The Mentoring Continuum

From Graduate School through Tenure

Edited by

Glenn Wright

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CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda (Manda) S. Adams is Director of Education and Cross-Cutting Activities for the Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences Division of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Prior to her position at NSF, Manda was an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is on the Board of Directors for the Earth Science Women's Network.

Jan Allen is Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in the Graduate School at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York (since 2012). Previously she was Associate Dean for PhD Programs in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University in New York City (2005–12), and Associate Dean in the Graduate School, Northwestern University (2002–5). She was a faculty member in human ecology at the University of Tennessee–Knoxville (1982–2002) and Assistant Dean in the Graduate School (1997–2001). She is the author of the forthcoming, *The New Faculty and Graduate Mentor* (Stylus Press). She can be contacted at Jan.Allen@cornell.edu.

Michael Amlung is a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of Missouri. He received a PhD in psychology from the University of Georgia, where he was involved in teaching undergraduate courses, mentoring undergraduate research, and promoting teaching-related training for graduate students. He has presented his teaching scholarship at the Lilly Conference on College Teaching and the American Psychological Association Annual Convention. In addition to his teaching-related interests, he has an active research program in the area of alcohol and drug abuse.

Rebecca T. Barnes is Assistant Professor in the Environmental Program at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Her research focuses on understanding the intersection between biogeochemical cycles,

water, and society. Barnes serves on the Leadership Board of the Earth Science Women's Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion and career development of women in the geosciences.

Beth A. Boehm is Professor of English at the University of Louisville. She completed her PhD in 1987 at the Ohio State University, where she specialized in twentieth-century British and American literature and rhetoric and composition. Since 2009, she has been focused on graduate student professional development as an administrator in the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies, where she is currently dean. Her current research is on mentoring and graduate student engagement.

Phyllis Bolin is Director of Pursuit, the Quality Enhancement Plan, for Abilene Christian University (ACU). She is an associate professor of mathematics in the Department of Mathematics and served as the Director of Faculty Mentoring at ACU for 6 years. Active in the field of technology, her research interests involve use of mobile devices in teaching and learning.

Janet Branchaw is Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Science Education and Community Engagement (WISCIENCE) and an assistant professor of Kinesiology in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her scholarship and program development expertise are in mentee professional development, particularly preparing undergraduate STEM students for graduate education. She has created training curricula for undergraduate research mentees (*Entering Research*) and their research mentors (*Entering Mentoring*) and empirically established the positive impact and effectiveness of these curricula on research mentoring relationships and the persistence of underrepresented minority students in research.

Susanna Calkins directs the faculty programs at the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching and teaches in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University. She is co-author, with Greg Light, of *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: The Reflective Professional* (Sage 2009), and has published twenty scholarly articles related to the conceptions of learning, teaching and research; mentoring; teaching and learning with tech-

nology; and the history of higher education.

Leonard Cassuto, a professor of English at Fordham University, writes a monthly column for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* called "The Graduate Adviser," and is the editor of a recent special cluster on graduate students in the journal *Pedagogy*. He is the author of *The Graduate School Mess: What Caused It and How We Can Fix It* (Harvard Univerity Press, 2015). The most recent of his seven other books are *The Cambridge History of the American Novel* (2011), of which he was General Editor; *The Cambridge Companion to Baseball* (2011), winner of the Best Anthology Award from the North American Society of Sports Historians; and *Hard-Boiled Sentimentality: The Secret History of American Crime Stories*, which was nominated for an Edgar Award and named one of the Ten Best Books of 2008 in the crime and mystery category by *The Los Angeles Times*. Cassuto is also an award-winning journalist who writes on subjects ranging from science to sports.

Paula Chambers is founder and CEO of Versatile PhD, a leading web-based career resource for PhDs seeking to transition into non-academic careers. Originally founded in 1999 specifically for humanities PhDs, Versatile PhD has broadened out over the years to include STEM disciplines and is now supported by over 80 subscribing research universities. The Versatile PhD mission is to help graduate students and new PhDs envision, prepare for, and excel in non-academic careers. Chambers earned her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from The Ohio State University in 2000 and spent several years as a Grant Writer and Development Director for Los Angeles–area nonprofits before devoting herself completely to Versatile PhD. She now runs her socially positive business from her home office in Los Angeles, with the help of one employee based in Washington, DC.

Mary Dankoski is Executive Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development at Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM), where she is also the Lester D. Bibler Scholar and Vice Chair for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Dankoski's scholarly interests include the advancement of women, the study of faculty vitality, and organizational and faculty development in academic medicine. She holds a PhD in marriage and family therapy with a graduate minor in women's

studies from Purdue University.

Miriam Cohen Dell served as a graduate assistant in the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development for the Indiana University School of Medicine. She completed her master's degree in applied communication from Indiana University in 2013 and is currently managing U.S. franchisee communication for an international restaurant organization based in Denver, Colorado.

Melissa Dengler completed her undergraduate studies at Niagara University where she majored in Psychology. Her interests in infant development lead her to choose the University of Georgia for graduate school. At the University of Georgia her research interest expanded to include the development of the nervous system across the lifespan. Melissa's teaching interests include Developmental Psychology, Introductory Psychology and Sensation and Perception courses.

Denise P. Domizi, PhD, is Coordinator of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at the Center for Teaching and Learning at the University of Georgia (UGA). She works to promote and support innovation and research in teaching and learning at UGA through the design, development, and delivery of workshops, programs, graduate seminars, and one-on-one consultations.

