



- Provide a brief statement describing your approach/philosophy to mentoring graduate students and new faculty.
- Where/from whom did you learn/develop your approach to mentoring?
- Provide some helpful tips that mentors can do to be effective.
- Provide any good resources on mentoring that you recommend.

The mentees were asked to respond to the following questions:

- Provide some great advice that you have received from your mentor.
- Describe how you are applying/will apply what you have learned to your own mentoring that you do/will do.
- Provide some tips that mentees can do to improve their relationships with their mentors.
- Provide any good resources on mentoring that you recommend.

Mentors' and mentees' responses are reprinted below, verbatim. Specific portions of their responses were selected to be expanded upon during the Presidential Session on Thursday, November 5, 2009, 2:45-4:15 pm.

We hope that these reflections will spark a continued dialogue on mentorship within ASHE.

## REFLECTIONS FROM MENTORS

*Provide a brief statement describing your approach/philosophy to mentoring graduate students and new faculty.*

I'm not sure I have a formal philosophy that I could state. I guess I'll have to look back at what I've done and how I've done it and *deduce* a philosophy or "approach."

When it comes to students, I have to admit that my approach has *evolved* over the years. I used to think that the best thing that could happen to the student would be to spend time with, and have close contact with, "the professor." I gradually learned, however, that the best thing that can happen to the student is to become part of a closely-knit, supportive *peer group*, and that one of my major roles is to try to help facilitate that process, especially the process of encouraging the peer group to form and prosper. AT UCLA we've found that such a peer group tends to persist into the post-graduate world of work and that the bonds continue to grow and strengthen with time. It's really heartwarming to see what a wonderful UCLA alumni community we have and how they continue to interact, collaborate, support each other, and have fun together.

When it comes to advising or dissertation mentoring, I suppose you could describe my approach as *do whatever you can to help the student get the job done*. Whether it's picking a topic, deciding on a research approach, picking a committee, or preparing for preliminary and final orals, my bias is always to guide the student to make the whole process as smooth and as doable as possible. My job is twofold: to help to student produce the highest quality product possible, and to minimize the pain.

When it comes to overseeing the actual dissertation work, research practicum supervision, or any form of scholarly collaboration, I'm pretty hard-nosed (in pursuit of the highest-quality product): to collect the best possible data (given the realities of time and resources), to do the best possible analyses, and to write it up in the most insightful and coherent way. Some students have found this easy, others have found it more of a challenge, and a few others have really had to struggle. I try to give only as much help as is needed, which for the first group of students means dotting a few i's and crossing a few t's. For other students this means that we go through multiple drafts, which can be painful, and with some students I finally end up doing a lot of heavy editing. I've often questioned whether all that editing doesn't compromise the learning experience—it probably does—so in the final analysis I guess I do it just to help them get through the process.

Just the choice of a research topic can be a grueling process for some students. I've always believed that the student should pick his or her own topic, and I've *never* pushed a student to do a piece of *my* research, even if they're serving as an RA on one of my grants. As a result the subjects of my students' dissertations are all over the place. On maybe a half dozen occasions, after many failed attempts to decide on a topic, I've asked the desperate student if they'd like me to *suggest* a topic, but I think there have only been a couple of times when they've actually taken the suggestion.

In reading this over I really don't know what to make of it all, but I'm proud to say that in my 30 years at UCLA I've had only one or two ABDs.

When it comes to the hurdles of qualifying exams, dissertation orals, etc., my job is always to be an advocate and a protector. Academe unfortunately has its share of assholes, people who take pleasure in making students and younger faculty feel uncomfortable or inadequate. So I take it as my personal responsibility to protect students (not just my advisees but others as well) from such people. The best way is to keep them off committees, but if one slips through, then I feel I have to do whatever I can to try to minimize the damage they do.

When it comes to new or younger faculty, I guess my approach has always been to support and encourage. The life of the Assistant Professor or "junior" faculty member has become almost untenable, what with all the responsibilities, competition, and pressure to achieve and excel. I think the tenure and promotion process has become almost inhumane, and what else can a senior faculty member do except support and encourage? When the person comes up for judging by the senior faculty, I usually find myself taking the side of the candidate, no matter how marginal the record might be.



My approach and philosophy to mentoring has always been to first identify a graduate student's or a new faculty member's strengths and then build on those strengths. I also like to develop a friendship with them where I can connect at a personal level and learn about their lives, their joys and their struggles.

