

INTRODUCTION

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Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in mentoring as a point of discussion in higher education, an area of particular concern being the cultivation of new faculty. This is not accidentally related to tectonic shifts taking place within the sector as to the nature and conditions of academic employment. Academic mentoring is trending now in large part because it is more difficult than it used to be, demanding a broader skill set, more reflective engagement, and more time. Of necessity, graduate students, postdocs, and junior faculty have become more discriminating consumers of mentoring, more mindful of their own needs and unafraid to request that they be met. Colleges and universities, in turn, wish to be seen as promoters of mentoring, resulting in various administrative initiatives, enhanced incentives for faculty, and added heft for mentoring in tenure and promotion review.

With increased attention has come increased recognition of some of the complexities and challenges of mentoring, and of its rewards. Even at high-powered institutions where research is understood as the meal ticket, skill at mentoring has to an extent clambered out of the category of things that less professionally fit academics pursue, and attained a certain cachet among those at all career stages who find in it an alternative way of being in academe—one that tilts away from the endemic competition of the research environment in favor of cooperation and mutual purpose. Part of mentoring's appeal lies in its ability to gesture in two directions at once: forward, as we will see, to new modalities and more egalitarian relationships, and backward, to a tradition of cross-generational support and identification as old as universities themselves, and that continues to feed the romance of the academic life in the minds of would-be faculty. This expansive view of mentoring is both celebrated and interrogated

in the following chapters.

Whatever fine ideals we associate with the practice, an unsentimental look at the academic career ladder shows that tradeoffs abound where mentoring is concerned, and that knowing when and how to erect constraints around one's mentoring commitments becomes a professional imperative. The same academics who, as grad students or postdocs, found in a mentor the image of groundedness in the face of bewildering realities, ascend the tenure track to discover that mentoring is, far from a grounded experience, a moving target if ever there was one. Rapid changes in their own needs (e.g., regarding role models) occur alongside increased obligations to *provide* mentoring for undergraduates, and possibly for graduate students and postdocs. They come to know that they exist on a mentoring continuum, one that imposes obligations as surely as it dispenses benefits. While the continuum includes both emeritus professors and children only dimly aware of an academic calling, this book takes as its purview the crucial phase between graduate school and tenure, where the academy either succeeds or fails in renewing itself.

One thing to observe initially when considering this interval of the mentoring continuum is its spiral organization. That is, graduate school is in conspicuous ways analogous to assistant professorship. To begin with, these respective levels of apprenticeship are roughly equal in duration (allowing both for the current trend toward more compact doctoral programs and the ongoing reality that many students, often but not exclusively in the humanities, take far longer than projected to complete their degrees). More to the point, the tasks, tests, and markers of progress defining each career stage present a nontrivial symmetry.

<i>Graduate Student</i>	<i>Assistant Professor</i>
early years largely devoted to coursework	early years largely devoted to developing and teaching courses
comprehensive/qualifying exams	third-year review (and variants)
dissertation proposal and writing	building record of publications, grants, and other research products
dissertation defense	tenure/promotion review

For scholars in fields and institutions where the “book for tenure” rule applies, this symmetry is typically reinforced by the strong continuity of their research programs—which is to say, the necessity of revising their dissertations for publication in book form and securing a suitable publisher, within about the same time frame required to produce the original thesis. Meanwhile, those in the natural sciences are faced with what might be seen as a third discrete iteration of the cycle, in the form of serial postdocs that can easily consume as many years as graduate school or a pre-tenure faculty appointment (but not more, if a tenure-track job is forthcoming). This model is currently enjoying rapid exportation across disciplines, as various forms of visiting, fellowship, and fixed-term appointments become expected CV-builders.

