

ACES Executive Coaching Evaluation Results: 2004-2008
June 23, 2008

Background

In 2003 CWRU initiated a five year program of executive coaching, led by Professor Diana Bilimoria, a Co-PI of the ACES ADVANCE Program. The CWRU coaching program relies on specially trained individuals drawn from an extensive network assembled by CWRU's Executive Education Center to develop skills among STEM departmental chairs and emerging leaders to achieve personal, professional, and organizational goals, and to undertake positive change in their respective departments and schools. The CWRU program includes 1) executive coaching for individual S&E chairs and deans; 2) performance, career and leadership development coaching for women faculty; and 3) related developmental inputs for all groups such as opportunities for mentoring, networking, development, and training.

Participants

In the five year period over 20 S&E chairs, 3 S&E deans, 2 associate deans, and 3 deputy/associate provosts and center directors have been participated in coaching, as have 88 female and 2 minority male S&E faculty members. By June 2008, 15 chairs/ deans/ administrators and 54 women faculty have filled out the coaching evaluation forms.

Results

With ratings based on a Likert scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), the participant evaluations of the different measures came in at a median of 4.5 for women faculty, and 4.7 for chairs and administrators (see Figure 1 or Table 1). Revealingly, individuals who were skeptical about the coaching program at the outset of their participation highly praised its usefulness at the conclusion. Some qualitative results from the opened questions are attached as well.

Figure 1: 2004-2008 Executive Coaching Evaluations of S&E Women Faculty and Chairs/Deans/Admin

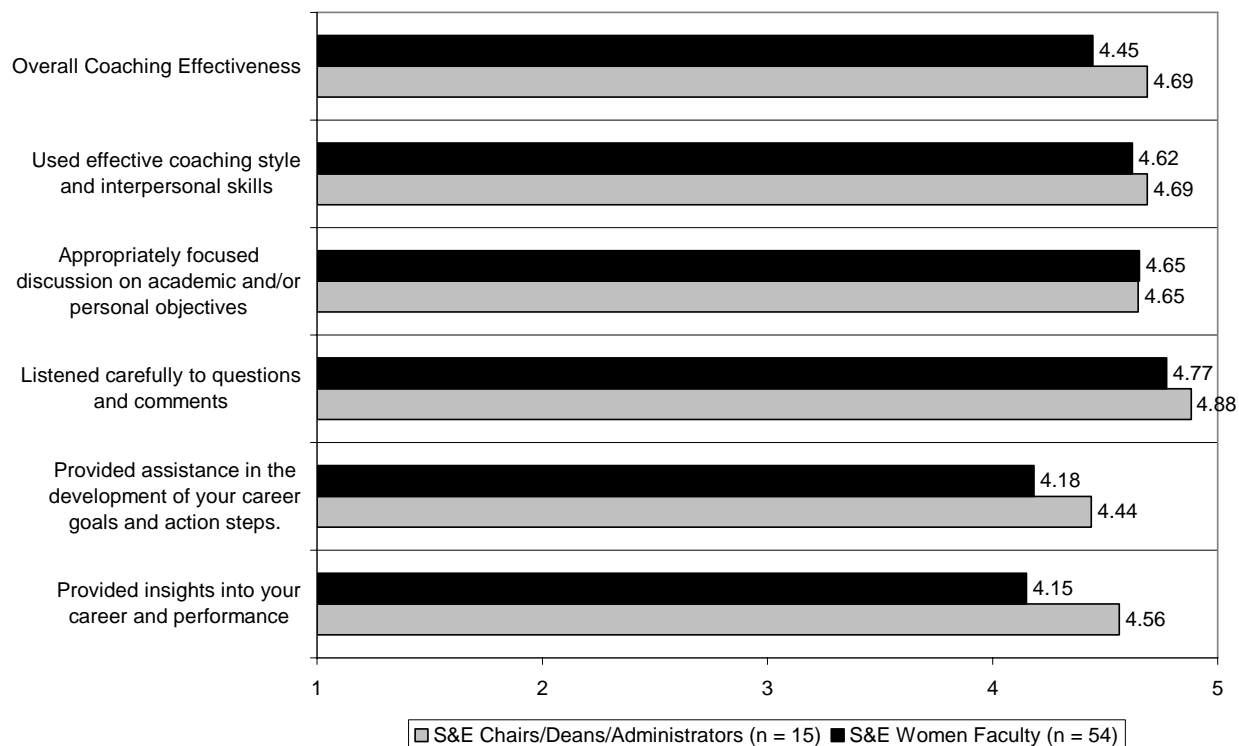


Table 1: 2004-2008 Executive Coaching Evaluations of S&E Women Faculty and Chairs/Deans/Admin

Item (5 Excellent, 4 Very good, 3 Good, 2 Fair, 1 Poor)	S&E Women Faculty (n=54)		S&E Chairs/Deans/Administrators (n=15)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall Coaching Effectiveness	4.45	.77	4.69	1.01
Used effective coaching style and interpersonal skills	4.62	.72	4.69	1.01
Appropriately focused discussion on academic and/or personal objectives	4.65	.54	4.65	1.00
Listened carefully to questions and comments	4.77	.52	4.88	0.49
Provided assistance in the development of your career goals and action steps.	4.18	.81	4.44	1.15
Provided insights into your career and performance	4.15	.90	4.56	1.09

Executive Coaching Comments from Chairs/Deans/Administrators for 2004-2008

Please describe your overall coaching experience.

