

## SPORT MANAGEMENT

# Mid-Career Faculty Development Model: Sport Management Faculty Perspectives

*Donna L. Pastore, Sean Dahlin, James Morton*

## Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to determine sport management faculty members' perspectives on the merit and applicability of the mid-career faculty development model proposed by Baldwin and Chang (2006). Thirteen associate and four full sport management professors participated in semistructured interviews. An inductive analysis was used in the development of categories. The results showed positive support for the model and revealed reflection and assessment as important. The participants supported recognition as a form of reinforcement, but felt it should be individualized. The suggestions can assist administrators in developing mid-career mentoring and professional development programs.*

Higher education faces many challenges today, such as budget reductions, faculty and staff furloughs, and the elimination of academic programs. According to Lumpkin (2009), “the challenges facing higher education may mean that meeting the developmental needs of faculty during transitional stages in their careers becomes

---

Donna L. Pastore is a professor, Department of Human Sciences, The Ohio State University. Sean Dahlin is an assistant professor, Physical Education, School Health, & Movement Sciences Department, Central Washington University. James Morton is an assistant professor, Sport Management Department, Ithaca College. Please send author correspondence to [pastore.3@osu.edu](mailto:pastore.3@osu.edu)

even more critical” (p. 213). Thus, it is important that we not only retain our current sport management faculty but also provide avenues for them to be successful. Baldwin, DeZure, Shaw, and Moretto (2008) define mid-career as the time after a faculty member’s probationary years until retirement preparation. Strage, Nelson, and Meyers (2008) indicated that over half of higher education faculty in the United States were at mid-career. Since mid-career faculty make up a large percentage of all college and university faculties, it is important to examine their professional development and mentoring needs.

One avenue that can help with sport management faculty retention and success is a high-quality mentoring and professional development program. Faculty mentoring and professional development has received much attention at the junior faculty level (Foote & Solem, 2009; Leslie, Lingard, & Whyte, 2005). While it is important to mentor junior faculty members so they can be successful in tenure and promotion, mentoring and professional development programs should not stop at this level. Mid-career faculty play a key role in universities and academic disciplines, such as sport management. Additional studies are necessary to advance the knowledge base, and a study on mid-career faculty within sport management is timely. Thus, this exploratory study of mentoring for mid-career faculty in sport management was undertaken.

The literature on mid-career mentoring includes key challenges and components that influence growth and renewal (Baker-Fletcher, Carr, Menn, & Ramsay, 2005; Baldwin et al., 2008; Buch, Huet, Rorrer, & Roberson, 2011; Strage et al., 2008), recommendations for supporting mid-career faculty (Canale, Herdklotz, & Wild, 2013; Nottis, 2005), programs to improve teaching (Romano, Hoelsing, O’Donovan, & Weinsheimer 2004), and a professional development model (Baldwin & Chang, 2006).

Mid-career faculty face a number of trials at their career stage. Baker-Fletcher et al. (2005) asked individuals who were attending a workshop on mid-career teaching the challenges they faced. The challenges that emerged included competing claims for time, research changes, increased generational gap with students, and feelings of fatigue. Buch et al. (2011) examined the “career challenges facing associate professors, as well as a comprehensive mid-career

mentoring program for associate professors” (p. 39). The findings from the study suggested the need for clear/transparent criteria for promotion to full professor, equitable service loads, promotion decisions made fairly, and regular feedback on associate professors progress toward promotion. In 2008, Strage et al. conducted a study of mid-career faculty to “identify key factors affecting the professional growth and renewal of mid-career faculty” (p. 72). The study participants represented various academic disciplines and were interviewed individually as well as in small groups. Strage et al. reported three themes and that “taken together... They also provide evidence of the positive impact that facilitative environments can have on engaging, sustaining, and nurturing a thriving faculty” (p. 73). Suggestions for institutional leaders were presented and one suggestion included the development of professional growth opportunities.

One of the more prominent studies conducted on mid-career faculty was completed by Baldwin et al. (2008). In their study, the researchers interviewed 20 mid-career faculty and 20 chairs of departments/schools at Michigan State University to understand their situation in a research university and identify best support practices. A number of themes occurred under the challenges and support for mid-career faculty in which the faculty and chairs were similar in agreement. Examples of themes under challenges included more work, neglect, relief, next steps, and unclear goals. Baldwin et al. also discussed an additional challenge for chairs, which was “time and money.” Relative to the support themes, the following emerged: aid and encouragement, and disciplinary, departmental, and programmatic differences. Baldwin et al. further discussed themes in which there was disagreement among faculty and chairs, and examples included need/support, expectations for promotion and merit increases, and annual review. The findings provided suggestions for department chairs to consider when working with mid-career faculty.

In 2013, Canale et al. investigated national programs that support mid-career faculty. Specifically, a team of researchers from Faculty Career Development Services (Rochester Institute of Technology) completed a benchmark analysis of 39 institutions. The results showed 18 institutions offered mid-career support in the way of “leadership development, support for women faculty, mentoring

(both mentor and protégé), grants and awards, sabbaticals, fellowships or some other stipend or financial remuneration (e.g., travel) and general opportunities” (Canale et al., 2013, p. 3). Further, the researchers found that few benchmark schools had programs that specifically support mid-career faculty. Rather, the focus was on support throughout the career of a faculty member.

