

# Perceptions of Employer Socialization Tactics During Junior Faculty Transition into Higher Education

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**Context:** New faculty are expected to teach, be productive scholars, and provide service in order to earn tenure, but few experience the full spectrum of faculty responsibility during doctoral preparation. Recent evidence suggests mentorship and orientation are important during role transition. However, how employers facilitate role transition for new faculty remains unclear.

**Objective:** Examine the perspectives of junior faculty members' organizational socialization into higher education, specifically focusing on mentorship and orientation sessions.

**Design:** Qualitative study.

**Setting:** Fourteen higher education institutions.

**Patients or Other Participants:** Sixteen junior faculty (7 male, 9 female; age =  $32 \pm 3.5$  years) representing 7 National Athletic Trainers' Association districts participated. At the time of the interview, all participants were within their first 3 years of a full-time faculty position.

**Main Outcome Measure(s):** All participants completed a semistructured telephone interview. The interview guide was focused on the experiences of junior faculty and was developed based upon the literature and purpose of the study. We analyzed the transcribed interviews using a general inductive approach.

**Results:** *Mentors* provided support to assist in the transition to faculty positions on a variety of topics, although formal mentoring programs are identified as helpful only if a *relationship develops*. Regarding the second theme, participants noted *orientation sessions* organized by the institution or department that provided a *clear overview* of the position. However, despite their use, many described the orientation sessions as not providing *essential information* that would have been helpful. Additionally, tenure and promotion processes often had *purposefully vague* criteria regardless of how thorough the explanation, leading to stress.

**Conclusions:** Our findings suggest that higher education administrators help new athletic training faculty transition by providing mentors and orientation sessions. Findings also suggest that these experiences, at times, are not comprehensive and caused the transition to academe to be stressful.

**Key Words:** Organizational socialization, academe, professoriate

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## KEY POINTS

- Informal mentoring allowed junior faculty to learn new roles while formal mentoring assignments failed when there was a perceived absence of relational interaction between mentors and mentees.
- Informal mentoring for new junior faculty members should be encouraged through opportunities whereby new faculty can have opportunities to network with more experienced faculty.
- Participants noted orientation sessions that lasted longer than the initial onboarding process as helpful, while front loaded sessions and/or sessions that provided ambiguous information regarding performance evaluation were discussed as distressful.
- Orientation sessions should be provided to allow opportunities for growth, development, and evaluation beyond the beginning of role inductance.

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational socialization in athletic training has been shown to be a blend of intentional, planned procedures and less formal, spontaneous interactions in a variety of settings,<sup>1-4</sup> particularly through mentorship.<sup>2,4-6</sup> Mentoring is necessary to help newly certified athletic trainers effectively transition into full-time roles as health care providers<sup>2</sup> and has implications for how athletic trainers effectively learn how to assume roles as educators.<sup>4</sup> The professoriate is an often foreign position due to a lack of formalized training during doctoral studies.<sup>7,8</sup> Many athletic training educators boast a clinical area of expertise as well as a focused line of research inquiry; however, they often do not receive in-depth training related to pedagogy, curriculum development,<sup>7,8</sup> and accreditation standards.

Recent publications<sup>9,10</sup> call into question how new faculty members succeed in their professorial roles when they require many skill sets not previously learned during preparation through doctoral programs. Indeed, while doctorally trained athletic trainers typically receive plenty of research experience, they may lack a full awareness of the complexities of the roles that extend beyond scholarship (ie, teaching effectiveness, service, administration).<sup>11</sup> Therefore, a core challenge in higher education concerns the preparation of new faculty. Sometimes with inadequate formal preparation, new faculty can be vulnerable to workplace stressors and issues such as role overload and burnout leading to departure from the profession.<sup>12</sup> Role strain and burnout have been reported by program directors and athletic training faculty, possibly due to the failure to gain appropriate training or mentoring regarding academic roles.<sup>13</sup>

Studying professional socialization of athletic training junior faculty is important as our profession prepares for the move to professional education at the graduate level and new accreditation standards. Educational reform will require more

terminally degreed athletic trainers to teach in professional athletic training programs and has the potential to increase the demands placed upon new faculty members. Learning how to support junior faculty members through their transition to the professoriate will help produce educators who can navigate the tenure and promotion path while developing and mentoring future athletic trainers.

