Optimizing Research Mentoring Relationships to Promote Diversity & Research Excellence

Successfully negotiating your constellation of mentoring relationships by “Mentoring Up”
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Introductions

Name
Department
Why You Are Here
Participants will:

- Describe the role that mentees have in optimizing mentoring relationships
- Identify ways in which the process and content of mentoring varies across disciplines
- Engage in self-assessment to identify the domains of professional development in which they need mentoring
- Discuss challenges they face and strategies they utilize in relationships with their mentors.
- Learn about evidence-based practices that they may employ as they negotiate their constellations of mentoring relationships
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So what are you going to do, Tajel?

I’m going to stay!

Prof. Rivera says he can advise me remotely from his new university.

It’ll be a combination of Skype calls and sporadic meetings depending on his busy schedule.

He’ll be your Skypevisor.

Yes, virtually useful.
"I'VE LOOKED AT IT."

SIR, DID YOU READ THE DRAFT I LEFT ON YOUR DESK?
I'VE LOOKED AT IT.

WHAT YOU HOPE IT MEANS:
THIS IS AMAZING!

WHAT IT PROBABLY MEANS:
sir, did you read the draft I left on your desk.

WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM
YOUR ADVISOR IS ON VACATION. HOW TO REACT:

YEAR 1 GRAD: hey now, it’s your birthday...!
PARTY LIKE A ROCK STAR.

YEAR 3 GRAD: will somebody tell me what I’m supposed to be doing?
RUN AROUND LIKE A CHICKEN WITH ITS HEAD CUT OFF.

YEAR 5 GRAD: really? he’s gone?
ACT TOO BUSY TO HAVE NOTICED.

YEAR 7 GRAD: aah! if he doesn’t sign this, i can’t graduate!
PANIC. RESIST URGE TO COMMIT FORGERY.
Mentoring is...

A collaborative, learning relationship that proceeds through purposeful stages over time.

Primary goal—mentees acquiring essential competencies needed for success.

Using one’s experience to guide another through experiences that require personal and intellectual growth and development.

Includes research mentoring, career coaching, peer mentoring, virtual mentoring, and advising.
It is about the relationship

It is critical to keep in mind that it will be less about what a mentor “gives” to you and more about how the two of you can collaborate to meet each other’s needs and grow the intellectual enterprise.
“Mentoring Up” is …

- Based upon the concept of “Managing Up” (Gabarro & Kotter, Harvard Business Review, 1980)
- Helps move toward shared purpose while making sure you get what you need
- Requires continually learning to proactively engage with your advisor or mentor
  - That relationship changes over time
- Requires an understanding of yourself and your advisor (strengths, weaknesses, styles)
- Engaging proactively while following respectfully

Lee, McGee, Pfund, Branchaw, 2016
Mentoring up is both:

- **Engaging pro-actively**
  - Act with confidence
  - Seek to understand your mentor’s expectations
  - Communicate your goals and expectations
  - Assess your developmental needs

- **Following respectively**
  - Practice “follow-ship”
  - Actively listen
  - Determine and fulfill your responsibilities
  - Adapt to your mentor’s needs, while advocating for your own
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Questions for our scholars:

- Describe the constellation of mentors you have had over the course of your career. How were they similar or different?

- Keeping your discipline in mind …
  - How prevalent is collaboration vs. more autonomous work? How does that impact your relationships with mentees?
  - What form do intellectual products take in your field? What gives these products currency?
  - What is the motivation of and/or goals for mentoring?

- Describe how disciplinary (or sub-disciplinary) differences in mentoring have impacted your relationships with mentees and/or mentors?
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- Identify ways in which the process and content of mentoring varies across disciplines
- Engage in self-assessment to identify the domains of professional development in which they need mentoring and develop a mentoring map
- Discuss challenges they face and strategies they utilize in relationships with their mentors
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Back to Aligning Expectations & Communication

- **STEP 1**
  Identify the domains of professional development you are seeking to develop (short-term & long-term)

- **STEP 2**
  Determine which of these short-term needs can be met with (a) a mentor; (b) a mentoring resource

- **STEP 3**
  Once you identify the needs that can be best met by a mentor, revise your short-term needs list

- **STEP 4**
  Map your current mentoring network.
Professional Development Need #1

______________________________

OUTSIDE MSU

______________________________

MSU

______________________________

Professional Development Need #3

______________________________

Professional Development Need #4

You
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REFLECTION:

• Identify a conversation with a mentor or advisor that had a positive outcome

• Do the same for one that did not go as well

• What elements of the conversations were responsible for the outcomes?
Strategies to Set Expectations Jointly Or Avoid Doing So

- **Avoidance** Passive
- **Accommodating** Passive
- **Competing** Active
- **Collaborating** Active
Basic styles of communication

Dominance

Warmth

Aggressive
Assertive
Passive
Assertiveness: Take the lead

 Dominance

 Warmth

 YOU

 PI
What to do after the meeting?

- Self-reflection and constructive evaluation
- Leads to preparing for your next meeting
- Becoming an effective communicator is a process
Dialogue & Questions

- What specific strategies could have been used prior to the meeting?
- What specific strategies could have been used while in the meeting?
- What specific strategies could have been used after the meeting?
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Cases

- What are the challenges or issues in the case?
- What options does the graduate student/postdoc have?
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