The concentric spiral of graduate school and assistant professorship provides the book’s structure. Part I (“Origins”) deals primarily with the professional development of graduate students. The benefits of administrative collaboration with grad students are on display in chapters 1 and 2, as is the spectrum along which these efforts are arrayed, from the institution-driven to the grass-roots (i.e., with the institution providing funding and/or nominal sponsorship only). Most particularly, these chapters reflect the current heyday of peer-mentoring initiatives—especially at the graduate level, and especially with active promotion by administrative units and through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

Doing It for Themselves

Michael Amlung and colleagues describe in chapter 1 the successful partnering of a home-grown student group with their institution’s Center for Teaching and Learning (along with departmental funding) to create a formal peer-mentoring program supporting the development of TAs in the classroom. In chapter 2, Jan Allen powerfully argues the special merits of peers as mentors, and draws on her experience at multiple institutions to show how administrative units (like Graduate Schools) can harness the potential of peer mentoring through well designed and structured programs (like dissertation-writing “boot camps”). In their discussions we can see several key variables with peer-mentoring efforts: the extent to which they rely on programmatic facilitation by the institution, the level of involvement by graduate students in program development, and funding. In many situations, for peer mentoring to have traction it must take

place within an institutional cocoon, such as provided by career centers, Graduate Schools, centers for teaching, faculty development and postdoctoral studies offices, academic units, and so forth. In fact, administrative support—in the form of funding and, crucially, professional-development-oriented offices, centers, and dedicated staff—is surely the second most important factor in creating the conditions for peer mentoring to thrive (departmental culture remaining firmly in pole position).

At the same time, graduate students are nothing if not an independent-minded and skeptical lot, ready to equate institutional benevolence with paternalism. This they share with those former graduate students, the faculty. To say that graduate students regard the support of administration as a Faustian bargain might push the point too far, but it is best to acknowledge that such support inevitably brings with it a set of assumptions and concerns that many graduate students do not share, and may indeed regard with some disdain. An experiment of possible advantage to program administrators, given their work environment, would be to image and record the brain patterns of graduate students and faculty when presented with a series of terms:

- Accountability
- Agility
- Assessment
- Evidence-based
- Impact
- Measurable
- Student-centered

Results, I think, would show an uncanny correlation between the items on the administrator's performance review worksheet and the activation of pain centers in their client population's brains. All this is well within the reach of modern neuroscience.

But there is another, wholly different force animating the peer-mentoring movement: a proletarian spirit clearly born in the realities of the job market. For fields in which doctoral graduates have non-academic career options, those options generally present a more favorable employment picture. Fields where nonacademic career paths for PhDs are less readily defined endure a multigenerational struggle with the dearth of good faculty jobs. And so most graduate students pursuing faculty careers are likely to do so within departmental and disciplinary cultures in which the self-defeating or

quixotic nature of their ambition is accepted as normal. In circumstances like these, peer mentoring can offer not only the reliable advantage of proximal (readily emulated) role models, but a reservoir of affirmation and comradeship. With a common purpose in their sails, they tack against jaundice and resignation, and even against the hard-headed wisdom their advisors are duty-bound to deal out.

Academia is simultaneously extolled and reviled in the popular imagination as a bastion of left-leaningness. Whatever the justice of this portrait, it is difficult to call to mind other economic sectors today in which employment is so rigorously stratified by class. Even those who are not attracted to graduate school initially by the expectation of a congenially progressive environment soon find that they are members of a class, and that this class is engaged in a struggle. As mostly younger people with similar inclinations, interests, and goals congregate in what is initially understood to be a battle against the odds, it is natural that a bond of kinship should evolve, and translate into mutual reinforcement in professional development. As will be seen later in the book, similar patterns of kinship emerge among junior faculty, because of the comparable pressures they face. There is a deep, perhaps a sinister secret in the efficiency with which the academy replenishes itself despite the abnegation of individual self-interest required.

