Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment

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Administrative Fellows   
Program Evaluation

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## Executive Summary

Penn State’s Administrative Fellows Program (AFP) is a long-standing and well-respected mentoring program that pairs faculty and staff members with a senior member of Penn State’s leadership for an immersive, year-long professional development experience. Initially created to help diversify Penn State’s leadership through the development of women and minorities, today the program is open to all.

This study takes a comprehensive view of the program, exploring the experiences, perceptions, and outcomes for both Administrative Fellows and their Mentors over the last decade. Interviews with past Administrative Fellows, Mentors, and Steering Committee members provide a rich source of data, supplemented by survey data and information collected through web searches designed to follow the careers of past Fellows.

**What is the typical Fellow’s experience?** Each experience is unique, but commonalities exist. Fellows’ time was largely self-directed, with much time spent attending administrative meetings, observing University leaders, and learning about the various interconnected components that make up Penn State. Fellows’ time was largely unstructured, which allows enormous freedom to create a professionally enriching experience. At the same time the lack of structure left some Fellows feeling directionless. Many Fellows used some of their time to undertake a project of significance for their Mentors.

**Are Fellows’ goals aligned with program goals and outcomes?** The goal of the program is to identify faculty and staff with leadership potential and to develop that potential by providing a one-of-a-kind learning opportunity. Although Mentors believed that Fellows enter the program with an expectation of leaving it in a new position, Fellows’ goals for the program focused on learning about Penn State and developing their own leadership potential. Fellows were aware that there is no guarantee of advancement after the program and felt that an important outcome was the ability to be a stronger contributor to the University no matter what their position. Overall, Fellows’ goals appeared well-aligned with program goals.

**What are the strongest aspects of the program?** Program participants were extremely positive about their experiences in the program. Fellows felt better able to understand the many working parts of the University and the full context in which decisions are made. They were enormously grateful for the opportunity and that gratitude translates to increased loyalty to the institution. Mentors found personal satisfaction in mentoring and interacting with eager Fellows. The program has helped to create a diverse pool of potential administrators within Penn State.

**To what extent have the recommendations from prior evaluations been implemented?** In 2004, an evaluation of the AFP yielded a number of recommendations, some of which have been implemented. It is not the expectation that all such recommendations will be acted upon, but there is an expectation that they will receive serious consideration. While it is clear from discussions with the program administrator that each of these recommendations did receive thoughtful consideration, the logic behind the decision not to implement some recommendations could be more widely communicated.

**Is the program meeting its goals?** Penn State has had moderate success in increasing the percentage of women in leadership positions over the past decade, but has been less successful in creating a racially and ethnically diverse administration.While participation in the AFP does not guarantee appointment to an advanced or administrative position, the program is designed to prepare participants to be competitive for such positions. While Mentors expressed mixed feelings over the extent to which the program was successful in doing this, a number of past Fellows have gone on to be hired in their Mentoring units. Study Fellows’ self-reports indicated that about half (47%) advanced within one year of completing the Fellowship and 84% within five years. A review of the job history of all past Fellows indicated that an estimated 79% advanced in administrative positions. Interviewed Fellows who had not advanced expressed confidence that they were better able to perform their jobs due to what they learned as Fellows.

**Is the program still needed?** This decade has and will continue to be one of leadership change at Penn State. Our administrative levels are aging and retiring. Moving forward, the appointment of effective leaders will be a key to Penn State’s continued growth and success, and developing those leaders from within has many benefits. In 1985 the AFP was designed to promote the development of women and minorities, both of which were underrepresented in University leadership. Today, the program is open to all, but it remains a key opportunity for women and minorities to develop professionally and become more competitive for open positions at a level where women and minorities remain underrepresented at Penn State in 2015.

**Recommendations for Future Consideration.** Diverse perspectives were provided on how to improve the AFP. While few things were unanimously agreed upon, several ideas were mentioned frequently enough to warrant consideration moving forward.

1. **Clarify Program Goals.** If the program’s goals truly are administrative advancement, it may not be appropriate to recruit participants who want the learning experience but desire to stay on their pre-Fellowship path. If developing better overall University citizens is the goal, then the University may wish to highlight the contributions and achievements of all Fellows and not just those that advanced in administrative positions.
2. **Manage Expectations.** Clearly, repeatedly, and effectively communicate that the program does not guarantee advancement. Although Fellows clearly understood that advancement was not guaranteed, Mentors felt the pressure of their expectations for advancement.
3. **Structure.** Consider adding an optional curriculum focused on specific administrative skillsets (e.g., budgeting, mentoring, and leadership). This could be through existing programs such as the Academic Leadership Forum, or Center for Workplace Learning & Performance certificate programs.
4. **Recruit.** Encourage vice presidents, chancellors, and deans to actively identify and encourage “rising stars” to apply for the program. Work with marketing professionals to tell the program’s story and market to desired demographic groups (e.g., women, minorities, tenured faculty, and units that haven’t been active in the AFP).
5. **Orient Mentors.** This could be something as simple as a tip sheet on “best practices for effective mentoring” or a short meeting prior to a new Fellowship year with that year’s Mentor cohort. Make sure Mentors know what Fellows are told, as well as what they might think despite what they are told. Do not select Mentors that are new in their position.
6. **Create Mentoring Units.** Mentors are busy people and their direct reports often spend significant time working with the Fellows. Communicate the goals and importance of the program to the direct reports and encourage their input so that they feel part of the process.
7. **Put the Fellow in the Driver’s Seat.** Communicate to Fellows that they must be the drivers of the process. Provide practical advice on how to reasonably press a Mentor if they don’t feel that they are getting what they need. Consider regular meetings with small groups of past Fellows who can provide support and advice.
8. **Set Goals and Monitor Progress.** Require Fellows to develop formal program goals and a plan for achieving those goals in collaboration with their Mentor, recognizing that these may evolve during the Fellowship. Schedule regular meetings between the Mentor and Fellow to review progress towards goals. Consider including the Mentors’ other direct reports as appropriate.
9. **Consider other Models.** Every program model has strengths and benefits. Other models that might be worth considering include “leadership academies” where people stay in their positions and periodically participate in structured experiences, part-time or half-year Fellowships, and campus or college mini-Fellowships.
10. **Prioritize Activity List.** Review the list of activities in prior AFP evaluation recommendations and in the AFP guidelines to determine high-priority learning opportunities. Make sure that Fellows are centrally scheduled into priority activities.

## Introduction

Penn State’s Administrative Fellows Program (AFP) provides faculty and staff with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to be mentored by some of the nation’s most respected higher education leaders and to observe decision making at the highest level. Through this year-long program, faculty and staff Fellows serve under the mentorship of Penn State’s senior administrators.

The objectives of the program are to identify faculty and staff who have potential for effective leadership; to increase awareness of the complexity of issues facing higher education and to enhance understanding of the environment in which decisions are being made; and to provide opportunities for participation in a wide range of decision-making processes, learning activities, and program management that provide a better understanding of the challenges of higher education administration (Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, 2014, para. 3).

This evaluation of the program was conducted at the request of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Blannie E. Bowen. This study was conducted by the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment, in collaboration with Cathy Dufour, former Administrative Fellow and director of corporate relations in the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations, and Susan Morse, human resources manager in Information Technology Services, who helped to conduct interviews and provided feedback on the analysis and recommendations.

## Background

**Program History.** In 1985 a Task Force of the University’s Commission for Women (CFW) pointed to the low numbers of women and minority administrators and proposed the establishment of a program that would provide women, minorities, and other underrepresented persons with a significant professional development opportunity that would prepare participants to pursue leadership roles at the University. In 1986, the CFW and the Office for Human Resources launched the program, naming the first Fellow and Mentor[[1]](#footnote-2). In subsequent years, program support and resources increased, enabling up to three Mentors and Fellows to participate annually (Administrative Fellows Review Committee, 2004). Today the program is coordinated by the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.

**What is Mentoring and Why Does it Matter?** There are numerous conceptualizations of mentoring, but one of the most relevant in this context is Ragins and Scandura’s (1999, p. 496), which focuses on mentors as “influential individuals with advanced experience and knowledge who are committed to providing upward mobility and support to their protégés’ careers.” While mentoring theory has evolved to embrace new technologies and models, the AFP is built on the traditional face-to-face, dyadic hierarchical mentoring relationship described by Scandura and Pellegrini (2007).

Numerous studies have affirmed the importance of mentoring in the career development of women and minorities (see for example, Claire, Hukai, & McCarty, 2005; Cox & Salsberry, 2012; and Touchton, Musil & Campbell, 2008). While it is worthwhile to note that the mentoring literature has been criticized for focusing exclusively on the benefits of mentoring and ignoring drawbacks (Carr & Heiden, 2011), the well-established benefits appear to outweigh potential obstacles, such as dysfunctional mentor/protégé relationships. In their review of the literature, Blake-Beard, Murrel and Thomas (2006) noted that benefits related to access to mentoring include higher salaries, career advancement, career satisfaction, and institutional loyalty. In particular, mentoring relationships can play a critical role in facilitating professional promotion for individuals who face historical and cultural barriers to advancement (Baltodano, Carlson, Jackson, & Mitchel, 2012).

Despite the importance of mentors in professional development, influential mentors can be hard to find and not all people have equal access to high-level mentors. While women are more likely than men to say that they’ve had a mentor (Ibarra, Carter, & Silva, 2010), women and minorities may have less access to *influential* mentors than their White, male colleagues (Dreher, & Cox, 1996; Sandberg, 2013). For this reason among others, many organizations have implemented formal mentoring programs focused on developing a diverse leadership pool. Seventy-one percent of Fortune 500 companies offer mentoring programs for their employees (*Chronus*, 2012) and colleges and universities are increasingly offering formal mentoring programs designed to develop future administrators.

**Administrative Mentoring Programs.** Formal mentoring programs for both students and tenure-track faculty are common in higher education, but mentoring programs geared toward administrative leadership are less so. The most well-known administrative mentoring programs are found in academic hospital settings (e.g., Johns Hopkins and the Mayo Clinic’s Administrative Fellowship Programs). These programs focus on early career development – introducing entering professionals to administrative roles. Programs similar to the AFP can be found at other colleges and universities (see Appendix A) and in higher education organizations such as the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) and the Conference (SEC), but these programs typically differ from Penn State’s in several key ways: 1) they are not full-time/full-year programs, 2) they are limited to faculty members, and 3) they lack a diversity emphasis.