I like to listen to them and try to bring out the best in them. I work on trying to being aware of when I am critical and impatient, and I try to correct it. I hope that I manage to do so. I have high expectations and a strong belief that they can meet my expectations. I have marveled at my student's work, creativity and talents. I do get a great deal of enjoyment when I'm working with them one on one. Working on dissertations has been a real pleasure for me.



For me, mentoring is about understanding the other person – trying to see their strengths and areas for development, hearing where they are trying to go/how they are trying to develop and to what ends, and working with them to get there. In practice, it is like developing an Individual Education Plan [IEP] for adults through which you help the person build underlying skills and abilities that help them see and enact the "scholar" or "scholar/practitioner" within. If you believe that the students you have admitted to your program or the new faculty you have hired have the capacity to succeed with appropriate support (like believing all children can learn), then it becomes your responsibility, at least in part, to help them do so. Not that this always works,

but it is my starting philosophy. Mentoring is also the responsibility of the collective; students and early career faculty [and administrators!] need multiple mentors since none of us have the capacity to single-handedly meet all of someone else's needs, nor is this a useful strategy for developing an inclusive next generation of scholars and leaders. Effective practice doesn't work only one-on-one; mentoring doesn't need to, either.

A lot of my research has been about leadership, and so I have written and studied this topic from many perspectives over time. There's a lot of similarity for me between leadership and mentoring. Heider, in translating parts of the Tao, says that you need to let your presence be felt but have the group lead itself, and that we shouldn't force our needs, insights and agendas to the forefront. Rather, it is like being a midwife who facilitates the processes of others. Kim and Mauborgne describe this as seeing the space in between the spokes of a wheel where the light streams through, and knowing who represents the light. Mentors may be the spokes, but reframing one's orientation to focus on the light in between those spokes seems quite the point of mentoring and graduate education and developing the leaders of the future.



My approach is to have an open unbiased perspective about the individuals I work with because I believe every student has the capacity to grasp and comprehend what we teach them. It is all about empowering the students who have a unique gift to share with everyone. They may not know that the gift is within them, so it is up to us, as mentors, to tell them what we see or hear that is special. The students rely upon us to give them the encouraging verbiage because are the "wise ones" and they do believe what we tell them.

I try to share my tenure and promotion experiences with new faculty so they know that "impossible is nothing". I try to keep the lines of communication open and talk to my faculty proteges throughout the year (if we are not on the same campus) and I surprise them with cards, text messages, or email to let them know I am thinking about them and they can connect with me anytime. My two key mentoring techniques are to invite student proteges as well as faculty to join me on a writing project when I see a connection with their research and mine. Second, I follow up on my proteges and keep them encouraged throughout their career.



I like to follow the golden-rule when it comes to many things, including mentoring: do unto others as you would like done to you. No one – particularly me ☺ - gets ahead on their own – especially in the often crazy world of academe. I try to do my best to give back, by providing support and helping others learning what they need to know in order to be successful.

***Where/from whom did you learn/develop your approach to mentoring?***

Mostly through trial and error. I suppose the notion of “getting the best possible product” is a projection of my approach to my own research onto to student—I’m always striving for the best product I can produce in my own work, and I suppose that I’ve just been applying that same value to my students’ work. (In retrospect this may sound unreasonable, and it may well be.)

The strong feelings of support for students and young faculty may be a reflection of the fact that I’ve been blessed throughout my life with some wonderful mentors—my parents, my high school choir teacher, the head of our music department in college, my dissertation advisor, my first on-the-job mentor and friend John Holland, my boss at ACE Logan Wilson, and my late friend and colleague Howard Bowen. These older folks were all tremendously loving and supportive, even when I got out of line. They exemplified what Carl Rogers liked to call “unqualified positive regard.” This is how I really feel about all of my former students.



In my generation, and being a woman, I did not receive much mentoring. But those who played that role for me were mentors who had an unqualified positive regard from me; from getting me research assistantships when I was a poor graduate student to opening doors for me professionally. My graduate/dissertation advisor was a critical person in my years as a graduate student and from him I learned about the importance and power of that relationship. Later, when I was a young professional I encountered a very wise and powerful mentor who was my “silent” mentor, like an anonymous donor. He recommended me to serve on important national committees, task forces, and commissions, very helpful and supportive move on his part, which taught me the critical role a mentor can play.



