University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

FACULTY GUIDE
To
Mentoring Graduate Students

Much of the text and structure is heavily borrowed from “How to Mentor Graduate Students” published by the Graduate School, University of Washington

An Overview of Mentoring

While Odysseus struggled to return home after the Trojan War, his son Telemachus was guided and educated by Mentor, the trusted counselor of Odysseus (University of Louisville, 2006). At one point, the goddess Athena sought to help Telemachus and took the form of Mentor. Since Athena was the goddess of wisdom, it is appropriate that we give the name of mentor to faculty who take on the role of providing help for students. In higher education, a mentor is the faculty member who serves as a guide to the graduate student's entry into advanced education, movement toward mastery of the discipline, and understanding of the norms of the profession or professions with which the discipline is associated. Good mentors go beyond fulfilling the need for periodic academic advice to personal attention in the form of social support, goal setting, norming, and, when needed, advocacy. If, as most scholars suggest, integration into graduate level study is critical for success, one of the best methods for ensuring success is good mentoring. The Graduate Division of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa recognizes outstanding mentoring through its Graduate Mentoring Award, given annually to the graduate faculty member who exemplifies the qualities of a good mentor.

Whenever a faculty member and a graduate student agree to the mentor-mentee relationship they are mutually engaging one another with the shared goal of seeking academic excellence. The psychology of any relationship is complex, but few have such a well defined goal. In graduate school, mentoring relationships are close, individualized relationships that ought to be carefully nurtured. Both the mentor and the student have responsibilities. The mentor not only provides academic guidance, but a prolonged nurturing of the student's personal, scholarly and professional development. The student has the responsibility of not only paying attention to the mentor, but also continuing to be fully engaged in the pursuit of their education in the broadest sense.

The Council of Graduate Schools, which is the national organization focusing on the improvement and advancement of graduate education, defines mentors as:

- advisors, who have career experience and share their knowledge;
- supporters, who give emotional and moral encouragement;
- tutors, who provide specific feedback on performance;
- masters, who serve as employers to graduate student "apprentices";
- sponsors, who are sources of information and opportunities;
- models of identity, who serve as academic role models.
  (Zeldrich, 1990, p. 11)

It is important to note that, while some advisers are mentors and some mentoring involves advising, they are not the same thing. Advising involves providing information to move a student forward through the steps necessary to obtain the degree. Good mentoring provides not only information, but, on a regular, ongoing basis such things as: feedback, opportunities for dialogue, role-modeling, and support relevant to a student's specific situation. Good mentoring has a been key aspect of graduate success. At its heart, there is a sustaining human relationship involved in mentoring that goes well beyond

advising. The relationship between the availability of these benefits and graduate student success has been advocated in theory (Parent, 2005) and supported by research (e.g., Lovitts, 2001).

An effective mentoring relationship develops across several phases. The first phase may occur in several ways, for example, a mentor recognizes a student's unique qualities and believes the student merits special attention. This recognition may inspire the student who seeks to benefit from the mentor's support, skills and wisdom. It is as likely that the student might seek out the faculty member for the special expertise that he or she has. Once there is mutual recognition of a relationship it can move to a more comfortable phase in which both parties explore and deepen it to the point where the student becomes a junior colleague. After a while the protégé may grow in ways that require some separation from the mentor, to test his or her own ideas. This is a positive sign that the mentoring relationship has matured and that the protégé is developing the skills to function independently. At the final phase, the mentor and mentee may redefine their relationship as one of peers, characterized over time by decreasing formality and increasing mutual assistance so that they become true professional colleagues.

Mentoring Styles

Although her focus was on advising, Kerlin (1997) extracted six styles of relating to students from her research on female doctoral students:

1. *Uninvolved*. These advisors do not spend much time with their students, leaving them to fend for themselves.
2. *Laissez-Faire*. Such advisors will meet with students, but they are reluctant to provide much constructive feedback.
3. *Negotiators*. These faculty will allow the student to take the lead but provide guidance as necessary.
4. *Proactive*. These advisors provide guidance similar to negotiators, but they will take more of a leadership role and use their power and authority to help students.
5. *Symbiotic*. Although this style involves being helpful, it also includes using the advisor's power to get something from the student.
6. *Autocratic*. This is a very authoritarian style in which the advisor seeks to form the student in his or her own image.

Despite her focus on female graduate students, Kerlin's taxonomy potentially has broad utility in providing a framework for understanding the range of relationships a student can have with a mentor. It is tempting to identify a "best practice" from this taxonomy; however, Kerlin also points out that these styles may shift as the student matures and needs less guidance. It is also true that different styles of mentoring will have different effects depending on the nature of the student or even the discipline. A mature, self-directed student working within a well-defined discipline may prefer an uninvolved mentor who leaves the student alone. A more dependent student in a rapidly changing discipline might be best assisted by an autocratic mentor, at least at the beginning.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Many, if not most, graduate students start their programs with little understanding of the complexities of higher education and how different philosophies in each graduate program drive the expectations for academic success and career paths. Although these same students can express their goals very articulately upon application in their statements of purpose, many of them are unsure as to what they want to do with their degree upon completion. Rather than see this as a problem, it can be viewed as an opportunity for good mentoring. Students' career goals normally do evolve and a good mentor can be of inestimable value in encouraging that evolution.

