

Mentor Orientation & Guidelines

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- ✦ Mentoring the next generation of scientists is a shared professional responsibility of all scientists.
- ✦ Mentoring involves a more experienced, skilled, and practiced academic mentor who facilitates a less experienced, developing individual's (mentee) professional development.
- ✦ Successful mentoring is a dynamic process that evolves through a series of stages, whereby each participant learns to respect and trust the other's commitment, expertise, and individuality.
- ✦ The focus of mentoring should be on the socialization of the mentee, helping them toward an understanding of the political, ethical, economic, and social dynamics within the academic community.
- ✦ Effective mentoring roles will vary and can be those of advocate, advisor, role model, guide, coach, and sounding board.
- ✦ Mentees should find multiple mentors and search both inside and outside their department.
- ✦ In mentoring programs that have a colleague-pairing component, it is often this aspect that provides the most satisfaction for both mentor and mentee because it is so personal and empowering.

I. Getting Started

A. Setting up the Meeting

First stages are usually awkward and tentative. The mentor should take the initiative early in the process since a younger colleague may not be comfortable taking the lead at the beginning. Sometimes mentees are uncomfortable about calling the mentor or about identifying needs and problems because they feel the mentor is too busy, the task too trivial, or they will appear too needy. Mentors, on the other hand, sometimes fear that if they may appear heavy-handed or intrusive if they pursue the mentee. These "miscommunications" can be avoided if discussed early in the pairing. As the relationship evolves, experience has shown that the most successful pairings occur when the mentee takes more responsibility for managing the relationship.

Be sure mentee knows how to contact you: email address, phone numbers, fax number, and best times. You should also have this information from your mentee.

B. Structure Your First Meeting and Prepare for Your Role

Set aside an hour for the first meeting with your mentee. It can be helpful to structure the first meeting because both partners often begin a mentoring relationship with high expectations and some uncertainty about how to proceed. Give some thought to how you would like the meeting to go.

Use this time to get to know other aspects of your mentee. Is s/he married? Have children? Any hobbies? Share similar information about yourself. You may want to conduct this meeting away from your office.

C. Agree Upon the Duration, Frequency and Length of Your Meetings

Agree upon when and where you will meet (your office, a breakfast meeting, etc.). Plan to keep your commitments for your meetings with your mentee. If possible have meetings at least once a month. Some conversations could also take place via phone or email.

D. Clarify and Respect Confidentiality

Some mentee and mentor pairs will feel a need for complete confidentiality in their relationship, others will not. It is critical that you and your mentee clarify the limits of confidentiality in your relationship.

II. Managing the Evolving Mentoring Relationship

A. Assist Your Mentee in Clarifying Interests and Needs

Ask your mentee to carefully identify his or her personal and professional goals for this mentoring relationship before meeting with you (e.g., questions about such areas as promotion and tenure, publishing, grantwriting, time management, teaching, lab management, presenting papers, CV development, institutional politics, and balancing work and family life). Ask for a copy of your mentees CV before first meeting.

When giving feedback, be mindful of preserving your mentee's sense of self-confidence. Use confrontation and feedback skills to give clear, non-judgmental descriptions of behavior and to show the relationship to results obtained. Assist your mentee in recognizing potential outcomes prior to taking actions.

B. Reach Agreement About the Goals of Your Relationship

He or she should provide additional clarity and background about career goals and aspirations. After learning more about your mentee's professional goals and particular concerns about career development, work together to finalize the list of goals that you feel can be adequately addressed during this experience. The mentee's readiness and willingness to be mentored will be a factor that affects the degree of progress in the relationship. The process usually requires a trial and

error stage until each determines how to achieve the appropriate quality and quantity of support. The key is to start where the mentee is and move at an agreeable pace.

C. Provide Examples of Good Practice

Prepare to assist your mentee by giving some advance thought to what your own lessons of experience have taught you. What support were you given that you can now pass on to your mentee? What discoveries did you make on your own, and how can you ease the path for this junior faculty member?

Plan to share your experiences, perspectives, and approaches to gaining your status as a Senior Faculty Member. An exploration of critical incidents can be particularly valuable. Consider sharing some of the key challenges you were confronted with in terms of research, grantsmanship, publishing, teaching, lab management, work/family balance, etc.; the options you identified for resolving the problem; your decision-making strategy; the actions you took; and the outcomes you obtained.

If possible and appropriate, engage in a collaborative activity with your mentee. It's important for mentors to make explicit the often implicit rationale for their behavior, because a mentee cannot learn the policy, strategy, and philosophy that underlie exemplary behavior alone.

D. Encourage Risk-Taking

Set some immediate goals and activities with short-term benefits, but encourage your mentee to think about the longer career focus and to stretch aspirations beyond the first identified goals. The mentoring relationship can be a safe place to take risks.

E. Honor Autonomy

Check periodically to see that your mentee remains his/her own person and you are not expecting a friend, student, follower, or clone (unless you have agreed on these roles). Seek your mentee's opinions and views and expect your mentee to disagree or challenge yours. One delicate but essential part of successful mentoring is that the mentee must move away from the mentor as you become peers.

F. Encourage Networking

Professional socialization into academia relies on whom one knows as well as what one knows. Sometimes junior faculty, particularly women and minorities, report loneliness, isolation, and separation from peers and opportunities. Getting to know other faculty and becoming known in the institution and discipline can enhance the mentee's reputation, visibility, ability to collaborate on research and writing, and to compete for funds. Encourage your junior partner to take part in university activities, committee work, and social activities, etc. If appropriate, integrate your mentee into your own professional networks and make critical contacts.