I think that my “approach” developed from two main influences. The first, and perhaps most obvious given my reference to IEPs was my undergraduate training in special education. For four years, in multiple classes every quarter, we developed IEPs for every student in every subject. You had to learn to listen well, to ask good questions, to try multiple teaching learning strategies to meet very diverse learning needs, and to critically reflect on what was happening in the moment and after the fact; we were assessed not just for learning outcomes students achieved but for how we were becoming skilled in strategizing with students to achieve those learning

objectives. You learned to meet students where they were, not where some arbitrary measure like a grade level or standardized test question said they should be, and figure out how they might most effectively move forward. Their success was their success; I still believe this with every graduate student with whom I work – we, as faculty can't do it for our advisees. But it was also clear that, as an educator, we could impede their progress or work very hard to facilitate it. I still take notes in every class or advising session about what's happening with students – what is connecting, what isn't, who seems to be having concerns about what and why, what might I have done differently or need to do differently in the next class or advising session, etc.

There is no question that I also have been privileged with terrific mentors myself, in and out of the classroom – sometimes more senior to me professionally and sometimes not. Some (including wonderful students) have pushed me far beyond my comfort zone, encouraged me to take professional risks or change my career or research directions before I necessarily saw these things for myself, and brought me along with them in so many different ways. Others have mentored me by letting me take the lead – reminding me of the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship, that I can [and should] continue to learn as much from my students and peers and senior colleagues as I might be perhaps teaching them. My mentor network has not always stayed the same, but some influential colleagues have been present for a long time, sharing their lives with me without curtailing my own growth and development.



I developed my approach from mentors in my church, teachers in my elementary school, a special high school counselor, and my advisers at The University of Iowa. My mother and father kept me in church all during my childhood in Alton, Illinois. It was the church that provided the opportunity to perform and speak publicly, hone my leadership skills, and travel. The church members/mentors saw greatness in every child and many of us became college graduates. I attended a segregated elementary school in Alton, Illinois in the early 60's (so much for Brown v Board of Education and "with all deliberate speed..."). The teachers at Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School were phenomenal African American women. They were always encouraging, enthusiastic about our accomplishments, and did not discriminate (there were many children who were poor, academically challenged, or lacked a family support system). The teachers encouraged and mentored us regardless of our personal limitations or circumstances and we all felt loved.

When I was in high school there was one counselor who encouraged me to take college prep courses and apply to several colleges. He knew I needed an ample amount of financial aid so he nominated me for every scholarship in the Alton area and I received quite a few. Again, this is a person who saw the hidden potential in me which made me self efficacious and ready to tackle college life.

In college my advisers in the special support services program made sure I did not let the ACT scores determine how successful I would become, they made sure I honed my leadership skills

and transitioned from undergraduate to graduate school in student personnel. One adviser told me that "the only thing a B.A. means is 'Begin Again' do not stop with the BA, get your master's degree and then work on your doctorate". Those words spoken to me as a college junior shaped my entire academic career and demeanor toward learning.



Joan Stark once told me that the best way that I could thank her for all that she did for me was to serve as a mentor to others. Michael Nettles taught me the benefits of involving students in all aspects of the research process, from conceptualization to publication. I've also tried to observe – and learn from – the many others who have provided (and continue to provide) me with various types of assistance and career boosts, including writing letters of recommendation, nominated me for various opportunities, involving me in conversations about research and funding, talking out loud about work-related challenges, etc.

***Provide some helpful tips that mentors can do to be effective.***

Find your own style. Whatever makes you comfortable. Be authentic with your students. Model who you are; don't play a role according to some prescription for "ideal mentoring."



My helpful, I hope, tips are: cultivate a positive regard; use encouragement; show respect; provide guidance, and finally experience enjoyment in the role of mentor and in your relationship with your mentee. I found that working in a research project of a mutual interest and in co-authoring with my students and young colleagues has been a growing experience for me and hopefully for those I mentor. It helps me work on, develop, and reinforce the qualities I mentioned above. Also getting excited about my students' ideas and letting them work on them has been very rewarding for me because I can learn from them, while they pursue their passions.



Remember that mentoring needs vary by the individual and their time as a graduate student or over the course of their early faculty/professional career. Therefore, you the mentor needs to know when to step up or get out of the way, etc. Listening and asking good questions can often serve both of you better than having “the” answers.

