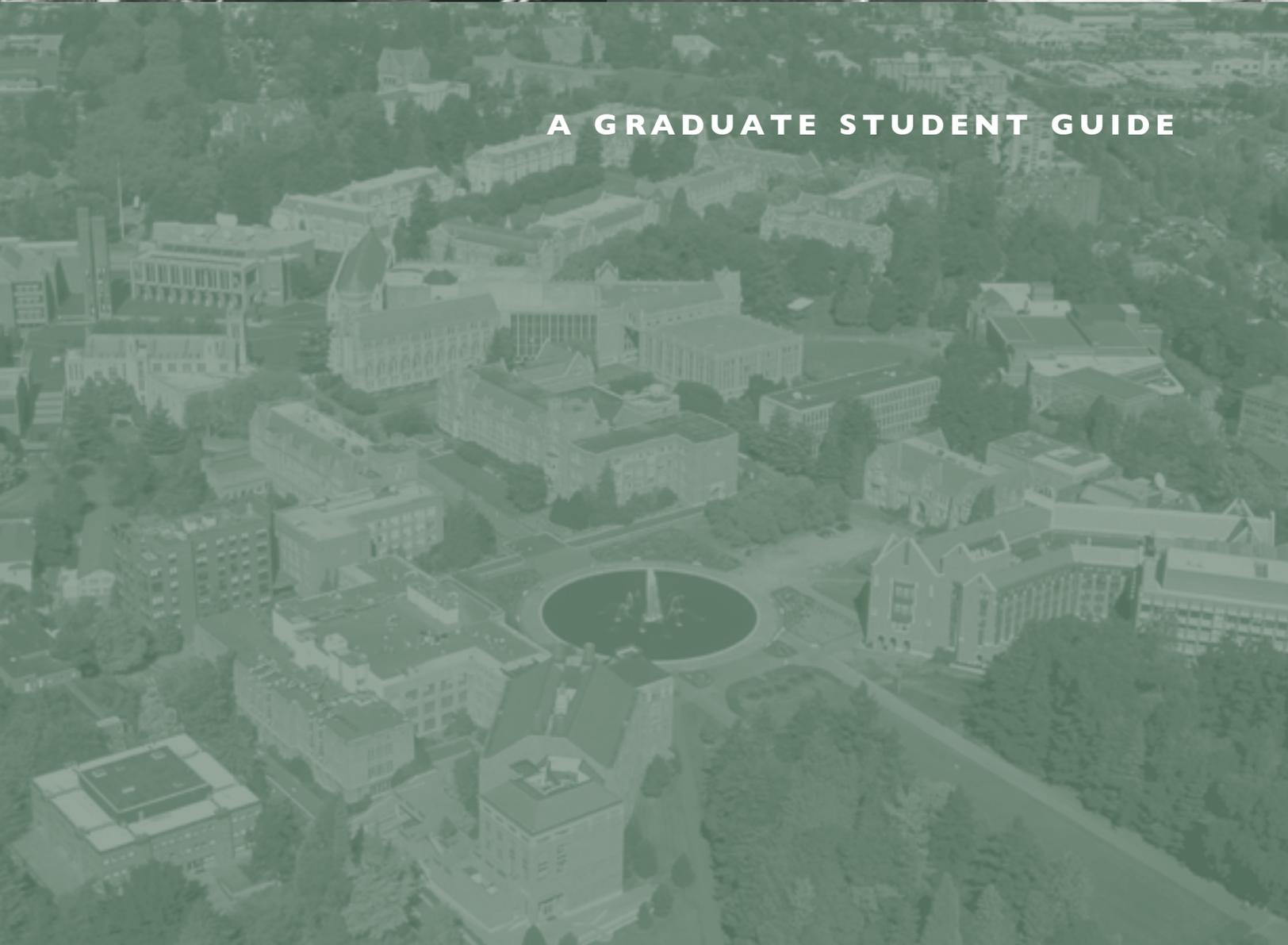


MENTORING

HOW TO OBTAIN THE MENTORING YOU NEED



A GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDE



Dedication

Marsha L. Landolt
1948–2004



LaMerle Bolcher

You would not be reading this guidebook were it not for the bold yet compassionate leadership of Marsha L. Landolt, University of Washington Graduate Dean from August, 1996 to January, 2004. Dean Landolt envisioned a Graduate School that not only provides excellent services to UW graduate students and faculty, but also proactively shapes the future of graduate education in the United States and abroad.

In particular, Dean Landolt was an ardent advocate for graduate students and passionate about helping them reach their goals. Her vision drove the creation of innovative resources for graduate research, teaching, professional development, career planning and, of course, mentoring. Although the dean's death was a tragic and untimely loss for our community, her enduring legacy will benefit all UW graduate students and faculty far into the future.

This guidebook is dedicated to Dean Marsha Landolt's life and accomplishments.

The Graduate School



Dear UW Graduate Student:

An important part of the mission of The Graduate School is to improve the quality of your graduate student experience. To that end, we spend a considerable amount of time talking with students like you about their goals, concerns, and suggestions for improving the experience. Over the years, a common theme has emerged—the *desire for more effective mentoring*.

Nationally and locally, the graduate student population is undergoing important changes. Although the University of Washington has many unique qualities, it shares with other research universities the challenge of transforming itself from a predominantly white, male-oriented institution to one that is increasingly diverse. The University is working to enhance institutional culture to serve better the needs of an ever-changing and dynamic learning community.

Effective mentoring rests on good relationships between graduate students and faculty. At The Graduate School, we have observed that the best mentoring occurs when *both* parties share responsibility for improving the quality of such support. When it comes to academic success and persistence, there is no substitute for a healthy relationship between you and your mentors.

The purpose of this guidebook is to offer you strategies for forming and maintaining successful relationships with your mentors. Because mentoring is a two-way street, we have also developed a companion guidebook for faculty, called *How to Mentor Graduate Students*. Mentoring is key to success for all of those involved in graduate education, and we hope these guides will be helpful resources for faculty, students, and staff alike.

The themes and recommendations derive from several respected sources. First, we consulted resources and materials from our peer institutions and adapted many aspects of mentoring handbooks developed by the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan. Their themes resonated well with our own campus experience. We also drew on findings from national studies and initiatives, such as the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's *Responsive PhD Initiative* and the National Science Foundation's *Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship* (IGERT) program. Closer to home, we drew on many insights from students, faculty, and staff who have participated in The Graduate School's *Preparing Future Faculty Initiative* and the *Re-envisioning the PhD* project, both funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

This guidebook for graduate students and the companion version for faculty are part of a collection of resources The Graduate School has developed to enrich the mentoring you receive. Please explore them on our website, www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring. The Graduate School's Office of Student Affairs is also a resource to students for questions that may arise.

The Graduate School will continue to sponsor opportunities for faculty, students, and staff to promote a learning environment of excellence. We hope you will use this guide as a tool to reflect on and plan for the mentoring you need, and to share your ideas with your peers and professors. We wish you every success as you engage in the challenging and rewarding experience of obtaining a graduate degree.

—The Graduate School Team

Acknowledgments

Many hands and minds were instrumental in creating this mentoring guide for the UW graduate education community. We thank the Rackham School of Graduate Studies at the University of Michigan for making versions of their mentoring handbooks available to all graduate schools for local adaptation.

Students and professors are the lifeblood of the graduate education enterprise. Over the years, hundreds of graduate students and faculty at UW and other research universities have participated in professional development projects sponsored by The Graduate School. We are indebted to them for graciously sharing their ideas on enhancing graduate education and providing insights on mentoring that shaped this guide.

Several campus leaders offered their time and thoughtful expertise in reviewing earlier drafts. We are especially thankful to Jody Nyquist, Associate Dean Emerita and former Director, *Re-envisioning the PhD* project; Dyane Haynes, Director, Disability Resource for Students Office; Charlotte Spang, Executive Director, Foundation for International

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We also thank the following individuals for timely technical and photographic assistance: Emily Borda, Nancy Bixler, Gary Farris, Lana Rae Lenz, Valerie Manusov, Ambre Martinez, Cynthia Morales, Jerry Pangilinan, Jill Perry, Gerry Philipsen, Essence Pierce, Frank Rodriguez, Diane Rogers, Cathy Schwartz, Cheryl Sorensen, and Saskia Witteborn. Bettina Woodford, a UW doctoral alumna in Communication, led the adaptation of the guide and wrote several new sections. A former program officer for graduate education at the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, she directs communications efforts for the Evans School of Public Affairs.

The 2004–2005 Graduate School leadership team (left to right): Donald Wulff, Betty Feetham, Gail Dubrow, Johnella Butler, Thomas Gething, and Maresi Nerad

Gavin Sisk





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SECTION I

Introduction

This guidebook for graduate students, *How to Obtain the Mentoring You Need*, along with its companion version for faculty, *How to Mentor Graduate Students*, reflects the University of Washington Graduate School's recognition and support of the pivotal role mentoring plays in graduate education.

The purpose of these publications is to help UW graduate students and faculty understand the building blocks of good mentoring and pursue a common road map for excellence in academic and professional development.



What graduate students tell us

One of the strongest desires graduate students express, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, socioeconomic background, discipline or department affiliation, is *to obtain more effective mentoring*. The need is universal: good mentoring helps all students learn more successfully. And that is the core business of the University.

This universality, however, does not mean that all students' needs are the same. Far from it. Because students come from different walks of life and have different needs, effective mentoring is not equal mentoring but equitable mentoring. Just as the effective teacher tailors lessons to the learning needs of diverse students in the classroom, so does the skilled mentor appropriately tailor guidance strategies to the goals and circumstances of individual mentees.

At The Graduate School, we have the unique opportunity of hearing from a wide range of students, including those who historically have been underrepresented or marginalized in US higher education. As a result, we have learned about challenges students face in their graduate programs.

Mentoring, like all of our academic and professional activities, takes place in historical, social, and political contexts that influence our institutional culture. The Graduate School acknowledges this fact in its commitment to identify, pursue, and encourage strategies that enhance success, diversity, and multiculturalism in all facets of graduate education.

Opening up lines of communication

Talking regularly about issues beyond research or coursework, examining the multiple roles of a professional in a particular field, or jointly exploring funding avenues and future job possibilities are hallmarks of mentoring that many graduate students describe as high priorities.

The recommendations in this guidebook draw attention to useful concepts that will help you and your mentors engage in productive and timely communication. This guidebook also addresses biases, assumptions, and perceptions that hinder such communication and offers ways that you can eliminate or minimize their negative effects on your relationships with mentors.

No single formula for successful mentoring exists, but we do know that frank and mutual exploration of expectations



Kathy Sauber

and interests should be the focus of your first meetings with potential mentors. While this guide cannot provide the answer to every question or scenario that may arise, it does address the factors that influence students' mentoring needs and suggests effective ways you and your mentors can promote learning and professional development.

The concept of mentoring has gained currency in recent years as a means to improve the productivity and effectiveness of the many individuals engaged in the graduate education enterprise. This increased attention has revealed that many of our day-to-day understandings of mentoring are often limited. Many people assume that good mentoring "just happens" naturally or is only for those who are "lucky enough" to stumble upon the right individuals to guide their intellectual and professional development. Good mentoring, however, is not a matter of luck. It is a matter of awareness, intention, and a genuine desire to succeed. The sections in this guidebook walk you through the concepts, planning, strategies, and tools that facilitate meaningful mentoring relationships.



Tools for excellence

This guidebook is part of a suite of resources The Graduate School has been developing to help graduate students and faculty achieve successful mentoring relationships based on realistic goals, expectations, and understandings:

- A growing compilation of online professional resources for master's and doctoral students, faculty, and staff.
- The Marsha L. Landolt Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award.
- Distinguished Graduate Mentor Statements.
- Graduate School Guidelines for Good Practice in Graduate Education: Part 3 of 3 (Mentoring).
- MyElectronicMentor (in progress), a self-guided, interactive mentoring assistance program designed especially for UW graduate students.

We encourage you and your prospective mentors to explore these resources on our web site by visiting www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring. There you will also find direct links to numerous campus-wide services that help graduate students succeed in our academic community.

How to use this guidebook

Section II, Mentoring in a dynamic learning community, lays a foundation for understanding the nature of mentoring and how it is similar to, and different from, advising. Here you can explore the basic definition and qualities of good mentoring, the benefits of mentoring to you and your mentors, the changing graduate student population, and the various roles and responsibilities you and your mentors have. This section also stresses the importance of seeking multiple mentors.

Section III, Thinking about your mentoring needs, offers practical strategies and concrete recommendations for establishing and maintaining effective relationships with your mentors. It expands your understanding of the personal, demographic, professional, and historical factors that may influence your goals and challenges, both during and beyond the graduate experience.

Section IV, Getting the journey started, helps you begin the initial groundwork of building great relationships with your mentors. Its focus is on

helping you clarify your and your mentors' mutual interests as well as the expectations that you have of each other.

Section V, Mentoring resources, provides sample worksheets to help you and your mentors implement the strategies and recommendations discussed in this guidebook. It also provides a list of further readings to expand your knowledge of mentoring and professional development.

We hope this guide serves all members of our graduate community—graduate students, faculty, graduate program coordinators and assistants, heads of departments, schools and colleges, and our central administration—as a useful starting point for enriching mentoring as part of the graduate student experience and for ensuring vitality in graduate education at the University of Washington.



*Courtesy of Henry Chapin Simpson
Center for the Humanities*

SECTION II

Mentoring in a dynamic learning community

This section introduces you to definitions of mentoring, the benefits of mentoring relationships for students and mentors, and the varied roles mentors play in graduate students' lives.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a relationship. At the same time, it is a journey mentors and mentees embark on together. Throughout this journey, two or more individuals help each other arrive at a destination called professional excellence. Naturally, the journey can be challenging, with occasional muddy trails and blind spots, but with many panoramic lookouts and high points. Good mentoring is simply “the best way to get there.”

