

# Developmental Networks – the basics

## A shared model and language for mentoring at SU

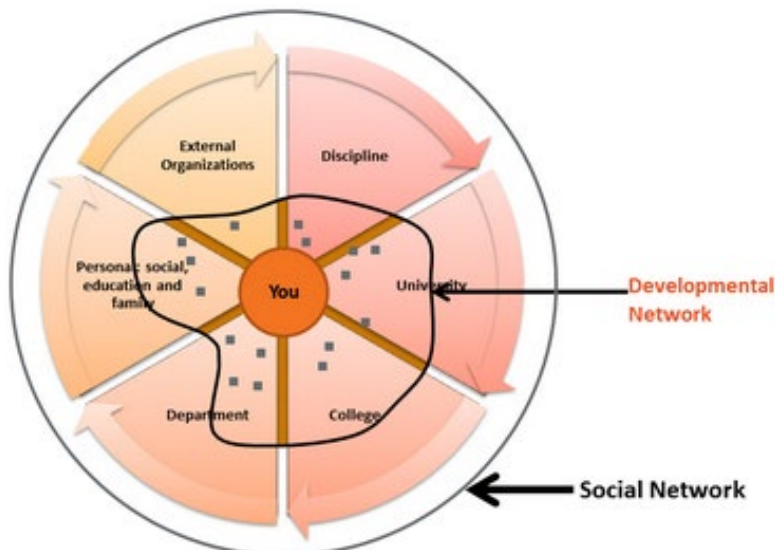
The information and knowledge required to be successful is no longer readily available from one person or group, necessitating pursuit of knowledge from other individuals and venues (Lazer and Mergel, 2011). Furthermore, there is evidence that a multiple-mentor approach is beneficial to women and members of under-represented groups, especially in the academy (Johnson, 2002). Over the last several decades the nature of mentoring has therefore expanded considerably although the essential goal remains the same. Broadly defined, **mentoring is the provision of career and technical guidance and psycho-social support for professional development.**

### Social Network

A social network is made up of individuals and organizations with career related and/or personal links/relationships with one another.

### Developmental Network

1. A developmental network consists of multiple social relationships that foster career development and personal growth (Higgins and Kram, 2001; Molloy, 2005; & Blickle, et al., 2009).
2. The developmental network is seen as a subset of an individual's overall social network and consists of multiple mentors acting as career advisors for specific needs or resources.
3. An individual's developmental network serves specific goals, and therefore, will be different depending on which goal a person is pursuing at any given time (including goals tied to specific stages of career advancement).
4. Individuals new to the developmental network approach may find it helpful to work with a developmental network coach.



The specific makeup (shape) of a developmental network will change over time.

# Mentors – a new look at the mentor role

## Defining the multiple kinds of support

A developmental network should have multiple, concurrent mentors that function in a variety of roles (Dinolfo & Nugent, 2010). There should be access to a full range of career assistance including advice, sponsorship, coaching, and psycho-social support. The roles are not intended to be mutually exclusive. Each type of mentor role is defined as follows:

**Navigator** - A navigator is an individual with the ability to offer advice on dynamics, standards, and expectations relevant to chosen goals; to share and interpret the “road map of success”. A Navigator should have sufficient knowledge, experience, and network centrality to offer guidance especially regarding career advancement and career resources. They also share tacit knowledge and information necessary for integration in the institution or organization. They can sit at any level in the hierarchy. Often these relationships benefit both partners.

**Sponsor** - A sponsor is someone with influence who actively ushers the mentee through advancement opportunities or calls attention to her/his talents. She or he provides opportunities for exposure to other people of influence and facilitates access to promising opportunities and challenging assignments. She or he may nominate for awards and recognition.

**Coach** - A coach’s input is generally instructional and tactical, often informed by knowledge of multiple strategies to reach a particular professional goal. She or he supports decision making, self-awareness, self-assessment and planning. He or she may or may not be part of the organization and may be a hired professional.

**Confidant** – A confidant is a sounding board, providing a safe place to talk and ask questions without judgment. She or he provides affirmation, encouragement, motivation and assistance. Often these relationships benefit both partners.

	Navigator	Sponsor	Coach	Confidant
General description	Advises about organizational dynamics	Helps navigate organizational dynamics	Helps in the development of professional persona	Listens to the challenges and triumphs
Relation to career goals	Helps identify career development goals and advancement criteria	Promotes – steers toward advancement	Helps with reflection about goals and advancement options	Affirms your choices and cheers you on
How they help:	Helps translate implicit performance criteria to career development plan.	Identifies the most critical performance criteria necessary for a particular outcome.	Helps with skills needed to make the case for advancement.	Shares their experiences, their view of the rules.
Career/Life	Work related	Work related	Work and Personal	Work and Personal
Relationship type	Mutual relationship	Protégé relationship	Professional /formal relationship	Reciprocal relationship
Role in the network	An advisor in the developmental network.	Shapes the developmental network; connects protégé to people of influence.	An advisor in the developmental network	An advisor in the developmental network and possibly part of one’s social network

