

On Being a Mentor

A Guide for Higher Education Faculty

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Why Mentoring Matters

Mentors are advisors, people with career experience willing to share their knowledge; supporters, people who give emotional and moral encouragement; tutors, people who give specific feedback on one's performance; masters, in the sense of employers to whom one is apprenticed; sponsors, sources of information about, and aids in obtaining opportunities; models of identity, of the kinds of person one should be to be an academic.

—University of Michigan (1999, p. 6)

A mentor is a person who oversees the career and development of another person, usually a junior, through teaching, counseling, providing psychological support, protecting, and at times, promoting or sponsoring. The mentor may perform any or all of these functions during the mentor relationship.

—Zey (1984, p. 7)

Superb mentors are intentional about the mentor role. They select protégés carefully and deliberately offer the career and psychosocial support most useful to protégés (Johnson & Ridley, 2004). Mentoring is one of the more important and enduring roles of the successful faculty member. Few professional activities will have a greater impact on students (even if you are a great teacher), and no professional activity will afford the faculty member greater psychological benefit (Johnson, in press; Mullen, 2005; Russell & Adams, 1997). For most of us laboring behind the ivied gates of academe, the career contributions that will hold greatest meaning—those that will sustain us long after our careers end—will be relational. In the end, I propose that more of us will count protégés and relationships than articles, grants, or courses delivered.

For the purposes of this guide, I use the terms *mentoring* and *mentorship* to address excellent student–faculty developmental relationships in academic settings. In this guide, I also prefer the term *protégé* to indicate the junior

member (student or junior faculty member) in a mentoring dyad. Protégé is a French derivative of the Latin word *protegere*, meaning “to protect.” Although terms such as *mentee*, *apprentice*, and *junior* have been used instead, I find these terms wanting and less often employed in the literature. I offer more in the way of conceptualizing mentorships in chapter 2.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP

Daniel Levinson, the Yale researcher credited with awakening interest in mentoring in the late 1970s, referred to mentorship as the most important relationship of young adulthood (Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978). In both business (Higgins & Thomas, 2001; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002) and academic (Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002) settings. Subsequent research lends strong support for Levinson’s claim (Busch, 1985; Green & Bauer, 1995; Schlosser, Knox, Moskovitz, & Hill, 2003). Good developmental relationships (mentorships) promote socialization, learning, career advancement, psychological adjustment, and preparation for leadership. Compared to nonmentored individuals, those with mentors tend to be more satisfied with their careers, enjoy more promotions and higher income, report greater commitment to the organization or profession, and are more likely to mentor others in turn.

One particularly poignant example of the power of mentoring can be found in the social ties between scientific masters and apprentices in the United States. A study of all U.S. Nobel laureates by 1972 revealed that more than half (48) had worked, either as students, postdoctorates, or junior collaborators, under older Nobel laureates (Zuckerman, 1977). Described by Zuckerman as a process of *sociological heredity*, these findings highlight the way promising students often seek out masters in the field, and masters in turn select protégés from among the many promising students who present themselves for training.

But when Daniel Levinson first revealed the salient benefits associated with good early career mentoring, he also made an observation about mentoring in academic settings: “Our system of higher education, though officially committed to fostering intellectual and personal development of students, provides mentoring that is generally limited in quantity and poor in quality” (Levinson et al., 1978; p. 334). Levinson’s study of adult development found that mentoring was rare when institutional constraints discourage supportive behavior and when potential mentors (faculty) are rewarded primarily for other forms of productivity. In contemporary academic culture, faculty are pressed with unceasing demands for research, teaching, and committee work. Not surprisingly, research confirms that faculty rarely initiate mentorships with students or junior faculty and that they rarely have opportunity to consider methods of deliberately advising or

mentoring (Johnson, 2002). It further comes as no surprise to learn that although nearly 95% of medical students and graduate students believe mentoring is essential for their personal and career development, only one third to one half report having a mentor (Aagaard & Hauer, 2003; Johnson, 2002).

WHY MENTORING MATTERS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

This book is premised firmly on the assumption that mentoring relationships in academic settings are crucial for students and junior faculty who benefit as protégés, for institutions who benefit secondarily, and also for the faculty who reap a range of positive outcomes—personally and professionally. The balance of this chapter is devoted to highlighting the established benefits of mentoring.

