Mentoring and Being Mentored – the Foundation of Academic Success

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Overview

• A test!
• Why mentoring?
• Mentoring of students & postdocs
• Assistant professors
• Associate professor issues
• Mentoring at other academic stages

• NOTE, interrupt and share ideas and discuss
• The critical message is to think about mentoring, and be proactive to ensure that you are engaged in mentoring activities to enhance your career
A Test!

• What is the origin of the word “mentor”?
Origins of “Mentor”

- From Homer’s epics *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*
- Odysseus goes off to war
- Entrusts care & education of his son Telemachus to his friend Mentor
- Bigger job than anticipated
  - War takes 10 years
  - Return trip takes another 10 years
What is a Mentor?

One who facilitates professional and personal growth in an individual by sharing insights, providing encouragement, and opening doors

http://chass.ucr.edu/about/ed_tech/mentoring_program.html
My Interests

- I’m interested in mentoring at all levels
  - How to be mentored (grad students and postdocs)
  - How to mentor (grad students, postdocs, faculty)
  - Mentoring of junior faculty (developed UMD “policy.”)
  - Mentoring of chairs and other administrators
  - Mentoring associate and full professors
Why We Need to Mentor

• A very distinguished senior colleague told me that: “...we should not mentor since a young faculty member is being tested and if they cannot succeed on their own then they should be denied tenure.”

• My response: “...mentoring is not to provide success to weak candidates, but to facilitate and insure success in strong candidates”!
Mentoring (Grad Students & Postdocs)

What should a trainee look for in identifying a potential mentor?
Mentor Qualities

- Active publication in high quality journals
- Extramural funding (in science) and likelihood of continuation
- National recognition and other indications of status
- Rank, tenure status, proximity to retirement
- Prior training record (time to complete degree, number of graduates, placement)
- Lab organization
- Teaches about research ethics
- Work ethic
More Practical Things

• Financial aid for stipend & tuition
• Costs of research
• Travel to meetings
• Place to do work
• Intellectual support
• Help in finding postdoc and/or job
• Mentor should be available for discussions and meetings
The Mentor’s Perspective

What expectations should a mentor have for her/his trainees?
• Interact with others in a professional way
• Spend time in the lab
• Responsible for own academic time line
• Teach mentor new things, new ideas
• Active participation in lab activities
• Good work ethic
• Focus on getting degree in a reasonable time
• Actively work toward professional skills & independence as an investigator
• Communicate honestly with mentor regarding research progress
• Foster collegial relationship with mentor
• Meet department, graduate school, research deadlines
• Publish
• Stay current with literature
• Seek own funding (fellowships)
Assistant Professors
The Premise

• Mentoring helps us to ensure assistant professor success in a very complex environment
• Environment more complex now than 20-30 years go, greater stresses!
• People come into the job later, and so more “conflict” between work/home
• External funding much harder to get

• From a “practical” point of view, we need to help young faculty since we invest a great deal of money in them and so we cannot afford for them to fail – otherwise we redo the expense
Expectations of “Junior Faculty” for Mentoring

The mentorship relationship is a reciprocal one in which the mentee has the responsibility to seek information proactively about the rules, regulations and standards of the university. It is particularly important that mentees ensure that they are informed of departmental, college, and university expectations for performance.
“We evaluate the performance of three cohorts of participants [economics departments] and randomly-assigned controls from 2004, 2006, and 2008. ... Our [interim] results suggest that mentoring works. After five years the 2004 treatment group averaged .4 more NSF or NIH grants and 3 additional publications, and were 25 percentage points more likely to have a top-tier publication.”

• Funded by NSF grant
Mentoring Involves:

- **Campus** – general principles that are the same for all faculty – APT, HR, RCR, etc.
- **College** – provide exposure to issues that are the same for all faculty. e.g., college APT expectations, lab management
- **Unit** – individual mentoring
  - One-on-one
  - Chair
  - Peer
Mentoring Roles

• What should assistant professor expect from mentoring?
• What are the expectations for senior faculty as they mentor?
• What is the role of chairs/unit heads in mentoring?
Assistant Professor Mentoring Needs

• Helping develop approaches for career success
  – Feedback on papers and grants
  – Planning “strategy” for success
• Approaches to ensure academic performance
  – Provide perspective and guidance on problems or concerns in the classroom, lab, or department
  – Advice to help determine priorities and avoid pitfalls in research
• Guidance & support in developing networks
• Guidance for institutional navigation
  – Provide insight about department/college/campus priorities, norms, structures, practices, values, and resources
  – Service – when and how to say “yes” or “no”, at what levels to participate
• Advocacy for the issues all assistant professors faculty face
Role of the Chair