**Program Structure.** The office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs recruits three Mentors from the President’s Council, which includes the University’s provost, vice provosts, and vice presidents. However, because of the popularity of the mentorship role, mentors are limited to the provost and the vice presidents. Each fall the AFP is advertised through University news outlets and program alumni play a key role in encouraging qualified colleagues to apply. Applicants must hold a standing, full-time faculty or staff appointment and may be located at any Penn State location, but must be willing to spend the Fellowship year at the Mentor’s campus (by the nature of President’s Council, this means University Park or Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center).

Applicants provide a summary of their service history (University, professional, outreach, and civic/community, and a cover letter describing the reasons for their interest in an administrative position, their expectations for the program, and their short- and long-term career goals. Applicants are asked to rank order their preferred Mentors from among the available pool of three. A steering committee made up of alumni Fellows and representatives from the CFW, the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, and the Office of the Provost reviews applications, conducts preliminary interviews, and provides recommendations to the Mentors. Mentors interview a short-list of prospective Fellows and make the final decision.

In order to help minimize the disruption inherent in removing a faculty or staff member from their home unit for a year, each sending unit is provided up to $50,000 to backfill the Fellow’s position (e.g., provide supplemental salary to those who take on additional duties or hire temporary staff). In order to support Fellows whose home campus is not the mentoring campus, a local housing stipend may also be provided. The expectation is that Fellows will separate completely from their home units for the year of the Fellowship and then return to their existing positions at the end of the year with a better understanding of the complexity of higher education, an increased ability to contribute to the work of their home unit, and improved prospects for advancement.

**Need for the Program.** Penn State has evolved from a farmer’s high school into one of the premier research institutions in the world. This evolution would not have been possible, and will not continue, without outstanding leadership. Developing leaders from within is an important component of succession planning. Internal hires hit the ground running, are less expensive, and more likely to remain than external recruits (Bidwell, 2011). Internal leadership development also increases employee engagement and retention (Lamoureaux, 2013).

Outstanding leadership is not homogenous leadership. It is diverse in perspective, background, and thought (Morrison, 1992). Significant attention has been given to the growing diversity of the U.S. population and its significance in terms of student and faculty diversity in higher education. Women make up a growing majority of undergraduate students (Peter & Horn, 2005) and soon, minority students will make up nearly half of all public high-school graduates (Prescott & Bransberger, 2012). Despite the changing face of the student body, diversity lags among university faculty and administrators. In 2011[[2]](#footnote-3), minority students made up 39% of national higher education enrollments, but only 20% of all full-time instructional faculty, 15% of senior faculty, and 20% of full- and part-time administrators (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2013). Likewise, women made up 57% of the national student body, but only 29% of senior faculty and 53% of administrators. Administrators, using NCES categories, include all managerial-level staff. Only 14% of doctoral degree-granting institution presidents are women.

In 1985, the CFW Task Force proposed the creation of the AFP in response to what it perceived as a lack of upward mobility and underrepresentation of women and minorities among Penn State’s leadership. Today, despite a strong focus on workforce diversity, cultural inclusiveness, and employment equity[[3]](#footnote-4), Penn State’s leadership remains largely homogenous in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender. Senior leadership, as represented together by the President’s Council (president, provost, and vice presidents) and Academic Leadership Council (chancellors, deans, and vice provosts), is 34% female and 10% minority[[4]](#footnote-5). Looking at Penn State’s leadership more broadly over the decade since the last evaluation of the program, there has been an increase in the diversity of its executives, administrators, and academic administrators (Figure 1), but it is still not reflective of the diversity of the Commonwealth, which is 51% female and 17% non-White (Pennsylvania State Data Center, 2015). In contrast, nearly two-thirds (62%) of Penn State’s non-administrative staff positions have been and continue to be held by women. Eight percent of these positions are held by minorities.

## Description of the Study

### Research Questions

Several key research questions guided this evaluation:

1. What is the typical Fellow’s experience?
2. Are Fellows’ goals aligned with program goals and outcomes?
3. What are the strongest aspects of the program?
4. What aspects could be improved?
5. To what extent have the recommendations from prior evaluations been implemented?
6. Is the program meeting its goals?
7. Is the program still needed?

### Study Population

The study population included Administrative Fellows and Mentors who participated in the program over the past decade. Participants prior to 2004 were excluded because their experiences may no longer represent the current program and they were included in prior program evaluations. Also excluded from the Fellows population were nine past Fellows who had recently participated in a similar research project. A selection of individuals involved in running the program and selecting and recruiting participants , termed Committee Members, were also included. Subjects were invited to participate in the study by Penn State’s Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. The Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment followed up the initial paper invitation with email and phone contacts.

### Methodology & Analysis

This evaluation is based on a non-experimental, ex post facto mixed-methods case study approach, which utilized interview, focus group, and survey-based data collection (Krathwohl, 1998).Researchers conducted individual interviews with past Mentors and Fellows. The administrator in charge of the program was also interviewed and recent members of the steering committee responsible for recruiting and selecting Fellows were given the option of participating in an individual interview or in a focus group discussion; five chose to participate in a focus group and three selected individual interviews. Interviews and focus groups were conducted by three researchers following a shared protocol (see Appendix B) and the format was semi-structured, allowing new issues to emerge as a result of the information shared by the interviewee. Additional information about the Fellows’ experience was collected through a survey that was distributed to all of the Fellows in the study population. Additional data on the career progress of the past Fellows was collected via web searches.

Both Mentors and Fellows are strongly invested in the AFP and the participation rate for the study was high (Table 1). Roughly two-thirds of the Fellows and all but one of the Mentors invited to interview did so; all of the Fellows invited to participate in the survey did so. Detailed survey findings are presented in Appendix C.

Table 1. Participation Rates.

| Research Instrument | Invited | Participated | Rate of Participation |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fellows interviews | 19 | 12 | 63% |
| Mentor interviews | 8 | 7 | 88% |
| Fellows survey | 19 | 19 | 100% |
| Committee interview or focus group | 9 | 8 | 89% |

Descriptive statistics were used to aggregate the quantitative data. The interview and focus group were analyzed using thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). Like grounded theory, this approach focuses on themes that emerge from the data and is inherently inductive. Unlike grounded theory, the focus of this approach is on providing data that can be used to inform decision making, rather than on developing or building theory.

After reading each of the transcripts and identifying preliminary themes, a single researcher established the initial set of codes. Each transcript was read multiple times and coded in an iterative process during which codes were refined (e.g., little-used codes collapsed and new codes identified). The researcher identified themes and triangulated her findings using theory in combination with the interview, focus group, and survey data. Following standard protocols for qualitative research, the credibility of the findings was supported using peer review and member checking with study participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All participants are identified by pseudonym in this report and participants’ gender is not necessarily reflected in the pseudonym.

Table 2. Participants.

| Fellows | | Mentors | Committee Members\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Anna  Brenda  Carol  Jessica  Kim  Linda | Michelle  Mike  Nancy  Patricia  Sandra  Sharon | David  Don  George  Ken Mark Scott Tom | Amy  Donna  Dorothy  Helen  John  Mary  Ruth  Shirley |

\*Many committee members are also former Fellows.

## Findings

Since its inception, 76 Fellows and 24 Mentors have participated in the AFP. Over the past decade (2004-05 to 2013-14), 28 Fellows have come from the following units:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Auxiliary and Business Services  College of Agricultural Sciences  College of Earth and Mineral Sciences  College of Education  College of Health and Human Development  Eberly College of Science  College of the Liberal Arts  Dickinson School of Law  Office of the Bursar  Office of the Registrar | Office of the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses  Office of Undergraduate Education  Penn State DuBois  Penn State Harrisburg  Penn State Worthington Scranton  Smeal College of Business  Student Affairs  University Budget Office  University Relations/Strategic Communications |

Fellows have been predominantly White females (67%); 15% have been minority[[5]](#footnote-6) females and 19% minority males (Figure 2). This distribution is similar to that in the Fellows population prior to 2004, although during that time period Fellows were less often male. This shift may reflect a weakening of the ties between the Commission for Women and the AFP over the decades. The number of participants has grown slightly since the program’s inception, with an average of 2.5 Fellows/year from 1986-87 to 2003-04 and 2.8 Fellows/year from 2004-04 through 2013-14.

### The Program Experience

*“It was absolutely a wonderful thing for them to invest in us in that way.”* Sandra’s statement reflects the overwhelmingly positive perception that past Fellows have of the program. If given the chance, most Fellows would do it again and they would recommend it to their colleagues. Fellows greatly appreciated the University’s commitment to their development and saw it as an investment in the University’s future. Mentors were more tempered in their enthusiasm, but were still positive about its organization and its role in leadership development. Given the positive nature of participants’ experiences and observations, the primary theme that emerged from both Mentor and Fellow interviews was: How can we make a good program better?

The AFP experience begins when an employee first learns of the program and considers applying. It includes a period of introspection. Is this program a good fit for me? Is the timing right? Would they ever really pick me? For some, their selection comes on the first try, but for many, their participation requires determination and persistence through multiple years of application. Once selected, the year approaches in a frenzy of preparation – putting plans and documentation in place in the home unit, meeting new people, and wondering “What have I gotten myself into?” For most Fellows, the year passes far more quickly than anticipated and before they know it, they are the ones being consulted by potential applicants eager to hear their experience and advice.

**Choosing to Participate.** The first step in participating in the AFP is learning about the program. Fellows most often learned of the program from a colleague (32%) or past/present Fellow (16%). Fellows’ reasons for participating in the AFP were fairly consistent. The most commonly noted reason for participating was a desire to learn more about the breadth of University operations and leadership. Many of the Fellows over the past decade already had long careers (an average of 15 years) at Penn State prior to the Fellowship and were looking to branch out. Fellows were interested in learning how to bring the right people to the table to address an issue, bring data to bear on a question, and get buy-in from colleagues. They wanted to observe different leadership and management styles. The encouragement of supervisors and colleagues, some of whom had served as Fellows previously, was an important motivating and confidence-building factor for some Fellows.

