Managing and Mentoring Graduate Students

FAST – ADVANCE
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Recruiting the Best Graduate Student

• Contact early, often and directly – invite for visit if possible
• Recruit on a continual basis
• Check references closely
• Recruit from diverse sources
• Set a deadline and review packages when information is complete
Set Expectations Early and in Writing
What to Cover in Initial Meetings

- Roles and Responsibilities – Grad School Brochures
- Goals, Professional Development
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Work Style
- Work Plan
- Meetings – individual and committee meetings
- Feedback and Drafts
- Intellectual Property, Human Subjects, Ethics, Data ownership
- Confidentiality
- Recommendation letters, travel expectations
Mentoring and Graduate Education

• Most important factor to continue or withdraw from graduate school is the relationship with an advisor or mentor

• Having a mentor helps maximize the educational experience through guidance and support

• Helps in the retention of women and minorities who face unique barriers
Graduate Students’ Perspectives of a Quality Mentoring Relationship

1. Professional development opportunities
2. Advice on post-degree plans
3. Effective communication
4. Trust and mutual respect
5. Regularly scheduled meetings
6. Interactions outside of school
7. Genuine interest
What Can Go Wrong

1. Attention to Detail – missed deadlines
2. Fabrication/Falsification/Plagiarism
3. Funding issues
4. Publication/authorship
5. Career choice/expectation
6. Professional Development – how they spend their time outside the research arena
Your Experience as a Mentee or Mentor

1. Think about the mentors you have had in your life. What are the qualities you liked and disliked in those individuals?

2. Describe some of the struggles you have experienced mentoring graduate students.

3. What strategies have you learned to help you become a better mentor to graduate students?
Elements of Quality Mentoring Relationships

• Instrumental Support
  – Professional development
  – Networking
  – Gaining knowledge of field
  – Gaining skills needed to succeed

• Psychosocial Support
  – Counseling (e.g., remedy for stress)
  – Empathy
  – Friendship
  – Socialization related to norms of discipline
Strategies to Help Develop and Maintain a Quality Mentoring Relationship

- Coaching that is developmental
  - Skill enhancement
  - Confidence
- Opportunities for non-academic interactions
  - Genuine interest in the total person
- Consistency
  - Within and across gender and race/ethnicity
- Encouragement to identify other mentors
Strategies to Help Develop and Maintain a Quality Mentoring Relationship

• Groom graduate students to be colleagues
• Bi-directional relationship
• Don’t force assimilation to majority culture/norms/behaviors to be successful in STEM
  – Encourage students to embrace their racial/ethnic identity while still functioning in STEM circles (e.g., conferences, lab groups)
• Be an advocate, esp. for females and URMs
• Avoid microaggressions
  – Microinsults, microassaults and micro-invalidations
Strategies to Help Develop and Maintain a Quality Mentoring Relationship

- Attentive listening
- Mutual respect
- Honesty and transparency
- Address academic and professional weaknesses directly but with tact
- Fostering of academic and social integration
- Encourage peer to peer mentoring
- Recognize it takes time
Values and Benefits of Mentoring for Faculty

- Personal satisfaction and professional growth
- Professional and career opportunities
- Rejuvenating and motivating during mid or late career stages
- Enhance technical skills
- Networking, collaboration and sharing of ideas with others
- Increase in the number of graduate students
- Increased productivity
- Serve as an example to other colleagues
Questions?
References

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• http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/Fmentoring.pdf
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