with NU's senior leadership to help ensure that the research process is understood and supported by all stakeholders.

Finally, the interview data were cross-checked and triangulated with my observations and journal notes. Brewer and Hunter (1989) stated that the triangulation process of comparing and combining the findings from different sources helps mitigate the limitations from the individual methods of interviews, surveys, observations, and journaling. In an effort to encourage honesty in answering the interview questions, respondents were given the opportunity to refuse participation at any time in the interview process. According to Shenton (2004), this would allow for respondents to become more honest in answering the questions because they are already willing to take part in the interview effort. Thick in vivo descriptions of the interview responses also helped build the credibility of the interview data (Shenton, 2004). I documented and quoted complete narratives as available in the coding and thematic analysis. Finally, a summary of findings were member-checked with the interviewees. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member-checking is the single most important factor that supports credibility of qualitative research.

Observations and Journal Notes. Credibility of the observations and journaling research processes were enhanced with peer scrutiny of the research project (Shenton, 2004). In particular, the CBA-AD reviewed the observations and notes I collated and

provided an expert and secondary viewpoint of the data collected and ensuing analysis. In addition, frequent contact with the CBA-AD and other CBA Team members were undertaken to help expand my viewpoints regarding the data observed and noted. According to Shenton (2004), the inputs from various team members involved during these meetings will provide a sounding board so that a researcher's interpretations and eventual findings can be verified.

Mixed Methods Data Validity

Post-Mentorship Surveys for Mentees. Because the survey instruments used in the post-mentorship quantitative data collection processes were based largely on instruments that have been used in prior academic studies, there is a measure of confidence in their validity (Giancola, 2021). In addition, the survey questions were pre-judged by CBA-AD who is the resident NU expert on mentorship to further check for validity (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Qualitative Data Trustworthiness – Transferability

Interviews, Surveys, and Observations/Journal Notes. According to Gomm et al. (2000), transferability of qualitative research, although limited to specific subjects and environments involved, can be prudently accomplished by providing adequate contextualization of the study being undertaken. As prescribed by Cole and Gardner (1979), to help transferability of data and findings generated from the qualitative instruments used in this study, the following contextual factors and mitigants were leveraged: (a) the mentee interviews targeted a convenience sampling of at least 15% of the 31 student mentee participants; (b) the participants were limited to the Northbound University College of Business Administration (NU CBA); (c) the mentee interviews and

mentor qualitative surveys were both collected at the end of the semester; and (d) observations and journal notes were taken during the mentorship program throughout the current program duration to express participant narratives as fully as possible.

Qualitative Data Trustworthiness – Dependability

Interviews, Surveys, and Observations/Journal Notes. Shenton (2004) suggested that qualitative research dependability can be accomplished by reporting the processes entailed in a study such that a future researcher might be able to reference and replicate the current endeavor. As such, the dependability of this dissertation was enhanced for future researchers who could refer to the data collection and analysis steps I have outlined in the respective sections. Furthermore, I included a reflective appraisal of the project in the Conclusions section of this dissertation. I have also attached in various sections of Appendix B, excerpts of my interview and survey questions, raw data, coding sheets, and personal notes for further reference.

Qualitative Data Trustworthiness – Confirmability

Interviews, Surveys, and Observations/Journal Notes. As stated by Shenton (2004), it is imperative for a qualitative researcher to create a complete audit trail of the study to be able to enhance confirmability in qualitative research. Moreover, detailed methodological description enables the reader to determine how far the data and constructs emerging from it may be accepted. As such, I compiled an audit trail that shows the stepwise formation of the data gathering, analytics, and the resulting conclusions developed as previously described in the qualitative trustworthiness-credibility section. These are diagrammatically summarized in Figure 5 of Appendix A.

As suggested by Ziskin (2021), the confirmability of this study was further enhanced by using triangulation methodologies throughout the research process.

Surveys for Mentees (Post-Mentorship). Because the survey instruments used in collecting quantitative data were based largely on instruments that have been used in prior academic studies, there is a measure of confidence in their reliability as well (Giancola, 2021). In addition, because some survey questions asked for similar responses, internal consistency is enhanced to further solidify reliability of the data and findings from these instruments (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). For example, the post-mentorship mentee surveys also had similarly framed questions to provide internal consistency of responses (e.g., item numbers 2 and 4). Asking the same question in two or more items in a survey also helped mitigate the Hawthorne effects because triangulation of the data being collected is accomplished (Holden, 2001).

CHAPTER TWO

RESULTS OF RESEARCH

REPORTING QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Quantitative Data on Student Metrics

The quantitative data on student metrics were originated from records of the respective Northbound University (NU) offices. Separate sets of data were collected for NU College of Business Administration (CBA) students identified by the CBA Team as “fledgling eaglets” and “soaring eagles.” A fledgling eaglet is defined as a student who, during the period of Fall 2021 through Spring 2022, encountered significant problems that are deemed to be attrition risk factors and will be targeted for mentoring in the Fall 2022 semester. The fledgling eaglets were tracked, but not mentored over the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters. Soaring eagles are the more mature students who were mentored over the Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 semesters.

Reliability of the Quantitative Study on Student Metrics

The student metrics data collected have been cross-checked with specific NU staffers. Over the past months, I met and exchanged emails with key NU staff who have intimate knowledge of student metrics such as demographics, at-risk factors, and GPAs of NU CBA students. For example, I verified with a CBA Team member on accuracy of gender distribution of the current group of mentees. I also confirmed with the CBA assistant dean about students with areas of concern (AOCs) identified by the CBA Team for accuracy. Moreover, I was in constant consultation with the CBA associate dean to help ensure accuracy of the metrics used in my analysis. Pictures of these email exchanges are respectively shown in Figures 1, 2, and 3 of Appendix B. I cleaned, to the

extent possible, all raw data sourced from the various NU offices. For example, outlier data found in the current mentee (soaring eagles) dataset were corrected by excluding data points that were skewing results.

Quantitative Study on Student Metrics Results and Analytics

Descriptive Statistics

This section discusses descriptive statistics for students identified by the CBA Team as “fledgling eaglets” and “soaring eagles” at the Northbound University College of Business Administration (NU CBA). Descriptive analytics include measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, and frequencies (Ziskin, 2020). Ziskin defined measures of central tendency (including mean, median, and mode) as indicators of the central position of the data points under review. Furthermore, Ziskin (2020) stated that measures of dispersion (including kurtosis, range, skewness, standard deviation, and variance) depict the diffusion of values in a dataset. Finally, Ziskin (2020) described frequencies as summaries of data distributions using tables and charts.

Fledgling Eaglets. Through the Spring 2022 mentoring semester, there were 74 NU CBA students identified and tracked by the CBA Team. A 74% majority of these fledgling eaglets were male (55) and 26% were female (19), as summarized in Table 1 of Appendix B. The largest segment by year of these students were the 30 freshmen who represented 41% of the total population as summarized in Table 2 in Appendix B. Upperclassmen students were distributed over 10 sophomores (14%), 22 juniors (30%), 11 seniors (15%), and one unclassified student. Figure 4 in Appendix B shows that there were numerically more fledgling eaglets in the younger population. However, the

fledgling eaglet year-standing distribution is fairly symmetrical with a skewness value of 0.217 as reflected in Table 3 of Appendix B.

Based on the NU data collected, these fledgling eaglets encountered five areas of concern (AOCs) as outlined in the Ishikawa fishbone diagram provided in Figure 5 in Appendix B. These AOCs are significant issues that could lead to attrition and include academic, financial, health, interpersonal, and NU administrative problems. The Ishikawa diagram further subdivides the main problem categories into more specific root causes faced by the NU CBA fledgling eaglet. The root cause (Ishikawa diagramming) analysis was used because it is based on the Pareto principle that a fairly small number of event causes can actually explain most challenges (Petrucci & Rivera-Figueroa, 2022). There were 106 total incidences of AOCs facing fledgling eaglets. An incidence is defined as one instance of an AOC experienced by a student. Note that each student may be suffering from more than one AOC. The most prevalent AOC encountered by these students stems from financial problems, whereby 34 incidences or 32% of the total number of AOCs were observed. The second most common AOC was due to academic problems with 27 occurrences or 25% of the total number of AOCs. These are summarized in Table 4 in Appendix B.

Moreover, financial problems occurred in 34 (46%) fledgling eaglets, while academic problems were observed in 27 (36%) of these students. Table 5 in Appendix B summarizes the counts of students affected by each AOC and the respective percentages over the 74 fledgling student population. As shown in Table 6 of Appendix B, 49 of these fledgling eaglets encountered only one AOC, representing a 66% majority of these type

of students. Meanwhile, 18 (24%) fledgling eaglets had to contend with two AOCs simultaneously and seven (10%) of these students had altogether three AOCs.

Soaring Eagles. For the current program, there were 31 validated NU CBA students mentored during the Fall 2021 through Spring 2022 semesters. Because these current mentees were well-established students who may have also earned the NU dean's list distinction, this group is labeled as "soaring eagles." From this group of soaring eagles, there were two students who were excluded from this study as they did not have their Spring 2022 grades available. Of the 29 mentees remaining in the study, 16 were females (55%) and 13 (45%) were males as summarized in Table 7 in Appendix B. There were eleven freshmen (38%), seven sophomores (24%), nine juniors (31%), and two (7%) seniors in this cohort of mentees. The categorization of these students is based on the semesters they have been credited thus far as of Spring 2022. Of these 29 current mentees under study, there were 21 (72%) who were dean's listers as of the Spring 2022 semester. There is a higher percentage of dean's listers as soaring eagles reach longer tenures at the university. 100% of seniors, 89% of juniors, 57% of sophomores, and 64% of freshmen were dean's listers in the Spring 2022 semester. These are all summarized in Table 8 of Appendix B.

Soaring Eagles - Upperclassmen. The GPA performances of the soaring eagle upperclassmen (sophomores, juniors, and seniors) were tracked over two semestral periods: Fall 2020 through Spring 2021 (Period 1) versus Fall 2021 through Spring 2022 (Period 2). Period 1 and Period 2 respectively indicate the time before and after the upperclassmen underwent the current NU CBA mentorship program. One of the upperclassmen records was not included in this analysis as the student did not have a

GPA in the Fall 2021 semester which was an outlier data for the cohort. Thus, there were 17 of the 18 total number of soaring upperclassmen studied. The weighted average GPA (WAG) of the upperclassmen for each of the two periods were compared. The straight mean was not used because the students' raw GPAs were weighted by the number of completed credit hours for each student. The WAG of this cohort did not change materially over the two periods. WAG in Period 1 at 3.55 increased slightly to 3.56 in Period 2 as illustrated in Figure 6. The WAGs in the Period 1 are more dispersed than the WAGs in Period 2, with respective standard deviations of 0.5951 and 0.5568. The WAG comparison for soaring eagle upperclassmen over the two periods noted along with other descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 9 of Appendix B.

Soaring Eagles - Freshmen. The GPA performances of the soaring eagle freshmen were analyzed separately from the rest of the group because they did not have GPAs in the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. Instead, the freshmen soaring eagle GPAs were reviewed and compared between the semesters of Fall 2021 (Period 1) and the Spring 2022 (Period 2). For these freshmen, Period 1 represents the soaring eagle experience in a single semester of mentorship versus the two-semester mentoring exposure in Period 2. The weighted average GPA (WAG) was also used for the freshmen analysis to account for credit hours earned by the students. There was a more pronounced increase of 0.20 (6%) between Periods 1 and 2 in the respective WAGs of 3.28 versus 3.48 for freshmen soaring eagles as shown on Figure 7. The distribution of WAGs for soaring eagle freshmen is also more dispersed in Period 1 versus Period 2 with respective standard deviations of 0.7689 versus 0.5693. These results are summarized in Table 10 of Appendix B.

Reporting Qualitative Results

I leveraged the Classical Grounded Theory (CGT) protocols provided by Kenny and Fourie (2015) to develop the major themes summarized in this section. According to Hesse-Biber (2017, pp. 43-44), the iterative CGT method used in analyzing the information collected provided an inductive method to continually refine new concepts being molded as additional data are collected and analyzed. Therefore, the CGT theme generation appropriately followed from the processing of various data sources such as survey, interview, observation, and notes collected from various stakeholders.

Credibility, Authenticity, and/or Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data collected were cross checked with various stakeholders involved in this research project. Member checking is one method of triangulation prescribed by Merriam and Grenier (2019, pp. 26-27) to prove the authenticity and therefore trustworthiness of qualitative data analysis. For example, the quotations, code words/phrases, and themes presented in this section were submitted for review and confirmation by the mentee-students who were interviewed. Corrections were made as needed. Excerpts of these emailed exchanges are shown in Figure 8. Moreover, the survey questionnaires I used had internal validity built-in with items that asked similar questions, albeit a little differently phrased. Such iterative questioning allows for detection of any contradictions in the responses provided (Shenton, 2004). I also encouraged honesty of the mentee interviewees by structuring the questions to be as simple and free-flowing as possible, while also leveraging the existing relationships I have had with the respondents. Shenton (2004) suggested that allowing the respondents to be as comfortable with the interviewer as possible encourages honesty in answering

the questions posed. Moreover, I used rich thick in vivo quotations from my interviewees in the development of my thematics. Shenton (2004) proposed that the use of detailed descriptions promotes the credibility of qualitative analytics because they support the communication of the actual situations and contexts under study.

Lastly, I also compared the interview results with the survey (mentees and mentors), observation, and notes for consistency in the development of the themes presented. Brewer and Hunter (1989) explained that leveraging various forms of data collection and analysis underscores the triangulation methodology which, in turn, facilitates the development of the credibility of the qualitative study.

Post-Mentorship Mentor Survey

Post-Mentorship Mentor Survey Results and Analytics

A post-mentorship mentor survey, which I co-constructed with members of the CBA Team, was administered by a single point person from our CBA Team who has been dealing with the mentors for the current program. Because these mentors are high-ranking executives from local companies, extreme care was undertaken to ensure continuity and consistency of communication. To encourage mentor responses, two weekly emails were sent which eventually resulted into a final tally of 10 respondents (32% response rate) out of the 31 mentors engaged in the current program. The survey results for each mentor-respondent were compared for similarities and differences of responses from all the other responses obtained. Three major themes emerged from the survey responses: (a) mentors generally found that mentoring was generally helpful to both mentees and mentors because of specific mentoring features; (b) the current mentorship program still needs refinements; and (c) mentors would like to continue

mentoring. The results of the post-mentorship survey for mentors are detailed in Table 11 of Appendix B.

Mentorship Benefits Mentees and Mentors. Mentors were unanimous that the current NU mentorship program developed both the mentees and mentors. They explained that mentorship helped mentees improve important practical skills. Mentor 1 stated, “(my mentee) walks away not only with a better resume, a 1-pager, and interview skills but also with confidence to enter into the workplace.” Mentor 4 further shared, “Career coaching, interviewing, and professional etiquette (were keys).” Mentor 5 offered the importance of career planning, “(Mentorship) will help her with next steps in her career planning.” Mentors 2 and 10 added that networking and potential careers were key mentorship features for mentees. Mentor 2 stated, “Primary focus on helping her with internship networking and opportunity,” while Mentor 10 wrote, “My mentees gained not only actual contacts but also career perspectives and potential job opportunities.” Moreover, mentor 4 wrote, “My focus was having other people with varying experiences share their career path, best practices and knowledge - young, old, black, white, entry level and executive level.” Mentor 3 wrote about goal-setting as an important skill that a mentee should be prepared for by a mentor, while mentor 5 taught his mentee the importance of preparation. Mentor 8 further suggested to incorporate professional shadowing, “have student shadow within multiple departments.”

Mentor 6 explained that mentorship develops mentors as leaders, “I find mentoring very rewarding and still consider it a learning opportunity for myself. I think strong leaders should continuously put themselves in positions to make others better and continuously improve and evolve their coaching skills.” Furthermore, mentor 1 explained

that being a mentor is highly recommended to his colleagues because, “(mentoring) can help build future leaders.” Mentor 8 found the mentoring experience rewarding, “It’s a great way to give back.” Mentor 9 shared the positivity of the experience has helped the mentee and him, while mentor 10 opined, “it helps develop me as a mentor and manager.”

Mentorship Refinement Opportunities. Although the mentors characterized the current NU CBA mentorship as a program with beneficial features to both mentees and mentors, they suggested some improvements. One of the most important improvements suggested by the mentors came from Mentor 4 who wrote about a need for mentorship core restructuring, “There was no communication with mentors since the initial engagement. It would have been nice to understand what services Northbound University (NU) provides to students in relation to career coaching, interviewing support and job placement. The mentors should be brought together on a zoom call at least twice during the process to learn about (NU’s) support, share experiences and best practices. You have to inspire the mentors to participate as well as the students. For example, have you ever thought of having all mentees on a call with a panel of mentors with various experiences? How about providing the names and emails of all mentors? If you want business leaders to invest you must invest, it does not happen by accident.” Another notable suggestion can be inferred from mentor 6 who wrote, “It’s no secret that there is a population of students who are nearing graduation who have no idea what sort of job they want or will end up in; or where to start in figuring all that out.” This suggests that the NU mentorship should be a vehicle to help sort career paths for mentees. Mentor 3 added that mentorship goals need to be more clearly defined from the beginning, “There were

no clear define(d) goals, so we have no way of measuring our performance.” Mentors 2, 7, and 9 respectively hinted at the need for increased mentee contact, “We were limited to a monthly phone call,” “Small part of the experience with one zoom call with (my mentee),” and “Please allow us more time to discuss more.” More mentee and mentor contact could be facilitated by better scheduling by the CBA Team who administer the program. Mentor 8 implied this need, “Both (my mentee) and I have been incredibly busy during Q(arter)1 and Q(arter)2 of 2022.”

Mentor Continuity. All mentors indicated that they wanted to continue with NU mentorship because they find value in the program. Mentor 6 summed this point effectively, “I enjoy it and find value in sharing lessons and experiences I’ve learned for the betterment of someone else.” However, the critical continuity of mentor engagement can be enhanced by more suitable mentee-mentor matching as stated by Mentor 7, “My expertise is very specific so it would only be beneficial if someone wanted a similar career path.”

Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview

Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview Results and Analytics

All 29 mentees being studied in the current mentorship program were either high-performing or high-potential students chosen by the CBA Team under direction from the Northbound University Advisory Board (NUAB). Five or 18% of the 29 validated mentees who participated in the current Northbound University College of Business Administration (NU CBA) mentorship program responded to my invitation for interviews. The interviewee names have been anonymized using two-letter codes for this dissertation. The first interviewee was LB, a female upperclassman, who is currently one

of my mentees. LB is a general business major who was an A-student from my Marketing class when she was a freshman in 2021. Next was TM who is a female freshman, a general business major, who also mentored with me over the Fall 2021 through Spring 2022 program. My third interviewee, SH, is also a female former A-student of mine. SH is now an upperclassman in the NU CBA majoring in supply chain and operations management. The fourth interview was with AJ, a male upperclassman who is an accounting major, while the fifth interviewee was ES, who is also a Finance upperclassman. The 60% to 40% female to male interviewee proportions matched the gender ratios for the overall mentee and general NU CBA populations as well.

All interviews were conducted via Zoom and each interview averaged about 40 minutes per interviewee. The longest lasted over an hour and the shortest was over a half hour. The interview questioning was loosely semi-structured, as I allowed our discussions to flow freely to encourage enough mentee participation to the extent possible. This is mainly because I understand that the power-distance between my mentee-interviewees and myself as NU professor may cause the interviewee to hold back based on prior student interview experiences from my earlier doctoral classes. Otter.AI software was used to transcribe the video recordings. I then input the transcribed data into an Excel spreadsheet for coding, analytics, and the building of findings.

The major themes resulting from the analysis of mentee interview responses can be summarized as: (a) soaring eagle mentees have strong positive views about mentorship; (b) there is ample room for concrete enhancements to remarket the mentorship program; (c) improvements are needed on pre-program preparation of mentees; (d) key enhancements and focus on mentorship features and benefits; and (e)

additional post-mentorship activities to undertake for program improvement. These main themes will be discussed in the order of mentorship phases from general program reactions through pre-mentorship, mentorship, and post-mentorship points of view. A simplified mapping of the analysis consists of recursively extracting the respondents' main quotes, isolating code words or phrases, and developing the major themes from the post-mentorship mentee interviews. Excerpts of this processing are provided in Table 12 of Appendix B.

Soaring Eagle's Positive Views. The mentees interviewed overwhelmingly voiced positive feelings toward the NU CBA mentorship program. LB, one of my current mentees exclaimed to her parents her appreciation for the program especially in light of the internship she gained, "I'm so thankful for the good things (given) to me. And that you saw it from the start, and you've only provided me with great opportunities. Like I can't thank you enough." SH, another one of my former students, chimed, "it's a cool experience. I learned from it and continuing to learn from it." AJ also stated, "I definitely appreciate (mentorship) to be able to have that sort of opportunity with my (mentor)." Finally ES stated, "But I was gonna say I appreciate the program (which) is definitely a great help." The overall positive mentee feelings for the current mentorship matches the positive feedback obtained from the mentors' surveys as well as the observations I had with my two mentees, LB and TM.

Enhancements to Remarketing. Two emergent themes drawn from the mentee respondents underline the main theme regarding pre-program marketing enhancements: (a) use the favored marketing instruments suggested by interviewed mentees; and (b) current mentees can help market and recruit new mentees.

Favored Marketing Instruments. Among the favored marketing instruments identified, ES proposed to leverage NU's local online platform called Northbound Instagram to reach out to students as they are likely account holders and frequent users of the application, "I think it will work to an extent as far as we had it on, maybe, the Northbound Instagram." He also suggested that the CBA Team hold recruitment sessions for potential mentees, "Maybe it should be maybe like, if we could try maybe like (have) a once-a-month event. Maybe in Gallagher (building), where, you know, we just hand out flyers and give some food away." SH and LB both liked the personal recruitment approach to market the program to potential mentees and SH said, "I think I prefer the personal recruitment approach (by NU CBA professors)."