Mentors elected to participate in the program because they saw it as part of their role or responsibility as a University leader or as a way to give back. Ken said, *“I think it's one of our fundamental responsibilities as a leader. . . to help nurture future leaders at the University”* and Tom recalled, *“I had three or four really good mentors in my career, so. . . it's just kind of giving back”.* Many noted their respect for the administrator in charge of the program as a motivating reason. Mentors also talked about the satisfaction they felt in working with the Fellows and helping them to develop as leaders. Ken observed, *“Usually you're tapping into a person's passion and their spirit. . . . It's just a fun relationship, you know, and it's enjoyable to watch people grow; to see how they're trying new things.”*

**Working with a Mentor.** Before undertaking any endeavor, it is as important to know where you want to go as it is to know how you will get there. Participants in the AFP chose the program because they believed it would help achieve their goals. Some Fellows entered the program with specific goals in mind (e.g., preparing to be a strong candidate for a particular job), but others did not. Regardless of where Fellows begin, “clarifying and articulating learning goals is indispensable to the success of a mentoring relationship” (Zachary & Fischler, 2011). Each Mentor approached the goal-setting experience in a unique way. Shirley recalled:

*[My Mentor] said, ‘Let me create for you the kind of environment that you need to achieve your personal goals, but we know you are going to be a significant contributor to our organization.’ And that was, that was just an incredibly mind-blowing thing for him to say.*

The one constant was that the Mentors saw it as the Fellows’ responsibility to make productive use of the year. To maximize their success, Fellows should be independent, motivated learners. Michelle noted, *“It was pretty much self-directed and I think that's really an important thing for Fellows to understand. It is what you make it. . . . Your Mentor isn't going to do this for you. You have to do it yourself.”*

The first few weeks of the Fellowship offer an important opportunity for the Mentor and Fellow to work together to establish preliminary goals for the year. Fellows’ experiences suggest that this is not happening in a consistent and structured manner. Most Mentors and Fellows did not engage in formal goal-setting or planning activities; however they did typically begin with a frank conversation about the Fellows’ expectations and the Mentors’ suggestions for achieving them. Formal meetings between the Mentor and Fellow varied from weekly to monthly.

All Mentors included their Fellows in their senior staff meetings and encouraged them to meet individually with all of the units’ senior staff. Fellows were provided with access to the Mentors’ calendars and were permitted to attend, at their choosing, all but the most confidential discussions. Mentors felt that the most important things they could do for a Fellow was to provide access and to be candid and honest.

In return, Mentors wanted their Fellows to be enthusiastic, engaged, and trustworthy. Some best practices included:

* Providing Fellows with context and expectations prior to meetings and/or debriefing with them afterwards (time permitting – no one did this every time)
* Having explicit, periodic conversations about the Fellows’ progress toward their goals
* Including Fellows in various service activities outside of the University, such as attending national meetings where the Mentor was presenting
* Traveling with their Fellows to Penn State campuses

Travel time emerged as an important, informal meeting time for Mentors and Fellows. Whether it was time spent in cars and airports or simply walking across campus to attend a meeting, these unscheduled moments provided unique opportunities for Fellows to speak candidly with their Mentors. Talking about the importance of this, Shirley recalled, “*[My Mentor] and I traveled a lot together . . . He was always asking me questions and it was those questions that helped me to frame and to further fine tune what my goals were.”*

**Meetings, Activities, and Events.** A core educational component of the AFP experience is attending meetings – standing committees, ad hoc committees and task forces, and unit leadership. In addition, Fellows are encouraged to schedule one-on-one meetings with a wide variety of University leaders to learn about their units and their roles, and to attend University-wide events and leadership/management development activities. Survey findings revealed that some activities are engaged in by all Fellows, while others are less universal. For example, 100% of survey respondents indicated that they had attended meetings of the President’s Council, Board of Trustees, and Faculty Senate. Interestingly, although a number of Fellows interviewed for this project expressed a desire for a more formalized “curriculum” including practical workshops, Fellows did not attend available programs at a high rate. For example, only 16% reported attending the Penn State Emerging Leaders Program and none indicated that they took advantage of the Excellence in Management series (see Appendix C, Q14-16 for a list of activities engaged in by Fellows). There are a number of potential reasons for this, including timing, travel requirements (for Hershey Fellows), lack of communication about such opportunities, and perceptions about the utility of such programs, but this study did not address those questions. Moving forward, this could be an important area for additional research.

**Engagement with Other Fellows.** A number of Fellows felt that an important aspect of their Fellowship year was their engagement with other Fellows. Although the current typical cohort of three is small, the opportunity to learn from other participants was significant for many, and several noted that sharing office space facilitated that exchange. Brenda recalled:

*[Sharing on office with the other Fellows] was a wonderful opportunity because they came from all walks of life at the University. . . . I got the opportunity to see what they went through, but also to participate in the meetings and functions that they were involved in. . . . So not only did I have the opportunity through my Mentor, I also had opportunities through their Mentors, on a more limited scale. And then we would chat and share observations and experiences.*

Fellows that were not at University Park full-time or who did not share office space had less interaction with their cohort, and expressed disappointment at missing this valuable learning opportunity.

**Projects.** Many Fellows worked on one or more significant projects during their Fellowship year and perceptions of the utility of these projects varied. While the wide range of meetings attended by Fellows provides breadth of experience, projects are a mechanism to provide depth in a specific area(s). As in discussions of the college curriculum, the optimal balance between breadth and depth is debatable. For some Fellows, projects provided an important way to feel like active and contributing members of the Mentor’s staff. Committee Member Ruth noted that projects gave them something to *“sink their teeth into and feel that the things they are learning, they could apply”*. This tangible task helped many Fellows to combat the lack of direction they felt.

Some Mentors saw projects as a method to give Fellows an opportunity to use their skills and contribute to the unit. In discussing how he approached the possibility of a project with Fellows, one Mentor described the conversation in the following way:

*I say, 'Look, you shouldn't feel guilty about this [being in the Fellowship]. If you want to, after you get to know the organization a little bit, if you want to sink your teeth into a couple of different places so you have some sort of project you are working on. . . that's fine.' But I think there is a little bit of guilt sometimes, about 'Gee, I don't feel like I am contributing now to Penn State like I was in my old role.'*

While some Mentors and Fellows saw projects as critical components of the Fellowship experience, others saw them as a distraction. When asked by her Mentor if she wanted to take on a project, Nancy responded, *“You know, for heaven's sake, I have done projects for all my life. No, I want to take this year just to learn from you.”* Some Mentors described projects that had made an important impact, while others indicated that they had yet to see anything significant come of these efforts.

**Program Alumni.** Both Fellows and Mentors felt that program alumni could be more engaged and saw a continued role for alumni Fellows that would allow the University to benefit from their experience regardless of whether their jobs changed. Mentor George:

*Even if people don't then elevate themselves to other roles, we ought to find some way to continue to benefit from the experience these people had. . . . I would actually love the idea of bringing in past Administrative Fellows and saying, ‘I'd just like to bounce this off of you, given your experience and insight.’ But I don't think we do enough of that.*

Fellows also felt that there should be more regular, formal interaction between current and past Fellows.

**Importance of Mentors’ Staff.** Fellows’ experiences are influenced by a variety of people. In particular, the Mentor’s direct reports and administrative staff play important roles in the Fellowship experience and can serve as informal mentors. Anna suggested, “*Mentors should set an expectation with their organization that the Administrative Fellow is a Fellow to the organization, not just a Fellow to the vice president.”* In reflecting on what he could do better as a Mentor, George said:

*So I've had people come to me to say, ‘Why is so and so appearing in X meeting?’ Or ‘I didn't know you asked so and so.’ So I'm always having to fend off that, which has told me that [my staff] don't fully appreciate the Administrative Fellowships. . . . I have some [staff] who are far less enamored with the program than others, and they’re a little resistant and I need to both prepare them and lay out some expectations about this. Why we're doing this, this is what I expect of you in terms of your contribution to make sure this is a good experience for this person, and in fact if we do it the right way we should benefit as an organization.*

**Differences by Race and Gender.** Fellows’ experiences in and perceptions of the program did not appear to vary by race, ethnicity, or minority status. Because only a single male Fellow and single female Mentor were interviewed for this project, and because the survey did not ask for demographic information in order to protect confidentiality in this small population, it was not possible to explore gender differences in this study. For a helpful overview of issues related to gender in mentoring relationships, see O’Brien, Biga, Kessler, and Allen (2010).

### The Mentoring Relationship

**Mentor-Fellow Fit.** When mentoring relationships are assigned rather than evolving organically, the “fit” between a mentor and protégé is uncertain. Mentors felt themselves able to work with a wide variety of potential Fellows, but emphasized the importance of selecting Fellows with the right attitude. This attitude was variously described as positive, assertive, curious, collaborative, and trustworthy. Fellows acknowledged the importance of fit – 84% considered it somewhat or very important – and felt that the Selection Committee did a good job of pairing Mentors and Fellows and that their relationship with their Mentor was generally a positive one. Ninety-five percent of Fellows reported having a good or very good fit with their Mentors.

**Mentor Engagement.** Not every person is prepared to mentor. Mentors should have an appropriate skill set, be engaged in the process, and be invested in the protégé. Fellows were generally very positive about the level of commitment their Mentors had to the program and to Fellows’ professional development. A small proportion, however, felt that their Mentor was not fully engaged. This deficiency was often put in the context of there not being explicit or well-communicated expectations for Mentors. Fellow Sandra said:

*[I would recommend] making sure that the administrator at that level is really, really interested in taking someone on and understands what that word mentor means. And I think in some ways [my Mentor] could say he did it, because he put me with people who really did take me under their wings.*

The importance of having a program administrator that they could talk to about difficulties in the mentoring relationship was noted by Fellows, Mentors, and Committee Members.

### Program Design

**Recruitment and Selection of Fellows.** The selection of Fellows is a competitive process and the AFP represents a significant University investment in the development of a relatively small group of individuals. Selecting Fellows that will take full advantage of the experience is critically important. Mentors wanted Fellows who were self-directed, open-minded, energetic, and collaborative. The importance of seeking people who saw the program as an opportunity rather than as an escape route was particularly noted by several Mentors. Fellows focused on the importance of curiosity, of going into the program as a learner, and of being open to new experiences.

The importance of identifying Fellows at the right point in their career to best benefit from the program and the difficulty of recruiting them was an issue that emerged primarily in discussions with Mentors. Finding the appropriate balance between experience and potential for growth was a balancing point noted by more than one study participant. Some felt that Fellows who already held advanced administrative positions did not stand to gain much from the program.In counterpoint, such Fellows felt that they were uniquely prepared to make the most of the experience because they already had the context and understanding that less-experienced Fellows lack.

