Office of Faculty Affairs
Thursday Topics
December: Mentoring

Today: Mentoring Across Race and Gender Boundaries

December 18 How to Continue (or Close) a Long-Term Mentoring Relationship

December 25 Christmas (no workshop)
Successful Mentor—Trainee Relationships
Program for the Ethical and Responsible Conduct of Science and Scholarship (PERCSS)
http://PERCSS.wustl.edu
Objectives

- Define “Mentoring”
- Define “Race”
- What are some of the potential race and gender issues that may exist in the mentoring relationship?
- A few tips on how to deal with race and gender issues in the mentor/mentee relationship
Mentor
What Mentors Do

- Motivate
- Empower and encourage
- Nurture self-confidence
- Teach by example
- Offer wise counsel
- Raise the performance bar
- Shine in reflected light

Souba, W. Mentoring young academic surgeons, our most precious asset.
Mentor: Definitions

- From Greek mythology: Mentor was the wise and trusted counselor that Odysseus left in charge of his household during his travels.

- A mentor takes a special interest in helping another person develop into a successful professional.

- In academics, a mentor may also be a faculty advisor, but these are not synonymous. A mentor is more than an advisor.
“Mentors are advisors, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge; supporters, people who give emotional and moral encouragement; tutors, people who give specific feedback on one's performance; masters, in the sense of employers to whom one is apprenticed; sponsors, sources of information about and aid in obtaining opportunities; models, of identity, of the kind of person one should be to be an academic.”

Council of Graduate Schools (1995) citing Morris Zelditch
Why Mentors Matter

Faculty who have been mentored are more likely to

♦ Receive research grants
♦ Have greater institutional support for teaching, research and administration
♦ Have increased academic productivity
♦ Have increased career satisfaction

Mentee Benefits

- Support and guidance
- Encouragement
- Development of personal/professional strengths
Mentor Benefits

- Recognition
- Extension of professional network
- Increased productivity in the field
- Better / more successful employees
Mentor Dos and Don’ts

University of California, San Francisco
Faculty Mentoring Program
Facilitator Toolkit
Mentor Dos and Don’ts

❖ Do

♦ Listen actively
♦ Support and facilitate networking and brokering
♦ Teach by example
♦ Be aware of role conflict
♦ Encourage and motivate mentees to move beyond their comfort zone
♦ Promote independence
♦ Promote balance
♦ Rejoice in success and convey your joy
♦ Encourage reciprocity
Mentor Dos and Don’ts

Don’t

♦ Fix the problem
♦ Take credit
♦ Take over
♦ Threaten, coerce, or use undue influence
♦ Lose critical oversight by allowing friendship to cloud judgment
♦ Condemn (mistakes or lack of agreement are not career-altering disasters)
Mentoring New Faculty

- Mentoring is not dependent on personality, but rather on tasks and activities that the mentor/mentee do together.
- Early and enduring mentoring is most beneficial; mentoring pairs continue to meet regularly and progress when “nudged.”
- Using mentors from outside the mentee’s department is very effective.
- Multiple mentors are of value to provide different aspects of career development.

Mentoring New Faculty

- Fewer than 25 percent of faculty find mentors on their own and those who do are often white males.
- Formal mentoring is, overall, more effective than informal mentoring.
- Peer mentoring and informal mentoring may be of special importance to women, minorities, and more senior faculty.

The concept of categorizing humans into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of characteristics.

Anthropologists in the 17th and 18th centuries based racial classifications on observable characteristics such as skin color, hair type, body proportions, and skull measurements.
Many cultural anthropologists consider race to be a social or mental construct rather than a purely objective biological fact.

Social groups play an important role in defining the rules of race (e.g., a person who is considered Black in one society might be considered non-Black in another society).
As Defined by the Association of American Medical Colleges

“The applicant is asked to choose one or more of the following [as a self description (neither race nor ethnicity are based necessarily on genetics, but are meant to be self-descriptions based upon social and cultural affiliation)]:

♦ Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian (Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, Vietnamese, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander)
As Defined in Popular Literature

♦ Author Toni Morrison (Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination)

♦ “Race has become metaphorical—a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological ‘race’ ever was.”
As the USA’s first black president is poised to take office, a new report about race suggests it is a ‘changeable marker of social status’ rather than a fixed characteristic of one’s birth...data collected between 1979 and 2002 and analyzed by sociologists at universities in California and Oregon show change over time in both racial self-identification and the way people perceive the racial identity of others.” (USA Today, December 9, 2008)
Race: Still a Hot Topic

  - “In fiscal year 2007, the EEOC received 30,510 charges of race discrimination; resolved 25,882 race charges, and recovered $67.7 million in monetary benefits for charging parties and other aggrieved individuals (not including monetary benefits obtained through litigation).”
Gender
AAMC: U.S. Medical School Faculty Distribution by Gender and Rank, 2008 (126 Medical Schools)
A Few Tips on Negotiating Race and Gender Issues in the Mentoring Relationship
Make No Assumptions

- In the U.S., individuals bring multiple layers of historical circumstances, culture, religion, and ethnicity to their interactions with others; thus, do not make assumptions based on first impressions or basic demographic information.