In graduate school, mentoring relationships are close, individualized relationships that develop over time between a graduate student and one or more faculty members, or

with other professionals who have a strong interest in the student's educational and career goals. It includes not only academic guidance, but also prolonged nurturing of the student's personal, scholarly, and professional development.

The Council of Graduate Schools, a national policy organization dedicated to the improvement and advancement of graduate education, defines mentors as:

advisors, who have career experience and share their knowledge

supporters, who give emotional and moral encouragement

tutors, who provide specific feedback on performance

masters, who serve as employers to graduate student “apprentices”

sponsors, who are sources of information and opportunities

models of identity, who serve as academic role models

—Zelditch, 1990, p. 11

In general, although some mentoring and advising activities are similar, not all mentors are advisors and not all advisors are mentors. (By advisors we mean those individuals who serve as thesis or dissertation supervisors.) For our purposes here, it is useful to distinguish the key qualities of advising from those of mentoring in the following way:

Advising focuses on the activities, requirements, and attainment of satisfactory progress through the steps needed to achieve a graduate degree.

Mentoring focuses on the human relationships, commitments, and resources that help graduate students find success and fulfillment in their academic and professional pursuits.



This guidebook focuses primarily on mentoring, although many of the recommendations also extend to advising. Think of mentoring as the consistent and developmental evolution of wisdom, technical knowledge, assistance, support, empathy, and respect to graduate students through, and often beyond, their graduate career. In other words, mentoring is a constellation of activities—educational, interpersonal and professional—that mean more than advising students on how to meet degree requirements, as critical as that is. Mentoring helps students understand how their ambitions fit into graduate education, department life, and postgraduate career choices. As you progress through your own graduate program, you will find that rarely is one individual able to meet all your mentoring needs. As discussed later, you will obtain more effective guidance by cultivating multiple mentors.

An effective mentoring relationship passes through *developmental phases* (see Worksheet 1, Phases of graduate student professional development, p. 43). Early on, a mentor recognizes a student's unique qualities and believes the student deserves special coaching. In turn, this recognition inspires the student, who seeks to benefit from the mentor's support, skills, and wisdom. Later, both parties explore and deepen their working relationship, perhaps collaborating on projects in which the student develops into a junior colleague. After a while, the mentee may grow in ways that require some separation from the mentor, to test his or her own ideas. This distancing is a sign that the mentoring relationship is maturing and providing the mentee with the skills needed to function independently. Finally, both mentee and mentor may redefine their relationship as one of equals, characterized over time by informal contact and mutual assistance, thus becoming true professional colleagues.

Why is mentoring hard to find?

Successful members of any profession need to balance the multiple demands placed on them. Mentoring is one of many responsibilities faculty members juggle on any given day: teaching undergraduate and graduate courses; advising undergraduate and graduate students; serving on dissertation committees; researching or working on creative projects; writing grant proposals, books, and articles; reviewing the work of their students and colleagues; serving on departmental and university committees; performing

service or outreach; and fulfilling duties for professional organizations. Junior faculty members face the additional pressure of preparing for tenure review, which means they have to be engaged in an active research agenda. As faculty members become more experienced, their national and international prominence increases and so do requests for their time and energies. For these reasons, graduate students and mentors need to ensure that time is reserved for mentoring and that the time is well invested for both parties. The vast majority of faculty members find that mentoring graduate students is one of the most rewarding of all their professional responsibilities. That is because mentoring is not a task, *per se*, but a renewable source of intellectual, professional, and personal fulfillment, and a gratifying means by which mentors can pass on the rich lessons they have learned throughout their careers.

Benefits of mentoring

Despite articulate statements of purpose in their graduate school applications, most graduate students enter their programs with little understanding of the complex landscape of higher education, or of how different philosophies in degree programs drive expectations for academic excellence and career pathways.

Early in graduate school, you may find that advanced study differs vastly from your undergraduate experience. As an undergraduate, your objective was *to obtain knowledge*, while in graduate school your objective is *to contribute knowledge to a field of study* and begin to function as a member of a profession. Even though you may be passionate about learning or problem solving in a particular subject, your ultimate goal for pursuing an advanced degree may still be evolving. This is by no means a problem but rather an opportunity for your mentor(s) to assist you with that professional evolution.

There is no doubt about it: quality mentoring greatly enhances your chances for success. Studies indicate that graduate students who receive effective mentoring demonstrate greater:

- productivity in research activity, conference presentations, pre-doctoral publications, instructional development, and grant writing.
- academic success in persisting in graduate school, achieving shorter time to degree, and performing better in academic coursework.

- professional success with greater chances of securing a tenure-track position if seeking employment in academe, or greater career advancement potential if seeking leadership positions in administration or in sectors outside the university.

Mentoring enables graduate students to:

- acquire a body of knowledge and skills.
- develop techniques for collaborating and networking.
- gain perspective on how a discipline operates academically, socially, and politically.
- acquire a sense of scholarly citizenship by grasping their role in a larger educational enterprise.
- deal more confidently with the challenges of intellectual work.

Mentoring enables faculty members to:

- engage the curiosities and energies of fresh minds.
- keep abreast of new research questions, knowledge, paradigms, and techniques.
- cultivate collaborators for current or future projects.
- identify and train graduate assistants whose work is critical to the completion of a research project or successful course offering.
- prepare the next generation of intellectual leaders in the disciplines and in society.
- enjoy the personal and professional satisfaction inherent in mentoring relationships.

Who is coming to graduate school?

The graduate student population has changed profoundly in the last 20 years, and will continue to do so in the 21st Century. Changes are evident in overall student demographics as well as in new market demands for graduate training. While such changes vary from region to region and among institutional types, there are several reasons why the graduate community should not assume that the typical graduate student is a full-time, white male from a middle-class background. In addition, mentors and mentees should not assume that every PhD graduate has prospects for immediate employment in a research institution upon degree completion.*

First, the average age of graduate students is on the rise. The National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey data



Mary Levin

for 2000 shows that the average graduate student is 33 years old and 20% of all graduate students are over the age of 40. Thus, many of your peers already have family responsibilities, marriage or life partners and dependents, and prior work experience. In addition, close to 57% of all graduate students maintain some form of employment outside of their studies.

Second, the racial and gender diversity of the graduate student population is also increasing, due to shifting US demographics and to government and privately funded programs aimed at widening access to higher education. If national census projections hold, in the next 15 years Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans may constitute nearly 40% of the national population between the ages of 25 and 39—the age group from which graduate education draws most of its applicants. According to the most recent *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report*, individuals from these ethnic groups, and Native Americans, earned over 4,730, or 19%, of the 25,450 doctoral degrees awarded to US citizens in 2002. What this means is that, although still a relatively low number of the *total* PhD earners that year (39,955, including non-US citizens), the proportion of minority PhD earners has increased 70% since 1991. Also, in 2000, 79,847

* The data sources mentioned in this section, and other sources on issues and trends in graduate education, are listed in Section V.



out of 497,000 total master's degrees were awarded to US minority students, a proportional increase of 88% since 1991 (NPSAS, 2000).

Third, women now pursue advanced study in record numbers, constituting approximately 60% and 51% of US citizens who earn master's degrees and PhDs, respectively. However, gender representation by field of study varies considerably. The physical sciences and engineering struggle with this problem more than disciplines in the arts, humanities, and sciences or the professional fields. Experts predict further increases of women and minorities pursuing advanced study during the next decade.

These changes in the graduate student population are affecting your and your peers' needs for mentoring and, along with other factors, are driving greater variety in career goals. For instance, although it is true that many doctoral students pursue advanced study to become professors, an increasing number are seeking other professional opportunities. In the US, the transition from an industrially based economy to a knowledge-based one has generated new demands for knowledge workers. Many graduate students seek high-level analytical tools and intellectual development to market themselves as future leaders in a wide range of "knowledge economy" sectors. In addition, downturns in the availability of tenure-track positions in academe are leading some students—including many who originally intended to become professors—to shift their job search to arenas outside of academe.

Such developments bolster the case for re-examining the structures of graduate education and students' needs for mentoring. In this context of change, the off-relied on separation of students into "traditional" vs. "nontraditional" categories is becoming specious. In all likelihood, you do not see yourself fitting squarely into either category. Because there is no single recipe for good mentoring, your best approach is to engage in ongoing, reflective assessment of your needs, and to learn strategies to interact with your mentors effectively. Sections III, IV and V in this guidebook help you do that.

Building a mentoring team

Rather than trying to find a single mentor, think of your task as building a mentoring "team." Carefully selecting

several mentors increases the likelihood that you will obtain the different experiences and support you desire. The team approach is a helpful safety net should one of your professors or mentors leave the university or if irreconcilable issues develop between you and a faculty member. Creativity in selection is also beneficial. Although this guide focuses primarily on faculty members as mentors, expand your professional network early by considering as potential mentors your peers; advanced graduate students; departmental staff; retired faculty; faculty from other departments, colleges, or universities; and professionals outside the academy. The team approach you take will likely be an informal one. That is, the mentors you select may or may not see themselves as part of a formal team. Indeed, if you have drawn individuals from varied fields or professional sectors, your mentors might not even know each other, at least not initially. It is up to you to decide if there are advantages to introducing your mentors to each other by proposing collaborative work.

Your mentor's varied roles

Mentors play many roles in your life. "Guide," "counselor," "advisor," "consultant," "tutor," "teacher," and "guru" are just some of the functions a mentor might perform to help you succeed. A mentor's particular combination of professional expertise, personal style, and approach to facilitating learning influences the kind of mentoring you will receive. He or she will wear several "hats" over the course of your professional development, and might be comfortable wearing many hats at once, or only one or two at a time. Whatever the case, it is important for you to realize that effective mentoring, like wisdom itself, is multidimensional. Of all the different mentoring roles that exist, you should become familiar with three core roles mentors play to assist your educational, professional, and personal growth.

Disciplinary guide

As noted earlier, sometimes a faculty member will be both a thesis/dissertation advisor and mentor; in other cases, the student benefits more by having different people carry out each role. Either way, the role of a *disciplinary guide* is to help you become a contributing member of your discipline. This

guidance goes well beyond helping you complete the requirements of your academic program, as important as that is. This guidance is deeper and involves helping you to understand how your discipline has evolved as a knowledge enterprise; recognize novel questions; identify innovative ways of engaging undergraduate students through your teaching and collaborative research projects; and see your discipline, its questions and methodologies, in relation other fields. Another important role of the disciplinary guide is to help you grasp the impact of your discipline on the world outside of academe, and to assist you in pursuing the impact you desire to have with your graduate degree.

Skills development consultant

While graduate study, especially at the doctoral level, is about learning how to generate knowledge, its pressures for specialization can make you temporarily lose sight of the array of skills you need to succeed both during and after graduate school. This can result, in part, because of the relative intensity and isolation of research. As a skills consultant, your mentor helps you develop a variety of intellectual and professional skills, including but going beyond those related to research. Some of these are:

- *Oral and written communication skills.* These include clearly expressing the results of your work; translating field-specific knowledge for application in varied contexts, such as teaching or interacting with the public; and persuading others, such as funders, policy makers, organizations, and conference audiences, of the value of your work.
- *Team-oriented skills.* Some of the most innovative learning occurs in teams that problem solve collaboratively. Increasingly, complex problems require interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary solutions. Your mentor can help you develop collaborative, problem-solving skills by organizing group exercises and projects.
- *Leadership skills.* As a graduate student, you are a prime candidate to become an intellectual leader in any number of settings. Mentors help you expand your potential by inviting you to assume leadership roles throughout graduate study—for example, in seminars, graduate student government, disciplinary societies, outreach to the community, and on departmental or university committees. These activities will help you

build people skills—listening to others, shaping ideas, and expressing priorities—which are indispensable for your advancement in any career.

Career consultant

In recent years, the mentor's role as your career consultant has acquired greater importance, especially for doctoral students. In some disciplines, the number of PhDs produced annually is far greater than the number of available tenure-track positions. As a result, many doctoral graduates are choosing challenging positions in a greater variety of educational settings and in different sectors of the economy.

As a career consultant, your mentor should help you develop an evolutionary view of your career, which requires planning, flexibility, and adaptation to change. Informed of the job market realities, an effective mentor finds ways to help you link aspects of your graduate work with other potential mentors beyond your department—alumni or other professionals in colleges, universities, schools, community groups, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, government, and industrial laboratories. Mentors outside your department can help you explore a multitude of career choices, so that you learn how your graduate education translates into various kinds of professional opportunities. With a modest investment of time, you and your mentors can stay abreast of postgraduate employment trends both inside and outside of the academy. Consult the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the US National Bureau of Labor Statistics or visit The Graduate School's web pages, www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring.

It would be impossible for one mentor to fulfill all of these functions equally well. Part of your mentor's responsibility is to help you to cultivate *multiple* mentoring relationships inside and outside the university. Multiple sources of expertise improve your ability to marshal the many resources you need to meet challenges during and after your graduate education. To make the most of mentoring, have thoughtful discussions with your mentors about the assistance you need to navigate your graduate experience optimally. The rest of this guidebook will help you reflect on and prioritize your needs.



SECTION III

Thinking about your mentoring needs

Good mentoring rarely just “happens.” It develops from reflection, planning, and an understanding of your needs as well as your mentor’s unique qualities. It also develops out of knowledge of the demographic, cultural, economic, and other factors that influence the kinds of mentoring graduate students need.

This section helps you recognize your mentoring needs, as well as what good mentoring looks like. It also helps you understand how your mentoring needs may be similar to and different from those of your peers. The final segment synthesizes advice for establishing and maintaining your mentoring relationships on solid footing.