Graduate students quickly learn that advanced study is very different from their undergraduate experience. A common way of framing this difference is to suggest that the goal of undergraduates is to *obtain knowledge*, while in graduate school (although they will continue to obtain knowledge) the ultimate goal is to *contribute to knowledge* in their field of study and begin to function as members of their profession. A role of the mentor is to help the graduate students understand this distinction and push them toward that ultimate goal. Studies (e.g. Girves and Wemmerus, 1988; Tenenbaum, Crosby, and Gilner, 2001) indicate that graduate students who get effective mentoring demonstrate greater:

- productivity in research activity, conference presentations, pre-doctoral publications, instructional development and grant writing;
- academic success in persisting in graduate school, taking less time to earn the degree, and performing better in their courses;
- professional success with better chances of securing tenure-track positions in higher education or of career advancement in other settings outside the Ivory Tower.

At the same time, mentoring benefits the faculty member to:

- engage the curiosity and energy of fresh minds;
- keep abreast of new research questions, knowledge, paradigms and techniques;
- cultivate collaborators for current or future research projects;
- identify and train graduate assistants whose work could be critical to the completion of a research project;
- prepare the next generation of intellectual leaders in the discipline and for society;
- enjoy the personal and professional satisfaction inherent in mentoring relationships.

The Roles of the Mentor

Some roles that mentors have include: "guide," "counselor," "adviser," "consultant," "tutor," "guru," and "teacher" among others. As a mentor, your unique combination of

professional expertise, personality, and approach to facilitating the learning process will shape the kind of mentor you are. You will no doubt wear several "hats" over the course of your student's development. You might be comfortable wearing many hats at once or prefer to wear only one at a time. Whatever you choose, it is important to remember that effective mentoring, like wisdom itself, is multidimensional. The best mentors adjust their multiple roles to meet different students' needs. While there is no single formula for good mentoring, it is important to know the following three "Core Roles" that are essential to advancing the educational, professional, and personal growth of your graduate students.

1. Disciplinary Guide

The role of a disciplinary guide is to help students become contributing members of their disciplines. Such guidance goes well beyond helping students complete the requirements of their degree programs, which is an essential advising role. This guidance is deeper, involving helping your graduate students to understand how the discipline has evolved; appreciate the current models and issues; recognize novel questions; identify innovative ways of addressing research questions; engage in teaching; and gain perspective of their specialization—its questions and methods--in comparison to other areas of the discipline and other disciplines as well. Another aspect of this role is to help students grasp the impact their discipline has on the world outside of academia and to assist them in pursuing the kind of impact they desire to make with their degree.

2. Skill Development Consultant

It is possible for graduate students to be so focused and intent upon their specialized studies that they neglect the development of broader, highly useful skills necessary for success both during and after graduate school. As a "skills consultant" the mentor impresses upon the student the need to hone some of these skills, including but going beyond research skills, that are important to the role of the professional. For example:

- *Oral and written communication skills*. As polished as a graduate student's communications skills may be, there is still much to learn about such things as the clear expression of the results of one's own study; the translation of abstract and lofty ideas to undergraduates and other audiences; and the art of communicating persuasively, as is often needed in writing grants or presenting one's work at a conference.
- *Team oriented skills*. Among students, the best learning often comes from collaborative efforts. Graduate study should not be as competitive as undergraduate study often is. This lesson should be pressed upon graduate students for its short term and long term practical value. Increasingly, complex problems require broad expertise from within the discipline or interdisciplinary solutions. Your role is to foster collaborative learning and problem-solving by helping students work together in labs, studios, course projects or any other settings where they can benefit.
- *Leadership skills*. Graduate students are poised to become intellectual leaders in a variety of settings. Effective mentors help students build their leadership potential

by inviting them to assume leadership roles during graduate study, for example, in seminars, governing roles, committee, community outreach or disciplinary societies. This type of engagement helps build skills such as careful listening to others, shaping ideas subtly, and expressing priorities. These are all indispensable for advancement in any career.

3. Career Consultant

The mentor's role as a career consultant has always been important. In this core role, the mentor imparts a view of a career as an evolutionary process—one that requires planning, flexibility, and adaptation to change. The mentor is familiar with the harsh realities of the job market and an effective mentor can find ways to help the students develop relationships within the professional network. Such relationships can be fostered in other places in the university, the discipline community, or the program alumni. They may have positions in community groups, nonprofit agencies, corporations, or the government. Wider relationships help students gain a realistic and informed view of their career choices and learn how to translate their degree into professional opportunities. Most students will not or are not seeking to find positions as college faculty, so breadth of contact can be an important asset. The mentor can also take a personal role or help direct the student to resources in such areas as writing a curriculum vitae, writing cover letters, handling interviews (academic or otherwise) and transitioning into full time employment.

It would be impossible to fulfill all of these roles equally well for each and every mentee. Making the most of mentoring involves having thoughtful discussions with your students and asking them what they need from you to navigate their educational experience, to adapt to disciplinary cultures, and to become productive, fulfilled professionals and colleagues.