Relative to programs to improve teaching, Romano et al. (2004) discussed a Mid-Career Teaching Program (MCTP) that was developed by the Center for Teaching and Learning Services (CTL) at the University of Minnesota. MCTP included four goals: (a) pedagogical strategies to improve student learning, (b) applying new knowledge and techniques, (c) conversations with peers about student learning, and (d) discussions of midlife events. According to Romano et al., this program gave faculty the opportunities to reflect on classroom practices, provided thought-provoking activities about one’s teaching and learning, and provided a support system to try new teaching approaches. MCTP groups consisted of six to 15 members from varying academic disciplines and met several times during the academic year. The scholars collected data from 37 faculty members to determine the impact of the program. The results showed “positive changes in teaching behaviors and knowledge as well as an increase in teaching satisfaction and confidence” (p. 21). For suggestions on how to support the mid-career researcher, Nottis (2005) wrote a scholarly article and presented suggestions based on a review of the literature. Examples of support included time to pursue new research ideas, research mentors, and research mentoring across disciplines. Nottis concluded the article by stating, “Resources and incentives for research longevity need to be examined and viable ways to support both male and female researchers need to be considered” (p. 98).

Baldwin and Chang (2006) developed a model for mid-career faculty development and mentoring. They proposed a model that can provide a support system for faculty in the middle years of academic life. This model was chosen for the study because the scholars completed “a national web-based investigation to identify strategies specifically designed to address the needs of mid-career faculty in colleges and universities” (Baldwin & Chang, 2006, p. 28). Small to large as well as public and private institutions were reviewed for the support the schools provided for mid-career faculty. The model

is comprehensive in nature and therefore able to be employed in a number of settings. Additionally, while this is the first empirical test of the whole model, several of the different aspects making up the model have been supported by research on this topic (Austin, 2002; Baker-Fletcher et al., 2005; Romano et al., 2004). Finally, this model represents the best attempt, to date, at identifying the necessary elements to keep an integral campus demographic engaged and contributing to the effectiveness of the higher education mission.

The model consists of three steps in the mid-career faculty development process. The steps include (1) career reflection and assessment, (2) career planning: short- and long-term goals, and (c) career action/implementation. Additionally, three areas of support to maintain the development process are proposed in the model and include (a) collegial support, (b) resources, and (c) reinforcement.

Although the aforementioned studies and articles have contributed to the literature, additional ones are necessary to advance the knowledge base on sport management mid-career faculty. A study on mid-career faculty within sport management is timely, and the findings have the potential to help institutions of higher education develop high-quality faculty mentoring programs. Mentoring is a key topic of study in many fields (e.g., business, education, nursing, occupational therapy, and physical education; Dodds, 2005; Jones, Harris, & Miles, 2009; Paul, Stein, Ottenbacher, & Liu 2002), and one avenue that may be able to help with faculty retention and success is a high-quality mentoring program. Further, given that faculty members at the mid-career stage “have been largely ignored in higher education policy and practice” (Baldwin & Chang, 2006, p. 28), an exploratory study of mentoring for mid-career faculty in sport management was undertaken.

The purpose of the study was to determine the merit and applicability of the mid-career faculty development model proposed by Baldwin and Chang (2006) within sport management. The research questions were

1. What are sport management associate and full professors’ perspectives regarding the three key facets, (a) career reflec-

- tion and assessment, (b) career planning: short- and long-term goals, and (c) career action/implementation), in the mid-career faculty development process?
2. What are sport management associate and full professors' perspectives regarding the three areas of support needed, (a) collegial support, (b) resources, and (c) reinforcement, to maintain the development process?

## Method

### Research Design

This study followed the qualitative case study approach (Merriam, 1998) with the case of participants being mid-career sport management faculty members. The case study is considered a single case of sport management associate and full professors; however, since the participants of the study were not all housed in the same institution of higher education, their affiliation to differing institutions are deemed as *embedded* units (Merriam, 1998) of the larger case. The larger case is that they all resided within a large Midwestern state.

### Setting and Participants

The setting for the study consisted of institutions of higher education from a large Midwestern state. The following demographics were utilized in the selection of the participants: rank, gender, ethnic background, race, years in rank, and type of institution (i.e., teaching, teaching and research, research). Table 1 provides the participant demographics. Although a variety of demographic information was gathered, there was no diversity among the participants regarding race. A purposive sampling method was used. Twenty-two sport management faculty members from varying institutions were invited to participate in the study through semistructured interviews. Thirteen associate professors and four full professors responded to the request to participate in the study and agreed to participate. Nine institutions were represented in the sample (i.e., 3 teaching institutions, 5 teaching/research institutions, 1 research institution).