Professors are increasingly implored to become intentional and deliberate in arranging and managing mentorships with students. Yet, advising and mentoring are seldom specifically reinforced. Few of us were ever instructed in the art of being a good mentor. In fact, in the broader landscape of faculty activities, mentoring is typically relegated to collateral duty status; few university committees seeking new faculty or reviewing candidates for promotion and tenure direct focused attention to a faculty member’s level of excellence in relationships with students (Johnson & Zlotnik, 2005). One educator recently called mentoring the “forgotten fourth leg in the academic stool” (Jacob, 1997, p. 486). Jacob was referring to the fact that although mentoring is often priceless in terms of developing the next generation, it is too often ignored in accounting strategies used to calculate faculty compensation. But a stool (or an academic career) supported entirely by research, teaching, and service, is incomplete (and structurally less stable) than one bolstered by attention to strong student–faculty relationships.

In the pages of this book, I encourage you to heed Jacob’s advice and shift your conception of mentoring from collateral add-on or unspoken assumption to intentional professional activity. Serious college and graduate school professors must cast developmental relationships as a distinct area of professional competence and applied practice; mastery of mentoring requires intentional preparation. Mentorships are often important enough in the lives of students that Weil (2001) recently argued that departments and their faculty have a *moral responsibility* to devise a system of roles and structures to meet students’ needs for mentoring.

Whether you work primarily with undergraduate or graduate students, the mentoring lessons offered in this book should ring true. Although I cover some of the unique concerns of college and graduate students separately later

in this guide, the historic distinctions between undergraduate and graduate training environments is eroding:

With undergraduate students asking for the skills typically associated with graduate studies, and graduate students requesting the guidance traditionally accompanying the undergraduate experience, differences between these two populations are blurring. ... Graduate programs are now populated by students with a deep interest in teaching and mentoring, who want to acquire good teachers and mentors while becoming good teachers and mentors themselves. These students are quite outspoken with respect to their needs. (Gonzalez, 2001, p. 1625)

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR PROTÉGÉS

Daniel Levinson's pioneering study of men in the early to middle career phases was the first to suggest that the presence of a mentor was essential to a smooth transition from young adulthood to a more mature and secure middle adulthood (Levinson et al., 1978). Levinson concluded:

The mentor relationship is one of the most complex, and developmentally important, a [person] can have in early adulthood. ... No word currently in use is adequate to convey the nature of the relationship we have in mind here. ... Mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles, but in terms of the character of the relationship and functions it serves. (pp. 97–98)

Shortly after Levinson's bold claim, research began to confirm the salience of mentors in the career success of professionals in a range of fields. In a landmark study by Roche (1979), a survey of 1,250 top executives listed in the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that two thirds had an important early career mentor. Moreover, those who were mentored reported higher salaries, earlier promotions, better adherence to a career plan, and higher levels of satisfaction with their careers. Subsequent research has reinforced the empirical connection between mentoring and a range of positive personal and professional career outcomes (Burke, 1984; Collins, 1994). In contrast to those who are not mentored, mentored professionals show better job performance, smoother socialization into organizational cultures, higher levels of tangible compensation, stronger professional identity, and more substantial contributions to the institution and the profession. Following their recent review of the mentoring literature, Russell and Adams (1997) concluded: "the benefits to the protégé can be so valuable that identification with a mentor should be considered a major developmental task of the early career" (p. 3).

Before reviewing the specific benefits of mentoring in the lives of students and junior faculty, it is important to acknowledge that not all mentorships are

equal. Advising and mentoring in academe ranges from excellent and highly satisfying to marginal to highly dissatisfying (Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002). Although most who report being mentored also report being quite satisfied with the relationship, the benefits covered below accrue most accurately to those students with skilled and supportive mentors. It is also important not to overlook the less tangible but often highly meaningful relational/interpersonal benefits of mentoring (Edem & Ozen, 2003). When a protégé reports great satisfaction with mentoring, and when the mentorship has lasted for more than a year or two, it is quite likely that the psychosocial dimension of the relationship has become more important than the formal career dimension.