Strategies for Effectively Addressing Graduate Student Needs

The following points are generally good practices in working with all graduate students whether you mentor them or not. Many of these can be done collectively by the department, but the individual responsibility for focusing these on a specific student resides with the student's mentor.

1. Develop your own vision of good mentoring

This can begin with your reflections on your own experiences as a graduate student. You might want to ask yourself the following questions:

- What kind of mentoring did I receive?
- How did my mentoring compare to the mentoring received by students who were different than me in race, gender, age, ability of family background?
- What did I find especially helpful about the mentoring I had?

- How well would the mentoring I received apply to the graduate students I have today?
- How well did my mentors help me develop as a scholar and progress through my graduate program?
- How well did my mentoring prepare me for my career?
- What did my mentors not give me that would have been helpful to me?

The answers to these questions will help you to decide what kind of mentor you want to be. You can use them to form the building blocks for developing a productive relationship with your graduate students. To that same end, you might find the worksheet in Appendix A, "Mentor Expectations" to be helpful.

2. Embrace the basics of good mentoring

Communicate with your students by:

- Engaging them in various ways from such simple things as saying hello to them in the hallway, asking them how they are doing in their courses, or sharing a cup of coffee with them away from your office when you are free of distractions.
- Talking to your students on a regular basis and no less than once a semester and letting them know that they are welcome to talk to you during your office hours.
- Reaching out to those who seem remote to see if that is simply their cultural way of being respectful or if it is due to their sense of social or academic isolation.
- Letting them know how and when to best reach you if they have problems they want to discuss: e-mail, cell phone, or your office hours.

Demystifying graduate school

- You can provide your students with the most recent copies of your program's handbook and show them how to access the Graduate Division's web-site on policies and procedures.
- Many first year students need help to get through the jargon that exists within the field, the department and the Graduate Division. Many are hearing such terms as "qualifying" exams or "orals" for the first time. Many will also not even know what questions to ask.
- You might need to clarify some of the more vague or unwritten aspects of the program's expectations for committees, courses, research, etc. especially, although not entirely, at the doctoral level. Almost all students need help with the finer, often unstated, points of doing a thesis or dissertation.
- At each stage of the graduate experience, explain the formal and informal criteria that the faculty use to determine what will count as quality work on the part of the student.
- Alerting students to pitfalls well ahead of time, notably those that may affect funding or graduate standing, can prevent crises.

Providing constructive and supportive feedback

- Students need your timely and forthright assessment of their work. Accordingly, you should avoid assuming that students know what you think of their work. Plus, avoidable delays in responding can create insecurity and hinder the student's progress.
- Tempering criticism with praise when it is deserved will help remind students that your high standards are intended to help them improve.
- Some mentors make the assumption that students who fall behind in their work lack commitment. Rather, they may be exhausted, unclear about what they need to do next, be having difficulties with resources, or running into problems with collaborators. An understanding of their perspective is a constructive approach.
- It is best to address any issues about a student's ability to progress in a timely manner. Putting any such issues aside may cause more damage later.

Providing encouragement

- Generally, students should take the risks of making the kinds of mistakes that often lead to better learning. You might even share with them a less than successful experience of your own, such as a heavily critiqued paper you wrote.
- You can encourage students to discuss their ideas with you or other colleagues, even the ideas that the student might think naïve.
- You can let those assigned to you for advising know clearly that this is not like an arranged marriage, which cannot be broken without bringing shame on either party. Students from some cultures might be unaware of this.
- It is good to reassure students of their skills and abilities. Many of them could be experiencing doubts and anxieties as to whether they belong in graduate school (aka, "The imposter syndrome"). Let them know that even experienced scholars have anxieties from time to time.
- You can teach students how to manage large tasks by dividing them into smaller ones with manageable deadlines for each. This helps keep them from feeling overwhelmed.

Foster networks and multiple mentors by:

- Letting your students know about others at Mānoa, or even beyond, who can help them when or if there is a need that you cannot meet. In addition to other faculty in your department, there are other faculty on campus, other graduate students, alumni, community members, staff, and retired faculty.
- Introducing students to faculty and other graduate students who have complementary interests on campus and at conferences.
- Helping your students connect their work with experts in and outside of Hawai‘i, including individuals in corporate, government or NGO as well as academic arenas. The internet means that there are few boundaries to these kinds of connections.
- Sharing your references.
- Catalyzing a community of scholars by coordinating informal discussion groups, projects or casual gatherings among students who share academic interests. These can be extensions of formal seminars or labs.

- In addition to the above, discussions with advanced graduate students and alumni can be good ways to gain insights into what helped them function optimally in graduate school.

Work in your students' behalf by:

- Letting your students know up front and in a variety of ways that you want them to succeed; then be their advocate.
- Creating opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills and abilities in a competent way, by putting them in situations where they can display their work, such as conferences, web-sites, or publications.
- Nominating your students for high-visibility fellowships, grants, and teaching opportunities when you feel they have demonstrated their potential to compete for these.

