



# A Mentoring Program in a Brazilian Medical School

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# Background

- Medical education has long been recognized as a demanding process and it is also **stressful in Brazil**.
- In 2001 FMUSP introduced a **Mentoring Program** in which groups of students from all the academic years were designated to a mentor.





# FMUSP Mentoring Program

## Objectives

- ✓ To improve the relationship between teachers and students
- ✓ To promote the exchange of experiences among students
- ✓ To follow the students' progress in the medical course
- ✓ To identify problems in the course
- ✓ To integrate academic and personal aspects of student life



# FMUSP Mentoring Program

## Structure

- ✓ 84 mentors
- ✓ students' groups (with 12-14 students, at least one from each academic year, randomly assigned)
- ✓ 6 supervisors
- ✓ a Coordination Committee
- ✓ a Technical team

## Dynamics

- ✓ all medical students (1080) of the school have a mentor as reference
- ✓ a minimum of 70% attendance results in a credit and a certificate for the students
- ✓ mentors and students evaluate the program through interviews and questionnaires.

# The beginning of the program 2000





# Students' needs and expectations

## Themes List

“What would you like to talk about with a mentor?”

## Focus Groups

“Mentoring: a therapy for medical education?”



# Mentors' selection and training

## Mentor's profile

- ✓ a faculty member or a doctor of the teaching hospitals,
- ✓ involved in undergraduate teaching and with good rapport with the students,
- ✓ available for 1 monthly meeting with the student group
- ✓ a good professional

## Becoming a mentor

- ✓ an initial workshop is designed to present the aims of the program and the students needs.
- ✓ during the program, mentors are monthly supervised by psychologists and psychiatrists.

# The program's evaluation 2001-2007





# "The Mentor Interview"

## Mentors' evaluation of the program

- In-depth face-to-face interview
- To explore meaning and perceptions of the mentoring process
- Open-ended questions about:
  - ✓ satisfaction with the program
  - ✓ perception of changes due to the program



# A two-way lane

## Students' changes

- For most of the mentors the students changes are due to a natural process of transformation.
- When changes were observed they involved:
  - ✓ social integration;
  - ✓ adaptation to the course;
  - ✓ career choices
  - ✓ positive self-esteem

## Mentors's changes

- However, most of the mentors recognized important changes in themselves:
  - ✓ as teachers (knowing students' lives better)
  - ✓ as members of the faculty (seeing the school as a whole)
  - ✓ as people (reflecting about their relationships)



# "The Mentee"

## Students' evaluation of the program

- Structured questionnaire
- Open-ended questions + Likert scales about:
  - ✓ Satisfaction (mentor, group, program)
  - ✓ Attendance (reasons)



# To attend or not to attend

## Good involvement

- ✓ Exchange of experiences
- ✓ Heterogeneous group
- ✓ Meet new people
- ✓ Receive guidance
- ✓ Global view of the medical course
- ✓ Learn new concepts
- ✓ Motivated mentors
- ✓ Good group dynamics
- ✓ Informal activities