Be patient. There are limits and sometimes the best thing for the mentee is to just let them go because you really aren't going to be able to foster an effective relationship. At the same time, if you take a developmental approach, you know that this requires challenge and support in ways that are not absolute or always clearly defined. So like every other relationship, it takes time, maintenance, and a willingness to be authentic.

Mentoring is about the person in front of you and who they can become, not the person that you want [or expect] them to be. This may be especially important for part-time students who want to stay in administrative practice rather than become faculty. These students don't see the world according to my faculty view, so I have to remember why their pursuit of a Ph.D. matters to practice and help them engage the scholar-practitioner within who values data based decision making and informed policy – a critically important role in improving higher education.

Be clear about your expectations, and realize it's ok to say no. This was great advice given to me that I have to continually work on....



Listen to the protege because they may be quiet, shy, and introverted so the gregarious mentees may get more attention because they are outspoken. Many of my first generation proteges are a bit unsure about the graduate school environment so I try to make sure they feel welcome and supported. Share your story with the protege because it humanizes the mentor. Mentor away from the office, I like to take my proteges off campus and away from the place that causes the greatest distractions or dissonance and move to a space that is comfortable (a counterspace according to Critical Race Theorists).

Share your work with the protege, this includes presentations, lectures, class materials, and writing projects. Invite the protege to be part of these scholarly experiences every opportunity possible.

Have fun and show your carefree humorous side. I try to laugh and make sure my proteges see a relaxed side of me whenever possible. I share my cycling or cooking experiences with them. I also talk about my pets and other fun avocations so they know I am not one dimensional and serious 24/7.



I try to learn about the needs and goals of individual students and adapt mentoring accordingly. I also have tried to share with students both the joys and the challenges of faculty life – including the joys and challenges of juggling work-family issues, the joys of having something published but the rejections and revisions that occur along the way, etc. I also have asked more senior colleagues many questions of about how they have addressed some mentoring-related challenges. I think that I've become a better mentor over time, as I've learned more about how to be a faculty member and become more comfortable in this role.

## REFLECTIONS FROM MENTEES

*Provide some great advice that you have received from your mentor.*

“Whenever I’ve intentionally tried to make money, I’ve lost money.” - There was a larger message regarding staying true to your values and pursuing only those things that you truly value.

“I don’t know, what do you want to do?” – His message was that important decisions in research (and probably beyond) must begin with a reflective, internal, conversation so as to stay close to your inner needs, your most strongly held values, and your personal commitments. Don’t be afraid of them.

“How are you?” – Not direct advice but mentoring by example. She began every interaction with me by asking me about my life and my day, implicitly telling me how important my life as a whole and my person as a whole were to her. Life was not just about work. Balance is important. Relationships are extremely important. Work on them.



First, I would say that I’m not sure Marilyn actually conceives of herself as a mentor. In the first leadership class I had with her, we had an entire set of readings on mentoring and long classroom conversations on whether it was necessary to be acknowledged as a mentor/mentee and what implication this had on the outcomes. I came away from that experience thinking that the natural evolution of mentoring seemed to be Marilyn’s style. This makes me question the definitions of mentor versus role model. For me, I think the difference involves one of degrees. Role models may be short term individuals who are viewed from afar whereas a mentor is someone who has more invested in the relationship and it is reciprocal—always a give and take. Mentoring involves a time commitment and shifts over time as individual needs change and the relationship grows.

Mentors for me must have your respect, be willing to tell you things that you don’t want to hear—and know that is okay, and get you to move forward in your own development. The learning I’ve taken from my experiences with Marilyn is to question assumptions—your own and those that others bring to the situation. This lesson is perhaps the biggest I’ve taking from my learning with her. When I am critically reflective, I continue to advance my learning. It requires a heightened awareness of what I’ve brought to the table and assumed.

Marilyn never tells you what to do. She makes you figure out what to do and meets you where you are. This requires ownership of the decisions, but she helps put spotlights in all the corners that you may not have considered, reminds you that you take yourself with you where ever you

go—so expect similar outcomes if you don't change! She is a good listener, well connected, and a good leader who sees the view from the balcony—she takes you there with her and it is treat!



I think Marilyn, although she provides advice, is more likely to facilitate a setting in which she is asking a lot of questions and as the learner you are exploring ideas along with her. This is true whether it is in class or one on one during the dissertation process. Below are a number of things I learned through my interactions with Marilyn as my mentor.