Treating students with respect

- If you avoid allowing the phone or other visitors from distracting or interrupting you while you are meeting with one of your students it is a sign of respect for their time. A common concern among graduate students is that they do not get their professors full attention. Focus on the student while you are with them and avoid giving any signals that might indicate that you are not listening to them.
- If you can remember your previous conversations with a student they will know that your focus is on them. It is a good idea to keep notes on such discussions, to review prior to your next meeting.
- Faculty often can learn a lot from their students, but how often do they tell that to the students? Such disclosures give the students confidence and allow to see themselves as future colleagues.
- Acknowledging the prior skills, experience and knowledge that the students bring with them to graduate school, begins to build their confidence in themselves.

Ways to provide a personal touch

- Being open and approachable. When students need to talk to you, be it about academic or non-academic issues, knowing that they can easily get your time and attention is very helpful. This is especially important for the shy student or students from different cultural backgrounds than yours.
- Helping students find creative solutions to their academic or personal challenges.
- Be generally familiar with the campus' resources, such as the Counseling and Student Development Center or Financial Aid Office, so that you can refer students to them should the need arise.

3. Teach ethical conduct

All graduate students should know the consequences of any form of cheating. It may be necessary to stress the specific definitions of such things as plagiarism and data and image falsification. Other important ethical issues include collaboration—its strengths, weaknesses and pitfalls-- and the need to teach the basics of intellectual property. Ethical

conduct encompasses yet goes far beyond these elements. Mentors have an obligation to teach and oversee their students in assuring ethical conduct.

- The conduct of research with human or animal subjects is carefully regulated by the University in accord with Federal statutes. A mentor must assure that graduate students engaging in such research be thoroughly familiar with the procedures for clearing their studies with the Committees on Human Studies and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.
- There are a number of hazardous substances and activities which are regulated by the Environmental Health and Safety Office. The mentor is responsible for seeing that any research involving these substances and/or activities (including the use of compressed gas or air) are approved by that office and graduate students should have experience with this process.
- Many disciplines, especially those involving human services, have codes of conduct or ethical or professional practices. Ideally, these are taught in the program's introductory or orientation courses, but the mentor should reiterate the importance of such codes even when taught and teach them when no one else has that specific responsibility.
- The rules of intellectual property are an important ethical dimension. Graduate students need to know of their rights and obligations. Where appropriate, they should be exposed to patent and copyright laws. One issue that is often important to graduate students is the guidelines on who should be an author on professional papers or presentations. It might even be necessary to reinforce the need for appropriate citations and acknowledgements.

4. Know the common concerns of all graduate students

Need for role models

All graduate students benefit from having role models whom they can admire—professionals whose lives they want to emulate. People usually identify such role models based on shared characteristics and connections to similar experiences. Because of the shifting demographics, not only at UH Mānoa but around the country, graduate students from historically under-represented groups and women in some disciplines can face greater challenges in finding faculty role models who have had experiences similar to their own. There are ways for a mentor to help.

- If the composition of faculty and graduate students in your department is homogeneous, join with your colleagues to identify and recruit new faculty and students who represent diverse backgrounds.
- Become familiar with people of diverse backgrounds across the university, especially in affiliated disciplines or in the community, who can help your students.
- Know that you can provide excellent mentoring to students of different race, gender or culture from you. What is important is finding common ground and focusing on the students' needs and goals.

Questioning the canons

For fields to advance, it is necessary that new scholars have the freedom to question the implicit assumptions and traditional knowledge and methods of their disciplines. Sometimes students find that their perspectives or intellectual interests do not neatly fit into the current academic canons. Studies suggest that under-represented students experience such disjuncture more, however, any student is likely to face his or her own doubts when confronting such challenges. Productive scholarly environments value new ways of thinking and encourage students to explore, and possibly push the boundaries into different modes of inquiry. How can a mentor support this process?

- Listen to students' experiences and perspectives. Ask them to share scholarly articles or essays that illustrate the work they would like to do or provide a base for any ideas that extend that base.
- Identify content that is traditionally excluded or marginalized in your field and expand the boundaries of your discipline by addressing such content.
- Allow students to disagree with you if they can do so using sound rationales and independent thought that is well constructed.
- Help your students think in ways that are interdisciplinary. Interest in interdisciplinary questions and applications is growing, but many students find that the structure of the department restricts movement across boundaries.
- Foster ongoing departmental discussions on how disciplinary and interdisciplinary theory and methods are changing because of the inclusion of more diverse content, approaches and perspectives.

Balancing studies and social life

It is not unusual for new graduate students to think that they need to spend every waking moment involved in their studies or closely related activities. This is an overwhelming feeling and can lead to rapid burn-out. It is especially difficult for students who have other commitments in life, such as a marriage and family. To help your students keep a more realistic perspective:

- Demonstrate to students that you value other dimensions of their lives besides their studies. Share your interests and hobbies with them to reveal that academics do have this kind of balance in their lives.
- Offer students ideas on how to manage their time better. For example, show them how to break large tasks, such as research papers into more manageable components and set short-term realistic goals to complete each component.
- Recognize that students try hard to balance their academic commitments with their non-academic commitments. Those who are unable to spend as many hours on campus as other students often may make better, more efficient use of the time they are there.
- Be empathic in learning about the demands your students face beyond the department. If you sense that a student is facing difficulties, speak to them about it and offer ideas for solutions or refer them to other campus resources.