In the remainder of this part, I highlight the most consistent and sustained benefits of mentoring for protégés. Although many of these positive outcomes are objective and easily measured, others are more subjective and rely on personal reflections of protégés—often after the active phase of mentorship has ended.

Academic Performance

Excellent mentoring, and in particular, student–faculty interaction outside of the classroom, is associated with academic achievement and persistence in college (Campbell & Campbell, 1997; Pascarella, 1980). When college freshman are actively engaged by faculty, they are more likely to return for the sophomore year and are more likely thereafter to persist until graduation. Mentoring also predicts higher GPAs and completion of more credit hours. Among graduate students (Johnson & Huwe, 2003), excellent mentoring is associated with dissertation success and timely degree completion. Effective mentors keep students on track, clear unnecessary obstacles, and provide essential doses of motivation and encouragement. In fact, mentoring predicts satisfaction with graduate school at least partly because students complete their degree and move on (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gilner, 2001). The longer a student lingers in graduate school, the less positively he or she will evaluate the mentor and the program.

Productivity

A well-established outcome of good mentoring in academic settings is productivity of protégés' both during graduate school and early in their own academic careers. Among graduate students in PhD programs, there is a clear connection between having a mentor and presenting papers at conferences,

publishing articles and book chapters, securing grant funding, and eventually demonstrating initiative and independence as a new scholar (Cameron & Blackburn, 1981; Cronan-Hillix, Davidson, Cronan-Hillix, & Gensheimer, 1986; Reskin, 1979; Scott, 1992; Tenenbaum et al., 2001). For students interested in careers in academe, there is simply no substitute for being trained and mentored by a productive sponsor and collaborating with one's sponsor during graduate school. Outstanding mentors understand this benefit and often go to great lengths to find ways to appropriately incorporate novice protégés into ongoing scholarly projects.

And the productivity benefit continues to manifest itself in the subsequent careers of protégés. Doctorates who report having a research mentor in graduate school are significantly more likely to engage in research during their professional careers (Dohm & Cummings, 2002; 2003). Among early-career professors at research-oriented universities, having a mentor is strongly correlated with publication productivity (Bode, 1999; Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000). Being mentored is consistently correlated with scholarly productivity among protégés.

Professional Skill Development

Through the application of mentor functions such as teaching, advising, coaching, and modeling, mentors help protégés master professional skills and ultimately “learn the ropes” of both the discipline and the local organization. Mentored students and faculty frequently describe enhanced professional skill as a prime benefit of being mentored (Koch & Johnson, 2000; Newby & Heide, 1992; Schlosser et al., 2003; Scott, 1992; Wright & Wright, 1987). Neophyte protégés evolve more rapidly into skilled professionals when mentors provide direct teaching, supply “insider” information, and model complex tasks. Not only do protégés demonstrate greater content mastery, they are also more proficient with applied tasks (e.g., conducting research, teaching a class, evaluating a client, presenting at a professional meeting). Further, enhancement of professional skill is associated with gains in both confidence and professional identity.

Networking

Protégés in academic settings often report being more “tied in” or connected to important players, committees, and sources of information and power than non-mentored students and faculty (Fagenson, 1988; Scott, 1992; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Wright & Wright, 1987). Well-mentored protégés are introduced to

significant people in both the local university community and the broader profession. Compared to nonmentored peers, they report greater organizational influence, more immediate access to important power-holders, and greater allocation of resources (stipends, fellowships, grants). Networking is connected to both immediate and long-term benefits. Protégés often gain the inside track on grant sources, job possibilities, early opportunities for leadership and engagement in professional organizations, and invitations for coauthorship.

Initial Employment

One of the most clearly established benefits of being mentored is assistance with securing one's first job. Undergraduates rely on mentors for stellar letters of recommendation to graduate school, and graduate students correctly assume that their collaboration with a well-respected faculty mentor will open doors when the time comes for finding postdoctoral or early career positions. In fact, when it comes to preparing for internships and postdoctoral career positions, the first piece of advice often given to graduate students is to establish excellent mentor relationships with faculty (Johnson & Huwe, 2003; Mellott, Arden, & Cho, 1997). And also after graduation, evidence from academe confirms that mentoring is highly correlated with successful initial job placement (Newby & Heide, 1992; Scott, 1992). For better or worse, it is often the mentor's stature and eminence in the academic community that determines the quality (prestige) of initial jobs in academe. Being mentored by an eminent scholar significantly increases the quality of both initial and subsequent jobs (Reskin, 1979; Sanders & Wong, 1985). In fact, within the most prestigious institutions, level of predoctoral productivity is less salient in initial job placement than the mentor's eminence in the field (Long, 1978).