Much less in evidence is the academy's skill in demonstrating the value of its doctoral degrees to nonacademic employers, and facilitating access to a range of meaningful careers for PhDs outside the STEM and professional fields. One significant difference between the graduate student and the junior faculty circuit on the upward spiral of academic professional development is the likelihood of "making the cut." That is, the chances of an assistant professor earning tenure are in most fields and institutions considerably higher than the chances of a doctoral graduate securing a tenure-track job. For this reason preparation for nonacademic or "alt-ac" careers has penetrated graduate education in a way foreign to faculty development efforts. Or rather, recognition of *the need* for such preparation has penetrated. We have now a situation in which advisement of graduate students regarding nonacademic jobs falls primarily on the shoulders of those who by dint of profession lack any experience with such jobs.

Chapters 3 and 4 attempt to fill a void for faculty nudged outside their comfort zone by the growing number of graduate students

actively or even exclusively pursuing extra-academic opportunities. In chapter 3, Paula Chambers offers a crisp and actionable answer to the question, “what specific practices can I adopt that will make me a better advisor to multi-career-track graduate students?” If all graduate faculty were to take her “Career Climate Departmental Assessment” (pp. 62–64) and compare scores with their colleagues, a discussion of significant benefit to graduate students might ensue. The nonacademic domain with the greatest appeal across disciplines is surely represented by NGOs and other publicly oriented “.org” entities; in chapter 4, Ron Krabill expertly dissects the consolation-prize mentality that has adhered to these professional destinations within academe, and notes how the shedding of assumptions and fears by career academics can lead to productive relationships with graduate mentees whose working lives may unfold primarily within the public sphere, whether as researchers, change agents, or both.

As one advances along the mentoring continuum, unexpected realities and new priorities assert themselves. Whether a succession of postdocs, fellowships, or visiting positions (less often adjunct appointments or ones that combine teaching and administrative duties) or the holy grail of a tenure-track job (how soon exchanged for a new grail!), the next stage in an academic’s life entails many similarities to the graduate student experience, including its probationary character; its adjustment to new demands in research, publication, sponsorship-seeking, and general professionalism; and its linear, well defined path to a conspicuous goal. There are differences as well, such as the need to navigate in a primary role the external funding regime in one’s discipline (if applicable), to consider one’s options regarding re-entering the job market and transferring institutions (before tenure restricts those options considerably), and to assume advisory and supervisory responsibilities. These are matters on which peer mentoring is likely to be less effective than mentoring by senior scholars.

On the Log with Mark Hopkins

In President James Garfield’s possibly apocryphal phrase, the ideal higher educational experience would be realized by his Williams College teacher and mentor Mark Hopkins “on one end of a log and a student at the other.” This tips the hat not only to Hopkins’ genius as a pedagogue (attested by others as well), but to the possibility and value of an intergenerational nurturing that in academic life can

long outlast the “formative years.” We remember Garfield’s words because of his office, and both point to the special potential that can reside within mentoring relationships involving considerable separation in age and professional standing. The senior partner has an opportunity, given the skill and dedication, to perceive the interests of the junior partner with greater clarity than the latter can muster. The mentor can discern the course of most advantage to the mentee (e.g., in an academic context, the choice of research project or method, teaching style and formats, particular pockets of academe that represent a good fit), based on a sympathetic understanding of the junior colleague *as a person*. This does not need to entail deep friendship, although it may. What mentoring of this kind requires is a serious conviction of one’s obligation to “pay it forward”—to give as one has received, or as one should have received. The segment of the mentoring continuum occupied by junior faculty, like the log on which Mark Hopkins is imagined to sit, points in two directions. The assistant professor must, perhaps for the first time, extend a hand behind as well as ahead.

Part II (“Transitions”) examines the mentoring landscape primarily from the junior faculty point of view. In chapter 5, Susanna Calkins and Greg Light propose a fourfold typology of faculty mentors based on their self-conception in the role. The axes they use to derive their categories of Model, Shepherd, Guide, and Companion—mentor-focused vs. mentee-focused and active vs. passive—yield highly intuitive types readily populated by faculty in one’s experience. Calkins and Light afford tools that will be useful in refining thinking about mentor-mentee “fit” and the continuing evolution of individual needs as relationships progress along the mentoring continuum.