5. Understand the Diverse Factors that Influence Students' Mentoring Needs

No two students experience advanced study in exactly the same way. Even students with similar backgrounds and personal characteristics can experience very different challenges. Conversely, some students of very different backgrounds might share similar anxieties about, for example, presenting papers, publishing research or finding a job. Yet, there are identifiable types of students who, while their unique backgrounds enrich the university community, must overcome unique demands. The purpose of this subsection is to help you become more knowledgeable about some of the many factors that shape such students mentoring needs.

Stereotypes and prejudices
Stereotypes still exist on college campuses and there is a great need to eliminate unexamined assumptions whether these are about race, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, age, class, religious background, veteran's status, or people with disabilities. The way stereotypes can be revealed might be very subtle, such as a lecturer assuming that everyone in the class is heterosexual or that someone with a hearing problem is totally deaf. The assumption that everyone within a certain group "acts the same way" is a form of prejudice in that it disposes us to treat all people in that group, say students from the same country, in the same way, when in fact, their language skills, abilities, or willingness to speak up in class differ from person to person. Ways a mentor can help include the following:

- Reflect on how you have been socialized to think about any specific group and make efforts to increase your awareness, socially and academically, by making personal contact with such groups. Having a friend or colleague who is from one of these groups is often the best way to gain perspective.
- Get to know the students as individuals as opposed to someone who is of a certain group.
- Be aware of negative classroom dynamics and the ways they might affect the experiences of all students. Recognize the individual strengths and weaknesses of students independent of their gender, race, etc. status.
- Learn about campus and national resources, such as support groups or organizations, for people of color, international students, students with disabilities, etc.
- Be familiar with the general legal requirements for equal treatment, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, civil rights laws, and visa policies.

Feelings of isolation
In comparison to undergraduate study, the specialized nature and intensity of graduate study can lead to a feeling of isolation. This is especially true when the increased diversity of graduate students often means that someone from an under-represented group, an older and/or married student, or a student working full time is actually alone in their role as student most of the time. Isolation from other students or from one's community leads students to more than just loneliness. It can lead to self-doubt, depression and dropping out of school. As a mentor, you can alleviate this by:

- Encouraging students to attend department functions and form groups for writing, discussion or studying;
- Being aware of students who seem to experience difficulty in taking active roles in departmental settings and find ways to include them; ask them about their research interests, hobbies, activities and avocations;
- Introducing your students to others with whom they might share interests, regardless of their background;
- Reminding students of the value of organizations on and off campus that can provide them with a sense of community. These can range from professional or academic societies to religious or recreational groups.

Adjusting to the academic culture here

International students, older students, students who are first generation college goers, those from indigenous backgrounds, and under-represented minorities all might face issues of adjustment to the graduate experience. An unspoken code in graduate education is that, aside from being intelligent, those who assert themselves attain success. Whether it is due to socialization or self-doubt, many graduate students in the above categories have trouble with being assertive. Although it is changing, some students still find difficulty in knowing that they must interrupt another student to contribute an idea, an interjection that they think rude and disrespectful even while fearing that their professors will wrongly attribute their lack of participation to having no ideas at all. Similarly, the need to be competitive, challenge the ideas of others or be critical are inimical to the way many students from Hawai‘i, Pacific Island and Asian societies are used to interacting. In many world cultures, the idea of challenging your professor is abhorrent. Mentors need to be aware of these kinds of obstacles and consider some of the following:

- Be sensitive to the specific needs to various groups. Most of them are not themselves aware of what they need to overcome to be successful. What each needs may be different. While older students might not have any trouble being assertive, they might not yet have the confidence in their academic skills to speak out.
- Encourage students to learn about the way graduate study occurs by calling on them in class or providing brief exposure to giving and taking criticism. Success in small doses will build the students' confidence as well as giving them hands on experience.
- Be patient with students who might not be used to the way graduate education is provided. Teach them what it is permitted and expected in various graduate settings from classrooms, to seminars, to studios to labs and give them time to adjust.
- Acknowledge multiple forms of participation and scholarly activity such as paired work, internet chat rooms, or on-line discussion groups. Many students contribute better in smaller groups or via electronic communication.
- Many students from these categories simply feel that they are different. A student who has no family members who ever went to college might not be visible to others but might feel awkward and out of place. A student with an invisible

disability or of a different sexual orientation will have similar feelings. It is important for the mentor to acknowledge the differences while making all students feel accepted and afforded the same treatment.

- A common error is to make a specific student the "spokesperson" for the entire group. It is never appropriate to call on a lone female student in a class and ask her "how women feel" about an issue. Similar restrictions should apply to a student from China, a gay student, an African-American, or a student in her 50s.

6. Encourage Your Department to Strengthen Mentoring

The department's graduate faculty, chair and graduate chair share the responsibility to establish and sustain a culture of effective mentoring. The following strategies are offered as suggestions to your department to optimize its mentoring resources and nurture productive relationships between all graduate faculty and all of their graduate students. An expansion of some of these ides can be found in Pratt & Tokuno, 2008.