The majority of Mentors were satisfied with the quality of the Fellows they had worked with and felt that the selection process worked well. However, there were some concerns that the pool of potential candidates was not as deep as it should be and that the quality of Fellows was uneven. Some Mentors expressed uncertainty about the program’s record of identifying the best candidates and acknowledged that they and other University leaders should take more responsibility for identifying and encouraging potential applicants.

Although not a significant theme among the majority of interviewees, some felt that limiting the program to faculty and staff in standing positions and promoting it primarily to women and minorities excluded potential applicants that could benefit from the program and, in turn, benefit the University. While there are inherent difficulties in including fixed-term faculty and staff in an immersive year-long program, it is increasingly important for the University to consider ways in which to substantively support the professional development of this growing group of employees. In regards to the program’s focus on diversity, the AFP does not exclude White men from participating; however, women and minorities are particularly encouraged to apply. Data are not available to determine how many non-minority White men may have applied or considered applying over the years. While the obstacles to including fixed-term employees are primarily logistical (e.g., what happens if their job is not there after the program?), the implication of focusing on women and minorities is more philosophically tied to the program’s mission and goals and should be considered in that light.

**Mentor Selection.** In discussing the selection of Mentors, both Mentors and Fellows were interested in the possibility of expanding the pool of Mentors. Specifically mentioned was the possibility of including additional members of President’s Council, deans, and chancellors and of selecting individuals based on their mentoring qualities rather than basing it solely on position. Good Mentors were described as having *“demonstrated leadership,”* and *“the ability to coach.”* They were also *“change agents,” “well-respected,”* and *“known for giving very development, deliberate, intentional feedback”.*

Another theme related to Mentor selection was the limitations of the single-mentor model. Both Fellows and Mentors indicated that exposure to multiple mentors and multiple units could enrich the overall experience. Jessica indicated, “*I would love to have had multiple Mentors. I would like to have spent . . . three months with X and three months with Y and three months with Z.”*

**Mentor Preparation.** Sixty-three percent of Fellows reported that their Mentor was well or extremely well prepared to help them make the most of their experience; 32% indicated that their Mentor was somewhat prepared and 5% felt that their Mentor was not at all prepared. Fellows were very positive about the quality of Mentors that have been involved in the program, but both Mentors and Fellows believed that Mentor preparation could be improved. Fellow Mike asked:

*What is the Mentor understanding and do they know what they are supposed to be doing with their mentees to make sure that the mentee gets everything out of it over the year? From my impression with [my Mentor], I think he didn't quite get all that.*

Most new Mentors had a general understanding of the expectation that Fellows would be shadowing them and that the Fellow should be given entrée into their networks. Mentor Mark said, *“[The program administrator] is very good at explaining what the role is and what the expectations are; what the goals of the program are….I thought I was well prepared.”* George however, noted that “*I sort of learned by doing it and that was not a good thing.”* The Guidelines for Administrative Fellows and Mentors (Appendix D) provides a list of common experiences recommended for all Fellows. Fellows were aware of this list, but at least one Mentor was not.

Not all Mentors felt that more preparation was necessary and in general, Mentors believed that they knew how to mentor others. Some Mentors did express a desire for greater preparation and support, and for clearer expectations. Tom, for example, suggested that it might be helpful to have a kickoff meeting with Mentors to talk about ground rules, learning outcomes, and best practices. In reflecting on why this wasn’t happening, Tom said, *“there may be a presumption that vice presidents either, 1) know how to do this already or 2) don’t have time to [attend another meeting].”* Mentors generally seemed uncertain about what Fellows were told coming into the program and some felt that knowing this would help ensure that everyone in the program was on the same page.

Mentors and Fellows felt that selecting Mentors who were new to their positions was detrimental to both the Mentor and the Fellow.

**Length of the Program.** The yearlong, full-time commitment of the AFP was a dominant area of discussion in all of the interviews. The program length was established in order to: 1) allow participants to be involved in a unit through a full academic cycle, 2) provide time for trust and communication to be developed between the Mentor and Fellow, and 3) provide both breadth and depth for the Fellows. Fellows were not unanimous, but generally saw the length and full-time nature of the program as a strength. Mentors typically were more open to considering either a shorter overall program or less immersive structure, in which Fellows participated in program activities for a certain number of days a month while remaining in their positions. The time commitment was noted as particularly problematic in recruiting high-productivity pre-tenured faculty. Mentor David observed, “*If you are running a lab you can't just say to your grad students, 'Well, I am going to go be an Administrative Fellow. See you next year.’”*

Reservations about the length of the program were often tied to concerns about its lack of structure. Several participants posited that the University should consider either shortening the program or increasing the amount of structure for participants. In arguing for more structure or a shorter program, Mentor Don observed, *“It was, you know, almost a 12-month shadowing experience. . . . Shadowing is interesting, but unless you are really engaged in the work, it has very significant limitations.”* Some of the study participants thought that moving away from the full-time commitment and focusing on a more training-oriented model would open the doors to a greater and more diverse range of participants. Committee Member Helen explained:

*So that's one of the reasons that I have not applied for it. . . . I don't necessarily want to give [my job] up for a year. . . . So if there is a possibility to engage in a way. . . [where] I didn't necessarily have to give up my life, I think that would be interesting.*

Each of the Mentors acknowledged that the time commitment necessary to serve as a Mentor was significant, which may be related to their beliefs that the program should be shortened or that Fellows be given a more concrete task. Shortening the program was also noted as a way to increase the number of participants by having more than one cycle of Fellows per year, limit the consequences of poor Mentor-Fellow fit, and encourage more campus participation.

**Structure.** The relative absence of required program activities or a curriculum was one of the most talked about components of the AFP. Opinions on the appropriate structure for the program ran from no structure at all to an academy-type structure or curriculum, and appeared unrelated to Fellows’ or Mentors’ roles (e.g., faculty, administrator, or staff member). Brenda recalled a common frustration among Fellows, *“I found myself with a lot of time on my hands with no constructive purpose to do something with. That was one of the most disappointing points of the Fellowship and one of the most frustrating parts of the Fellowship.”* In contrast, Nancy wasn’t interested in more structure, *“because then the structure means that someone has imposed a structure for you to go through and to learn. And this is the year, for me, free from my teaching, free from my other responsibilities, just to learn.”* Like Nancy, many of the Fellows and Mentors felt that the flexibility of the program was one of its key strengths, but others saw it as the program’s greatest flaw. In questioning the unstructured nature of the AFP, Mentor Ken observed, *“[The program] shows you how complex things are, the nuances of the Trustees, the President's Council, and all that. That's exposure, but I don't know if it's development.”*

For the Fellows and Mentors that desired more structure, the nature of that structure varied, but there was general agreement that it should not be too rigid. Fellow Mike said, “*It was good to attend [meetings] and learn from whatever topic was discussed that day, but it would have been nice to have something that would be more . . . like a curriculum.”*

Among other suggestions were:

* Facilitated sessions with the Mentor and Fellow focused on goal setting and planning for the year
* Focused training (e.g., workshops or webinars) on issues like strategic planning, communication, human resource activities, and finances
* Structured time for Fellows to debrief together and with prior Fellows

**Continuous Improvement.** Those interviewees who had been associated with the program for a long time noted that prior evaluations of the program had identified many of the same issues that were being discussed this time around and that prior recommendations were not perceived to have been considered or acted on. Shirley said:

*I think that the fact that there have been so many recommendations made by three previous groups that have not been implemented or enacted in a very strategic way has been a problem. But this would not be the first University committee, or the last, that's [made unimplemented] recommendations - I'm not saying there is any malevolence or they're swept under the rug. It's just that implementing new recommendations, new ideas is time consuming, labor intensive, and [the University has] a full plate.*

While both Fellows and Mentors were positive about the program, several suggested that a more formalized evaluation, including the evaluation of Mentors, should be completed at the end of every year and that the diversity of Penn State’s leadership diversity and the career paths of past Fellows be documented regularly.

### Program Outcomes

**Overview.** Fellows were asked a series of survey questions that asked them to judge the efficacy of the AFP in meeting its objectives. Eighty-four percent of Fellows felt that the program met or exceeded their expectations and 79% were satisfied or very satisfied with their ability to meet their personal goals for the program. Fellows were asked to rate the program on each outcome using a six-point scale where: 1 = very ineffective, 2=ineffective, 3=somewhat ineffective, 4=somewhat effective, 5=effective, and 6=very effective. On average, Fellows rated the program as at least somewhat effective, and typically effective or very effective in each objective (Table 3). Fellows generally rated the program higher on providing learning opportunities than on providing opportunities for practice. The highest rating was for the program’s ability to enhance understanding of the environment in which University decisions are made.

Table 3. Fellows’ Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the AFP.

| Objective | Mean | Standard Deviation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Enhancing understanding of the environment in which University decisions are made | 5.74 | 0.45 |
| Providing a better understanding of the challenges of higher education administration | 5.58 | 0.61 |
| Increasing awareness of the complexity of issues facing higher education | 5.53 | 0.70 |
| Providing opportunities for learning about the decision-making process | 5.47 | 0.70 |
| Providing opportunities for participation in decision-making processes | 4.16 | 1.50 |
| Providing opportunities for participation in program management | 3.89 | 1.56 |

**Knowledge of the University.** Penn State is one of the largest and most complex institutions of higher education in the world. Although most Fellows came to the program after many years at the University, a primary goal for each was an increased understanding of the different facets of the University and their connections. Reflecting on her program experience, Carol recalled, *“I looked at the entire University operation and I delved into a lot of different areas. . . . I sought out opportunities for those areas of Penn State that I wanted to know more about.”* Mentors likewise felt that the opportunity to increase Fellows’ knowledge of the breadth of the University was a foundational function of the AFP. Different Fellows identified different growth areas depending on their mentoring unit, their personal experiences, and their projects, but many mentioned increased understanding of the Commonwealth Campuses as one of the most important things they learned.

