Reflections on Faculty to Faculty Mentoring

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This paper grew from a presentation[1] I made as a Faculty Ally of the Susan Bulkeley Butler Center for Leadership Excellence's Support Circle (SBBCLE)[2] on February 26, 2021. The occasion was a drop-in session focused on mentoring as a gendered practice—what it meant to the faculty participating in the session, how it needed to adapt to evolving faculty needs, how it could best serve underrepresented minority (URM) faculty, and what potential minefields as well as best practices we had found in our own experiences as women faculty mentees and mentors. In this essay, I build on that presentation with the goal to contributing to a critical conversation on mentoring that the Butler Center has fostered in the last three years- and that it has used to excellent purpose to intervene and advocate for women and URM faculty at Purdue and beyond. While mentoring merits careful attention for many other groups in the academy, from staff to graduate students to administrators, in the interest of time I have confined the reflections below to faculty-to-faculty mentoring.

I begin with a brief consideration of three principles that promise success in a broad array of faculty mentoring practices, and then move on to consider in depth three specific models of mentoring that I addressed in my presentation. I conclude with some thought on how to address recurring questions and problems that surface around the issue of mentoring.

General Pathways to Success in Mentoring

Typical definitions of mentoring include the guidance, support, sponsorship and coaching that an established faculty member provides for a junior member. But I think what cuts to the heart matter is Lisa Beal's observation that to mentor is to commit and "exert oneself" for "the success of another" (Beal 2017:49). I would include under the rubric of such success not only the mentee's career advancement, but also her/his ability to maintain work-life balance, find

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[2] For more on the genesis and impact of the Support Circle, see the opening essay by Subramaniam and Zanotti in this issue.

supportive and collegial relationships in the academy, and achieve physical, mental, emotional and intellectual well-being. The first pathway to success in mentoring is for the mentor to see themselves as those who expend time, energy and effort in working for the success of their mentees- and defining that success in multifaceted ways. But the benefits do not flow in just one direction.

The second pathway to success requires that we honor the inherent (though often unacknowledged) reciprocity that inheres in all effective mentoring. We sometimes wrongly conclude that the power differential between mentor and mentee leaves little room for reciprocity, and we assume that the support and help flows only one way, from mentor to mentee, and so too does the sense of obligation and gratitude (albeit in the opposite direction, from mentee to mentor). Here mentoring itself is seen as benevolence, or even a system of personal favors, from the mentor to the mentee. This worldview can potentially lead some mentors to consider their efforts thankless and leave some mentees reluctant to seek meaningful mentoring in the hope of avoiding a feeling of obligation. I argue that we need a more constructive framing of reciprocity. In accepting the role of mentors in the first place, faculty might on the face of it appear to exert themselves uni-directionally for their mentee's success, but, importantly, their exertions in the long run ensure the success and growth of their discipline, institution and the academy. Mentees can best reciprocate by paying forward and actively seeking the role of mentors in their turn. The power differential between mentor and mentee cannot hinder this powerful and ongoing pattern of reciprocity. In creating conditions in which mentor and mentee are always paying forward, we set up mentoring to perpetuate and renew itself across academic generations, ideally gaining greater reach and depth in each iteration.

The third pathway to success I will outline here is for all involved to regard mentoring as a time-bound arrangement that will very likely go through phases in which mentor and mentee would have greater or lesser need of each other. Further, honest and transparent communication is essential in each phase, and particularly when the relationship begins and ends. A mentoring relationship can end when external circumstances change: for example, when a stated goal of the mentoring is achieved, from the publication of an article to the granting of tenure. But closure at any point, for example, when the personal dynamic changes between mentor and mentee, should be smooth and free of reproach, guilt, or hurt. Most academic faculty mentoring arrangements last at least one semester and as much as several years, but whatever their span, we should acknowledge that mentee needs might change in a way that the mentors can no longer address, and other mentors might fulfill more effectively- or that mentors might find their efforts more productively employed with other mentees. No-fault exit clauses must be part of an open discussion around mentoring within the institution and academy, and must also be discussed formally or informally between each mentor and mentee. A healthy approach would be to see mentoring as a phase in a long collegial relationship, one that could change form and even direction over time (with mentor and mentee switching roles) and one that can conclude without bitterness, ideally after a thoughtful conversation about what the arrangement has already achieved. Communication will be key from beginning to end.

