

SUMMARY OF THE SEMINAR ON MENTORING (24/11/2020)

On Tuesday 24 November, the 'Mentoring' seminar took place, the second of those organised by the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid within the framework of the promotion and communication of tools and actions linked to the **Human Resources Award**.

After the greeting by the Vice-Rector for Teaching Staff, Ignacio Aedo, the Director of Human Resources at the UC3M, Carmen Martín-Romo, explained that mentoring is linked to the Human Resources Strategy for the institution's teaching and research staff and, always linked to its mission and values, is part of the pillar centred on Training and Development. Mentoring, he continued, needs two actors: the mentor, who with his experience and knowledge accompanies and supports the mentee in the management of his career, and the mentee, who is the recipient of this knowledge and responsible for its development. Mentoring, which is not training, coaching, mentoring or sponsorship, aims, as Martín-Romo explained, to inform about career options, develop professional relationships, design individual career plans, provide support from colleagues or improve leadership skills. Likewise, this "excellent tool" can be applied in the strategic development of talent, to facilitate the integration of new collaborators or in situations such as a change of responsibility or the promotion of entrepreneurship.

The UC3M, according to its Human Resources Director, wants to have its own mentoring program because of the benefits it will bring to the IDP, among which he highlighted the improvements that it can bring to many individually, because of its facet as a promoter of new skills, its ability to promote job satisfaction or to value the talent of the institution and encourage effective communication. For all these reasons, and under the auspices of this seminar, a forum on the subject has been set up on the Extension platform in order to gather the concerns of members of the university community.

Patricia Forcén, senior technologist at ZOTEFOAMS PLC and member of the Society of Spanish Scientists in the United Kingdom (CERU), as well as director of the Mentoring Committee, then took the floor. Forcén, who is also a mentor and has received the award for one of the "Best CERU Mentors" on several occasions, highlighted that among the various initiatives of the Society, which has nearly 750 members, is the mentoring programme, of which they are launching the fourth edition, scheduled for 2021. CERU launched the programme from scratch and the response in the first edition was good (45% rated it as very good) although currently 80% of the participants consider it "excellent". The 160 or so mentors and mentees involved, who take part in the programme over the course of a year, create a two-way relationship based on two "basic pillars": active listening and the asking of questions by the mentor so that the mentee can express his or her ideas and take action to organise his or her goals. All this, he added, is seasoned with trust and confidentiality. The development of the curriculum adapted to both the academic and the working world, the development and consolidation of skills or the search for work are some of the actions in which the couples work, which first build confidence and then define the objectives. Mentors do not have to be from the same discipline of study as the mentees and do not make decisions about them. Regarding the main changes experienced after a mentoring process, Forcén referred to the increase in mentee's capacities, skills and confidence.

For her part, the head of the 'Science Abroad' unit of the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT), Izaskun Lakunza, explained the experiences of the European REBECA mentoring programme, which was created to try to alleviate the lack of knowledge of pre- and post-doctoral students about professional options outside the academy, for which purpose highly qualified professionals were available outside the university environment. He also presented the new FELISE initiative, which seeks to put senior researchers with a feminist sensibility in contact with young women researchers who want to continue their careers. Specifically, REBECA seeks to create a network, support researchers in promoting their careers outside academia and improve the University's relationship with other sectors, while FELISE, with 35 established partners, aims to contribute to a structural change in the academic field and encourage collective

reflection on the situation of women in science and the need to work on gender equality, as well as creating a network of women researchers.

Lakunza, who insisted on the importance of defining the objectives to be achieved with a mentoring programme, which can be useful for many things, explained that the REBECA 2020-2021 call has just been launched following the success of the 2019 edition, in which 46 young researchers from Spanish and some foreign institutions were paired with professionals from sectors such as consultancy, the pharmaceutical industry, energy or institutions such as the EU, in some cases close to the environment of the FECYT workers themselves. The result of the REBECA programme, which focuses on Social Sciences, Humanities, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, shows that the young researchers are "extremely satisfied" and the real impact on them is closely linked to the clarity of their professional options outside academia (80%) and the acquisition of skills (86%). In addition, and just in case it is necessary at the beginning of the relationship, FECYT provides discussion topics for couples.

The Effectia Consulting director, Lorena Muñoz, moderated the round table that put an end to the seminar and which was attended by three lecturers from the UC3M: *Jesús Carretero*, professor of Architecture and Computer Technology and head of the Computer Architecture Research Group (ARCOS); *Beatriz García Osma*, professor of Accounting, and *Miguel Ángel Marzal*, vice-dean of Academic Planning and Infrastructures and professor of Library Science and Documentation. In all three cases, they shared their experiences as tutors or thesis directors.

The round table started with a quantitative introduction: the number of researchers has grown by 21% since 2007 to 7.8 million worldwide. Moreover, of the 47% of people who developed their career in the scientific field, only 0.45% stayed in academia. First of all, Jesús Carretero stressed the importance of having a mentoring programme at university in order to get pre- and post-doctoral students back on track in their professional careers, to which he added the need for funding. He also stressed that he advises his students to invest in training, both in international stays and in career seminars, and helps them to find sources of funding. For her part, Beatriz García Osma stressed that

her group advocates having a good job with which to reach the labour market, and that she also advises and counsels young people on research stays, making contacts, attending conferences... In the end, Marzal centred her intervention on her work of tutoring her students and the way in which they approach the preparation of the TFM or doctoral theses together.