Develop a mentoring policy
A mentoring policy works best when it is the result of the creative ideas and the sincere good will of the faculty. Informal discussions among concerned faculty members can prove a sound beginning and eventually, all members of the department can become involved in identifying some basic principles of mentoring and agree on how they will institutionalize and reward good practice at this most fundamental level.

Provide new students with some kind of interim advising
New students should be provided with some kind of temporary advising during their first semester. Whether this is in the form of a temporary faculty adviser assigned to them, advising from the graduate chair, or advice from a well informed and experienced professional staff member is less important than the idea that the student gets some initial support and direction. This should be a formal relationship with two or three meetings by appointment. Topics of discussion should include information about degree requirements, program planning, course selection, and how well the student is being assimilated into the department's social and academic activities. Later meetings can focus on the student's goals, scholarly focus, long term curriculum plans and choice of a permanent adviser.

Establish peer mentoring
Pairing new students with a more advanced graduate student, a peer mentor, is an excellent way to help new students make the adjustment to graduate study. Ideally, this peer mentor should share a similar academic focus and perhaps a few other background characteristics, but the main qualifications are that they are experienced and interested in helping a new student. A peer mentor can help a new student become familiar with the department culture, campus and community resources, and how to be persistent and successful. Such pairings often become self-sustaining as the students who received such peer mentoring will want to do the same thing once they gain experience.

Enlist other staff to be supportive

Department secretaries are a well known resource for graduate students. It is not a part of the secretary's duties to do any type of mentoring, but they can be an important information and communication link if they are willing to help. Other clerical staff, researchers, administrative assistants and even janitors can be part of this effort as long as they are willing, friendly, and possess accurate knowledge. Alumni of the program, if they are readily available, can also be part of this effort.

Mentor TAs
The faculty member to whom a TA is assigned has primary responsibility for mentoring the TA in his or her basic duties. This faculty mentoring aspect can be extended in several ways, such as by asking the TA to do a lecture or two, asking the TA to hold optional exam review sessions, inviting other faculty to attend a TA discussion or lab session to observe and comment on the TA's teaching methods. The Graduate Division in partnership with the Center for Teaching Excellence conducts TA training before the start of every semester. A department can build on this training by offering special teaching seminars for TAs and faculty to share ideas, innovations, and strategies for teaching.

Create Community
Designate a special place, such as a lounge or conference room, even if only for a set time during each week, to foster collegiality and an inviting atmosphere in which faculty and graduate students can gather and interact informally. This space can be used to honor the accomplish-ments of members of the department, hold colloquia, or conduct brown bag lunch discussions.

Reward effective mentoring
Departments that create rewards for excellent mentoring are making it known that they are committed to supporting their faculty in taking this role seriously. This might be done by including mentorship as a factor in considering tenure and promotion; using discretionary funds to provide a small, but visible cash award; by publicizing any outstanding mentoring efforts; and especially by nominating such mentors for the Graduate Division's Graduate Mentoring Award.

Getting Good Mentoring Started

This section offers strategies to get good mentoring started with graduate students. Start early, clarify your expectations and keep the line of communication open. Please see Appendix B on how to plan your first meeting.

1. Conduct the initial meetings with the students' interests in mind

You might want to start by asking students to complete the Graduate Division's "Self-Assessment Check List" (See Appendix C) or developing one of your own to assist each student to self-appraise their needs and present status. Before you meet with a student, you also might want to use the mentoring checklists in the appendix. For your first meeting you might want to use the following questions as "talking points" to guide you.

What are the students' goals for graduate school and beyond?

- Ask the students about their educational and professional experiences and how they are connected to their graduate study. What do they hope to accomplish with a master's or PhD?
- Offer suggestions about courses, training or work opportunities that would aid the students in reaching their long term goals.
- Offer to introduce students or write letters of introduction to colleagues inside and beyond the university who could serve to help the students meet their learning or professional objectives.
- If students desire to use their time in graduate school to make contributions to the community while learning in community settings, offer to help them meet colleagues who have bridged the academy and the community.
- Help the students to realize that their goals might change as they develop and learn about previously unconsidered options. Be supportive of this change.

What are the students' strengths and weaknesses?

This is a good question for students to ask themselves and a good start would be to ask each student to do an analysis of his or her own skills and what areas they need to improve. They can be encouraged to discuss this with you or faculty who know them well from courses or other work. Suggest courses or other experiences the students can seek to improve in those areas that need strengthening.

What are the students' preferred work styles?

These questions can be asked to provide some guidance for any student working with you: Does the student work more effectively alone or in groups. Does he or she learn better by hearing or reading? Is he or she able to complete assignments without a lot of structure? How well does the student's work style fit with yours? Given the student's work style, where might he or she need more targeted guidance in completion of the program's requirements?

2. Clarify Expectations

One of the strongest themes that graduate students express in national studies (Lovitts, 2001; Parent, 2005)) is the desire for greater clarity on expectations, roles and responsibilities of being a graduate student. With clear expectations, mentoring relationships are far more likely to be productive and mutually beneficial. To prevent misunderstandings, you should frequently discuss the expectations you and your mentee have of each other, including how these expectations might change over time.