Idealistic though one or more of the three pathways might seem, I believe they are within reach of all mentoring. There are implicit considerations in each of the three forms of mentoring (with some overlap) that I will address in the remainder of this paper. The three forms are 1)

hierarchical, dyadic mentoring; 2) group mentoring; and 3) peer mentoring. I conclude with brief recommendations on what we can do to ensure that mentoring works to the benefit not only of very many individual faculty, but also of our disciplines and institutions as a whole.

Hierarchical Dyadic Mentoring
I begin with hierarchical dyadic mentoring, quite familiar in the academy, in which individual senior established mentors are assigned to work with individual junior mentees, usually at the local level of departments and institutions. I posit that this model situates mentors as coaches who bring superior knowledge and authority to guide the mentee, and the mentees as novices who at present lack the wherewithal—the experience, the knowhow, the institutional savvy—to achieve their full potential.

Literature on mentoring is replete with instances when the hierarchical dyadic model has led to inappropriate exercise of power. Gregory Diggs et al. caution that "Neither politically neutral nor free from power issues, mentoring programs and relationships may actually reflect the power and interests of the organization rather than the interests of the mentors and their protégés" (2009:316). I would add that in the hierarchical and dyadic model, problems emerge especially when the mentor serves as coach *and* gatekeeper to the discipline; in the latter role, mentors can exercise enormous institutional power over the careers of their mentees. To cite obvious instances of this: mentors are sometimes in a position to vote for and advocate for and against the mentee's tenure as well as other opportunities for advancement; outside the institution, as established faculty, they can potentially often network to promote (or obstruct) the mentee's progress with respect to publication, grants and funding. Assigning this dual role of coach and gatekeeper to mentors was common practice when I began my career three decades ago. I see fewer instances of it today in my own discipline of cultural and literary studies, but it persists in many fields. If we accept Beal's definition of mentoring I cited earlier—namely the act of committing and "exert[ing oneself]" for "the success of another" (Beal 2017:49)—then the gatekeeping function focuses explicitly on the success of the discipline/institution rather than the success of the mentee *entering and/or navigating* that discipline/institution. Not to put too fine a point on it, the gatekeeping function potentially undermines any claim that mentors foreground the mentees' needs and interests above all else. In instances when mentors in the hierarchical model do not commit even to confidentiality and either volunteer, or are obliged, to report on the mentee to their senior colleagues, we find ourselves dealing with something like a "spy system," or at least the perception of one (as quoted in Meschitti and Lawton-Smith 2017:184). Trust and reciprocity, the precise linchpins for meaningful and supportive mentoring, are at risk.

Moreover, the hierarchical dyadic model often requires the mentor to protect the status quo of the institution or discipline by molding junior faculty to "fit" the latter. As Anne-Marie Núñez, Elizabeth T Murakami, and Leslie D Gonzales put it, the dyadic model often draws on "a traditional hierarchical, compensatory (or deficit), and grooming approach to mentoring" (Núñez et al. 2015:93). In the case of URM faculty, if the deficit model requires the new faculty member to reshape themselves to fit a hitherto exclusionary dynamic, then the dynamic remains as exclusionary as before, even if a little room is made for (the now remolded) member. We witness a loss of potential when mentoring seeks not only to clone existing faculty but also to *assimilate* new faculty to the extant culture of the institution and discipline, rather than *transform* the latter so as to ensure that new mentees can leave their imprint on it.