Previous findings illustrate that employers provide mentoring and orientation sessions to assist new hires.<sup>4</sup> However, this literature<sup>4</sup> focused on recalling what was in place to assist transition, rather than determining how these strategies were provided or perceived. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understand organizational socialization processes, mentorship and orientation specifically, from the perspective of junior faculty members transitioning into higher education. Our goal was to build on previous research<sup>4</sup> and explore mentoring and institutional programming in greater detail, as these have been suggested as the primary organizational socialization techniques. We were guided by the following underlying research question: How do new faculty describe their experiences in regard to their employers' use of mentoring programs and orientation sessions in support of their transition into higher education?

## METHODS

### Research Design

We chose to use qualitative methods to collect our data and a general inductive approach<sup>14</sup> for data analysis in our study. The underlying premise was an exploratory narrative to assist understanding of the perceptions and experiences of junior faculty in transition to higher education faculty roles. We selected our methodology based upon our research agenda, and the premise that future research would emanate from the data we collected as little is known about transition to practice for junior faculty members.

### Participants

Sixteen junior faculty (7 male, 9 female; age =  $32 \pm 3.5$  years) representing 7 National Athletic Trainers' Association districts participated. Twelve participants were in tenure track and 4 had nontenure track positions while 5 reported positions with a research focus and 11 reported positions with a teaching focus. At the time of the interview, participants were within their first 3 years of a full-time faculty position. All participants graduated from doctoral programs where they studied full-time in residence while being funded through an assistantship. Fourteen students received Doctor of Philosophy degrees while 1 received a Doctor of Education degree and 1 received a Doctor of Athletic Training degree. We provided all participants with pseudonyms to protect their identities and removed any identifiable information from quotes.

Data Collection Procedures

We received institutional review board approval and obtained signed informed consent from all participants before data collection began. First, we sent e-mails to faculty members and program directors who serve as doctoral student advisors and professors for athletic training doctoral students. We asked for names and contact information of recent graduates (within the past 3 years) who were athletic trainers working as faculty members. This resulted in 20 contacts to whom we sent recruitment e-mails after confirming institutional affiliations and e-mail addresses. The 16 who responded were first screened as meeting our inclusion criteria and then signed an informed consent form before we finalized scheduling an interview time. All participants completed a semistructured interview over the telephone that lasted 45 to 60 minutes. The interview guide (see the Table) was focused on the experiences of junior faculty and was developed based upon the literature<sup>4,11</sup> and purpose of the study. We had the interview guide reviewed by an experienced qualitative researcher and expert in socialization for athletic trainers. The benefit of the peer review process was an impartial review of our interview protocol that afforded us a complete template to better understand faculty development from an organizational socialization framework. Also, we believe the review provided credibility to the interview protocol by providing rigor to our data collection process. After making slight modifications to improve clarity, we pilot tested the interview guide with 1 faculty member meeting the inclusion criteria (junior faculty member who is an athletic trainer). During data collection, we continually immersed ourselves in the data to determine data saturation, which we achieved after the 16th interview. Saturation was important to ensure rich descriptions of our participants' experiences, as well as to reduce any bias that could result within the interviewing process. Upon completion of all of the interviews, we sent the audio files to a professional company for transcription to reduce researcher bias.

Data Analysis and Credibility

All transcribed interviews were analyzed using a general inductive approach,<sup>14</sup> a process completed by 2 researchers independently. The researchers completing the analysis procedures have previous experience with the coding process as guided in a general inductive stepwise approach. First, we read through the interview transcripts multiple times in their entirety. After getting a sense for the data, 2 research team members independently coded the transcripts on a line-by-line basis. We combined the codes into similar categories followed by validating the relationships between the categories to form themes to complete the analysis process. After the 2 research team members independently completed the analysis process, they traded coding structures and the results. Negotiations ensued until we reached 100% agreement on the final themes.

Multiple analyst triangulation and peer review were used to ensure trustworthiness of the methods and presentation of the results. As described above, 2 research team members independently coded the data and negotiated over the presentation of the results during multiple analyst triangulation. In addition, we had an experienced qualitative researcher and expert in socialization for athletic trainers review our interview guide (as discussed earlier), coding structure, and presentation of the results. The peer provided feedback to improve clarity of the interview guide before data collection