[My coach] was a wonderful addition to my life. She listened well, helped me organize my own scattered ideas and objectives. She recognized early on that I did not need help in many traditional coaching areas such as negotiating or managing relationships. Instead she focused on areas that were of enormous helpful to me. I couldn't have designed a better or more positive coaching experience. [Chair]

It was very helpful in focusing on the process of dealing with those who report to one, rather than the content of the interactions. [Chair]

It was much more enjoyable than I had envisioned before starting the process. The coaching process confirmed much of my personal beliefs about my own strengths/weaknesses. I found it very easy to converse with my coach, and found him/her to be very perceptive. [Administrator]

It's been enormously helpful, both in terms of big-picture help as I come up to speed as a new department chair, and also in detailed ways, for example with advice on how to conduct good performance evaluations. [Chair]

Very positive. Non-directive approach, almost therapeutic, with coach offering non-judgmental suggestions, questions, perspectives. [Dean]

I have had a coach through the transition first to Department Chair, through the budget turmoil and no-confidence crisis of 2005-2006, and then through my subsequent transition to Interim Dean and then Dean. My coach has been extraordinarily helpful in managing the challenges of these transitions! [Dean]

Did you feel encouraged to make improvements based on your coaching sessions?

I don't feel that I am lacking "courage" to make decisions regarding my career advancement. However, the coaching sessions were useful in that they helped me understand that I have an accurate self-impression of my abilities. I have many options, and I feel as if I am equipped to pursue any of these, should I so choose. [Administrator]

Yes. My coach's perspective and questions led me to raise my sights regarding leadership opportunities. [Dean]

Yes - and I implemented most of the recommendations, though perhaps not as fully as either of us would have liked. [Dean]

Please describe ways in which your coaching experience met or did not meet your expectations.

Not having any concrete expectations at the outset, this question is not easy to answer. I appreciate how insightful and understanding the coach was throughout the process. [Administrator]

It exceeded expectations. Since my college does not provide any significant training or development of chairs, and since many of the other chairs are not people I would choose to emulate, it has filled an important gap in my professional development. It's helped me become better at my job. [Chair]

I had no expectations, but it's fair to say the coaching experience has exceeded my expectation that the experience would neither be especially valuable or positive. [Dean]

My coaching experience exceeded my expectations. My coach listened, asked good questions, guided the tasks, provided relevant and interesting literature, etc. As I said above, my coaching was to be faculty coaching, but because my responsibilities are also largely administrative, my coach adjusted the coaching program to best meet my needs. I think that I benefited enormously from this experience and look forward to the remainder of our sessions. [Dean]

It greatly exceeded my expectations!!! [Dean]

Provided insights into your career and performance.

I was assigned a faculty coach even though more than half of my responsibilities are administrative. My coach modified the coaching program to best suit my multiple needs. [Dean]

Provided assistance in the development of your career goals and action steps.

Incredibly helpful at focusing. [Dean]

Listened carefully to questions and comments

Good listener; this has really been more like therapy for me. Of course it's a bit funny when [he/she] earnestly, as listener, tells me [he/she] thinks I'm saying something fairly obvious like that I don't really like being department chair. [Chair]

I always felt that [he/she] listened carefully and responded appropriately. [Dean]

Overall Coaching Effectiveness

My coach made this an exceptionally useful experience. [Dean]

Executive Coaching Comments from Women Faculty for 2004-2008

Please describe your overall coaching experience.

Through discussions, "homework," and a 360 evaluation, I have been helped to see myself and others more clearly and to develop strategies to make my work life easier, achieve my goals, and improve my standing in the university. I will have to "practice" what I have learned. The external difficulties haven't changed, but at least I am not acting like my own worst enemy and may be able to get what I need more often.

I have found it is helpful in focusing on my goals and always encouraging. My strengths have been acknowledged and ways of strengthening my lesser developed skills have come into focus. A profound experience.

I thought that it was helpful and I appreciated the opportunity to have it, but I was not sure to take full advantage of it.

I initially was very "negative" about having a coach. But the interaction was great – it was especially good to be able to talk to someone outside of my immediate circle and to get their input.

