

Jan 1st, 12:00 AM

Inter-generational Mentorship Workshop

Jung Eun Ha-Brookshire
University of Missouri, habrookshirej@missouri.edu

Nancy Rudd
Ohio State University, rudd.1@osu.edu

Kristen Morris
University of Missouri, morriskd@missouri.edu

Tameka Ellington
Kent State University, tellingt@kent.edu

Lynn Boorady
SUNY-Buffalo State, booradlm@buffalostate.edu

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Ha-Brookshire, Jung Eun; Rudd, Nancy; Morris, Kristen; Ellington, Tameka; and Boorady, Lynn, "Inter-generational Mentorship Workshop" (2017). *International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Annual Conference Proceedings*. 115.
https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/itaa_proceedings/2017/presentations/115

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Inter-generational Mentorship Workshop

Jung Ha-Brookshire, University of Missouri

Nancy Rudd, Ohio State University

Kristen Morris, University of Missouri

Tameka Ellington, Kent State University

Lynn Boorady, Buffalo State University

Veena Chatteraman, Auburn University

Sharron Lennon, University of Indiana-Bloomington

Today, some 11,000 Americans turning 65 years of age each day (Freeman, 2016) and more and more millennials are entering into workforce every day. To respond to such demographical changes in workplace, large companies, such as Coca Cola, has initiated programs that will strengthen intergenerational discussion within the company (Coca Cola Journey, 2014). Professional organizations are also organizing various formats of inter-generational mentorship, including American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), and members of the American Institute of Certified Planners College of Fellows (FAICP).

We believe that ITAA is also going through similar demographic shifts, and inter-generational mentoring workshop would be beneficial for ITAA members. The goals of this workshop were to:

- Encourage inter-generational communication;
- Pass on institutional knowledge about ITAA and the discipline, and help “grow” the organization and the discipline
- Foster development of lifelong relationships; and
- Provide opportunities to collaborate on projects and socialize beyond conference

To achieve these goals, we conducted the following workshop in 2017:

1. Before the conference meeting, organizers and hosts reached out to ITAA members to promote this workshop.
2. During the conference meeting, as participants enter into the workshop room, they identified themselves as one of the following community members: (a) less than 5 years, (b) 6-15 years, (c) 15-25 years, and (d) 26 or more years in the discipline/profession.
3. The following six topics were displayed around the room. After the organizer’s introduction/explanation, participants were asked to go to the first topic that they want to start the work with. Each topic was hosted by community hosts. Hosts were not intended to be the “leader” of or “expert” in the conversations. Rather, the hosts’ role was to ensure that each community has an environment where all members of the group can feel free to contribute, share, and bring their own unique experiences to the table. In this way,

learning/mentoring is not a top-down situation but rather a 360-degree experience, where each member will be expected to contribute and teach in some form or fashion.

- a. Getting tenured
 - b. Becoming full professors
 - c. Career after tenure/full professorship
 - d. Work-life balance
 - e. Finding own voices in department, campus, and profession
 - f. Contributing to the discipline and ITAA
4. The organizer and hosts ensured that each community has a number of individuals who will likely be at different career stages in order to have a wide range of knowledge and expertise within each group.
 5. Conversations took place within each community with the hosts' facilitation. The focused discussion took 25 minutes at a time. We will repeat this process for 5 other topics (25 minutes per topic, and 6 topics). All participants and hosts had opportunities to participate in all of the 6 topics.
 6. We ended the workshop with encouragement of keeping conversations going.

Overall, over 35 people participated in the workshop and we had inspiring conversations while learning about different phases of academic careers. Several members commented after the workshop that we need more conversations or opportunities like this. And, the majority of the participants, a total of 27, stated that they want to be mentors for others based on the experiences we had during the 2017 workshop. To respond to such requests, our group proposed (a) to write a newsletter with the summary of the 2017 workshop discussion over the 2018 calendar year to further disseminate our conversations with the rest of ITAA members; (b) to propose a monograph related to inter-generational mentoring, and (c) to host another workshop in 2018 to continue our inter-generational mentoring efforts.