- Determine senior faculty who are most appropriate to serve as mentors
- Recognize and “reward” senior faculty for good mentoring
- Set expectations for mentoring by senior faculty
- Encourage senior faculty to initiate contact with newcomers
- Establish collaborations of newcomers with senior faculty (e.g., in team teaching)
- Develop additional mentoring resources, such as emeritus faculty
- Foster interchanges among mentors about experiences, best practices
- Be particularly welcoming to new non-majority faculty, as well as faculty whose scholarship is unique within the department
- MENTOR
Attributes of a Good Mentor

- Accessible for both formal & informal meetings
- Takes time and effort to make mentoring successful
- Offers critical, and constructive, assessment
- Encouraging
- Knowledgeable, wide contacts on campus & perhaps in discipline
- Offers wisdom, experience, advice
- Keeps confidences so mentee can share personal issues
- Views mentoring as important and a major responsibility
- Views mentoring as rewarding, especially in seeing the success of the mentee & that mentoring is not just a “job” taking time from other responsibilities!
Some Potential Difficulties for Mentors and Mentees

- Time challenges
- Mentor expects too much too soon and is disappointed that mentee does not do exactly what the mentor says
- Mentee feels pressure or guilt
- Finding the right balance of roles
- Inappropriate behavior and gendered expectations between men and women
- Not knowing how to end a mentoring relationship
Some Good Mentoring Practices

• Unit should have clearly stated goals for mentoring
• Mentors and mentees need to understand the goals and the process
• Multiple mentors for each mentee
  – Perhaps one in discipline and one with other expertise/experiences
  – Teaching and research mentors
  – Women/minorities might benefit from a woman/minority as one of their mentors
• Assess the outcomes of the relationship
• Mentee has some opportunity to select her/his mentor
Some Other Mentoring Practices

• Mentor & mentee have written mentoring agreement
  – Outlines expectations
  – Informal, but provides guidance
  – May be formulated by unit, and modified by each mentor/mentee

• Assign mentor as soon as hired so that the mentee has someone to talk with before they even show up (but be willing to change the mentor, or add mentors, later)
Cohort Mentoring

• In addition to one-on-one
  – Provides support group! Develop friendships, collaborations
  – Possibly have someone (more senior) as part of discussion as guide & to answer questions

• Positives
  – Provides opportunities for individuals at same point in careers to share ideas
  – Broader issues, based on group experiences, might be considered even if individual has not dealt with an issue
  – Potentially do with multiple mentors so their ideas can be discussed and compared

Good Mentoring Practices?

- The mentor chairs the candidates APT committee
- Mentoring is required of all senior faculty
- The chair is the only mentor
- Mentor is a new associate professor
Beyond the Individual Mentor

- Unit or college might have mentoring programs on topics of broad interest and which may be beyond the individual mentor. Some examples:
  - Balancing work/home
  - How to organize and run a lab (how to fire someone!)
  - Good practices in mentoring undergraduates, graduate students, postdocs
  - APT policies and procedures
  - Developing a tenure portfolio
  - Responsible conduct of research
  - How to navigate campus/federal policies on research
  - Strategies for teaching excellence
  - Grant writing
"Our most important finding is that family formation damages the academic careers of women but not of men. Having children is a career advantage for men; for women, it is a career killer. And women who do advance through the faculty ranks do so at a high personal price." — Mary Ann Mason, UC Berkeley

Potential solutions to “baby penalty”
- More and better child care options
- Effective dual-career policies
- Childbirth accommodations (mother & father)
- Accommodations for childbirth for female graduate students & postdoc (leaves, etc.)
Other Issues

• Women less likely to be speakers at meetings than men, but this changes if meeting organizers include women (also Am. Soc. Microbiol. Study; Chronicle 1/7/2014)

• Women and URM often on lot of committees that require diversity

• Women tend to ask for less (e.g., for funds to go to meetings) (Chronicle 1/17/2014)

• Imposter syndrome (Chronicle 3/27/2014)
  – High achieving women have less self-esteem & more self doubt! e.g.,
    • Pressure to dress a certain way
    • Students not speaking out in classes with males
“...studies have shown that women generally apply only to those jobs for which they’re totally qualified, whereas men tend to have no compunction about applying if they meet some, but not all, of a job’s requirements.”

“Women are less likely to tout their own research and more likely to be saddled with excessive service commitments than men are, too.”
What About after Promotion?

“Message to deans, department chairs, and other administrators in higher education: Pay more attention to associate professors—particularly women, for whom the path to promotion is often murky and less traveled.”