## Low involvement

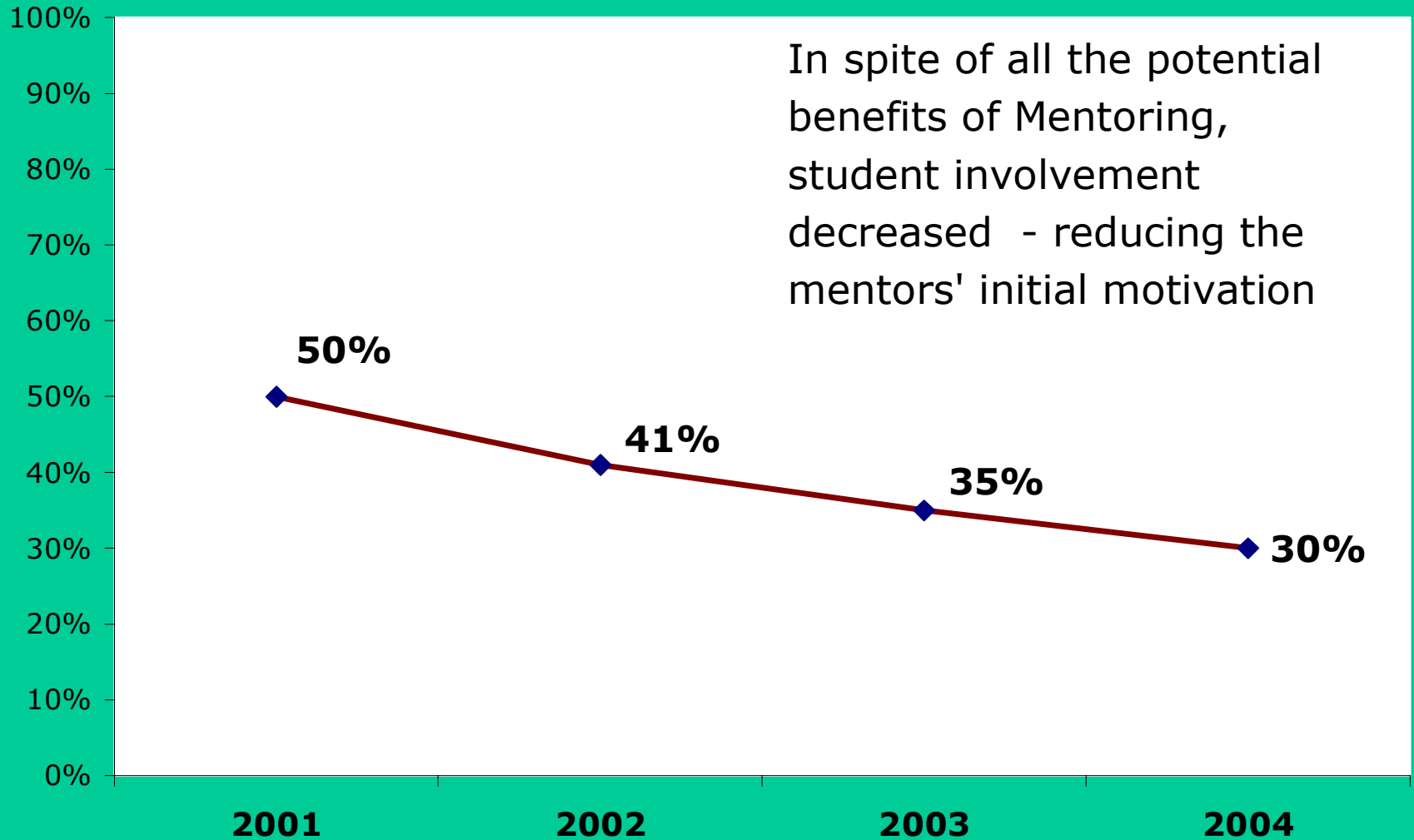
- ✓ Change of mentors
- ✓ Irregular meeting schedules
- ✓ Extracurricular activities
- ✓ Unmotivated mentors
- ✓ Lack of perceived benefits
- ✓ Small group
- ✓ Boring issues
- ✓ Informal Mentoring

