

# SUCCESS FOR FACULTY MENTORS & GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

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## THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE AND MULTIPLE MENTORS

The work of the graduate faculty in preparing the next generation of scholars and professionals doesn't stop with classroom teaching. Advising, tutoring, supporting and supervising are all part of the faculty role as stewards of the profession and mentors to graduate students. Mentoring future professionals and professors, therefore, requires a commitment that goes well beyond the capacity of a single individual advisor. Best practices in graduate education indicate that graduate and professional students' multiple professional and personal development needs are most effectively met by a network of people.

## THE MENTORING NETWORK

The Council of Graduate Schools has identified six primary areas in which graduate and professional students need mentoring. Typically an advisor and other graduate faculty along with staff members will work with graduate and professional students in several of these areas to provide this network of support. As mentoring takes place, it is shaped by the goal-setting responsibilities of the graduate student at the center of the network. The most common components of this mentoring network or constellation include:

- Advising** Giving counsel about degree program requirements; academic progress expectations; local dissertation standards, components, processes; and overall career planning considerations.
- Tutoring** Providing feedback on scholarly development; pointing out practices for seeking, prioritizing and using additional feedback.
- Supporting** Offering emotional support, practical resources related to academic, professional and personal concerns.
- Supervising** Offering training and feedback on employment related to teaching and research assistantships, internships, and project or program management.
- Modeling** Providing and pointing to authentic models of teaching, research, service and professional leadership to foster the career development of graduate and professional students.
- Sponsoring** Opening doors by providing information and coaching; playing a role in development of networks and sharing leads to professional opportunities across multiple career paths.



# MENTORING - IDEAS FOR ACTION

## Advising

- Assist in the selection of student's schedule of courses
- Explain accurately department/college academic policies and progression
- Assist the student in the exploration of possible research areas
- Foster graduate student participation in the department
- Assist the student in planning academic conference participation

## Tutoring

- Assist student by providing honest assessment of academic strengths and weaknesses, including planning for improvement
- Model writing as an integral and on-going part of the research process
- Set clear and fair expectations regarding the ownership and use of data and regarding authorship and joint authorship arrangements prior to beginning research projects
- Provide fair and timely assessment and feedback on work products

## Supporting

- Guide the student to appropriate campus resources for personal, academic, career and community support and development as needed
- Encourage student's increased independence as future presenters and teachers through on-campus professional development opportunities
- Assist students in generating an effective, respectful, practical problem-solving protocol for when interpersonal conflicts emerge within a cohort
- Direct student to career development resources for multiple career paths

## Supervising

- Provide clear, realistic, achievable expectations in relation to teaching and research roles; agree to measures and evaluation procedures
- Know and guide student in navigating departmental, university, and external funding and award opportunities
- Ensure student understands compliance issues for proposed research

## Modeling

- Model respectful interactions and shared decision making
- Provide the student with opportunities to discuss norms and expectations within department, university, field of study and other academic settings
- Showcase your own current collaborations and past multiple mentoring relationships with internal and external professional colleagues

## Sponsoring

- Provide information regarding expansions and contractions in the field of study, subfields and interdisciplinary alliances
- Assist students in the development of a comprehensive portfolio, from vita/resume to cover letter to documenting teaching and research to gathering information in advance of campus interviews

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

### **“MENTORING VS. ADVISING” – UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS**

<http://grad.uark.edu/recruit/orientation/>

Offers a quick review for addressing key questions: What is “good mentoring”? What differentiates mentoring from advising? What are fair expectations and ways of clarifying responsibilities? What are challenges mentors & mentees face?

### **“Mentoring Guidelines” – UC, Davis**

<http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/mentoring.pdf>

[http://www-eve.ucdavis.edu/eve/pbg/Program\\_Mentoring\\_Guideline.html](http://www-eve.ucdavis.edu/eve/pbg/Program_Mentoring_Guideline.html)

“Faculty mentoring is broader than advising a student as to the program of study to fulfill coursework requirements and is distinct from formal instruction in a given discipline. Mentoring encompasses more than serving as a role model.” The Davis Faculty Council overviews practices for guiding student through: degree requirements, dissertation research and professional development. Two pages featuring key steps & best practices.

### **“MENTORING: HOW TO OBTAIN THE MENTORING YOU NEED” – THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE**

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring/GradStudentMentor.pdf>

“When it comes to academic success and persistence, there is no substitute for a healthy relationship between you and your mentors.” So notes the introduction to this helpful and comprehensive document. The guide begins with a useful set of definitions and advocates for students to expand their networks of helpers as they progress through their graduate careers. Later sections detail common concerns for students and discuss issues of diversity that may affect an individual’s experience. Worksheets are included to help students chart goals and implementation steps year by year.

### **“HOW TO GET *THE MENTORING YOU WANT: A GUIDE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS*” AND “HOW TO MENTOR GRADUATE STUDENTS: A GUIDE FOR FACULTY” – UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/mentoring.pdf>

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/Fmentoring.pdf>

This set assists both student mentee and faculty mentor. The mentor can find examples of best practices across disciplines, suggestions from students, and action steps to avoid problems in the relationship. Students can find strategies on building the relationship and recognizing the needs and position of the mentor.