Table. Interview Guide

- 1. What specific strategies were used to help you gain an understanding of your role as a faculty member at your current institution after being hired?
  - a. Which were valuable?
  - b. Were there any processes that were not helpful? Why?
- 2. Does your current institution have a formal mentor program for new or junior faculty?
  - a. Are you involved with it? Why or why not?
    - i. If yes, what do you like best about it?
    - ii. If yes, what do you like least about it?
  - b. If the current institution does not, would you benefit from one?
- 3. Can you describe the orientation for new faculty at your institution?
  - a. What was helpful?
  - b. What did you like about it? Not like about it?
- 4. Most institutions of higher education evaluate faculty on their contributions through various review processes. What was your understanding of such processes and the areas of contribution upon which you would be evaluated?
  - a. (Prompt if needed: What is your understanding about teaching, research, and service contributions required of faculty at your institution?)
  - b. What did your current institution do to help assist you in understanding these processes further?
- 5. What role(s) do you see as most important in your success as a faculty member?
- 6. Who, if anyone, has significantly impacted your professional development since beginning your faculty position? Please explain.
- 7. What other experiences did you have that impacted your professional development (eg, attending professional conferences, workshops) and understanding of the role of faculty members?
- 8. What advice would you give to other athletic trainers who are considering the pursuit of a position in higher education?

began and validated the coding structure and presentation of the results. The peer review process supported our coding, but also reduced the potential bias and assumptions that can manifest within the process.

RESULTS

Our participants perceived *mentors* and *orientation* tactics as either a eustress that helped improve job performance or a distress that hindered role completion. Coworkers and engaged institutional *mentors* provided support to assist in the transition to faculty positions on a variety of topics, although formal mentoring programs were identified as helpful only if *relationships developed*. Mentors were seen as a eustress when they provided support, but a distress when relationships failed to materialize. Second, a majority of our participants noted timely, comprehensive, and ongoing *orientation sessions* organized by the institution or department. The sessions provided a *clear overview* of the position and evaluation process that assisted junior faculty in allotting their time appropriately, which was seen as a eustress and increased feelings of comfort. However, many described the



orientation sessions as a distress in not providing *essential information* that would have been helpful and a tenure and promotion process that was *purposefully vague* regardless of how thorough the explanation provided. The themes are further explained and supported in the sections below with participant quotes.

## Mentors

Our participants extensively noted how helpful mentors within their new institution were to them during the transition. The majority of the encounters with mentors were informal in nature and happened organically due to proximity, resulting in positive *relationship development*. Several participants noted having colleagues “down the hall” or “next door” from whom they could seek guidance and help on an as-needed basis rather than during a formal meeting. Amelia noted interactions with “great” colleagues. She described these by stating,

*Anything along the way. Where are the IRB forms? How do I request paper for my printer? Stupid things like that that you just have no idea. They've been really welcoming. . . . Like we would just have back and forth conversations, very informal—one was on the tenure process. The other one was about how to get your research agenda going. So there are formal opportunities for interaction, but also very informal ones as well, which I almost found more helpful. I felt like they actually cared about me. Definitely got that feeling right away and it's funny I always tell people—I felt they genuinely were looking out for me.*

Our participants received informal mentorship from various faculty members both within their department and in other disciplines. Liam described the friendly atmosphere as being “helpful” in navigating his transition into higher education. He went on to say,

*So, it's really just been chatting with the different faculty members and seeing what their experiences have been and getting their help in the different course preps and chatting with the department chair. And everybody's been supportive.*

Finally, Oliver described his program director as “a real mentor here and a motivator” who “helped me develop as a teacher.” He went on to say, “She's kind of taught me the ins and outs of [institution name] and helped me figure out the unique aspects of the university, so she's been a great help.” Oliver went on to describe the other faculty in his department and the informal mentoring he had received from them. He said,

*The biggest thing was the support from the current faculty here at [institution name]. It is a relatively young faculty, so they've all within the past five years gone through a similar process. And then there were also older faculty who had really learned the ins and outs of a university. So that support from them was huge.*

Our participants enjoyed the informal mentoring they received from colleagues; however, at times the lack of formal or structured mentoring caused distress. Participants wished there was more formalized “checking in” and “modeling” to make sure they were performing adequately and did not have any questions. While Harper “felt like the personnel who were here would support me,” she did wish a formal mentoring experience was offered. “There's not a formal, at least within

our department, there's not a formal faculty mentorship program. So, I would say that's sort of a missing component.”