**Administrative Understanding.** One of the primary goals of the AFP is the development of Fellows’ understanding of the roles and skills of administrators, and of the complex and interconnected environment in which decisions are made. When asked about their goals for participating in the program, Mentors were unanimous in this perspective. Scott noted:

*I would hope that they would see how the organization hums along, all the reasons why we are so complex and we're so complicated. To actually see it as a greater whole is very important, and to be able to go back to their unit and see how that unit participates and contributes to the greater organization is very, very important.*

Based on the experiences of the Fellows interviewed for this project, the program has achieved notable success in this area. Sandra said, “*“I gained a healthier understanding of the complications of running an institution of this size.”* Fellows talked extensively about the importance of being exposed to different areas of the University, of considering big-picture questions, and of being exposed to the styles of various University executives. Linda said, *“You can sit back and observe what's successful and what's not”* Similarly, Sharon reflected, “*I know how to be civil, I know how to be an advocate without aggravating people because I learned from the best and I realize that and I am so appreciative of everything that I learned. . . from my many mentors.”*

While not an explicit goal of the AFP, an important outcome noted by many of the participants was a greater appreciation for the work, dedication, and commitment of University leaders. Carol observed:

*I have gained a better understanding and better appreciation for the many demands placed on the senior administrators at Penn State. These folks were almost nonstop workers, up early, out late. . . . they really earn their salaries and they really appear immensely dedicated to their jobs.*

Mike reflected on his change of perception*, “[I used to think that] the top, the Old Main building, they don't really think about us. They are just doing whatever they want. And at the end, it was a whole different point of view.”*

**Professional Advancement.** Not every Fellow enters the program hoping to get a new job afterwards, and most seemed to understand that the expectation was that they would return to their original units at the completion of the program. Carol observed, “*Penn State's doing a better job at saying to Fellow applicants, this isn't guaranteeing you a promotion, this is guaranteeing you a wonderful opportunity that you need to make the most of*.” All of the survey respondents agreed that the Fellowship helps participants (in general) to compete for positions at higher levels of administration (Figure 3) and 89% felt that participation in the program had opened doors to advancement in their own Penn State careers (somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree). Kim credited the program with having a decisive role in her career progression:

*I don't want to be overly-dramatic, but it changed my life. . . . It totally changed my career path. And I am doing different things that I never thought that I would be doing and I think I have much more, very different and exciting opportunities, that I don’t think I would have had before.*

When surveyed about their advancement following the end of the Fellowship, 47% indicated that they had advanced in some way[[6]](#footnote-7) within the first year after completing the Fellowship (Figure 4). Based on their survey self-reports, most Fellows (63%) reported advancing in higher education administration[[7]](#footnote-8) after participating in the program. Based on a review of the job titles and career progressions of all Fellows since the program’s inception, an estimated 79% advanced in higher education administration. Further, many Fellows who had not changed positions post-Fellowship did take on more responsibility in their existing positions. Among the post-Fellowship job titles of past Fellows are deans, assistant deans, vice provosts, and executive/senior directors. While such evidence supports the efficacy of the AFP, it is not possible to ascertain whether these Fellows – all high-achieving employees with a demonstrated interest in administration – would have advanced regardless of the AFP experience.

Fellows who participated in the Fellowship at least partly as a springboard to a new position but had not advanced, still saw value in the Fellowship experience. Anna captured this feeling when she said, *“My career was not advanced by my Fellowship experience, but my career was enhanced by my Fellowship experience.”* Fellows who had advanced in their careers post-Fellowship were generally more positive in their assessment of the AFP.

Mentors frequently mentioned and expressed concern with the expectation of Fellows that they would immediately advance upon completing the Fellowship. Committee Member John noted, “*A lot of times the timing just isn't right. You see that people are really great, but . . . there is just no position. The opportunity just isn't there.”* Both Mentors and Fellows, but particularly Mentors, felt that it was important to manage Fellows’ expectations in this regard. For example, some Mentors were concerned that Fellows expected a position to be created for them in the mentoring unit or thought that they would not have to compete for open positions. When asked whether having been a Fellow would make someone a more competitive job candidate for a position, one Mentor mused, *“That would be an edge, absolutely. But to say that this is a program that is designed for the next step. . . . I don't know. But I do think it's a great program, provided we're clear about the expectations.”* In general, Mentors seemed unclear about the messages that Fellows were getting about the expected outcomes of the program.

Although none of the Mentors described the Fellowship as a way to try out or identify potential new employees, several of them had brought prior Fellows into their units through competitive processes. In talking about this issue, Tom said:

*I don't think we want to be going around creating positions just so that a Fellow can land in a new spot . . . and at the same time, after they've spent a year kind of following you around as a vice president and so forth, you know about them and they know about you and so it makes a hire easier, because you've basically been interviewing them for a year.*

**Better Employees and University Citizens.** As described previously, both Fellows and Mentors spoke to the importance of the AFP in providing an experience that prepares Fellows to advance and also enhances their ability to serve the University in their existing[[8]](#footnote-9) roles. Fellow Jessica recalled:

*I felt that even if I didn't go anywhere further with it, that I would be able to contribute to the department. I would be able to help my students. I would be able to help the Senate. I would be able to contribute more meaningfully because I knew more about the institution.*

Mentor Scott observed, *“Anyone can aspire to leadership, but it could be leadership because you become a more active member of the unit.”* All of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Fellowship helped participants to become more effective in their existing positions. Reflecting on returning to her position, Dorothy said:

*I think others felt that I had knowledge, I had valuable knowledge that they liked knowing I had and it helped them. . . . We would have staff meetings . . . and people would . . . make comments where they really thought the upper administration didn't understand or didn't do things the way that they thought things should be done. I would have the opportunity to say, 'No, it doesn't work like that.' Or, 'No, there's a bigger picture here. You're thinking small, you are thinking just us, but this is how it impacts everybody.' And I think it was my experience as a Fellow and seeing those things, I could bring it to others and then help them to try to see things . . . from another side.*

Some Fellows credited the AFP with opening up other opportunities for professional and personal growth, such as participating on key University committees. They credited these opportunities largely to the knowledge and skills they gained as Fellows, as well as to the connections they made during the program. Both Mentors and Fellows felt that the alumni Fellows were in a unique position to contribute to the University, no matter what their current role or title, and that they were underutilized post-Fellowship. Committee Member John said:

*I feel very comfortable that I can go to a former Fellow, and say, 'Look, this is a very sensitive issue. It's going to be very controversial. A lot of confidences need to be in place here. And you've been through this and I think you could do a really outstanding job of either chairing the committee or being an influential member of the committee’. . . . A lot of faculty and staff, absent the Fellowship experience, you couldn't ask them to do this.*

**Professional Network.** Many Fellows pointed to the networks established during their Fellowship year as one of the most important outcomes of the experience. For example, Brenda said:

*Getting to know the people, getting to know the structures of the University, how people intersect with one another, who has influence over whom. . . . I now had connections in an area of the University in which I previously had no connection. I could pick up the phone or send an email and people gave me the time of day in a nanosecond. That was the best thing I got out of the Administrative Fellowship.*

**Benefit to the Mentoring Unit.** While the primary focus of the AFP is the development of Fellows, benefits to the Mentoring unit are an important part of unit buy-in. Because a number of prior Fellows have gone on to advance in their mentoring units, it raises the question of whether Mentors see the program as a recruiting ground and whether that affects the Fellowship experience. If some Mentors see the program in this light, they did not explicitly disclose that in the interviews. When asked about the benefits of participation to the Mentoring unit, several Mentors described the Fellows as a sounding board. Other benefits described by Mentors included having Fellows help in preparing for meetings (e.g., by researching topics or benchmarking) and completing projects that would not have been taken on otherwise.

**The Price of Participation.** Temporarily removing key employees from positions of significant responsibility can leave a void that sending units struggle to fill. For some Fellows, separating from their home unit during the Fellowship year was stressful. For faculty this can mean leaving ongoing research projects, graduate students, and collaborations. For staff, it often means leaving colleagues short-handed. Patricia recalled, “*It's very hard. Because I mean you work for years to build relationships and to put processes in place . . . and then you're just handing it over and praying.”*

In order to fully benefit from the AFP, Fellows are encouraged to separate entirely from their home units for the Fellowship year and many Fellows do not have difficulty doing so. Brenda said, “*I did not have problems separating from my prior role. The office understood what I was attempting to accomplish because it benefited not only me but the office and the University, so it was a win/win/win.”* For some, the opportunity to separate was seen as a type of sabbatical, where they were still working, but in a way that rejuvenated them and introduced them to new opportunities and areas for growth. But for other Fellows, conflicting loyalties were a significant source of tension. Fellows generally, but not always, credited the AFP with sending clear messages to the units about the expectations for separation (faculty felt this was less clear than staff), but did not think that this was always realistic. Mike gave an example:

*I wasn't even done with my Administrative Fellowship, it was done in June, well in Summer 1 there was a class, and I needed to teach it. There was no way around it. So I was teaching a class . . . twice a week for six weeks while I was finishing my Administrative Fellowship. . . . So, I was like, here I am again. I am doing two jobs for the next month and a half. But we have to do it. I mean there was no way around it.*

A number of Fellows spoke of the guilt they felt over leaving their colleagues to pick up the slack in their absence and some Fellows were unwilling to separate because of their concerns about decisions being made in their absence.

For faculty, the Fellowship was often viewed in terms of the trade-off between their administrative goals and progress toward promotion in the faculty ranks. Faculty Fellows are typically tenured associate professors, but that is not the only promotional hurdle that faculty face. Jessica stated:

*I knew that taking the Fellowship as a faculty member, meant . . . you were taking a year out of your trajectory toward full professorship. . . . I had to think very carefully about what it meant in terms of my reaching full professorship. So, I decided to go ahead, knowing that it would probably have some implications.*

Unit support was an important factor in determining the level of separation difficulty faced by Fellows. Mentor Mark observed, “*If . . . a department head . . . doesn't really understand the purpose of the program or simply isn't as supportive, it can be difficult, awkward.”* For Fellows who were encouraged to participate in the program by their supervisors, separation was easier to achieve. Kim described the importance of her supervisor’s support: *“She encouraged me and said you need to do this. . . . On my own, I would not have done it because there was just too much going on.”*

**Guilt.** While both Fellows and Mentors spoke to the benefits of the program in producing better University citizens, those who had not advanced often felt guilty. There was a feeling that they had let down the AFP or their Mentor, although they were quick to point out that these were their own feelings and not feelings projected on them by others. Fellow Sandra illustrated this perception among some former Fellows:

*And the fact that I'm in the same role . . . I sometimes worry that I may, it may look like I let them down . . . . [University leader] was a great supporter and when I would see him I would think, ‘Is he disappointed in me?’*

In acknowledging this perception, Mentors and Committee Members focused on the great importance of communicating to Fellows that they make contributions in other ways and that they should feel pride in those contributions rather than guilt over not being promoted. David affirmed, “*I am not any less proud of the ones that didn't go on to some leadership role than I am the ones that did.”*

### Continuing Need for Program

Does there continue to be a need for the AFP? Given the investment of University resources, both fiscal and human, in the AFP and the evolving workplace environment in the decades since the program’s inception, this is a reasonable question. Only one of the 34 subjects interviewed for this project suggested that the program should be discontinued, though the participants had differing perspectives on the benefits of the program. In terms of leadership development, interviewees saw the program as an important avenue for employees to gain breadth of knowledge about the University, expand their networks, and observe University leadership closely to determine if such a role might be a good fit in the future. Knowledge and understanding emerged as more significant outcomes than practical skills. Both Mentors and Fellows perceived the program as a way to identify and develop leaders from within. Mentor Mark observed, “*That's the value to the University . . . it should accelerate the progression towards being a viable candidate for a leadership position.”* However, there were varying perspectives on how the program might best accomplish this goal moving forward.