**Table 1**  
*Participant Demographic Information*

Participant letter	Age	Gender	Ethnic background	Race	Faculty rank	Years in	
						current rank	Type of institution
A	54	Male	Jewish	White	Professor	1	Teaching & Research
B	52	Female	Italian-American	White	Associate	13	Teaching & Research
C	37	Male	German-Irish	Caucasian	Associate	14	Teaching & Research
D	48	Male	Caucasian	White	Associate	4	Research
E	50	Female	Polish-Slovak	Caucasian	Associate	4-5	Teaching
F	64	Female	Irish, Scottish, French Canadian	White-Caucasian	Professor	10	Teaching & Research
G	62	Male	Caucasian-Irish	White	Associate	16	Teaching & Research
H	50	Male	German	White	Associate	7	Teaching & Research
I	59	Female	Caucasian	Caucasian-White	Associate	4	Teaching & Research
J	49	Male	Caucasian, Irish-German	White	Professor	9	Research
K	38	Female	White	White	Associate	4	Teaching & Research
L	49	Male	German, Irish, Norwegian	Caucasian	Associate	14	Teaching & Research
M	52	Male	German, Irish, Norwegian	Caucasian	Associate	8	Teaching & Research
N	64	Male		Caucasian	Professor	19	Teaching
O	43	Male	White American	White	Associate	10	Teaching & Research
P	65	Female	Caucasian		Associate	10	Teaching & Research
Q	44	Female	Portuguese		Associate	5	Teaching & Research

Of the 17 participants ( $N = 17$ ) in the study, 13 identified themselves as coming from Teaching and Research institutions, whereas two were classified as coming from Teaching institutions and two from Research institutions. In terms of gender, 10 of the participants were male and seven were female. Additionally, 16 of those in the study determined themselves as White/Caucasian with one participant not self-identifying in terms of race. Regarding age, the range of the participants was between 37 and 65 years old, with the mean age at approximately 52 years old. Furthermore, when asked what year they were in at their current rank (i.e., associate or full professor), the participants reported a range between 1 and 19 years of experience, with the mean amount of years at current rank being 9.

### **Interview Guide and Pilot Test**

As seen in the review of literature, Baldwin and Chang's (2006) model was founded upon steps for mid-career faculty members (i.e., career reflection and assessment, career planning [short- and long-term goals], and career action/implementation) as well as three proposed areas of support (i.e., collegial support, resources, and reinforcement) to assist them. The interview guide consisted of six questions implemented consistent with Baldwin and Chang's mid-career faculty development model. It is also important to clarify that the questions from the interview guide were developed to align with the research questions of this study. Prior to participant interviews for the establishment of trustworthiness and credibility, a pilot test was conducted. Two sport management faculty members from institutions outside the sample list were interviewed and asked to provide feedback on the semistructured interview. As a result of the pilot test, the questions were slightly changed and expanded to gather more perspectives from the participants.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The study utilized semistructured interviews that lasted from 26 min to 1 hr and 10 min. The interviews occurred on the participants' campus except for one interview which took place via Skype. Each interview was recorded with a digital voice recorder. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and shared with each participant for member checking. In addition to interviews, field notes were kept. Each participant completed a demographic information sheet.

Themes and subthemes were developed from an inductive analysis (Patton, 2015) and are shown in Table 2. Two peer debriefers were used as part of the review and confirmation process of the transcripts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Table 2**

*Major Themes and Subthemes*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
Career Reflection and Assessment	Importance of reflection Informal reflection Formal reflection/annual reviews
Career Planning	Focused more on short-term goals Frequent leadership turnover
Career Action/Implementation	Positives of career plans Informal assessment
Collegial Support	Importance of collegial support External collaborations
Resources	Time Funding
Reinforcement	Individualized recognition

## **Findings**

The purpose of this study was to determine the merit and applicability of the mid-career faculty development model proposed by Baldwin and Chang (2006) within sport management. The major themes identified were Career Reflection and Assessment, Career Planning, Career Action/Implementation, Collegial Support, Resources, and Reinforcement (see themes and subthemes in Table 2).

### **Career Reflection and Assessment**

Under the major theme of Career Reflection and Assessment, the participants' perceptions highlighted the subthemes of Importance of Reflection, Informal Reflection, and Formal Reflection/Annual Reviews.

**Importance of reflection.** It is apparent that reflection is a tool that Participant F values, when stating, “I agree with the approach because I think reflection is valuable,” with Participant K giving a similar statement: “. . . I absolutely agree with this approach and it gets incredibly important.” Participant E gave her take on the importance of how reflection helps with achieving goals: “I think evaluation is pretty necessary to continue to determine where you want to go and what you want to do and in what regard . . .” Participant I explained not only how reflection helps with present and future goals, but also the detriment of not utilizing reflection to its fullest capacity:

And so I think it’s important that reflection and assessment is critical, not only in using the past to kind of inform what you’re going to do in the present and the future, but really more important to achieve my future goals, of which I have some. And I think if you stop reflecting and assessing, I think you almost push the pause button on staying in the present and moving forward.

Similarly, two other participants described how reflection has affected them in their careers even to the point that Participant O’s quote shows how he reflects more over the years: “. . . reflection and assessment, I think has become real important and I think as my career has progressed, I do it more often.” Participant P said, “. . . to me reflection is important in my life in general and so I do believe it’s important in one’s career.”