Chapters 6 and 7 assert in the faculty context the same prominence of peer-based approaches and bottom-up directionality that we have seen with graduate mentoring. Mirjam Glessmer and colleagues in chapter 6 describe how they were able to “take ownership” of their mentoring through the formation and extension of the Earth Science Women’s Network, a grass-roots peer-mentoring collective (defined in this case more by discipline and gender than by career stage, though skewing young). They also introduce another of the volume’s important themes, mentoring as an online phenomenon, emphasizing the Internet’s capacity to multiply mentoring options and to permit meaningful human bonds without regard to distance. Even more

forceful advocates of mentee ownership of the mentoring process are Steven Lee and colleagues, who in chapter 7 draw on the techniques of “managing up,” popularized in the corporate context by Gabarro and Kotter, to trace the contours of an academic equivalent, “mentoring up.” Elsewhere in the volume, especially in the dialogues of Part III, we find mentors reflecting on the need to encourage agency in their mentees, and the difficulty of knowing in every instance what the optimal amount of agency might be.

The mentoring literature frequently asserts the benefits of a productive relationship *for the mentor*, and may even posit reciprocal professional development as definitional of true mentoring. Several contributions to the volume address this dynamic, none more directly and convincingly than Jennifer Shewmaker and Phyllis Bolin in chapter 8. One of the most challenging areas of mentoring is to prepare aspiring faculty for the virtual certitude that they will start their professorial careers in an academic environment unlike what they knew in graduate school or on their postdocs. As Shewmaker and Bolin note, the teaching-centered (or at any rate less research-intensive) schools that provide the majority of tenure-track jobs stand to gain enormously from the infusion of current research experience embodied in their recent hires, specifically from the standpoint of continued professional development for senior faculty. Meanwhile, junior colleagues in this situation feel affirmed as positive contributors and thus invest more easily in their new surroundings. These potentialities of the mentoring continuum are perhaps most likely to be realized when intentionally (i.e., administratively) cultivated, as with the New Faculty Mentoring Program at Shewmaker and Bolin’s institution. Also noteworthy is the authors’ engagement with an under-discussed issue, the culture shock faced by many new faculty transitioning to schools with religious affiliations and mission commitments not previously integrated with their academic lives.

In chapter 9, Julie Welch and colleagues further develop the ideas of mutuality, reciprocity, and institutional benefit as aspects of a successful academic mentoring relationship. Both as a description of the experience of constructing an online nexus for mentoring activity, and as a “how-to” blueprint easily adapted to other situations, Welch and colleagues’ discussion of the Indiana University School of Medicine Faculty Mentoring Portal bears comparison to Glessmer and colleagues’ account of the Earth Science Women’s Network. While ESWN reaches outward, across universities and con-

tinents, the IUSM mentoring portal demonstrates how web-based initiatives can effect change locally, and can address the generally held aspiration of “building a culture of mentoring” at the college or institutional level. There will be more to say about web-facilitated mentoring shortly.

Less often discussed, though, are the *costs* of mentoring for the mentor, significant as these may be in a variety of ways. For instance, an underappreciated variable in the mentoring equation is the legitimate interest of the more advanced scholar in defending territory painstakingly carved out. Does the maxim, “a pupil rewards his master poorly who remains a pupil forever,” apply in academe? Perhaps not, and for good reason. The ideal outcome of one’s mentoring efforts, at least from a research standpoint, would be to populate the field with protégés whose work will advance *one’s own* agenda, forming a wave whose crest one will ride. If this is consistent with the protégé’s interests, how fortunate! But for many specialists, a mentoring relationship of true benefit to the senior partner would entail preservation of access to grants, publishing venues, and other tenuous arenas of professional achievement. If your former student makes the NSF cut and you don’t, well, what kind of mentor were you? Answer: the kind that gets removed from the academic competition. And even if the danger of giving birth to a rival is not grave, there remains the crucial issue of time. Often in academe, career “success” is reducible to the rate at which one accumulates the recognized tokens of accomplishment (publications, grants, invited talks or visiting appointments, conference appearances, and other CV categories); by and large, those who succeed best are those who devote the most time to these activities, as opposed to service obligations or the dedicated mentoring of colleagues earlier in their careers. An unfortunate logic is at work here, such that one is least likely to get good mentoring from those whose careers one would most like to duplicate. The mentoring literature to date has not grappled much with such conflicts of interest, but ignoring them can only dampen prospects for the healthy propagation of the professoriate.