Professional Confidence and Identity Development

Development of confidence and a sense of self in the profession is among the most meaningful and enduring of the mentoring benefits (Johnson & Huwe, 2003; Newby & Heide, 1992; Russell & Adams, 1997; Schlosser et al., 2003). When students encounter a faculty mentor who gets to know them, refrains from rejecting them as unworthy (something many college and graduate students fully expect), and instead offers acceptance, confirmation, admiration, and emotional support, their self-concepts are irrevocably bolstered. When professors express this sort of confidence in protégés, protégés themselves begin to adopt the mentor's vision as valid; their confidence and professional esteem rise to match the mentor's view. Mentored students are more

likely to adopt what Packard (2003) referred to as positive *possible selves*—images of what one can ultimately become in life and the profession. And personal confidence and professional identity are just as important for junior faculty as they are for students (Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000). Finally, the impact of a mentor on the personal esteem and identity development of protégés often endures after the mentor's death. Marwit and Lessor (2000) found that deceased mentors often continue to play an active role in the lives of surviving protégés; images and memories of the mentor's affirmation buoy protégés when times get tough.

Income Level and Rate of Promotion

Not only are protégés more confident and organizationally connected, they also make more money and report more rapid promotions than nonmentored colleagues (Collins, 1994; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Russell & Adams, 1997; Scandura, 1992; Whitely, Dougherty, & Dreher, 1991). Sometimes the advantage to protégés can be striking. For example, Dreher and Ash (1990) found that business school graduates with an early-career mentorship earned an average of 8,000 more than their nonmentored counterparts. It appears that some combination of mentor-induced networking, promotion, and opportunity leads to higher compensation levels and more rapid ascension of the promotional ladder in most institutions. Although the connection between salary and mentoring is less well established in academe, having a mentor in academic settings is correlated with acquiring rank, promotion, and eventual leadership roles within the university (Bode, 1999).

Career Eminence

Beyond salary and compensation, protégés also experience greater opportunity and notoriety during their careers. Various indicators of "career success" suggest protégés enjoy higher levels of career mobility, accelerated job offers, and greater recognition within their professions (Collins, 1994; Fagenson, 1989; Russell & Adams, 1997). In academe, mentoring is equally predictive of subsequent eminence and career achievement. Cameron and Blackburn (1981) discovered that graduate school sponsorship by a mentor was a significant predictor of notoriety or fame in one's field of study. As Zuckerman (1977) discovered among U.S. Nobel Prize laureates, mentorship by an eminent scholar during training radically increases the probability of one's own career success. Perhaps this is why it is so rare for recipients of prestigious academic awards not to mention their mentors in the course of their acceptance speeches.

Satisfaction With Program and Institution

One of the clearest and most consistent outcomes of mentoring in academic settings is the positive effect on student satisfaction. Across the board, research with graduate students reveals that those who identify a personal mentoring relationship with a faculty member are more satisfied with their doctoral program, and the institution (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; Cronan-Hillix et al., 1986; Tenenbaum et al., 2001). The positive valence of a mentorship becomes associated with the graduate training experience writ large; it appears that many program shortcomings can be tolerated as long as students feel personally engaged with an individual faculty member. A similar connection between mentoring and satisfaction holds true for undergraduate alumni (Koch & Johnson, 2000). College students who develop mentorships with faculty are more likely to report satisfaction with their college and a sense of being well prepared for their present position. Among all of the benefits accruing from mentoring, none may be as important as satisfaction when it comes to creating long-term institutional advocates.