1. I learned that honesty is paramount. Her complete honesty from the outset about the opportunities and limitations of doing doctoral work at MSU were a breath of fresh air. She never told me what she thought I wanted to hear; instead she told me her perspective in a way that I could hear it.
2. Marilyn views her students as full and whole people. Not just scholars. Her actions as a mentor are aligned as such.
3. The mentoring relationship is reciprocal. Marilyn gave so much of herself in terms of time, energy, talent, and goodness that I had to keep reminding myself – and didn't realize until much later to some degree – that I was giving to the relationship in ways that were meaningful to her as a mentor. That we were both learning through the process.
4. It is quite likely that a mentee will need the support of multiple mentors as a single individual is not likely to have either the time or the capacity to meet all of his or her needs. At MSU, I found that mentoring rarely only occurred via 1:1 relationships with an adviser. Instead, during my time in the HALE Community of Scholars it was clear that the entire faculty were committed to my personal, intellectual, and professional growth and development. It was my responsibility as a learner to seek out what I could learn from each of them, and from peers and those outside of MSU, to grow and develop. What this means in practice is that a mentor doesn't have to do or be everything to the mentee.
5. Keep going. Doctoral work is a process. It is hard, but time on task helps move on forward.



- Find a balance between personal life and academic life.
- Do research that is important to you, not simply because it is a “hot” topic.
- You have to be willing to ask for help sometimes.

- Get the dissertation done. It is not going to be perfect, you have the rest of your career to continue to improve it.
- It is more important to truly understand a concept/learn the material than to simply get all the answers right.



My mentor, Mary Howard Hamilton, has offered numerous nuggets of advice and support. She has stressed the importance of maintaining a sense of humility. She has connected me with various scholars to help me in establishing relationships in the field of higher education. She consistently validates the scholarship in which I engage and offers advice regarding how I should approach various studies. She has helped me understand the politics and dynamics inherent in faculty work. She has advised me to focus on my research, but also be visible and available to students. She has provided advice on crafting position cover letters to communicate specific information to employers. She advised me to weigh the pros and cons of every situation. She consistently tells me and demonstrates the importance of maintaining spiritual well-being. She also provides information so that I don't make the same mistakes that she has. She allowed me to co-teach with her and chaired my dissertation.

While her advice has been important, the overall relationship has been the biggest factor because we connect on various levels. I know that I can go to her about anything and she will be supportive, honest and encouraging, never afraid to tell me what I need to hear, even when I don't want to hear it. Moreover, she has helped me to understand what my identity as an African American woman means in higher education. She has shared the inequities, challenges, and triumphs with me.



- Do not waste time stressing out about tenure; if you work hard and do good work you will be fine.
- Remember that you are building your life -- not just your career.
- Life balance is key in order to be productive.
- Try to be as efficient as possible and meet all deadlines.



Heather does not give advice, per se. Rather, she provides guidance by asking many questions and offering another perspective on the issue at hand. Whether we are discussing research, writing, teaching, or job applications, she will often preface her comments with, "Something to think about..." Instead of telling me how to resolve problems, she helps me to come up with solutions on my own, and suggests alternative ways to consider a dilemma, thus turning every experience into a learning opportunity. In so doing, Heather has provided me with the tools I need to approach problems independently, which has made me a more confident student, researcher, and teacher.



I remember when my mentor, Mary Howard-Hamilton, told me that I had to be very deliberate about taking time for my writing. She advised me to schedule my writing as a "meeting" and to not allow anything else to conflict with it. She also encouraged me to take a full day per week to write and think. I still do both and it is largely because of this advice that I have been able to be productive amidst the other pressures on my time (students, colleagues, teaching, service, family, etc.).

Mary Howard-Hamilton modeled to me how important it is to surround oneself with other people who "get it" when it comes to work on race, gender, or social justice issues more generally. She also modeled to me how necessary it is to create a community of accountability on these issues. She created a community of critically-oriented people around her and invited me into this community. The community that she created is still at the heart of my intellectual support network. I have since attempted to create this kind of community among my own graduate students and with colleagues across the country.

Particularly when it comes to work about race and gender, Mary strongly promoted the importance of knowing oneself first. That is, she maintained that one can't possibly begin to question racism and sexism without knowing one's own role in or experiences with these issues. She asked me the tough questions that helped me to begin this self reflective process. I still think about this often in my scholarly work and it drives the questions that I ask of students who desire to study similar issues.