# Attendance – a constant challenge





# Attendance (2001 – 2004)



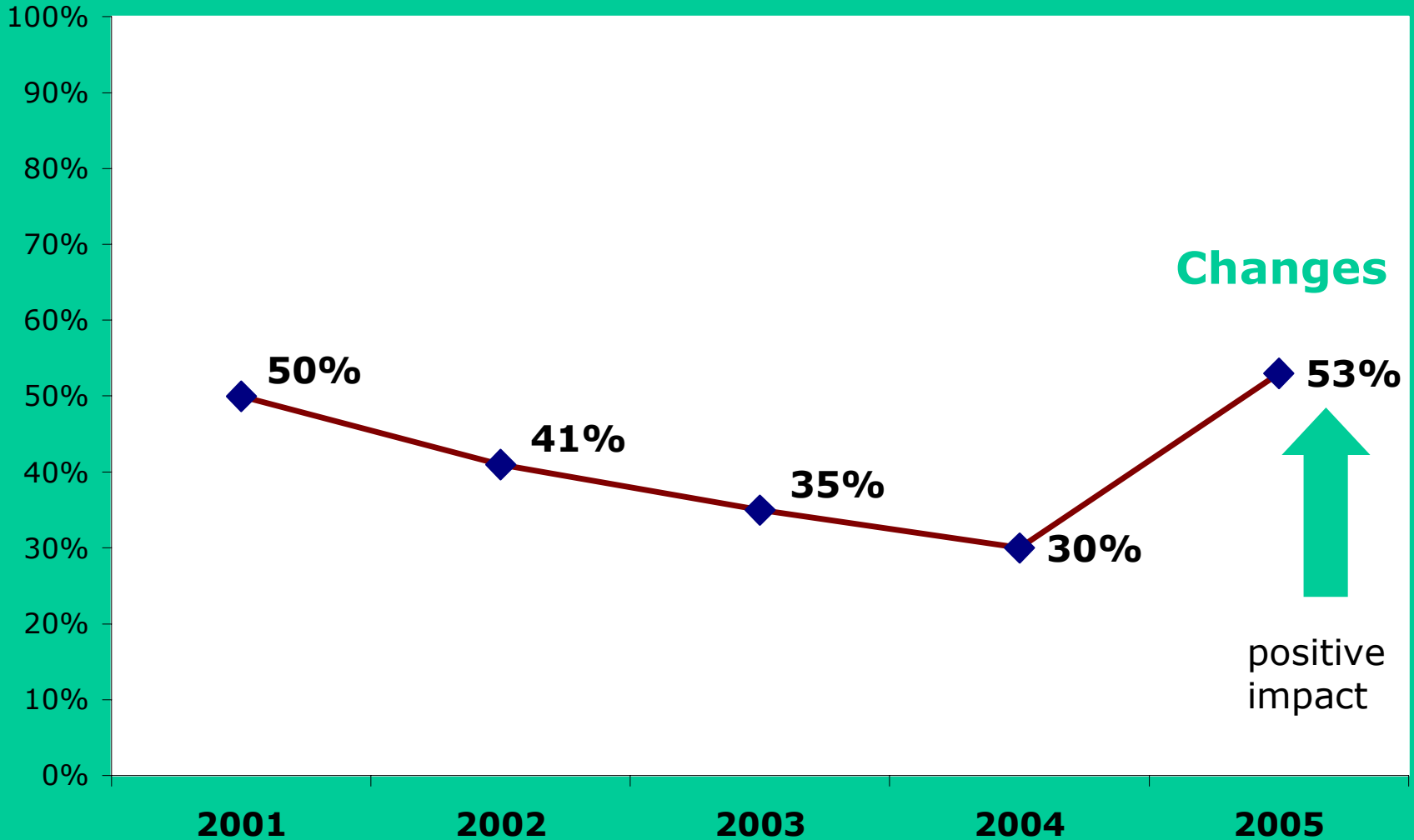


# Continuity requires changes

- Changes were made in the Mentoring Program, considering student evaluations:
  - ✓ The undergraduate teachers' commission established an exclusive time for the activity
  - ✓ Once a month, no other activities whatsoever can be scheduled during the two hour period allocated for mentoring.
  - ✓ The "mentoring credit" became officially part of the elective credits
  - ✓ The size of the groups increased to 12-14 students