All this said, however, the dyadic hierarchical model is here to stay, especially in disciplines in which sponsorship and patronage by mentors are indispensable in opening doors. The patronage system is structurally set up to replicate itself, in that one survives only by playing by, and thus further entrenching, the rules. Without institutionally-supported efforts to at least supplement hierarchical mentoring with more egalitarian options (some of which I will address later), inequities might conceivably stifle any positive impact of mentoring while also further consolidating inequities. For example, in the context of the mentoring of women in STEM, Viviana Meschitti and Helen Lawton Smith (2017) note that "white male mentors may be better networked" than others, and sought as mentors by women for that very reason—even though "the rationale of mentoring is to challenge existing structures of power and paternalistic relationships, and not to replicate them" (172). Until those structures *are* transformed, however, women faculty in STEM must work with the mentoring options available. Hence "the need to promote formal mentoring programs for women: because of the power of existing networks, men are more likely to benefit from informal opportunities, while women and minorities, in absence of formal programs, might not have any opportunity at all" (Meschitti and Lawton Smith 2017:172). In view of the gendered gatekeeping that has famously kept women as well as URM out of the loop or limited their advance in some fields, the dyadic model, for all its drawbacks, might be one of few mentoring options available and cannot simply be wished away.

It might take one or more academic generations to achieve much-needed meaningful and structural transformation of the dyadic hierarchical model. Until that point, however, all those presently bound to this model (but possibly now possessing, through seniority, some agency within it) must seek opportunities to push back so as to better serve the needs of mentees. Meaningful mentoring *within* the model usually requires both mentor and mentee to commit to self-training, careful listening, and a commitment to reciprocity. For an inspiring example of the dyadic model being put to excellent use, I would like to invoke Dr. Buffy Smith, a powerful voice and authority on academic mentoring for under-served populations. Her short reflection on her own experience as a mentee makes for especially compelling reading in this context. A self-described "Black, gay woman from a low income background" (Smith 2014:116), Smith worked with a faculty mentor from a very different and clearly more privileged demographic as she notes.

> I was assigned an extraordinary mentor in the department […] I believe we had a successful formal mentoring relationship because of the following reasons: (1) we had clear expectations of each other; (2) we respected each other as individuals with agency; (3) whenever there was a misunderstanding we would immediately address the issue; (4) we did not internalize critical feedback; (5) we trusted one another and were committed to developing our relationship. Overall, we were mindful of our different social identities but we did not allow those differences to prevent us from having conversations concerning race, social class, sexual orientation, and other sensitive topics. We were able to engage in honest and respectful discourse about any topic and that is why we are good friends today (Smith 2014:119).

I cite Smith here to suggest that reciprocity and collegial connections *can* emerge against the odds in even formal, hierarchical mentoring contexts and even when there isn't an "identity

match" between mentor and mentee. Gregory Diggs et al. similarly find that while such a match could be desirable, it is not "strictly necessary" for mentoring to succeed (Diggs et al. 2009:324). To return to the example offered by Smith, good communication protected the mentor and mentee from the destructive effects of unreal expectations on either side and it also ensured quick course correction when difficulties arose. I find Smith's use of the word "we" in item 4 significant: it implies that critical feedback between Smith and her mentor, when it emerged, flowed both ways, with not just her mentor but Smith herself free to offer it- a reciprocal dynamic that comes close to a peer exchange. Communication was obviously vital to this relationship and as the ending of the quote illustrates, the mentoring concluded without bitterness or resentment.

Group Mentoring
The second model of mentoring I will address here is group mentoring, sometimes also termed team mentoring and the multiple mentor model. I include the following arrangements under this rubric:
- When an individual faculty member is mentored by a collective of other faculty.
- When an individual faculty member serves as a mentor for a collective of mentees.
- When a collective of faculty serves as mentors to a collective of mentees.