### **“BEST PRACTICES FOR FACULTY MENTORING OF GRADUATE STUDENTS” – BROWN UNIVERSITY**

<http://www.gradschool.brown.edu/go/mentoring>

This succinct discussion of advising and mentoring includes useful templates for graduate students and post docs to use in charting their academic progress and in clarifying responsibilities in an advising relationship. The individual development template includes a useful delineation between long term and immediate goals, and the advising agreement provides a forum to discuss potentially awkward issues such as constructive counsel, authorship, work hours and so on.

# Keys to S.U.C.C.E.S.S. for Graduate / Professional Students and Faculty Mentors

**A Graduate / Professional Student is encouraged to...**

**A Faculty Mentor is encouraged to...**

**Set clear expectations for academic relationships.**

Advisees who have a clear idea of how the advisor and other mentors can help them achieve their educational and career goals will get the most out of relationships with mentors and advisors. Create a plan to guide you as you work with mentors to complete your degree.

**Support your student's goals and career plans.**

Advisors who listen to graduate and professional students' goals, share ideas and additional possibilities, and ask future-looking questions will help their advisees to find and create their own appropriate career paths. Take care to distinguish between your hopes and their hopes.

**Understand your rights and responsibilities.**

Advisees have a right to be treated with respect; this includes the right to study in a harassment-free environment, have equal access and opportunity in all educational programs without individual or systemic barriers, and seek religious and disability accommodations. Advisees' are expected to contact appropriate offices to request accommodations, seek advocates and mediation.

**Understand your roles and responsibilities.**

One of the key roles an advisor plays is that of a mentor. As a mentor, the advisor might help the advisee assess their academic strengths and weaknesses as well as assist in course selection and exploring possible research areas. In addition, an advisor also has a responsibility to treat advisees with respect and to ensure that the advisee is able to pursue their academic work in a harassment-free environment with access to any needed accommodations.

**Communicate with advisor/mentors regularly.**

The success of any effective relationship is dependent on communication. Advisees need to make sure they communicate with faculty mentors regularly, not just when facing a crisis. Communication includes sharing successes, asking questions and seeking feedback in problem solving, which allows an advisor to provide effective, timely support, and can help prevent a crisis.

**Communicate timely feedback respectfully and constructively.**

Direct and honest feedback will help students assess errors and move forward when it is informational, specific, constructive, timely, positive, personal and differential. Faculty mentors, especially dissertation advisors and workplace supervisors are expected to refrain from engaging in intimidation and humiliation in workplace and professional interactions with students whatever the University setting or context.

**Connect with resources to nurture your well-being.**

Pursuing a graduate or professional degree can be stressful, and it is important for advisees to connect with resources that will nurture their emotional, physical, cultural, and spiritual well-being - whether individuals, student services programs, or interest/affinity groups. Putting personal interests on hold while in school often creates stress, which hinders rather than helps progress to degree. If your advisor does not appear to have your best interest at heart, you have a right consult other mentors and to seek a new advisor.

**Create a safe environment for your graduate student.**

Advisee will experience highs and lows: exhilaration, fear, possibility, frustration, joy, anger. Ideally, an advisor will hear and talk about these experiences and be equipped to provide appropriate guidance, including referrals. Not "just" students, RAs or TAs, advisees have full, complex lives; therefore, advising includes learning about/ creating an environment free from racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of prejudice, intolerance, or harassment. Because students are also *future* colleagues, it is critical that advisors understand and respectfully navigate current power dynamics.

**Establish milestones to reach degree completion.**

Take time to develop an Individual Development Plan in order to know, understand, address and update progress with your specific writing, teaching, research and professional development goals. Review with peers and mentors. Reflective practice allows you to plan for luck.

**Expect and elicit on-going progress to degree completion.**

To create effective annual student progress reviews, schedule regular short meetings each term: a first discussion establishes goals with steps/suggestions/resources for meeting them; a mid-term email exchange allows for updates and adjustments; a term-end review provokes mapping out next big steps/stages and goal setting.

**Spend your time wisely.**

Graduate and professional school success is highly dependent on how well students manage their time and that of their advisor. *Learning* effective time management skills is a start, *using* them is a necessity for personal development and for interacting regularly and effectively with advisors.

**Serve as a resource and provide networking support.**

When a faculty or staff member commits to serving in a mentoring role, that person is an on-going contributor to the success of the student. Talking through ideas, linking students to appropriate resources and suggesting ways to broaden or deepen the student's network are essential components of this role.

**See yourself as part of a community.**

Show up at departmental events *and* invite faculty to your events, offer to be part of new student recruitment, set up resource sharing for teaching assistants, enroll in professional development programs to improve skills and deepen networks. Engaged students report increased satisfaction and progress.

**See yourself as part of a community.**

Create opportunities for informal socializing within department events and support student groups in their events. Know your local university resources for graduate student professional development and bring this information to your department. Talk with peers across institutional types to help students understand multiple career paths.