Reduced Stress and Role Conflict

A final benefit of mentoring for students and new faculty is a reduction in the inevitable conflict between work (school) and family roles as well as a reduction in the general stress associated with acclimating to a training environment or a first job. Nielson, Carlson, and Lankau (2001) found that employees with mentors had fewer work–family conflicts and reported more success with balancing the often fierce demands of work and family. Among new faculty, a solid mentorship serves to reduce social isolation and stress while simultaneously enhancing the capacity to cope successfully (Bode, 1999). Mentors help diminish role strain and conflict not only by offering support and advice, but also in modeling appropriate work–family balance.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR MENTORS

Although less frequently evaluated in the research literature, less frequently touted by deans and department heads, and less frequently acknowledged by faculty members themselves, professors and other professionals who mentor often reap a number of benefits (Allen, Poteet, & Burroughs, 1997; Busch, 1985; Kram, 1985; National Academy of Sciences, 1997; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Russell & Adams, 1997; Wright & Wright, 1987). Some of these are tangible (extrinsic) rewards whereas others are deeply personal (intrinsic) in nature. The healthiest and most self-aware

mentors among us acknowledge and appreciate these benefits as delightful by-products of time devoted to the lives and careers of juniors. The most frequently cited benefits of mentoring for mentors include:

- *Personal satisfaction:* Nearly every study of the experience of mentors mentions a deep sense of personal pleasure and satisfaction from seeing protégés develop and succeed. Academic mentors often find joy in the experience of helping a neophyte student evolve into a confident and competent colleague.
- *Personal fulfillment:* Mentoring may be particularly meaningful to faculty in the middle to later phases of their academic careers. Mentoring allows the professor to address the essential task of midlife—*generativity* (Erikson, 1959/1980). Passing on one's skills and wisdom imbues mentor relationships with a deeply existential meaning. Mentoring affords an opportunity to revisit and reappraise one's past—to realistically appraise and make peace with choices and achievements. Through mentorships, a professor extends his or her contribution to subsequent generations. The effects of one's work become multigenerational and in some way, immortal.
- *Creative synergy and professional rejuvenation:* Talented protégés are often said to spark or trigger a creative renaissance in the lives of faculty members who may otherwise become stale or mired in academic careers. Mentors often report a positive creative synergy with good students or junior colleagues. The mentorship becomes a source of new ideas, novel designs, and scholarly excitement. The energy and genuine excitement of the new scholar is contagious and vicariously invigorating.
- *Networking:* Protégés who are productive scholars or active in the professional community often increase the visibility and influence of mentors. As mentors make connections for students, they inevitably create their own—protégés evolve into professionals and often relish the chance to create opportunities for their mentors.
- *Motivation to remain current:* The requirements of teaching, coaching, and guiding the next generation of scholars often provides mentors with ample motivation to stay up to date with the scholarship and innovations in their specialty areas. Gifted protégés stimulate mentors to remain on the "cutting edge" in their fields while occasionally following their protégés into new areas of study. In sum, good mentoring prevents stagnation and obsolescence.
- *Friendship and support:* Although few professors enter a mentorship to find a friend, friendship is an inevitable outcome of many good mentorships. Particularly as protégés become more independent, and the relationship more collegial, mutuality and friendship increase. Over

the years, some of an active mentor's most supportive, loyal, and enjoyable collegial connections may be with former protégés.

- *Reputation for talent development:* An excellent mentor quickly develops a reputation as a "star-maker"—one with capabilities as a developer of students and junior faculty. For example, a content analysis of the obituaries of eminent psychologists published in the *American Psychologist*, revealed that being an inspirational mentor and friend was one of the most common themes (Kinnier, Metha, Buki, & Rawa, 1994). Whether this recognition results in tangible rewards, it nearly always enhances the mentor's stature and allows him or her to attract the most talented students and postdoctoral protégés. Additionally, attracting the highest caliber protégés makes the mentor more productive; good mentoring establishes a system of success with its own inertia.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Although the benefits of mentoring accruing to students and faculty mentors indirectly benefit the academic departments and institutions in which mentoring occurs, some of the positive by-products of mentorship impact organizations directly. Institutions with active mentoring are more likely to have productive employees, stronger organizational commitment, reduced turnover, a stronger record of developing junior talent, and a loyal group of alumni and faculty (Russell & Adams, 1997). Two of these institutional benefits bear specific mention here.