Current Mentees Can Help Market and Recruit New Mentees. All interviewees were supportive of personally marketing and recruiting new mentees into the NU CBA program. LB and TM were very excited to recruit other potential mentees by highlighting some of the current mentorship benefits they already got. LB exclaimed, "So I'll remind her and ask her if she's curious about it again, because I know, she knows I got this job and everything," while TM added, "I tried to spread the word to, like, incoming kids on my team, too, that I think would be good for it. I've mentioned it to many people, because I know it's done good things for me." AJ pointed out that mentorship has increased his drive to succeed and wanted this benefit shared to potential recruits, "Hey, these are the kinds of things you can do, and like how successful you can be, I could probably help to further get on that drive, I guess I could say."

Pre-program Preparation Needs of Mentees. Two underlying themes emerged from the mentee interviews in relation to the main theme of the need to better prepare the mentee before beginning mentorship including, (a) increased adequacy of priming the mentee before program starts; and (b) mentorship should start with setting goals, agendas, and expectations between mentees and mentors.

Adequacy of Priming the Mentee Before Program Start. TM suggested an overall overview of the mentorship program should be provided to mentees prior to program start, “I had no idea what I was getting myself into when you asked me to do it.” AJ further stated, “The first time around, I felt like I was a bit unprepared. I guess you could say with going in. But yeah, I would say that was probably my own thing with the mentorship program was I felt like it was hard for me to figure out at the beginning, what kind of benefits I wanted to get out of it.” More specifically, he added, “So maybe if they were to have a bit more of a, I guess maybe a bit more of a streamlined process to help us to generate ideas on what exactly we could use it for that will help us to get into the program feeling a lot more prepared.”

Start by Setting Goals, Agendas, and Expectations. LB specified that goal planning was key to program success because it gave direction for agenda setting, “Like, what goal, what do you want to get done? And then you (and I) together, figure out so like for me, like I wanted to make relationships and network. So you came up with the idea of role models. So then we can be like (set the agenda), like how many do we want to get done in the year.” ES emphasized the need to have a more defined agenda before meeting with the mentor, “And honestly, there was really not really a game plan. As far as this week, we're going to talk about this. And this week, we're going to talk about that.

It was kind of just like, he was just introducing me to the insurance life, and given me the basics of insurance.” To really create a collaborative learning experience for the mentees and mentors as well, the program must begin by actively, not passively, engaging all stakeholders in togetherness. This “we” climate of setting together the program goals and expectations reflects Dumlao’s (2018) first two principles of successful collaboration: mutuality of mind set and action-orientation.

Key Enhancements and Focus on Mentorship Features and Benefits. The soaring eagle interviewees were not shy about opining on the benefits and features they particularly liked and generously shared with me. The emergent themes that are foundational in supporting the need for enhancements to program benefits and features include, (a) Mentee comfort about the program is of paramount importance during the entire process; (b) Actual interactions with key professionals are desired by the mentees; (c) Mentorship should provide tangible professional career support and opportunities; (d) Mentorship must provide broad and deep industry exposure for mentees, especially in their fields of interest; (e) Mentorship should build mentees' organizational leadership qualities by encouraging joining or creating NU student clubs; (f) Mentorship must improve important mentee skills and knowledge sets vital for their careers; (g) Need for financial support; and (h) Mentorship should help prepare soaring eagles for their graduate degree pursuits. Some of these features and benefits suggested by mentees echo the suggestions of the mentors.

Mentee Comfort About the Program is Key. The mentee-interviewees demanded that mentors and the general mentorship process make them comfortable with the program. LB stated that coordination of mentee and mentor availability was important, “I

think (that by) you just being in the video chat makes it way more comfortable in general. Just because of my schedule, personally.” She also pointed out the need for the mentor to have an accommodating demeanor so that the mentee can open up, “You make it easy for me to be myself and show who I am.” ES echoed this sentiment that mentors must have a pleasing disposition to communicate effectively, “You know, you have to know how to communicate with others and have a positive energy.” TM added that allowing the mentee to get to know the mentor over time allowed her to feel more relaxed, “And then as we went on, I became less nervous because I kind of had it figured out a little bit.” These comfort-building attitudes that mentees crave illustrate how the concept of “mattering”, as explained by (Flett et al., 2019), could be practiced by mentors and NU staff alike. SH spoke about the flexibility of going over different topics of interest allowed her to gain comfort in the mentoring relationship, “He goes, Okay, if you don't like this, and you don't like this, let's look at this.”

Actual Interactions with Key Professionals. Professional interaction with key contacts of mentors was another area of focus discussed by the interviewees. LB enjoyed these professional conversations with corporate managers and executives, “I said that I wanted some professional interaction, which we did. I think those went great.” TM agreed, “I would say my biggest highlights would be talking to experienced professionals (role models).” SH noted that having interacted with key professionals was beneficial by itself, “Part of it was kind of just the exposure, kind of being more in a professional setting, and mostly networking I would say.” AJ enjoyed his connections with professional contacts introduced to him and saw the future use he might be able to leverage with the relationships he was able to form, “And the biggest thing that we

basically did with that was my mentor has connections with people with the accounting firm. But that was the other really good benefit I've had with that as well was being able to benefit from the types of connections, the network that he already has, and being able to use (in the future) as well." ES agreed, "Yes, of course I liked the significantly (expanded professional network of contacts)."

Tangible Professional Career Support and Opportunities. All interviewees independently, but unanimously, asked for tangible career support such as career path direction, job references, internships, and shadowing. ES appreciated his mentor's help in finding internships, "But he has introduced me to different firms, like because he was trying to get me an internship in accounting." He also relished the thought of being able to see the real office work environment, "And he said that he's eventually going to have me shadow the investors to the investment section as well." SH cited using mentors for references and acquiring shadowing opportunities, "But he was my reference for my current internship" and "I think kind of having that as like a shadow day." TM agreed with the need for shadowing, "(Shadowing) - That'd be very interesting to me!" LB was ecstatic to have gained an internship via the mentorship program, "And that helped result in the internship that I wanted, even better internship than I could have imagined."

Provide Broad and Deep Industry Exposure in Mentees' Fields of Interest. The mentees who were interviewed expressed their desire for acquiring broadened and deeper understanding of the field they were interested in. For example, LB specified that she wanted to know more about becoming a relationship manager in a commercial bank, "And also, um, you said the relationship managers, maybe we could integrate one of those, because I'll get a little bit of it this summer." AJ referred to the opportunity to

widen his grasp on different industries from the experiences of different contacts, “I think I would use the mentorship as an opportunity to get to better know, like, we know different industries and their and their mentors, different perspectives, like from their own experience.” TM was excited at getting to know the job perks such as travel afforded to executives as they moved up the proverbial corporate ladder, “Yeah, yes, Ms. MB, how she got to travel for her job and try all these different fields within management.” SH was focused on learning more about the different sub-specializations in logistics and operations management, “And I'll be in operations and production. And if I did intern with the other company, it would be within transportation. I still have a focus on but I prefer operations.” ES initially was unsure of going into the related fields other than his chosen major of Finance, but realized the value of broader understanding of the subfields existing in the financial services sector, “And, originally, you know, I don't know anything about Insurance. You know, my idea of Finance, of course, I was thinking of just investing in such, but with PFS (his mentor's company), Insurance, you know, someone who's a financial advisor. He's, like, telling you about saving. He's teaching you about saving on insurance rates. And it's like, kind of like the backwards effect of what I really was more interested in. But this is important too!”

Build Mentees' Organizational Leadership by Joining or Creating NU Clubs.

The mentee interviews also affirmed one of Tinto's (2012) principles of student retention that posited the strengthening of bonds between students within the university helps prevent students from leaving the institution. To this point, the interviewees added that leadership at NU student organizations can be encouraged and facilitated during mentorship. SH said it best by initiating leadership in forming a NU club as a result of her

mentorship guidance, “I was thinking last night and I was like, I don't feel like I have given enough to NU. That was kind of my thought process. Am I okay, I have a year left. I have my thoughts on this. There isn't (an organization or) something in supply chain. Okay, maybe I start a supply chain club.” My discussions with AJ confirmed his dedication to continuing being a student leader at NU, “To make sure to become leaders in their community as well? Basically, I would definitely say so. And you actually did mention that part. But I am an officer of three clubs.” ES extended his development as a student-leader model for other current and potential mentees with a flavor for diversity, equity, and inclusion, “I just recently went to a political trip to Albany with NU and I don't know if you heard of the political advocacy. Okay, the trip to Albany advocating the Fair College Fair Act.”

Improving Mentee Skills and Knowledge Sets are Vital for Their Careers. The mentees interviewed acknowledged that mentorship should provide improvement of the skills and knowledge sets they need to succeed in their chosen careers. TM stated, “I think it's helped me in a lot of ways with my like, rational conversational skills with my like, interview skills.” SH added, “We focused mostly on like, my resume on my LinkedIn profile. Kind of focusing on, we did a couple of practice interviews.” LB confirmed her learnings about the importance of courteous communications and civil etiquette, “As long as they're expecting that I want to speak to them and they want to speak to me (proper decorum).” SH lamented that mentorship should also help provide guidance and support on the actual job requirements a mentee must have in order to get a career started, “So I really only hear that from the university, from my professors, what I can do with it, how I can, how I can approach it, what are the degrees I need? What do I

need to learn?” As a further example of skills and knowledge sets that mentees must get from the mentor, AJ stated, “Because I did ask, I did ask my mentor, like, what were your study habits? What did you do to kind of help to get yourself ready for the CPA exam? And so what that sort of track I definitely (can) use for that.” As ES summarized, the mentee needs to gain practical information on job requirements from the mentor’s experiences, “Because, you know, us as students, we don't really know anything, and we don't have any experience. And I realized that, um, you know, you could be book smart, but when you get into the workforce, you know, you might be still be clueless. So, you definitely need that experience to see what the work environment is like.”

Financial Support. Even though almost 90% of NU undergraduate students already get some form of grants and/or scholarships (NCES, 2022), there are still funding gaps omnipresent in higher education. SH explained her desire to continue on to graduate school after NU and was seeking advice and help on how she might be able to fund her further educational aspirations, “I really do. I love learning, I love my education. And I would like to keep considering it. But I also have to keep in mind, finances and things like (that).” ES was also looking to supplement his funding sources for his college education at NU and was interested in help he could source from mentors, “That sounds perfect. Yeah. Definitely. I want to be a part of (scholarships and financial assistance) for sure.” In addition, I observed LB’s interest in in my mentoring meetings

Graduate Degree Assistance. Because the current mentees were invited because of their high-potential, one of the mentees expressed a strong desire to attend graduate school. As such, one emergent theme from the interviews was how mentorship might be able to guide mentees into getting into graduate school after NU. SH stated her desire to

get graduate education, “But I'm, definitely looking in different MBA programs. I'm also starting to kind of explore possibly a PhD route as well.” She was interested in getting support from program mentors to help her accomplish her post-undergraduate dreams.

Additional post-mentorship activities that will improve the program. The main theme of adding activities that were not currently being done in the current mentorship program is supported by two underlying sub-themes that emerged from my interviews with the mentees. These sub-themes include: (a) Mentees would benefit from meeting other mentors aside from their assigned mentor; (b) Mentees like to engage with their co-mentees; and (c) Need for an informal get-together of all mentees and mentors aimed at discussions on improving the program.

Meeting with Other Mentors. Although the interviewees expressed their preference to stay with their current mentors, they also sought the possible experience they could get from other mentors assigned from the one they were assigned to. ES summed up this sentiment, “I was gonna say that, um, it'll be great to have different mentors you know. I plan on keeping Mr. JJ as my mentor. But it would be great to have different experiences as well.” LB was curious about other mentors as well, “But I don't know anything to speak from like other experience(s), because I don't know what the other mentors have.” In contrast, TM expressed, “I think I would prefer to stay with you.” Although she was open to hearing advice from other mentors, “When I say it, again, the finding yourself through other people (mentors).”

Engaging with Other Mentees. The current program did not provide for mentees to engage with other mentees. However, the interviewees were spoke loud and clear on this issue. LB would like to know how her co-mentees have advanced personally and

professionally, “Like, I mean, that'd be kind of cool to see (other mentees). Like, how we've advanced since we've gotten older, like, that'd be cool.” AJ suggested that there should be an engagement event whereby co-mentees could exchange notes on their mentorship experiences, “And, you know, we haven't really had things where we would get together with other mentees and exchange, like, experiences or notes with them. But that is actually a great idea, though.”

Culminating Event with Mentees and Mentors . The interviewees also like the idea of a culminating event with all mentees and mentors together. LB suggested for a mentorship activity that would bring all participants together, “Yeah, sure I would like a mentorship activity with mentees and mentors (to exchange ideas). Yeah.” TM proposed to use the event to develop new ways to enhance the program, “Yeah, it's just what we need to do (brainstorm for ideas), right?” SH added that she would be happy to participate in a development activity, “But maybe some kind of like organizational or some kind of like developmental (event) that we could put into, I would be happy to do that as well.” AJ stated the need for a mentorship evaluation, “Super. Yeah good to exchange notes with mentees to review benefits and features.” And ES wanted such an event to be more informal, “But, you know, you might ask students, oh, what do you what do you think would be more entertaining or more fun.” The mentees indicated their desire to collaborate informally.

Observations and Notes

Many of the themes that emerged from the qualitative instruments I used were corroborated by the observations and notes (from journaling and memos) I was also able to collect from various stakeholders. For example in one of my earlier mentoring

meetings with LB, she appeared to have an enthusiastic interest in getting career benefits like internships via the mentorship program. Her voice rose higher as she sounded really excited when she spoke. See Table 13 in Appendix B for an excerpt of this observation.

My notes from one of the meetings with AJ also affirmed the theme of career development. I noted down that he emphasized two benefits that he was very keen on experiencing at the NU CBA mentorship program. He mentioned that shadowing and networking with his mentor was critical for students in light of the real-world experiences gained from these mentorship features. A sample note page is shown in Figure 9.

Reporting Mixed Methods Results

Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

I invited all mentees who attended the current NU CBA mentorship program that transpired over the period of Fall 2021 through Spring 2022 semesters to respond to a post-mentorship survey questionnaire. All students who attended this current NU CBA mentorship program were categorized as high-performing or high-potential (i.e., soaring eagles). Of the 29 soaring eagles who were analyzed for dissertation purposes, seven (24%) responded to the post-mentorship survey. There were three follow-up emails sent to all mentees which resulted in the receipt of responses for the post-mentorship mentee survey being spread throughout the period April 29th through June 14, 2022. The survey consisted of quantitative and qualitative questions and the results are discussed separately in these sections.

Reliability of Quantitative Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

The survey instrument contained questions of similar construct that asked the respondent similar themes, albeit in different wording. For example, Questions 4 and 5

are intra-item validity checks in relation to Question 2. All three questions inquire, with slightly different phrasing, about the mentees' overall satisfaction with the program.

Another demonstration of the reliability of the quantitative results I used is by measuring the Cronbach's Alpha of the responses using the SPSS v.28 software. Cronbach's Alpha is ultimately an overall measure of internal consistency and therefore reliability of the items with similar constructs in an instrument (Wronowski, 2021). For example, the general inquiry for Questions 12, 13, and 14 was about if the mentorship program helped the mentees improve their academic study skills. The Cronbach's Alpha for this set of items was 0.822, indicating a high degree of internal consistency in the responses provided by the mentees. This is summarized in Table 14 in Appendix B.

Quantitative Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey Results and Analytics

This section discusses the quantitative results and subsequent analytics performed on the mixed methods survey data. The results are also summarized in Table 15 in Appendix B. Questions 2 through 6 inquired about the mentees' general satisfaction with the Spring 2022 program. Question 2 was a "yes or no" question with all seven (100%) answering yes to the question on whether they found the mentorship to be generally helpful to them. Question 3 was also a "yes or no" question with six out of seven (86%) respondents answering yes to the question whether their mentor followed an interaction plan. Questions 4 through 6 were Likert-type items, questions answerable by "1" equals highly agree, "2" equals agree, "3" equals neutral, "4" equals disagree, and "5" equals highly disagree. For Question 4, all seven (100%) of the respondents answered "1" to the question of overall satisfaction of the program. All seven (100%) of the respondents also answered "1" to Question 5 which asked if the mentorship met their expectations. All

respondents answered “1” to Question 6, save for one who indicated “2” for this question. In summary, the mentees surveyed appeared to be highly satisfied with the overall programming of the Spring 2022 mentorship which match the results of the qualitative mentee interview and mentor survey results as well.

Questions 7 through 11 inquired about the quality of interaction between mentor and mentee, from the mentee’s perspective. These were Likert-type questions answerable by “1” equals highly agree, “2” equals agree, “3” equals neutral, “4” equals disagree, and “5” equals highly disagree. For question 7, asking if the mentor actively listened to the mentee, all (100%) respondents answered “1.” Question 8 asked the mentee if the mentor provided them with constructive feedback and all seven (100%) answered “1.” Question 9 asked if the mentor created trust with the mentee and all seven (100%) answered “1.” Question 10 asked if the mentor was boring and six of seven (86%) answered “1” with the lone dissenter providing a “2” which drove the average answer to 1.14 and the standard deviation for the seven answers was 0.378. Question 11 asked if the mentor was a good role model and every respondent answered “1.” Generally speaking, the Spring 2022 mentees were highly satisfied with their mentors and their interactions. The results from this quantitative mentee survey matched the qualitative mentee interview results.

Questions 12 through 26 surveyed the mentees for their preference for each of the feature highlighted in each question. These were also Likert-type questions with possible answers of “1” equals highly agree, “2” equals agree, “3” equals neutral, “4” equals disagree, and “5” equals highly disagree. Question 12 asked if the mentorship covered the mentees’ academic needs and five of the seven (72%) respondents answered “1”, one of the seven (14%) respondents rating the mentorship “2”, another answered “3” and the

mean answer for this question was 1.43 with a standard deviation of 0.787. Question 13 asked if the mentee's study skills were built up by mentor. Three of seven respondents answered "1", two answered "2", and three answered "3". This question garnered more variability in answers than the earlier questions with a standard deviation of 0.900 and a mean score of 1.86. Question 14 is also an intra-item validity check for question 13. Question 14 also resulted in variable opinions with two "1" responses, two "2" answers, and three "3" replies. Question 14 responses had a mean of 2.14, a mode of 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.900, also indicating more dispersed responses. Based on the responses from questions 13 and 14, mentees indicated agreement that their study skills were enhanced by the current mentorship program. Although this quantitative survey indicates a generally positive response to the overall impact of mentorship on the mentees scholastic abilities, the qualitative interviews did not really indicate that much positivity. One potential reason is that when I prodded the mentees during the interview on this subject, the mentees being interviewed seemed to think they did not really need as much academic help because they are already high-performers.

Question 15 asked if mentee communication skills were enhanced by the program and there was unanimity as all responses were "1." Question 16 asked if mentee motivation to complete college was enhanced by mentoring and all respondents affirmed a solid "1." Question 17 asked if mentorship encouraged mentees to join NU clubs and there were three "1", two "2", and two "3" responses. Question 17 indicated mixed responses with an average of 1.86 and an also dispersed set of answers with 0.900 standard deviation. The slightly positive response to question 17 would indicate that the mentorship is helping students cope with the social aspect of collegiate life. Question 18

asked if mentees were presented with career opportunities by their mentors and was also answered solidly as a “1” by all respondents. Question 19 asked if the mentor built a trusting relationship with the mentee. This question attempts to provide internal consistency of mentee answers with question 9. Therefore, results for question 19 are quite similar to question 9, although one respondent rated the mentor relationship as neutral in terms of trust by answering with a “3”, all others answered a “1.” The results and findings from the quantitative survey matched the results from the mentee interviews on the subject of communications wherein the interviewees indicated that their skills were sharpened via interactions with their mentors and their staff.

Question 20 asked if the mentorship developed diversity, equity, and inclusiveness (DEI) for the mentee; all answers were a “1”, except for one with a “3” resulting in a question response mean of 1.29. This is a subject that I did not get a chance to focus on during the qualitative mentee interviews and should therefore be revisited in the assessment and evaluation sections of my action plan going forward.

Question 21 inquired if the mentee has become more financially literate because of the program and the answers were more dispersed. Three of the question 21 answers were “1”, two were “2”, and three were “3.” The question 21 mean was 2.00, with a mode of 3.00, and a standard deviation of 1.000. Question 22 asked if the mentor offered financial assistance and the answers were also dispersed with three “1”, two “2”, and two “3” resulting in a mean of 1.86 and standard deviation of 0.900. The quantitative survey answers indicate a slight agreement by the respondents that they got some financial support. However, just as the qualitative mentee interviews indicate, there appears to be a need for stronger financial support and servicing from the current mentorship program.

Question 23 asked if the mentorship helped the mentee solve NU administrative issues and the scores were dispersed with three “1”, one “2”, two “3”, and one “4” indicating the first responder who disagreed receiving the benefit being polled amongst all the questions. Question 24 asked if the program had provided the mentee with a person who can be counted on for emergencies and a majority five of the seven (72%) answered with a “1”, while one (14%) replied with a “2”, and another replied with a “4.” The mean score for question 24 was 1.57 with a standard deviation of 1.134. Question 25 asked if the mentee got assistance for health issues from the program and this question garnered the least positive response among all the questions with three “3” and one “4” responses. Although there were two responses were “1” and one was “2”, the mean score was the lowest at 2.43 among all the questions with a standard deviation of 1.134. This line of questioning on NU administrative support was also not focused on in the qualitative interviews. This is another area that can be enhanced in the assessment and evaluation sections being considered for my action plan.

Question 26 asked if the mentorship program gave the mentee improved capabilities to complete their college degree and a majority or five of seven (71%) respondents scored the question a “1”, two answered with a “2.” Question 26 indicates that a majority of respondents are in high agreement that mentorship has helped their capabilities to complete college. This finding is in line with the qualitative interview responses wherein the mentees were unanimous that the mentorship was generally helpful to their overall positive impression about their stay at the university.

Questions 27 to 29 were answerable by “yes or no” and inquired about mentorship recruitment for the Spring 2022 program. Question 27 asked if recruitment

efforts drew them into the program and a majority six of seven (86%) respondents answered yes. Question 28 asked if the mentee liked the current recruitment process and six of seven (86%) respondents answered yes. Finally, question 29 asked if the mentee would like more recruitment efforts and five of the seven (71%) responses were yes. Again, this finding is in agreement from the qualitative interviews that the mentees had positive responses about mentorship recruitment, although they also voiced a need to improve the recruitment efforts.