Mary Howard-Hamilton encouraged me to push the envelope with my work. Even when other people questioned why I, as a White woman, might want to devote my research agenda to working with African American women, Mary Howard-Hamilton believed in me and my work. She encouraged me to question previous findings, theories, and approaches and to develop my own thinking. There is a careful balance here between understanding the previous and current body of work, but, also pushing it to new heights. Mary strikes this balance and then fosters it in those around her. It is in my mentoring relationship with her that I became more courageous in questioning previous assumptions.

***Describe how you are applying/will apply what you have learned to your own mentoring that you do/will do.***

I've taken all of these models to heart in my relationships with students and even in the classroom. I teach students that values are important and should be investigated and considered deeply and often. I talk about congruence. I talk about these in the context of conducting research and in daily life. I try to model it for students. I ask students about their lives, loves, and lemons. At the beginning of class, I always ask for *en vivo* facebook statuses.



I find in mentoring my own students that I draw heavily from the experiences I've had with Marilyn. I try to model critical reflection and encourage students to be reflective learners. I try to be prompt with feedback to take advantage of teachable moments and I'm flexible with my classroom teaching since multiple means lead to the end. I work to meet people where they are versus where they will be or where I wish they were. All these are lessons that Marilyn modeled and I felt were most important. The full circle has come when I have students of mine who have met Marilyn and she has served as a mentor for them too. I still learn lessons from Marilyn and find that I can immediately put them to play with my own students. Learning patience in allowing students to learn their own lessons is part of the evolving process.



One of the things that I really took away from my experience working closely with Marilyn is that teaching/mentoring is never, or at least should never be, about me. It should be focused on promoting reflection, learning and growth. Each student is unique, is in a different place, has unique needs and challenges, and responds differently to opportunities and adversity. That's OK. The goal is to help them move forward.

As a mentor/colleague I'm more patient, more understanding, more empathetic, less guarded, more giving, and more willing to offer support for colleagues and peers. I view the role as a gift and a responsibility.

Mentoring is highly time intensive and has limits in the number of students one can work with effectively. It is important to understand and define my own limits and be honest about what I can and can't do.

Marilyn has the unique ability to hear what I'm NOT saying as much as what I am. Her ability to see the areas that I'm ignoring or leaving unexamined is quite extraordinary. I'm working on developing that talent. At the core of this is the ability to listen.



- I treat my graduate students as colleagues not merely as work horses. Sandy always treated me like a colleague so I always felt so much more invested in the work that I did for him.
- I involve graduate students in writing/publishing. Sandy was always willing to be a second author on a paper so that I could begin developing my own academic voice.
- I try to treat each graduate student as an individual realizing that each one of them needs more/different attention in certain areas. I think Sandy was great at determining the right combination of support every one of his students needed.
- I always try to keep my eyes and ears open for opportunities that may be beneficial to my mentees academic and professional development.
- I am realistic with my mentees. They know that I cannot be all things to them. Sandy never took it personally (and in fact encouraged his mentees) to seek out other people as resources.



I use what I have learned from my mentor, Mary Howard Hamilton, and apply it to the mentoring relationships that I have established with current masters and doctoral students. My mentor validated my experiences, invited me to collaborate on research and continues to offer sound advice for decisions that I make with my career. I in turn, devote a significant amount of time collaborating on research projects with students. These collaborations don't simply emerge from student desires to work with me. I also take the initiative to gauge student interests and invite them to collaborate. I also validate the experiences of the students with whom I work and advocate, particularly in arenas where their voices are not readily valued. In terms of student career paths, I have been totally honest with students to help them understand the challenges and reward associated with both administrative and faculty work. I don't tell students on which pathway they should proceed. Instead, I provide as much information as possible, help them to weigh pros and cons so that they have the agency to make their own informed decisions. Most importantly, I harbor no shame in sharing mistakes that I have made in the past with students so that they don't do the same thing.