The quotes from the participants show evidence of the importance of reflection not only within their own career progression but also in their own lives as seen from Participant P’s comment.

**Informal reflection.** As seen from Participant Q, informal reflection can be used yearly to help determine longer term plans: “And then informally I usually do it every year. I usually have a process just for myself, what my goals are for that year and then I adjust my five-year plan.”

Participants A and C, on the other hand, spoke on how they have used informal assessment on a more frequent basis. Participant A said, “I think I always try to assess my strengths and weaknesses and where I am going.” Participant C noted, “. . . I think a self-evaluation reflection happens if not on an ongoing basis every single day when

you re-evaluate what you're going to teach to your students in a given class, when you start to do something administratively . . .”

Several participants from the study noted that they engage in informal reflection, with the examples being a snapshot of its utility with mid-career faculty members, which appears to be perceived by these quotes as a constant, continual process.

**Formal reflection/annual reviews.** One feature that emerged was that several participants engaged in formal reflection sometimes through or because of annual reviews. The examples in this section note these approaches, typically as some type of annual review, as stated by Participant D: “. . . our annual reviews that we all have to complete does cause some reflection on what we've done in the past and also provides the opportunity for future goals.”

The participants also described that if it were not for the formal review process then they might not necessarily do formal assessment on their own otherwise:

Where I am you have to write it up in the form of an abstract and then provide evidence . . . then you highlight on your CV – and that's the only time really that I think anybody I know at my place does any type of reflection . . . (Participant F)

The annual evaluation process provides that on a year-to-year basis, but if wasn't for kind of being forced to give more than a year looking back and reflecting, I'm not sure I would do it as often. (Participant K)

Last, Participant J gave his take on how in his role as an administrator he has utilized formal assessment as a tool to assist faculty members plan for their future:

I think when we go through the promotion to associate professor and tenure that the missing piece is often the what's next step and getting people to think about kind of where they're at, where they want to go next. I've been trying to do that in my current role, and so when I meet with faculty and they ask me what to put into their contextual statement, one of the things I encourage them to do is do a somewhat of a forward thinking thing . . . (Participant J)

It was interesting how formal reflection was couched as an activity that was related with the annual reviews the participants alluded to. In the case of Participant F and Participant K, without annual reviews, they would not go through the formal process of reflection as often, whereas Participant J explained the administrative side and how he used formal evaluations as a chance to assist his faculty members in planning ahead.

### Career Planning

Regarding the theme of Career Planning, the subthemes that emerged from the participants' perceptions were highlighted as Focus More on Short-Term Goals and Frequent Leadership Turnover.

**Focused more on short-term goals.** As outlined in Baldwin and Chang's (2006) model, a few of the participants from this study paid more attention to short-term goals. Participant B said, "... I like the approach of looking at what are the short-term goals versus what are the long-term goals because I think it gives people some direction..." For Participant M, his focus on the short term seems to have been based on attaining promotion to full professor and would likely shift afterward:

... I would say short-term goals for me, probably focus on the notion of promotion up to full professor... I think after that has taken place, I think that will change a little bit of my focus, and little bit of the perspective just because I have some other areas that I'm currently engaged in...

Based on the quotes, the focus on short-term goals has given the participants something that appears more tangible to work toward opposed to long-term goals with Participant M's main objective being the promotion to full professor, which is dependent upon the decisions made by administration.

**Frequent leadership turnover.** The following excerpts show the influence of leadership changes on goal setting, particularly long term:

... every time you have a new provost, you have a new goal for the institution, every time you have a new president, you have a new goal, every time we get a new dean, a new provost, and sometimes a new president, you do a new strategic

plan . . . so it's hard to keep up with the university, it's hard to make your plans according to the university. (Participant F)

It's really difficult to plan where do we want to be in 5 years, where do we want to be in 10 years because you're so in the trenches that you can't really see that far in advance. Our institution has been doing some strategic planning where they're looking at new online programs and new innovative programs, but that's been in some way a response of the declining enrollment in higher education across the board. . . . And every time leadership changes, they want to have a new strategic plan. They want it to be their plan. (Participant G)

The problem that I have faced with long term goals it seems as though with the change in administration those goals change . . . the administration changes although they've all been good changes and good people, it's just with the different philosophies and emphases they have, makes long-term planning a little bit more challenging. (Participant O)

. . . I've counted the number of presidents, provosts, deans, directors and chairs, program chairs, and there's been so much turnover that in terms of getting a good sense of where the institution's going, it changes every time we have someone at one of those levels change . . . in 2 or 3 years these administrators will be gone and we'll be talking about doing it again, so it's hard to align with any kind of institutional goals when there's that kind of turnover. (Participant P)

The participants commented on how turnover in leadership positions affected their goal setting to the point that it has hindered their own goal setting at times when administrative or institutional goals took precedence.

## Career Action/Implementation

For the overarching theme of Career Action/Implementation, the following subthemes were indicated from the transcripts of the participants: Positives of Career Plans and Informal Assessment.

**Positives of career plans.** A number of participants commented on the positives of career plans. Participant M stated, “I think it’s feasible and plausible,” and Participant K commented, “. . . I do and like a long-term personal career plan.” Participant D described how career plans can help with next steps: “I think it would definitely help someone in my case that’s been an associate for several years—kind of a guidepost to that next step of becoming a full professor.”