Pleasant, informative, enjoyable, helpful. I like my coach.

I was very pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed and benefited from my coaching experience. The guidance and reflection I received from the coach was so helpful in allowing me to move forward in my career.

I appreciate the opportunity to be coached through this mechanism and XX [coach's name] did a good job. It gave me the opportunity to know myself and the environment that I am in and affirm what I thought in terms of my situation in this institution. I do need to make a change.

It was very helpful. It helped me think about ways to improve. The evaluation was also a great way to get feedback, which forced to think about some issues.

Fantastic! I so appreciated [the coach]'s support through a difficult year. I looked forward to our meetings and was never disappointed. [The coach] found just the right balance of listening and directing, and I really felt "heard" [the coach].

My main concern prior to the coaching experience was that it was going to be "touch-feely, getting in touch with my inner self" sort of thing, to which I do not respond well. I was very pleased that I got constructive assessment of my performance as faculty/mentor, and practical advice. XX [the coach's name] also made me aware of resources available at CWRU that should allow for continued development.

It was very helpful to meet with someone to bounce ideas off and make plans for handling tough situations. The coach had great suggestions for thoughts organizing.

I expected it to be painful but it was very enjoyable.

It was a great experience, especially since I arrived at a tumultuous time for my department and for the university. I feel I would have benefited more from my discussions with her if she was assigned to me when I first arrived.

Interesting process. I really enjoyed having the perspective of someone outside my field. It was also extremely useful to try to list and prioritize concrete career goals. This is something I've never had to do.

This was helpful in many ways. It was essential to bounce issues off of someone that wasn't tied to the department or my career in any way. Some issues you just can't discuss with your colleagues.

Really helped me focus on the important activities for career success

I found great value in organizing my career goals. I have successfully submitted my first grant and received my first XX from XX. This is very critical to the tenure process. I am very fortunate. [Coach's name] helped me organize my priorities to attain this.

I had wonderful time in those coaching sessions. I am very certain that the sessions will influence the development of my career, although they may not result in immediate improvement. The articles I have read though sessions were informative.

My coach was a great person to talk to about the ongoing issues I have been having with a specific situation. I am not certain there was much she could do except listen and reconfirm that I was not the crazy one, but that alone was helpful. She also provided some tips to help me focus my research better. I think having a coach helped relieve some stress!

[The coach] was a huge source of support.

Helpful in getting me to set priorities and to stop procrastinating about accomplishing a important work goal. Also, my coach held me accountable to move ahead with my mentoring committee meeting, which turned out to be very helpful.

My coach has been very effective in directing me to communicate with my colleague and chair.

Initially, I felt the coaching was a bit of a waste of my time. The sessions seemed very unfocused and "chatty" rather than specifically helpful. However, they took a dramatic turn for the better as they progressed, and I found the overall experience very positive. My coach helped me to clarify my career and life needs and goals, and helped me recognize when I was living my values and when my actions were torpedo-ing them. This reduced my stress level considerably and made me more effective.

My coaching sessions were much like what I would expect "therapy" to entail. I basically ran down the list of all the challenges and successes that had occurred since our last session. Since I am going through a pretty intense time in my personal and professional life, this pretty much

filled up the time. It helped me, in any case, tell someone the unabridged and uncensored version of my transition into the academic environment at Case.

Overall this was a good experience. The one downside is that the sessions did raise issues about gender inequity that I have managed to suppress over the years in order to survive. So in a way this experience has opened a "Pandora's box" and I am more aware and angered by these inequities. It is now a matter of finding some balance in identifying some issues that can be realistically addressed and putting the others back in the box. I think it is difficult to achieve success if you only focus on the negative aspects of the culture. Admittedly sometimes it is easier if you pretend they don't exist.

Did you feel encouraged to make improvements based on your coaching sessions?

Yes, I made several changes as a manager/supervisor, and I felt empowered to move forward with projects involving the Case administration.

I am encouraged, enough to seek leadership roles within and outside the institution.

I thought it was a great experience that helped me focus.

Yes, especially in the days right after a session. I would lose momentum as I got farther out from a meeting with my coach.

Yes. I have not followed through as well as I would have liked, though.

Yes, several times I took initiatives that I might have passed up pre-coaching

I have already used his/her coaching strategies in helping my graduate students attain their goals.

Through coaching sessions, it became clear to me what I can do or what I should do for my career to be successful. Career directions, which became more concrete through coaching, served as a guideline for my performance.

My coaching sessions did provide encouragement to make some improvements such as to prioritize and focus.

Yes, very much so. The coach was helpful between sessions by sending follow-up emails reminding me of things I had said I would do prior to the next session.

Somewhat. My coaching sessions have reinforced my approach to attain success in my career. So this is encouraging.