While I can only aspire to be as wonderful a mentor as Heather is, after working with Heather for over three years, hers is the voice in my head when I collaborate with my fellow students. When providing feedback as a tutor, teaching assistant, or peer, I often find myself asking the same sorts of questions Heather asks me when she and I are working together. Heather has also shown me the value of time and attention. In my future mentoring roles, I hope to be as generous as Heather has been with me and her other mentees. Regardless of how busy she is, Heather finds the time to meet with us, and when she does, she is completely engaged. She is an exceptional listener, and remembers details about our respective projects and classes, as well as our lives outside of school. (Heather never ends a meeting without asking, “And how is everything else going?”) Finally, Heather has taught me to appreciate the power of encouraging comments like “nice job” and “thank you for all of your hard work” – small phrases that go a long way toward making students feel recognized and appreciated.



Mary Howard-Hamilton’s approach to working with students is the centerpiece to my own teaching and advising philosophy. During my doctoral program, she served as a faculty mentor to a student research team with which I was fortunate enough to be involved. This team became a vital educational tool toward building my research skills. But, it also served as a support network for students of color and for those of us who do research with underrepresented students. Now, as an assistant professor, I am starting to build a similar team at my current institution. I find that this fosters a better intellectual environment in the department, helps to support students, builds students’ research skills, and is a catalyst to my own intellectual growth as a faculty member.

One aspect of mentoring that is of vital importance is modeling. Mary takes good care of her physical, emotional and spiritual well being in addition to being a good scholar, mentor and teacher. I still remember that Mary ran marathons while also being an active scholar, for example, and the memory of seeing her do this propels me to remember to take care of my own physical, emotional and spiritual well being.

***Provide some tips that mentees can do  
to improve their relationships with their mentors.***

Tell mentors what you need from them; they often don’t know.

Take the initiative to set up time to talk, and especially, talk and eat. Mentors are often too busy to initiate but are happy to meet and eat.

Find out something that your mentor likes to talk about outside of work like sports, books, politics, etc. and then engage in a conversation on those topics. Get your mentor out of the traditional role to help create a more personal bond.

Meet with your mentor regularly, about once a month, if you don't already see him/her on a regular basis.



Mentees have an obligation in the mentor/mentee relationship. They cannot merely be “takers” and not reciprocate. I see part of this obligation as representing professional behavior and good citizenship. Namely, doing what you agree to do, being timely, respecting the time and attention of the mentor and not squandering it. The idea of a reciprocity within the relationship means that when Marilyn asks for some information, needs a quick read of some writing, or needs a contact or reference, I respond as soon as I can, knowing that she has done this on too numerous occasions to count. As a learner herself, she always takes what is given and incorporates it into her own understanding. The benefits of a long-serving mentor is that you have a history upon which the relationship is built, thus a type of short-hand talk results allowing for shared meaning.



1. Communicate in a way that works for both parties. Always respond to request quickly and with the information requested. Have reasonable expectations. Be open to learning. Let go of the idea of trying to prove yourself or trying to impress your mentor with your intelligence or insight/ the goal is to move forward or improve your writing, thinking, or quality of your professional work.
2. Do NOT waste the time of your mentor. For example, come prepared when meeting with your mentor. Be sure to have done the thinking, the writing, the editing well in advance. The role of the mentor is not to do that work – either academic or professional – for the mentee but to help them enhance what they are doing as they move forward.
3. Know that just as the mentor is giving of him/herself, the mentee is also providing energy and commitment to the relationship. This is a gift you are receiving; treat it as such and reciprocate.
4. Enjoy the relationship and cherish the time with your mentor as a learning opportunity. And, if you harbor jealousy toward colleagues, let it go.
5. Be forgiving and understanding that many of the best mentors are stretched too thin because many students – current and former – choose them for this role. When they have the opportunity and time, they will give it.
6. Coffee. Bring your mentor coffee. He/she deserves it.



- Do not expect your mentor to guess what it is you need. Explain to him/her what you need.
- Be willing to participate in events that your mentor suggests to you even if you are not confident that it is the “best” thing for you at the time.
- Respect your mentor(s) time. We all have busy lives so make sure that when you solicit advice or assistance, it is truly needed.
- Do not expect equal amounts of “support” from your mentor. Often it may seem like they are helping some students more than others. Do not take it personally. There may be other circumstances that you are not aware of.



- Be respectful of mentors’ time.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions.
- Understand that there are various types of mentors. You don’t have to have just one. Different mentors can fulfill different needs and can respond to situations from different perspectives.
- Seek opportunities for participation in collaborative projects.
- Maintain confidentiality. If your mentor shares private information, don’t share it with others.
- Consistently express thanks.