Any of the three arrangements above could mitigate the unreal expectation that a single mentor needs to fulfil all the mentoring needs of a mentee. A wide range of activities, calling for equally wide-ranging expertise and knowhow, falls under the rubric of mentoring: for example, mentors can serve as sponsors, opening doors for the mentee when it comes to publishing, grants, and career networking. They can serve also as informants to those walking the strange halls of the academy for the first time as faculty. They help demystify protocols that are taken for granted by insiders but are often bewildering, if not entirely opaque, to new faculty (and especially to URM and/or first-generation, and/or foreign-born faculty). In addition, mentors can work actively to support the mentees' need for work/life balance, mental, emotional, and physical well-being and self-care. Each of these tasks is laudable and worth pursuing, but the sweeping and varied scope of mentoring work can easily overwhelm a single mentor. This is not to say that we do not hear of inspiring mentors forced into acting alone and still willing to do it all. For example, describing the extraordinary role of URM "mentors-at-a-distance," Richard Reddick singles out a senior scholar, whom he names Gia and describes as a "mentor magnet." A prolific and renowned scholar, Gia nonetheless made it a point to follow the work of and mentor "a multitude of junior faculty" at once, including many outside her own institution (2015:52). But though URM senior faculty such as Gia make herculean efforts to nurture the work of junior scholars who might lack access to same-identity mentoring in their own institutions, the academy must not be oblivious of the intense time-commitment made by these extraordinary mentors, nor continue to overburden them We frequently hear justifiable concerns over the dearth of mentors, particularly in fields with few or no URM faculty in senior positions, but it should not then fall to those who *do* mentor to take on every task at once. In fact, it might demoralize both mentor and mentee for the institution to expect any mentor to serve as first, last, and only recourse for the mentee. Group mentoring can provide some answers here.

But like all forms of mentoring, group mentoring also does not *guarantee* a perfect outcome. Importantly, it can follow either a hierarchical framework, or an egalitarian one, or a mix of the

two. The hierarchical version is open to the same issues as in the dyadic model. For example, in a hierarchical group mentoring model, a group of mentors can undertake an inappropriate exercise of power that is as, or more, pernicious than with a single mentor. The net effect of a group of misguided or unethical mentors acting in tandem is to inject greater toxicity into the system. To forestall this possibility, it is important to build into the group-mentoring process the same safety-valves needed for hierarchical dyadic mentoring: for example, the third pathway to success I outlined at the start of this essay, namely no-fault exits. With such guardrails in place, group mentoring at its best can move past the limitations of dyadic relationships. Most importantly, it can secure some agency for the mentee who now gets to choose additional mentors and even alternative mentoring practices. And finally, no-fault exits are likely to be smoother in a system where the mentoring is thought of as a group activity. The collective of group mentors can, in theory, stay flexible and expand or contract as needed, without needing to be surveilled by an official administrator.

Two notes of caution: first, it remains unlikely that demands on the time of BIPOC and URM faculty mentors will cease even in group mentoring situations; indeed, such mentors are likely to be engaged in less publicly-acknowledged forms of mentoring and still undertake forms of mentoring rendered invisible in the system. All stakeholders—and all who participate in mentoring activities—must therefore acknowledge and recognize the work that is being done by these mentors of whom so much is always asked in our academy. Second, if some mentors are selected specifically for their ability/willingness to guide on work/life balance and physical, mental and emotional well-being, care is needed not to replicate gendered or racialized divisions of labor. If the institution, field, or discipline routinely maintains a dismissive attitude toward ethics of care, some effort must be made on the part of administrators, and more broadly, the institution itself to ensure that that attitude does not manifest itself in the mentoring relationship by some process of osmosis. As long as the mentoring network is mindful of equity, recognition and reciprocity, however, one can be optimistic.

Group mentoring has another immediate and practical advantage: when significant numbers of faculty participate, they create a culture in which mentoring is seen as the concern of all, including mentors, mentees, department executives and upper administration. Such interaction can in itself win mentoring the wide recognition and exposure it deserves, and one can even hope that as multiple stakeholders enter the institution's conversation on mentoring, more strategizing and innovation follow.