While some interviewees focused on the program primarily from a general leadership development perspective, others focused on its role in diversifying the University’s administrative ranks. Mentor George noted, “*I think that healthy organizations grow their leaders from within. I think it's a marvelous thing to advance, particularly women and minorities, where we're still challenged as an institution to find the degree of equity that we should.”* Penn State’s leadership has become more diverse over the past decade, but few would argue that we have come far enough or that directed efforts toward recruiting and retaining diverse leaders are no longer needed. Although study participants were almost unanimous in their commendation of the AFP, a number did question whether it was the best approach to preparing diverse leaders given its lack of structure, small numbers, and significant cost per participant.

## Conclusions & Recommendations

The AFP is a well-respected program both internally and externally. It has provided a model for similar programs at other institutions around the country (B. Bowen, personal communication, March 21, 2014). In this study, both Mentors and Fellows focused on the importance of growing University leadership from within and for providing unique opportunities for a diverse group of faculty and staff members to learn about Penn State’s complexities and its leadership. Participants were nearly unanimous in their belief that the University’s leadership is too homogenous and directed efforts were necessary to diversify. Most saw the AFP as continuing to play a role in that effort.

### Status of Previous Recommendations

In 2004, the Administrative Fellows Review Committee made a number of recommendations. These were reviewed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and some were implemented while others were deemed unfeasible under the existing model. The current status of these recommendations is summarized here.

1. **Maintain relationships with the Office of the President and the CFW.** These relationships have been maintained, although the connection to the CFW has weakened over the years. Interviewees did not express concern over this weakening, indicating that the existing relationship was sufficient and that the leadership of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs was appreciated.
2. **Better educate University leaders about the AFP as a professional development opportunity for identified leaders in their areas. Enhance marketing and recruitment efforts to facilitate recruitment.** A print brochure and program web site are available, however it is not clear that the recommended targeted recruitment, public recognition of Fellows’ achievements, or assessment of marketing materials has occurred.
3. **Develop a formal leadership-learning component.** Not implemented.
4. **Provide consistency and structure for Fellows and Mentors.** This recommendation has been partially implemented, but is still a sticking point. A checklist of activities and core experiences has been developed and provided to Fellows, and projects are completed at the discretion of the Mentor and Fellow. Former Fellows have been incorporated into the program informally (e.g., former Fellows sometimes host a gathering for incoming Fellows).
5. **Better utilize the leadership capacity of the alumni Fellows.** Former Fellows are included on key University committees and task forces, but the perception among many study participants is that they are still underutilized.
6. **Involve the alumni Fellows in supporting the Steering Committee and the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs.** Past Fellows are included on the Steering Committee and are active recruiters for the program. They have not been involved in developing program materials (e.g., leadership programs or readings) or in a formal orientation program as these have not been pursued.
7. **Assess the AFP on a regular schedule.** Fellows participate in an exit interview with the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs. This intensive evaluation is the first one since the 2004 evaluation. This level of evaluation is not necessary or desirable on a more frequent basis, but should be supported with systematic, regular feedback from Mentors as well as Fellows.

**Recommendations for Future Consideration.** Diverse perspectives were provided on how to improve the AFP. While few things were unanimously agreed upon, several ideas were mentioned frequently enough to warrant consideration moving forward.

1. **Clarify Program Goals.** If the program’s goals truly are administrative advancement, it may not be appropriate to recruit participants who want the learning experience but desire to stay on their pre-Fellowship path. If developing better overall University citizens is the goal, then the University may wish to highlight the contributions and achievements of all Fellows and not just those that advanced in administrative positions.
2. **Manage Expectations.** Clearly, repeatedly, and effectively communicate that the program does not guarantee advancement. Although Fellows clearly understood that advancement was not guaranteed, Mentors felt the pressure of their expectations for advancement.
3. **Structure.** Consider adding an optional curriculum focused on specific administrative skillsets (e.g., budgeting, mentoring, and leadership). This could be through existing programs such as the Academic Leadership Forum, or Center for Workplace Learning & Performance certificate programs.
4. **Recruit.** Encourage vice presidents, chancellors, and deans to actively identify and encourage “rising stars” to apply for the program. Work with marketing professionals to tell the program’s story and market to desired demographic groups (e.g., women, minorities, tenured faculty, and units that haven’t been active in the AFP).
5. **Orient Mentors.** This could be something as simple as a tip sheet on “best practices for effective mentoring” or a short meeting prior to a new Fellowship year with that year’s Mentor cohort. Make sure Mentors know what Fellows are told, as well as what they might think despite what they are told. Do not select Mentors that are new in their position.
6. **Create Mentoring Units.** Mentors are busy people and their direct reports often spend significant time working with the Fellows. Communicate the goals and importance of the program to the direct reports and encourage their input so that they feel part of the process.
7. **Put the Fellow in the Driver’s Seat.** Communicate to Fellows that they must be the drivers of the process. Provide practical advice on how to reasonably press a Mentor if they don’t feel that they are getting what they need. Consider regular meetings with small groups of past Fellows who can provide support and advice.
8. **Set Goals and Monitor Progress.** Require Fellows to develop formal program goals and a plan for achieving those goals in collaboration with their Mentor, recognizing that these may evolve during the Fellowship. Schedule regular meetings between the Mentor and Fellow to review progress towards goals. Consider including the Mentors’ other direct reports as appropriate.
9. **Consider other Models.** Every program model has strengths and benefits. Other models that might be worth considering include “leadership academies” where people stay in their positions and periodically participate in structured experiences, part-time or half-year Fellowships, and campus or college mini-Fellowships.
10. **Prioritize Activity List.** Review the list of activities in prior AFP evaluation recommendations and in the AFP guidelines to determine high-priority learning opportunities. Make sure that Fellows are centrally scheduled into priority activities.

### Areas for Future Research

The insertion of a Fellow into an established working group can create disruption if not handled appropriately. Anecdotal information suggests that there is an awkwardness created among staff working with Fellows who do not have relevant context or background, but may have knowledge that other staff are not privy to. No recommendations are made regarding this issue because it emerged outside of the study’s formal data collection process, but it is an area worth further consideration.

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## Appendix A: Similar University Programs

Harvard University, [Administrative Fellowship Program](http://diversity.harvard.edu/pages/fellowship)

* Participants: Mid-career professionals with at least five years’ work experience. In 2014-15, there are 22 administrative Fellows; 17 are Harvard Staff.
* Time: One year, full-time.
* Mentor: Fellows are placed to mid-management positions in various schools and departments throughout Harvard.
* Fellows will participate in a seminar series (in forms of seminars, lectures, and case studies) in addition to a full-time work assignment. The seminar series are designed to enhance management and administrative skills and to assist in self-assessment and development.

Iowa State University, [Faculty Fellows Program](http://www.provost.iastate.edu/what-we-do/diversity/pfo/intern)

* Participants: Up to four full professors, with at least five years working at the University.
* Time: Two years, half time.
* Mentor: No information.
* The Faculty Fellow serves as part of the senior vice president and provost’s administrative team, providing leadership and project management support for a set of initiatives in the academic division surrounding faculty development.

The Ohio State University, [President’s and Provost’s Leadership Institute](https://hr.osu.edu/ole/ppli)

* Participants: About 10 tenure-track or clinical-track faculty members who do not currently hold significant leadership positions.
* Time: Part-time 4-month intensive version or 18-month option.
* Mentor: An experienced academic leader (18-month option only).
* The program consists of a series of experiential workshops with special attention to conflict, negotiation and difficult conversations and lunch presentations by university leaders.
* The primary goals of the institute are to create a pool of potential leaders from groups that traditionally have been underrepresented in key leadership roles and to develop leaders who can create a culture that is supportive of all faculty members.

Purdue University, [Provost Fellows](http://www.purdue.edu/provost/faculty/development/fellows.html)

* Participants: Up to five tenured faculty members.
* Time: Part time (0.5 FTE) for two semesters with salary savings returned to the departments.
* Mentor: No information.

Texas A&M University, [Administrative Fellow Program](http://advance.tamu.edu/index.php/activities/administrative-fellow-program.html)

* Participants: Up to three female tenured faculty members from the STEM fields.
* Time: Two semesters, part-time, (buy out one course per semester; $25,000 funding per person per year).
* Mentor: Senior administrators.
* The Administrative Fellow Program is funded by the National Science Foundation and hosted by the University’s ADVANCE program. Positions are developed specifically for this program with the expectation that many will become permanent, with the Fellows transitioning into permanent leadership positions.

Texas Tech University, [President’s Administrative Fellow Program](http://www.ttu.edu/administration/president/special/adminfellows.php)

* Participants: One tenured faculty member, with at least eight years work experience at the university.
* Time: Nine month, half time
* Mentor: The university president
* The fellow is assigned a major project and a series of multiple mini-tasks to complete. A written report is provided at the end of the fellowship.

The University of Alabama, [Leadership Academy](http://advancement.ua.edu/cqi/description.html)

* Participants: Up to 10 university faculty and staff.
* Time: One year, no appointment.
* Mentor: Senior administrators (e.g., deans and vice chancellors).
* Fellows have regular workshops, meetings, and socials. Fellows also participate in the SEC Academic Leaders Development program.

The University of Georgia, [SEC Academic Leadership Development Program](http://provost.uga.edu/index.php/resources/fellowships/administrative-fellows-program/)

* Participants: Up to four tenured or standing faculty members.
* Time: One year, no appointment.
* Mentor: Senior administrator or dean.
* Includes two three-day workshops focused on specific administrative topics.
* Is part of the SEC Academic Leaders Development Program; the SEC provides the workshops and the university designs the institutional component.