Please describe ways in which your coaching experience met or did not meet your expectations.

I expected help with some problems. With other difficulties, I expected the coach to say something like "that's too bad, there's nothing you can do about it." But there was always something that I could do to try to make things better. So, my expectations were exceeded.

Since I had no expectations (viewed it as a new experience), I found it an enlightening experience. I am sure the match-up is always important. Who ever assigned this match made an excellent choice. Thank you.

The experience surpassed my expectations in regard to impact. While I anticipated a positive collegial interaction, I did not expect it to have the impact it had.

I didn't know what to expect. The positive feedback from [the coach] gave me a lot of self confidence.

Exceeded my expectations in all areas (and I was looking forward to it to start with, so this is a pretty impressive outcome!)

It was very helpful. I would benefit from on-going coaching sessions as well as more frequent meetings with my coach during the 1 year program.

It allowed a confidential yet professional outlet for me to voice my concerns about my experiences thus far at Case.

I had very vague expectations. In general, this process clarifies (and exceeds) what I should try for in terms of career planning.

I didn't have any expectations so this was just gravy.

I had unclear expectations because it was not explained clearly to me and it was an effort to make the business model fit us. Eventually we overcame this and it was extremely helpful.

Better than my expectations - the business approach that [coach's name] was used to coaching is totally compatible with today's climate of running a lab in the school of medicine

The coaching experience was more positive than I had expected. I thought it might be too vague to be of much value. In contrast [Coach's name] gave me very real ways to improve my relationships with my students, department and peers.

This is difficult to say as I did not have any expectation at all. Nevertheless, I would say this coaching experience is worthwhile, especially in helping me with interacting with my colleagues.

The coaching reminded me that I am the master of my own fate. It also provided female comraderie that I do not otherwise have, and I had forgotten how important that is. This has encouraged me to re-connect with my female colleagues in other department despite everyone's time constraints. We are trying to organize a monthly chalk talk to share science for starters, building on Mary Beckerle's advice to be optimistic. On the downside, I can change and my chair can change, but progress will still be very slow without changes in administrative attitude ranging from deans to support staff. For example, it has been very discouraging to see the shift to evening faculty meetings in the medical school, which I think is a major step backwards.

Provided insights into your career and performance

My coach's insights have helped me enormously with regard to my relationships with everyone in the university. What is remarkable about our conversations is that she helps me to understand myself and honor my own values and goals even as she helps me to accommodate to others' expectations.

She [the coach] is unusually insightful with my rather non-traditional career journey. She always creates a comfortable atmosphere for dialogue and discussion.

I was at a difficult stage in my career. It was great to be able to talk to my coach about my career options.

Very thoughtful and insightful.

Gain many new insights with the coach's help.

Outstanding insight into my issues.

Definitely helped me with time management and thinking more about effective supervising to get more progress towards the lab goals

Although my coach was not necessarily attuned to my particular field, she was able to give insight about my performance as an academic in general.

Provided assistance in the development of your career goals and action steps

Very skillful in helping me clarify my focus and in determining action steps

The coach is great at identifying goals and staying on task while still being very much present, empathic, and "in the moment".

[My coach] was an excellent sounding board to anticipate scenarios that might come up that could be confrontational within our department

My coach provided me some tips to help me focus my research goals which were helpful.

I did not really need help in articulating my career goals; they were pretty clear once I had gone through the exercise of writing them down.

Listened carefully to questions and comments

She [the coach] is an excellent listener – hears, questions and comments and is thoughtful in her response. She is fully present when we meet.

Extraordinary listening ability; make me feel very affirmed and valued.

She really understood where I was coming from and helped me come up with approaches that were specifically applicable to me.

She was a great listener and this was the most important part of my coaching experience!

Appropriately focused discussion on academic and/or personal objectives

Great blend of academic and personal.

She helped me to focus on my personal objectives, since my academic objectives and milestones were pretty clear and on track.

Using effective coaching style and interpersonal skills

She is sensitive, gentle and understanding. She is clear in her directives. I enjoy and value our sessions even when the going seems a bit tough.

Tremendous warmth, energy, empathy, insight.

Very effective style for me, very direct.

She is a pleasant person with a very approachable demeanor.

Overall Coaching Effectiveness

I knew I wanted a coach but did not expect to get as much out of it as I have.

Very positive experience. Helped me a lot through difficult times.

She is very good in guiding me in discussion and suggesting means for evaluation/assessment.

Extremely supportive, focused, really helped me identify areas to work on as well as strengths.

Working with the coach was great!

Wish I had her my first year at Case!

Extremely helpful in helping me to re-focus on and get direction. Have made some major changes in my work life so I am increasing my scholarship and visibility.

I was not sure what to expect from the experience, so it is hard to say whether it was "effective". Nonetheless, I am glad I participated in the program.