Future Faculty Workshop

Mentoring – The Fifth Dimension

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Who was Mentor?

- Mentor was the wise old man put in charge of Odysseus’ son, Telemachus, when Odysseus went off to the Trojan war.

- In a 1699 French tale, “Les Aventures de Telemaque” the lead character was Mentor, but his name is no longer a proper noun…

- What did Mentor do to deserve this?
A Modern Definition

- “A mentor is a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times, promoting or sponsoring. The mentor may perform any or all of these functions during the mentor relationship.”

- Zey (1984)
Mentoring can encompass:

- Role modeling
- Counseling
- Advising
- Teaching
- Tutoring
- Coaching
- Supervising
- Supporting
- Sponsoring
- Promoting
- Protecting
- Parenting
The First 3 Dimensions

- Career
- Personal
- Academic
The 4th Dimension

Career vs. Advising

Time

Advice vs. Advising
What is the 5th Dimension?

Reciprocal caring...

- You can teach...but not care
- You can advise...but not care
- You can coach...but not care
- You can even parent...but not care

But you can’t mentor...and not care
Nor can you be mentored...and not care
Benefits to Being Mentored

- Productivity
- Academic performance
- Professional skill development
- Professional identity and confidence
- Early employment
- Networking
- Promotion
- Career eminence
- Satisfaction with program/institution
- Reduced stress and role conflict
- Compensation
Are Mentors Easily Available?

- How many of you would like to have a mentor?
- How many of you actually have a mentor?
- About 95% of graduate students believe mentoring is essential for their personal and career development.
- Only 35-50% report actually having one.

Why does this happen?
Why Finding a Mentor is Hard

- Mentoring skills tend to be unrewarded:
  - They are invisible
  - They are unmeasurable (by standard means)
  - They are not recognized as “valuable”
  - They are not viewed as teachable

- Mentoring competes with rewarded skills
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Service

“No time, no time!” says White Rabbit
How Do You Find a Mentor?

- Being mentored should be intentional.
- Mentors cannot effectively be assigned.
- Mentors must be sought out.
- Mentors must reciprocate your interest.
- Contemplate having multiple mentors.
- Look for those you admire for their persona, respect for their achievements, value for their perspective and judgment.
Why Finding a Mentor is Worthwhile

- “It is one of the most complex and developmentally important relationships a person can have in early adulthood”
  - Levinson (1978)

- “Identification with a mentor should be considered the major developmental task of the early career”
  - Russell & Adams (1997)
Institutions should formally value mentoring...

- Together with research, teaching and service, mentoring is the “fourth leg of the academic stool” (Jacob, 1997).
- The first 3 are all used in faculty evaluations, but mentoring almost never is, even though it gives to students knowledge about “the ways of the world”.
- Mentoring thus invisibly strengthens the “stool” by building strong relationships between students and faculty in ways that the others do not.
Mentoring provides “sociological heredity”*

- Alums who have been mentored often continue their contacts far into their subsequent careers, further strengthening the inter-institutional “community of scholars” network that we value.
- Mentoring thus establishes a robust continuity between academic generations – a kind of “sociological heredity” that is usually ignored, if even recognized, but is priceless…

*Zuckerman (1977)
Mentoring Begets Mentoring

- Aristotle mentored Alexander the Great
- Bach mentored Mozart
- More than half of the U.S. Nobelists since 1972 had worked with older Nobelists.
- In any given field
  - Masters often seek out promising students to mentor
  - Good students likewise look for accomplished masters to learn from.
- Mentoring well includes sharing the expertise of how to mentor well
The End – But only the Beginning

The career contributions that will hold the greatest meaning will be relational.

“Mentoring is one of the more important and enduring roles of the successful faculty member. Few professional activities will have a greater impact on students..[and]..afford the faculty member greater psychological benefit.”

- Johnson (2008)