Mentee and Mentor Roles: Transitioning from Mentee to Mentor in Academic Centers

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My Background

My Medical Physics Career Path

- A graduate student: Medical Physics PhD, University of Wisconsin Madison (2004-2008)
- A junior faculty: Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin Madison and The Ohio State University (2008-2015)
- A mid-career faculty: Associate Professor, University of California Davis (2015-present)

Major Milestones

- Growing from a graduate student to a junior faculty
- From a junior faculty to a mid-career faculty
- My roles as both mentor and mentee
What is your experience in mentoring?

• Transitioning from a student/resident to a young clinical faculty
• Mixed roles: A mentor, but also a mentee
• What are mentoring styles of your previous mentors?
  ▫ Provide opportunities and step back
  ▫ Mix of hands-on and hands off
• What is your current mentoring style(s)?
• Is it working?
What defines a good mentor?

- Different roles in an academic setting:
  - Teaching: therapists, dosimetrists, residents, students, especially fellow faculty physicists/MD
  - Sponsoring: students that contacted you, colleagues you have met or collaborated with
  - What about mentoring?

- A good mentor in an academic setting...
  - Set career goals, help set priorities, and inspire
  - Provide honest feedback for accomplishments
  - Available – but not omnipresent
  - Provide access to resources and emotional support
  - Act as an advocate with administration
What are Key Elements of Mentoring

• Aligning Expectations and Defining Responsibilities
• Maintaining Effective Communication and Assessing Understanding
• Promoting Professional Development and Fostering Independence
• Managing Conflicts, Addressing Diversity and Inclusion

子曰：三人行，必有我师焉

When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. ——Confucius
Key Elements of Mentoring and Tools

• **Aligning Expectations and Defining Responsibilities**
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Form a mentor/mentee agreement

- Basic agreement
  - Time commitment
  - Keep conversations confidential
  - Be honest, direct and respectful to each other

- Defining responsibilities and aligning expectations
  - Establish responsibilities and expectations of mentors and mentees

Prescribing style

As a mentor and a mentee in the UC Davis schools of health faculty mentoring program, we agree to abide by the following set of guidelines:

- Commit to making the time to meet on a regular basis.
- Keep the content of our conversations confidential.
- Practice active listening.
- Provide each other with honest, direct and respectful feedback.
- Other (please specify) ________________

1. Check the topics to be addressed in mentoring sessions
   - Teaching
   - Additional mentors
   - Research
   - Self development
   - Clinical care
   - Networking
   - Service
   - Work/life balance
   - Leadership

2. Circle the frequency of meetings for this year
   - Weekly
   - Bi-monthly
   - Monthly
   - Quarterly
   - Other ____________
   - Contact number(s) for scheduling ______________

3. Information provided by mentee prior to each meeting
   - None
   - Updated CV (new additions highlighted)
   - Outline of topics to be discussed
   - Other (please specify) ________________

4. Please discuss, edit, and check the expectations for this mentoring relationship
   - Responsibilities of Mentor(s). (If have multiple mentors, place initials of each mentor associated with each:
     - Help set priorities to achieve academic advancement
     - Provide assessment and formative feedback for accomplishments; help plan ‘next steps’
     - Encourage creativity and broader thinking
     - Provide emotional support
     - Act as an advocate
     - Actively address any problems with mentorship relationship
     - Other (please specify) ________________

   - Responsibilities of Mentee:
     - Understand the academic series; review career with Department Chair annually and with the Associate Dean for Academic Personnel, when needed
     - Provide personal goals, priorities, and updates
     - File simple post-meeting reports with DMD/CMD (include topics discussed, goals, and may include accomplishments, joys, frustration, and self-evaluation)
     - Recognize when and how often mentoring input is needed and ask for it
     - Actively address any problems with mentorship relationship
     - Other (please specify) ________________
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Setting Goals

• Setting specific goals based on mentor/mentee expectations
  ▫ Short term / long term goals
  ▫ Target timelines, milestones
  ▫ Allocate time and effort
  ▫ Offer suggestions and feedbacks, i.e. skills, knowledge needed, introduce collaborators, etc.

• Individual Development Plan (IDP)
  ▫ A planning process
  ▫ Better communication
  ▫ Assessing understanding
  ▫ Can be modified or adaptive to changes

1. Name______________________________
2. Date__________________________
3. Primary Mentor______________________________
   Additional Mentor(s)______________________________
   Additional Mentor(s)______________________________
4. Identify Personal and Institutional Long Term Goals (expand space as needed)
   What are your long-term (3-5 years) career goals?
   List any longer term (5-10 years) career goals.
   List your Academic Series requirements (see Academic Criteria for Series)

Advisory
Pace setting
Active listening
Friendship
Individual Development Plan

• IDP Contents
  ▫ Long term goals (5-10 years)
  ▫ Short term goals (1 year)
  ▫ Areas of focus and specific goals in focus areas
  ▫ Optimal distribution of effort

• Mentor’s Review Process
  ▫ Provide feedback, help revise
  ▫ Provide assistance, help achieve goals
  ▫ Routine meetings to discuss progress and challenge
Mentor-Mentee Relationship

• Effective communication and clear understanding
  ▫ Engage in active listening, use non-verbal expressions
  ▫ Paraphrasing to check for understanding
  ▫ Summarizing
  ▫ Provide constructive feedback
  ▫ Self-disclosure
  ▫ Confrontation
  ▫ Multi-strategies for improving communication (in person, email, group discussion, coffee break, etc.
  ▫ Consider personal boundaries
  ▫ Too much of negativity, complaints
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Professional Development

• Be clear on career goals:
  ▫ Academic centers, community or private hospitals, industry, etc.
  ▫ Location, country, etc.

• Define a career path
  ▫ Master or PhD
  ▫ ABR and residency
  ▫ Act as an advocate, setting up connections and collaborations

• Expectations from both mentor and mentee
  ▫ Research and manuscripts
  ▫ Clinical trainings
  ▫ Professional committees
Foster Independence

• Give directions and driving tips, not to drive the car.

• Strategies
  ▫ Seminars, topic discussion, journal club
  ▫ Identify a clinical problem, find solution, what data needs to collect, publication
  ▫ Meet regularly and ensure the team is aware of progress… peer-pressure is the key

• Challenges
  ▫ Conflicts in time: clinical training or research?
  ▫ Writing challenges
  ▫ Possibility of making mistakes

授人以鱼不如授人以渔——老子
Give a man a fish, he’ll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, he’ll eat for life. — Lao Tzu
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Managing Dilemmas and Conflicts

- As a mentor, there may be conflicts between you and your mentees, or within your mentees, or your mentees with others.
- Examples: family issues, language barriers, clinical duties, authorship on a paper, etc.
- Strategies:
  - Learn to identify and engage with diverse perspectives
  - Proactively apply different mentoring styles
The Joys of Teaching

• Successful mentor-mentee relationship is a win-win
  ▫ Mentor: Learn from teaching, improve reputation, grow leadership skills, advancement in academic ladder
  ▫ Mentees: Learn, improve, career development
• The Key to a successful mentor-mentee relationship: be respectful to each other!
• Negative moments and emotions...
• Being a mentor and also a mentee for junior or mid-level faculties: better understanding and more grateful
So if you're asking me what to do with all this knowledge you're accumulating, I say... Pass it on...

---Professor Norman

Thank you