Does Mentoring Exist?

Whatever its ongoing vitality, the Mark Hopkins model clearly no longer provides an adequate compass for what it means to mentor and be mentored in the 21st-century academy. Not only must we

agree that one can be mentored by those of similar age and equal rank, but as noted above, several of the book's contributors urge us to consider that we might, in effect, be mentored by a website. Certainly the ESWN site "mentors" in large part by facilitating connections between human beings (like MentorNet and other websites noted in the Resources section) and Welch and colleagues' Faculty Mentoring Portal strives to promote fruitful interactions between flesh-and-blood mentors and mentees. At the same time, these sites provide many excellent non-human resources, and it is not in every case obvious where facilitation ends and mentoring begins. Nor is the distinction necessarily coherent, insofar as how to be a good mentor is one of the things a good mentor would mentor you on.

Is it still possible to draw meaningful boundaries around the concept of mentoring? Does any attempt to enhance the success of aspiring academics qualify? Or does there abide some unquantifiable element rooted in an authentic engagement between specific people? Part III ("Dialogues and Reflections") makes several approaches to these questions in the form of mentor-mentee dialogues and deliberate reflections on mentoring by seasoned scholars. In chapter 10, Beth Boehm and Amy Lueck return us to the territory of graduate student peer mentoring, from the perspectives of faculty/administrator and grad student mentee/mentor, respectively. By proceeding more or less chronologically, they are able to illustrate not only the process of creating a mentoring program (usefully set beside the efforts discussed in chapters 1, 2, 6, 8, and 9), but the progressive engagement with mentoring as a domain of professional development by individuals at a distance on the mentoring continuum. Chapter 10, Leonard Cassuto and Jane Van Slembrouck's discussion of family as part of the graduate education equation, points to the difference between a mentor who thinks, "my job is to advise you on how best to succeed as a graduate student in our program," and one who thinks, "my job is to help you integrate your academic pursuits with all aspects of your life, so as to maximize your human happiness." We can see here the sketch of a holistic approach to mentoring, another crucial dimension of which is explored in chapter 12, Christine Stanley and Yvonna Lincoln's dialogue on the factor of racial difference in a mentoring relationship. In a volume heavily concerned with the value of mentoring by/with one's peers (those, by definition, like oneself), Stanley and Lincoln bring into belated focus the mentoring imperative of "identification with difference"—that

is, an identification of individuals achieved *despite* some categorical difference, but also the identification of both partners *with* the condition of alterity they share: “I know what you are going through. Here’s how it was for me”

Of course all mentoring relationships are criss-crossed with vectors of otherness, sometimes glaringly and uncomfortably obvious, sometimes insidious enough to go unrecognized. Much of this more opaque difference has to do with career stage. Faculty run the risk of mentoring poorly when they fail to examine the assumptions that served well in their own job search and career climb. In the case of senior scholars, these assumptions may have been formed under very different employment circumstances. Handing out the same advice to today’s mentees that your students of ten or twenty years ago received puts an undue burden of interpretation on the junior partner, who may be perfectly, even painfully aware of the problem but still unsure how to discern which pronouncements can be accepted at face value, which require a particular adjustment, and which must be discarded.