An exemplary model for faculty group mentoring is the Coaching and Resource Network (or CRN) initiated in 2019 at the Butler Center at Purdue. The network invites assistant and associate professors to "seek advice and have an advocate or sponsor outside of their departments" (SBBCLE 2021) and facilitates long term relationships between mentors and mentees across departments and schools. Mentoring here does not focus exclusively on limited career goals such as reviewing grant applications, but instead promotes faculty wellness more broadly, including mental and emotional well-being, career satisfaction and work-life balance. While gendering is an explicit focus for the Center and for the CRN network, mentoring is not restricted by gender, and the mentoring of URM and BIPOC faculty is also foregrounded. The

network's success may be gauged by the fact that the University of Texas at Austin and Georgia State University have signed agreements to replicate it in their institutions.[3]

For a group-modeling model outside Purdue, we could consider Emory University's Center for Faculty Development and Excellence (CDFE) Faculty Mentorship Network. Noting that "no one person can provide all of the mentoring expertise" a faculty member might need, the homepage for the network describes its objective as follows:

> … to provide all Emory faculty confidential opportunities for support and conversation with colleagues, by providing access to multiple mentors. More than 180 Emory faculty from a wide range of schools and departments have volunteered to support their colleagues in areas such as teaching observations, guest lecturing, research, scholarship, university service, public scholarship, and general professional development (Emory 2019).

The description includes an important reminder that "mentoring is life-long" and faculty at any stage of their career are welcome to use the services of their network. It is difficult to fault this kind of group-mentoring, and I particularly appreciate the imperative that mentoring should be accessible to all faculty at any stage in their career, and further, that mentees can take active charge and initiate the process by selecting their own mentors.

On a smaller scale, Ohio State University's 2015 group mentoring initiative for women faculty in STEM also incorporated intriguing and innovative elements. In their account of the initiative, Nicole Thomas, Jill Bystydzienski, and Anand Desai (2015) note that mentor-circles comprised a mix of 12-15 mentors and mentees; significantly, participants did not always share a home department or even know each other. Each circle included "a professionally trained, non-STEM facilitator," who opened the meeting by laying out four rules:

> (1) What is said in circle stays in circle; confidentiality is critical. (2) We listen to each other with curiosity and compassion—we replace judgment with discernment and keep an open mind. (3) We ask for what we need and offer what we can. (4) When we are unsure how to proceed, we stop action, pause, and reflect (Thomas et al. 2015:150).

I wish to make two observations here: first, even when confidentiality is not guaranteed by the institution, it can nonetheless be an important ethical goal to which mentors and mentees can commit themselves. Second, pausing for reflection could forestall much unnecessary misunderstanding, for example when deciding when the mentoring relationship should end. Overall, the Ohio State model has in-built safety valves in its highlighting of confidentiality, reflection and communication, and careful engagement free from judgement.

Faculty at smaller institutions might lack the critical mass to sustain such versions of mentoring across departments, and the group mentoring models offered by SBBCLE, Purdue, Emory, or Ohio State might not lie within reach of every institution. Fortunately, however, group mentoring can function effectively *across* walls and borders: as I will highlight at the end of this essay, technology enables the model to evolve into ever-expanding networks across institutions.

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[3] For more details, see https://www.purdue.edu/butler/crn-support-circle/crn/index.php.

Peer Mentoring

I turn now to the third and final mentoring model I will address, that of peer mentoring. The group mentoring discussed in the previous section can redress issues such as the dearth of mentors and the need to share and delegate mentoring roles; it can also accommodate some agency on the part of the mentee. But like its counterpart, hierarchical dyadic mentoring, it too can fail faculty when group mentors replicate oppressive power structures, and it can especially fail faculty whose mentoring needs are routinely rendered invisible in the academy. Three groups who stand to benefit significantly via peer mentoring are foreign-born faculty, URM faculty, and contingent faculty. All three have sometimes been especially ill-served by hierarchic mentoring models, whether group or dyadic, and in many instances, they have gone on to create their own exciting and dynamic models of peer mentoring. The best of such networks organize themselves not merely around social identity but also around shared academic and ethical commitments. All three groups I discuss below have evolved, or are in need of evolving, peer mentoring to encounter a form of invisibility that is specific to each. Worth noting here is that though they do all encounter invisibility, each does so for different time-spans and often at a different moment in a faculty career.