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, [Provost Fellows Program](http://provost.illinois.edu/fellows/)

* Participants: Two to three tenured faculty members.
* Time: Two years half time: 50% FTE in the Provost’s Office and 50% FTE in fellows’ home units.
* Mentor: Senior administrators in the provost’s office.
* Fellows participate in the CIC Academic Leadership Program during their appointment - three three-day seminars. Fellows also serve as members of the Provost’s Cabinet.

The University of Kansas, [Senior Administrative Fellows Program](http://facultydevelopment.ku.edu/senior-admin-fellows)

* Participants: Five to eight tenured faculty members.
* Time: Four hours per month, no appointment or release time.
* Mentor: Senior administrator.
* This program allows selected faculty to explore senior administration without having to take time away from teaching, service, or research.

## Appendix B: Interview Protocols

### Fellows’ Interview Protocol

1. Background information
   1. How did you learn about the program?
   2. What/where was your position when you became a fellow?
2. What attracted you to the Administrative Fellows Program?
3. What do think the University’s goals for the program are? What were your goals for your participation in the program? Did you and your Mentor discuss those goals (once, occasionally, regularly…)? Were those goals met?
4. How did you spend your time as a Fellow (e.g., core experiences, projects, coaching from former Fellows)?
   1. Who set the agenda (you or your Mentor)?
   2. How much structure was provided for you? (e.g., Did you do the “list” of things suggested by the program?)
   3. Did you have difficulty separating from your previous position for the year?
5. What did you gain from the Fellowship?
6. How has the Fellowship experience influenced your career at Penn State?
7. What were your most valuable experiences? What does the program do well?
8. Where could the program do better?
9. Do you feel that there is still a need for this program at Penn State? Why or why not?
10. After the Fellowship ended, what happened? For example, did you return to your prior position or to a promotion in the same or another unit?

### Mentors’ Interview Protocol

1. What made you want to serve as a Mentor?
2. What do think the University’s goals for the program are? What were your goals for your participation in the program? Did you and your Fellow(s) discuss those goals (once, occasionally, regularly…)? Were those goals met?
3. How good a job does the program do of identifying people with leadership potential? How could it do better?
4. How did you work with your Fellow?
   1. Who set the agenda (you or your Fellow)?
   2. How did you incorporate the Fellow into your staff?
5. What did you gain from the experience?
6. What did you get out of being a Mentor?
7. What does the program do well?
8. Where could the program do better?
9. Do you feel that there is still a need for this program at Penn State? Why or why not?

### Program Committee Members’ Group Interview Protocol

1. Background information
   1. How did you get involved with the Administrative Fellows Program?
   2. Why did you decide to serve on the program committee?
2. What are the University’s goals for the program? How have these evolved since you have been involved? Are these goals being met?
3. How good a job does the program do of identifying people with leadership potential? How could it do better?
4. How much structure and support are provided for the Mentor and Fellow?
5. What are the benefits of the program to Penn State?
6. What does the program do well?
7. Where could the program do better?
8. Do you feel that there is still a need for this program at Penn State? Why or why not?

## Appendix C: Detailed Survey Findings

\*Some percentages do not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Q1. How or from whom did you first learn about the Administrative Fellows Program?** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | 11% | Administrative Fellows web page | | | | | | |
|  | | 33% | Colleague | | | | | | |
|  | | 6% | Supervisor | | | | | | |
|  | | 17% | Past Fellow | | | | | | |
|  | | 6% | Member of the Fellowship committee | | | | | | |
|  | | 6% | *The Intercom* | | | | | | |
|  | | 6% | *The Faculty/Staff Newswire* | | | | | | |
|  | | 17% | Other: “current Fellow”, “Blannie Bowen”, “email” | | | | | | |
| **Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|  | | The Fellowship allows participants to become more effective in their existing positions. | | -- | -- | -- | -- | 42% | 58% |
|  | | The Fellowship helps participants to compete for positions at higher levels of administration in the University. | | -- | -- | -- | 47% | 21% | 32% |
| **Q3. How effective do you think the Administrative Fellows Program is in meeting the following objectives for participants?** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | Very Ineffective | Ineffective | Somewhat Ineffective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
|  | Increasing awareness of the complexity of issues facing higher education | | | -- | -- | -- | 11% | 26% | 63% |
|  | Enhancing understanding of the environment in which University decisions are made | | | -- | -- | -- | -- | 26% | 74% |
|  | Providing opportunities for learning about the decision-making process | | | -- | -- | -- | 11% | 32% | 58% |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Q3 continued. How effective do you think the Administrative Fellows Program is in meeting the following objectives for participants?** | | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | Very Ineffective | Ineffective | Somewhat Ineffective | Somewhat Effective | Effective | Very Effective |
|  | Providing opportunities for participation in decision-making processes | | | | 5% | 11% | 16% | 21% | 26% | 21% |
|  | Providing opportunities for participation in program management | | | | 11% | 5% | 26% | 16% | 26% | 16% |
|  | Providing a better understanding of the challenges of higher education administration | | | | -- | -- | -- | 5% | 32% | 63% |
| **Q4. To what extent would you agree that your Administrative Fellows experience opened doors to advancement in:** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|  | | Your career at Penn State? | | | -- | 11% | 28% | 28% | -- | 33% |
|  | | Your career at another college/university? | | | -- | 10% | -- | 20% | 50% | 20% |
|  | | Your career outside of higher education? | | | -- | 33% | -- | 33% | 17% | 17% |
| **Q5. To what extent did the Administrative Fellows Program meet your expectations?** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | 37% | Far exceeded expectations | | | | | | |
|  | | | 16% | Exceeded expectations | | | | | | |
|  | | | 32% | Equaled expectations | | | | | | |
|  | | | 16% | Short of expectations | | | | | | |
|  | | | -- | Far short of expectations | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Q6. Overall, to what extent were you satisfied with your ability to meet your personal goals for the program?** | | |
|  | 58% | Very satisfied |
|  | 21% | Satisfied |
|  | 16% | Somewhat satisfied |
|  | 5% | Somewhat dissatisfied |
|  | -- | Dissatisfied |
|  | -- | Very Dissatisfied |
| **Q7. How well-prepared was your Mentor to help you make the most of the Fellowship experience?** | | |
|  | 42% | Extremely well prepared |
|  | 21% | Well prepared |
|  | 32% | Somewhat prepared |
|  | 5% | Not at all prepared |
| **Q8. How would you describe your "fit" with your Mentor?** | | |
|  | 58% | Very good fit |
|  | 37% | Good fit |
|  | 5% | Bad fit |
|  | -- | Very bad fit |
| **Q9. How important is that "fit" to the success of a Fellow?** | | |
|  | 42% | Extremely important |
|  | 42% | Very important |
|  | 11% | Somewhat important |
|  | 5% | Somewhat unimportant |
|  | -- | Very unimportant |
|  | -- | Extremely unimportant |
| **Q10. Please indicate which statement(s) best describe your career during the first year after your Fellowship. Please select all that apply.** | | |
|  | 53% | I returned to my previous position. |
|  | 21% | I was promoted within my unit. |
|  | 21% | I advanced in another Penn State unit. |
|  | 5% | I advanced at another college, university, or higher education-related organization. |
|  | -- | I left higher education for a career in another field. |
|  | -- | Other |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Q11. Please indicate which statement(s) best describe your career during the five years after your Fellowship. Please select all that apply.** | | | |
|  | 63% | I returned to my previous position. | |
|  | 38% | I was promoted within my unit. | |
|  | 44% | I advanced in another Penn State unit. | |
|  | 25% | I advanced at another college, university, or higher education-related organization. | |
|  | -- | I left higher education for a career in another field. | |
|  | 13% | Not applicable. I retired or completed the program less than 5 years ago. | |
|  | 13% | Other | |
| \*Note: One person who answered Q10 did not answer Q11. | | | |
| **Q12. Did you advance in the field of higher education administration after completing the Fellowship?** | | | |
|  | 63% | Yes | |
|  | 37% | No | |
| **Q13. [Only answered by those who responded “Yes” to Q12.] Please provide the title and institution for the most advanced position you have held in higher education since being a Fellow. For example, Vice Provost for Information Technology at Virginia Tec**h. | | | |
|  |  | Data not provided in order to protect the confidentiality of respondents. | |
| **Q14. Which of the following leadership activities did you participate in as a Fellow? Please check all that apply.** | | | |
|  | 100% | | Faculty Senate meetings |
|  | 95% | | Academic Leadership Forum |
|  | 84% | | Campus College visits |
|  | 79% | | Penn State Forum |
|  | 68% | | Faculty Senate committee meetings |
|  | 58% | | Academic Leadership Academy |
|  | 58% | | Faculty Senate Council meetings |
|  | 53% | | CIC briefings |
|  | 53% | | New Faculty Orientation |
|  | 37% | | Graduate Council meetings |
|  | 32% | | Road Scholars Tour (last conducted in 2011) |
|  | 26% | | New Employee Orientation |
|  | 26% | | University Staff Advisory Council meetings |
|  | 16% | | Penn State Leader program |
|  | 0% | | Penn State Management Institute |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Q15. Which of the following meetings did you attend at least once as a Fellow? Please check all that apply.** | | | |
|  | 100% | | Board of Trustees (BOT) |
|  | 100% | | President's Council (PC) |
|  | 95% | | Academic Leadership Council (ALC) |
|  | 90% | | Central Enrollment Management Group (CEMG) |
|  | 79% | | Commission for Racial and Ethnic Diversity (CORED) |
|  | 79% | | Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC) |
|  | 79% | | Facilities Resources Committee (FRC) |
|  | 74% | | Budget Task Force (BTF) |
|  | 74% | | Commission for Women (CFW) |
|  | 69% | | Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education (ACUE) |
|  | 68% | | Special University task forces (these vary from year to year) |
|  | 53% | | Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Equity (LGBTE) |
|  | 47% | | Council of Campus Administrators (CCA) |
|  | 32% | | Campus Environment Team (CET) |
| **Q16. With which of the following people did you meet one-on-one with while a Fellow? Please check all that apply.** | | | |
|  | 94% | Deans (not necessarily all of them) | |
|  | 94% | Executive Vice President and Provost | |
|  | 89% | Past Fellows | |
|  | 89% | Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses | |
|  | 89% | Vice President for Outreach | |
|  | 83% | Faculty Senate Chair | |
|  | 83% | President | |
|  | 83% | Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education | |
|  | 83% | Vice Provost for Academic Affairs | |
|  | 78% | Administrative unit heads (Registrar, Intercollegiate Athletics, etc. - not necessarily all) | |
|  | 78% | Senior Vice President for Finance and Business | |
|  | 78% | Vice President for Research | |
|  | 78% | Vice President for Student Affairs | |
|  | 72% | Senior Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations | |
|  | 67% | Key personnel in the Budget Office | |
|  | 67% | Key personnel in the Office of Planning and Institutional Assessment | |
|  | 67% | Vice Provost for Information Technology | |
|  | 61% | Vice Provost for Educational Equity | |
|  | 56% | Special Assistant to the President for Government Affairs | |
|  | 50% | Senior Vice President for Health Affairs & CEO Hershey Medical Center | |
|  | 50% | Vice President for Administration | |
|  | 50% | Vice President for Human Resources | |
|  | 50% | Vice Provost for Affirmative Action | |
| **Q16 continued. With which of the following people did you meet with one-on-one while a Fellow? Please check all that apply.** | | | |
|  | 44% | Department heads (not necessarily all of them) | |
|  | 44% | Key personnel in Physical Plant | |
|  | 44% | Vice Provost for Global Programs | |
|  | 39% | Key personnel in Development | |
|  | 39% | Key personnel in Intercollegiate Athletics | |
|  | 39% | Key personnel in Public Relations | |
|  | 33% | Vice President for Strategic Communications | |
|  | 22% | Key personnel in Alumni Relations | |
| **Q17. Which of the following events did you attend as a Fellow? Please select all that apply.** | | | |
|  | 94% | Campus visits (not necessarily all of them) | |
|  | 50% | Commission for Women banquet | |
|  | 50% | Martin Luther King, Jr. banquet | |
|  | 89% | Penn State Forum lunches | |
|  | 56% | Promotion and Tenure workshops | |
|  | 61% | State appropriation hearings in Harrisburg | |
| **Q18. In your opinion, is there still a need for the Administrative Fellows Program at Penn State?** | | | |
|  | 94% | Yes | |
|  | 6% | No | |
| **Q19. Is there anything specific that you would like to share about your Administrative Fellows experience?** | | | |
|  | * There should be a clearly defined expectations from the Mentor in regard to what they need to do for or provide to the Adm Fellows. * I would like to clarify that most of the meetings I checked in the one-on-one section included the other Fellows. I had very few of those types of meetings by myself. I wish I felt like the program had helped me be a successful candidate for promotion, but there seems to have been a shift away from hiring internally for many positions, especially those at higher levels. * The administrative Fellowship experience was the best one that I have ever had in my Penn State career. | | |
|  | * The Mentor is taking on an important role and should be a willing participant and responsive to the Fellow, as well as invested in developing projects that are important to the Division and the University. We want to make a difference; we are used to making a difference; we want to make the year mean something beyond ourselves. * In order to ensure a successful Fellowship, I believe Mentors should try their best to include Fellows in meaningful ways in the Mentor's daily work. Some Mentors are better suited than others at doing this, so Fellowship experiences are highly variable as a result. My experience was not the “ultimate back stage pass” to university administration. * Yes, I greatly appreciate my experience as a Fellow. I REALLY think Fellows need to have a very honest sit-down conversation with admin leaders (or ex-leaders) about the dark side of admin. I do not say this to scare them away but to better prepare them for the underbelly. I was completely shocked by this. I felt totally under-prepared for the kind of malicious attacks administrators can be exposed to. I also did not feel as prepared as I could have been to address the balancing act of trying to address multiple requests around budget in a politically intense environment. We need case studies that capture these real life intense situations. * The opportunity provided a much needed overview of the process for decision making and administration in a large and complex academic institution. During the year I was given the option to design and implement a special project, with the resources needed for the tasks. This turned out to be a most memorable and significant accomplishment coming out of the year. * Wonderful opportunity in obtaining an enhanced understanding of our great University. While personal situations and somewhat limited opportunities prevented "climbing the ladder", the experience was very valuable in interacting with senior level administration and achieving a level of respect from colleagues. It also provided exposure to situations and individuals that positively influenced my career. Thank you, Penn State. * I really believe that this is the best program of its type for developing future leaders of Higher Education in the country. It does much more than producing leaders, it essentially transforms individuals from a fairly myopic view to a more holistic view of the University and Higher Education. Simply put, it is transformative! | | |