Qualitative Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

The post-mentorship mentee survey questionnaire I administered also included five free-form qualitative questions (item numbers 30 – 34). Excerpts of the responses for these questions are shown in Table 16 of Appendix B. This portion of the survey were comprised of questions 30 through 34 that asked the mentees to provide, in their own words, general comments on program marketing, mentor quality, additional features desired, and reflections about the program and the university.

Credibility, Authenticity, and/or Trustworthiness of Qualitative Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

Data received from the seven mentees who responded to the post-mentorship survey were cross-checked with the respondents. Sample emails between the mentees and me are illustrated in Figure 10 in Appendix B. In addition, the post-mentorship results were cross-checked with the results from both the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews as well. The comparison of multiple data sourcing is a method of checking for qualitative analytics prescribed by Merriam and Grenier (2019, p. 26).

Qualitative Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey Results and Analytics

This section reports on the results and subsequent analytics performed on the qualitative post-mentorship survey. Again, the classical grounded theory from Kenny & Fourie (2015) was used to develop the overarching themes in the analysis.

Affirmative Affectations Toward Mentorship. The respondents were generally positive about the NU CBA mentorship program. Respondent 1 wrote, “Such a great experience” and respondent 5 recorded, “Very content with my experience.” Respondents 3 and 4 respectively added, “Learned a lot from my mentor” and “Great experience from my mentor.” These two statements indicate a strong liking for their mentors. In whole, these statements represent important affirmations of the value of mentorship from the mentees, given their emphatically positive responses. Again, these results are consistent with the outcomes from the qualitative interviews and with the quantitative section of this survey as well.

General Positive Feelings Toward NU. A component of the positive feelings from the mentorship program is assumed to rub off onto the university and vice-versa. Respondent 1 summed it up nicely, “Grateful to have the opportunity and thank the University for assistance.” Respondent 4 seconded this point, “I appreciate the opportunity (from NU).” The theme of positive reaction from a valued experience at the college level can translate into the overall positive reflection of the university. In other words, the goodness that the mentorship NU CBA program reflects progressively into the broader institution as well. This finding is also consistent with the quantitative section of this survey.

Constructive Marketing Suggestions. The respondents gave key suggestions on program improvements. For marketing the program for the Fall 2022 semester, respondents voiced out the need for professors to recruit from their own classes. Respondents 1, 5, and 7 wrote respectively, “Professors should mention (mentorship) in classes, have advisors mention it,” “Within business course or gen ed course encouraging students to join,” and “Going into classrooms.” Furthermore, respondents suggested using different media and venues to reach out to students, “Handing out flyers in class,” “Market the program at student club/career fairs,” “Posters would be very useful,” “Email and seminars,” “Video should be showed.” These communication channels should focus on making the potential recruit more aware of mentorship benefits as written by respondent 3, “(Make mentees) aware of the possibilities of the program.”

Focus on Providing Real Career Opportunities. A significant theme from these suggestions emerged from the respondents’ suggestions regarding career development focus. Respondent 1 outlined, “Mentor created many (professional) connections for me.” Respondents 2, 4, and 5 wrote, “He listened to my career interests,” “Great help for career paths,” and “Role model meetings spread out through semesters.” The suggestions coming out of the qualitative section of the mentee survey are generally consistent with the mentee interview results regarding the need to feature realistic career building opportunities for the mentees.

Summary of Overall Findings

The quantitative and qualitative analytics performed provided the major finding that the needs of the fledging eaglets are quite different from the soaring eagles. The findings for the fledgling eaglets were derived exclusively from the quantitative student

metrics that I collected and analyzed. Essentially, the mitigants to the fledgling eaglets' problems or AOCs can be summarized into four main categories: (a) financial sponsorship; (b) academic coaching; (c) NU CBA administrative support; and (d) heightened social mattering. It is also apparent that the renewed mentorship program can concentrate solutions towards specific fledgling eaglet AOCs. This is because a significant majority (66%) of the fledgling eaglets are encountering only one AOC at a time. Thus, a full-blown concerted effort to mitigate an individual AOC is a very viable approach to help an individual fledgling eaglet for the forthcoming Period 3 program. These needs have been confirmed by the literature review I have detailed in Chapter One.

For the soaring eagle population, the solutions to their mentorship needs going forward were developed through both the quantitative and qualitative analytics and thematics undertaken. The quantitative analyses illustrated that the soaring eagles were indeed high-performing students at the university. Although most of the soaring eagle upperclassmen do not need much in the way of academic support from a mentorship program, freshmen soaring eagles could benefit from academic mentoring. Nonetheless, all soaring eagles can still profit from a well-designed and implemented mentorship program, especially along the major theme of addressing their professional aspirations. The qualitative interviews and surveys of these soaring eagles indicate the need for the renewed mentorship program to focus along the major themes of providing for: (a) real-life practical career opportunities such as internships and college cooperative curricula; (b) leadership development such as NU organizational officership; and (c) mentee-mentor social activities. The findings from the mentors and the prior literature review further support these findings on the soaring eagle requirements.

Action Plan for My Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Abstract Framework

The abstract framework underlying the action plan for the participatory action research in my dissertation in practice (DiP) continues to be based on the seminal work of Tinto (1993). In the rebuilding of the NU CBA mentorship program, the main focus for our CBA Team should be the educational excellence of NU CBA students instead of just attrition attenuation per se (Tinto, 2014). It is with this framework that a well-implemented action plan could develop and retain NU students and staff. This accomplishment should go a long way into helping attain NU's dual objectives of maximized student and staff development while also enhancing the academic preeminence of the institution.

Goals of the PAR

Given the inadequacies of the current mentorship program in serving the mentorship needs of underserved NU CBA students, the near-term goal is to gain awareness and acceptance of a renewed NU CBA mentorship program. In turn, this should lead to achieving the medium-term goal of increasing mentee participation to include at least two to three fledgling eaglet students over the Fall 2022 (Period 3) through Spring 2023 (Period 4) semesters. Ultimately, the long-term goal is to help improve NU CBA's student retention by 2-3% by minimizing the attrition of NU CBA students, especially the fledgling eaglets, over the next two years starting from Period 3. To accomplish these goals, the CBA Team needs to enhance and enact a stronger and broader-reaching mentorship program than the current program that was implemented in the Fall 2021 (Period 1) through Spring 2022 (Period 2) semesters. The initial action

plan, which will be revised as needed throughout the timeline, is detailed in Table 17 of Appendix B.

Objectives of the PAR Action Plan

Based on the findings from the data collected and analyzed, the CBA Team must accomplish the following objectives to improve the servicing of mentoring needs for both the fledgling eaglets and soaring eagles. The proposed new NU CBA mentorship program commencing in the Fall 2022 semester will be to implement separate but contemporaneous agendas for both student populations. Separation of the program between low and high performing students is a recommended and workable strategy that is able to address the different needs of these two student groups (Lau, 2003). The tasks and timelines involved in these objectives are detailed in the next sections.

PAR – Overall Communication Plan

The main communication strategy is to provide all stakeholders with consistent, coordinated, and coherent information that will guide and help them fulfill the overall mentorship program goals. The two primary stakeholders at the NU CBA that I will be communicating and engaging with in my DiP are composed of the college's student learning community (SLC) and professional learning community (PLC) composed of NU staff and sponsors. The NU CBA students comprise the SLC because they are purposely bound together to maximize their own education (Lenning et al., 2013), while the NU educators and sponsors can be considered a professional learning community (PLC) because they aim to fully advance the NU CBA students' scholastic, social, and professional objectives (DuFour & DuFour, 2013).

However, given the differences in power and participation of the stakeholders involved, there will be communication customizations to align with their respective profiles. For example, the communication approaches for the SLC are focused on providing what they can get from mentorship with a nurturing and fun factor while maintaining educational messaging. In contrast, the communication approach to the PLC, including the NU CBA staff and corporate sponsors, will be more business-like with concise and educational messaging aimed at win-win constructs. More specifically, the communication approach for NU senior leadership will be concise and factual with concrete and positive messaging especially when reporting program results and outcomes. Within the CBA Team, the communications tactic will be more open so that completeness of information is effected, but will also be creative and factual with a strong focus on how to get the project tasks done. Because of the high-power distance and hierarchical management structure at NU, proper protocols for chain of command communications will be followed. For example, the NU CBA-AD will be the main communicator to the CBA-D, who in turn, will be the primary liaison between the NU CBA Team and NU's senior leaders. The NU CBA Team will be the main communicators with the SLC and PLC. However, inter-level communications, especially within the internal NU environment, will be supported as needed.

Available communications formats and tools will include electronic (email, phone, as well as communications applications such as Zoom and NU Instagram), live (in-person) meetings/info-sessions, hardcopy (memos and letters), PC presentations (MS PowerPoint), and infographics (pictographs). Mentee-mentor interactions will also be handled via Zoom (in-person preferred but subject to availability). In addition, the NU

CBA Team will develop infomercials about mentorship that will be sent to NU students primarily via social media or SM (e.g., NU Instagram). Given the frequent use of SM by students, it is anticipated that SM infomercials would be widely utilized among the communication formats available to students. According to Paulin et al. (2014), social media is considered the most important communication medium to engage the current crop of students with respect to social activities. In contrast, NU's senior leadership will be best reached in formal meetings via Zoom or in-person (if available) and leveraging presentation software (e.g., MS PowerPoint) to drive key messages.

The frequencies of communiques will also be differentiated between each stakeholder group. For example, it is recommended that mentee-mentor interactions occur at least monthly (they can elect to meet more often). The corporate mentor-sponsors will have regular email communications with the NU CBA Team for program updates. The CBA Team will have team meetings at the start and end of each semester and as needed. NU's CBA-D will get monthly updates as well as end of semester reporting. As an extra precaution, the NU CBA Team will conduct ad-hoc communications using suitable formats and tools whenever needed for any of the stakeholders involved in the evaluative and mentorship programs. According to Giancola (2021), informational power is gained by persons who acquire access to important information that may not be readily available or easily understood. As such, it is incumbent upon me as the primary researcher along with my collaborators in this project to properly disseminate the right information at the right time to the right parties.

A series of communications, primarily presentations and written reports, will be made to all key stakeholders, especially to the NU senior leadership. For the NU

administrators, presentations will be conducted mostly at meetings wherein the focus will be on how retention and development has been enhanced by the mentorship program. The emphasis on enhanced retention is because it is one of NU administration's top three plan priorities for the entire university. Additional communication with the NU student-mentees will also be via meeting presentations which would focus on mentorship features that help them thrive at the university. Focusing on which and how mentorship features are useful to student-mentees is important because they would be interested in how they can positively maximize their educational experiences via programs they engage in Northbound University. Limitations such as respondent hesitancy and honesty will be deliberated at all presentations, with emphasis on mitigation methods.

Overall, these presentations will be geared towards open and bi-directional exchange of ideas aimed at continually improving the assessment processes and ultimately the mentorship program. The findings from the data collection and subsequent discussions will provide the retention committee with the formulation of conclusions that they will use to keep enhancing the mentorship program. Not only the key learnings from these discussions be used by the retention committee to improve the mentorship program, but these will also help in further advertising the mentorship program for the next batch of students who may benefit by engaging in the program. As previously mentioned, the entire project will be reflexive and recursive, with the retention committee purposefully reflecting, reviewing, and revising their assessment and intervention planning and implementation throughout the three-year project timeline. The overall communication strategy is illustrated in Figure 11 in Appendix B. Figure 12 of Appendix B shows a

sample infographic that the NU CBA Team will employ to help NU students and staff conceptualize the NU CBA mentorship program goals and outcomes as well.

PAR – Overall Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The overall stakeholder engagement strategy will be an organization-led model. According to Fahning (2022), the organization-led engagement plan leads the implementation and is the primary entity that is responsible for enacting the plan, although multiple engagement strategies can be used throughout the project life cycle. I will collaborate with the CBA Team to drive the overall PAR implementation, but we will also vacillate between community-led (both SLC and PLC) and stakeholder-shared engagement styles when needed. In this regard, our CBA Team is a key asset that plays the role of the main catalyst for people to enact the social interventions (Parker, 2020) in the participatory action research effort. The primary leadership role of the CBA Team members is based on the CBA-D mandate and support from NU's topmost leaders.

The CBA Team will bridge between the two learning communities because the team members were directly entrusted by the CBA-D with the establishment, evaluation, and enhancement of the mentorship program update. With the CBA-AD's considerable expertise on mentorship and my work as the primary researcher conducting the participatory action research, we can proactively lead the engagement to apply the renewed mentorship improvements. We are supported by two staffers who were hired to help the NU retention causes. The CBA-D is a senior leader at NU who represents an active resource provider in terms of guidance, manpower, and funding for the CBA Team's initiatives. In addition, the NU PLC staffers who are active mentors in the program provide their educational expertise and experience to help plan and implement

program improvements as well. Quite importantly, the suggestions from the SLC need to be continually surfaced and accordingly acted on because their contributions signify the mentorship benefits and features that are actually desirable and needed by students. Therefore, the SLC is also a significant asset that will be leveraged towards the research, redevelopment, and reimplementation efforts.

There are certain challenges in facilitating the crucial links to the engagement between the SLC and PLC. Some potential problems could stem from the power differential between the two groups which may result in the drowning out of the SLC voices and discouragement to engage. This is because SLC members may be intimidated by the higher hierarchical status of the PLC members within the NU macro-community. There could also be a lack of focus on the overall enhancement effort and thereby decreased enthusiasm in encouraging inclusive participation of all stakeholders by the involved PLC members given their already busy regular work schedules. Also, Dumlao (2018) prescribed that all stakeholders should examine the core layers of everyone's insides to foster complete communication and engagement. In this regard, the practical constraints of resources such as time and patience of both SLC and PLC members could subvert the intentions and work of the CBA Team. Thus, the CBA Team must take steps to mitigate these limitations to ensure project viability and success.

Projected PAR Timeline

The timeline of the actions involving the communication, engagement, implementation, and review (assessment and evaluation) plans for the participatory action research commence in the Summer of 2022 so that the renewed NU CBA mentorship program is fully functional and ready to implement by the Fall 2022 semester (Period 3).

Moreover, because the overall participatory action research is both reflective and recursive, the overall project timeline steps will be repetitive over a period of at least two years from the commencement of the updated mentorship program scheduled for Period 3. Thus, the plan processes will occur over the additional semesters of the Fall 2023 (Period 5) and Spring 2024 (Period 6) semesters. Figure 13 in Appendix B graphically illustrates a simplified overall timeline of the participatory action research involved in my DiP which includes the communication, engagement, implementation, and review plans described.

PAR Action Plan - Implementation Details

Fledgling Eaglets

A pilot program with specific mentorship features and benefits catered to the needs of fledgling eaglets will be undertaken for the Fall 2022 semester. As previously discussed, the areas of concerns (AOCs) encountered by the fledgling eaglets provide the basis for what will be addressed in the fledgling eaglet mentorship. The fledgling eaglet mentorship is designed as a pilot program so that the CBA Team can test the new features being planned for the Fall 2022 semester. In collaboration with the CBA-D, respective NU offices, and NU leadership, the CBA Team will purposively select two to three mentorship candidates from the 74 fledgling eaglets identified in Periods 1 and 2. The selected students will be provided with the following mentorship highlights with the condition that they stay with the pilot program over Periods 3 and 4.

Financial Sponsorship. I have initiated a partnership with a third-party company (i.e., Argo Company, a pseudonym) that will help fund the fledgling eagle financial needs. The monetizing mechanism is to provide micro-grants of \$1,000 per student, with

a pilot program for two to three students starting in Period 3. With final approval from the CBA-D, the micro-grant recipients were chosen from the 74 fledgling eaglets initially identified by the CBA Team to have encountered the financial difficulty AOC. In order to create a sustainability for funding and growing the fledgling eaglet program, the CBA Team and Argo Company will design and implement an on-going donation campaign targeting NU alumni and local companies. Going forward, expansion of financial services to other students may be possible depending on the fund-raising results.

Academic Coaching. Also in collaboration with Argo Company, I have co-designed an academic program on basic college success skills improvement based on the Stratosphere University (a pseudonym) academic coaching practices (Stratosphere University, 2022) and Argo's proprietary financial survival instruction curricula. Academic coaching will be offered to as many fledgling eaglets as possible. There will be one-hour interactive sessions with the fledgling eaglet held twice a month over Periods 3 and 4. In addition, there will be flexibility in the topics covered during these sessions wherein specific fledgling eaglet academic issues can be addressed. Fledgling eaglet academic performance will be closely monitored over the periods covered.

NU Administrative Support. The CBA Team, in cooperation with the respective NU offices and departments, will create a roadmap for the 74 fledgling eaglets to help them better navigate through NU administrative issues. The starting point is appointing an overall coordinator who can be the point person that fledgling eaglets can reach out to whenever they have a pressing personal need or encountering any of the other AOCs. A contact list for each NU department with an actual resource person will also be provided

to the fledgling eaglets. These departmental contacts will be informed and cross-trained about the potential needs of the fledgling eaglet who might reach out to them.

Ongoing Social Activities. The CBA Team will sponsor formal and informal “mattering” social affairs throughout Periods 3 and 4. Borrowing the key “mattering” concepts from Flett et al. (2019) and Strayhorn (2019), the primary objective of these social activities will be to make the students as comfortable and welcome to the NU environment as possible. Some sample specific steps to help attain this objective would be to: (a) provide awards and recognition for program participation and progress; (b) encourage students to join or create NU student organizations; (c) enjoin the participants to meet regularly in a private “hang-out” location; and (d) create fun activities such as “dunking the dean” day to show the lighter side of NU staff and administration. Mentees (both fledgling eaglets and soaring eagles), mentors, and special guests will be invited for specific social activities or “hang-out” sessions. Initial funding will be provided in partnership with the third-party sponsor, Argo Company.

Soaring Eagles

Based on the survey and interview responses from the soaring eagles from their mentorship experiences in Periods 1 and 2, additional features and benefits will be added to the program planned for Periods 3 and onwards. Although many of the principles applicable to the fledgling eaglet mentees are also adaptable for the soaring eagles, there are some features that will be focused on for the new mentee participants. In fact, among the key concepts that are applicable for more advanced students are rooted in their desire and need for realistic future career chances and professional development. Therefore, the

NU CBA mentorship program starting in the new semester should highlight the following features and benefits in addition to its current platform.

Real-life and Practical Career Opportunities. The most desired features that were unanimously requested by the current soaring eagle mentees centered on credible career opportunities and professional advancement. Among others, these include internships, college cooperative curricula, and employee shadowing/role modeling. These features are attractive to the high-performing soaring eagles because they can foresee future career possibilities arising from such mentorship features. According to Keevy and Mare (2018), the act of actually performing a job is the ultimate proof of one's ability to do it. Thus, the real-life work environment wherein real-life work responsibilities as well as skills and content training are afforded to the mentee should also provide both the mentee-intern and potential employer definitive proof that the former will be a viable fit for the job (Galbraith and Mondal, 2022). The successful completion of the internship can therefore lead to full-time work for the mentee-intern on top of the real-life learnings of the respective soft and hard skillsets (Lansdell et al., 2020). Moreover, the internship can be structured as part of the cooperative college curriculum wherein the mentee-intern gets college credits for the internship. This amplifies the benefits afforded to the student wherein course completion and credit are added to the mentee-intern's internship learnings and career opportunities. Also, the interactions borne out of employee shadowing and professional networking further develops the mentee-intern's soft skills on professionalism that would be valuable for future job placement and performance (Abston & Soter, 2019).

Encouraging Leadership Development Activities. Because the soaring eagles are already high-performing or high-potential students of the university, the NU CBA mentorship must enable and inculcate leadership abilities that may be just surfacing for these students. According to Rudolph et al. (2018), the intergenerational guidance of mentors in a mentorship program provides powerful lessons to the younger mentees in not only specific institutional and substantive knowledge, but also a leadership legacy. Thus, the NU CBA program must cater to the mentees' leadership development by providing platforms from which their leadership skills are exposed and enhanced. As a sample task on how this can be accomplished, the mentor will guide the mentee on how to lead by practicing learned leadership skills in existing or newly-formed NU student organizations that they will be encouraged to be affiliated with. The soaring eagles will also be tapped to furnish guest mentoring sessions to the fledgling eaglets so that the former group become role models to educate and inspire the latter students. In this capacity, the soaring eagles will act more as informal or naturally-occurring mentors who can positively influence the fledgling eaglets because of the more equal social and cultural footing as co-students and friends (Fruiht & Chan, 2018). In turn, the soaring eagles further sharpen their leadership skills as a function of the leadership and coaching they provide to the fledgling eaglets from this task. Finally, the mentors could provide role modeling by sharing their extensive leadership experiences with a special focus on their own paths to successes in the projects and organizations that they have been involved with. It is key to for the mentees to hear first-hand about such victories from these mentors.

Soaring Eagle Social Activities. Just like the fledgling eaglets, there is an opportunity for the NU CBA mentorship to engage soaring eagles in informal and formal social activities for all stakeholders involved in the program. The fact that soaring eagles also clamored for such social events makes it imperative for the CBA Team to host these activities on their behalf. These o” hang-out” sessions would be similar in format to the design proposed for the fledgling eaglets. However, a key feature unique to the soaring eagles would be the inclusion of a high-profile successful guest speaker and role model from the professional ranks who will be invited to inspire the soaring eagles into striving for more successes. The emulation of high-profile mentors and role models will allow soaring eagles to aspire and rise as stars themselves (Malmgren et al., 2010). Initial funding will be solicited in partnership with a third-party sponsor company.