The first faculty group that I believe may particularly benefit from peer mentoring comprises those born and educated partly outside the U.S. Such faculty, particularly when they are BIPOC, might not have encountered invisibility, disregard and marginalization in academic institutions in their countries of origin and are often unaware of how crucial mentoring is as they begin their faculty careers. Admittedly, some foreign-born faculty may have been students in the U.S., and might thus have developed (perhaps painfully) a sense of how privilege and exclusion work in the U.S. But from my own experience as an international graduate student and now faculty, I believe not all in this group are prepared for the patterns of exclusion we could encounter as faculty or able to appreciate how much peer mentoring can help. I can cite many instances from my own experience and those of similarly-situated faculty colleagues and friends when we were shocked to see how much self-education we needed to read signs and signals, and understand default systems of exclusion and privilege that were specific to the U.S. (and did not echo systems of exclusion and privilege that we knew well from our countries of origin). In my case, it was through my affiliation with Purdue's then Women's Studies Program under the directorship of Berenice Carroll that I began to educate myself on the specific challenges likely to come my way. This was also the space outside my department where as I started out, I was welcomed, mentored, and made aware of opportunities to mentor others. In short, I was drawn into a peer-mentoring feminist network. Interacting with and being mentored by all my feminist colleagues, but especially U.S. born URM faculty who had greater experience of racism in the United States, was deeply restorative. The fact that I was able to find a peer network through Women's Studies is not surprising given the primacy given to mentoring within feminist work: some of the most intriguing and revelatory work on mentoring has come from feminist studies. I was particularly fortunate in being positioned as I was. But administrators, stakeholders, and foreign-born faculty themselves must be proactive in ensuring that such faculty seek and find opportunities to be mentored, and whenever opportunities come, to mentor in turn. Peer mentoring networks are vital for this group.[4]

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[4] For a particularly inspiring instance of mutual peer mentoring by international faculty who began as dissertation advisor and advisee but transformed their relationship into a highly successful peer mentoring

Moreover, let me note a great need for research and first-hand accounts on intercultural and international mentoring, which tend to be rare (and foreign-born faculty are not unique in this regard; scholarly discussion remains sparse on the mentoring of other URM faculty and contingent faculty). Until this important scholarship comes along, we must guard against accounts that rely on shortcuts of any kind. I would caution potential mentors of foreign-born faculty in a hierarchical set up against assumptions about national or religious essence that might inform much spoken and unspoken understanding of non-U.S. cultures. In particular, I urge that mentors waste no time and resources learning the foreign origin mentee's culture in the abstract, or even from those who profess expertise in it. Even in peer mentoring networks, foreign-born faculty must be on guard against internalized stereotypes of themselves and each other. Platitudes and stereotypes passing themselves off as cultural literacy can intrude on and eventually drown out the kind of careful listening and delicate interpersonal navigating that all mentoring calls for. Mentors themselves must be persistent in opening and reopening the doors to conversation, listening carefully, and responding to the cues and feelers being put out by the mentee.

The second faculty group that is most likely to benefit from peer mentoring includes the other URM groups, namely, U.S. citizens who have encountered race-, gender-class-, heteronormativity- and ableist- based exclusions long preceding their entry into the academy. Their life experiences might have exposed such faculty more routinely to dismissal, invisibility, and worse for a longer period than foreign-born faculty. URM faculty are likely to have had their mentoring needs dismissed, and typically are well aware that hierarchical modeling (whether group or dyadic) ushers in problems that might be circumvented in a peer-mentoring situation.

In the academy, such URM faculty groups have been especially resourceful in drawing from anti-race and other civil rights activism to evolve alternative peer mentoring networks. An exemplary instance of URM peer mentoring is the collectivist model of "pedagogy with equity" developed by a collective of then junior Latina faculty, Anne-Marie Núñez, Elizabeth T Murakami and Leslie D Gonzales. Núñez et al. (2015) argue that to build genuine diversity, institutions must see past tokenist hires and stop making assimilationist demands of new URM hires; they must ensure also that this faculty has the space and freedom and resources to generate a "diversity in knowledge production" (2015:93). They identify four principles that could move us towards this transformative outcome. Three of these involve careful steps to ensure that the research generated is meaningful to the faculty member. To this end, they advocate building from "conversations and interests" to "writing projects"; working with each other to build "the practice of self-reflexivity"; and finding ways to "link together all facets of academic life: research, teaching, and service to the community" (2015:93). The fourth is particularly compelling. Núñez et al. propose that mentor groups should