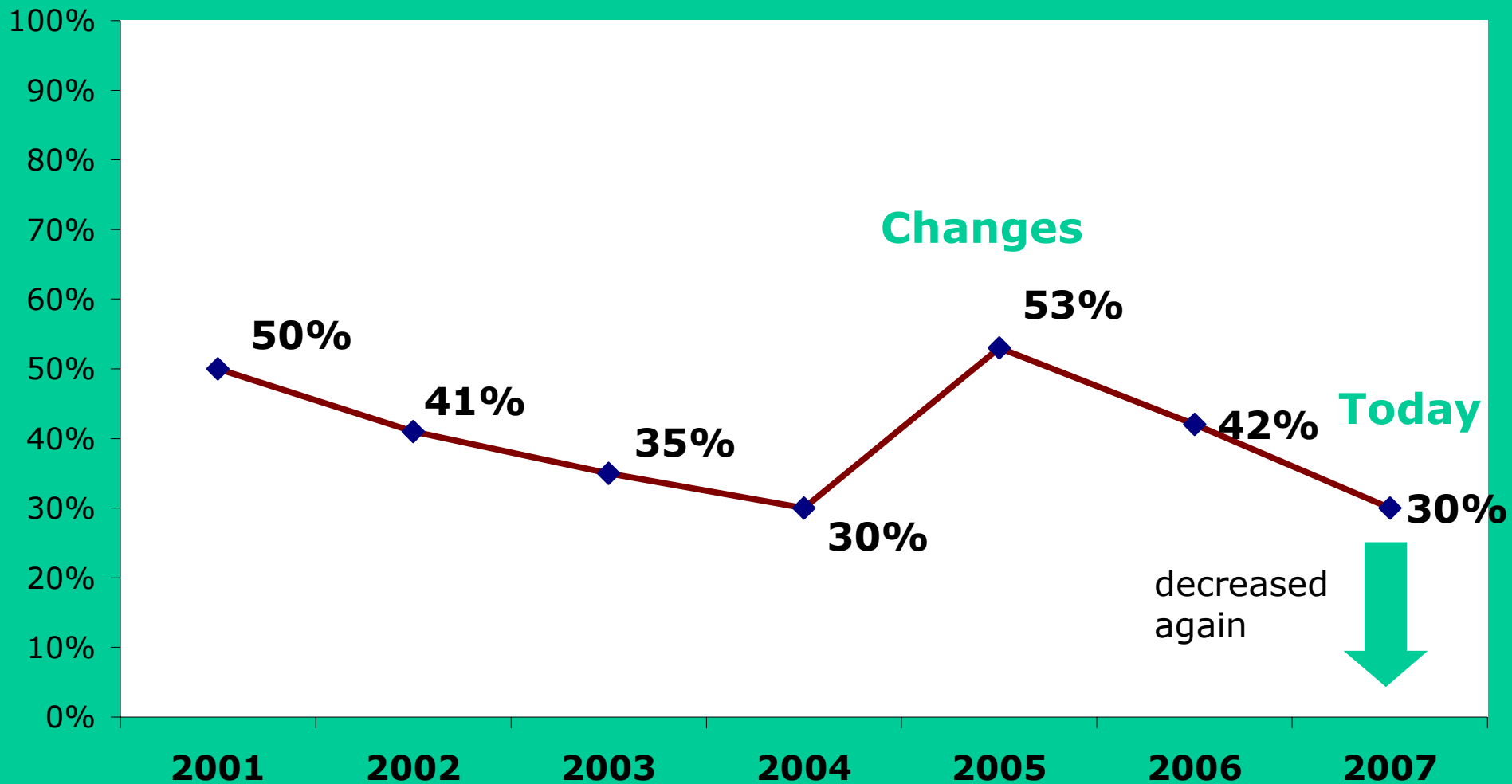


# After the changes (2005)





# Attendance today





# Issues

- The inclusion of the program in the official schedule solved important problems, but several students still prefer to use the mentoring time for academic activities or personal needs.
- Informal mentoring with friends, a bad mentoring group dynamics and a dislike for reflective activities also justify the absence of some students.
- A solid structure is important for a Mentoring Program, but the group dynamics and the personal characteristics of the participants remain essential to the success of the relationship.
- As unique individuals, mentors and mentees will benefit from the mentoring experience in different ways.
- We can not control all the relevant variables that may affect the mentoring relationship.



Mentoring is

a complex system to be understood...

“What makes a system ‘complex’ is the introduction of **human elements** (relationships, passions, viewpoints, freedom to make choices, and so on). The more that these elements impact the workings of a system, the more complex that system is said to be”



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