## Appendix D: Guidelines for Administrative Fellows and Mentors, March 2015

Mentors and Fellows work together to design a year’s experience that gives a good sense of the office of the Mentor and his or her responsibilities. In addition, there is a common core of experiences that we would like all Fellows to have. The list below identifies that core.

In many cases, Mentors are involved in the various experiences listed below, and the Fellow’s invitation to these meetings is part of his or her experience in shadowing Mentors on their rounds. Fellows are expected to be involved in all aspects and meetings related to the Mentor’s office that the Mentor deems appropriate. The Fellow may need the guidance of the Mentor in making choices when there are conflicting opportunities. Fellows are urged to take the initiative to take advantage of the opportunities. To help them do so, contact persons are listed where appropriate. It is expected that every effort should be made to avoid cancelling once a commitment is made.

* Board of Trustees (BOT) ‑ Contact: Tom Poole
  + All Fellows are urged to attend all of the open meetings of the Board.
  + Fellows are invited to meet with the Committee on Academic Affairs and Student Life during the July meeting of the Board. This meeting is typically held at one of the campuses.
* State budget hearings in Harrisburg: Fellows are invited to attend budget hearings. Travel arrangements may be coordinated by the Fellows and typically require reserving a Fleet vehicle.
* Fellows are also encouraged to attend meetings of the University Faculty Senate and may want to sit as observers on Senate Committees, particularly as appropriate to the office of their Mentor. They may also want to attend, or be expected to attend, Senate Council or Graduate Council, as appropriate.
* When practical, Fellows will be given opportunities to visit non‑University Park campuses. This can be achieved by traveling with Mentors as appropriate when they make campus visits, by accompanying Commonwealth Campus personnel (coordinating with Melanie Ekdahl), or by accompanying other UP administrators as appropriate, e.g., Fellows may accompany the University Faculty Senate officers on tours of commonwealth campuses (contact Marissa Shamrock). Also, by attending the Board of Trustees meetings, the Fellows will have an opportunity to travel when the meetings are held at locations other than University Park.
* Fellows will have an open invitation to the three special commissions, Commission for Women (CFW), Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity (CORED), Commission on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equity (CLGBTE); and the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC). Contact: Eileen Williams
* Meetings with President Barron: One each semester (Fellows will need to arrange these joint meetings with Carmella Mulroy-Degenhart).
* Meetings with Provost Jones (Fellows should arrange joint meetings with Monica Nachman).
* Joint meetings with senior administrators from Academic Affairs, Development and Alumni Relations, Educational Equity, Finance and Business, Human Resources, Intercollegiate Athletics, Outreach and Online Education, Research and Graduate School, University Budget Office, Undergraduate Education, and Governmental Affairs. (Jamie Stang will contact Fellows’ assistants to schedule joint meetings.)

Observations of key administrative groups at work are also part of the core experience for all Fellows. Fellows whose Mentors are members of these groups may accompany them as appropriate. Each Fellow should have the opportunity to observe at least one meeting even if a Mentor is not part of the group, preferably one per semester. Fellows should determine the most appropriate meetings for them to attend by conferring with their Mentors and the office of the committee’s chair. Some of these groups are willing to open themselves up to regular participation of one or more of the Fellows, or to one Fellow at each meeting on a rotating basis. These details need to be worked out by Mentors, Fellows, and the chairs of the committees. The key administrative groups, along with the contact person for discussing such arrangements and the appropriateness for participation at particular meetings, are listed below:

* Academic Leadership Council (ALC) ‑ Contact: Monica Nachman
* Council of Campus Chancellors (CCC) ‑ Contact: Melanie Ekdahl
* Facilities Resources Committee (FRC) ‑ Contact: Monica Nachman
* President’s Council (PC) ‑ Contact: Barbara Stine
* University Park Campus Deans (UPCADs) - Contact: Monica Nachman

Past Fellows have also found many other experiences very worthwhile. Fellows should discuss with their Mentors such possibilities as the following, and then take the initiative to follow through as their time and interest allow by discussing the appropriateness of attending any particular meeting with the contact person listed:

* Meetings with deans and budget executives not already listed under joint meetings - Contact: Administrator’s Assistant
* Meetings with senior administrators from Affirmative Action, Information Technology, Global Programs, and Planning and Institutional Assessment - Contact: Administrator’s Assistant
* Penn State Forums: Fellows will be included when Mentors’ offices reserve tables for these events.
* Academic Leadership Forums: The Fellows are invited to participate in the fall and spring forums. ‑ Contact: Alicia Cornali
* Promotion and Tenure Workshops ‑ Contact: Alicia Cornali
* Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education (ACUE) ‑ Contact: Brenda Shaw
* Central Enrollment Management Group (CEMG) ‑ Contact: Kathy McKinney
* Special Task Forces
* Campus Environment Team (CET) ‑ Contact: Eileen Williams
* Meetings with past Fellows
* Attend monthly Fellow lunch

Questions regarding the Administrative Fellows Program may be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs at 814-863-7494.

1. Administrative Fellowship Program Mentors and Fellows are referred to throughout this report with their first letters capitalized. Specific employees associated with the administration of the program and the program’s steering committee, are referred to as Committee Members. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The most recent year for which IPEDS data is available for both faculty and student race and ethnicity. These numbers include non-resident aliens, which are calculated separately from White and Minority, and exclude those of unknown race/ethnicity. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. In 2014, Penn State earned its second Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine and in 2013, an independent analysis from Halualani and Associates concluded that Penn State ranks in the top four in comparison to peer institutions in terms of new minority faculty hire numbers. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. As of February 2015, the membership of these two groups was 87% White, 10% minority (Asian, Black, and Hispanic), and 3% international based on data reported in the uf\_curr\_month\_aff\_Action table of Penn State’s Data Warehouse. People of international origin may report as international or affiliate with a particular race/ethnicity, so a person from India may be identified as international or as Asian. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Minority Fellows were Black, Hispanic, and American Indian. Two Fellows were of undeclared race. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Advancement in this context may have been interpreted by respondents to include advancement along the traditional promotional pathways of faculty (e.g., assistant/associate/full professor). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. The position they were in upon entering the AFP. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)