1. Develop a vision of the mentoring you need

Enhanced self-knowledge helps you articulate your goals and choose the people whose personality, expertise, and style are best suited to your needs. To develop a vision of the kinds of mentors you should seek, reflect on others who served as mentors earlier in your life and answer candidly the following questions:

- What kind of mentoring have I received in the past? Was it work-related? School-related? Both?
- Would I describe my past mentoring relationships as collegial ones (as equals or near equals) or apprenticeship ones? What does this difference mean to me now? Which do I prefer at this stage of my professional development?
- What did I find most useful about the mentoring I received? What did I find least useful?
- How does the mentoring I received compare to the kind that others received who were different from me in terms of race, gender, age, ability, or family background?
- How well would the mentoring I received in the past apply to my graduate school circumstances now? How might I need to alter my expectations?
- What kind of mentoring did I not receive earlier that would be particularly helpful to me now?

By answering these questions, you can begin to define the kinds of mentoring you need. Ultimately, your vision will clarify the expectations you have for mentoring (see Worksheet 2, Mentee expectations, p. 44).

2. Recognize the basics of good mentoring

You know you want good mentoring, but how do you know when you have found it? There are several ways to recognize good mentoring, and certain aspects will be to your advantage no matter what your educational and career aspirations. For example, faculty members who have received awards for outstanding mentoring, such as the Marsha L. Landolt Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award, are excellent models (www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring). Advanced graduate students and alumni also are great sources of insight into what will help you function optimally as a learner and professional. One doctoral student we

interviewed described excellent mentoring this way:

“The best mentor I ever had used to have this motto: ‘My primary responsibility is helping my students build their futures.’”

In all, *a good mentor can be defined as a person who:*

Engages students in ongoing conversations

- Welcomes students to talk often, and invites them to discussions during office hours, in the lab, department lounges, or hallways.
- Is in touch with students at least once a quarter and is sensitive to whether remoteness is a cultural way of showing respect or is due to social isolation.
- Invites students, if he or she is able, to coffee or outings away from the office so that informal and rich discussions can occur without office distractions.

“The message my mentor sent to me was that I had value enough for her to spend time with me.”

“The most important things my mentor did were spending time talking with me and taking an interest in things interesting to me.”

Demystifies graduate school for students

- Skillfully helps students interpret program guidelines and The Graduate School’s policies and procedures.
- Adjusts academic discussions to a level that students, especially new ones, can understand (e.g., initially students might not know what questions to ask or what certain terminology means).
- Clarifies unwritten or vague aspects of program expectations for coursework, exams, research, and teaching.
- Helps students understand the finer points of forming a committee and how to approach a thesis or dissertation.
- Helps students understand the criteria that are used to judge the quality of their work at different stages of graduate study.
- Alerts students ahead of time to possible pitfalls, especially those that may affect their funding status.

“It has been extremely helpful to me to have a mentor who recognized that academic procedures and protocol—everything from how to select classes to how to assemble a panel for a conference—are not familiar territory for a lot of people.”

“My mentor has been willing to answer the most basic questions without making me feel foolish for asking them.”

Provides constructive and supportive feedback

- Provides students with frank, helpful, and timely feedback on their work, and knows that delays in responding create insecurities that can hinder student progress.
- Tempers criticisms with praise when it is deserved, and holds students to high standards to help them improve.
- Does not assume a lack of commitment if a student falls behind in work, but instead tries to assess, with the student, what is going on and offers ways to help.
- Knows the benefits of early intervention and addresses quickly any question about a student’s ability to complete his or her degree.

“I wrote several drafts before he felt I had begun to make a cogent argument, and as painful as that was, I would not have written the dissertation that I did without receiving strong, if just, criticism, but in a compassionate way.”

“Honest advice, given as gently as possible, is something all of us graduate students need.”

Provides encouragement

- Encourages students to come forward with their ideas at all stages of development.
- Motivates students to try new techniques and to expand their skills.
- Reminds students that mistakes lead to better learning.
- Shares less-than-successful professional experiences and

the lessons learned from them.

- Knows that many students experience anxiety about their place in graduate school (e.g., the imposter syndrome), and helps them understand that even seasoned professionals experience this kind of anxiety.
- Teaches students how to break down potentially overwhelming projects into smaller, more manageable tasks.

“Mentorship is far more than a one-time conversation about your career plans or a visit to a professor’s home. It is the mentor’s continuous engagement in a student’s professional growth and the ongoing support and encouragement of a student’s academic endeavors.”

“My professors encouraged me both to publish my work and to participate in conferences. Without their encouragement, I might not have made the effort to accomplish these things.”

Fosters networks and multiple mentors

- Helps students locate assistance from multiple sources of expertise, and sees UW faculty, graduate students, alumni, department staff, retired faculty, and faculty from other universities as rich resources.
- Introduces students to faculty and other graduate students in the department and at conferences who have complementary interests.
- Helps students connect their work with that of experts in the community (e.g., graduate alumni) who can provide helpful career perspectives.
- Builds a community of scholars by coordinating informal discussion and interest groups or occasional social events among students who share interests.

“My co-chair referred me to a faculty member doing related research at UNC at a time when my research was floundering and I really needed additional support. I could not have completed my dissertation were it not for this recommendation.”

“My advisors really made a team of their graduate students, having regular meetings and informal parties and get-togethers, working on projects together, and forming interest groups. That comradeship was essential to my academic growth and my sense of having a community.”

Looks out for students’ interests

- Conveys through a variety of means that he or she wants students to succeed.
- Creates opportunities for students to demonstrate their competencies by encouraging them to present at meetings, conferences, and in university forums.



Kathy Sauber

- Nominates students for high-visibility fellowships, projects, teaching, and internship opportunities.
- Promotes students' research and teaching projects inside and outside the department.
- Is a clear advocate for all graduate students.

"My mentor allowed my tasks to grow along with me, offering appropriate opportunities and challenges at each stage of my education."

"I knew that I was not just an ordinary student when she invited me to co-teach with her. We worked together as colleagues, not as teacher and student."

Treats students with respect

- Minimizes interruptions and distractions during meetings with students, or on occasion meets away from the lab or office to offer more personalized time.
- Tells students what he or she learns from them, to help them see themselves as potential colleagues.
- Acknowledges the prior skills and personal and professional experiences students bring to graduate school.

"She treated me and her other students with respect—respect for our opinions, our independence, and our visions of what we wanted to get from graduate school."

"It sounds silly but the best thing my mentor did for me was to actually sit down and listen to what I had to say. When graduate students are allowed to feel that what they have to say is actually worthwhile, it makes interactions more rewarding."

Provides a personal touch

- Is open, approachable, and demonstrates caring, even when students need to discuss nonacademic issues.
- Does not assume that all students experience the challenges of graduate school in the same way, and assists them in finding creative solutions to the particular issues and circumstances they encounter.
- Keeps abreast of the mentoring and professional development resources at The Graduate School and elsewhere designed to help students succeed.

"Having someone supportive when things go wrong is the difference, in my mind, between an adequate mentor and a great one."

"A few of my professors were always willing and eager to talk with me about my career interests, professional pursuits, and issues such as juggling career and family. This may not sound like much, but it truly makes a difference."

3. Understand that all graduate students share some common concerns

Need for role models

All graduate students benefit from role models they can admire—professionals whose lives they may want to emulate. Quite often, people identify role models based on shared outlook and connections to similar experiences. Although the composition of faculty at UW is becoming more diverse, students from historically underrepresented or marginalized groups, and women in some disciplines, can face greater challenges finding faculty role models who have had experiences similar to their own. Some students convey that they hope to find "someone who looks like me;" "someone who immediately understands my experiences and perspectives;" "someone whose very presence lets me know I, too, can make it in the academy." At the same time, shared background and experiences are important, but do not "guarantee" a good mentoring relationship. What is key are shared interests and interpersonal compatibility. All students also benefit from reaching out to potential mentors who are different from them in race, gender, or other characteristics.

- Expand your knowledge of people within your department, across UW, or at other universities who may help you obtain the kinds of experiences and resources you need.
- Ask other students with whom you have common experiences or interests to identify those faculty in the department they hold as role models, and why.
- Hold occasional discussions with other students and faculty, either informally or through your graduate student association, on how well your department's educational and work climate welcomes all contributions.
- Know that you can receive very good guidance from mentors who are of a different gender, race, or culture from you. What is important is to focus on what you need in order to learn and make progress.

Questioning the canons

To do adventuresome academic work, you may need to question the implicit assumptions and ways of knowing in your discipline. Indeed, it is because of this kind of questioning that disciplines evolve. In some instances you might find that your perspectives or intellectual interests do not fit neatly into the current academic canons. For instance, interest in interdisciplinary questions and the social

applications of knowledge is growing, but the structure of some programs makes it difficult for students to pursue these questions in their research and teaching. Studies suggest that underrepresented students experience this disjuncture more keenly; however, majority students face the chasm as well. You should seek productive environments that value new ways of thinking as you explore, and possibly challenge, different models of inquiry. To generate receptivity to your work:

- Be open to hearing about other students' and faculty members' experiences and perspectives.
- Convey your interests by sharing an essay or scholarly article that exemplifies the kind of work you would like to do.
- Be prepared to formulate and present strong, compelling arguments for the importance of a new or nontraditional line of inquiry. Seek feedback on your arguments, identify their weakness, and work to strengthen them.
- Explore the many interdisciplinary programs and research

centers across the University where you can find communities of scholars whose research interests cross traditional boundaries:

www.washington.edu/home/departments/labs-centers.html and http://www.grad.washington.edu/Acad/interdisc_network/InterdisNetwork.htm

- Identify content that is traditionally excluded or marginalized in your discipline and help develop strategies to address that content via teaching and research.

Fear of being categorized as a “single-issue” scholar

Some students, whether minority or majority, are concerned that if they select questions of gender, race, sexual orientation, or the content of marginalized cultures as their thesis/dissertation topic, faculty will mistakenly assume they are interested in pursuing only these topics for their entire career or question the relevance of their work. If you are passionate



Mary Levin

about these questions in your research and teaching, do not feel apologetic. Instead, bolster the scholarly nature of your agenda:

- Articulate clearly and compellingly to potential mentors the value of your research interests and strive to make connections to others' work, as well as to other major topics and questions in the discipline.
- Discuss with your peers and faculty members the ways that race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and other characteristics expand questions asked in your discipline and the approaches used for answering them.
- Seek assistance from faculty and advanced graduate students on how to frame the issues that drive your intellectual curiosity.
- Practice job talks and interview responses that demonstrate the depth and breadth of your research interests.
- Understand that some people who are uninformed about your topic may perceive it as narrow or limited, so practice effective ways to address questions from skeptics.

Feelings of isolation

At times, you might find that graduate study can be an isolating endeavor. Isolation, whether from other students or from one's home community, is a difficulty that all graduate students face at one time or another. If it goes unchecked, isolation can lead students to loneliness and self-doubt. In more severe cases, it can lead to depression or dropping out. Depending on the discipline, students from historically underrepresented groups or women might feel more isolated than other students, especially if the composition of students, faculty, and content in the department is highly homogenous. To prevent isolation, you should:

- Ask advanced graduate students and faculty to introduce you to peers and potential mentors with complementary interests, whether academic or personal.
- Attend as many departmental functions as you are able. Offer to organize functions or form groups (e.g., interest, study, or writing groups) to become known as a contributor to department life.
- Invite mentors to join these activities when appropriate.
- Be aware of students who seem to find it particularly difficult to take active roles in academic or social settings and find ways to include them. Take the initiative to talk with them by asking about their research interests, hobbies, and activities outside of school.

- Get involved with the wealth of organizations within or outside the University that can increase your sense of community, such as cultural and religious groups, reading groups, and professional associations. See The Graduate School's resources for graduate students at www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring.

Burden of being a spokesperson

It is unfair to assume that any one student represents the experiences or beliefs of an entire group. When certain issues arise in classroom or theoretical discussions, especially those relating to race, class, or gender, the pressures of being a spokesperson arise. These pressures tend to burden underrepresented students more than others. Consider the pressures put on a woman in an engineering seminar if asked, "How would a woman approach this design problem?" or on the man in a feminist theory class if asked to provide "the male perspective." You can help to alleviate this burden:

- Avoid asking your peers and professors to speak as spokespersons for a group to which you think they belong. Simply ask for their perspective.
- Avoid assuming that the "white male" experience is the norm. Seek to understand how race, gender, and other characteristics are factors that can influence people's perspectives on intellectual problems or issues.
- Emphasize, when called upon, that you speak from your own perspective. If you voluntarily take on a spokesperson role for an issue you feel strongly about, explain that there may be others present who do not feel the same way.
- When you hear other students voluntarily taking on spokesperson roles, acknowledge what you have learned from their contributions to the discussion.

Balancing work and lifestyle

Students from all disciplines observe that professors devote large parts of their lives to their work in order to be successful in the academy. In turn, students who feel that faculty expect them to spend every waking minute on their work can become overwhelmed. This feeling causes concern for those seeking to balance success in their graduate career with other interests and responsibilities. To help keep the pressures of graduate school in check, you should:

- Ask faculty whom you admire as role models about their interests and hobbies, and how they balance their

professional and personal lives. Request their assistance to help you balance tasks among your obligations.

- Ask your peers how they balance family or personal problems and what they do when they encounter difficulties.
- Attend UW workshops and panels on work/life balance.
- Demonstrate through your behavior and work that you are focused and productive when in your office or lab.

4. Understand the specific factors that may influence your mentoring needs

The Graduate School strongly believes that a graduate student population diverse in its origins, beliefs, lifestyles, experiences, and intellectual perspectives greatly enriches the scholarly, cultural, and social activities of the University. In particular, we are committed to enhancing the presence and mentoring of students from historically underrepresented or marginalized populations with the knowledge that these improvements will make the University a more democratic community and benefit the entire graduate student body.

The purpose of this subsection is to increase your awareness of the factors that shape how you face the challenges of pursuing an advanced degree. No two students experience advanced study in exactly the same way. Even students with similar backgrounds and personal characteristics can experience very different challenges. Conversely, some graduate students of very different backgrounds share similar concerns, such as presenting or publishing papers and job searching.