Isabella described her frustration about the fact that she did not have a formal mentor because of a lack of communication, and indicated that inadequate structure to the program had failed to produce *relationships* for previous junior faculty. She said,

*There was no mentoring. There was a mentoring program if you wanted to sign up for it, but they didn't tell anybody how to sign up for it. They just said, “hey this exists.” They didn't tell us how to access it or how to find a mentor or what to do with it. And from what it sounded like from the people who had done it before, they're like “oh it's worthless, it's a waste of time because you might meet once at the beginning of the semester” and they'll say, “oh do you have any questions?” You don't know what questions you have at that point because you just don't know yet. And so I think that's why I didn't do it 'cause I didn't know enough to know.*

Finally, Olivia described her dissatisfaction with her mentor's availability, which was problematic. She explained,

*So, we have a mentoring program. I'm not gonna say that it's been successful for me. . . . The person who was supposed to help [the mentor] just kind of fell off the face of the earth. So, there are other workshops and there's a whole department I could go to for help, but it would have been nice to just have a peer or somebody. So, that's probably the one thing that kind of bothers me out of everything else because I have a weakness, and I want it to get stronger and I wanna utilize my tools and I just feel like some of them are there and some of 'em aren't.*

Our participants felt their colleagues were helpful and willing to assist them during their transition into a faculty position. Most of the positive mentoring occurred informally through discussions. However, participants seemed to want more opportunities for formal mentoring that included a more rigid structure and frequency to facilitate *relationship building* and assist them during the transition.

## Orientation

Orientation sessions facilitated by human resources or faculty development during the first few weeks and months were also noted as assisting our junior faculty with the transition to a tenure track position. Mainly, sessions that were timely and provided a *clear overview* of the basic role responsibilities were noted as “helpful” in making participants not feel “lost.” Charlotte explained that, despite understanding the basics of her new position, she needed guidance that her orientation sessions provided. She explained the various topics and how the sessions were helpful,

*It [orientation sessions] was not a requirement, but it was definitely strongly encouraged. I found them very valuable. There were different things like the way that we report for our annual reviews. We spent four hours learning how to use the system to do that. Then we talked about midterm grading one time. We talked about e-learning and our online platform. So, they would bring in various people to do that and then you could also make connections with these other faculty members about different research that they did. So, it was all first-year faculty members here on campus. . . . Policies and procedures*

were huge because, again you know how to teach, you know how to do research, but you don't know where the IRB is located or you don't know where your classroom is. And so those were very helpful things.

Harper had comparable experiences. She said,

*I think all of it [orientation sessions] was helpful. It's just learning the new hoops that you have to jump through in order to be able to move forward with teaching or preparing a course or getting a certain project off the ground. So, I think all of it was helpful. . . . I felt the teaching program they put together was helpful and sort of talking about different strategies to reach different students and different resources that faculty can use on campus to do that or get help with teaching.*

Emma described ongoing outreach from the institution's teaching and learning center that was particularly helpful. She responded,

*We have the teaching and learning center at the institution. So, they send out e-mails about different seminars and workshops that they do, things like that. And that's been a help 'cause I've been able to go to a few of their things to get better that way.*

Despite the fact that orientation sessions were helpful for initial transition, they were not as helpful for long-term success because what was perceived as *essential information* was missing or nebulous, which caused some aggravation. Most of this distress was caused by ambiguity on the evaluation process. Ava succinctly summed up this theme. She said, "The thing that's unclear is that it's not clear, but it's not 'this is what exactly you need to do.' So, it's clear that it's unclear, which is, yeah at most places I'm assuming how it is."

Sophia gave a robust depiction of the difficulty she had during the transition with regard to expectations. She said,

*I won't say that there's anything sort of specific to my position. . . . What I didn't get necessarily was the department specific stuff. . . . Some of our things, like our reemployment, promotion tenure, merit review document procedures, are department specific here. Nobody really knew what those procedures or documents were. Some of the things about different committees and the department and departmental policies were never really fully reviewed. . . . The issue of not knowing the culture of where I'm at, that's been probably the biggest challenge, figuring out really what's the expectation. . . . So probably just policies, procedures, cultures, that's been the hindrance, not necessarily feeling like I got a clear set of guidelines and expectations.*

Noah described that even when administrators try to make the expectations "concrete," they are "vague." He explained,

*They develop this workflow policy where for every 10% teaching, you're expected to teach one course. For every 10% research, you're expected to submit a grant and/or get a publication. But there's no inclusion of level of grant or impact back with publication or your teaching evaluations. So there's a lot of wiggle room and vagueness in the overall requirements. They lay out some things so you have this minimum expectation of producing so much for every 10% effort. Beyond that it's kind of hard to tell, which seems kind of normal.*