Chart updated July 2020

# Developmental Network Principles

## Different networks result in different kinds of development

The developmental network model fosters the use of social networks as a facilitator of career advancement. More generative and entrepreneurial networks will have a number of strong and weak relationship ties from highly diverse (multiple) systems/social networks in order to provide sufficient career assistance. The network should provide sufficient embeddedness to encourage retention, but enough diversity for novel information and advice to become available. Where formal mentoring programs exist in the academy, they most closely resemble “traditional” networks as described below. More detailed information about the connections between social network theory and mentoring, as well as a primer on social network concepts, is included in Section 6. The table below summarizes the work of Higgins and Kram (2001) on this topic.

### Social Network Concepts in Action: Mentoring and Developmental Network Makeup

*Passive* ←————→ *Pro-active*

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Receptive: “many potential guides”</i>	<i>Traditional: “one or two mentors”</i>	<i>Opportunistic: “loosely managed development”</i>	<i>Entrepreneurial: “well managed development”</i>
<b>Strength of Relationship Ties</b>	Weak ties, low motivation to help	Strong ties and high motivation to help	Tendency toward more weak than strong ties	Tendency toward more strong than weak ties
<b>System Diversity</b>	Low Diversity/ Department only	Low Diversity/Only Mentor’s Network	High/Multiple Networks	High/Multiple Networks
<b>Information</b>	Minimal Opportunity for novel information and type of information is narrow in scope	Strong source of information but minimal variety of perspectives and little access to new resources	High access to novel ideas and a variety of information and resources	More complex and varied information, and increased access to resources
<b>Communication</b>	Minimal	High	Moderate	High

At least one mentor in a developmental network should have the skills to help the mentee or protégé build and manage their network. However, the developmental network model requires the pro-active and deliberate engagement of faculty members in meeting their own mentoring needs.

# Developmental Network Coach (DNC)

## Support for the individual at the center of the network

Even though individuals ultimately manage their own networks, a regularly scheduled conversation with a colleague can help ensure that the network is developing in a productive direction. This unique mentor role—the *Developmental Network Coach*—is particularly beneficial to those new to the University, seeking to achieve a new career stage, or working on a major new goal.

Developmental Network Coaches can help:

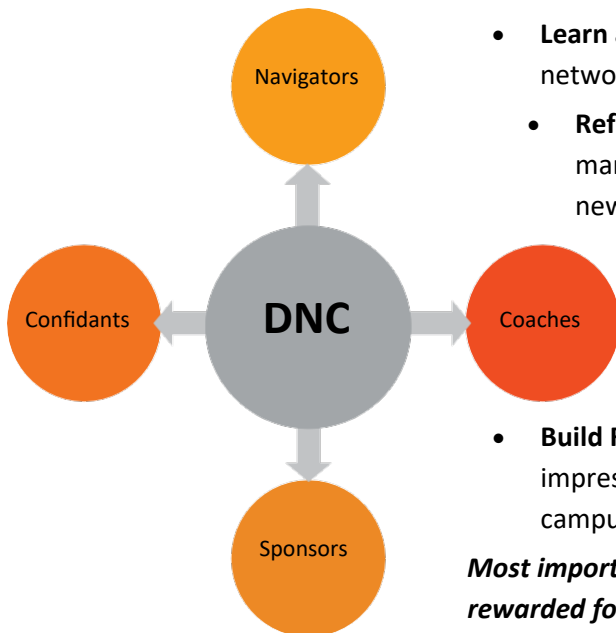
- By discussing goals and providing feedback.
- By introducing faculty to individuals who can help them reach those goals (for this reason, Developmental Network Coaches are most effective if they have high centrality in the University network).
- By continuing to learn about developmental networks and how they can be used effectively as a professional development strategy.

### Network for Success

Developmental Network Coaches can help others identify gaps in their network. In addition to a mixture of strong and weak ties, a developmental network should include:

1. Functional diversity - mentors that play different roles such as navigator, sponsor, coach and confidant.
2. Positional diversity - senior faculty, junior faculty, academic leaders/ administrators.
3. Demographic diversity - gender, ethnicity, race, age, (dis)ability, cultural background, etc.
4. Systems diversity - college, university, discipline, industry/government, community, etc.

## Individuals in this role are particularly helpful to new faculty as they:



- **Learn about Developmental Networks:** Understand developmental networks as a mentoring model and how to implement it.
- **Reflect on self-management:** Develop or enhance the capacity to manage their network toward career success in the context of new demands.
  - **Plan:** Support creation of a career plan and ensure clear understanding of expectations.
  - **Build a network:** Bridge with potential mentors, role models, and other important resources on campus.
- **Build Reputation:** Provide guidance on establishing a good first impression and collegial relationships within the department and on campus.

***Most importantly, a formally assigned DNC should be recognized and rewarded for service to the department.***