PAR Assessment and Evaluation Plans

All students to be engaged in the renewed mentoring program scheduled for the Fall 2022 (Period 3) through Spring 2024 (Period 6) semesters will continually be tracked for their feedback and suggestions resulting from their collective mentorship experiences. Also, the mentors will be consulted for their suggestions based on their ongoing mentorship experiences to further enhance the program. According to Harvey et al. (2017), such customized feedback and improvement approaches cater to the participants’ needs and should help ensure a meaningful evolution of the NU CBA mentorship program. To further enhance validity of the assessment and evaluation strategies presented, the CBA Team will use the backwards design process (Wronowski, 2021). This process entails the following steps: (a) discussions to review and reach agreement on the main objectives; (b) implement the initial assessments (surveys and interviews); (d)

perform data analyses from the initial assessments and execute the appropriate interventions; (e) update the assessments (surveys and interviews) as needed; and (f) repeat the process all over. This recursive process of formative assessments, intervention deployment, and summative evaluations over the two-year timeframe should help accomplish the second goal of increasing the NU College of Business Administration's student retention by 2%-3% by the end of the Spring 2024 semester. The entire communications, assessment, and subsequent enhancement processes will be recursive with end of the semester evaluations aimed at further refinements to the program for the duration of the participatory action research effort which should go through the Spring 2024 (Period 6) semester.

Description of Assessment Plan

Essentially, the assessment plan is composed of self-designed surveys to be conducted for NU CBA students at the start of the renewed program in Period 3. The instruments are intended to determine the NU mentorship needs of students and are based in large part on the mentorship assessment works of Fleming et al. (2013), Gayrama-Borines (2017), and Jackevicius et al. (2014). In addition, the combined expertise of the CBA Team and a diverse group of co-teachers will be leveraged to help ensure for appropriateness, comprehensiveness, and overall validity of the surveys being constructed and used. The instruments will include appropriate confidentiality provisions to protect the respondents' privacy and clear instructions to help completion. The surveys will be a formative assessment that will be administered to students at the beginning of Period 3. This initial student survey will help determine freshmen attitudes, expectations, and interests along the mentorship program. This student survey consists of mostly yes-

or-no, fill-in-the-blank questions, and a few open-ended questions. This student survey has some repetitive questions that check for response consistency (e.g., item #s 7 and 10). The initial survey should help the CBA Team understand the potential causes of student attrition. This initial survey is shown in Figure 14 in Appendix B.

There will be limitations including respondent hesitancy and honesty that need to be addressed for the initial survey. To this, the CBA Team will triangulate the data from the initial survey with data from observations and notes to help filter out inconsistencies. In addition to triangulation, the committee will furnish students with instructions that emphasize no right/wrong answers and the importance of honest responses to help address the social desirability fears that students may have regarding the data collecting processes. Another concern in administering the first survey is that students may not feel comfortable with joining a mentorship program, especially freshmen who may have had negative experiences with extra classroom work wherein they may have been subjected to marginalized experiences (e.g., stigma of attending and outright ostracism from remedial classes). This could be mitigated by holding mentorship information sessions and distribution of mentoring materials prior to conducting the survey. The first set of instruments will be adjusted as needed and administered for new mentees throughout the planned phases of the mentorship program from Period 3 through Period 6.

Description of Evaluation Plan

The overall evaluation of the updated NU CBA mentorship program scheduled at the end of Period 4 will use the embedded evaluation (EMB-E) framework. According to Giancola (2021), embedded evaluation is a framework that is focused on recursively incorporating improvements within the operation of a program. I have chosen to use the

EMB-E framework because it provides the benefits of, (a) helps clarify the existing strategies and goals of the program as a result of the examination of the current logic model; (b) fosters broad cooperation amongst all stakeholders so that program building and decision-making capacities are refined; (c) allows for data collection and analysis that informs stakeholders if the program is working for its participants; and ultimately (d) examines present program processes so that outcomes can be enhanced (Giancola, 2021). Furthermore, because EMB-E creates shared meaning about the evaluative project for all stakeholders, these involved parties are more likely to not only identify problems but find their own solutions as well to the program challenges encountered during its implementation (Jacobsgaard & Norlund, 2011).

Once the initial assessment data are collected from the survey, I will undertake a series of analyses in collaboration with the CBA Team. These analytics will help the fine-tuning of mentorship features and benefits that are found to best help enhancement of the mentees' educational excellence. The review process should be scheduled over the semestral break between Periods 3 and 4. Then, a second series of student surveys will be administered to the mentees and mentors towards end of Period 4. These instruments will be summative evaluations on how the mentorship features have impacted both mentees and mentors. These will be similar to the surveys I used earlier in my data collection methodology (Figures 2 and 4 in Appendix A) in Periods 1 and 2 with the corresponding analytics performed as well. Among the measures used would be how many of the mentees had overall positive affectations towards the program and if they have subsequently been incented to persist at the university. Again, in order to help with the reliability of data received from the respondents, follow-up mentee interviews (similar to

the instruments used for Periods 1 and 2 as shown in Figure 3 of Appendix A) will be used to triangulate participants' responses. Limitations would still include the honesty or hesitancy from respondents to answer the second surveys and interviews. The triangulation of data from both survey and interview instruments should mitigate some of the limitations described. Just as in the first set of instruments, this second set of surveys and interviews will be reviewed, revised, and repeated over the overall timeline.. These cyclical activities, in essence, should help firm the validity and reliability of the instruments being used.

Logic Model

According to Giancola (2021), a logic model is a process that facilitates a deeper grasp of how a program that is being evaluated works. As a result of this understanding, the construction and implementation of an evaluation program is therefore developed into a powerful tool to improve program outcomes. As such, I have created the logic model shown as Figure 15 in Appendix B to illustrate the theories behind how the evaluation should work to improve the NU CBA mentorship program results. In summary, the main components of the logic model include the required inputs, strategic activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts (Giancola, 2021). The required inputs in my logic model are the NU senior leadership, CBA-D, CBA Team, NU CBA faculty and staff, NU CBA funding, corporate mentors, and corporate donors. The strategic activities include mentee-mentor feedback analysis, marketing, and the NU mentorship overhaul. The outputs from the strategic initiatives include incorporating the feedback collected, creating and executing the marketing campaign, and reimplementing the updated mentorship. The short-term outcome will be mentees' acceptance of the marketing

campaign to join the renewed NU CBA mentorship program. The medium-term outcome expected will be a 10% increase in mentee participation within the next school year and the final outcome hoped for will be a 2-3% increase in student retention over a two-year timeframe. The final impact will be attainment of NU's dual mission of maximized student and staff development so they can contribute towards the common good of society while solidifying Northbound University's regional academic standing.

Anticipated Findings

It is anticipated that mentorship will have a positive impact on student development so that they are encouraged to flourish and graduate from the Northbound University College of Business Administration (NU CBA). Helping students stay at the NU CBA would then lead to increased student retention at the university. In turn, this should lead to the enhancement of NU's overall academic prominence in the regions it serves. The ultimate supposition, based on the research I have conducted thus far, is that a well-designed and properly executed mentorship program will help the university achieve its dual mission.

From an introspective personal perspective, I have learned that experience is one of the best teachers. As one lives through the most salient solutions when confronting challenges, these answers tend to become ingrained into one's personality. Through the parallel processes of working on my DiP and continuous education, I have learned and internalized into my inner psyche that multiple combinations of communication and engagement strategies could be most useful. Thus, there are situations when my former positivist epistemology is applicable, but there are many more times when my newly forming subjectivity can be applied to my communication and engagement styles. As a

rational person, I may just be obeying the principle from Kant (1785/2017) that moral values of any action are guided by a person's own rational duty as I have been classically trained to be a logical being. But as an aspiring educational leader, I know that my ultimate duty is to help teach people from both the content and technique perspectives. As Freire (1998) affirmed, I am fully aligned with the ideology that the demand for close collaboration between educators and learners in order to attend to their mutual needs now supersedes my initial inclination to only use objectivist ontologies in serving the communities I am involved with.

CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTION OF OVERALL CHANGE PROCESS

Description of Actions/Interventions/Changes

Change Process Steps

Over the Summer of 2022, I spearheaded several meetings for the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA) mentorship program core constituency of stakeholders including the college dean, our CBA Team, and the third-party partner (Argo Company, a pseudonym and sponsor) regarding key program changes involving, among others, novel financial, academic, and forward-facing career support for the respective NU CBA students. The discussions with these primary stakeholders were focused on the proposed key changes to the NU CBA mentorship, specifically pertaining to the inclusion of a fledgling eaglet component to the program. In addition, the planned mentorship improvements for the soaring eagles were also vetted with these direct partners to the program enhancement efforts.

In parallel to the core-player mentorship meetings mentioned above, at the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester I began the cross-communication process to inform other related officers of Northbound University concerning the overall NU CBA mentorship program, specifically regarding the additional features designed for the fledgling eaglets. The list of NU leadership I have already met include the Dean of Academic Services and Academic Affairs, Director of Academic Success, Director of Financial Aid, and Vice President of Institutional Advancement. The extra communication with the NU figureheads is important to gain both their current advisement and advocacy access to NU's key leaders for the potential championing cause

for future mentorship iterations should the NU CBA mentorship program become a model for university-wide adoption.

After acquiring the collective contemplations and consequent consensus of the primary and peripheral stakeholders noted, the NU CBA dean approved the proposed changes. Summarily, he tasked the CBA Team to execute the planned enhancements to the NU CBA mentorship program under the supervision of the NU CBA associate dean. As the primary researcher and proponent of the new fledgling eaglet component, I had a special mandate to start and safeguard success of that portion of the program. I worked in close coordination with the NU CBA assistant dean to narrow down the pilot program candidates from the list of 74 to the final three recipients for the fledgling eaglet pilot program. I also collaborated with the CBA Team lead who is our NU CBA associate dean to ensure that we were following all NU protocols guiding the new fledgling eaglet pilot program. The CBA Team also met to finalize the implementation plans for the enhanced interventions for the soaring eagle component of the NU CBA mentorship program. All the new interventions are scheduled to commence for the latter half of the Fall 2022 semester. The following is an outline of the planned interventions.

Fledgling Eaglets

The brand-new intervention program for fledgling eaglets incorporate (a) financial scholarships comprised of a \$1,000 microgrant per student and requisite financial intelligence preparation; (b) academic coaching focused on academic tools and techniques to strengthen the students' scholastic performance; and (c) NU administrative support and initiatives with special attention devoted to providing "mattering" social activities for these students. As defined in Chapter One, mattering is a concept originated

by Flett et al. (2019) that prescribes the use of institution-sponsored activities to promote the belongingness of the student to the university community. Figure 1 below illustrates a sample syllabus for the fledgling eaglet pilot program that specifies detailed contents of the academic and financial coaching.

Figure 1

Sample Syllabus for Fledgling Eaglet Academic and Financial Intelligence Coaching

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Consultation</u>
Frank Orr (a pseudonym)	frank@argo.com	716-yyy-yyyy	By appointment
Virgil Alcazaren Jr.	junmo102858@gmail.com	716-zzz-zzzz	By appointment
COURSE INFORMATION:			
Course Overview:			
Welcome to the NU Fledgling Eaglet academic and financial coaching course! In this class, you will have the opportunity to enhance your basic study habits along three major topics: (a) note-taking; (b) time management; and (c) basic academic skillsets for reading, writing, arithmetic and overall scholarship. In addition, you learn financial techniques that will help overcome financial challenges in college life. We are your allies in this important improvement aspect of your academic and financial undertakings.			
Course Prerequisites: None			
Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs):			
Upon the successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain financial intelligence. • Use key techniques and skillsets for effective and efficient scholarship. 			
Required Course Materials (Videos & lectures as provided by instructors):			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Basic Study Skillsets (reading, writing, and arithmetic)</i> • <i>Time Management</i> • <i>Note-taking</i> • <i>Bonus Skillsets</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Test-taking tips</i> ○ <i>Reducing Test Anxiety</i> ○ <i>Preventing Procrastination</i> ○ <i>8 Habits of Successful Students</i> • <i>Financial Intelligence Skills</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>To be provided during class sessions</i> 			

Figure 1 (Continued)

Sample Syllabus for Fledgling Eaglet Academic and Financial Intelligence Coaching

<p>Course Requirements/Course Policies:</p> <p>Attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Each scholar must attend the live sessions. No attendance, no scholarship. <p>Assessment/Grading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Each scholar will be required to provide feedback at the end of each live session. <input type="checkbox"/> Everyone gets an “A” <p>Accessibility Statement:</p> <p>If you have any physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your coursework or participation in this class, please let the instructors know and they will forward the information to the appropriate NU Coordinator to determine with you the accommodations that are necessary, appropriate, and reasonable. All information and documentation is confidential.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR FALL 2022:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Fledgling Eaglet Scholarship Series</i></p>		
Monday Live Sessions/Date	Time	Activity
Month 1: Nov 18 th	Between 3:00pm – 5:00pm	Getting familiar with the scholarship series: materials, student setup, setting expectations, initial survey/data collection
Month 2: Dec 12 th Month 3: Jan 16 th Month 4: Feb 20 th Month 5: Mar 20 th Month 6: Apr 17 th Month 7: May 8 th	Between 3:00pm – 5:00pm	30 minutes per student: Financial Management Academic Improvement Mattering Social Activities interspersed over the period
Month 8: May 10 th	Between 3:00pm – 4:00pm	Exit survey, commencement activity

Note. This course outline and schedule is subject to change at instructors’ discretion.

The addition of a mentorship component for students who are the most at-need and underserved is aimed not only at increasing the breadth of the mentees involved in the program, but more importantly, at the retention of these students. According to Law et al. (2020), taking care of the most at-need students such as the NU CBA fledgling

eaglets should be beneficial to the NU CBA’s retention concerns. Figure 2 below summarizes the main steps in the overall fledgling eaglet mentorship program.

Figure 2

Infographic on Key Facets of the Fledgling Eaglet Mentorship Pilot Program



Note. The mattering activities are planned to be held throughout every step of the process.

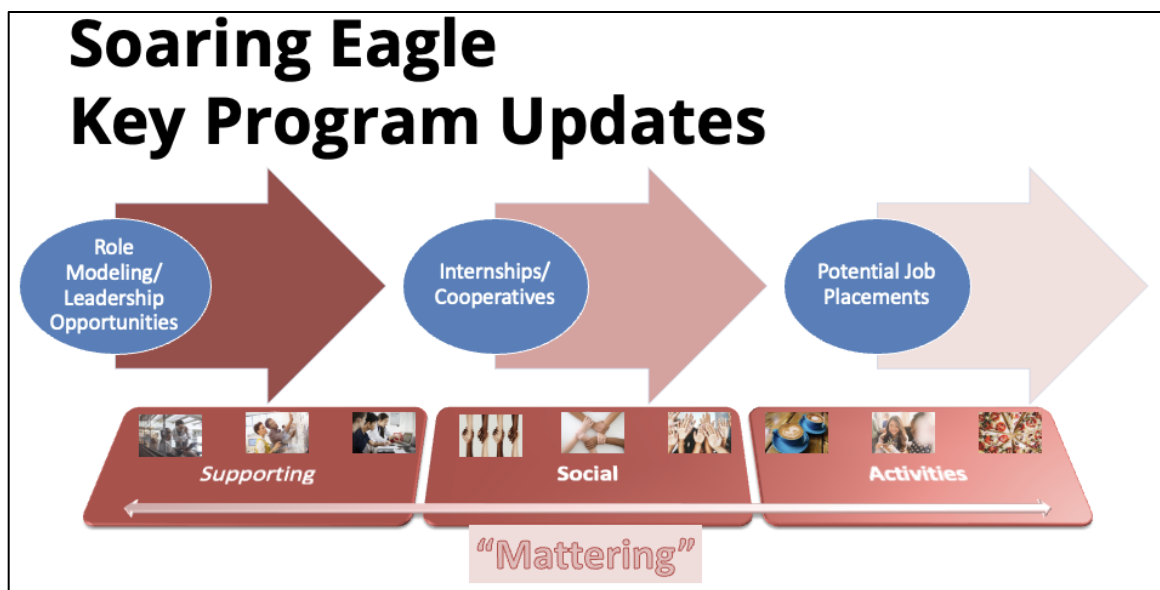
Soaring Eagles

In parallel to the new fledgling eaglet program, planned changes to mentoring the more mature students or soaring eagles are also arranged for implementation in the Fall 2022 semester. These include (a) emphasized mentor focus on providing career and professional placement opportunities by meeting with role models and mentor-sponsored cooperative curricula; (b) advancement of leadership skills encouraging and supporting organizational captaincies at NU; and (c) interactive “mattering” social activities with a focus on co-building their scholarship skills within student learning community (SLC) with other higher performing students and the professional learning community (PLC) of mentors and professors from the soaring eagle mentorship program (Rocconi, 2011). The

soaring eagles component will also feature enhanced introductory activities for both mentors and mentees. By virtue of their more advanced status at Northbound University, it is not surprising that among my most salient findings about soaring eagles is that fostering career and leadership opportunities are front and center in their minds. Therefore, the NU CBA mentorship program starting in the Fall 2022 semester highlight the following features and benefits in addition to its current platform as summarized in the infographic in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Infographic on Key Additional Features for Soaring Eagle Mentorship Program



Note. The mattering activities are planned to be held throughout every step of the process.

Process Summary

In summary, the proposed changes involve separate but synchronous intervention processes for the NU CBA fledgling eaglets and soaring eagles. The brand-new pilot program for the NU CBA fledgling eaglets is targeted to save these at-risk students and thereby directly help alleviate NU’s retention concerns. Meanwhile, the soaring eagle enhancements are designed to further strengthen their already proficient performances

while also solidifying their future career opportunities. The focus on building their career opportunities is a key dimension that aims to further strengthen the students' resolve to complete their degree at the College of Business Administration (CBA) at Northbound University (NU). Having gained the approval of the core collaborators and NU CBA's top leadership was critical and paved the way for the updated program implementation.

Analysis of Future Implementation

Anticipated Outcomes

It is with cautious optimism that I hope for the success of the updated NU CBA mentorship program. Given the strong support from the major program stakeholders noted and assuming that the plans are well executed, it is expected that program will have affirmative results. These positive outcomes are anticipated to address the previous mentorship program's main problems of practice: excluding lower-performing students and deficiencies in program features. To further rationalize the defined efforts to enhance the NU CBA program developed from this participatory action research, the additional literature discussed in this section incrementally underscores this conservative but positive outlook.

Fledgling Eaglets

In review, the NU CBA fledgling eaglets are students who have been identified by the CBA Team as at-risk of attrition from the university as a function of five main areas of concern (AOCs). These five factors include financial, academic, health, interpersonal, and NU administrative issues. Of these, the financial and academic problems of the fledgling eaglets were respectively the first and second most commonly encountered

issues based on the data analysis from this research study. Thus, the initial interventions included in the pilot program incorporate mitigants to these top two concerns.

Kim and Kim (2018) produced a research study that established and explained why and how financial problems continued to be incessant impediments to the retention of college students. The authors postulated that a root cause of student attrition is based on their finding that students who presumed that upfront costs of college education exceed the potential benefits visualized for themselves adversely affected their higher education pursuits. Furthermore, in a study conducted by Titus (2006), students who had to work extra to pay for their college expenses were observed to have had a negative correlation with their ability to persist at their college. To counter these issues, Arendt (2013) proposed that providing the disadvantaged student with financial aid can circumvent the negative effects of the funding constraints encountered by these students. This finding is further confirmed in the study conducted by Dynarski (2003) who suggested that students who receive financial aid are incented to complete their college education. As such, it was imperative for the CBA Team to incorporate a funding support component in the NU fledgling eaglet mentorship program to help these financially at-need students.

In regard to the academic advisement component of the fledgling eaglet mentorship program, it is an ever-more critical function that colleges and universities must undertake in order to retain their students, especially those who are at risk of attrition according to Zhang et al. (2019). Furthermore, LaCount et al. (2018) demonstrated that successful scholastic coaching should include interventions to develop key skillsets on: (a) building the students' organization capabilities; (b) enhancing their

time management skills; and (c) developing scholastic planning (hence, the acronym OTMP). The LaCount et al. (2018) quantitative study on at-risk students found that the participant group of students who were provided with OTMP interventions had a higher increase in the corresponding skills compared to the control group.

In addition, the integration of the novel feature of financial intelligence coaching into the NU fledgling eaglet program is supported by the Brau et al. (2019) research. The authors (2019) stated that financial education not only provides college students with economic acumen, but also ultimately makes them more effective scholars and productive contributors to society. In essence, the researchers' empirical analytics on college students determined that formal training on financial principles had a significant impact on the students' financial literacy which would ensure healthier future fiscal practices. In the end, they concluded that the key to financial coaching is the honing of the students' personal finance management skill sets. As such, the CBA Team intentionally incorporated these interventions to promote the important underlying academic and financial proficiencies into the NU fledgling eaglet mentorship program.

Soaring Eagles

Because the soaring eagle mentees are intensely interested at looking ahead for potential professional opportunities, it was important that the updated NU CBA soaring eagle component of the renewed mentorship program include interventions that support their future career aspirations. These interventions include internships, course cooperatives, and role modeling that provide the advanced student with experiential learning opportunities while allowing access to a professional work environment. This concept is supported by the research conducted by Callanan and Benzing (2004) who

proposed that interventions such as internships and cooperatives help students develop a realistic comprehension of the diverse array of career fields and organizational settings they could get involved in while also advancing their appreciation of the demands of their future field of work. Hamilton et al. (2019) added that mentees can particularly benefit from mentor-models who are in the occupation and industry that they are most interested in or have decided to follow for their future careers.

Furthermore, Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) explained that role models who form trusted relationships in mentorships could demonstrate to the mentees the proper professionalism and goal-oriented work ethics that they could emulate to foster career successes. In the seminal scholarly work done by Bandura (1977), among the most salient contributions by a role model include the transfer and sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences via the four-step processes of: (a) attention; (b) retention; (c) motor reproduction; and (d) motivation and reinforcement. Most importantly, the ability of a mentee to internalize the concepts being shared by the role model comes from the motivation that the role model's successes can also be eventually achieved by the mentee (Ahn et al., 2020).

Mattering

The updated NU CBA mentorship program will be supplemented with social activities and features that promote the social well-being of both the fledgling eaglet and soaring eagle mentees based on the Flett et al. (2019) mattering ideas. Almeida et al. (2021) supported the concept of mattering in that the act of enhancing the students' access to social capital goes a long way in increasing a college student's propensity for scholastic success. Moreover, according to Hamilton et al. (2019), mentorship features

that promote the students' social interests provide mentees with positive emotions that can help propel them to academic attainments and further on into professional achievements. In addition, in a quantitative study conducted by Freeman et al. (2007), a student's institutional belongingness or the sense of being accepted, respected, and valued in the educational environment was found to be positively correlated to academic performances. Furthermore, Hartmann et al. (2013) prescribed that engrossing the students in activities wherein they derive pleasure or enjoyment from the engagement would help them commit into pursuing goals that are being advocated for within those activities. Thus, the mattering activities planned for the fledgling eaglets and soaring eagles are expected to contribute into firming up the mentees' resolve to persist and succeed at the university and beyond.