*Chronicle of Higher Education* (June 2009, p. 1)
Moving from Associate to Full Professor

• Could continue doing the same things as an assistant professor
• But, are the expectations of the institution different?
• To go to full professor one may need:
  – International reputation
  – Larger number of trainees
  – Active involvement on the campus – leadership!
  – Involvement at national and international levels
Data Suggest That:

• Many people, and especially women, get “stuck” at the rank of associate professor
• MLA survey across institutions found that: “on average and across institutions, it takes women one to 3.5 years (or 24.2 percent) longer than men to attain the rank of professor. This gap ... was independent of marital or parental status and was present at all types of institutions, though more pronounced at doctoral institutions. “
• There is far more job dissatisfaction in a variety of measures for associate professor compared to assistants and full
Associate Professors may be Least Satisfied Group of Academics

- Harvard U. survey of a large number of universities in 2011-2012 suggests this is the case
- Problems include:
  - Greater expectations for workload (teaching, committees, research, external activities)
  - Less protection of time (by chairs and others) so more things to do
  - Generally, support of mentors is gone and so no one there to help in a formal way
  - Lack of clear and transparent expectations for promotion to professor
## Faculty (Men & Women) Satisfaction by Rank, 2011-12 at Four-Year Colleges and Universities

(from Inside Higher Education)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Assistant</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Full</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appreciation and recognition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Satisfaction with recognition received for teaching</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Satisfaction with recognition received for scholarly/creative work</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Satisfaction with recognition for service contributions</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Satisfaction with portion of time spent on research</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service-related factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--Equity of committee assignments</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>--Number of committee assignments</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.49</td>
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<td><strong>General benchmarks</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Mentoring</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Personal and family benefits</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Satisfaction with appreciation and recognition</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--Would again work at this institution</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All values for associate professors statistically different from other ranks*

Mentoring Opportunities

Dear Colleagues,

A group of society members recently met with Vice Provost Fran McSweeney to discuss establishing an Emeritus Society faculty mentoring program. We had a great meeting and after much discussion arrived at the following proposal for initiating a mentoring program for newly promoted associate professors. We believe this is an excellent opportunity for emeritus faculty to make a significant contribution to dealing with a major problem at WSU, the failure of the majority of associate professors to make full professor. At this point, we have about 10 folks who have volunteered to be mentors, but we could use many more. So it is not too late to join this effort. Just drop me a note and I will add you to the team.

Here’s Fran’s understanding of what we’ll be doing. This can be changed if you detect problems or have additional suggestions.

- We’ll start with mentoring new associate professors because our data indicate that’s where the greatest need lies. If there is sufficient interest, or if the emeritus professors prefer, we can change this to mentoring of assistant professors at a later date.
Mentoring Continues to be of Value

• Unit head should be involved
• Guidance in expectations and frequent review to see if meeting expectations
• Selecting mentors who can provide guidance and feedback can help meeting expectations
• Etc.
Do Full Professors Need Mentors?

- Probably!
- Post-tenure reviews – people can be full professors for 20-30 years – they change, but is this evaluated?
  - Post-tenure review evaluates if faculty are really contributing
  - Goal could be to get rid of people
  - But, much better goal is to evaluate and help faculty contribute more to the unit and feel better about themselves
Post-Tenure Review of Four Full Professors

1 - Active research, teaching, and service (but teaching can improve!)

2 - Claims they are an active researcher, but not really
   - Mediocre teaching
   - Not very good publication record
   - But has heavy teaching load

3 - Continues in research
   - No funding in many years
   - Terrible teacher (and prides self on that so does not have to do more)

4 - Claims community does not agree with research
   - No funding, no graduate students
   - Few papers
   - Mediocre teaching
   - No service
Issues Regarding Post-Tenure Review

• What should the chair/unit do in each case?
• Does post-tenure review have value?
• Mentoring, by chair or others, may be an approach to “turn these people around”
• Goal:
  – Help them serve the department better
  – Help them feel better about their contributions
• Note, same approach can be taken with long-term associate professors
Do Chairs Need Mentors?

- Most people who become chairs are chosen for their scholarly prowess
- Few (none!) have managerial and leadership experience other than, perhaps, in their own labs
- Being a good chair requires strong management and leadership skills
Manage vs. Lead

• Managers organize and make sure things work
• Leaders provide vision and thinking that moves a unit forward
• These are different, and a good unit head needs both
How do Chairs Learn Their Jobs?

- Many do not, and are flops!
- Some have observed other chairs over years and have good idea what to do
- A few have had experience
- But:
  - Chairs need “non-competing” mentors (other chairs)
  - Courses on academic leadership
  - A dean who is willing to be a mentor
Final Thoughts

- Mentoring should be part of the culture at every level of a university – undergraduates to president.
- Mentoring should take various forms that may be designed to fit the needs of each *individual* mentee.
- Mentoring should utilize a variety of practices – not only one-on-one, but mentoring in cohorts, peer mentoring, reviews with chairs annually, etc.
- Mentoring is two ways – mentor and mentee can switch roles at times.
• Mentors and mentees should be “taught” about mentoring – there should be no assumptions that everyone knows how to mentor or be mentored
• Mentors should have regular discussions among themselves as to best mentoring practices, and to learn about mentoring
• Expectations should be set, and these should be monitored by the chair or someone else on a regular basis – is each relationship working and, if not, it needs to be fixed
• Mentors and mentees should be matched carefully, with involvement of the participants
Discussion!

http://med.emory.edu/faculty_dev/career-development/mentoring/index.html