G. Recognize the Value and Limits of the Relationship

Like any relationship, this match involves a dynamic process in which the uniqueness, individuality and expertise of each member of the pair needs to be respected. You are not expected to respond to all of your mentee's needs. Be judicious in how you spend your time together and clarify the ways in which you will choose to be of support. While sharing your expertise, refrain from telling a mentee what to do, so that you limit their dependency on you. Recognize that one size does not fit all and that your mentee's personality, gender, background, or style may preclude him or her from achieving the results you obtained, using your particular techniques or approach. Assist your mentee in recognizing the options available for action and selecting the one that will work best for him or her. Recognize that some advice you offer may seem irrelevant to your mentee at this time, but may prove to be useful later on. It will ultimately be your mentee's choice as to how he or she will integrate the insights gained into his or her own evolving style, methods or approach. Your guidance and wisdom will nevertheless be invaluable. Look for opportunities for your own enrichment, as mentors often find value in the questions or fresh perspectives of mentees.

H. Setting Goals for Each Subsequent Meeting

Mentees should be encouraged to set goals for future meetings. As with all goal-setting, you do not need to strictly adhere to the goals you initially agree to, as other more vital matters or pressing priorities may arise. Nevertheless, some foresight and support in advanced planning can keep your relationship productive and worthwhile for both participants.

I. Participate in Mentoring Activities and Training Opportunities at UCSF

Executive Vice Chancellor Gene Washington has recently approved the establishment of a Faculty Mentoring Office, which will be organizationally located within a new Faculty Development Office. The mentoring office will provide training opportunities and assist programs and departments in creating the most effective mentoring programs and ways to evaluate these initiatives.

J. Bring Closure to Your Relationship

Mentoring is an ongoing process, but there may be a time when the mentoring relationship will end. It's important to bring closure to the relationship. Support your mentee in recognizing his or her achievements and encourage your mentee to use resources inside and outside UCSF to continue to develop his or her career. Encourage your mentee to take reasonable risks and try out new skills. Recognize the value of your role in supporting this junior faculty member or postdoc and the long-term, beneficial effect that can accrue from relationships of this kind.

III. General Tips

A. Suggestions for Mentees:

- Share your professional background and purpose for participating in the Mentoring Program
- Review your goals for your experience in the Mentoring Program
- Identify ways your mentor can support you
- Complete an action plan for your mentoring relationship

- Establish an agenda for each meeting
- Summarize key learning points and express appreciation at each meeting
- Find multiple mentors

B. Suggestions for Mentors:

- Show genuine interest in your mentee
- Be sensitive to gender and cultural issues.
- Share your professional background along with personal information, as you feel appropriate..
- Review the aspects of your role as a Senior Faculty member in which you feel you can be particularly helpful
- Clarify which of your mentee's goals you believe you can support
- Help your mentee develop a focus and agenda for subsequent meetings.
- Suggest relevant readings and other resources, as appropriate.
- Be willing to review manuscript drafts

III. What's In It For the Mentor?

For some, mentoring is an addition to an already full plate. Why would an overburdened academic say yes to such an additional role when given no money, little release time, and must assume new responsibilities for the effective induction of a new member into the profession?

Adult development theory suggests benefits to mentors that can be of the same degree of worth as those of being a mentee. Some benefits include career development, emotional satisfaction, rejuvenation and creativity, increased self-awareness, personal growth, realization of the significance of the mentor's life and professional contributions, and fulfillment of generativity needs.

UCSF hires some of the most highly qualified faculty in the nation. The selection of high-caliber junior faculty is only the first step in the process of creating a first-rate faculty. Mentoring programs are designed to cultivate this talent and thus represent an investment in the university's future. Faculty searches are expensive and time consuming...when you hire a new faculty members, you don't want to lose them. Mentoring aids in the retention of junior faculty, especially women and minority faculty.

A review of the literature on mentoring suggests that mentor benefits can be categorized into four dimensions: Relationship, Professional, Skill, and Personal Esteem.

On the Relationship Dimension, mentors benefit by seeing mentees grow into the profession, become more independent, and avail themselves of career-advancing opportunities. Mentors often feel a sense of pride in passing skills to the next generation. The pattern of giving mutual reinforcement through feedback is often a characteristic of the mentor-mentee relationship.

On the Professional Dimension, mentors feel that they are helping the organization and report being challenged, rejuvenated, and reinforcing their own professional identity. Sometimes the mentee's youth and enthusiasm and new energy can foster a freedom for mentors to re-evaluate

old patterns of working. Becoming a mentor benefits not only the mentor and mentee, but serves the profession as well.

On the Skill dimension, mentors report that they analyzed their own skills more, received stimulating ideas for use in their workplace and acquired a sharpened ability to effectively help another.

On the Personal Esteem Dimension, mentors were honored to be selected and felt important when asked by their mentee for advice. Emerging patterns of interaction suggest a “Mentor Mirroring Model.” The mentor takes a view of him or herself by observing the way others respond. The mentee sees desirable accomplishments and mirrors to the mentor a sense of worth that affirms and encourages the mentor.

Mentors do want recognition; e.g., annual award for outstanding mentor (published in school publications and websites, dinner for mentors,

Sources:

1. Johns Hopkins Department of Medicine Career Development Guide, 2001
2. University of Hawaii at Manoa Faculty Mentoring Program “Working Wisdom: Some Guidelines for Mentors”
3. Stanford Faculty Mentoring Program Evaluation
4. CMSI Mentoring Solutions
5. RCR Education Consortium: Mentoring by P.D. Magnus, Michale Kalichman, September 2002
6. USC Center for Excellence in Teaching: Faculty Mentoring Paper Summary