Finally, Harper also agreed that a lack of clarity regarding the tenure and promotion process existed after her orientation and onboarding. She said,

*I haven't gotten a firm answer here if this is X amount of dollars that you need to bring in or this is the number of publications that you need to have before you go up. It's more like you need to be an established expert in the field. In my mind I think that I at least need to make up sort of my startup fund and sort of be on the broach of hitting on bigger federal grants at least to be competitive.*

Participants found value in orientation sessions that provided a *clear overview* of responsibilities very early in their transition. The sessions provided basic information on the duties essential to their new positions. Nevertheless, the orientation sessions did not necessarily set our participants up for long-term success due to a lack of *essential information* and *vagueness* in the faculty evaluation process and the requirements for tenure and promotion.

## DISCUSSION

Our results extend the previous research findings that suggest employer mentorship and orientation influenced transition for those who entered junior faculty positions after finishing doctoral degrees.<sup>4</sup> Our results are reflective of faculty currently experiencing transition and imply that the perceptions of influence are a function of the characteristics of mentorship and orientation. Interestingly, both mentors and orientation sessions were perceived to improve and impede transition depending on the situation and implementation. Perhaps our findings illustrate that mentoring and orientation are the basic tenets of organizational socialization; however, they must be implemented in specific ways to improve and facilitate transition into the professoriate.

### Mentors

The importance of mentorship in athletic training has been well established in the literature.<sup>2,4-6</sup> Transitioning from student roles to professional roles can be stressful, and at times ambiguous. Therefore, having someone to contact when questions arise or if advice is needed can be helpful and ease the stress associated with the process.<sup>2,6</sup> We have seen this concept of relying on mentors, current and past, as a way to assimilate in the clinical capacity. Our findings suggest that transition, regardless of the role, requires a mentor.<sup>2,5,6</sup> Mentorship is the tactic that supports transition, as it allows for an exchange of knowledge as well as support during a period of time that can be viewed as stressful and challenging.<sup>15</sup> Mentoring relationships can manifest in a formalized way (ie, pairings made intentionally), yet interpersonal relationships often materialize organically and due to common interest, values, and attitudes.<sup>15</sup> As shared by our participants, they enjoyed and benefited from some of the informality of the mentoring they received where knowledge was shared through discourse and conversations that can occur in workplaces.

Participants noted the fact that some formal mentoring assignments were forced and included pairs in disciplines that were quite different. The informal conversations between colleagues had greater benefit and were more impactful for our participants compared with more formal

mentoring programs. These findings are similar to previous findings on how program directors professionally socialize students into their programs by using both formal and informal mentoring networks.<sup>16,17</sup> However, our findings and the findings of others<sup>18</sup> suggest that formal mentoring networks seem to be more likely to fail if there is a lack of “relationship” development.

Relationships appeared to be easier to build when participants had others transitioning at the same time or someone who had recently transitioned to seek guidance from. The office location of mentors could also improve or impede transition. Participants often noted the helpfulness of mentors who were in close proximity to them and who had open-door policies for mentees to drop in for help, for assistance, or just to talk. Our participants explained that the informal mentoring they received assisted with day-to-day tasks, such as new pedagogy strategies, learning where the IRB forms are located, and social opportunities outside of work. These findings are not surprising, as similar characteristics, including availability and approachability, among others, have been found previously as important components to mentoring relationships in other scenarios.<sup>19,20</sup>

### Orientation

Similar to our theme of mentoring, researchers found orientation as a theme when the transition was studied with other faculty members.<sup>4</sup> We sought to extend the literature by investigating the components of orientation and specifics on how they are delivered and what content is covered. We found that the orientation session could be stressful if it is ambiguous or does not provide essential information that would have helped ease the transition, such as evaluation criteria and the tenure process. Several participants noted that evaluation and tenure criteria were purposefully vague and not covered in enough detail during orientation sessions. Although they understood the areas of focus within evaluation (ie, teaching, scholarship, and service), the uncertainty regarding expectations within each area of focus was perceived as a distress. Specifically, participants were unsure how to prioritize responsibilities to ensure they would meet long-term expectations.