Participant J noted having a plan, but an opportunity changed the direction of the plan: “I will say I had a plan, but it took some detours because opportunities came along that I wasn’t expecting, so I never expected to be in the provost office as the example.”

The quote by Participant J is a great example of the fact that career plans can change in an instant based on what direction our professional and/or personal lives take us, thus leading to the ever-evolving process of informal assessment.

**Informal assessment.** Participants noted they make informal assessments when thinking about career action. The following excerpt shows Participant B’s approach to informal assessment, which appears to be an evolving process:

Well, I guess mine is still evolving . . . I’m not really the type of person who writes down a lot of stuff, so I guess I am following a career, implementing a career plan, but I don’t know that I necessarily write all of that down.

Participant L, on the other hand, explained his approach a little differently:

. . . I think it’s great to have a plan and have some direction, but again, just through experience, buddy you better be ready to adapt because you can’t lay it out and say, well this is where I want to be in 2 years, this is where I want to be in

3 years, this is where I want to be in 5 years; when you know, life gets in the way. It's good to have some structure, so you know what you're trying to do and know what you're trying to accomplish. I do, I don't know that I plan, but I prioritize. I think that's probably my better definition of how I do it.

In his case, Participant L highlighted that his informal assessment is contingent upon being able to adapt and prioritizing goals and tasks.

### Collegial Support

According to the participants, Collegial Support was an underlying theme that aligns with the framework for this study. The subthemes emphasized were Importance of Collegial Support and External Collaboration.

**Importance of collegial support.** Another topic of discussion per the participants was the importance of collegial support. Participant O and Participant G emphasized how imperative it is for faculty members. Participant O said, "I think collegial support is vital and here we had a great structure and so there was lots and lots of collegial support... I think it's incredibly important." Participant G said,

... I think it's when you have it, I think you can really do a lot of really good things and you can feel good about what you're doing and you can feel growth because you're able to bounce things off of people.

Participant D, for instance, described his fortunate circumstance with the colleagues in his department: "I'm lucky here. I get along with all of the people. I know other colleagues who really struggle in their departments. There's not a lot of collegiality between faculty in some programs I know, but we're pretty fortunate here."

Furthermore, some participants provided examples of how collegial support works at their institutions. Participant K said, "... knowing that if you do have to run something by somebody, their door is open and they're going to stop what they're doing and give you their time." Participant F said,

. . . collegiality to me is right now, we have a pretty good collegiality on our hallway because most everybody gets along, most everybody likes each other, most everybody supports each other. You tell somebody what they're doing, or they ask you what you're doing and they think it's great. It's the best it's ever been . . .

To sum up the participants' perception of collegial support, Participant A phrased it in the following way: "I truly believe it's the life blood of the university."

**External collaborations.** In a different vein, some participants identified collaborations with others outside the institution:

Probably regional, national conferences. When I started this gig as teaching Sport Management, fortunately I had somebody who was I thought pretty well established who introduced me [at the] first conference I went to, NASSM conference in Louisville, KY and I was introduced to a lot of people. If I was on my own, I never would have met. This person introduced me to a lot of people and in a couple years, I'm now [at a position in] the organization, not because I did anything special, but I had someone who they respected who introduced me and figured out, oh this is how you do things. (Participant N)

I'm still involved with the NCAA Women's Leadership Symposium, which has always been developed around the collaborative approach of using a committee in order to accomplish our tasks and goals, and it's been really supportive obviously in order to make it as successful as it has been. (Participant E)

Similar to the quotes for collegial support, the quotes from Participant N and Participant E show their sentiments of involvement with organizations and committees and support from colleagues outside of their own institutions in their own effectiveness as academics within their field of study.

## Resources

Under the major theme of Resources, the participants' perceptions highlighted the subthemes of Time and Funding.

**Time.** The participants noted the importance of flexible schedules and release time. One participant commented: “. . . to me the biggest one is time to be able to have flexible scheduling . . .” (Participant O). Another participant noted, “I think the release time part is important . . .” (Participant H). Participant B emphasized flexibility with time to take advantage of pursuing other things on campus and that the release time at her institution was an uncommon occurrence:

Yeah, I personally have been able to take advantage of the scheduling. Typically in the fall, I teach Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule, and then in the spring, I have a Tuesday, Thursday schedule. So that's very important, very helpful because that gives me time to again take advantage of some of the services on campus that are offered, the workshops or whatever. Here they're not so crazy about release time; you know that's probably not going to happen.

In the case with Participant E, she explained her need to have one day out of the week to write:

. . . we need flexible schedules . . . being able to have a writing day is important to me, one day a week, and I'd like to have more . . . and like I said, one writing, just give me one writing day.

One participant identified a sabbatical as being important and suggested it be required: “It almost seems like we should make it mandatory for associate professors to take a sabbatical in their third year after you're tenured and promoted” (Participant Q).