Thus, we discuss the *factors* that influence (but do not determine) the kinds of mentoring you might seek, rather than assume you are a member of any one discrete group. Your gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, disabilities, age, prior work experience, career aspirations, family responsibilities, and socioeconomic background are factors that influence the mentoring you need. To be empowered, you need to reflect on how these factors shape your particular circumstances as a graduate student. Steps you can take to improve your graduate experience, and that of your peers, follow. The suggestions are general enough to apply no matter what your discipline, although we attempt to draw disciplinary distinctions where pertinent.



Yangziang Zhang

gender

Women are as ambitious as men in pursuing success in graduate school. Women and men demonstrate their ambition in their day-to-day persistence, interest, and intellectual contributions, which are changing the face of graduate education. Even though the graduate community is more enlightened than ever about the benefits of having both genders well represented in teaching and research, it is still working to transform the traditionally male-centered structure of advanced study. When sexism and other unconscious biases surface, women graduate students may experience the negative effects more pointedly, although men also report negative effects. For this reason, while students share many concerns about academic interactions, women express some concerns that differ from those of men.

Assertiveness. The unspoken code in graduate education is that, aside from being intelligent, students who are assertive in classroom discussions or conference presentations attain success. However, students from marginalized groups often demonstrate a different approach to academic interactions. Many women and racialized minorities, and even international students, express concern about difficulties they experience making their contributions heard. For example, in classroom discussions, women have noted that to contribute an idea, often they have to interrupt another student. They tend to interpret interruptions as rude and disrespectful, yet fear that professors and peers will wrongly attribute lack of participation to having no ideas at all. Many women report that when they do assert their ideas strongly, they feel subjected to criticism in ways that their male counterparts are not—even though the assertive behavior is the same.

Competitiveness. Research has shown that an overly competitive and critical atmosphere in graduate programs can alienate minority students, and that women, in particular, feel such alienation more intensely. There is no doubt that women are capable of providing insightful criticisms of others' work when warranted. But some interpret critical behavior as an attempt to appear intellectually superior, and thus as a form of insecurity. Women, and indeed a growing number of students in general, lament that the system does not reward one for praising the contributions of other scholars. More opportunities for collaborative work would help balance the competitive culture of graduate school.



Mary Levin

Importance of positive feedback. Many students desire to receive frequent constructive feedback on their work. Although lack of feedback is problematic in its own right, the lack of constructive feedback can lead students to doubt their capabilities. Women tend to attribute negative experiences they have in graduate school to personal deficiencies, whereas men tend to attribute them to insufficient guidance or problems within the department. Regarding their mentor's personal style, men are more content than women with mentors who may be impersonal but offer solid instrumental advice. Women may interpret a professor's distance as an indication that he or she has a negative opinion of them. Studies suggest that these nuances hold true for racialized minorities as well.

Recommendations

- Discuss with your mentor or professor what kinds of interactions make your participation in seminars or collaborative projects difficult. Suggest concrete ways that he or she can help you participate more, such as by directing questions to you more explicitly.
- Experiment with ways of influencing class discussion so that a few students don't monopolize the conversation. Encourage those who have participated once in a

discussion to wait until others have had a chance to talk before contributing again.

- Point out, if a professor or peer interrupts you, that you would like to complete your thought or contribution.
- Avoid addressing your peers or professors as spokespersons for their gender. Invite your peers to offer their perspective, and, if appropriate, ask how gender may or may not influence them.
- Try to influence the tenor of group discussions that become excessively critical by asking, “What contributions does this particular article/person/report make?”
- Participate in discussions and projects in multiple ways if you find you contribute better outside of large groups (e.g., small group or pair work, e-mail discussions or discussion boards, journal comments, informal discussions, and office hours).
- Be aware of how peer or discussion groups form and try to include all who want to participate.
- Ask your mentors and/or professors to provide clearer feedback on your work, if you find their comments vague.
- Convey feedback on your peers’ projects in concrete terms. Saying “this paragraph exposes the research

problem succinctly, but leaves out one important point” is clearer than saying “not bad” or “I don’t have any major problems with it.” Ambiguous feedback can hinder others’ performance.

- Remember that you have recourse to departmental resources and Graduate School representatives if you feel you are being treated in ways that negatively impact your graduate work.

Resources

www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring

Center for Instructional Development and Research offers consulting and workshops on how to make learning environments and mentoring more inclusive.
206-543-6588

Center for Workforce Development provides graduate student mentoring and resources geared towards women pursuing careers in the sciences and engineering.
206-543-4810

Center for Curriculum Transformation assists individual faculty and academic departments with curriculum change related to gender and cultural pluralism.
206-685-8276



Mary Levin

sexual orientation

SEXUAL ORIENTATION & GENDER IDENTITY

Many gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgender (GBLT) students are members of our community. Unlike other underrepresented students, many GBLT students are “invisible” because sexual orientation and gender identity are not always determined through physical expression, or because some students choose not to be “out.” Some students do talk about their sexual orientation or gender identity openly. Your mentors have the responsibility, regardless of their own sexual orientations, to maximize your learning. Whether you are a GBLT student or not, you can help your academic community eliminate, or be more aware, of the following:

Homophobia. Even within a fairly accepting climate such as ours, GBLT students can still encounter homophobia around campus. Behaviors can range from the blatantly offensive, such as verbal or physical threats or attacks, to the less obvious, such as the casual remark “that is so gay” in classroom or hallway conversations.

Heterosexism. Many graduate students and professors discuss topics with the unconscious assumption that everyone is heterosexual. Even some straight faculty and students who have a heightened awareness of gender issues might still talk about the world from a heterosexual perspective. GBLT students experience such scholarly discussions as biased, and the absence of GBLT perspectives can make them feel isolated from opportunities for intellectual engagement.

Genderism. Similarly, many people on campus assume that all individuals identify fully with the gender in which they were raised. Genderism is the assumption that male and female assignments of gender are fixed at birth. This is not the case for every person. Gender biases in classrooms and departments (e.g., saying “it” to refer to individuals of ambiguous gender; gendered bathrooms) are oppressive to individuals who feel the need to alter their gender identity.

Disclosing. Being “out” as a GBLT student is not a one-time event, but a decision experienced in each new social situation. Each new interaction comes with the burden of having to assess the personal, social, and political ramifications of disclosure. Heterosexual students do not bear this weight when interacting with peers and professors.

Recommendations

- Assume that GBLT students or faculty are present in every classroom, lab, seminar, or campus meeting, and that they might not feel safe being “out.”
- Assess your department’s environment and your level of comfort with being “out” if you are a GBLT student. Find out who your allies are and utilize them.
- Ask peers and mentors whom you know are “out” to suggest how department members can create an environment that is conducive to everyone’s learning and professional needs.
- Establish standards for inclusive language and communication collaboratively with your peers and professors.
- Avoid homophobic, gendered, sexist, or other discriminatory comments. For example, when talking about families, avoid talking as if every family were composed of a husband, wife, and children. Use words like “spouse and partner” instead of just “spouse” or “husband” or “wife.” These terms go a long way in letting GBLT students, and students who are single, know they are represented in discussions.
- Treat sexual orientation as a multidimensional phenomenon in your relationships with peers and mentors. Understand that homosexuality is only one of several expressions of sexual orientation, and that gender identity may not be fixed for everyone.
- Encourage your department to put GBLT concerns on the agenda for graduate student orientations and training programs for faculty and staff.

Resources

www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring

ASUW Gay, Bisexual, Lesbian, Transgender Commission offers programs regarding issues of sexual orientation. 206-685-GBLC (4252)

Affirming Diversity: Moving from Tolerance to Acceptance and Beyond, a presidential task force report on GBLT issues, suggests ways to improve campus climate, student resources, and policies.

Q Center is a resource for classroom speakers, research, and information on Queer issues. 206-897-1430

BOHGOF is a support network for graduate sexual minorities. bohgofs@u.washington.edu

race and ethnicity

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Race and ethnicity are important factors that shape your academic, social, and professional experiences on campus. Although the racial and ethnic diversity of the UW graduate student population has been increasing over the last 20 years, the campus community as a whole remains relatively homogenous. One reason is that efforts to enhance the pipeline of students at primary and secondary levels preparing for higher education have been well-meaning, but sporadic and limited. Another reason is that disciplinary programs are still learning how to expand their student recruitment and outreach efforts. Thus, ethnic minority graduate students at UW can feel marginalized, not only in the student population but in how research problems and curricula reflect, or fail to reflect, their scholarly influence and experiences. We need more role models of faculty and students who engage in multicultural scholarship, research, and teaching so as to make diversity awareness and support structures in graduate training more explicit.

Role models. When students enter a large and complex research university, they can experience feelings of isolation or become overwhelmed. One of the first things students do is seek out people with whom they can identify in order to temper those feelings. This search can be especially challenging for students of color because the dearth of minority faculty, and of white faculty who resonate with their academic and sociocultural experiences, makes it difficult to find role models in their fields. It is not the case that ethnic minorities only want other ethnic minorities as professors and mentors. Rather, they seek to find affinity with role models who have “paved the way,” who actively work through the dissonances between their home communities and the academic community, and who can help students do the same. Mentors help students see pathways to their own futures more clearly. When one of the few faculty of color leaves UW for another university, minority students can feel the impact—it often means losing a potential supporter of their work.

Stereotyping. Stereotypes still exist on campus and there is a great need to eliminate unexamined assumptions. Stereotypes are particularly burdensome to graduate students of color, not least because many have worked hard to overcome significant barriers to get to graduate school.

A stereotype that they worry about is whether other graduate students and faculty will have low expectations of them. This stereotype makes minority students feel awkward when seeking advice and guidance. Another harmful stereotype is that “all ethnic minorities are alike” or have the same goals for graduate school and thus experience the same challenges. This lumping together of outlooks or abilities creates an environment that compromises collegial interaction and undermines students’ individual needs and talents.

Lack of an explicit support system. At least two kinds of support are necessary for students, and students of color in particular, to succeed. The first is sufficient financial support and the other is environmental support, including mentoring and networking. It is dangerous for departments to assume that students automatically “know” how to navigate the system or pursue support, such as through grant writing, locating assistantships, and establishing networks with potential mentors. Marginalized students may have fewer direct channels to such sources. Students in a number of programs have found ways to form groups to address these issues.

Exclusion from support networks. Underrepresented students on fellowships often are inadvertently overlooked for teaching and research assistantships. As a result, they experience fewer opportunities for collegial, career-building interactions with faculty and peers who may be student instructors or research assistants. They also miss out on how such teaching and research assignments can enhance graduate training and strengthen their curriculum vitae.

Recommendations

- Reflect on how you have been socialized to think about race and ethnicity. Increase your awareness, socially and academically, by attending some of the numerous diversity forums on campus each year, and bring ideas for community building back to your department.
- Understand that graduate students from different racial and ethnic groups confront different issues and challenges in their programs. At the same time, avoid assuming that all students from a given racial or ethnic group have the same perspectives or needs.
- Become aware of how your identity shapes your graduate

experience, and of how graduate education shapes your identity. You may find that your identity is an important springboard to your self-confidence and your involvement in wider communities of experience.

- Eliminate stereotypes in your behavior by explicitly recognizing your peers' unique strengths.
- Inform yourself about scholarly advances that have resulted from the inclusion of multicultural research, knowledge, and perspectives in your discipline. Become aware of the challenges such advances pose to faculty and students pursuing them.
- Reach out to students of color in seminars, discussions, and group assignments. Collaborate on research or teaching projects and look for opportunities to present these projects in departmental forums or disciplinary meetings.
- Request that your department offer workshops on financial support, mentoring, diversity, community building, success strategies, and other matters important to your success. Students can work successfully with department personnel to organize these kinds of events.
- Consult The Graduate School's web pages to check for listings of academic, professional, and community resources you and your peers can use to navigate the graduate student experience.
- Talk with your mentors about ways they can help you achieve a broad range of professional development experiences. If you are a student of color on a fellowship, make it known to faculty and peers that you are interested in guest lecturing or collaborating in different lab groups. You can also request to be considered for future teaching or research assistantships as a substitute for a certain amount of fellowship time.
- Familiarize yourself with minority peers and white faculty inside and outside your department who can help expand your networks.
- Gain exposure by joining student policy, curricular, or cultural groups. Serve and shape the needs of your community by being a student representative at faculty meetings, joining the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, or leading writing, study, or teaching groups.
- Become involved with national networks for under-represented minorities and women students. Identify



Courtesy of the Henry Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities



national conferences for underrepresented groups and share these with your department chair. Consider requesting financial assistance to attend.

Resources

www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring

Center for Instructional Development and Research offers web and print resources on inclusive teaching and assistance with workshops.

206-543-6588

Center for Multicultural Education focuses on research projects, activities, and services designed to improve practice related to equity issues, intergroup relations, and the achievement of students of color.

206-543-3386

Center for Curriculum Transformation helps individual

faculty and departments address cultural pluralism in the academic curriculum.

206-685-8276

Ethnic Cultural Center promotes diversity, cross-cultural exchange, lectures, and learning opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students.