Potential Roadblocks and Unintended Consequences

Stakeholder Disinvolvement

Although the NU CBA mentorship program updates have been planned carefully and thoughtfully in collaboration with all stakeholders involved, these people have regular jobs that already consume most of their busy and prioritized schedules. As such, even if they have explicitly expressed commitments to the NU CBA mentorship enhancement project, they may have more immediate responsibilities that could at times merit their undivided attention. For example, the CBA Team are all employees of Northbound University and are bound to perform their regular duties. The primary corporate partner, Argo Company, is working with many other institutions and with whom the company may be in various stages of sponsorship efforts. As such, the division of stakeholder concentration could be a potential hindrance to the proper execution of the

planned interventions. Moreover, Lahiri et al. (2019) warned that the various ranks and capabilities of the different stakeholders involved in a project can get in the way of cooperation. Key to mitigating these instances of disunified attention would be the open, consistent, and considerate communication amongst all stakeholders so that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, understood, and therefore performed. This mitigant is not entirely dissimilar to the adoption of agile projects in businesses wherein the organizational objectives and vision are kept in focus by leveraging accessible, coherent, and promoted philological understandings across all stakeholders, especially in the primary phases of the project (Conboy & Carroll, 2019). Moreover, Evans and Bahrami (2020) proposed that project team member agility or the ability to be flexible in solving for unforeseen and unexpected project challenges is critical to success in today's universally uncertain environment. Thus, the CBA Team must be both creative and compliant in working out the programming and performances of project deliverables as the needs arise.

Unintended Concerns

There are certainly some potentially negative consequences that could come out of the updated NU CBA mentorship program. A big concern is that the program success could generate an increased demand for servicing more students beyond the capacity and resources of the CBA Team and current stakeholder/partners. Although expanding the reach of the program to as many students is a desirable outcome, excess growth could overcome the current capabilities of the team over the near term. One way to moderate the potential for under-capacity is to anticipate and plan ahead for this growth while also allowing for stakeholders' operational flexibility. According to Armstrong and Taylor

(2020), the process of operationalizing flexibility is comprised of (a) functional flexibility wherein team members can be redeployed to back up other teammates by building the capability to multi-task; (b) structural flexibility where key team members have assigned back-ups when the needs arise; and (c) numerical flexibility wherein additional resources can be pre-arranged with NU leadership as required. Clearly, the NU CBA mentorship program stakeholders should adopt these operational flexibility steps to ensure that the NU leaders are constantly communicated with specifically if the need for numerical flexibility has to be invoked. Specific to the funding needs for future fledgling eaglets, I am working with Argo Company on sustaining and increasing the financial capital of the original program.

Analysis of Organizational Change and Leadership Practice

Leading an Emergent Course of Change

Hofstede (2001) stated that advocating for a bottom-up solution is a tough task in a hierarchical top-down social structure and high-power distance culture such as that found at Northbound University. In fact, Khatri (2009) stressed that the vertical downward communications flow in such organizations can impede the all too important bottom-to-top level information interchanges. Moreover, even as I had planned for many of the change processes in this participatory action research, I have come to realize that effecting an organizational movement from the ground-up will be co-created with the various stakeholders I have been engaging with as presaged by Northouse (2022). As such, the organizational change process I am co-leading for NU is more emergent rather than completely prescriptive. Be that it may, I was able to garner the support of NU's topmost leaders and the generous contributions from external benefactors by applying the

following combination of techniques, tools, and learnings throughout my many leadership courses undertaken to-date from my Doctor of Education (EdD) program at the University of Dayton (UD).

“Accordance of Needs”

Upon embarking on a mission to find dissertation topics for my UD EdD program, I approached the NU CBA dean using a technique that I shall label as an “accordance of needs” perspective. In essence, this interaction method required me to first ask the dean for his most pressing penuries in terms of research work for the college specifically and the university generally. Upon hearing the dean explain NU’s retention rate concerns as one of the top three plan priorities of NU, I then offered to use my dissertation as a platform from which we could generate potential solutions. I recommended to research how mentorship could help with NU’s retention problem. After I had reported to the dean an initial literature review on the mentorship solution, we had an alignment of needs and agreed to proceed. The concept of “accordance of needs” is supported by Voller et al. (2020) who stated that it is critical to be compliant with the leaders' views in regard to the communication and thereby fulfillment of the high-power distance organization’s mission and vision statements.

Building Trust

The next step I undertook was to gain the NU CBA dean’s trust. In relation to the retention improvement needs at the university, the dean intoned the need for information and understanding on why students would leave NU. This required data collection and more importantly multifaceted analytics. As such, I volunteered without hesitation to do the data ground-work pro-bono. I rationalized that this activity was a win-win situation in

that I would be helping the dean and the institution while also providing initial information that I could later expand on for my dissertation. As explained by Li et al. (2019), the act of initiating and building trust fosters a reciprocal relationship reliance such as that formed between the NU CBA dean and myself. In addition, the solidification of trusting relationships is a two-way street wherein it is strengthened when organizational leaders allow their lower-level employees to share their ideas (Uzun, 2020). Such was my good fortune and experiences in dealing with the NU CBA dean, associate dean, and other NU senior leaders.

Clear and Consistent Communications

To effect changes originating from a bottom-dwelling street-level bureaucrat or SLB like me, another key tactic that had proven to be reliable was the use of being in constant, clear, and consistent communications with organizational leaders as indicated by Lipsky (2010). As mentioned, I have been engaging in informative interactions with not just the internal NU stakeholders, but also with key external stakeholders such as the corporate sponsor Argo Company. According to Luo et al. (2020), egalitarian engagements and deliberations must be done before making decisions in order for innovative ideas to emerge and be implemented within an organization. Furthermore, the exchange of fertile ideas is critical to the reduction the effect of organizational high-power distance for its negative effect on innovative idea generation (Luo et al., 2020).

Additional Leadership Reflections

As an adjunct professor and SLB at Northbound, I submit that the NU CBA students who will be mentored need a quality servant leader who will not only guide them but also co-create the needed NU CBA mentorship program changes based on the

leader-follower interactions and “reversing the lens” followership theories from Northouse (2022). One example of the co-created change theory’s application was the addition of the soaring eagles’ contribution regarding their desire for tangible career-leading opportunities. Based on my study findings, the soaring eagles were not content with a program wherein mentors just talked about how their careers moved forward; the mentees were clamoring for practical professional prospects such as internships and cooperatives that could lead to actual jobs and careers. As such, I have incorporated this vital contribution from the soaring eagles of realistic employment opportunities into the NU CBA mentorship program.

Moreover, the NU CBA mentorship program updates are supported from the Birkeland et al. (2019) research regarding the preferred and requisite features for a formal mentorship program. The authors studied mentee preferences on (a) what classes to get into; (b) which professors to take; (c) what major to choose; (d) what minor to choose; (e) student organizations to join; (f) work options; and (g) graduate school options. The authors’ most salient findings can be summed up by following leadership behaviors that solidify the mentee-mentor relationships to enhance achievement of the mentorship objectives for: (a) trust building; (b) vision for mentees; (c) believing in the mentees; (d) conducting mentorship with integrity; (e) mentee advocacy; (f) role modeling; and (g) generosity of time. All these rapport builders have been acknowledged and built into the NU CBA mentorship program.

Another key to successful leadership of the organizational change efforts is to incorporate the concept of student integration modeling (SIM). Based on the seminal work of Talbert (2012), SIM is a comprehensive process engaging students at the

university to reduce attrition by developing solid relationships between students and faculty, immersive school activities, academic support, and appropriate learning environments. SIM is a practical perspective that includes three main methodological lines of strategy formulations to effect student success: (a) design programs that increase rates for the enrollment, retention, and graduation (ERG) of all students; (b) develop ERG improvement of underserved students; and (c) identify and obtain resources needed to increase ERG rates. Examples of the NU CBA mentorship program changes that follow these steps include: (a) based on my research findings, incorporating the much-desired internships and cooperatives for soaring eagles; (b) inclusion of the underserved fledgling eaglets into the NU CBA program; and (c) based on this study's research and analysis on at-risk students, partnering with Argo Company to sponsor the funding needs of the fledgling eaglets.

Finally, to effectively enact all the planned changes I am inclined to also leverage the concept from Norris et al. (2017) who identified the requisite characteristics that allow servant leaders to connect and guide college students towards academic and professional success. These researchers proposed eight main characteristics that a successful servant leader must possess: (a) accountability; (b) authenticity; (c) courage; (d) empowering; (e) forgiving; (f) humility; (g) standing back; and (h) stewardship. As a leader and primary researcher, I must fully develop and internalize these traits. This act could also inspire the rest of the program mentors to follow my example and incorporate these qualities as we implement and administer the planned program changes in order to more easily gain acceptance from the student-mentees.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

Prescriptive Implications

Recursive and Reflective Enhancement

A key implication to consider for Northbound University (NU) leadership and staff is how to continue conducting a recursive and reflective deep dive into sustaining the enhancement efforts towards the NU CBA mentorship programs for both the fledgling eaglet and soaring eagle populations. Although the NU CBA associate dean will continue to lead the overall mentorship team efforts at the college, there will be a potential vacuum, especially for an advocate and implementor for the fledgling eaglet component. This is because once I graduate from the University of Dayton (UD) with my Doctor of Education (EdD) degree, I am not certain where I will next be employed full-time. As such, I may have to pass the advocacy to a new leader who will continue to passionately espouse the students' cause, especially for the fledgling eaglets. Personal passion is important according to Barnes et al. (2018) because individual motivation is key to believing and thereby leading a cause. The authors also proposed that a leader must practice critical self-reflection on personal strengths and weaknesses to respectively leverage and mitigate when leading organizational change. I have undertaken reflexivity throughout this study and it is a required activity that my successor must assume.

Considering what encompasses the advocacy baton-passing, I would suggest that championing for the NU CBA mentorship involves moderating the multi-level challenges of supporting both the underserved and high-performing students. This will involve the dual tasks of: (a) continued funding support with further scholastic skills development for fledgling eaglets; and (b) realistic career opportunity offerings for the soaring eagles.

According to a longitudinal study by Azmitia et al. (2018), at-need students need to build their personal assets, including financial resources, as well as enhance their academic skill sets via teaching relationships so that they are able to persist at their collegiate institutions. Furthermore, Hargreaves (2007) asserted that the education of college students must be redesigned to incorporate proper provisions for realistic employment opportunities for these students so that they can contribute to the building of a more productive and satisfactory society for everyone.

Expansion to Other NU Colleges

In my Fall 2022 meeting with the NU Dean for Academic Services and Academic Affairs, our conversation turned into the possibility of expanding the mentorship model to other NU colleges based on the work we had already done and potential realizations from the NU CBA program. I was initially unsure of her position on this concept. In the course of our discussions however, it dawned on me that her line of questioning actually led to her support of the mentorship program extension. As I began to understand her viewpoints, the main rationale for her alignment with my promotion of mentorship program expansion was centered on her leadership role of championing the academic enhancement of all NU students in the best possible of ways. This is akin to the stakeholder model described by Hatch (2018) who proposed that organizational change is facilitated by the exchange of resources as represented by the sharing of learned expertise from different stakeholders across the organization. Furthermore, the integration of a mentorship program for all NU colleges is supported by Stouten et al. (2019) who advised that a key step to successful organizational change is to involve all levels and areas of the organization. According to the seminal and authoritative management

masterworks from Barnard (1968), cooperation to achieve common goals amongst organizational members helps ensure the sustainability of not only its projects, but the entire organization itself. Thus, we parted from the meeting with a co-created communion of ideas with visions of program expansion.

Implications for Practice

Fledgling Eaglet Pilot Program Sustainability

The NU CBA mentorship program, especially for the underserved students has been built with committed care from my passion to help the underserved NU CBA fledgling eaglets. The effort most certainly consumed a significant amount of time and energy in advocating and then commencing to implement the program. The heavy-lifting process was derived from the dyadic dynamic of espousing for the fledgling eaglets while also fulfilling my dissertation requirements for my UD EdD program. Among the most salient implications to be able to continue the advocacy cause of the fledgling eaglets is this continued devotion to these students. It can undoubtedly be done by anyone who is willing to take on the commitment and be creative about it.

Furthermore, I have already prepared a blueprint for this person that could address the needs of fledgling eaglets. The plan is based on creating strong partnerships with available stakeholders. An example of this is the collaboration I have forged with Argo Company in providing for a unique funding mechanism for the short-term monetary needs of the fledgling eaglets. Therefore, a fundamental and practical suggestion for NU leadership is to create additional corporate partnerships in order to sustain funding for the pilot fledgling eaglet program, particularly for funding future financial demands. As Sergi et al. (2019) advocated, public-private partnerships between corporations and

institutions of higher education offer sustainable development of the agendas and projects for both parties. Moreover, the success of such relationships requires the advancement of the goals of each organization (Perkmann & Salter, 2012). In the case of the partnership formed with Argo Company, they proceeded to work with the NU CBA on the fledgling eaglet funding component knowing that their combined efforts with NU would help attain Argo's mission statement of providing microgrants to at-need college students while also satisfying the NU CBA mentorship need to financially support its fledgling eaglets.

Soaring Eagle Career Opportunities

The most important component of the NU CBA mentorship in the minds of soaring eagles is to gain practical career-leading opportunities from the mentorship. According to Rothman (2007), students with higher GPAs (e.g., the NU CBA's soaring eagles) are most interested in career-oriented possibilities such as internships and cooperatives. As such, a practical implication for NU leaders to consider is that these job prospects could be originated from the mentors and corporate partners involved in the mentorship program. An example of the practicum that should be formally and fully incorporated into the program is the internship and cooperative feature that I proposed for the new semester. There are many benefits to incorporating such features in the NU CBA mentorship program. Tovey (2001), posited that the mentee-intern will not only learn on-the-job knowledge and skill sets, they would also acquire critical corporate cues and cultures that may be very difficult to pick up at the usual college classroom environment. Tovey (2001) added that allowing soaring eagles to intern with a company could provide potential new employees to that company. In turn, the company expands its professional contacts and possible research resources with the university's leadership and staff,

resulting in a plausible win-win scenario for the company and the university as well.

Implications for Research

Best Mentorship Practices

This study has some important implications for future researchers on the topic of mentorship and retention rates for institutions of higher education. For fledgling eaglets, it would be quite interesting to determine the mechanisms on how supporting the funding needs of the at-need students could extricate them from the bondage of having to worry and work to earn enough just to pay for their education. What would be particularly interesting and useful to find out is if the financial unburdening of the student directly helps by providing them the extra time and energy to study. Furthermore, it would be very valuable to uncover if and how those extra resources could be leveraged by the emancipated student. As such, future studies could concentrate on how mentors and the mentorship program features might be able to redeploy the students' newfound resources towards productive capacities for the students' education and career. In addition, it would be worthy to determine the right dosage, frequency, and interval of funding intervention and coaching to provide to each fledgling eaglet. According to Yeo et al. (2020), many university students are not financially literate and could significantly benefit from further development of their understanding and practice of money management.

For soaring eagles, it would be worthwhile for future researchers to investigate how to materialize many more diverse and concrete career opportunities for the student-mentees. One specific aspect that continues to intrigue me beyond this research study is how to provide a more customized cooperative or internship program for the high-performing mentees. According to Hora et al. (2020), it may not be enough to provide the

mentee with a cookie-cutter internship agenda. In fact, the authors indicated that each mentee's career aspirations could vary by industry, expertise, degree attainments, capabilities, or by some other variables that would require accommodations for individualized student needs to maximize the internship experience for the student. As such, a more detailed study on the different cooperative and internship permutations could be undertaken to address the unique needs of the individual soaring eagle. In fact, I would go further by suggesting to examine whether the current bifurcation by academic performance is enough to demarcate the groups of mentees to be serviced in a mentorship program. It may be valuable to learn the different subsets of student learning communities that can be formed and whose diverse needs must be creatively attended to in a mentorship program.

NU CBA Mentorship Model Application

There are many learnings that can still be uncovered regarding how NU CBA mentorship model can be adapted for use at other colleges at NU and even for highly similar universities as well. For example, the fledgling eaglet component might be adaptable because it has a general focus on providing for students' financial needs and facilitating mastery of study techniques. In addition, the NU CBA soaring eagles' desire for career development can conceivably be universally coveted by students at other NU colleges. Thus, a potential research implication is to ascertain if these same requirements are present for Non-CBA students. Once the students' needs from the different NU colleges are determined, it is incumbent for future researchers to study how to apply learnings from the NU CBA mentorship program and use at these other NU colleges.

Conclusion

Summary of Study

Properly Designed and Executed Mentorship Program

In conclusion, the participatory action research (PAR) I conducted for the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA) yielded many practicable insights about leveraging a mentorship program to help sustain and thereby retain its students. One of the most important learnings from this study is that higher education students need supplemental support from the university in conjunction with its basic course and curricular offerings. Moreover, the additional aspect of making the student feel they matter at the institution by hearing and implementing their suggestions while making mentorship a meaningful and fun experience further strengthens the value of the program for student-mentees.

A big advantage of undertaking a PAR is its reflective and recursive process for creating continual improvements (Pine, 2009). Given this research characteristic, I have been afforded the ability to make constructive adjustments throughout the overall three-year timeframe allotted for the overall NU CBA mentorship program enhancement project. Moreover, the effort on this PAR also affirmed the value of working with the various student and professional learning communities within my spheres of influence. Certainly, I learned how to navigate and coordinate the various resources needed to reinvent and reimplement the renewed program. Yet, I would be remiss if I did not stress the importance of sustaining the progress that has already been made. More needs to be done, specifically with respect to bolstering the resource sustainability of the project.

There are additional funding and human sourcing needs that will be the most critical and continual challenges that must be overcome.

Resolving My Problem of Practice (POP)

The renewed NU CBA mentorship involved expanding the breadth, depth, and overall inclusiveness of the program to ultimately deliver on addressing NU's retention rate concerns. Attending to the developmental demands of all students is key. In fact, the innovative component that I advocated and applied for the lower-performing fledgling eaglets delivers on this very important need. My outlook is positive because if we, at NU CBA, are able to keep the three fledgling eaglets that were sponsored for the Fall 2022 semester, we would decrease the CBA attrition by exactly these three at-risk students. Furthermore, we would have immensely incited the soaring eagle mentees to complete their college education at NU even though they are less likely to leave on their own. By solidifying their career-leading possibilities, soaring eagles would entrust their education to NU even more than if they would not have participated in our mentorship program.

It would be conceivable that this process of helping the NU CBA student learning community realize their collegiate dreams can be replicated across different NU colleges. The additional students saved at various colleges could multiply via well-designed and astutely implemented localized mentorships. Thus, solving the problem of practice in my dissertation regarding the need to renew the NU CBA mentorship program should directly improve NU CBA's retention rate. With some work on mirroring the NU CBA mentoring successes and adapting a proper program for other NU colleges, NU's overall retention rate and regional preeminence should be enhanced as well.

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APPENDIX A

Figures for Chapter One

Figure 1

Sample Invitation to Participate in Research (Mentee)

Research Project Title: An Action Research to Enhance the Northbound University College of Business Administration Mentorship Program.

You have been asked to participate in a research project conducted by Virgil Alcazaren Jr. from the University of Dayton, in the Department of Education and Health Sciences.

The purpose of the project is: The project aims to research, redesign, and reimplement improvements that can be made to the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA) mentorship program for the benefit of maximized student development at the university and beyond.

You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and to stop participating at any time for any reason. Answering the questions will take about 20-30 minutes.
- You will not be compensated for your participation.
- All of the information you tell us will be confidential.
- If this is a recorded interview, only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to the recording and it will be kept in a secure place.
- If this is a written or online survey, only the researcher and faculty advisor will have access to your responses. If you are participating in an online survey: We will not collect identifying information, but we cannot guarantee the security of the computer you use or the security of data transfer between that computer and our data collection point. We urge you to consider this carefully when responding to these questions.
- I understand that I am ONLY eligible to participate if I am over the age of 18.

Please contact the following investigators with any questions or concerns:

Name of Student: Virgil Alcazaren Jr., University of Dayton E-mail Address: alcazarev1@udayton.edu, Phone Number: 716-523-1028

Name of Faculty Supervisor: Dr. James L. Olive, University of Dayton E-mail Address: jolive1@udayton.edu, Phone Number: 937-229-3177

If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please email IRB@udayton.edu or call (937) 229-3515.

Figure 1 - Continued

Sample Invitation to Participate in Research (Mentor)

Thank you again for your role as a mentor for the Northbound University (NU) College of Business Administration (CBA) mentorship program. As such, you are cordially invited to take part in a research study that explores enhancements to the NU CBA mentorship program. The study's primary researcher is Virgil Alcazaren Jr., a doctoral student at the University of Dayton in coordination with his dissertation in practice (DiP) chair, Dr. James L. Olive, Ph.D.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be involved in post-mentorship surveys, as well as observations and journal notes related to the NU mentorship program. There may be additional information requested in other formats. Information you provide may be audio and video recorded. No names or identifying information will be included in any publications or presentations based on the data collected which are made anonymous and stored in a password-protected digital location in the researcher's personal computer. Your responses will remain confidential and we do not anticipate any significant risk to participants.

Your responses, however, will play a significant role in identifying improvements to the NU mentorship program. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you can end your involvement at any time. Should you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact either Virgil Alcazaren Jr. (alcazarenv1@udayton.edu or 716-523-1028) or Dr. James Olive (jolive1@udayton.edu or 937-229-3177).

Please note that acceptance of participation for this study indicates your informed consent to participate in this study. Thank you in advance for your time and involvement in this important research!

Sincerely,

Virgil Alcazaren Jr.