Within our sample, participants who experienced orientations spread throughout the year appeared to perceive the experience as a eustress during transition. These findings suggest that offering orientation sessions throughout the year, rather than as a single session that presents a large amount of programming at the beginning of onboarding, would provide junior faculty with a perceived increase in support. These findings are consistent with research in other disciplines.<sup>21</sup> Participants noted that long, front-loaded orientation sessions were overwhelming. Faculty had just moved to a new area, had to prepare for class, and had to orient themselves to a new working environment. In short, the sessions felt like information overload and they were unable to absorb all of the communication provided. The junior faculty would have supported a more long-term orientation session, as most occurred only during initial onboarding. They noted at the onset of role inductance that they were not sure what questions to ask as they felt overwhelmed with all of the new job expectations, as well as the adjustments they needed to make personally as they moved to a new location. Orientation

sessions spread out through the first year would allow participants to ask questions as they arise and receive more formative feedback on performance while providing support and detail regarding expectations. Those who had orientation sessions or seminars that lasted throughout their first semester noted that they felt more comfortable during the transition due to the increased time to absorb the information provided.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Mentorship

We have several recommendations regarding mentorship for both junior faculty and higher education administrators.

1. Encourage new athletic training faculty to do the following:
  - a. Actively seek mentoring opportunities, but recognize that formalized mentoring programs may not be effective if relationships are not built.
  - b. Seek information from various members of the community, based upon their experiences and willingness to engage in mentoring (ie, department chair for tenure information).
  - c. Realize that questions do not always materialize during initial transition. Informal mentors who are close in proximity allow for spur-of-the-moment questions that arise during day-to-day activity of faculty members.
2. Higher education administrators should do the following:
  - a. Offer formal mentoring programs for new faculty members that are purposefully planned with important content (communication of expectations) and support (resources).
  - b. Consider pairing new faculty with experienced faculty within the institution to help support transition—pairs that should be made carefully noting personalities, areas of interest, location on campus, and roles served within the institution.

### Orientation

Our results also support several recommendations regarding orientation sessions for new athletic training faculty.

1. New athletic training faculty are urged to take these measures:
  - a. Attend new faculty orientation sessions, as the information can be helpful in learning the basics regarding institutional policies and procedures. Prepare a list of questions beforehand to ensure key elements that are unclear are covered.
  - b. Be proactive about asking questions to help clarify expectations regarding tenure, promotion, and other aspects of new faculty's role within the institution if unclear after attending orientation workshops. Attempt to gain clarity on how time should be allotted while appreciating the fact that tenure and promotion criteria are often purposefully vague to allow some flexibility.
  - c. Seek other opportunities for role learning within the institution itself, which includes reaching out to support mechanisms such as the teaching and learning center, faculty development sessions, or academic success seminars.



2. Administrators of higher education institutions are advised to do the following:
  - a. Offer new faculty orientations that are department specific and aimed at educating faculty members on roles and strategies/resources for success.
  - b. Evaluate new faculty orientation processes and use the data to determine the components that are most effective (eg, timing, session topics, faculty involvement) in an effort to maximize efficiency.
  - c. Consider offering ongoing workshops during the first year for new faculty members to improve transition and understanding of institutional expectations for success.
  - d. Be honest and upfront with role expectations for new junior faculty member hires, although we appreciate the fact that tenure expectations are often purposefully ambiguous.

## LIMITATIONS

We acknowledge that we used a qualitative paradigm to answer our research questions and that generalizations are difficult. In order to get a broader sense of initiatives that can improve and hinder transition, larger studies will need to be completed. Quantitative studies may help facilitate data collection from a wide variety and larger number of participants. We recommend a longitudinal design in which data are collected from doctoral students as they are finishing their degrees, after they have accepted a position, but before starting, and during their first semester of their new position. Perhaps tracking participants as they enter 3-year reviews or tenure and promotion decisions would lend important information regarding how junior faculty learn expectations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our findings confirm previous findings that higher education administrators socialize new athletic training faculty by providing mentors and orientation sessions. Our findings expand the current literature and suggest that junior faculty enjoyed informal mentoring and orientation sessions that lasted longer than the initial onboarding process. Formal mentoring assignments failed when there was a perceived absence of relational interaction between mentors and mentees. Participants also noted orientation sessions as distressful that were front loaded and/or provided ambiguous information regarding performance evaluation. Informal mentoring for new junior faculty members should be encouraged through opportunities whereby new faculty can network with more experienced faculty. In addition, orientation sessions should be provided for opportunities for growth, development, and evaluation beyond the beginning of role inductance.

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