> …focus energies around the principle that all individuals are legitimate creators and agents of knowledge. Each person's personal, cultural, professional, political, and disciplinary-based backgrounds can be viewed as assets. By building mentoring efforts

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one, see Mullings and Mukherjee 2018. They note that beyond their racialized identities and immigrant status, "it was our shared intellectual and political commitment to a decolonial transnational feminist praxis that proved to be the most important element in our ability to help each other to thrive" (1417).

and relationships around this principle, a traditional hierarchical, compensatory (or deficit), and grooming approach to mentoring is displaced (2015:93).

Particularly impressive in this URM model of peer mentoring is that it not only defies the "deficit" approach to mentoring, it also organizes itself around a positive charge: the assets URM faculty bring to the academy. By welcoming a multiplicity of backgrounds and experiences as "assets," such models bring to fruition the promise of diversity. Successful URM peer-mentoring networks typically grow organically, as in the instance cited above, and by valuing and honoring each participant's potential to generate knowledge and learning, they powerfully celebrate a "diversity of knowledge production," to recall Núñez apt formulation (2015:93).

The third faculty group that benefits from peer-mentoring networks is one that is increasingly exploited today, namely that of contingent faculty, a term that includes all faculty who are not in the tenured/tenure track categories. The non-URM and non-international faculty in this group might not have encountered invisibility until they entered the university with far fewer benefits and typically reduced roles in governance than have other faculty but typically doing vital administrative, pedagogic and research work of the university (cf. Raghavan 2018). It is worth noting that there is a great deal of overlap between this group and URM and international faculty. Andrew Rosen and Jaime Lester (2020) point out that, "The steady march toward the Gig Academy –as Adrianna Kezar, the author and professor of higher education at the University of Southern California, titled her 2019 book—means that more than half of the faculty are now adjuncts, and three-quarters of all faculty positions are off the tenure track."

In her doctoral dissertation on mentoring for adjunct faculty who teach online, Kathy Beal (2017) pointed to the glaring lack of support available for contingent faculty. Nearly every analysis of contingent faculty emphasizes the objective of "professional development" but opportunities remain spare for many. Contingent faculty also highlight their need for connection and collegial contact with other university personnel, but yet "they are not included in any community-building activities" (Beal 2017:51). In short, both needs are largely unmet. A non-exploitative, humane and inclusive engagement with contingent faculty is ethical in itself. But if this is not seen as a pressing enough reason, the academy must acknowledge that it wins and undergraduate instruction improves dramatically if contingent faculty are able to seek professional development and meet their other needs. In the two-tier system of the increasingly shrinking groups on the tenure track and the growing ranks of contingent faculty, it is imperative that the relatively privileged tenure and tenure-track faculty do what they can to initiate meaningful collegial connections with contingent faculty and seek opportunities for collaboration, advocacy, and mentoring. But contingent faculty, like the other two groups, would also be well-served by generating its own support structure, for example a peer mentoring network.

Beal is also careful to point out that some among the online contingent faculty she interviewed had grown wary of peer mentoring, having found themselves in an "unsafe, unsupportive environment" with "no opportunities to engage in honest reflective dialogue with their peers": as some peers and "high control" leaders would dominate, other members would disengage (2017: 216). As this illustrates, in itself peer mentoring networks are not panaceas: they too can be

vulnerable to the tensions and schisms of the outside world and to the usual complications that can trip up any human interaction.

While peer mentoring holds out genuine promise of meeting the needs of faculty who might be rendered invisible in the current system, like other mentoring models, it is not immune to problems. The greatest might be that peer mentors do not always have access to institutional knowhow and strategies. For that reason, whenever possible, peer mentors must seek outside counsel from trustworthy sources if not in their own institution then in others. No-fault exits, communication, and continuing self-education could also function as safety valves for peer mentoring -as much as for other forms of mentoring.