When mentor and mentee are closer in age, the latter may be tempted to turn off the critical filter, smoothing the way for an equally damaging if less visible set of assumptions—those of faculty members whose own graduate institutions rested considerably higher up the academic food chain than the ones their graduate students will receive degrees from. A very high proportion of grad students at nonelite universities are being advised by faculty who were grad students at elite universities. Does the mentor have a realistic sense of the kind of placement that would represent success for the mentee? If Yes, does the mentor sufficiently appreciate the specific advantages that an elite degree and/or name-brand advisor has conferred, to be able to provide the correct adjustment when advising? Not all mentors may be confident in their answers to these questions, but a frank admission of fallibility to the mentee is infinitely preferable to avoidance of the issue.

Open channels of communication regarding blind spots and knowledge deficits can humanize the mentoring relationship and increase the odds of mentee success. Modeling such communication is Jan Allen and Kevin Johnston’s dialogue in chapter 13, which like Boehm and Lueck’s earlier exchange triangulates faculty, administrative, and student perspectives on mentoring. Distilling an 18-year conversation around mentoring, Allen and Johnston draw together many of the book’s main preoccupations, including mentee

agency and responsibility, the virtues of peer mentoring, non-academic career preparation, teaching as a critical area of focus, and the key role of administration in providing the impetus, initial frameworks, and ongoing support for mentoring efforts.

Nina Namaste's reflections on her career vis-à-vis mentoring in chapter 14 capture some of the ironies enmeshed in the mentoring continuum, such as the tension between her early desire for a "sage on the stage" mentor (in Calkins and Light's formulation, a Model) and her evolving commitment to egalitarian and cooperative ideals in all arenas of practice. Namaste's "Guided Self-mentoring Reflection" (p. 244), a kind of rough Individual Development Plan for faculty seeking satisfaction in their work, represents another terrific tool, easily adapted to all stretches of the academic career path. A sterner rebuke, surely, to the reality of mentoring comes in the final chapter, wherein Leonard Cassuto reveals how he inferred the principles of good mentoring in Lacanian style, by tracing the imprint of their absence in his own professional development as a grad student. That this should stand—let the reader judge—as the method most effective in delineating the frontiers of mentoring may give us pause.

However problematic a definition, if measured by SoTL output, mentoring not only exists but is enjoying an unaccustomed vogue. This is due in no small part to the consolidation, legitimation, and expansion of SoTL itself as an academic enterprise and research area. The sheer proliferation of SoTL studies has made apparent the consistency with which graduate students and junior faculty report quality of mentoring to be the single most important determinant, for good or ill, of their success, and also the comparative effectiveness of mentoring programs as opposed to other structured forms of professional development. Meanwhile, the number of faculty maintaining SoTL as a primary or valued secondary field of research, and/or holding significant SoTL-related administrative roles (such as director at one of the now nearly ubiquitous teaching and learning centers), has increased dramatically, as witnessed by many present contributors. The concept and practice of mentoring has been an easy wagon to hitch to the rising SoTL star. Growing awareness of SoTL research and institutional resources on the part of graduate students and faculty also prompts demand from below, resulting in new forms of mentee-driven administrative collaborations as well as fully home-grown mentoring efforts.

The stakes with academic mentoring extend well beyond individual professional success. Entrusted to the academy are two crucial

functions: to advance knowledge, and to ensure the renewal of a capable citizenry. Higher education represents one of the few channels through which intellectual talent can be directed efficiently toward human benefit, and not squandered on enterprises indifferent or injurious to general welfare. Whether it can sustain this mission depends on many things, including its ability to attract and retain high-caliber recruits. While successful mentoring can never be more than part of this formula, it provides what nothing else can, a sense of immediacy, connection, and career “doability.” Mentors can say, both literally and by demonstrating their investment in the relationship, “you’re on the right path. Keep moving ahead. I will help get you there.” This book is intended to support all parties as they continue to walk the mentoring continuum.