Executive Summary
NASPDP Mentoring Survey Results
Summer 2007

INTRODUCTION
This is the second annual survey, and the third year of the program. There were four
versions of the survey: one for Mentors, one for Protégés, one for the RL of the Protégé and one
for the Mentor's RL.

Purpose and Themes: The purpose of the survey is to help the Area Office gauge the
effectiveness of the mentoring component. There are four general themes to each of the versions:
Framework (structure, materials, frequency of interactions); Transitions (job, worksite,
community, work:life balance), General Usefulness (advice, networking, collaborations, etc.);
and Recruitment (source of vacancy and distance from home town).

Format: The survey was on-line and was open from June 17th through July 31st, and access to the
survey was via an email with a link for the site. Responses were anonymous and no demographic
data was asked in order to ensure confidentiality.

Response Rates: Survey response rates for 2007 were as follows (2006 rates in parenthesis):
* Protégés: 66%, 20 respondents out of 30 (82% in 2006)
* Mentors: 79% 22 respondents out of 28 (88% in 2006)
* RL of Protégé: 66% 12 respondents out of 18 (same rate as in 2006)
* RL of Mentor: 31% four respondents out of 13 (same rate as in 2006)

DISCUSSION
Framework: The existing framework appears to be working reasonably well, although some
refinements might be in order. With the exception of one Protégé, all respondents indicated that
the mentoring activities did not take too much time. As with the previous survey, the majority of
Mentors and Protégés feel the current structure is fine and that training should not be required.
Nearly all Mentors and Protégés report feeling comfortable confiding in one another.

All but 2 of the Protégés report that their RL is supportive of the mentoring program, and all but 4
of the Protégés have discussed the mentoring program with their RL. Three Protégés report that
they have received advice from their Mentor that conflicts with advice given by their RL.

The program is designed to match Protégés and Mentors as much as possible by shared discipline,
and shared discipline is something that 54% of Mentors and 75% of Protégés consider very or
somewhat important. The next most important characteristic is having a match at the same
location, favored by about 37% of Mentors but only 20% of Protégés. Having a match of the
same gender is important to about 20% of the Mentors and 2% of the Proteges, while having a
match of the same race is important to about 10% of the Mentors but none of the Protégés.

Communication, however, may be somewhat problematic. Only 50% of Protégés and 65% of
Mentors report communicating with their "match" at least once a month; 20% of Protégés and
10% of Mentors report communicating bi-monthly; 10% of Protégés and 15% of Mentors report
communicating quarterly; 15% of both say they communicate "as needed" and 5% of both say

they "rarely" communicate with their "match." Several Protégés and Mentors noted in the open-ended comments that their communications have dwindled over time.

Overall, Mentors and Protégés both report satisfaction with program materials (Question #6), although Mentors report a higher rate of satisfaction. The Checking-in Topics were rated as most helpful by Mentors and Protégés. Roughly 80% of Mentors found all the materials helpful. In contrast, 60% of Protégés found the materials helpful, with the Mentoring Handbook helpful to 50% of the Protégés. For Protégés, that means that about 40% found the materials not especially helpful. These results indicate that the materials need to be reviewed and revised, paying more attention to the needs of Protégés.

Transitions:
Most Protégés (80%) indicate they are adapting well to being a SY, while 95% of Mentors believe their Protégés are adapting well. Establishing a research program/agenda, publishing, and promotion/advancement were cited as pressing concerns by Proteges as well as their respective Mentors and RLs. However, several Protégés also cited time management as a pressing concern.

Work:Life balance appears to be important to the majority of Protégés, as about 75% of Protégés have discussed this with others. New SYs tend to report a lower satisfaction compared to RLs and Mentors, and RLs report a lower satisfaction than do Mentors.

In terms of transitioning to worksites, all groups report that their RL was the Most Helpful, then Other Location SYs, followed by Technical Staff, then Clerical/Administrative Staff (RLs and Mentors), while Protégés listed their Mentor as the fourth most helpful.

In terms of transitioning to the community, all groups reported a reliance on community/family affiliations, followed by Other Location SYs, Technical Staff and their RL (in no particular order).

General Usefulness:
Career-related topics with a high degree of satisfaction (70% and above) reported by Protégés are: ARS Culture, ARS Research Expectations, Career Planning, and ARS Promotion Procedures. Sixty percent of Protégés report that they did not have any discussions with their Mentor about NASPDP panel preparation, Training opportunities, and Supervisory Skills Development; while 45%-55% report they did not have any discussions about Research ethics, Preparing RPES materials, Collegiality or Annual Performance.

In terms of helpfulness in developing the Protégés research program, Protégés report that Other Location SYs were most helpful, followed by their RL, then their NPA Mentor.

Most mentors (82%) report that they have enjoyed being a Mentor, and 80% of Protégés report that their Mentor has been helpful. RLs of Protégés report about the same ratios of helpfulness, although one RL indicated that the program was not at all helpful to one Protégé. About 40% of Mentors report that they have gained new technical knowledge from their Protégé.

Recruitment:
It appears that Protégés and Mentors are somewhat more likely to live farther away from their home town than do RLs. For instance, 35% of Protégés, 40% of Mentors, and 50% of all RLs currently work within 500 miles of their home town. On the other hand, 33% of all RLs, 50% of Protégés and 55% of Mentors live more than 1,000 miles form their home town.

Word of mouth is the most cited source of vacancies for one's current position, ranging from 50% for Mentors, 60% for Protégés, 78% for RLs of Mentors, and 58% for RLs of Protégés.

Suggestions/Comments:
RLs remain the most skeptical of the merits of having an off-site Mentor, although RLs also noted that their New SYs were for the most part, helped by their Mentor.

Mentors seem to enjoy their role and generally believe they have been of some help to their Protégé, the majority like the structure as is and do not want training, and one specifically noted that s/he hoped the program would not be further "regimented." Three of the Mentors touched on the challenges inherent in mentoring from a distance and mentoring a relative stranger. One Mentor noted that the expectations were not clear, and suggested a check-off sheet of topics as part of the application.

Protégés also report a relatively high degree of satisfaction with the program.

Conclusions:
Although the survey results demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with the framework, assistance with transitions, and general usefulness, there are nonetheless some areas of concern. Frequency of interactions is one concern. Although 65% of Mentors report having monthly contacts, only 50% of Protégés report that same frequency – neither group indicated contacts of more than once a month. Several Protégés and Mentors indicated that the contact has dwindled over time, although it is not clear what has caused that trailing-off of contacts (lack of interest, time conflicts, no need, etc.).

While the program is designed to be flexible and not impose undue burdens on the Mentor or Protégé, the risk inherent in this level of independence is the potential for an absence of clear direction and expectations.