Protégés in high-quality mentorships report stronger long-term commitment to the organization and also exude more positive and notable organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., assisting coworkers, volunteering to do things not formally required of them) than those not mentored or those in poor supervisory relationships (Donaldson, Ensher, & Grant-Vallone, 2000). In academe, well-mentored graduate students may manifest strong commitment to both the institution and their profession of choice. Well-mentored faculty are less prone to leave prematurely and, during their tenure, are more likely to demonstrate collegiality and institution-affirming behaviors.

Finally, mentoring begets mentoring. One of the most strikingly consistent findings in mentoring research is that former protégés (those who have enjoyed a significant positive mentorship) are significantly more likely to subsequently mentor juniors themselves (Allen et al., 1997; Busch, 1985; Clark et al., 2000; Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Roche, 1979). It appears that good mentoring, like good parenting, is prone to positively influence many generations of protégés; excellent mentors often have a profound impact on both an institution and a profession.

MENTORING BENEFITS MEN AND WOMEN

Early writing on mentoring and gender frequently noted that women were quite disadvantaged when it came to securing a mentorship, and if one was secured, benefiting from the mentorship personally and professionally. In fact, research in both business (Fagenson, 1989; Ragins, 1999; Ragins & Scandura, 1994) and academic (Clark et al., 2000; Dohm & Cummings, 2002; 2003; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Tenenbaum et al., 2001) settings offers no indication that women are less often mentored in college, graduate school, or early academic careers. Women appear just as likely as men to initiate mentorships and to benefit from the mentoring functions they receive. Later in their careers, women are just as likely as men to express a willingness to mentor others. I address mentoring and gender in greater detail in chapter 12.

OBSTACLES TO MENTORING IN THE ACADEMY

Although surveys of students reveal that nearly all of them view the formation of a close mentorship with a faculty member as essential to their development and success, only about half of students report having such a relationship at the graduate level (Clark et al., 2000; Kirchner, 1969). Further, nonmentored students report regret at not being mentored and believe they have missed out on something important. It seems that going without a mentorship in any organizational setting is predictive of fewer opportunities for advancement, lower job satisfaction, and reduced expectations for one's career (Baugh, Lankau, & Scandura, 1996). In graduate school, the slow erosion of the traditional mentor-apprentice system further raises concerns about how professors can adequately pass on the largely tacit codes of ethical conduct and professional behavior (Folse, 1991). Stressed, overextended, and rewarded primarily for research behavior, college and university faculty enjoy fewer salient teaching moments with individual students. In the following section, I summarize three primary obstacles to mentoring in modern-day academe.

Organizational (University) Obstacles

Several characteristics of the contemporary university effectively diminish the probability of student-faculty mentoring (Johnson, 2002). First, systems of promotion and tenure seldom take quality advising and mentoring into account. Although college presidents and promotional brochures pay ample lip service to "learning environments characterized by personal mentoring,"

bottom-line criteria for promotion tell a different story. In most college and university accounting systems, funded research and publications are the primary determinants of advancement decisions. Although teaching efficacy may also factor in, it is the rare university promotion and tenure committee that seriously scrutinizes a faculty member's effectiveness in the mentor role.

Second, part-time faculty now make up about 50% of college faculty nationwide and the percentage is growing (Bippus, Brooks, Plax, & Kearney, 2001). Although part-time faculty have been a viable response to recent financial struggles across university systems and have the advantage of infusing courses with real-world practice connections, they are less physically accessible outside of class, less engaged with the university culture, less capable of effectively guiding students through a degree program, and often less available for substantive developmental relationships with students.

A third and related organizational mentoring obstacle is the rapid profusion of professionally oriented graduate programs. Professional programs are geared to launching graduates into careers as practitioners (vs. scholars), may exist external to universities, and may rely heavily on part-time professional faculty. Because professional programs admit more students per faculty member, encourage part-time or evening programs, and often have shorter durations and fewer requirements for research (e.g., dissertations), it is no surprise that graduates of these programs report less mentoring than graduates of more traditional graduate programs (Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000; Fallow & Johnson, 2000). This does not mean that professional programs do not serve an important educational niche, and many professional program faculty are excellent mentors; however, given the volume of students faculty must contend with, professional programs need to develop effective alternatives to traditional mentorships (see chap. 16 for recommendations in this regard).