Figure 2

Post-Mentorship Mentor Survey

Item#	Item	Answers
1	Mentor ID#	<input type="text"/>
2	Please summarize your experience with the NU Mentoring Program.	<input type="text"/>
3	Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	<input type="text"/>
4	Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Any aspects that could be improved?	<input type="text"/>
5	Would you recommend participating in the NU Mentorship Program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	<input type="text"/>
6	Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	<input type="text"/>
7	If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:	<input type="text"/>
8	Did you follow a mentee-mentor interaction plan?	<input type="text"/>

Figure 3

Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview

Item#	Item	Answers
1	Student ID#	
2	Please summarize your experience with the NU Mentoring Program.	
3	Do you think this program has been effective in helping you learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	
4	Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was most useful in helping you reach your goals? Were there aspects that could be improved?	
5	Would you recommend participating in the NU Mentorship Program to fellow students? Why or why not?	
6	Would you partner with a mentor again? Why or why not?	
7	Did you and your mentor follow an interaction plan?	
8	How did you come to know about the NU mentorship program (Via: NU Mentorship ad, a schoolmate, a professor, others)	
9	What other forms of marketing the NU mentorship program would you recommend?	
10	If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:	

Figure 4

Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

1. General Mentorship		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)				
Item#	Item					
1	Student ID					
2	Overall, did you find the mentorship helpful?	Yes	No			
3	Did you and your mentor follow an interaction plan?	Yes	No			
4	I am satisfied with the overall mentorship program.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
5	The mentorship met my expectations.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
6	The mentorship meetings were sufficient	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
2. Mentor Interaction		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)				
Item#	Item					
7	My mentor actively listened to me.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
8	My mentor provided constructive feedback.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
9	My mentor was able to create a trusting relationship with me.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
10	My mentor was not boring.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
11	My mentor was a good role model.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree

Figure 4 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

3. Mentoring Topics		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)				
Item#	Item	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
12	The mentorship covered my academic needs.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
13	The mentorship helped build my study skills.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
14	The mentorship helped with my approach to studying.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
15	The mentorship helped with my communication skills.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
16	I am more motivated to earn my college degree after mentorship.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
17	The mentorship opened doors for me to join NU clubs.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
18	The mentorship provided me with career opportunities.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
19	The mentorship provided me with someone I can confide in.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
20	I feel I can relate with more diverse people after being mentored.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
21	I am more financially literate than before mentorship.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
22	I was provided with paths to financial assistance.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
23	The mentorship program helped with my NU administration issues.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
24	The mentorship program provided me with a go-to person for whatever issues I faced.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
25	The mentorship program helped with my health concerns.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
26	Overall, after mentorship, I feel more capable of completing my college degree.	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree

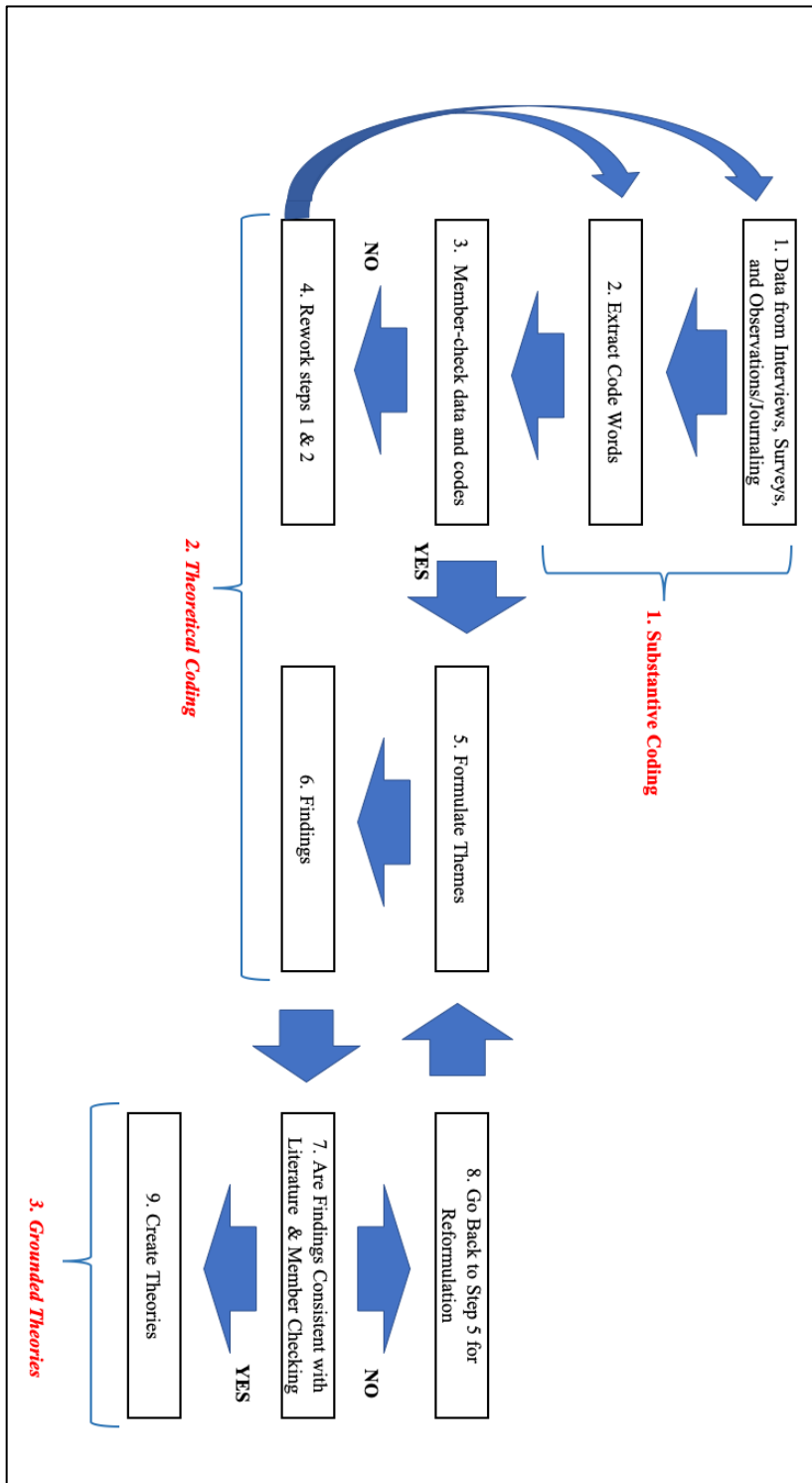
Figure 4 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentee Survey

4. General Mentoring Marketing		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)				
Item#	Item	Highly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Highly Agree
27	The mentorship ads were effective in drawing me into joining the program.					
28	I liked the mentorship ads.					
29	I would like to see more ads					
30	I like other marketing for NU mentorship (list types such as radio, give-aways, etc.)					
5. Other Comments						
Item#	Item	Answers				
31	Please provide any mentorship features (not listed above) you would be interested in.					
32	Please provide any other suggestions on the mentorship features that may you have.					
33	Please provide any other general comments about mentorship.					
34	Please provide any other general comments about Northbound University.					
35	If you have further questions or need more information about the NU mentorship program, please feel free to directly contact Prof. Virgil Alcazarren at alcazarrenv1@udayton.edu .					

Figure 5

Simplified Analytics Diagram Using Classical Grounded Theory (CGT)



Note. Items in red are numbered steps of the basic classical grounded theory model for analyzing qualitative data (Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

APPENDIX B

Tables and Figures for Chapter Two

Table 1

Frequency Table – Gender (Fledgling Eaglets)

Gender	N	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Female	19	26	26
Male	55	74	100
Total	74	100	

Table 2

Frequency Table – Year (Fledgling Eaglets)

Year	Year Indicator	N	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Unclassified	0	1	1	1
Freshman	1	30	41	42
Sophomore	2	10	14	55
Junior	3	22	30	85
Senior	4	11	15	100
Total		74	100	

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics Frequency Table – Year (Fledgling Eaglets)

Statistic	Value
N	74
Mean	2.162
Std. Error of Mean	0.135
Median	2.000
Mode	1.000
Std. Deviation	1.159
Variance	1.343
Skewness	0.217
Std. Error of Skewness	0.279

Table 3 - Continued*Descriptive Statistics Frequency Table – Year (Fledgling Eaglets)*

Statistic	Value
Kurtosis	-1.372
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.552
Range	4
Minimum	0
Maximum	4

Table 4*Frequency Table - Areas of Concern (AOC) Instances (Fledgling Eaglets)*

AOC	AOC Label	N	Percent of Total Instances (%)	Cumulative Percent of Total Instances (%)	Average Number of Students Affected
Financial Problems	AOC2	34	32	32	0.5
Academic Issues	AOC1	27	25	58	0.4
NU Administrative Problems	AOC5	23	22	79	0.3
Health Problems	AOC3	20	19	98	0.3
Interpersonal Problems	AOC4	2	2	100	0.0
Total		106	100		1.4

Table 5*Number of Fledgling Eaglets Who Encountered Each Area of Concern (AOC)*

Statistic	AOC2	AOC1	AOC5	AOC3	AOC4
Encountered – N1	34	27	23	20	2
Percent of Total Students	46	36	31	27	3
Did Not Encounter – N2	40	47	51	54	72
Percent of Total Students	54	64	69	73	97
Total – (N1 + N2)	74	74	74	74	74
Total – Percentages	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6*Frequency Table - Number of AOCs Per Fledgling Eaglet*

Number of AOCs Per Student	N	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
1	49	66	66
2	18	24	90
3	7	10	100
Total	74	100	

Table 7*Frequency Table – Gender (Soaring Eagles)*

Gender	N	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Female	16	55	55
Male	13	45	100
Total	29	100	

Note. Out of 31 mentees, two were excluded as they did not have Spring 2022 GPAs.

Table 8*Frequency Table – Year (Soaring Eagles)*

Year	Year Indicator	N	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)	Number of Students in Dean's List	Percent of Students in Year (%)
Freshman	1	11	38	38	7	64
Sophomore	2	7	24	62	4	57
Junior	3	9	31	93	8	89
Senior	4	2	7	100	2	100
Total		29	100		21	72

Note. The two rightmost columns refer to students in the dean's list for the year.

Table 9*Descriptive Statistics - GPA Performances of Soaring Eagles (Upperclassmen)*

Statistic	Weighted Average GPA Period 1	Weighted Average GPA Period 2
N	17	17
Weighted Average	3.55	3.56
Median	3.74	3.74
Std. Deviation	0.5951	0.5568
Range	1.87	1.93
Minimum	2.13	2.07
Maximum	4.00	4.00

Note. The weighted average is used instead of the mean to account for completion-hours. Period 1 = Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 and Period 2 = Fall 2021 to Spring 2022.

Table 10*Descriptive Statistics - GPA Performances of Soaring Eagles (Freshmen)*

Statistic	Weighted Average GPA Period 1	Weighted Average GPA Period 2
N	11	11
Weighted Average	3.28	3.48
Median	3.50	3.61
Std. Deviation	0.7689	0.5693
Range	2.22	1.53
Minimum	1.78	2.42
Maximum	4.00	3.95

Note. The weighted average is used instead of the mean to account for completion-hours. Period 1 = Fall 2021 and Period 2 = Spring 2022.

Table 11

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentors 1 and 2)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
1	<p>This mentoring experience has been tremendous. It's nice to feel you're helping make a difference and (my mentee) needed the guidance and coaching as he completes his college career and takes the next step in his journey.</p>	<p>Yes, I do believe (my mentee) walks away not only with a better resume, a 1-pager and Interview skills but also with confidence to enter into the workplace.</p>	<p>My mentee needed a lot of guidance with resume prep, understanding of different companies, types of roles to apply to and interviewing skills. I would think some type of course at NU to prepare students with mock interviews would be beneficial if not already happening.</p>	<p>Yes, we can help build future leaders.</p>	<p>Yes, enjoyable experience</p>	
2	<p>Engaged mentee that appeared to appreciate the external perspective that I could provide regarding her marketing interest. Primary focus on helping with internship and networking opportunity.</p>	<p>I think the marketing perspective and experience has helped her understand what's out there and how to position herself for</p>	<p>We were limited to a monthly phone call. I think it was fine. It ended up leading to an internship interview opportunity with my firm.</p>	<p>Yes. It remains a really good experience for (Northbound) U students to expand their horizons and networks.</p>	<p>Yes. I enjoy trying to make a difference with self-starters that are willing to take the step.</p>	N/A

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 11 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentors 3 and 4)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
3	There were no clearly defined goals , so we have no way of measuring performance. She listened, learned and asked good questions. My focus was having other people with varying experiences share their career path, best practices and knowledge - young, old, black, white, entry level and executive level. If she represents students, it's clear students are receiving minimal guidance for careers attached to degrees or not listening.	Any interaction a student has with a professional should have impact on development. Yes - opened her eyes to thinking bigger and evaluating multiple careers.	Prepping the mentee to identify goals at the first meeting. Career coaching, interviewing and professional etiquette. There was no sharing of best practices and engagement with other mentors.	Yes, all should have the opportunity to understand the reality of the expectations of business owners. I would recommend it as it does have an impact but in a more structured, communicative and engaging process.	Yes	N/A There was no communication with mentors since the initial engagement. It would have been nice to understand what services (NU) provides to students in relation to career coaching, interviewing support and job placement. The mentors should be brought together on Zoom at least twice during the process to learn about (Northbound's) support, share experiences and best practices.
4						

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 11 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentor 5)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
5	It's been great getting to know (my mentee). She always presents well prepared for our meetings and is thoughtful around the use of our time together. I hope the information we've discussed will help her with next steps in her career planning.	Yes, (my mentee) has come prepared to discuss specific questions related to interviewing, networking and communication.	The guide from NU was helpful in providing a starting place for conversations. (My mentee's) engagement in the process made the activity worthwhile.	Yes, it's a meaningful way to connect with students and not overly cumbersome.	Of course!	Thank you for inviting me to participate in this activity with your student.

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 11 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentor 6)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
6	<p>It was a great experience! (My mentee) is a very curious student who was eager to learn and grow. Because of this she's an excellent mentee.</p>	<p>I believe this program did influence growth and learning for the mentees. There is opportunity to enhance the program to offer continuous "ice breaker" conversation starters to keep the progress going and ensure we cover off on all mentor/mentee learning topics. The initial list of questions and topics was very helpful but I wonder if there is even more that can be offered early on and allow the mentees to prioritize which topics they have the most interest in developing.</p>	<p>She was very forthcoming to share situational challenges she was facing in her internship and in certain class projects. She sought my advice in these areas because she felt stumped on how to address the challenge. This offered some outside experience, a different view of situation. Also, one of her goals was to seek help and explore the process on finding a job. It's no secret there are students who are near graduation who have no idea what they want or will end up in; or figuring all that out. Hope I gave helpful insights.</p>	<p>Yes - I find mentoring very rewarding and still consider it a learning opportunity for myself. I think strong leaders should continuously put themselves in positions to make others better and continuously improve and evolve their coaching skills.</p>	<p>Yes - I enjoy it and find value in sharing lessons and experiences I've learned for the betterment of someone else, especially someone who is eager and seeking such insight.</p>	N/A

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 11 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentors 7 and 8)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
7	I was only a small part of the experience with one zoom call with (my mentee). I gave her some advice on a possible career pivot and she seemed very open, receptive, and intelligent.	I truly hope so. Since my contribution to the process was small I can't say for sure, but I believe the advice I gave her is valuable and would help her on the path she expressed interest in should she decide to pursue it.	NA	NA	Yes - but my expertise is very specific so it would only be beneficial if someone wanted a similar career path.	N/A
8	It has been a great experience so far. Two years in a row I've been able to connect with two female business students and share my expertise.	I hope that it has been. Both (my mentee) and I have been incredibly busy during Q1 and Q2 of 2022, but I hope that our chats in Q3 and Q4 of 2021 were helpful and made an impression. My plan is that we can resume shortly and	I think sharing my own experiences and giving my perspective as an employer were helpful to her in what to focus on and improve to meet her specific goals.	100%! It's a great way to give back and share what you wish someone had told you when you were in college or the early stages of your career.	Yes - for the same reason as above!	Nope!

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 11 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentor 9)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
9	I was asked to assist with an overview of auto industry because he expressed some interest in auto. We talked many times and connected at a dealership to provide overview, department walkthrough, intro to owner and managers, etc. I believe after hours we covered a (many) areas of dealership operations that were enlightening and beneficial for him to get perspective on if and how to move forward. I asked him to digest visit, experience	Honestly, it's too early to say. I have been speaking with (my mentee) for months, but did not get chance to meet in person until this week. Spent time with mentee on first visit, so please allow us more time to discuss more.	(My mentee) had a chance to meet owner, ask direct questions, and get honest feel for operational opportunities, with no commitment. As for improvement ? Simply more time with student can be helpful, or may be best to have student shadow within multiple departments after general overview.	Absolutely. Our industry is in constant need of qualified and interested employees, so the need to enlighten and educate only helps the chances of reinforcing what a dynamic business we have and the potential students came realize if they commit to it.	Be happy to assist if a student has desire to seek career in our field.	

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 11 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentor Qualitative Survey Results (Mentor 10)

Mentor #	Q1: Please summarize your experience with the Mentoring NU program.	Q2: Do you think this program has been effective in helping your mentee learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?	Q3: Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was the most useful in helping your mentee reach their goals? Were there any aspects that could use improvement?	Q4: Would you recommend participating in the Mentoring NU program to your colleagues? Why or why not?	Q5: Would you mentor again? Why or why not?	Q6: If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:
10	Both my mentees were high-potential students whom I had the pleasure to mentor.	Yes, introduced both (mentees) to different role model execs from various companies and industries which expanded their professional contacts and outlooks.	I believe the professional introductions were most helpful because both my mentees gained not only actual contacts but also career perspectives and potential job opportunities.	Yes, because it helps develop me as a mentor and manager.	Yes, the mentorship has been a very positive experience for my mentees and me.	Continue with role modeling. Introduce mentorship to at-need students.

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 12

Excerpts from Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview Results (Positive Affections)

Code Words and Phrases						
Line# Quotes - LB	Line# Quotes - TM	Line# Quotes - SH	Line# Quotes - AJ	Line# Quotes - ES	Emergent Themes	Major Themes
Line 29: Very positive impression. Line 311: So that's wonderful. And after our last call, I texted my parents, I was like, my mentor is the best because I'm so thankful for the good things (given) to me. And that you saw it from the start, and you've only provided me with great opportunities. Like I can't thank you enough.	Line 26: Along with the networking, mentorship's a cool experience. I learned from it and continuing to learn from it. Line 88: Um, yes, I did like you as a mentor very much. We have good conversations about what you do professionally, and what parts of that can apply to what I would like to do in the future.	Line 96: Along with the networking, it's a cool experience. I learned from it and continuing to learn from it. Line 126: (Yes, I liked mentorship). I would say so.	Line 17: And, and I definitely appreciate (mentorship) to be able to have that sort of opportunity with my (mentor).	Line 23: But I was gonna say I appreciate the program (which) is definitely a great help.	Mentees are generally satisfied with the overall program.	Soaring eagle mentees have strong positive views about mentorship.

Note. Red-font items are code words and phrases used to develop emergent themes.

Table 12 - Continued

Excerpts from Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview Results (Room to Improve Marketing)

Code Words and Phrases						
Line# Quotes - LB	Line# Quotes - TM	Line# Quotes - SH	Line# Quotes - AJ	Line# Quotes - ES	Emergent Themes	Major Themes
Line 161: So I liked your idea of the video. Line 173: Well, the reason you got me was you personally came to me and said, like, I think you should really look into this. Did I know that I was gonna get you as a mentor? No. But you kind of like got on me. And we're like, you should really do this. And I'm glad you did. Line 191: However, many more teachers are mentioning this out loud in class. I know she does it because she's like, helps.	Line 65: Someone just emailed me and mentioned the program. And I'm like, that sounds like a good opportunity. And I signed up for it.	Line 90: Dr. AR recommended (to me and) that she was starting this. (She) asked if I'd be interested, and I was one of the first (to join). Line 102: Because I remember we talked for your (class in my) freshman year. Line 114: I think I prefer the personal recruitment approach (by NU CBA professors).		Line 143: Maybe it should be maybe like, if we could try maybe like (have) a once a month event. Maybe in Gallagher, where, you know, we just hand out flyers and give some food away. Line 149: I think it will work to an extent as far as we had it on, maybe, the Northbound Instagram.	The favored marketing instruments according to interviewed mentees.	There is ample room for concrete enhancements to remarket the mentorship program.

Note. Red-font items are code words and phrases used to develop emergent themes.

Table 12 - Continued

Excerpts from Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview Results (Mentee Preparation)

Code Words and Phrases						
Line# Quotes - LB	Line# Quotes - TM	Line# Quotes - SH	Line# Quotes - AJ	Line# Quotes - ES	Emergent Themes	Major Themes
			Line 119: The first time around. I felt like I was a bit unprepared, I guess you could say with going in. I felt like it was hard for me to figure out at the beginning, what kind of benefits I wanted to get out of it. So maybe if they were to have a bit more of a streamlined process to help us to generate ideas on what exactly we could use it for that will help us to get into the program feeling a lot more prepared.			
Line 41: Preparing me beforehand, telling me who the individual was, like, maybe a couple ideas of things I could ask them helped me.	Line 29: I had no idea what I was getting myself into when you asked me to do it.	Line 258: So it's kind of having someone within the industry that I have that great focus on. Yep, I think really, really made a difference. Because he could understand how I was feeling.		Line 71: And honestly, there was really not really a game plan.	CBA Team must better prepare the mentee for mentorship.	Need pre- program preparation of mentees.

Note. Red-font items are code words and phrases used to develop emergent themes.

