# Mentorship

## Mentor and Mentee Relationship

Mentoring is a power-free partnership between two individuals who desire mutual growth. One of the individuals usually has greater skills, experiences, and wisdom (Weinstein, 1998).

* Mentoring is a journey that requires perseverance.
* Mentoring includes helping mentoring partners to determine their priorities and uncover their passions.
* Mentoring concentrates on the needs of the one being mentored, not on the agenda of the mentor.
* Mentoring focuses on changing people from the inside out, not the outside in.
* Mentoring is one of the best ways to have a significant personal impact on society, even for generations (Stoddard, 2003).

Research shows that both students and faculty benefit when graduate students are involved in effective mentoring and advising relationships.

* The student is more productive in terms of research activity, conference presentations, predoctoral publications, instructional development, and grant-writing. The well-mentored students' academic success is evident in higher completion rates and a shorter than average time to degree.
* Faculty benefit in terms of both personal and professional satisfaction. As these students are more productive, faculty in turn attract better students, extend their professional network of future colleagues, and amplify their own success (Rackham Graduate School, 2013).

## Mentorship Structure

### Role expectations

*“It is the professor who owns primary responsibility for initiating this process and ferreting out the student’s expectations” (Johnson, 2007).*

Be clear about expectations. Discuss the role that faculty and student will play. Introduce students to policies, responsibilities, expectations, and resources. Provide a department handbook. Students need a guide that clarifies expectations and serves as a roadmap for the program. Include detailed, up-to-date information about requirements and resources for each stage of the doctoral experience. Include forms and deadlines. Make it available in print and electronically (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013).

Consider the following:

* Will the mentor provide feedback?
* How long is the mentor’s turnaround time when reading drafts of a thesis or dissertation?
* What are the mentor’s expectations concerning coauthorship and intellectual property stemming from collaborative work with students?
* What can the student expect in terms of letter of recommendation and other early career support? (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013)

### Clarify goals

*“It is imperative that…the professor begins to help the student shape and articulate both short-term and long-term goals” (Johnson, 2007).*

Establish milestones between start and finish, including setting of timelines and construction of tentative plans for achieving specific goals. For many students, knowing that his/her mentor has set expectations, and the context of those expectations, is enough to keep research and writing on track. Encourage the effective use of time. Share techniques and practices that have been useful for others but recognize that people are different (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013).

### Frequency and duration of contact

Mentors and mentees should meet on a regular basis. In the beginning, you may want to use a set agenda, shared in advance with the student, of topics you’d like to cover. Try to achieve some initial agreement on frequency of contact and duration of relationship. This should encourage the student to hone time management and organizational skills. Regular meetings should also increase the student’s comfort level so that when a problem emerges he/she is more likely to seek your advice (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013).

Consider the following:

* How often do you typically meet with advisees?
* Do you schedule regular meetings or expect students to drop by to see you when there are questions or concerns?
* Are students expected to schedule meetings directly with you or speak with your secretary?
* Do you expect mentees to attend both individual and team meetings?
* What should the student expect in terms of meeting frequency (keeping in mind your time and travel constraints)? (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013)

### Relationship boundaries

*“It is…wise to collaborate with the student early on in setting basic professional boundaries around the mentorship” (Johnson, 2007).*

Boundary setting might involve specifying appropriate and inappropriate roles. Confidentiality and expectations of such should be discussed. Model professional responsibility - it’s not enough to act with integrity in every aspect of your work as a teacher, researcher, and author. You need to help students understand the reasons for you actions. Share the right skills at the right time. Remember that there are multiple phases in the degree completion process so it’s best to introduce students to the skills they are most likely to need currently or in the near future (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013).

Consider the impact of the student’s ethnicity and other group identities on the mentoring relationship:

* Gender
* Age
* Sexual Orientation
* Religious Affiliation
* Educational Level
* Generation in College
* Physical Capabilities (Driscoll, 2004)

### Periodic evaluation

Draw up a “contract” with your mentee (reference template provided) – an articulated set of responsibilities and expectations for both parties in the mentoring relationship. Review student progress periodically. At least once a year formally assess student progress, set goals and identify milestones for the coming year. Students can complete in advance a form detailing which requirements are fulfilled and plans for the coming year. A detailed summary should be provided in writing to the student and a copy placed in a file (Johnson, 2007 & Rackham, 2013).

## Best Practices/Tips

Recognize that not every student who sought your mentorship will choose the same career. Draw on colleagues and alumni to help students evaluate career options. Introduce mentees to a broad network of contacts and encourage them to learn about job opportunities in related fields (Rackham Graduate School, 2013).

## Sources

Johnson, W. B. (2007). On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty.

Driscoll, D. M. (2004). *Mentoring and diversity: A handbook for faculty mentoring LSAMP Indiana students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields*. Purdue University: West Lafayette, IN.

Rackham Graduate School. (2013). *Mentoring & advising*. Retrieved from <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/faculty-staff/information-for-programs/academic-success/mentoring-advising>

# TEMPLATE - Faculty Mentor Plan

## Goals of Project

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short-term Goals** | **Long-term Goals** |
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |

## Goals of Student

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short-term Goals** | **Long-term Goals** |
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |

## Goals of Mentor

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short-term Goals** | **Long-term Goals** |
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |

## Commitments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commitments** | **Signature of Acknowledgement** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |

## Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Tasks** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

# SAMPLE - Faculty Mentor Plan

## Goals of Project

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short-term Goals** | **Long-term Goals** |
| 1. Compare biomass accumulation between bacteria and algae in multiple gel matrices. | 1. Generate fundamental knowledge about algal biology and scaling algal biofuels production from cells and populations to large reactors. |

## Goals of Student

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short-term Goals (through 7/14)** | **Long-term Goals (by 5/2017)** |
| 1. Become familiar with research and research terms  2. Learn advanced microscopy techniques  3. Learn how to perform stable isotope analysis | 1. Complete MS  2. Contribute to 2 peer reviewed publications  3. Present research at national conference |

## Goals of Mentor

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short-term Goals** | **Long-term Goals** |
| 1. Help student identify thesis topic  2. Complete [identify task/objective] of research program | 1. Increase student’s knowledge about bioalgal energy  2. Connect student to professional network |

## Commitments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commitments** | **Signature of Acknowledgement** |
| 1. RCR training |  |
| 2. Bi-monthly meetings to review progress |  |
| 3. Attend EPSCoR All Hands Meeting |  |

## Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Tasks** |
| April 2014 | Complete RCR training |
| May 2014 |  |