Departmental (Local) Obstacles

At times, obstacles to mentoring originate in the local academic department. Departments and programs can, unwittingly or deliberately, discourage development of an academic culture conducive to mentoring (Johnson & Huwe, 2003). At times, graduate programs foster competitive climates such that students are left to wonder if they will "survive" the next academic hurdle. These programs implicitly discourage students from cooperating and also discourage faculty from making early investments of time and energy in students' development until the student has weathered the early graduate school gauntlet of stressors and qualifying examinations. Sadly, by the time these students garner support from a faculty advisor, they are often beyond

the stage during which mentoring may be most helpful and undoubtedly counting the days until their graduate school ordeal ends.

Many department heads overestimate the extent to which students are actually mentored by faculty (Dickinson & Johnson, 2000). When students are paired with faculty advisors, department chairs and deans often assume mentorships develop. Students themselves are less likely than department chairs to evaluate existing student–faculty relationships as mentorships. This phenomenon may at least partially explain a third department-based obstacle to excellent mentoring: Very few academic departments explicitly reward professors who mentor. Although faculty are given awards for teaching or research excellence and faculty loads may be lightened on the basis of extra committee work or other departmental service, excellence in the mentor role is rarely the basis for explicit reward.

Finally, some departments do not offer a diverse range of faculty who might become mentors to an increasingly diverse student population. Although the population has become steadily more heterogeneous, the majority of senior tenured professorships continue to be held by White males. When academic departments fail to actively recruit and retain talented faculty who are also representative of the population in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, all students suffer—not only those from minority groups.

Individual (Relational) Obstacles

At times, the primary obstacle for mentorship formation is relational or personal; not all professors have the requisite attributes and skills to mentor effectively and others may be discouraged by the costs of being a mentor (Allen et al., 1997; Johnson, 2002; Ragins & Scandura, 1994). The following comprise some of the key individual mentoring obstacles:

- *Poorly matched character or personality traits:* At times, faculty members may be characteristically aloof, critical, demeaning, or indifferent to students and junior colleagues. They lack some of the key virtues and personality traits known to correlate with good relationships, generally, and mentorships, specifically.
- *Personal pathology:* On rare occasions, a professor may be impaired by virtue of a clear personality disorder (e.g., narcissism, dependence, avoidance), acute emotional disturbance (e.g., depression, anxiety), or addiction to substances. In these instances, students may suffer negative consequences from their association with the advisor. They may report enduring angry tirades, depressive mood swings, or unpredictable

absences. In each case, the professor's pathology interferes with effective relationships.

- *Cloning (unequal access):* Although most professors are most inclined to mentor those who remind them of themselves at an earlier stage of development, this tendency toward cloning or mentoring juniors in one's own image can turn corrosive. Students who do not match the professor demographically or in terms of career aspirations may be rejected, and those admitted to the mentor's fold may feel pressure—subtle or overt—to make themselves in the mentor's image.
- *Unwilling to render service:* At times, a faculty member may simply be unwilling to make the sacrifices in terms of time, energy, and attention required for mentoring. Face it, mentoring is time intensive. Professors who lack an orientation to helping may not easily move beyond routine advising with students. In my experience, such cases are relatively rare.

WHY COLLEGE PROFESSORS MENTOR

Although data on the prevalence of mentoring in college and graduate school reveals that about half the students in these contexts are not mentored, this is probably related to departmental priorities and institutional cultures more than it is a symptom of individual faculty neglect or disinterest. Having observed faculty colleagues in several colleges and universities, it is my observation that the men and women attracted to the professorial life are also those most inclined to teaching, coaching, advising, and mentoring. Although Jacob (1997) may be right in reflecting that mentoring is the forgotten fourth leg of the academic stool, this is not for want of willing mentors, but rather, for want of academic systems that encourage, facilitate, honor, and reward excellence in the mentor role.

So why do we mentor? Faculty motivations run the gambit from sheer altruism to a utilitarian interest in research assistance. Most of us harbor a mix of motivations for the mentor role including genuine caring for our students' development, personal enjoyment of mentoring relationships, gratification in seeing protégés succeed, assistance with the tasks of research and teaching, and a sense of responsibility for ensuring the best educational outcomes for our "customers" (students and institutions).

Whatever your primary motivation to fill the mentor role with students and new faculty, I applaud you and hope you find some valuable guidance in the pages of this guide.