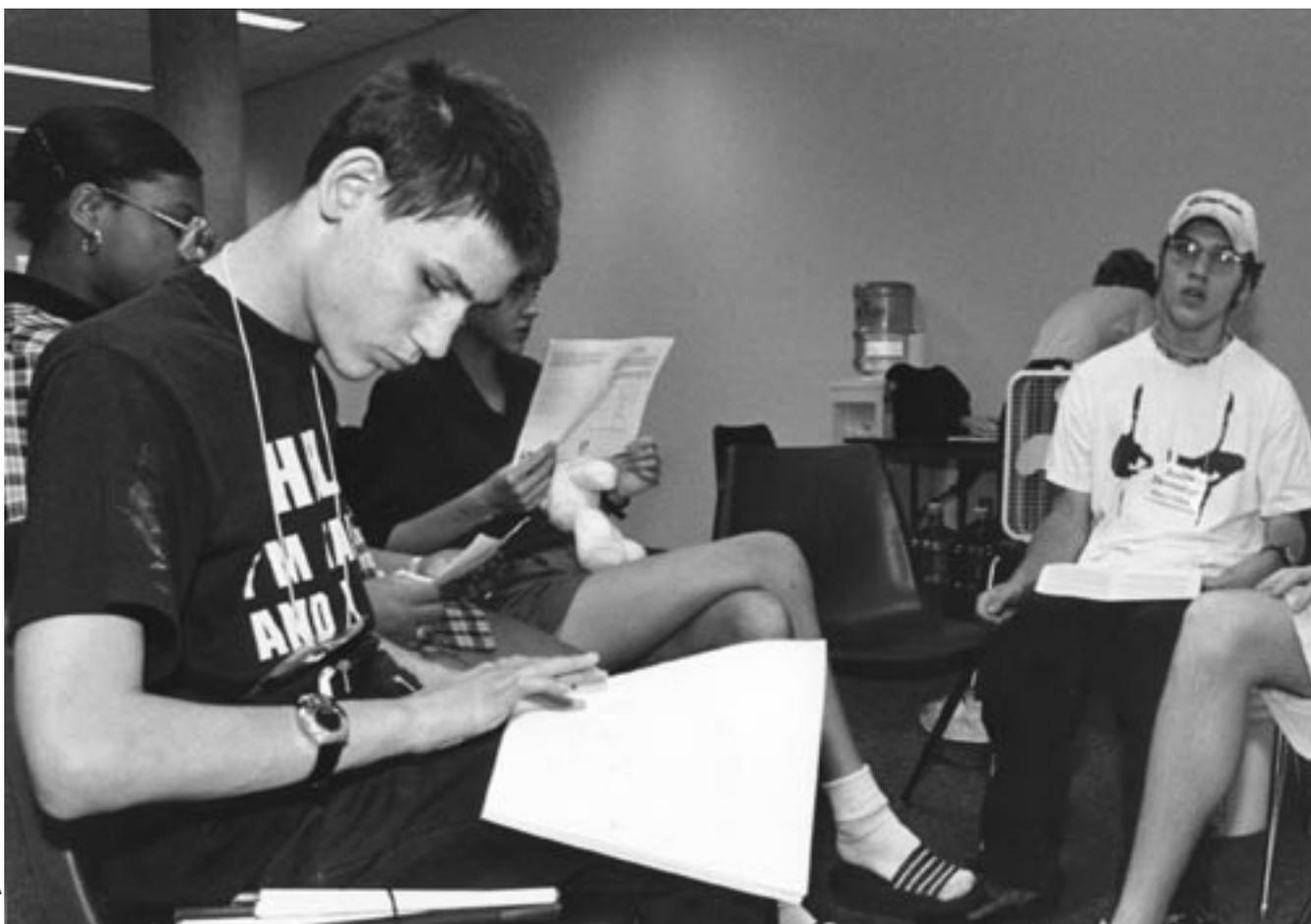
206-543-4635

Graduate Opportunities & Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) provides graduate student outreach and recruitment programs, and supports diversity with numerous resources and opportunities.

206-543-9016

Office of Minority Affairs provides outreach and academic support services to ensure a welcoming climate in which all students can realize their full potential.

206-685-0518



Kathy Stauber

disabilities

Students with disabilities have differing needs and concerns depending on their type of disability. Disabilities vary greatly; some are visible while others are invisible. There are students with physical disabilities, learning disabilities (such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia), chronic disabilities (such as lupus and multiple sclerosis), and psychological disabilities (such as depression and bipolar disorder). Students' needs vary depending on whether they have had a disability since birth or whether it developed later in life.

Given the variety of disabilities that exist, it is important that students work collaboratively with their professors and with Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to ensure that their needs are met. The DRS office is charged with establishing eligibility for disability-related services such as academic adjustments and auxiliary aids for qualified students with disabilities, and can assist students and faculty in determining effective ways to meet disability-related needs in courses or programs. If you or any of your peers has a disability, be aware of the following factors that can influence mentoring needs.

Reluctance to ask for help. Some students with disabilities fear appearing or becoming too dependent if they ask for help. Those whose disabilities are a recent onset or are “invisible” may be unaccustomed to asking for help or may fear being stigmatized as less capable due to the accommodations needed.

Effort exerted just to keep up. For many students with disabilities, meeting basic requirements demands more time and energy than it does for other students. A student with multiple sclerosis, for instance, may only have a certain number of hours in the day for school and studying before fatigue, vision problems, and cognitive deficits flare up. A student who is hard of hearing and uses a real-time captioner (like a court stenographer) may have to review several pages of notes from the captioner in order to create suitable study materials. This process requires additional preparation and study time. Some students find it challenging to participate in certain professional activities as much as they would like to (such as submitting papers for conferences) because they need to devote all their time and energy to meeting the demands of their programs.

Problems that arise from last-minute changes.

Changes in reading assignments can be very difficult for students who are blind, visually impaired, or have a learning disability in reading. At the beginning of the quarter, these students may need to request that readings be converted into an alternate format, such as Braille, audiotape, or electronic text that is accessible for them to read. Conversion often involves a computer screen reader or enlargement with special software. Readings added at a later date require the student to make emergency arrangements to have new materials converted into an accessible format. It may not be feasible to meet reading deadlines if the conversion process cannot occur quickly enough. Classroom relocations may also cause hardships for visually impaired students or students with mobility limitations, such as students in wheelchairs or with conditions that impact walking distance. (Note: People with disabilities prefer not to use language such as “physically challenged.”)

Recommendations

- If you are a student with a disability, inform your professors and contact DRS as soon as possible to determine how your needs can be accommodated to ensure equal access.
- Get a head start on readings by requesting a syllabus in advance from your professors. Ask them to prioritize readings or task assignments if you anticipate difficulties completing them within the assigned time.
- Ask your professors to put an outline on the board for each class or seminar so that students with attention disabilities can follow the learning goals that day. Such an outline will benefit all students.
- Ask your professors how flexible they can be with deadlines. If you need additional time to complete tasks due to the nature of your disability or the accommodations you utilize, discuss this with your professors. Also, alert your professors to the additional steps or time you might need to take to deal with sudden changes in syllabi or research assignments.
- Focus on your and your peers' abilities. For example, if you use a wheelchair for mobility, demonstrate how you are able to use overhead projectors, blackboards, and other instructional tools or laboratory equipment. This is especially useful in job interviews.

Resources

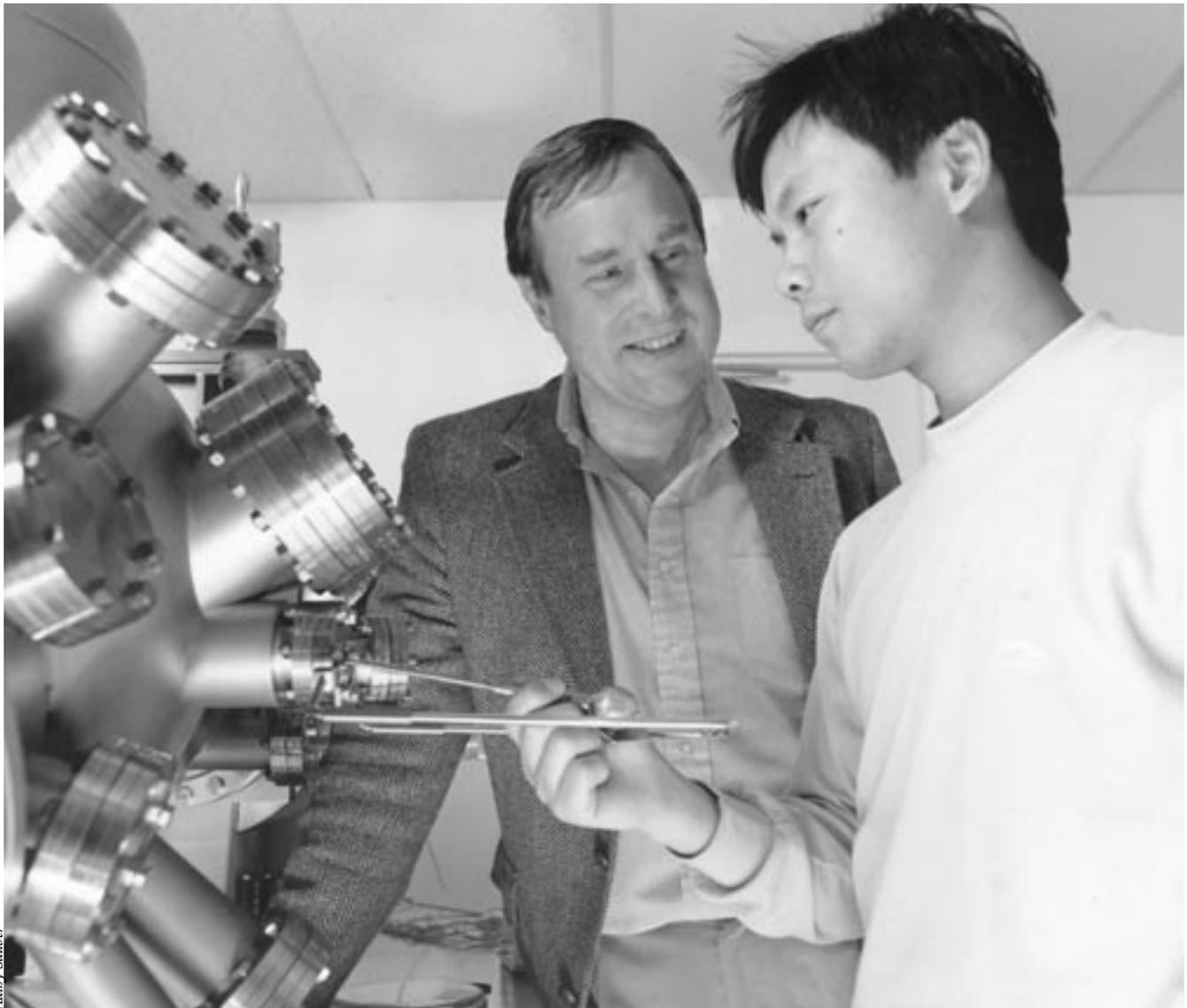
<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring>

Disability Resources for Students (DRS) establishes a student's eligibility for disability accommodations and works collaboratively with faculty and staff to coordinate and implement these accommodations. DRS is a resource for students, faculty, and staff regarding the provision of equal access for students with disabilities in all aspects of campus life. DRS provides knowledgeable guidance and consultation, and is a resource for publications on disability-related subject matter.

206-543-8924 (V/TTY)

DO-IT Program (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) provides resources for disabled students in engineering and the sciences to help increase independence, productivity, and participation in education and employment. Though directed primarily to undergraduates, graduate students can find helpful information too, or they can volunteer to mentor younger students.

206-685-DOIT (3648), (V/TTY)



Kathy Saubier

another country

BEING FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY

International students who attend graduate school in the US recognize the many advantages of our graduate education system, and arrive with appreciation and energy to accomplish great things with their faculty and peers. At the same time, these students take on a significant set of challenges in addition to meeting degree requirements. These challenges go beyond adjusting to living, learning, and working in a foreign language, and vary depending on the background of the student—whether he or she is new to graduate study in the US or has experience in this system. If you are a graduate student from another country, or if you have many international students in your graduate program, you will benefit from understanding that no matter where you or your peers are from, there are cultural, educational, and social norms to be learned in graduate school.

Language and culture in the classroom. Despite their accomplishments, international students can feel their competence diminished in the early stages of their programs. Lack of linguistic proficiency or lack of knowledge about the US academic system can be initial hurdles to overcome in beginning a research or teaching assignment. In addition, most international students have been socialized into different classroom communication patterns. In the educational systems of East and Southeast Asia, for instance, the student's role is more passive in interactions with professors, whose authority goes unquestioned. Thus, some international students are surprised to encounter US students speaking up without being called upon, or challenging their professors' remarks. Also, interaction in graduate seminars sometimes can seem unnecessarily competitive to international students, who fear that if they do not exhibit these same behaviors, professors will judge them as less capable or less intelligent. Lastly, many international graduate students come from countries in which only a small percentage of high school graduates is admitted to university, so the different level of preparation of first-year undergraduates in the US can be a new challenge for international teaching assistants.

The rules of the academic game. When international graduate students arrive on campus, they need to demystify three cultures: the US culture, the culture of the research university, and the academic culture in their departments.

They discover that policies in graduate departments can be quite different from those in their home institutions, or are opaque or difficult to interpret. For instance, some may find it hard initially to understand why they can accept teaching or research assistantship “work” but are not permitted to work off-campus. On a subtler note, international graduate students might rely on different assumptions about how faculty members and graduate students should relate to each other. Many East Asian graduate students, for example, have reported sensing a kind of interpersonal “coldness” from some US faculty who, while informal and jovial with students during seminars, remain distant regarding students' personal or family lives. In other countries, the faculty-graduate student relationship often extends beyond academic discussions and may include various types of non-academic interactions with students and their families.

Social stresses. In moving far away from families and friends, many international students can feel a great sense of displacement. Those who are new to this country, and who bring their partners and children with them, worry about how well they or their families will adjust to life in the US. Even for students from countries with a large number of fellow nationals studying at UW, uncertainties about how to socialize with Americans can raise stress levels. After a while, some students may begin to wonder about how they will be accepted at home when they return with different dress, talk, and behavior. In essence, they worry about becoming foreigners in their own countries.

Recommendations

- Interact with international students by reaching out to them in academic and social venues. Ask about their research and outside interests to express your openness to new experiences and perspectives.
- If you are an international graduate student, ask advanced international and US graduate students to offer advice on how to navigate the UW system. Their experiences will be recent and relevant.
- If you are an international student, ask your peers or the professors themselves about the best ways to interact with your professors and mentors: in person, e-mail, phone, office hours, or group meetings. It is important to feel that your lines of communication are open as you adapt



to a new environment.