- Knowing an individual’s ethnic or cultural “phenotype” does not necessarily predict the extent to which cultural differences may be present or relevant:
  - For example, a person of Chinese ancestry whose family has been in the U.S. from the mid-19th century may share little with a recent immigrant from China.
Establish Trust

- Quality mentoring requires trust and effort from both mentor and mentee, which comes about when the mentor and mentee welcome the opportunity to learn about differences.

- In a cross-gender or cross-cultural mentoring relationship, there could be a lack of comfort due to the uncertainty of the other person’s culture, experiences, values, and behaviors.

- Remember that people have different perceptions of reality and their view of the world has been developed through unique experiences.

Thomas DA. Mentoring and irrationality: The role of racial taboos. Hum Resour Manage. 1989; 28: 279-290
Communicate Openly and Often

David A. Thomas, H. Naylor Fitzhugh Professor of Business Administration and Unit Head, Organizational Behavior at Harvard Business School, performed hundreds of case studies during a 3-year study of 3 major corporations and found that minorities who were mentored by white males who acknowledged race as a potential barrier advanced further because the mentors could help them overcome obstacles.

Communicate Openly and Often

- Begin the relationship with conversations that are centered on safe topics, such as professional goals, meeting schedules, professional associations to join and functions to attend.

- After some time, there may be sufficient comfort to move forward onto other topics, such as those that address differences in gender, culture, family circumstances, and generation.

See Each Other as Individuals

- Check assumptions at the door.
- Resist viewing each other as part of a category based on gender, race, age, or other characteristics.
- Each of us has unique mentoring needs.
- Interpersonal styles vary across gender and race, in part because women and minorities are allowed a narrower band of acceptable assertive behaviors.

See Each Other as Individuals

- Simple clarification by the mentor, such as “This approach worked for me, but may not work the same for you…”

- The mentee can have multiple mentors for guidance and support in a variety of personal and professional areas to decrease the chance of an individual mentoring relationship proving inadequate.

Take the Initiative

- Some potential mentees may hesitate to seek assistance or advice because they do not want to be judged incapable of making it on their own, or may perceive themselves as a burden to others more senior and more accomplished.

- Mentors can assure the potential mentee that mentoring provides a beneficial learning experience for both partners (but not as a quid pro quo)

Mary Blitzer Field, M.Phil., University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Advance faculty professional development focus group program
Publicly Support the Mentee

- Help the mentee expand professional networks
  - Invite mentees as colleagues to meetings and events
  - Introduce mentees to colleagues and peers inside and outside of the department and institution
  - Encourage mentees to collaborate with influential others on projects
  - Include mentees in informal social activities that provide forums for informal “work talk.”
  - Coach the mentee in graceful self-promotion
Manage Power Differentials and Appropriate Boundaries

- Recognize that *power* is so historically ingrained in certain societal and structural positions that it often goes unrecognized.

- The mentor and mentee should distinguish appropriate positional power from social power ascribed by gender and race.

- Work together to ensure that the illegitimate aspects of power based on socialization, stereotypes, and attributions do not act as a barrier.
Manage Power Differentials and Appropriate Boundaries

- To maintain the relationship at a professional level, boundaries should be discussed, established, and respected.

- *Perceived* risk of sexual involvement and concerns about public image may inhibit a mentoring relationship.

- Cross-gender mentoring that is also cross-cultural may involve racial taboos that can add a barrier to establishing an effective cross-cultural mentoring relationship.


Manage Power Differentials and Appropriate Boundaries

- Maintain a high standard of conduct
  - Lead with qualities you want others to personify
  - Be on your best behavior
  - Act like a trusted friend
  - Show respect at all times
  - The word “different” does not mean “unequal”
  - Don’t exhibit patronizing behavior

- Don’t exhibit patronizing behavior
Acknowledgments

- Carole Bland PhD, Ann Taylor MD, Sindie Shollenberger PT, MS, University of Minnesota *Mentoring Systems: Benefits and Challenges of Diverse Mentoring Partnerships. Faculty Vitae, AAMC*