Table 12 - Continued

Excerpts from Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview Results (Better Features and Benefits)

Code Words and Phrases						
Line# Quotes - LB	Line# Quotes - TM	Line# Quotes - SH	Line# Quotes - AJ	Line# Quotes - ES	Emergent Themes	Major Themes
Line 59: And that helped result in the internship that I wanted, even better internship than I could have imagined. Line 311: I plan to be reaching out to you a lot while I work there. And also not only helping me get the (internship) job, but helping me do more within the company.	Line 118: (Shadowing) That'd be very interesting to me!	Line 156: But he was my reference for my current internship . Line 318: And I think kind of having that as like a shadow day. Yeah, (I) like that, if you could kind of voice it in that way, I think would be would be great.	Line 23: Which, right basically, right now I'm applying to hopefully intern with them in the summer of 2023, with their office for North Carolina. And so that was the most that we did with that for internships. Line 53: And so they can see if that's kind of a type of maybe not a place, but at least the environment that they're kind of looking for going into the industry. I kind of talked about that with my mentor this semester, earlier on, if they wanted to meet	Line 41: But he has introduced me to different firms like because he was trying to get me an internship in accounting. Line 59: Because I'm at the mentorship because you go in and you see, you know, your mentor's work environment. And you know, he lets me listen to his phone calls as well. Oh, that's awesome. Yeah, we went client calling. Line 65: And he said that he's eventually going to have me shadow the investors. Line 107: I've tried to get an internship (to	Mentorship should provide real profession al career support and opportuniti es such as job references, internships and profession al shadowing .	Key improvements to enhance and focus on mentorship features and benefits.

Note. Red-font items are code words and phrases used to develop emergent themes.

Table 12 - Continued

Excerpts from Post-Mentorship Mentee Interview Results (Post-Mentorship Activities)

Code Words and Phrases						
Line# Quotes - LB	Line# Quotes - TM	Line# Quotes - SH	Line# Quotes - AJ	Line# Quotes - ES	Emergent Themes	Major Themes
Line 236: Yeah, sure I would like a culminating mentorship activity with mentees and mentors (to exchange ideas). Yeah.	Line 157: Yeah, it's just what we just talked about (brainstorm for ideas), right?	Line 438: But maybe some kind of like organization or some kind of like development that we could put into, I would be happy to do that as well.	Line 77: Super. Yeah good to exchange notes with mentees (to review benefits and features).	Line 185: But, you know, you might ask students, oh, what do you what do you think would be more entertaining or more fun, as well, like, instead of just me, you know, because it definitely is a great help. And so students experience things.	Post mentorship activity to review and redesign of program with mentees, mentors, and CBA Team.	Additional post- mentorship activities to undertake for program improvement.

Note. Red-font items are code words and phrases used to develop emergent themes.

Table 13*Excerpts of Observations from Prior Meetings with LB*

Line#	Transcript: Total time = 1:06:50	Coding/Themes
148	VA	
149	Okay. Yes.	
150		
151	LB	
152	12:36 But, um, so I'm still trying to register for them specifically. And I was going to ask them if they had any, like spots leftover, because obviously, I'm way behind on like, the recruiting or the applications for this summer here though, right?	Need <i>help for her Application</i> for internships. She waved her hand to emphasize she was behind in internship applications.
153		
163	LB Okay.	Enthused appreciation – she really wants the <i>internship</i> .

NOTE. The items in red indicate highlighted key phrases in the transcript. The items in italicized red are codes and themes extracted from the transcript.

Table 14*Cronbach's Alpha - Mentee Survey (Questions 12, 13, and 14)*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N
0.822	0.822	3

Table 15*Descriptive Statistics - Mentee Survey Results (Post-Mentorship)*

Question Number	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	Range	Min	Max	Skew-ness	Kurto-sis
2	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
3	7	1.14	1	1	0.378	1	1	2	2.646	7
4	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
5	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
6	7	1.14	1	1	0.378	1	1	2	2.646	7
7	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
8	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
9	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
10	7	1.14	1	1	0.378	1	1	2	2.646	7
11	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
12	7	1.43	1	1	0.787	2	1	3	1.76	2.361
13	7	1.86	2	1	0.9	2	1	3	0.353	-1.82
14	7	2.14	2	3	0.9	2	1	3	-0.35	-1.82
15	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
16	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
17	7	1.86	2	1	0.9	2	1	3	0.353	-1.82
18	7	1	1	1	0	0	1	1		
19	7	1.29	1	1	0.756	2	1	3	2.646	7
20	7	1.29	1	1	0.756	2	1	3	2.646	7
21	7	2	2	1	1	2	1	3	0	-2.6
22	7	1.86	2	1	0.9	2	1	3	0.353	-1.82
23	7	2.14	2	1	1.215	3	1	4	0.414	-1.53
24	7	1.57	1	1	1.134	3	1	4	2.156	4.58
25	7	2.43	3	3	1.134	3	1	4	-0.24	-1.23
26	7	1.29	1	1	0.488	1	1	2	1.23	-0.84
27	7	1.14	1	1	0.378	1	1	2	2.646	7
28	7	1.14	1	1	0.378	1	1	2	2.646	7
29	7	1.29	1	1	0.488	1	1	2	1.23	-0.84

Table 16

Post-Mentorship Mentee Qualitative Survey Results (Respondents 1 - 3)

Item#	Item Description	Respondent 1	Respondent 2	Respondent 3
30	List other marketing efforts you think would be effective such as posters, flyers, etc.	Professors mentioning it in classes, handing out flyers in class, have advisors mention it	It may be good to market the program at student club/career fair events, if not already done so previously.	I think posters would be very useful for those who aren't aware of the possibilities of the program. Something as simple as a poster could easily draw attention to all the positives of the program.
32	Provide any other general suggestions about mentors.	N/A	I certainly did enjoy working with my mentor, especially since he listened to my career interests, was unbiased, and helped to provide options for me to consider. I would certainly make sure that students land mentorships with those who are willing to provide this kind of input.	N/A
33	Provide any other general comments about mentorship.	Such a great experience. My mentor has created many connections for me and overall is a great help to my education.	N/A	I feel that I learned a lot from my mentor and many could also benefit from having him as their advisor.
34	Provide any other general comments about the university.	I am very grateful to have had the opportunity and thank the University for the assistance!	N/A	N/A

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 16 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentee Qualitative Survey Results (Respondents 4 - 7)

Item #	Item Description	Respondent 4	Respondent 5	Respondent 6	Respondent 7
30	List other marketing efforts you think would be effective such as posters, flyers, etc.	email and seminars	a video should be showed within business course or gen ed course encouraging students to join - the video that was made with my mentor	N/A	Going into classrooms
31	Provide any mentorship features (not listed above) that you would be interested in	Accounting/ Banking/ Political	very content with my experience	N/A	N/A
32	Provide any other general suggestions about mentors	It's a need	mentorship role model meetings - spread out through both semesters	N/A	N/A

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 16 - Continued

Post-Mentorship Mentee Qualitative Survey Results (Respondents 4 - 7)

Item #	Item Description	Respondent 4	Respondent 5	Respondent 6	Respondent 7
33	Provide any other general comments about mentorship	Its great help for career paths	N/A	N/A	I had a great experience with my mentor and learned a lot. I hope that we will continue working together in the future
34	Provide any other general comments about the university	I appreciate the opportunity	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note. Red-font items indicate code words and phrases that provide emergent themes.

Table 17*Action Plan*

Objectives and Outcomes (What)	Tasks (How)	Person(s) (Who)	Time (When)	Location (Where)	Resources	Funds
Research Cause for Student Attrition (Collect data)	Digital and physical library and office research	Primary researcher	Spring 2022 throughout Summer 2022	At my office and NU library and NU offices	NU records offices	N/A
Research the best features and benefits for a college mentorship program (Collect data)	Digital and library research and interviews with Spring 2022 mentees and mentors	Primary researcher	Spring 2022 throughout Summer 2022	My home office, NU library, and NU offices, and via Zoom	NU records offices, SLC and PLC member inputs	N/A
Analyze data and report findings (Analytics and conclusion presentations)	Quantitative and qualitative analytics and presentations to NU leadership for approval	Primary researcher and CBA Team	Spring 2022 throughout Summer 2022	My home office, NU library, and NU offices, and via Zoom	CBA-AS's experience and leadership plus author's EdD learnings	N/A
Increase NU Mentorship Student Participation (Program enhancement)	Expand NU mentorship marketing	Primary researcher a and NU CBA Team	Fall 2022 (ongoing)	NU campus, Internet sites	Internal NU resources	\$1,000
Increase NU Mentorship Student Participation (Program enhancement)	Expand mentees to include fledgling eaglets in addition to soaring eagles	Primary researcher, NU CBA Team, and Third-party sponsors	Fall 2022 (ongoing)	NU campus	Company and NU alumni partnerships to address the students' financial, academic, and professional wants and needs	\$1,000 per student

Table 17 - Continued

Action Plan

Objectives and Outcomes (What)	Tasks (How)	Person(s) (Who)	Time (When)	Location (Where)	Resources	Funds
Improve current NU mentorship program (Redevelop and reimplement mentorship features and benefits)	NU CBA Team to develop academic performance enhancement and social upliftment programs	Primary researcher, NU CBA Team, NU CBA students, and corporate sponsors	Fall 2022 (ongoing)	NU campus and third-party (sponsoring company) premises	Team up with third-party company to help provide for professional development needs;	\$500 per student
Mentor development (Knowledge and skills improvement)	Equip mentors with mentorship tips and improved teaching praxis	Primary researcher, NU CBA Team, and corporate sponsors	Fall 2022 (ongoing)	NU campus	NU CBA Team, NU administration and staff; Team up with third-party company	N/A

Figure 1

Sample Email Exchange – Confirming Quantitative Data (Soaring Eagles)



Figure 2

Sample Email Exchange – Confirming Quantitative Data (Fledgling Eaglets)

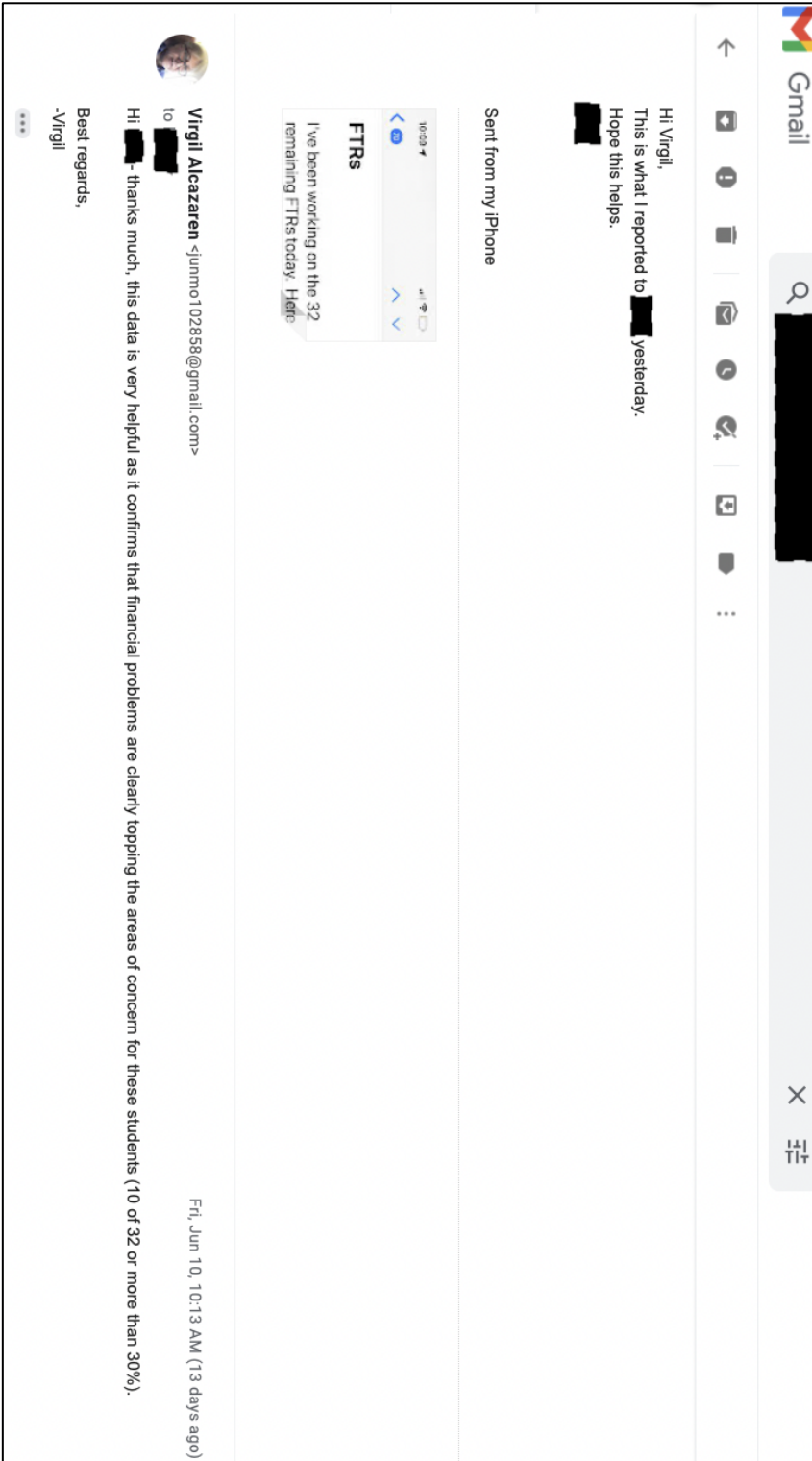


Figure 3

Sample Email Exchange – Confirming Quantitative Data (Soaring Eagles)

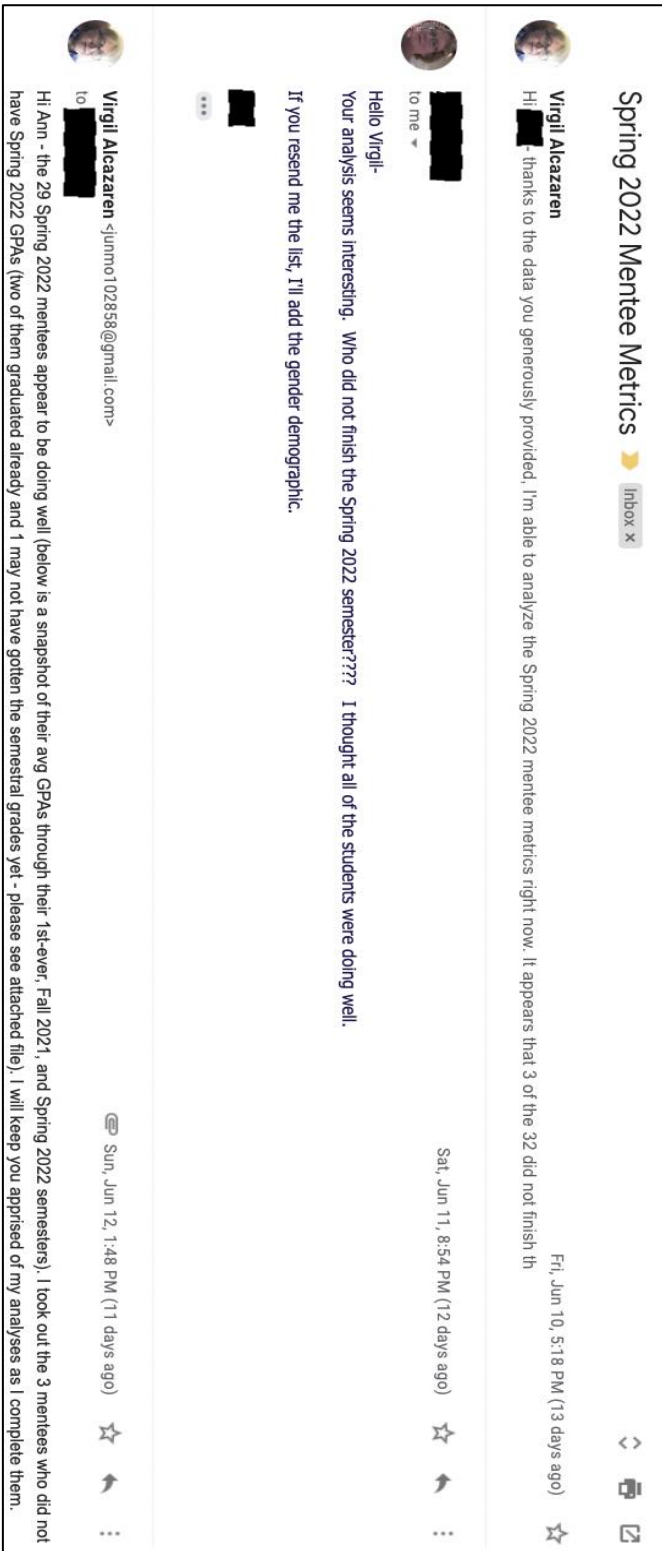


Figure 4

Histogram – Number of Fledgling Eaglets by Year

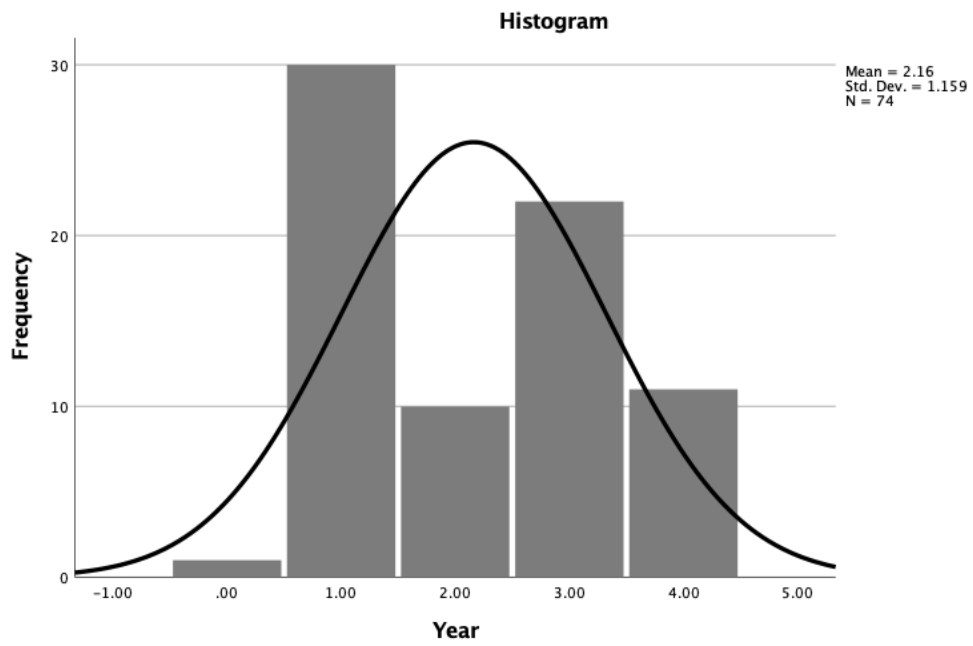
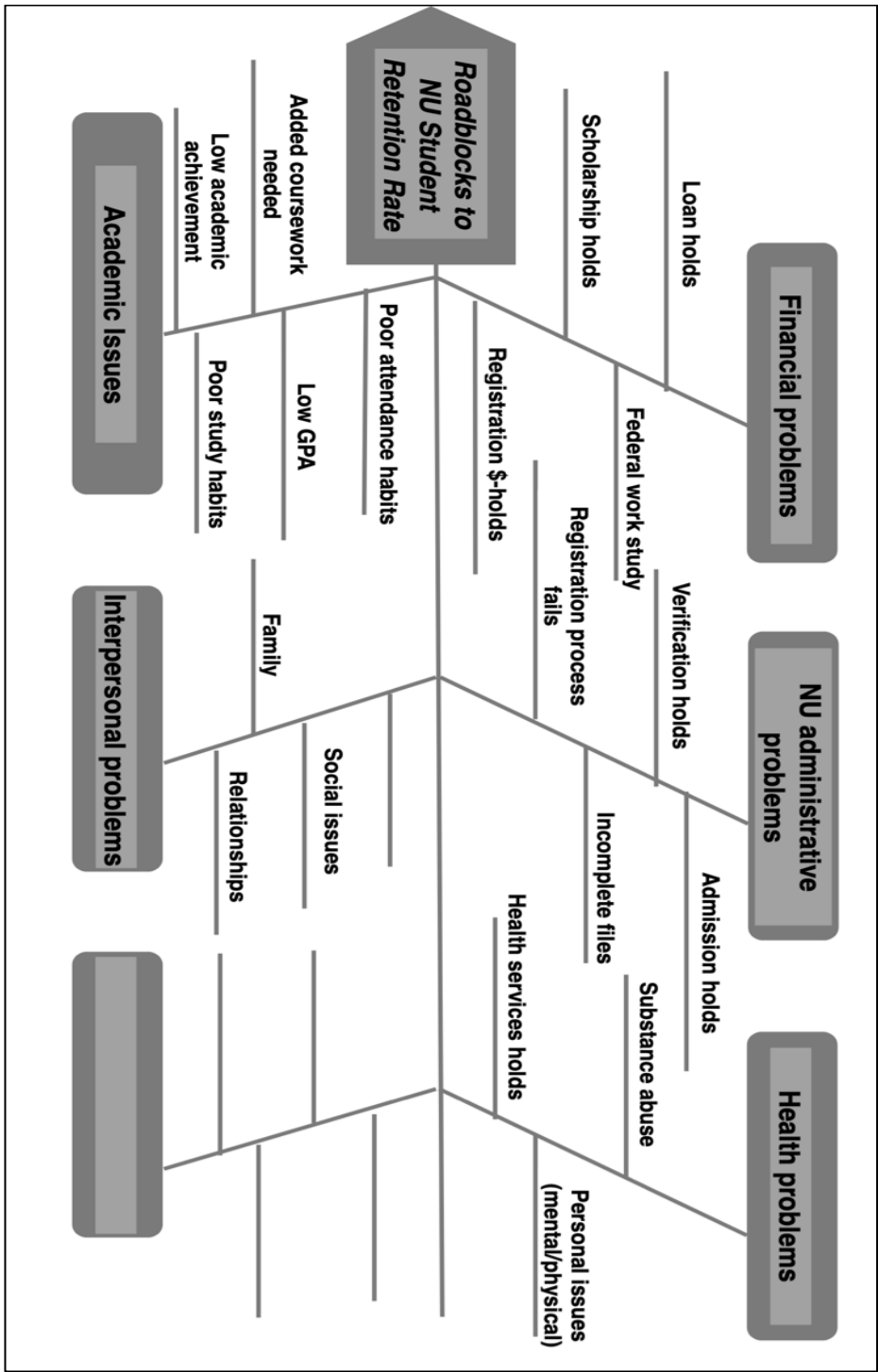


Figure 5

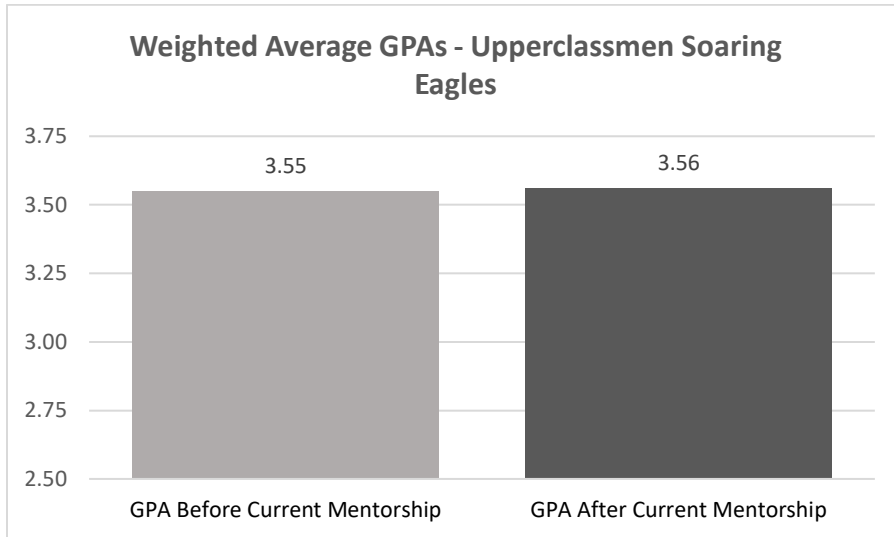
Ishikawa Diagram of Main Categories (AOCs) and Root Causes (Fledgling Eaglets)



NOTE. Financial problems accounted for 32% of total AOCs, academic issues were 25%, NU administrative problems were 22%, health problems were 19%, and interpersonal problems were 2%.