- Refrain from stereotyping international students as having difficulties with English.
- Help your peers and faculty mentors learn that even international students who speak English very well can still experience cultural dissonance or confusion about US graduate education.
- Be aware that the rules governing graduate studies and funding in the US are often very different from those in other countries. Most students have a single country visa that prohibits them from traveling freely outside the US. Also, they cannot work for pay, except for TA or RA positions. If you have questions about your program's requirements, speak with your graduate program coordinator or department chair. If you have questions about international student travel or work, contact the International Services Office.

Resources

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring>

International Services Office addresses international student issues and provides one-on-one assistance.

206-543-0841

International Teaching Assistant Program, in the Center for Instructional Development and Research, provides workshops and individual consultations to help prepare international students for roles as graduate teaching assistants.

206-543-6588

Foundation for International Understanding Through Students (FIUTS) links UW international students, visitors, and scholars with the Puget Sound community and provides opportunities for cross-cultural friendships and events.

206-543-0735



Kathy Sauber

age

AGE

Older students can be more focused and aware of their goals for graduate school than their younger colleagues. Their maturity is an especially strong asset for graduate study because their life experience means they are familiar with complex problems and independent thinking. Even with this important advantage, older students sometimes face challenges that are less common among younger students.

Fear of having “rusty” skills. Older students, especially if they have been in the workforce for several years, might worry about how they compare academically to their younger counterparts, who might be more up-to-date in the discipline or possess more experience with recent educational computing technologies.

Devaluation of life experiences. Many older students pursue graduate school after spending a number of years running a business, leading developments in industry or the public sector, or raising a family. A difficult issue they sometimes face is learning that their hard-won, “real life” knowledge is devalued during the graduate experience. This is particularly frustrating when older students’ experiences contradict the research or theory they are studying.

Invisibility in the classroom. Older students commonly describe feeling excluded when a professor refers to an event or popular film from many years ago and then says to the entire class, “And, of course, none of you would remember that.” Although not intended to be harmful, this kind of remark makes older students feel overlooked.

Isolation from fellow students. Because of the age differences between them and their peers, older graduate students can sometimes feel socially isolated. Many prefer to socialize in environments different from those of younger students. Also, although they do develop friendships with younger colleagues, older students are aware that some of them may be the same age as their own children.

Awkwardness with faculty. Some students are close in age or even older than their professors, and may worry that their professors are more accustomed to interacting with younger students.

Recommendations

- Talk to your peers and mentors about how your prior professional and educational experiences are transferable to graduate study. Whenever possible, link real world examples to theory.
- Visit faculty members regularly during office hours or set up appointments with them. Few ways are better to help professors, and potential mentors, understand who you are and what you are about.
- If you have been in the workforce for several years, jot down your five most polished skills and identify their correlates in academic work. Advertise these skills in your interactions with faculty and peers.
- Take the initiative to lead discussion groups or projects that mix people of different ages and experiences. Avoid always joining or forming study teams that consist only of same-age students.
- Ask younger graduate students for suggestions on readings or for technological assistance (if you need it).
- Offer technological assistance to your graduate student peers if your prior experience exposed you to useful computer applications and tools. Students and faculty alike will be drawn to your special skills.
- Initiate social activities on and off campus, such as dinner parties or community events.
- Start an interest group or a writing group.

Resources

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring>

Women’s Center, Re-entry Program, offers free referrals, assistance, and financial information to women and men returning to university education.

206-685-1090

UW Computer Training offers a variety of free and low-cost computer training opportunities to all students, staff, and faculty.

206-685-2763

Center for Social Science Computation and Research offers all UW students computer training for academic and discipline-specific purposes.

206-543-8110

family

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

As the graduate student population increases in age, so do family responsibilities, such as raising children (whether with a partner or single) or becoming the primary caregiver for elderly parents or relatives. If you have children or parents who depend on you for support, you may find that the structure of graduate education in a large research university still presumes that you can be on campus at any time, which can conflict with your other responsibilities.

Dual commitments. Students with family responsibilities are often highly organized and intensely focused during the blocks of time they carve out for their graduate work. Unfortunately, students may fear that their professors might misconstrue their attention to other responsibilities as a lack of commitment to scholarship. Emergencies, such as an ill

child or parent, occasionally prevent them from attending a class or a meeting and can exacerbate that misperception. Even after a child enters school, childcare demands do not lessen. Other demands arise, such as picking up or dropping off children and attending school functions.

Isolation. Students with family responsibilities might find it difficult to attend some social, academic, and professional functions. As a result, they may begin to feel isolated from their cohorts and departments, missing out on the “academic business” that takes place in those functions.

Time constraints. Students with family responsibilities often need to be home in the evenings to tend to those in their care. For this reason, study group assignments or



Joel Levin

research projects that require meeting in the evening can present difficulties, as can evening lectures.

Cultural differences. Cultural beliefs influence the ways graduate students deal with family responsibilities. During the mourning for a family member, for example, some students may be expected to spend a considerable amount of time consoling relatives at home. You can ask your mentor to help explain to other faculty the need for participating in family activities different from mainstream practices. On another note, some students enter graduate school without the full support of their families, who might question how graduate study is beneficial to the entire family, particularly if it has been experiencing economic hardships. Your mentors can help all their students communicate how a graduate degree can bring long-term benefits to them and their families.

Recommendations

- Help your mentors and others understand that, if you have family responsibilities, you might need to be away from class sometimes or are able to work in the department only during certain hours.
- Ask professors to distribute a schedule of assignments in advance so that students with family responsibilities can integrate them into already demanding schedules.
- Alert your professors and peers in advance if you use a cell phone or beeper for the purpose of staying connected in case of family emergencies.
- Seek out graduate students and faculty who can share strategies and resources for balancing family and academic life.
- Request that your peers be flexible with study group times or invite them to meet at your home if you live locally.
- Explore the use of e-mail, listservs, or discussion boards to facilitate group discussions away from the department. To learn about such tools, contact UW Computing & Communications or Catalyst for resources and support in teaching with new technologies.
- Be open with others about your family responsibilities. When appropriate, consider bringing your children to your department's social functions or to the office. This will help your peers and professors understand what your



Courtesy of the Cascade Center, Evans School of Public Affairs

life is like beyond the department.

- Use various means to demonstrate professional commitment and productivity. Be highly focused and productive when you are in the classroom, office, or lab. When you cannot be there, provide advanced notice and use other means, such as e-mail, to stay in touch or contribute your ideas.

Resources

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring>

Childcare Assistance Program for Students offers a childcare subsidy program. To be eligible for funding, students need to demonstrate financial need and must use licensed childcare. Contact Childcare Assistance Program for Students.

206-543-1041

or the Office of Student Financial Aid

206-543-6101

Work/Life Office can help UW students find childcare or elder care.

206-543-6963

Housing and Food Services or the Family Housing web pages are helpful services for students with families.

206-543-4059

prior work

PRIOR WORK EXPERIENCE AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Regardless of their reasons for pursuing advanced studies, students enter graduate school today with more experience and more diverse career aspirations than ever before. For many, it is common to have had one or more career-track jobs before beginning advanced study.

Often it is prior work experience itself that sparks a person's decision to pursue a graduate degree, whether it is for love of the discipline, advancement in a current profession, entrance into a new profession, or a combination of these reasons. Thus, if real world perspectives or examples are not valued in the graduate experience, students with prior work experience can feel especially disappointed. Many graduate students want to feel valued for their prior work accomplishments, especially if those experiences were as teachers or practitioners in a field that they are now researching.

Recommendations

- Discuss with your mentors and peers how your prior work experience influenced your decision to pursue graduate study or relates to your research and teaching.

- Understand that your career aspirations might not reflect the same interests that motivated your professors. Explain to them how the concepts, theories, and tools you are learning support your own career aspirations.
- Ask your mentor to help you explore a wide range of professional development opportunities, such as serving on graduate student or department/university committees, and doing service, teaching, or research internships on or off campus.
- Be aware of new opportunities for knowledge workers and periodically check on the condition of the academic and non-academic labor market in your discipline. Consult your disciplinary association, or the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, for current data and trends.
- Offer your mentors periodic updates about how your professional goals are developing, changing, and being enriched by graduate study.

Resources

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring>

Center for Career Services supports students in exploring a variety of career options and employment services.
206-543-0535

Center for Workforce Development provides graduate student mentoring programs geared towards women pursuing careers in science and engineering.
206-543-4810

Preparing Future Faculty Program helps graduate students prepare for academic careers by offering them structured opportunities to observe and experience a full range of faculty roles and responsibilities.
206-543-9054

Re-envisioning the PhD is an online collection of resources for graduate students interested in pursuing a variety of careers and professional development opportunities.



Courtesy of the Cascade Center, Evans School of Public Affairs

disadvantaged

DISADVANTAGED SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Students come to graduate school from a variety of socioeconomic trajectories, determined either by their parents' educational and occupational circumstances or by students' own occupational histories. Some students delay higher education in order to earn and save money, gain professional experience, or support their families. Socioeconomic background is a largely “invisible,” but important factor that influences students' mentoring needs. Rural or inner-city origins; growing up in a blue-collar family; being raised by a single, struggling parent or in a very large family; low family income; and family unemployment are all factors that can put students at an educational disadvantage.

Quite often, graduate students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds are the first in their family to complete an undergraduate degree. If you are a graduate student who experienced economic hardships earlier in life, you developed the fortitude and perseverance to overcome barriers to your educational ambitions. These are highly desirable qualities for success in graduate school. To maintain peak performance, there may be certain topics regarding your graduate experience that you and your mentors will find helpful to address.

Economic concerns. Students from working-class backgrounds often cannot turn to family members for monetary support throughout graduate school. What is more, some students carry responsibilities for financially or physically supporting their parents, siblings, or other relatives while obtaining a degree. It is common for these students to feel the need to work additional jobs outside of their departments, even if they have graduate fellowships or appointments.

Access to professional networks. Graduate students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds can experience greater difficulties accessing or creating professional networks in academe. They might not have had as many opportunities to develop these relationships as their peers from more advantaged backgrounds, especially those peers who grew up in academic families. This disparity surfaces most pointedly when students struggle with the costs of financing travel to professional conferences or the need to seek summer employment each year.

Summer professional opportunities. Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds often face having to disrupt their academic training during the summer. Because of financial constraints, they may seek better-paying jobs off campus instead of accepting low- or no-pay (but academically relevant) internships. Outside employment temporarily distances them from their studies, and fears of falling behind can arise. Professors who are unaware of their students' financial situations can inadvertently misconstrue interest in outside employment as a lack of commitment to academic study.

Difference in background experiences. Some students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds can find it intimidating to hear about the spring break or summer travel experiences of fellow students. Those in the arts, humanities, and social sciences can feel especially vulnerable knowing that some of their peers have traveled to, or even lived in, the foreign countries they are studying.

Disconnection with family and friends. Like many other graduate students, those from disadvantaged backgrounds probably have had to move away from their families. Once a student becomes socialized into the discipline, talking with old friends and family about scholarship or academe may be difficult. Some relatives might have trouble relating to the way a student talks about scholarly endeavors or might wonder why the student is not working in a “real job.” This communication gap can cause graduate students to feel disconnected because they feel less comfortable in their old worlds but not yet settled into their new ones.

Recommendations

- Try to learn from faculty and more experienced students about the ways academic networking works.
- Be alert to and creative about funding opportunities, especially for the summer period. Well before spring quarter, be sure to ask your mentors and professors about their resources and how they can help you strategize for continuous support during your degree program.
- Ask your professors to put books or course packets on reserve at the library or in the department to help reduce expenses.



- Take pride in your scholarly accomplishments and share the news of your work in language that your friends and family back home can relate to.
- Encourage and support all your peers' dreams and aspirations, just as you expect your mentors and peers to support yours.

Resources

<http://www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring>

Grants and Funding Information Service offers a user-friendly database, workshops, and individual consultations to help current and newly admitted graduate students, regardless of economic situation, identify external funding.

206-616-3084

Office of Student Financial Aid can help students secure short-term loans for emergency assistance. Applications are available through My UW or 172 Schmitz Hall.

206-543-6101

5. Heed good advice

Finding suitable mentors for any new endeavor requires openness, patience, persistence, and creativity. Informed about the concerns you and other graduate students share, and the diverse factors affecting your individual needs, you are probably beginning to develop a vision for the mentoring you need. As you continue to refine that vision throughout the various stages of your professional development, rely on the following basic advice for cultivating productive mentoring relationships.

Be proactive

The faculty-student ratio at the UW may be unlike that of your undergraduate experience, especially if you studied in a smaller academic setting. At a large research university, you may need to take extra initiative to seek out interactions with faculty members. You should approach professors openly, as colleagues, and initiate discussions. If your personality, upbringing, or cultural background makes you less

Courtesy of Cherry Cayabyab



comfortable with direct approaches, visit professors during their office hours to initiate contact.

Seek out multiple mentors

Identify and cultivate multiple potential mentors. Rarely is one individual the perfect mentor for all of your educational and professional needs. Having multiple mentors increases the likelihood that you will obtain the assistance and support you need from a range of expert sources—your “team.” Multiple mentors can be faculty members within or outside of the University, departmental staff, current graduate students, alumni, and other professionals in the community with special knowledge or abilities related to your academic and career goals.

Develop realistic approaches to mentors

Invest time in assessing what you need from your mentors and then request that assistance clearly and professionally. It is more effective to request specific kinds of guidance than to make general requests for mentorship.

Be visible

Understand the importance of being visible in the life of your department. Office and hallway conversations help you build relationships and glean vital information. If you have an office in the department, use it as much as possible. If you have other responsibilities outside the department (such as a family or work), talk to your mentors about creative ways you can remain engaged in regular happenings, such as participating in or coordinating key events or gatherings.

Take yourself seriously

From the day you apply to graduate school, you need to begin to see yourself as more than just a bright student. You are becoming a colleague and a professional. Participating in departmental lectures and activities; joining professional associations; networking at conferences and campus events; and seeking out opportunities to present your work inside or outside your department are all ways to show you are engaged in that transition.

