

# UCSF GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING PROGRAM: GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY MENTORS

JULY 13, 2004

## THE NEED FOR GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING

- ❑ A good mentoring relationship is crucial to the success of graduate students as they learn to develop original research ideas and move toward greater independence and maturity.
- ❑ Mentoring is crucial to strengthen networks for graduate students and to provide advice on becoming integrated within more traditional science networks.
- ❑ Mentoring is particularly crucial to retaining the number of women and disadvantaged students who have begun doctoral work in science, and to promoting the continuation of their careers in science.
- ❑ Graduate students benefit from the valuable professional knowledge and experiences of their mentors.

## BASIC OBLIGATIONS OF THE MENTOR

### 1. BUILDING TRUST

- ❑ A mentoring relationship takes time to build.
- ❑ The mentor is a role model who:
  - responds to the graduate student's career goals and professional concerns.
  - shares personal experiences which address the student's career.
  - inspires confidence and provides encouragement to the student.
  - demonstrates professional attitudes and values.
  - listens to and communicates effectively with others.
  - demonstrates knowledge of the organization's/institution's cultures and systems and passes this knowledge on to the student.

### 2. INTERACTING WITH ROTATION STUDENTS

- ❑ Welcome the rotation student and orient him/her to the lab.
- ❑ Allow the rotation student to choose from a number of potential projects
- ❑ Be clear to the rotation student regarding your expectations about attending group meetings, hours worked and whether s/he will give a group meeting presentation at the end of the quarter.
- ❑ Remember the rotation student has class responsibilities.
- ❑ Give the rotation student opportunities to interact with you one-on-one, to get a sense of your working style.
- ❑ Encourage the rotation student to talk to a variety of lab members (postdocs, other students, etc.) to get a sense of the people and culture of the lab.

### 3. INTERACTING WITH NEW THESIS STUDENTS

- ❑ Make the new student feel welcome in your lab. Give him/her bench space and supplies to get started.
- ❑ Establish a regular meeting time with the student. Remember that some students may want more frequent meetings than others.
- ❑ Brainstorm potential research topics with the student. Give him/her time to discover his/her personal interests, but help him/her choose a project that is focused, tractable, and dissertation worthy.

- For each project/sub-project in which the student will participate, clearly establish the student's role in the project in terms of primary areas of responsibility, analyses to be performed, conceptualization of study, drafting of manuscripts, etc.
- Inform the student of available resources within the lab (e.g. – co-workers with particular expertise of use to the student) and outside the lab (e.g. – materials, equipment and expertise in other labs).
- Discuss a timeline for progress in the student's research project and periodically adjust/revise this based on the student's progress.
- Encourage the student to seek other mentors (see **Need for Multiple Mentors**).
- Alert the student to support from on-campus resources and organizations such as the Graduate Students' Association and the Career Center (see **Links to Graduate Student Mentoring Resources**).
- Assist the student in establishing successful collaborations when available.
- Involve the student in scientific discussions during lab meetings and/or on an individual basis.
- Participate in and encourage the student's participation in seminars, journal clubs and other educational activities.
- Provide constructive feedback on oral and written communication skills (presentations, papers, fellowship/grant applications).

#### 4. INTERACTING WITH ADVANCED STUDENTS

- Discuss tentative topics for papers on which the student will be first author.
- Support/encourage the student to present his/her work at scientific meetings.
- Provide timely feedback on the student's papers, posters, and dissertation chapters.
- Encourage regular thesis committee meetings, and help the student prepare for these.
- Consider asking the student to be a co-author of invited book chapters or review articles when time permits.
- Provide opportunities for the student to participate in the writing and reviewing of papers and grants, when appropriate.
- Encourage creativity and independence.
- Discuss scientific conduct in terms of individual and institutional integrity and ethics in scientific research, including intellectual property of the student. For more information about intellectual property, go to the UCSF Office of Technology Management (<http://www.otm.ucsf.edu>)
- Help the student engage in networking (e.g. – introduce him/her to colleagues at meetings or by phone/email).
- Play an active role in the student's job search (e.g. – give advice on application letters, CVs, interviews, presentations).
- Encourage the student to participate in career development seminars and activities sponsored by the UCSF Career Center and the Academic Enrichment Program (for links, see **Links to Graduate Student Mentoring Resources**).

#### 5. EVALUATION

- At the start of the student's tenure in the lab, meet with the student to discuss expectations regarding progress meetings and evaluations. Agree upon the frequency of progress meetings (weekly, biweekly, monthly) and the format. Consider drawing up a written mentoring agreement to facilitate initial discussion of expectations and objectives (see **Sample Mentoring Agreement**).

- ❑ Topics of review include the student's progress to date, strengths, and areas needing improvement.
- ❑ The review may include a reasonable set of tasks to be completed before the next meeting, agreed to by the mentor and student.
- ❑ Maintain open communication with the student regarding career goals and options and alert the student to applicable opportunities (e.g. – on-campus events/lectures/seminars, professional organizations and meetings).
- ❑ Periodically ask the student if there is anything you can do to further improve his/her experience.