Figure 6

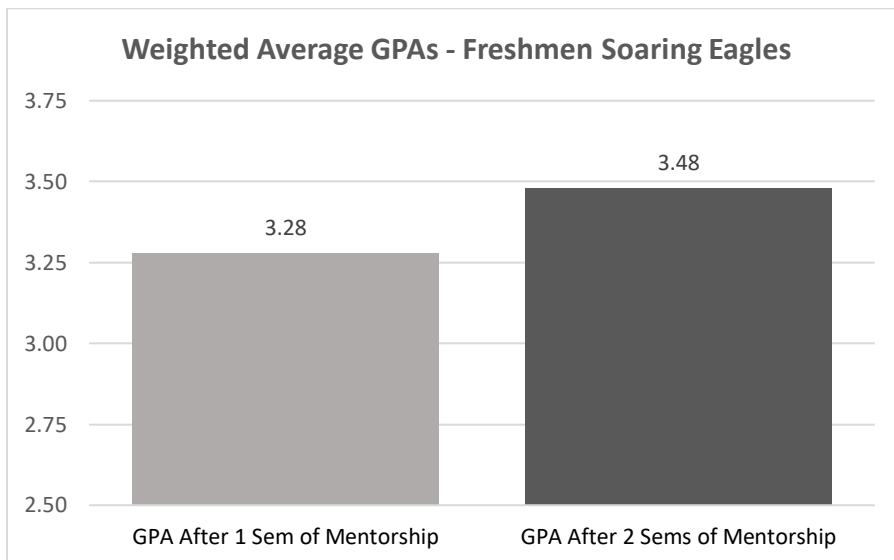
Average GPA Performances of Soaring Eagles (Upperclassmen)



Note. The weighted average is used instead of the mean to account for completion-hours. Upperclassmen include sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Period 1 = Fall 2020 to Spring 2021 and Period 2 = Fall 2021 to Spring 2022.

Figure 7

Average GPA Performances of Soaring Eagles (Freshmen)



Note. The weighted average is used instead of the mean to account for completion-hours. Period 1 = Fall 2021 and Period 2 = Spring 2022 (one and two semesters of mentorship).

Figure 8

Sample Email Exchange – Confirming Qualitative Data (Member Cross-checking)

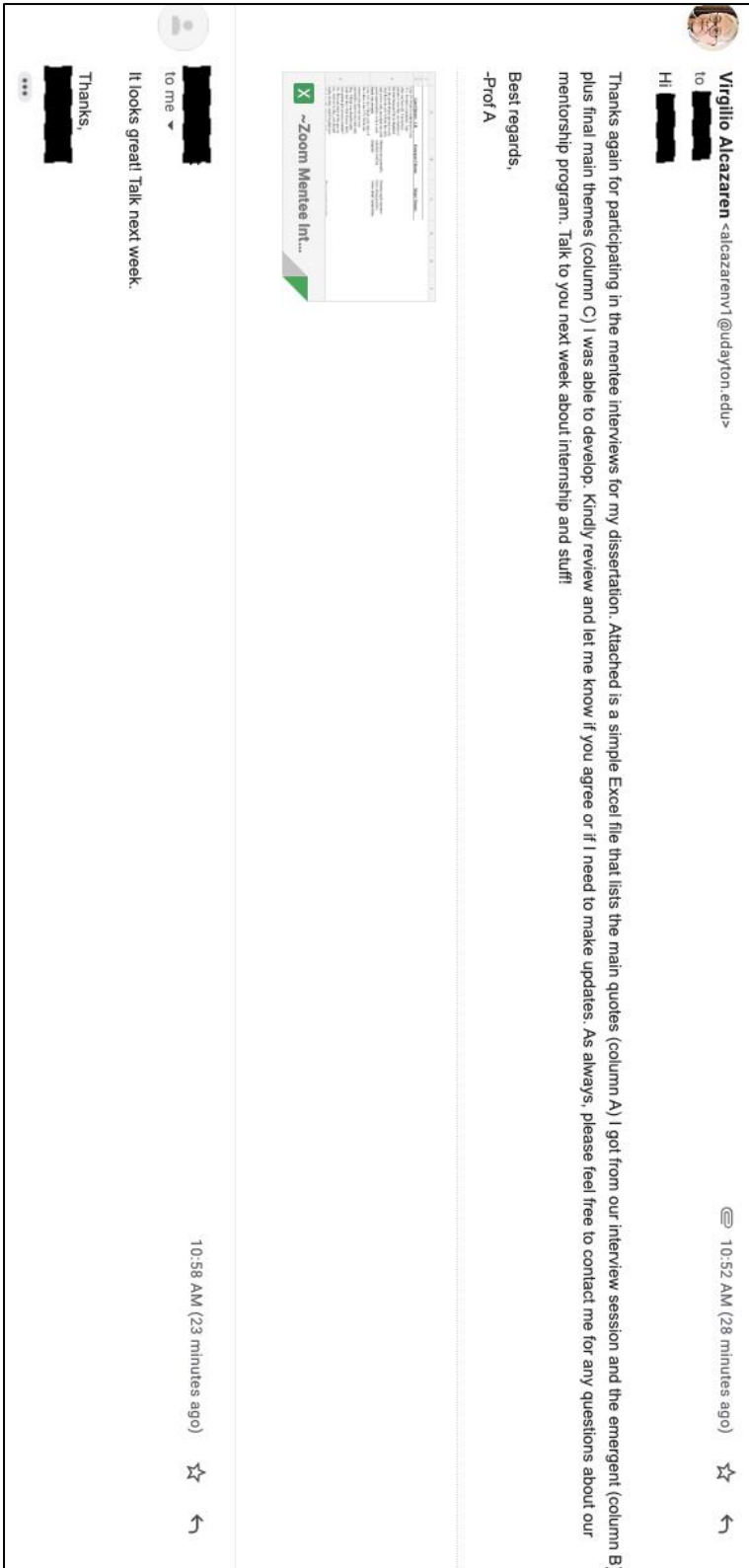


Figure 8 - Continued

Sample Email Exchange – Correcting Qualitative Data (Member Cross-checking)

Cross Check - Interview Themes External Inbox x

Virgilio Alcazaren
Hi [redacted] Thanks again for participating in the mentee interviews for my dissertation. Attached is a simple Excel file that lists the main quotes (column A) | 10:54 AM (4 hours ago)

to me ▾
Hey Professor A:
Hope all is well. Thank you for the opportunity I learned soo much. If there's anything you need from me please let me know. We'll be in touch this semester.
Best regards,
[redacted] ... | 11:11 AM (4 hours ago)

Virgilio Alcazaren
Hi [redacted] - are you OK with the themes developed? Thanks, -Prof A | 11:27 AM (3 hours ago)

[redacted]
Hey Prof. A, yes maybe add something about social media attraction. | 11:47 AM (3 hours ago)

Virgilio Alcazaren
OK, [redacted] - I think you mentioned something about using the NU Instagram, right? I'll add that... Best, -Prof A | 12:02 PM (3 hours ago)

[redacted]
Hey Prof. A, that would be great. | 12:15 PM (2 hours ago)

Figure 9

Sample Notes Taken in Zoom Meeting with AJ

DATE: MAY 6TH 3-4PM
VIA ZOOM; AJ @ DORM

Item#	Item
1	Student ID#
2	Please summarize your experience with the NU Mentoring Program.
3	Do you think this program has been effective in helping you learn and develop important skills? Why or why not?
4	Which part of the mentoring experience do you feel was most useful in helping you reach your goals? Were there aspects that could be improved?
5	Would you recommend participating in the NU Mentorship Program to fellow students? Why or why not?
6	Would you partner with a mentor again? Why or why not?
7	Did you and your mentor follow an interaction plan?
8	How did you come to know about the NU mentorship program (via: NU Mentorship ad, a schoolmate, a professor, others)
9	What other forms of marketing the NU mentorship program would you recommend?
10	If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to share it with us here:

2nd mentorship - both ACCOUNTING [REDACTED]
- mentioned internship
chief acctg/opstrs officer COO
virtually (on-line)
opportunity in acctg field
CPA exam
specific topics for each mtg
were mistakes
1 hr long
found them beneficial
discussed relationships → no time family is coming south
connections w/ GE largest firm
- interview } HI-LITES!
- shadowing }
- FINANCE CLUB, LIONS CLUB
ACCTG SOCIETY
- PRESIDENT
- likes different mentors // *
- no need for academic coaching
→ [REDACTED] for MENTORING
→ MAY take away from ACADEMIC OFC
→ 1st time needed more PREP - EXPAND → what benefits to get

Figure 10

Sample Email Exchange – Mentee Survey Member Cross-checking

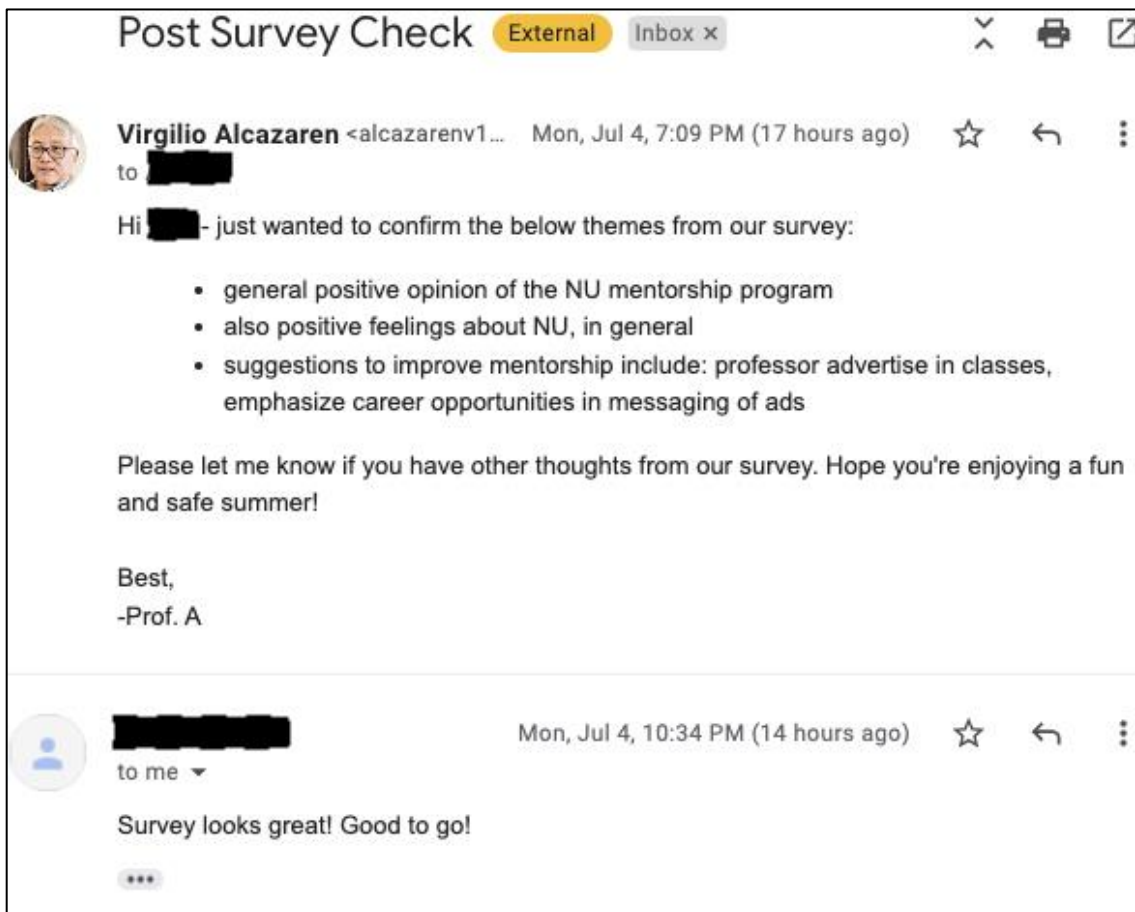


Figure 11

Communication Strategy Matrix

Stakeholder	Topic/Issue/Idea <i>What do you want to communicate?</i>	Approach <i>What is the best approach given stakeholder interests & power?</i>	Format <i>What type of format will work best for the stakeholder?</i>	Communication Tool <i>What is the best means through which to communicate?</i>	Frequency <i>When and how often will you communicate?</i>	Notes
Stakeholder #1	NU Mentee and Non-Mentee Students; NU emails.	What's in it for them, Nurturing, Fun, Educational	Electronic, Hardcopy, and Live-person (as possible)	Email, Texting, Phone, PCs, PPT Presentations, Infographics (Pictographs) Meeting apps (e.g. Zoom), Surveys, Interviews, Live-person	Monthly mentee, mentor meetings via Zoom; Beginning and end of semester surveys and interviews; Frequent and complete communicues (all formats and tools)	Encourage and empower student engagement, emphasize how mentorship will help make stronger students and eventual powerful professionals
Stakeholder #2	Corporate Mentors, Various Companies, Company emails.	Factual, Business-like, Win-win proposals, Educational	Electronic, Hardcopy, and Live-person (as possible)	Email, Phone, Written Correspondence	Beginning and end of semester interviews, Monthly mentee meetings, CBA team meetings bi-monthly and as needed	Focus on bilateral and mutually beneficial relationships and communicues
Stakeholder #3	NU CBA Team (including myself as primary researcher) & NU CBA Leadership; NU emails and phones.	Factual, Creative, Organized, Focused	Electronic, Hardcopy, and Live-person (as possible)	Email, Phone, Written Communicues, Meetings (in-person and via Zoom), Texting, PCs, Internal Memos, Letters, PPT Presentations, Infographics (Pictographs)	Monthly meetings, beginning as-needed, and end of semester workgroup sessions	Ad-hoc communicues as needed
Stakeholder #4	NU Senior leadership (President, Provost, VPs, NU Board); NU emails.	Factual, Concise, Concrete	Electronic and Live-person (as possible)	Email, Phone, Written Communicues (Internal memos), PPT Presentations, Infographics (Pictographs)	Monthly reports, as needed (depending on program progress), end of semester reports/meetings	Consistent positive (but precise and timely) messaging

Figure 12

Sample Infographic – NU Retention

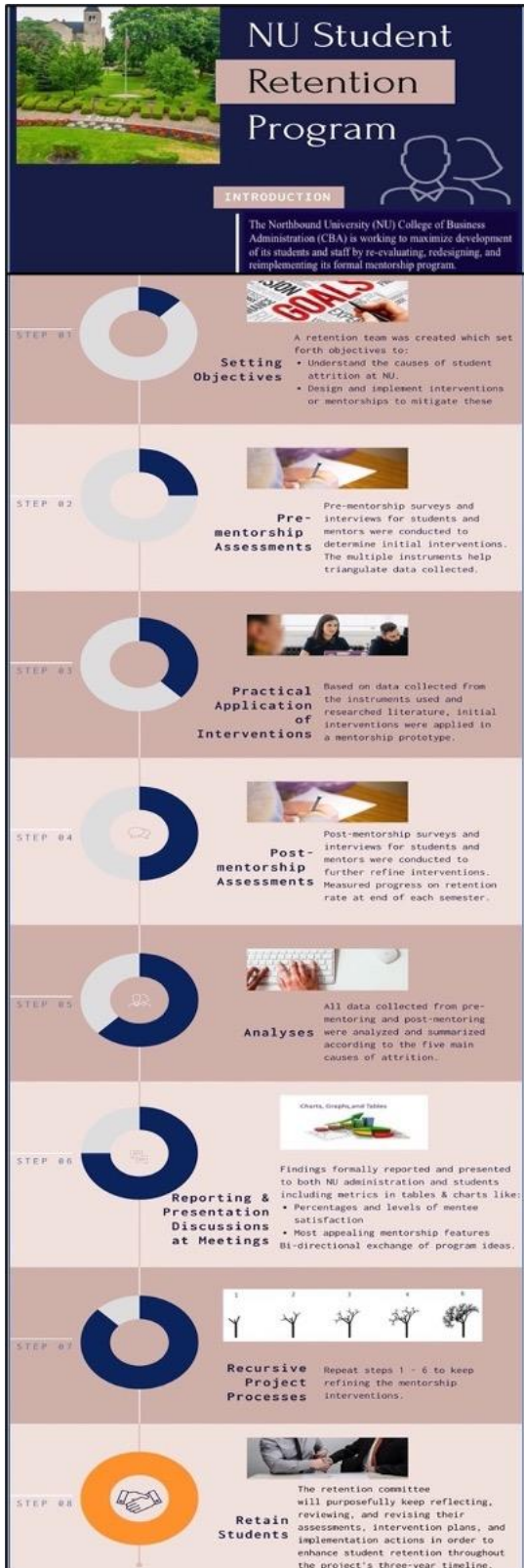


Figure 13

Simplified Timeline - Participatory Action Research

Activity	Pre-Summer 2022	Summer 2022	Fall 2022 (Period 3)	Spring 2023 (Period 4)	Summer 2023	Fall 2023 (Period 5)	Spring 2024 (Period 6)
Review of past programs (from Pilot & Periods 1 & 2)	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done
Literature review	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done
Data collection (surveys, interviews, observations, and notes)	Done	Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done
Analysis of data	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done
Compile findings	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done	Done
Redesign program	Done	In-process	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done
Program communications and engagement with stakeholders	Done	In-process	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done
Program reimplementation	Done	In-process	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done	To Be Done

Done	In-process	To Be Done	Not Applicable
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Legend:

Figure 14

Mentee Survey at Start of Fall 2022 Program

1. Demographic Info		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
Item#	Item		
1	Were you aware of the NU mentorship program prior to joining?	Yes	No
2	Survey Response Date		
3	Age (in years)	18 to 20	21 to 24
4	The gender that best describes me is:	Male	Female
5	High School GPA (4.0 maximum scale)	Below 2.0	2.0 to 3.0
6	Overall SAT Score (if known)	Below 1050	1050 to 1200
7	Are you the first college student in your family?	Yes	No
8	Did you declare your college major?	Yes	No
9	Did you transfer from another college	Yes	No
10	Did any one in your family (parents or siblings, if any) graduate from college?	Yes	No
2. Academic Assistance			
Item#	Item	Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
11	Would you like academic tutoring? (Indicate subject(s) in the box provided)	Yes	No
12	Would you like to learn about effective study habits and skills?	Yes	No
13	Do you like group learning activities or study groups?	Yes	No
14	Do you prefer one-on-one academic assistance?	Yes	No
15	Are you interested in taking advanced courses?	Yes	No

Figure 14 - Continued

Mentee Survey at Start of Fall 2022 Program

3. Personal Preferences		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
Item#	Item	Yes	No
16	Would you like to join any NU clubs or organizations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Do you like outdoor activities such as hiking, camping (indicate all in box provided)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Do you enjoy quiet activities such as reading, watching movies (indicate all in box provided)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Would you like to take part in charitable events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Would like professional development activities such as networking, shadowing, etc.:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Financial Profiles		Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
Item#	Item	Yes	No
21	Are your parents fully paying for your college?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Do you have any scholarship(s) to help pay for college costs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Are you working to help pay for college costs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Are you interested in financial aid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Would you like to learn more about financing your college costs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 14 - Continued

Mentee Survey at Start of Fall 2022 Program

5. NU Administrative Matters			
Item#	Item	Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
26	Do you have any admission holds?	Yes	No
27	Do you have any registration holds?	Yes	No
28	Do you have any verification holds?	Yes	No
29	Do you have any incomplete files on your high school records?	Yes	No
30	Are you interested in guidance on navigating NU's administrative requirements? (List all).	Yes	No
6. Health Concerns			
Item#	Item	Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
31	Do you need special health accommodations? (Indicate in the box provided)	Yes	No
32	Do you have any health services holds?	Yes	No

Figure 14 - Continued

Mentee Survey at Start of Fall 2022 Program

7. Mentorship Marketing Campaign			
Item#	Item	Answers (Shade the box of your choice)	
33	Would you like to see NU Mentorship social media ads?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
34	What content would you like to see on NU Mentorship?	<input type="text"/>	
35	What other NU Mentorship ads would you like to see?	<input type="text"/>	
8. Additional Open-ended Questions			
Item#	Item	Answers	
36	Please provide any mentorship features (not listed above) that you would be interested in.	<input type="text"/>	
37	Please provide any other general comments about mentorship.	<input type="text"/>	
38	Please provide any other general comments about the university.	<input type="text"/>	
39	If you have further questions or need more information about the NU mentorship program, please feel free to directly contact Prof. Virgil Alcazar at alcazarvir1@udayton	<input type="text"/>	

Figure 15

Logic Model

