# *Mentor-Led Learning Communities to Impact E-Learning Completion and Success*

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Challenges and values

- Wide variance in student technology capacity, access, skills, comfort, etc.
- Faculty resistance to fully online program
- Wide geographic spread among students
- Importance of relationships
  - In social work and for presence and engagement
- Faculty desire for "eyes on the ground" with students – for better feedback and monitoring

Mentored Learning Community Model
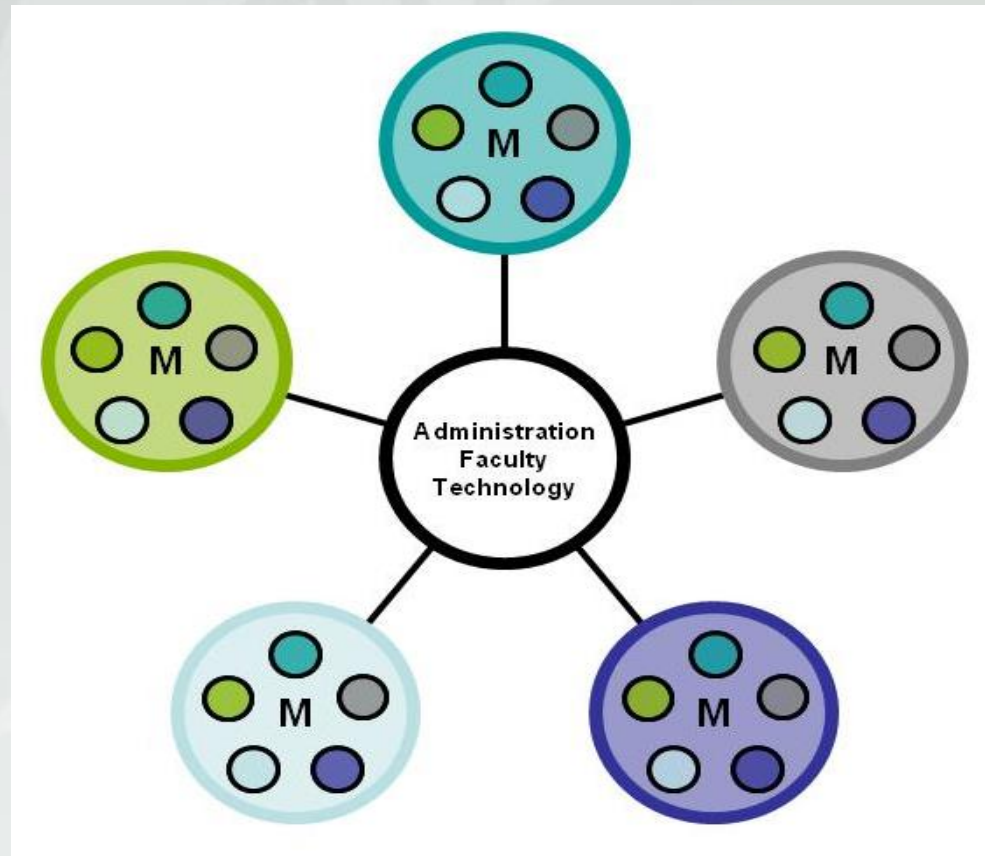
Specifics of the Mentor-led Learning Community Model

- Once per month (Saturday) simultaneous local meetings all linked together and with Faculty through videoconference technology

- Approximately 80% of course content online

- Mentors' role course-only Year 1, field liaison Years 2 and 3

- Annual 5-day in-person Summer Institute where all students and mentors participate

- Learning communities established own patterns for connecting between f2f meetings

Results and challenges

- Completion rates of 90-100%
- Learning outcomes greatly exceed benchmarks…….

BUT

- Variance in faculty use of mentors
- Variance in mentor engagement, group skills, impact of personalities in groups
- General drift from the "ideal" model

Lessons and next steps

- Clearer training and support for mentors

- More explicit expectations for faculty on how they use mentors and learning communities

- More explicit expectations for students and mentors regarding behavior in Saturday sessions and contacts between sessions

- Increased effort to identify a pipeline of future mentors (our alums?) and recruit faculty