Be responsible

Recognize the value and the rewards of taking responsi-

bility for “owning” your education. Ownership includes responsibility for developing a vision of the future and attending to ordinary, everyday detail. Make an effort to be prompt for meetings with your mentors and prepare an agenda ahead of time. Update your mentors at least once a quarter about your progress and clearly articulate the challenges they can help you with along the way.

Show commitment to your professional development

Demonstrate in various ways that you are involved in your programs, courses, teaching, research, and service. Professors commonly point out the importance of students “embracing their own work”—an important aspect of professional leadership. Initiate or lead study, writing, discussion, or interest groups among your peers. Asking a peer or a faculty member you admire to co-author a paper, identifying and seeking a grant opportunity, and applying your scholarship to civic concerns are also excellent ways to demonstrate professional commitment.

Receive criticism in a professional manner

A core part of intellectual work is exchanging ideas and debating their merits. You need to accept criticism of your work in a professional manner. Accepting criticism does not mean agreeing with everything that someone says about your work, but rather reflects your willingness to consider and evaluate the merits of other points of view. If you disagree with certain criticisms, you should defend your ideas in a professional style, such as by saying, “Thank you for sharing your perspective. Although I understand the reasoning behind your view, I would like to explain why I disagree....”

Let mentors know you appreciate their advice

Finally, be sure to let your mentors know that you value the time they spend with you, and that you use their input productively. After reading books or making contacts your mentor suggests, talk about the results of what you learned, perhaps via e-mail or in a subsequent meeting. You should not feel compelled to follow every bit of advice you receive, but you should inform your mentors when their advice is particularly helpful, even when it leads you in an unexpected direction. When you share this information constructively with your mentors, it is a sign of your collegiality and growth.



SECTION IV

Getting the journey started

Mentoring relationships work best when all parties involved clarify their expectations and focus on the educational needs at hand.

This section offers you strategies to get the mentoring journey started with your potential mentors. We suggest you first do a self-appraisal to understand your own needs better and to help clarify expectations. This section also suggests topics to address early in your associations to help you get a good start in your mentoring relationships.



Do a Self Appraisal

The person who knows your goals, needs, and passions best is you. Take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions. Jotting down answers to this self-appraisal will help you assess what you have to offer, and need from, your mentoring relationships.

What are my goals for graduate school and beyond?

- What are the connections between my prior background experiences and my decision to go to graduate school?
- What do I hope an advanced degree will help me do?
- What type of training do I desire?
- What skills do I need to develop?
- What kinds of research or creative projects do I want to work on?
- What type of career do I want to pursue?
- What kind of networks might I need to develop?
- What work or training experiences inside and outside my department might I need?
- How do I want my learning to impact communities beyond the university?

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

- What are the skills I bring to graduate study (e.g., creative, analytical, statistical, organizational, etc.)?
- What skill areas do I think I need to work on?
- What experiences might help me strengthen my skills?

What is my preferred work style?

- Do I like to work independently or collaboratively, or some combination of both?
- Do I like to manage meetings with an agenda, or do I prefer to let priorities emerge during meetings?
- How does my work style help or occasionally prevent me from learning?
- How does my work style compare to that of others who have served as valuable mentors in my life?

Explore your prospects for forming a mentoring team

Take the initiative

At a large research university, it can be daunting to approach

a potential mentor at first. However, taking the initiative to explore discussions with faculty is a more helpful approach than waiting for them to approach you, especially in disciplines in which graduate students and faculty do not necessarily interact every day. Prospective mentors will appreciate your interest in their work and will be eager to talk to you.

Strive for diversity in composition

Consider the composition of your informal mentoring team. While it is common to choose potential mentors based on similar experiences and ways of thinking, you can also benefit from individuals whose background, characteristics, and perspectives are different from your own. Some of the most meaningful mentoring occurs when mentor and student explore different takes on research or teaching problems and yet focus successfully on what matters most: mutual interests and learning from each other. Beyond assessing rapport, inviting individuals of a different ethnicity or gender to serve as your mentors will help you develop a more reflective understanding of your own work and future possibilities.

Seek a balance between senior and junior faculty

As you begin to identify prospective mentors, look for a balance of senior and junior faculty members. Each can be of assistance, although possibly in different ways. Senior faculty, because they have been in the field for a long time, may be able to help you better with networking. Junior faculty, having been in graduate school relatively recently themselves, may be able to help you cope better with the stresses and strains associated with being a graduate student.

Seek individuals outside the discipline/ university

Finally, seek potential mentors outside your department, or even outside the university, whose intellectual or professional interests relate to yours. These individuals will not only be able to provide you with a fresh perspective on the nature of your work, but can help you understand how it relates to exciting questions or practical problems in other disciplines or professional fields.



Initiate contact with potential mentors

Having completed your self-appraisal, and having thought carefully about the range of individuals who can offer you mentoring, you have acquired deeper insight into your aspirations and the resources available to help you realize them. You are now ready to discuss your aspirations with prospective mentors and familiarize yourself with their professional accomplishments. In initial meetings, your goals are to make a positive impression, establish a good rapport, and assess whether the person is a good fit for you.

As you prepare for initial conversations, reflect on the following topics to trigger ideas about what is important to you and your mentor. Your first meetings should be exploratory: you are only taking the first step. Remember, a mentoring relationship evolves over time and often arises out of a particular need. You can extend more explicit mentoring invitations down the road, after some initial planning (see Worksheet 3, Planning for first meetings, p. 45). As you prepare for initial conversations, reflect on the following topics. The first four items address what potential mentors want to know about your qualities.

Mutual interests

Potential mentors want to know if you have intellectual interests similar to theirs. Share how your prior academic, professional, or personal experiences relate to theirs. Ask about their recent work and explore ways in which their work intersects with what you envision doing.

Motivation and direction

Mentors enjoy mentees who are motivated and eager to grow professionally. State your goals as you see them right now. Ask about ways you can explore these goals together over time, and about courses or key projects you should consider given your plan of study.

Initiative

Potential mentors want to know how well you will follow up with contacts and ideas they suggest. Ask them to suggest other people and experiences that will help you develop your skills and knowledge. Make those connections, and let your mentor know you have taken action.

Skills and strengths

Demonstrate to your potential mentors why they should invest their energies in you. Highlight the qualities you bring to the relationship, such as research or language skills, creativity, analytical techniques, computer skills, willingness to learn, persistence, passion, enthusiasm, and commitment.

The following six items refer to what you need to learn about the personal and professional resources prospective mentors can offer you:

Availability

- Assess how much time a prospective mentor can provide you by asking about his or her other commitments.
- Find out from other students how much time this person normally spends with graduate students. Will that amount of time be sufficient for you?
- Ask prospective mentors about their future plans. Do they anticipate being in the graduate program for the entire duration of your degree? Will they be taking a sabbatical or otherwise work away from the department during this time? If so, what arrangements would you need to make to maintain sufficient contact?

Communication

- Do you feel comfortable interacting with this person?
- Do you feel able to communicate your thoughts and ideas effectively?
- Does this person listen attentively to your ideas and concerns, and ask good follow up questions?
- Does this person like to meet one-on-one?

- Will you be able to work closely with this person?
- Do you enjoy, or are you able to accommodate, this person's professional and personal style?

Workload and financial support

- What does the potential mentor consider a normal workload for graduate scholarship (outside of your work as a teaching or research assistant)? How many hours per week does he or she believe you should be spending on your own research or creative projects?
- Does the potential mentor have, or know of, funds to support you? Will that financial support remain available until you complete your program?
- Is there potential for developing a thesis or dissertation topic from the mentor's research program that you would find interesting?
- Especially for those in the sciences and engineering: Does the mentor have appropriate space and laboratory equipment for your needs? What is the size of the mentor's research group, and is this size optimal for you? If you desire to bolster your teaching experience, will this person support your search for teaching assistantships?
- Especially for those in the humanities, social sciences, or professional schools: Will this mentor be able to help you obtain graduate assistantships or fellowships (if you do not already have these lined up)? Will he or she be able to help you achieve the professional development balance you want between teaching and research assistantships?

Publishing

- Does the potential mentor co-author articles with graduate students? If so, ask about his or her approach to determining first authorship.
- Is the prospective mentor willing to help you prepare your work for publication?
- What helpful publishing contacts does he or she have?

Reputation with graduate students and departmental staff

- Ask your peers whether the potential mentor has a history of giving proper attention to his or her mentees.
- Can this person provide you teaching and research opportunities, access to financial resources, and sufficient guidance for completing a thesis or dissertation?
- Does this person provide students access to useful

professional networks, and assistance in exploring academic and nonacademic career development?

- Have former students completed their programs in a timely fashion with this mentor's guidance? If not, why?
- If you are interested in exploring careers outside the academy, what is the prospective mentor's approach to training graduate students for breadth as well as depth?

Reputation within the field

- What opinions do others in your field hold about the prospective mentor's work?
- What kind of professional positions did others mentored by this person obtain? Do you see yourself pursuing those kinds of career paths?
- Read reviews of the potential mentor's work in scholarly journals or convention proceedings, or in nomination letters if the person has been nominated for awards.

Follow up with your prospective mentors via e-mail or phone to thank them for their time and let them know that what you learned was fruitful. If you agreed to pursue an idea or topic, let them know your plans and when you will get back in touch. Initial meetings will probably give you a sense of this person as a potential mentor; however, you do not need to make any decisions immediately. Allow yourself and the person time to reflect. If you later decide to ask this person to be a mentor, you both will have a better understanding of what each stands to gain from the relationship. If a mentoring relationship begins to take shape, this understanding will help you and your mentor create a professional development plan that is tailored to your needs (see Worksheet 4, Professional development plan, p. 46).

Clarify expectations

One of the strongest themes that graduate students express on this campus and in national studies is the desire for greater clarity about expectations, roles, and responsibilities. When students and mentors have clear expectations of one another, relationships are more likely to be productive, enjoyable, and mutually beneficial. To prevent misunderstandings, discuss the expectations you and your mentor have of each other, including how they may change over time. Not all mentors and mentees establish formal contracts. Some find formal agreements useful while others prefer to



work under informal agreements (see Worksheet 5, Sample mentee and mentor agreement, p. 47). As you start exploring more details with potential mentors, keep in mind the following points:

Have realistic expectations

First, be realistic about what any one mentor can do for you, and avoid requesting too much assistance or assistance that is too broad. That is why having multiple mentors is so helpful. Second, remember that mentors can respond better to requests for specific types of assistance than to requests for general mentoring. Analyze what you need from a given mentor and explicitly ask for those things. Finally, remember that part of your task as a graduate student is to develop and demonstrate your abilities as a colleague and a professional. Discuss with your mentor ways that you can take on more responsibility over time.

Clarify roles and responsibilities

No matter how formal or informal your agreements are with your mentors, as you progress through your program you might need to revisit the roles and responsibilities each of you has assumed. Some responsibilities that pertain to students and to faculty members are matters of departmental policy and are not negotiable. Nonetheless, you should fully explore your expectations of each other on several dimensions. If the person you consider a mentor is also your advisor or thesis/dissertation chair, key dimensions to discuss include:

Goals and work plans. Develop a work plan that includes short- and long-term goals within reasonable (achievable) timelines. Talk with your mentor and with your graduate program coordinator to make sure these plans meet departmental requirements. At least once a quarter, update your mentor on your progress, as well as any obstacles you have encountered. Explore additional training and experience you need in order to achieve your goals. If you need to modify your timeline, work with your mentor to agree on a new work plan.

Meetings. Discuss how often you and your mentor will meet, and what other modes of communication can keep

your conversations going (e.g., occasional e-mails). Be sure that you request the amount of meeting time you believe you need to progress on your goals. Also, find out if this person will have a heavy travel schedule or go on sabbatical during the time you are pursuing your degree. If so, ask the mentor to suggest other people or resources you can consult during that time. While a mentoring relationship is one of mutuality, be prepared to lead meetings with an agenda to maximize your time together. Finally, find out under what circumstances, if any, the mentor feels it is appropriate to be called at home, and let him or her know if you can be called at home, too.

Feedback. Clarify how often the mentor will be able give you feedback on your work and your progress, including how long he or she typically needs to return papers or drafts of articles. Inquire about his or her current workload so you can plan your deadlines appropriately, and offer sufficient lead time when handing in your work. Ask the mentor if he or she tends to provide lots of feedback or sparse feedback, so that you will know what to expect.

Reminders. Ask your mentor what is the best way to send reminders about returning your work to you, or following up on an issue, within an agreed upon timeframe. For instance, you can ask: “When you are very busy, what is the best way for me to remind you about a paper of mine that you are reviewing? Should I e-mail you, call you, or come by your office?” “Do you want me to remind you in advance? Is one week enough or do you prefer two?”

Drafts. Discuss your mentor’s expectations for drafts of your work before you submit them for feedback. Some professors prefer not to receive very rough drafts and might suggest you share those with a trusted peer or writing group, and revise them before handing them in. When it comes to successive revisions, help your mentor be more expedient by highlighting the revised sections with each document version.

Publishing and presenting. Find out what kind of philosophy a prospective mentor holds about presenting or co-authoring papers. Whether he or she is a senior or junior faculty member might influence the response. Nonetheless,

be explicit about the kinds of publishing or presentation opportunities you seek. You may be able to work out a plan that alternates credit for first and second authorship (or first and second presenters) depending on the nature of the joint project and the roles you might play over time.

Intellectual property. If you are working closely with a mentor on a research project, clarify who owns the data that is being collected and whether others will be able to have access to it. Consideration for the ownership and sharing of research is important in all disciplines. Discuss the ownership of any copyright and patent agreements that might occur as a result of a project. For further information, contact the UW Office of Research, www.washington.edu/research, or UW TechTransfer at depts.washington.edu/techtran.