Conclusion

Keeping in mind the three pathways I outlined at the start of this essay for successful mentoring, namely, exertion on behalf of the other, reciprocity, and communication particularly around no-fault exits, all three models of mentoring that I have explored here hold out some promise and manifest some limitations. In this conclusion I want to consider two ways in which we can best position ourselves to realize the former and work around the latter.

First, we must take advantage of technological innovation. Tech-supported remote group mentoring, or digital mentoring, can potentially make a particularly critical difference for URM faculty and faculty in under-resourced disciplines and fields, many of whom might be isolated in and thinly scattered across institutions. All forms of mentoring have much to offer faculty within single institutions, but they can make a particularly critical difference for faculty whose research focus, or URM status, isolates them in their institutions. Technology can forge collaboration across institutional and even national borders. Sometimes one fears that while it waits to find good mentoring options for URM faculty, foreign-born faculty, and contingent faculty, the institution has the luxury of moving at very slow speed. So it must be emphasized to all stakeholders that some of the most creative remedies happen to be relatively low-expense and *ad-hoc*. Institutions that cannot, at present, provide same-identity hierarchical mentoring for their faculty could still support ongoing remote peer mentoring for that faculty—for example, through the simple act of funding the network as a whole to attend professional meetings and retreats together. The sooner we all recognize the benefit to the institution and the academy of peer mentoring, the more pressing the case becomes to support faculty's effort to build sustaining co-mentoring networks with their peers.

Digital mentoring can operate cross-institutionally and even cross-nationally, connecting faculty (including same-identity URM mentors and mentees) who lack critical mass in their immediate location.[5] At regular intervals and as much as possible, face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction can supplement such digital efforts. Moreover, digital mentoring networks open a step in the

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[5] I thank Marcia Stephenson for pointing me to the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) mutual mentoring sessions of the Romance Language Chairs. Similar opportunities exist via BTAA for faculty in other fields as well. My thanks also to Nancy Peterson for informing me of the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures, which directly lists the following as a mandate: "providing strong mentorship and professionalization opportunities for graduate students and junior scholars in the field." These are two of many inspiring ways in which professional societies have stepped forward to address a range of mentoring needs.

right direction not just for individual faculty mentees and mentors, but also for entire disciplines, departments and institutions that cannot provide meaningful local mentoring. Every mission of the academy- its scholarship, pedagogy, and engagement—benefits significantly today from multifold field- and discipline-specific mentoring networks, and from professional meetings in various disciplines that emphasize sessions on mentoring. The academy as a whole can and must reciprocate in kind. Consortiums of institutions (and not just individual faculty, disciplines or fields), should therefore enthusiastically initiate, fund, and offer meaningful support for these efforts.

Second, mentors, mentees, those who administer mentoring, and all stakeholders, will all benefit from lifelong self-education on mentoring. A rich body of scholarship, research, and first-person accounts of mentoring makes for engrossing, and often paradigm-shifting, reading. I believe we need this literature to grow exponentially and elicit more first-hand accounts from all involved, particularly URM faculty as mentors and mentees. Notably, we see a dearth of research on and first-hand accounts from all mentors, including non-URM mentors, perhaps because it would be difficult to convey an experience in which one is assumed to hold all the power, and in which one is more pressed to ensure confidentiality of others. Even if that is the case, however, those with mentoring experience could have a vital contribution to make to the field. We especially need accounts from URM faculty who mentor non-URM faculty. But hearing from all involved is the best practice; contributions from those with experience and views in faculty mentoring can not only serve as fine instances of a key pathway to success, namely communication, they might help forestall the awkwardness or difficulties in mentoring relationships by offering an array of examples and counter-examples. Finally, I believe that a proliferation of scholarship on mentoring is the best way to endorse the one simple but powerful principle that sets apart ethical, rewarding mentoring relationships from exploitative and toxic ones: namely, reciprocity. Those who have benefited from mentoring in our day can reciprocate by serving as mentors and by promoting a culture of mentoring by encouraging and producing scholarly research on mentoring. The *raison d'etre* of mentoring is to promote the success and well-being of others, and as such, it is an exemplary form of collegiality and responsibility to the other.

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