Realistic Expectations

The following points are especially helpful to discuss from the very beginning:

As a mentor you need to be realistic about what you can and cannot do for your students and help them understand what kinds of assistance they can expect from you. A goal is to help them take more responsibility as they mature professionally, but at the beginning they will appreciate your analysis of their needs and what you can do to assist them in meeting those needs. Obviously, different students will have different needs, as well as different ways of having those needs met. Whereas some may be very uncertain of their goals and require lots of hand-holding, others will be very independent and clear in their goals and how to meet them.

Some responsibilities that you will want to see your students address right away include:

- Goals – both short- and long-term. You can suggest to your students how feasible they are.
- Work plans – including meeting program requirements and any specialized training.
- Meetings – Discuss how often you want to meet and whether you want to set a schedule as opposed to asking the students to take initiative in arranging meetings.
- Progress reports – Let your students know how often you will monitor their progress and what kind of feedback they will get from you.

Later, if you continue to be their thesis or dissertation adviser, here are some additional matters:

- Drafts – Explain what you expect from first drafts. Will you review rough drafts or should drafts be shared among students for feedback first? Tell students if you prefer drafts electronically or in hard copy. It's always a good idea to ask them to highlight revised material in later drafts so you know what they changed.
- Publishing and presenting – Make your policies on co-authorship clear. Let them know how much help they can expect from you on scholarly work they intend to present as sole author/contributor.
- Intellectual property rights – Clarify who owns the data and who has rights to access to labs, studios, etc. Who owns the final product, especially if there may be copyright or patent issues?
- Specialized training – The student's goals may require specialized training and/or certification in equipment, software, animal or human subjects, diving, etc.

Recommendation letters

Let students know how much time you will need to write letters in their behalf. Ask them to provide basic information to you about the position, fellowship, or program to which they are applying. Better, teach them how to write a good curriculum vitae. Ask them to draft one and share it with you. Ask your students to provide details of any of their experiences or accomplishments they would like to emphasize. In your letters, try to address multiple facets of the student's work. Some faculty visit classes, studios or labs

taught by their graduate students so they can directly speak of their teaching abilities in letters of recommendation.

3. A few additional tips

The following are an assortment of the kinds of tips you can reinforce regularly with your mentees meetings, gatherings and hallway conversations.

- Encourage students to take the initiative. Ideally, all students should feel like they can approach any professor openly, but students new to this level of study may need to work up their courage to seek out interactions with the faculty. In some cases, personalities or cultural backgrounds can inhibit students. By making yourself available and approachable, you can provide them with confidence that they can seek out your colleagues. You can also push them to do this in gentle but direct terms.
- Explain the advantages of multiple mentors. No one person can meet all of a student's mentoring needs and any student intent on writing a thesis or a dissertation will need to make multiple faculty contacts. It is always good for students to learn to deal with different faculty personalities, approaches and scholarly ideas to broaden their perspectives. At the very least, multiple mentors can complement each others' strengths.
- Remind students to be visible. Students undervalue the importance of simply "being there" and becoming known to a variety of faculty, staff and other students. In this way, they join the community, find out about important events and opportunities, and stay in touch with departmental matters. Students should spend time in their offices, if they have them; check their mail, electronic or otherwise; and keep in touch with the clerical staff. Students whose responsibilities take them from the department too much of the time, especially in their first year or so, often find themselves in jeopardy.
- Empower students to take themselves seriously. Graduate students need to see themselves as your potential colleagues. Sooner is better than later in beginning to make that transition. Discuss the full range of professional activities involved in being just such a colleague: attending colloquia, joining professional associations, going to national or regional conferences, etc.
- Explain to students how they need to accept criticism in a professional manner. They need to understand that accepting criticism does not necessarily mean agreeing with it, but rather reflects a willingness to consider others' points of view. When a student disagrees with certain points, it is appropriate for them to defend their ideas, but in a professional manner. You can model this behavior by inviting their criticism of your own ideas.
- Ask students if they find your advice helpful. This kind of feedback can be useful to you. It is important to remind yourself, however that students may not and often do not follow their mentor's advice in every instance. Sometimes not taking your advice is a sign of independence and the kind of initiative that you are, after all, trying to get them to develop.

A Final Note

Being a good mentor is one of the best investments you can make in your own professional life and in the lives of your graduate students. Having a good mentoring relationship does not “just happen” but is the result of planning, patience and time. The rewards can be great and long lasting if your students do reach that mutual goal of one day being a true colleague.

By assisting new talent to enter your field, you are helping it evolve and grow. You are enriching your own experience by spending time with bright and eager minds that will have much to offer you and your discipline for many years. Remember, too, that many graduate students will follow in your footsteps and become mentors themselves and in this way multiply the lessons of self-reliance, collegiality and a genuine regard for the best interests of scholarship that you have nurtured in them.

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APPENDIX A – MENTOR EXPECTATIONS

Use this worksheet to develop an understanding of what you can expect to gain from your mentoring relationship. By clarifying your own expectations you will be able to communicate and work more effectively with your students. Add items you deem important.