## **6. AREAS REQUIRING SENSITIVITY**

- ❑ It is of great importance for the mentor to demonstrate willingness to communicate with and to understand each student as a unique individual, and to promote inclusiveness within his/her lab group.
- ❑ Certain aspects of a student's lifestyle may require open-mindedness and acceptance from the mentor, in order to build trust and to create a comfortable working environment for the student. These include, but are not limited to:
  - minority issues.
  - cultural differences, especially pertaining to international students.
  - gender issues.
  - sexual orientation.
  - disabilities.
- ❑ With respect to family responsibilities, mentors should be alert to students who need extra support when having a child, raising a child alone, returning to school after child-rearing, caring for an elderly parent, etc.
- ❑ Inappropriate closeness between mentors and students will produce personal, ethical, and legal consequences not only for the persons involved but also for the programs or institutions of which they are a part. Be guided by common sense. Even consensual relationships between a mentor and student are highly inappropriate. For the UCSF policy on sexual harassment, go to: <http://www.ucsf.edu/oshpr/policies/policy.html>.
- ❑ Be careful that friendship with a student does not turn into favoritism. Resolve to treat students in your lab as equitably as possible.
- ❑ Be attentive to conflicts that may have developed, or are at risk of developing, within the lab or between you and the student. For assistance with strategies to manage conflict and resolve disputes, contact the Problem Resolution Center (see **Links to Graduate Student Mentoring Resources**).

## **THE NEED FOR MULTIPLE MENTORS**

- ❑ Encourage the student to seek multiple mentors, and assist in this process by recommending potential mentors to the student, or by introducing the student to potential mentors.
- ❑ It is important for the student to have multiple mentors, each of whom performs one of several mentoring functions:
  - advising on scientific, institutional, or departmental matters.
  - providing information about specific career opportunities.
  - offering ideas and support in balancing family and career responsibilities.
- ❑ Finding a diverse group of mentors (male and female, of the same and other ethnicities, various career tracks, etc.) allows the student to evaluate advice from a variety of sources

and perspectives. This support also helps to minimize the isolation and separation often experienced by the student.

- ❑ Each mentor may feel more comfortable with less responsibility in the student's career development and with a smaller time commitment to the relationship.

#### **TIPS ON WRITING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

- ❑ Make sure you have a current CV and a description of the desired position before you write the letter.
- ❑ Be relevant. Describe qualities or achievements related to the position under consideration.
- ❑ Be honest in your assessment of the student.
- ❑ Be honest with readers about the extent of your knowledge based on personal interaction with the student.
- ❑ Be specific about skills, abilities, potential, etc. Be quantitative when possible. Give specific examples or anecdotes to support your general statements.
- ❑ Keep copies of previous letters to serve as starting points for future letters.

#### **BENEFITS TO THE MENTOR**

- ❑ Personal and professional satisfaction.
- ❑ Reputation as a good mentor will attract high quality students.
- ❑ Good mentoring facilitates staying on top of your field.
- ❑ Being a mentor extends your network.
- ❑ Being a mentor extends your contribution to the scientific enterprise.

#### **LINKS TO GRADUATE STUDENT MENTORING RESOURCES**

UCSF Graduate Division

<http://saa49.ucsf.edu/graduate/welcome.htm>

UCSF Graduate Students' Association (GSA)

<http://student.ucsf.edu/gsa/>

UCSF Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Students' Association (LGBTSA)

<http://www.ucsf.edu/cge/lgbtr/related.htm>

UCSF Women in Life Sciences (WILS)

<http://itsa.ucsf.edu/~wils/WILS.html>

UCSF Career Center

<http://saawww.ucsf.edu/career/>

UCSF Office of Student Academic Enrichment

<http://student.ucsf.edu/enrich/home.jsp>

UCSF Office of Sexual Harassment, Prevention & Resolution

<http://www.ucsf.edu/oshpr/>

UCSF Problem Resolution Center and Campus Mediation Program

<http://www.ucsf.edu/resolve/>

San Francisco Association for Women in Science (SF-AWIS)

<http://www.nccawis.org/chapters/sfawis/sfAWISHome.html>

How to Mentor Graduate Students: A Guide for Faculty in a Diverse University

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/StudentInfo/Publications/FacultyMentoring/contents.html>

Writing Letters of Recommendation for Academic Jobs

[http://www.mla.org/Job\\_counseling/125044.htm](http://www.mla.org/Job_counseling/125044.htm)

## **REFERENCES**

Theresa Gamble, Tina Settineri and Renee Willard Spencer, Eds. (1993). Mentoring Guide published by The Association for Women in Science San Francisco Chapter 1993 Mentoring Program, in collaboration with Women in Life Sciences, University of California, San Francisco.

UCSF Institute for Health Policy Studies (2003). Agreement between Fellow and Mentor: Expectations and Objectives for Fellowship.

## SAMPLE MENTORING AGREEMENT

### **Agreement between Student and Mentor: Expectations and Objectives**

This document represents an agreement reached between the graduate student and the faculty mentor/research advisor regarding the structure of the working relationship during the student's tenure in the laboratory. It should be developed interactively between the two parties. **Please use as much space as you need.**

- 1. Regular one-on-one meetings.** We plan to meet: *(e.g. weekly on Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, as needed but at least monthly, etc)*
  
- 2. Participation in group meetings (if relevant).** Student will participate in the following ongoing research or policy group meetings:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. Professional meeting(s) that the Student will attend & dates:**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. Tentative topics for papers on which Student will be an author:** *(list topics and likely order of student's authorship, e.g., first, second, etc.)*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5. The Student's role on the project will be as follows:** *(describe his/her primary areas of responsibility, such as overseeing analyses, performing analyses, helping conceptualize study, working with technician to conduct analysis of particular research question, interviewing, drafting a manuscript, etc.)*

**6. Other areas:** *(list here any other areas of understanding between the Student and mentor regarding working relationship during the Student's tenure. This might include what days the Student will be where; any long absences agreed to in advance, such as a trip to return to the Student's home country; any unusual arrangements regarding provision of computer equipment, space, or other resources; etc.)*

---

Student

Date

---

Mentor

Date