

Early Career Academic Development Programme

USAF presentation

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- Originally funded by Mellon Foundation
- DHET are current funders
- Key principles:
 - Inclusivity
 - Diversity
 - Excellence

Our profile (2022 figures - in 2023 we have 130 mentees so far)

- 105 mentees, with *approximate* figures:
 - 75 women
 - 30 men

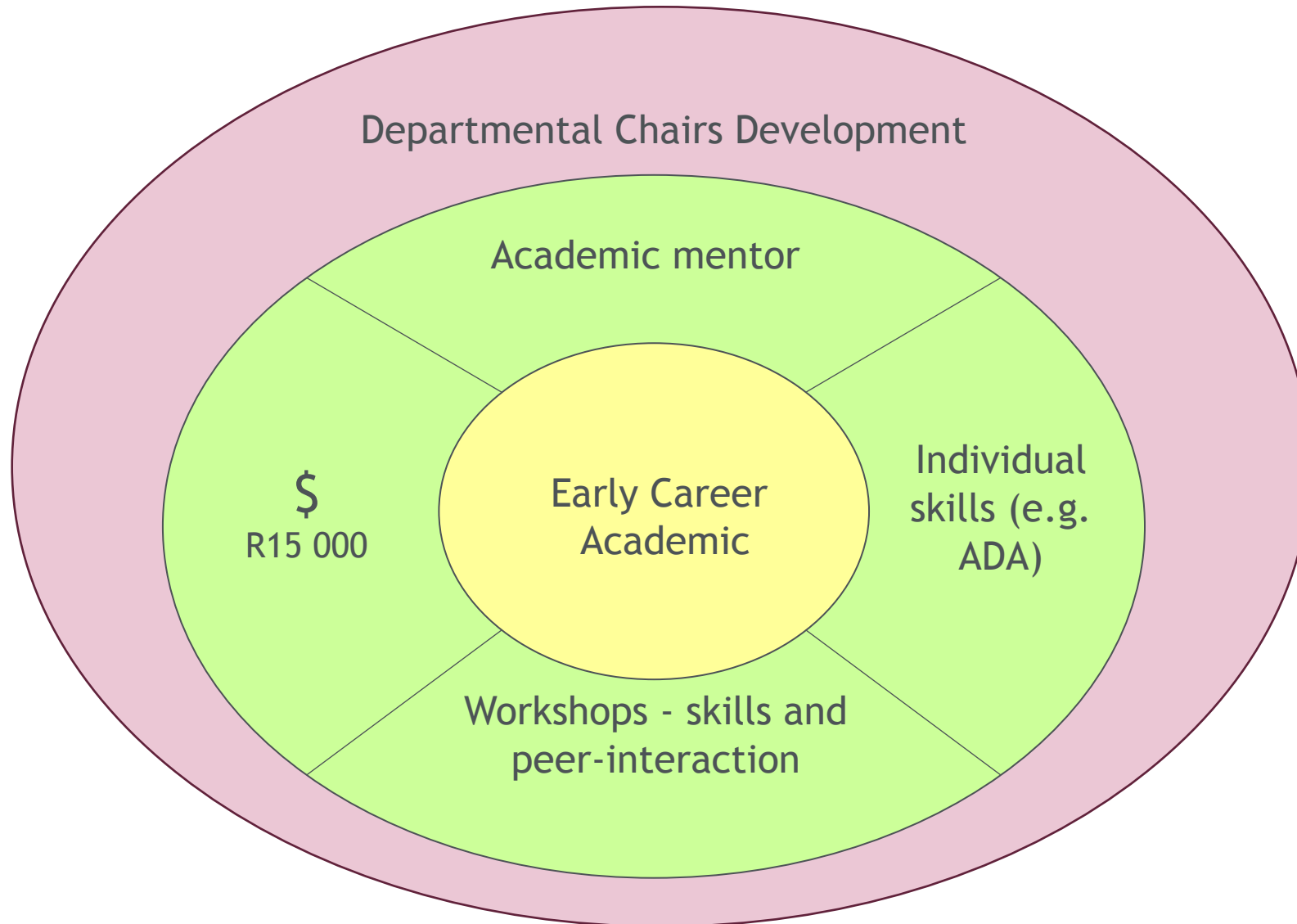
 - 32 African
 - 36 Coloured
 - 5 Indian/Asian
 - 32 White

- 90 mentors (some have more than one mentee)

Mentees by faculty

Faculty	Number of mentees
Agrisciences	11
Arts and social sciences	14
Economics and management sciences	11
Education	3
Engineering	13
Law	2
Medicine and health sciences	32
Military science	8
Science	11

Early Career Academic Development @ SU



Courses attended (selected examples)

- Writing for Publication
- Supervising the literature review
- CREST Science communication
- World Congress on Research Integrity
- ADA:
 - Systematic reviews
 - Research publication and presentation
 - Project management
 - Teaching in the digital world
 - Preparing for the PhD
- From 2023: Planning an academic career

Key issues and challenges

- Annual reporting by mentees with feedback - overwhelmingly positive, but
 - No formal external evaluation yet
- Explicit alignment of interests:
 - University
 - ECAD programme
 - Mentors
 - Mentees
- Big enough to be diverse; small enough to be personal
- Central role of Fadwha Patel (administrative officer)



The Stellenbosch and South African context

- ‘Op Stellenbosch is almal gasvry, maar mens bly nog steeds ‘n gas’ (Chris Brink)
‘At Stellenbosch everyone is hospitable, but you still remain a guest’
- The politics of belonging - as a basis for having voice and a contribution to make
- Ongoing (often subtle) exclusion, racism, sexism, xenophobia
- Gendered maldistribution of care (both in private life and in professional life)
- Strong goodwill around these issues (eg Agrisciences project) but continuing mindfulness needed

The complex politics of (in)formality

- Bureaucratization, metrics, indicators, outputs
- Increasing loads (including administrative loads)
- Focus in ECAD on respite from this:
 - Emphasis on personal tailoring
 - Individual welcoming
 - Events to create a sense of community
 - Accessible role models and possibilities for identification
- But:
 - If we don't think about informality carefully it can be experienced as exclusionary and marked culturally

Some more general issues

- Huge variability across contexts in terms of access and ‘academic bridging capital’
- Commodification of outputs, audit culture have unintended consequences
- Use of junior academics and graduate students to produce monetized products with insufficient attention to the academy as a space for debate, contestation, conversation
- Short term outputs vs long term excellence
- Reality of informal exclusion from a ‘hidden curriculum’ (ORCiD example)



What does academic development and support of new academics take?

- Head and heart
- Professional and personal
- Skills and access
- Long-term engagement and support is key (communities of practice)
- Global/local: lots of resources, lots of overlap and repetition, but importance of meeting people where they are in the context of relationships
- Relational, care ethics as central
- But also more need for rigorous assessment of what we do
- Future cohort model, fully assessed for process/outcome issues?