For each participant quoted, the concept of release time was perceived as something different. For instance, Participant B pointed out that having time meant being able to take advantage of resources on campus (e.g., workshops, services), whereas Participant E referred to the fact that her free time was needed for writing in terms of research. Then, Participant Q expressed that having time was related to taking a sabbatical after achieving tenure. In each case, a large part of

how time outside of teaching is decided is based on the expectation of the institution in terms of teaching, research, and service.

**Funding.** The participants commented on the importance of travel funds to attend professional conferences. Participant N commented on what is provided at his institution for conferences:

We're at a university where we do provide a couple of internal grants which you can get. Some are travel grants you can get, and then there's another one and then fortunately if you're presenting at a conference here, the conference is paid for, unless it's international, then up to \$2000 . . .

Some participants acknowledged that their institutions did not provide enough travel funds:

...I don't know of a colleague anywhere in any institution that hasn't experienced a drop off in the amount of financial support to be sent to conferences and/or to purchase software, to run a particular data analysis or whatever. I think that's been a real frustrating piece. (Participant I)

We have so little. We just had an external review and they could not believe the amount of money that we got for travel expenses—\$650, and there's other pools we can take it from on campus. There's a pool if you want to go to a workshop that you can get a couple hundred dollars, there's another pool if you're presenting research that you can add to your \$650, you know it's up to \$250, so I mean there's just not a lot of support. We want to be a research institution, but we don't have the resources to support faculty. A lot of faculty pay their own way for these kinds of things. (Participant F)

In the case of funding, there was more consistency from the three participants' quotes. They all equated funding for the most part to travel to an academic conference or workshop.

### **Reinforcement**

Again, consistent with Baldwin and Chang's (2006) framework, the participants placed emphasis on Reinforcements as a theme

of this study, particularly focused on the subtheme *Individualized Recognition*.

A number of participants commented on the importance of re-inforcement. Participant N and Participant G stressed that recognition is a significant piece to the puzzle, whether by one's institution or even outside of the institution. Participant N said, ". . . I think that's important to create some type of recognition system, even if it's minimal. If money goes with it, that's great, I need some recognition as well." Participant G said,

Everyone likes to feel as if they're appreciated, and it's nice sometimes when that is a monetary reward, but that's not always the case and it doesn't always need to be the case. So I think when you're recognized by your institution, as well as for the work that you do outside of your institution, it is very rewarding.

Several participants noted the importance of receiving appreciative notes from others. Participant B said,

I'm more of a person that if I get a sort of a note from the department chair, or get a note from the dean or something saying, hey congratulations on this, or, for me that goes a longer way than necessarily standing up at a faculty meeting or something and making an announcement about something like that.

Participant C said, "Like I said, everybody likes to get that pat on the back, and when you do reward people, whether it's just a thank-you, once again, can mean the most. But when it's in writing, it's beneficial." Participant K said,

I would suggest thank-yous. I mean, I think that because time is such a precious resource that there is this just frenetic pace on developing things and implementing things by deadlines and getting documents, committees, and . . . and there's no thank-you.

Participant Q and Participant I described that external motivators are another form of recognition that could be beneficial,

although both participants also stated that it is not what solely motivates them:

I think in this area it really depends on what motivates people. Like for me those kinds of external things, I mean it's nice to get, but it's not what drives me. But I think for other people, you know, who need that kind of external recognition, it could really be meaningful. (Participant Q)

External motivations I think are still really nice to get. That being said, also again, I don't know that I really think that's any more important than someone just coming to you and saying thank you, or saying I really appreciate the work you did on this. That's just as valued to me and that goes back to that generation where a thank-you is really kind. (Participant I)

It is evident from these quotes that the participants in the study feel that recognition from their colleagues and/or administrators (e.g., department chair, dean) goes a long way in feeling appreciated, whether that be with a simple thank-you note or a monetary benefit.

## Discussion

This study sought to learn the perspectives associate and full sport management professors had toward the merit and applicability of the mid-career faculty development model (Baldwin & Chang, 2006). The key steps of the mid-career faculty development process (i.e., career reflection and assessment, career planning: short- and long-term goals, and career action/implementation), as outlined by Baldwin and Chang, were evident in the responses of this sample of faculty. Additionally, the three essential elements of support for the development process were verified by the participants as being important aspects of posttenured faculty development. The majority of participants said they engage in career reflection and assessment and that this assessment was helpful in navigating the next steps of their faculty career. However, there was not a consistent application of this step. Some faculty commented that reflection and assessment took place during formal reviews with administrators, while others said that it was an informal, self-guided reflection. This formal versus informal dynamic was consistent throughout the responses and

certainly has a bearing on how faculty and administrators should interpret these results.

The importance of the formal versus informal dynamic lies in the necessity of participation. For mid-career faculty to benefit from the development model, it holds that they need to take part in the outlined steps. This idea was also supported by the findings of Buch et al. (2011). They found that faculty felt regular feedback on progress toward promotion was necessary for mid-career faculty to continue to be successful. If an institution is not providing a formal way for mid-career faculty to continue their development, then it is left to the individual faculty member to decide whether to engage in these key steps. Without the institution formalizing the process, they are leaving to chance the continued development of one of the most important resources on campus.