Research and human subjects. All research involving human subjects that is performed or supervised by UW faculty, staff, or students must be reviewed by the UW Human Subjects Division. It is your obligation as a researcher to seek Human Subjects review and approval prior to the beginning of research activities. Research with human subjects cannot be retroactively reviewed and approved. Moreover, performing a human subjects study without prior review and approval is considered “serious” non-compliance according to federal regulations, and must be brought to a full Human Subjects Committee for inquiry and action. More information is available at www.washington.edu/research/hsd/index.php.

Confidentiality. Students and mentors who develop close relationships sometimes discuss confidential issues. Be explicit about the confidentiality you want your mentors to offer you regarding touchy or sensitive issues you might speak about, and offer strict confidentiality to your mentor. An exception to confidentiality is the obligation of all UW employees, including graduate assistants, to report instances of sexual harassment to organizational superiors.

Recommendation letters. Before you approach the job search phase of your graduate experience, think about the letters of recommendation you might need and identify people in the best position to speak to your abilities and achievements. Ask how much advance notice your mentors like to receive for a recommendation letter, and how you can remind them. Be sure to provide key details about

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the fellowship, grant, program, or job that the letter of recommendation supports. Attach an updated copy of your curriculum vitae, highlighting key sections. You should ask one or more mentors to visit the classes you teach or labs you run so that they can reflect knowledgeably on your professional abilities.

What to do if problems arise

All of the themes and recommendations in this guidebook are geared toward one purpose: to help you have a successful, rewarding graduate student experience. Occasionally, situations arise that might affect the timely completion of your work, such as the birth of a child, or an illness you or someone in your family experiences. If this happens, take the initiative and discuss the issue with your mentors. As soon as possible, get back to them with a new timeline for completing your degree. Be sure the revised plan is realistic and that you can meet the new deadlines.

Be aware that mentors, too, occasionally face situations that can affect progress on your work. Other demands can hinder your mentor’s ability to meet with you or provide prompt feedback. If significant delays happen often, or if other difficulties arise, talk with one or more of the following individuals who are in an excellent position to help you to resolve them.

The mentor or advisor. First, remind the person politely and diplomatically of your needs. If you are not getting satisfactory results, schedule a meeting with the person as soon as possible to review what is happening and your goals. From our experience at The Graduate School, face-to-face meetings lead to satisfactory results more often than e-mail, because tone and message can be misconstrued in electronic communication.

Other mentors or supervisory committee members. Even if other mentors on your team do not know the individual with whom you are experiencing difficulties, and may or may not know your department's norms and policies, they will be able to offer you a fresh perspective, and suggest solutions they have found helpful.

Peers. Other students who have frequent contact with the individual in question can tell you if the issue is typical, and may be able to suggest solutions. Your peers can be very helpful by explaining the norms in your department regarding frequency of meetings, turn-around time for feedback, and general availability of faculty.

Other faculty. Other trusted faculty can give you advice on how to deal with challenges that arise with a mentor. If you want someone to intercede on your behalf, senior faculty may be in a better position to do so than junior faculty. You may feel more comfortable asking general questions about a situation, rather than being explicit about the people involved.

Department staff. Graduate program coordinators and graduate program assistants can help you clarify departmental expectations and policies. They also can offer suggestions on how to resolve difficulties, and are familiar with the people and the offices on campus that can assist you.

Department chair. If you have tried to resolve issues with the faculty member directly, and other trusted peers, faculty, and staff have been unable to assist you, you might find it helpful to talk to your department chair. As always, focus the discussion diplomatically and objectively on the assistance you need to meet your goals in your graduate program. Avoid making the discussion about personality or interpersonal style difficulties.



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The Graduate School. At any point in your graduate program, you may find it helpful to talk things over with staff at The Graduate School.

Changing mentors or advisors

At some point in your graduate career, you might face the question of how to acquire a new mentor or advisor. The issues can be more complex if the same person fulfills both of these roles for you. Because of the relatively informal nature of mentoring, there is no formal policy for acquiring mentors as there is, in most departments, for acquiring or changing a research or dissertation advisor. It is important to know the differences between the two processes, and the basic guidelines applicable to each.

Changing *mentors* is not an issue if the relationship is an informal one (i.e., the person is not your thesis/dissertation advisor). Also, changing mentors does not necessarily imply any difficulties in your relationship. In fact, as you progress through various phases of your professional development, your priorities for mentoring will change, possibly making it beneficial to select a different mentor or combination of mentors. This change is more likely to be motivated by your personal and professional growth than by misunderstandings. A good mentor will support you in your search for others who can assist you.

Changing *advisors* is common in some fields of study and less so in others. It usually requires that you follow departmental procedures. It is easier to change advisors if your department encourages students to work with multiple faculty members, and making changes earlier in your career is generally easier than later. However, you will need to do extra thoughtful planning if you came to UW to work with a specific faculty member and down the road find that your interests change or the relationship begins to suffer.

If you are changing an advisor, you can accomplish the task best if you adopt an attitude of respect for the person who has assisted you. The following are general guidelines, *but first, always consult your department* for the specific policies and procedures that apply to your case.

Guidelines for changing advisors.

- Begin by doing an objective analysis of the pros and cons of changing advisors.
- Refer to the list of people (under “What to do if problems arise”) who can help you with this assessment.
- Try to work through any differences with your advisor *before* you make a final decision.
- Seek advice from a trusted faculty member or peer to assess your needs and determine whether a different advisor would be good for you. This advice is especially important if you are attempting to change advisors towards the final phase of your graduate program.
- Approach another faculty member about being an advisor for you. Frame your approach with positive information, such as new interests and new possibilities.
- Be professional at all times. Focus discussions on your interests and goals and not on negative incidents or difficulties. Avoid doing or saying anything that could have negative ramifications for your future.
- Practice diplomatic ways to express to your advisor or mentor, *and* to others, why you are considering a change.
- Discuss and arrange a timeframe for completing any remaining work with your current advisor before the change takes place.
- Complete or update any formal paperwork that contains information about your advisor (e.g., internship paperwork, thesis, general exam, or dissertation committee forms).

You are on your way!

As you have learned from this guidebook, obtaining good mentoring is one of the best investments you can make with your time in graduate school. It takes effort and patience in the beginning, but the returns are great and will have a positive impact on you for many years after graduation.

Good mentoring will give you the edge as you prepare to enter the profession of your choice. Not only do good mentors help you gain solid knowledge and skills, more importantly, they help you maintain a positive attitude and acquire the self-reliance you need for embarking confidently on your path to success. Remember, many graduate students will follow in your footsteps. You, too, will mentor many others over the course of your professional life, whatever your career trajectory. The mentoring relationships you establish now will directly and indirectly benefit numerous individuals and institutions down the road. On this wonderful journey, we wish you every success!



SECTION V

Mentoring resources

Worksheets. This section provides worksheets to help you and your mentors implement many of the recommendations discussed in this guidebook. These include assessing your own expectations, getting initial meetings started, planning for professional development, and more.

Further readings. Also provided is a list of useful readings to help you expand your knowledge of mentoring and professional development.

Worksheet 1: Phases of graduate student professional development

As mentee becomes:	Senior Learner	Colleague-in-Training	Junior Colleague/ Colleague
Sees mentor's role as	Manager	Educational/Professional Model	Colleague/Mentor
	“Do the task the way I’ve laid out and check back with me.”	“Think about the problem, generate options, then let’s talk about potential outcomes/decisions.”	“You make the decision. Let me know how I can help. I’m interested in the outcome.”
Views own teaching role as	Assistant	Associate	Collaborator
	Grading papers Holding office hours Planning quizzes Collecting feedback	Writing assignments Generating test questions Doing some teaching, lecturing, or small group discussions	Designing, developing, or revising advanced courses or curriculum; instructor of record or co-teaching
Views research role as	Assistant	Associate	Collaborator
	Performing specific duties under relatively close supervision	Assuming design and implementation responsibility for part of a grant or for own research project	Conducting research project (or own portion of it) with high degree of independence; sees mentor as a resource
Understands practitioner, applied or service roles as	Assistant	Associate	Collaborator
	Learning the ropes; acquiring discrete technical skills	Providing strategic assistance or expertise; ultimately defers to mentor	Co-leading, co-designing, co-facilitating; sharing responsibility equally
Prefers evaluation to be	Assistant	Associate	Collaborator
	Frequent and focused on immediate performance	Systematic and focused on overall development of skills, aptitudes	Collegial, informal, and focused on style, approach, values
Sees mentoring needs as	Assistant	Associate	Collaborator
	Self-assessment; goal assessment; regular meetings	Observations; job shadowing; meetings; attend/present at conferences together; networking	Reflective practicum; retreat; opportunistic meetings; networking; generate new project together; co-stewardship

Adapted from Nyquist, J.D. and Wulff, D.H. (1996). Working effectively with graduate assistants, p. 27. Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage. (See Chao [1997] for a four-phase model of graduate student development.)

Worksheet 2: Mentee expectations

Use this worksheet to develop an understanding of what you expect to gain from your mentoring relationships. By clarifying your own expectations, you will be able to communicate them more effectively to your mentors. Add items you deem important.

The reasons I want a mentor are to:

- Receive encouragement and support
- Increase my confidence when dealing with professionals
- Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives
- Gain a realistic perspective of the workplace
- Get advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities, and set priorities
- Gain knowledge of “dos and don’ts”
- Learn how to operate in a network of talented peers
- Other _____

I hope that my mentor and I will:

- Tour my mentor’s workplace/explore various teaching or work sites
- Go to formal mentoring events together
- Meet over coffee, lunch, or dinner
- Go to educational events such as lectures, conferences, talks, or other university events together
- Go to local, regional, and national professional meetings together
- Other _____

I hope that my mentor and I will discuss:

- Academic subjects that will benefit my future career
- Career options and job preparation
- The realities of the workplace
- My mentor’s work
- Technical and related field issues
- How to network
- How to manage work and family life
- Personal dreams and life circumstances
- Other _____

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

- Disclosing our conversations to others
- Using non-public places for meetings
- Sharing intimate aspects of our lives
- Meeting behind closed doors
- Other _____

I hope that my mentor will help me with job opportunities by:

- Opening doors for me to job possibilities
- Introducing me to people who might be interested in hiring me
- Helping me practice for job interviews
- Suggesting potential work contacts for me to pursue on my own
- Teaching me about networking
- Critiquing my resume or curriculum vitae
- Other _____

The amount of time I can spend with my mentor is likely to be, on average:

- 1 2 3 4 hours each *week*/every *other week*/per *month* (circle one)

Adapted from: Brainard, S.G., Harkus, D.A. and George, M.R. (1998), *A curriculum for training mentors and mentees: Guide for administrators*. Seattle, WA: Women in Engineering Initiative, WEPAN Western Regional Center, University of Washington.

Worksheet 3: Planning for first meetings—a mentee’s checklist

Use this checklist to plan initial meetings with your mentors in light of what you hope to achieve over the long term.

- ___ Arrange first meeting with a prospective mentor.
- ___ Explain your goals for meetings and ask how confidentiality should be handled.
- ___ Discuss with your mentor what you both perceive as the boundaries of the mentoring relationship.
- ___ Review the current experience and qualifications. Record these on a professional development plan (see Worksheet 4).
- ___ Discuss and record your immediate and long-term goals. Explore useful professional development experiences in view of these goals. Discuss options and target dates.
- ___ Discuss and record any issues that may affect the mentoring relationship such as time, financial constraints, lack of confidence, or newness to the role, etc.
- ___ Arrange a meeting schedule with your mentor (try to meet at least once a quarter). Record topics discussed and feedback given at each meeting. Request that meeting records be kept confidential and in a safe place.
- ___ Discuss with your mentor the following activities that can form part of your mentoring relationship:
 - Getting advice on strategies for improving teaching or research
 - Organizing observation(s) of teaching and providing constructive feedback
 - Organizing a session of work shadowing (in a campus or other employment setting)
 - Getting advice on issues or concerns with colleagues in study or research groups
 - Providing feedback from other sources (students, faculty, administrators, and other mentors in or outside the university)
- ___ Create a mentoring action plan that reflects different professional development needs at different stages of your graduate program.
- ___ Encourage your mentor to reflect regularly with you on your goals, achievements, and areas for improvement. Compose a brief reflection essay (e.g., 1/2 page) prior to each meeting.
- ___ Amend your mentoring action plan as needed by focusing on your developing needs.

Adapted from: *Mentoring towards excellence: Section 4: Handbook and guidelines for mentors and mentees*. Association of Colleges and the Further Education National Training Organisation, Learning and Skills Council: Coventry, England.

Worksheet 4: Graduate student professional development plan

Goals	Strategies	Assessment	Follow Up	Outcomes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Adapted from Nyquist, J.D. and Wulff, D.H. (1996). *Working effectively with graduate assistants*, p. 109. Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage

Worksheet 5: Sample mentee and mentor agreement

Consider using this agreement, or another one that you and your mentor create together, if you believe the mentoring relationship will be strengthened by formalizing a mutual agreement of roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

We are voluntarily entering into a mentoring relationship from which we both expect to benefit. We want this to be a rich, rewarding experience with most of our time together spent in professional development activities. To this end, we have mutually agreed upon the terms and conditions of our relationship as outlined in this agreement.

Objectives

We hope to achieve:

To accomplish this we will:

Confidentiality

Any sensitive issues that we discuss will be held in confidence. Issues that are off-limits in this relationship include:

Frequency of Meetings

We will attempt to meet at least _____ time(s) each month. If we cannot attend a scheduled meeting, we agree to notify one another in advance.

Duration

We have determined that our mentoring relationship will continue as long as we both feel comfortable or until:

No-Fault Termination

We are committed to open and honest communication in our relationship. We will discuss and attempt to resolve any conflicts as they arise. If, however, one of us needs to terminate the relationship for any reason, we agree to abide by one another's decision.

Mentor

Mentee

Date

Date

Source: Brainard, S.G., Harkus, D.A., and George, M.R. (1998), *A Curriculum for training mentors and mentees: Guide for administrators*. Seattle, WA: Women in Engineering Initiative, WEPAN Western Regional Center, University of Washington.

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