The reasons I want to be a mentor are to:

__ Encourage and support a graduate student in my field
__ Establish close, professional relationships
__ Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
__ Pass on knowledge
__ Create a network of talented people.
__ Other:
_____

I hope that my mentee and I will:

__ Tour my workplace, classroom, studio, or lab
__ Got to departmental events together
__ Meet over coffee or meals
__ Go to local academic events, such as lectures, conferences, performances, etc. together
__ Go to regional or national professional meetings together.
__ Other:_____
_____

I hope that my mentee and I will discuss:

__ Academic subjects that will most benefit his or her academic career
__ Career options and professional preparation
__ My work
__ Technical and related issues
__ How to network
__ How to manage studies and outside obligations
__ Personal dreams and life circumstances
__ Other:_____
_____

I will help my mentee with job opportunities by

__ Finding job or internship possibilities in my department, center or company
__ Introducing my mentee to people who might be interested in hiring him or her
__ Helping practice for job interviews
__ Suggesting possible job contacts to pursue
__ Teaching about networking
__ Critiquing his or her vita

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Other:_____

_____

I will spend an average of ___ hours, on average per week/month with my mentee.

Adapted from Brainerd, S. G., Harkus, D. A, and George M. R. (1998). A curriculum for training mentors and mentees: Guide for administrators. Seattle, WA: Women in Engineering Initiative, WEPAN Western Regional Center, University of Washington.

APPENDIX B: Planning for the First Meeting – A Checklist for Mentors

You might need to take the initiative to arrange the first meeting with potential mentees yourself or in cooperation with the graduate chair. Once arranged you can use this checklist to go over what you will discuss.

__ 1. Explain the goals of the first meeting and discuss how confidentiality should be handled.

__ 2. Talk informally about non-academic matters to get the student to relax.

__ 3. Discuss what each of you perceives as the mutual boundaries of the mentoring relationship.

__ 4. Review the student's current experience and qualifications. Ask the student to self-assess his or her strengths and weaknesses.

__ 5. Ask the student to discuss any concerns or anxieties they might wish to disclose about being in graduate school.

__ 6. Discuss and record the student's immediate and long range goals and explore useful professional experience in light of these goals.

__ 7. Discuss and record any issues that may affect the mentoring relationship such as time and financial constraints, lack of confidence, lack of familiarity with the role or others.

__ 8. Discuss the following activities that can form a part of your mentoring relationship:

- Advising
- Guidance on shifts in long term goals
- The student's working style
- Giving advice on strategies for improving teaching
- Consulting on issues of concern the student has with colleagues, study or scholarly production
- Relationships with other students or faculty in the program

__ 9. Create a mentoring action plan that reflects different professional development needs at different stages of the student's graduate program.

__ 10. Amend the mentoring action plan as needed by focusing on the mentee's developing needs.

__ 11. Arrange a meeting schedule for the coming year. Try to meet at least twice a semester. After each meeting note topics discussed and feedback given. Keep all records secure and confidential.

__ 12. Plan what you will discuss at your next meeting and schedule the meeting for later in the first semester.

Adapted from “How to Mentor Graduate Students” published by the Graduate School, University of Washington

APPENDIX C: <u>Self Assessment Check-List for Graduate Students</u>

The list below is a template that you can tailor for your own self-assessment. It includes items that you as a graduate student might use to self-assess your progress in acclimating to the graduate program during your first year. (Not all items are necessarily applicable to all students or programs.) Graduate programs usually provide information and assistance concerning most of the items on this list; however, you need to know that it is your obligation to seek additional information or help as needed. You should add your own items as you find them, especially those specific to your program.

You should check an item once it has been completed, or as you regularly attend to an item (i.e., seminars), or when you understand the role an item will play, or when you understand your responsibility in meeting the department's as well your own expectations.

Pre-entrance activities

_____ Send your "Statement of Intent to Register"
_____ Obtain information on funding possibilities (TA, RA, other assignments)
_____ Familiarize yourself with literature and other information provided
_____ Process all forms and paperwork required by the program and the university (for health clearance, insurance, financial aid)
_____ Seek information on or secure housing (department, local paper, local CC)
_____ Find information about any orientations or pre-semester training you need to attend

Academic advising and mentoring

_____ Understand the requirements for the degree you are pursuing (list each requirement and deadline and check off when met)
_____ Meet with an academic advisor (assigned or one you choose) to develop a tailored program (courses, activities) that meets your goals and interests
_____ Register for courses
_____ Become acquainted with areas of faculty research/scholarship
_____ Choose a faculty mentor for your area of specialization

Integration into the program

_____ Attend orientation session and available opening social events
_____ Become acquainted with other students in the entering cohort
_____ Become acquainted with advanced students in the program
_____ Meet all program faculty members
_____ Introduce yourself to program staff members
_____ Attend functions that allow social interaction with faculty, students, staff
_____ Develop first-name or appropriate personal relationships with a sizeable fraction of program faculty, students, and staff

_____ Initiate discussions or social activities involving other program members
_____ Attend departmental seminars and post-seminar events