Similar to career reflection and assessment, this sample of sport management faculty supported the elements of career planning and implementation as essential steps to mid-career development. However, there were different perspectives from the Baldwin and Chang (2006) model. While the participants supported the idea of setting short-term goals to further development, long-term planning proved to be more difficult. A number of respondents noted the frequent turnover of leadership positions made it difficult to make long-term plans, as new leadership often wants to change the course of past strategic plans. Additionally, the unexpected happenings of life often interrupt long-term plans. While this group of faculty did not say it was unimportant to engage in long-term planning, they cautioned that it was important to be able to adjust those types of plans.

According to Baldwin and Chang (2006), there must also be a foundation to support the development process of mid-career faculty. The findings of this study support this portion of the Baldwin and Chang model. The three support elements of collegial support, resources, and reinforcement were all deemed important in helping mid-career faculty continue their career development after earning tenure. This sample of sport management faculty viewed collegial support as institutional colleagues as well as external colleagues. The participants consistently commented on how beneficial it is to have people to rely on. Additionally, there were numerous

comments about the negativity that comes with a lack of collegiality. Besides institutional collegiality, the participants acknowledged the importance of external collaborations as a type of support. These collaborations help with accomplishing research goals and providing alternative viewpoints. As institutions put together search committees for faculty hires as well as administrator hires, it is paramount that they are instructed to consider collegiality in the evaluation of candidates. This is especially true as it relates to mid-career faculty, who will be working with new faculty members as well as possibly looking to move into administration.

Of the resources discussed by these participants, time was the most widely discussed. This supports the findings of Canale et al. (2013), who found that faculty felt sabbaticals were an important support mechanism for mid-career faculty. Additionally, Baker-Fletcher et al. (2005) and Baldwin et al. (2008) found that mid-career faculty often face an increased workload after tenure, which escalates the demands on and importance of time.

An oft-repeated answer from these participants was the desire for a more flexible schedule that allows for more time to focus on research or even to prepare classes better. Coupled with the desire for sabbaticals, this focus on more time leads to the conclusion that, even more than funding, time is the most valuable resource available to mid-career faculty. This time certainly comes at a cost. Allowing for a course release requires that the institution pay someone else to teach that course. However, investing in resources that allow mid-career faculty to take more time is a wise course of action for institutions that want to keep the posttenured faculty engaged and at their most effective. The final element of support, reinforcement, was also verified by the participants of this study. However, the only consistent aspect of the responses was that there are numerous ways to encourage mid-career faculty. The majority of respondents noted that the best way to recognize a faculty member's efforts depends on the type of individual receiving the encouragement. Answers ranged from a quick pat on the back from the chair to a formal recognition in front of colleagues to monetary incentives. Despite the varying methods of reinforcement, the participants felt it is an important aspect of career development.

The results of this study support the six elements of the Baldwin and Chang (2006) model for mid-career faculty development. Many of the resources and types of support the participants desired are available to junior faculty and seem to dissipate for newly promoted associate professors. Many mentioned that there were formal, helpful programs available for faculty working toward tenure, but that once tenure was achieved the support faded away. This emphasis on tenure seems to create a situation in which newly tenured faculty are left feeling adrift with little direction about how to achieve the next promotion or how to prepare for a career change into administration. Some of the common types of support available to junior faculty are increased research funding for the first year or two of employment, course releases, increased travel funds, multiple tenure reviews, research support, decrease in service requirements, and start-up funds. All of this support is aimed at ensuring junior faculty have everything they need to earn tenure at the institution. Unfortunately, the results of this study show that this type of support does not often extend to newly tenured faculty despite the apparent need.

### **Practical Application**

Based on these results, it is recommended that institutions implement a formal program dedicated to mid-career faculty. This programs should involve many of the elements that exist for junior faculty, as noted above. The six elements of the Baldwin and Chang (2006) model should be used as guideposts for the establishment of this program. A formal reflection on at least an annual basis should be performed by faculty members with their chair and/or dean. This should lead to the construction of a short-term plan in which the faculty member identifies areas of opportunity for growth that align with the goals of the department. At this stage, we would differ slightly from the Baldwin and Chang model in that we would eliminate formally establishing a long-term plan. The results of this study tell us that due to the high turnover rate of institutional leadership, long-term planning is overly difficult. It is recommended that long-term planning be done on an informal basis and incorporated into short-term planning as time passes. Finally, it is suggested that there is a formal evaluation for the implementation of short-term plans. It is critical that administrators are involved in this evaluation of implementation. This will help to ensure that faculty members are

following through on new initiatives as well as ensure that these new initiatives are beneficial not only to the faculty member but also the department as a whole.

As discussed, the results of this study lead to the conclusion that mid-career faculty need elements of support to the keys to career growth. These elements of support should also mimic the support given to junior faculty. To provide collegial support, institutions should look to provide resources that assist with mentoring and networking both on and off campus. This could include providing newly tenured faculty increased travel funds, which would allow them to further establish external collaborations. It could also include creating gatherings of mid-career faculty on campus.