- Never give your mentor writing that is not your best work and expect them to fix it. Do the best that you possibly can before you give it to him/her.
- Be willing to work hard and do your best work for that person. Always. Even years after you graduate. You are a reflection of that person. You are now part of their academic family tree: don’t be the bad apple!

- Know when your mentor is absolutely overwhelmed and try to avoid adding to his/her stress, if possible.



First of all, I believe that those of us who have mentors are quite fortunate. As with any relationship, finding a good mentor – or being found by one, as the case may be – is as much about luck and timing as it is about personality and shared interests. That said, for a mentoring relationship to succeed, it is important for mentees to listen to and act upon the wisdom their mentors have to offer. Of course, hard work helps, too. If a mentee is willing to put in the effort that is necessary to achieve his or her goals, their mentor may, in turn, be more willing to invest the time and energy required to foster a mentor-mentee relationship and steward the mentee's success.



Mentoring is a two-way street. The mentee must play an active role for the relationship to be fruitful. It is important to be forthcoming about one's goals, questions, and needs. In some ways, for mentoring to work, there has to be some level of vulnerability where the mentor and the mentee admit some of the things that they do *not* know and then learning can begin.

Mentoring does not happen automatically, and it does not happen in all relationships. A mentoring relationship takes time and commitment for both parties. For the mentee, I would recommend thinking about the time/energy that one has available to put toward the relationship and the time/energy that one is asking of the mentor. Then, it is important to make expectations clear within the relationship.

<b><i>Recommended resources on mentoring</i></b>
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- Johnsrud, L. K. (1990). Mentoring for administrative staff: Relationships that help and relationships that hinder. In K. M. Moore, & S. B. Twombly (Eds.), *Administrative careers and the marketplace* (pp. 57-66). San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc.
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- Kasprisin, C. A. and Single, P. B. (2005). [Identifying essential elements of successful e-mentoring programs through needs assessment](#). In F. K. Kochan & J. T. Pascarelli (Eds.), *Mentoring and technology: Insights and challenges*.(pp. 51-71) Greenwich, CT: Information Age Press.
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- Patton, L.D. (2009). My sister's keeper: A qualitative examination of significant mentoring relationships among African American women in graduate and professional schools. *Journal of Higher Education*, 80(5), 510-537.
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- Sorcinelli, Mary Deane. *Mutual Mentoring*.<sup>1</sup>  
[http://www.umass.edu/ofd/mentoring/Mutual%20Mentoring%20Guide%20Final%2011\\_20.pdf](http://www.umass.edu/ofd/mentoring/Mutual%20Mentoring%20Guide%20Final%2011_20.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> What I like about this model is the fact that mentoring is not solely embodied in one person, rather you can find different aspects of the lessons you are seeking to learn in multiple individuals. In the workshop, Mary Deane presented a quadrant on research, teaching, service, and personal balance. The charge was to identify who in your institution and who outside your institution helped you in each of these quadrants. For me, Marilyn figured in all four quadrants! The guide provides a perspective on the responsibilities of each of the parties involved, mentor and mentee. The model also highlights the reciprocal relationship of students to faculty and acknowledges that this relationship is a two-way street.

Wade-Gayles, G. (2003). *In praise of our teachers: A multicultural tribute to those who inspired us*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press

Washington, D. (2006). *A hand to guide me: Legends and leaders celebrate the people who shaped their lives*. New York: Meredith Books

Wright-Edelman, M. (1999). *Laterns: A memoir of mentors*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

### ***Parting advice***

You're probably your own best resource. Who in your life has been a good mentor for you? How did *they* manage to be so effective with *you*?

Enjoy the process and learn from it. Also trust your intuition.

### ***Mentors Nominated by ASHE Members***

Walter Allen  
Marilyn Amey  
Alexander Astin  
Helen Astin  
Benita Barnes  
Estella Bensimon  
John Braxton  
Pamela Couture  
Ada Demb  
Pamela Eddy  
Marybeth Gasman  
Judy Glazer-Raymo  
Penny Poplin Gosetti  
Linda Hagedorn  
Don Hossler  
Mary Howard Hamilton

Patricia King  
Kathy Manning  
John P. Murray  
KerryAnn O'Meara  
Laura Perna  
Laura Rendón  
Gary Rhoades  
Rob Rhoads  
Vicki Rosser  
Heather Rowan-Kenyon  
Edward St. John  
Terrell Strayhorn  
John Thelin  
Barbara Townsend  
Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner