Growing as a Research Professional

Mentoring and Being Mentored

Faculty Orientation

University of Tennessee

Adapted from Making the Right Moves: A Practical Guide to Scientific Management for Postdocs and New Faculty (2nd Edition)
Topics to be discussed:

• What is Mentoring?
• Responsibilities of a Mentor
• Mentoring Strategies
• Different Mentoring Needs
• Mentoring Outside the Department / University
• Being Mentored
• Gender and Culture Issues in Mentoring
During the Trojan War, Odysseus left his son, Telemachus, in the care of his trusted friend, Mentor.

Mentor: a trusted friend, counselor or teacher, a more experienced person.

Mentoring is still a method of passing experience and knowledge from one generation to the next.
Mentoring

• Personal, one-on-one relationship between a senior and junior researcher

• Traits of good mentors:
  – Accessibility
  – Empathy
  – Open-mindedness
  – Consistency
  – Patience
  – Honesty
  – Savvy

• Confidentiality
Responsibilities

• Choosing whom to mentor
• Define your role as a mentor
• Mentor vs. advisor
Strategies

- Make everything a learning opportunity
- Set specific goals and measurements of accomplishment
- Encourage strategic thinking and creativity
- Uphold professional standards
- Impart skills
- Provide networking opportunities
- Give moral support
Different Mentoring Needs

• Mentoring undergraduates

• Mentoring graduate students
  – First years
  – Middle years
  – Final years

• Mentoring postdoctoral fellows

• Mentoring outside the department / university
Being Mentored

- Suggestions:
  - Do not let go of old mentors
  - Establish a relationship with official mentors
  - Seek out informal mentors
  - Establish a set of confidants
  - Meet regularly with formal mentors
  - Keep meetings professional

- What to do when the relationship is not working out