The main resource these participants coveted was time. For a formalized program dedicated to mid-career faculty development, this could take the form of course releases or sabbaticals for newly tenured faculty, a decrease in service requirements for a year, or an increase in graduate/student support. The key is the recognition that mid-career faculty often feel directionless, and providing more time to implement short-term plans will aid in them staying motivated and on track. Finally, mid-career faculty and administrators should work together to create a recognition program for reinforcement. The recognition of successful faculty takes many forms and largely depends on the individual. Therefore, it is important that chairs and deans consider this even after having created a recognition program. It may still be necessary for chairs and deans to occasionally write a note to congratulate a professor on getting a manuscript accepted to a top journal or writing a successful grant. The key is for administrators to recognize the importance of reinforcement and to learn how best to accomplish it with their individual faculty members.

### **Limitations and Future Recommendations**

While this study expands the literature on mid-career faculty by exploring associate and full professor perspectives on mentoring, there is still a strong need for further research. First, the interview questions utilized in the study were very broad. It is recommended that future studies include more specific questions to determine participants' ideas for what mentoring they would ideally prefer. Second, in this study, a single state was used. Future investigations on mid-career faculty mentoring may opt to use institutions in sev-

eral states. By including additional states, broader perspectives and new ideas for mid-career faculty mentoring may emerge. Third, this study only collected data through interviews. It would have been of value to include a survey along with the interviews. The responses from a survey could provide additional insights into mid-career faculty mentoring and professional development programs. Future studies can include a mixed-method strategy by combining qualitative with quantitative approaches to better understand mid-career faculty mentoring.

An additional limitation to this study was the lack of racial diversity among participants. It is possible that faculty of color view the elements of the Baldwin and Chang (2006) model differently than their White counterparts. Future studies should incorporate a wider array of representation in their participants. While there was a lack of racial diversity in the participants of this study, there was diversity in the types of institutions for which they work. This diversity presents another possible limitation. Future studies could investigate the views of faculty at one type of institution at a time to further develop the distinctions between the application of the Baldwin and Chang model at teaching, teaching and research, and research institutions.

## References

- Austin, A. E. (2002). Creating a bridge to the future: Preparing new faculty to face changing expectations in a shifting context. *The Review of Higher Education*, 26, 119–144. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2002.0031>
- Baker-Fletcher, K., Carr, D., Menn, E., & Ramsay, N. J. (2005). Taking stock at mid-career: Challenges and opportunities for faculty. *Teaching Theology & Religion*, 8(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9647.2005.00217.x>
- Baldwin, R. G., & Chang, D. A. (2006). Reinforcing our “keystone” faculty. *Liberal Education*, 92(4), 28–35.
- Baldwin, R., DeZure, D., Shaw, A., & Moretto, K. (2008). Mapping the terrain of mid-career faculty at a research university: Implications for faculty and academic leaders. *Change*, 40(5), 46–55. <https://doi.org/10.3200/chng.40.5.46-55>
- Buch, K., Huet, Y., Rorrer, A., & Roberson, L. (2011). Removing the barriers to full professor: A mentoring program for associate professors. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 43(6), 38–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2011.618081>

- Canale, A. M., Herdklotz, C., & Wild, L. (2013, October 23). *Mid-career faculty support: The middle years of the academic profession*. Retrieved from [http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairsfacultydevelopment/sites/rit.edu.academicaffairs.facultydevelopment/files/images/FCDS\\_Mid-CareerRpt.pdf](http://www.rit.edu/academicaffairsfacultydevelopment/sites/rit.edu.academicaffairs.facultydevelopment/files/images/FCDS_Mid-CareerRpt.pdf)
- Dodds, P. (2005). Chapter 4: PETE women's experiences of being mentored into postsecondary faculty positions. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 24, 344–367. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jtpe.24.4.344>
- Foote, K. E., & Solem, M. N. (2009). Toward better mentoring for early career faculty: Results of a study of US geographers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 14(1), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13601440802659403>
- Jones, R. L., Harris, R., & Miles, A. (2009). Mentoring in sports coaching: A review of the literature. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 14, 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408980801976569>
- Leslie, K., Lingard, L., & Whyte, S. (2005). Junior faculty experiences with informal mentoring. *Medical Teacher*, 27, 693–698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421590500271217>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lumpkin, A. (2009). Follow the yellow brick road to a successful professional career in higher education. *The Educational Forum*, 73, 200–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720902991251>
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Nottis, K. (2005). Supporting the mid-career researcher. *Journal of Faculty Development*, 20(2), 95–98.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Paul, S., Stein, F., Ottenbacher, K. J., & Liu, Y. (2002). The role of mentoring on research productivity among occupational therapy faculty. *Occupational Therapy International*, 9(1), 24–40. <https://doi.org/10.1002/oti.154>
- Romano, J. L., Hoelsing, R., O'Donovan, K., & Weinsheimer, J. (2004). Faculty at mid-career: A program to enhance teaching and learning. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29(1), 21–48. <https://doi.org/10.1023/b:ihie.0000035365.92454.a5>
- Strage, A., Nelson, C., & Meyers, S. (2008). “Stayin’ alive:” Meeting faculty mid-career professional renewal needs. *Metropolitan Universities*, 19(1), 71–83.