Mirjam S. Glessmer is Coordinator of Teaching Innovation at the Center for Teaching and Learning at Hamburg University of Technology, Germany, where she works with professors and teaching staff on improving the teaching of university courses in STEM. She runs workshops on ocean/climate topics for various audiences, and on ocean/climate education for STEM educators. She publishes in the peer-reviewed literature on education, serves as associate editor in a journal on education, and blogs about her "adventures in oceanography and teaching" at mirjamglessmer.com.

Meredith G. Hastings is an assistant professor at Brown University in the Department of Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences. She joined the faculty at Brown in 2008, and continues to pursue her varied research interests in biogeochemistry, atmospheric chemistry and climate. She is co-founder and Vice President of the Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN; eswnonline.org), which facili-

tates career development for women scientists in the early stages of their careers.

Krista Hoffmann-Longtin is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) and an Assistant Dean in the IU School of Medicine Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development. Her work focuses on faculty development, organizational/professsional identity, and strategic communication in academic health settings. Before returning to university life, Krista worked as an advertising account executive. She earned a BA in telecommunications from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, an MA in Communication and Creative Arts from Purdue University, and a PhD in Education Leadership and Policy Studies at Indiana University.

Kevin Johnston is an adjunct professor in the Hunter Division of Humanities at Southern Vermont College. Much of his academic career has focused on developing future faculty pedagogically. Presently, his research focuses on how professional development programs engender adjunct faculty loyalty.

Ron Krabill is Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences and Faculty Coordinator of the MA program in cultural studies at the University of Washington Bothell. He is also affiliated with the Department of Communication, the African Studies Program, and the Graduate Interdisciplinary Group on Public Scholarship at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is the author of *Starring Mandela and Cosby: Media and the End(s) of Apartheid* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Greg Light is retiring as Director of the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching at Northwestern University, where he will remain as a senior fellow. A professor in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern, he has published over 50 papers and chapters in national and international peer-reviewed publications and given over 100 invited talks, workshops, and conference presentations in North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. He is the author, with Susanna Calkins, of *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: The Reflective Professional* (Sage, 2001, 2009); and, with Marina Micari, of *Making Scientists: Six Principles for Effective College Teaching* (Harvard University Press, 2013).

Yvonna S. Lincoln holds the Ruth Harrington Chair of Educational Leadership and is University Distinguished Professor of Higher Education at Texas A&M University. She is a former president of the American Evaluation Association, and also the former president of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), and has been an evaluation and organizational development practitioner and consultant for over 25 years. She is the co-author of *Naturalistic Inquiry, Effective Evaluation, Fourth Generation Evaluation*; the co-editor of the first, second, third, and fourth editions of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*; and the co-editor (with Norman K. Denzin) of the *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. She has authored more than 100 chapters and journal articles on research and evaluation practice, qualitative methodologies, new paradigm inquiry, ethics in inquiry, and higher education. Her interests lie in democratic, inclusive, participative, and social justice issues in research, evaluation and public policy formulation for higher education.

Steven Paul Lee is the Graduate Diversity Officer for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines at UC Davis. His work focuses on strengthening graduate education through diversity. He loves to translate research into evidence-based activities for professional development, covering topics such as mentoring, oral and written communication skills, self-assessment, and career planning. Previously, he was the assistant director of a graduate diversity program at Northwestern University, and served as faculty at Roosevelt University and Wheaton College. He earned a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and BS in chemistry from Carnegie Mellon University.

Amy J. Lueck is a doctoral fellow in Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Louisville. Her dissertation research explores rhetorical practice and instruction in nineteenth-century high schools. In addition, she has researched and contributed to graduate student professional development and mentoring as research assistant in the University of Louisville School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies, and was recognized for this work by the American Association of Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award in 2014. She currently represents graduate students on the Executive Council of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC).

Richard McGee has been mentoring biomedical scientists and designing novel research training programs for nearly 40 years. He currently is Associate Dean for Faculty Recruitment and Professional Development at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, assisting new faculty to launch their research careers through individual mentoring and group coaching. He also leads the Scientific Careers Research and Development Group, a team of 15 social and natural scientists studying the development of young scientists. They are following more than 250 biomedical PhD students with annual in-depth interviews. They are also conducting a randomized controlled trial of a novel coaching model as a new approach for increasing faculty diversity.

Nina B. Namaste is Associate Professor of Spanish in the World Languages and Cultures department at Elon University, North Carolina. Her disciplinary research focuses on culinary imagery as a means to express issues of identity formation in contemporary Spanish and Spanish-American fictional works. Her interdisciplinarity and dedication to the liberal arts have led her towards her new role as Arts and Humanities Director of the Elon College Fellows, an undergraduate research program. Her Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) focus on transformative learning experiences, for students and faculty, have led her towards her other new role as co-director of a three-year research seminar on global learning sponsored by Elon's Center for Engaged Learning.

Christine Pfund is a researcher with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research and the Department of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW). She serves as PI and Director of the Mentor Training Core of the National Research Mentoring Network and as an Associate Director with the UW Institute in Clinical and Translational Research. Dr. Pfund's work focuses on developing, implementing, documenting, and studying research mentor training interventions across science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine (STEMM) and understanding specific factors in mentoring relationships that account for positive student outcomes.

Daniel Rusyniak is a professor of Emergency Medicine and the Vice Chair for Faculty Development in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Indiana University School of Medicine. An active teacher and researcher, he has served as the Faculty Development

Chair for the Society of Academic Emergency Medicine.

Jennifer W. Shewmaker, PhD, is an associate professor of psychology and the Director of Faculty Enrichment at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas. She has worked with hundreds of students and teachers in her career and is the founding developer of ACU's master teacher program.

Elizabeth A. Simpson is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Parma and carries out research on early social cognitive development in infants at The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. She helped to develop the *Specialized Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) Workbook*, a mentoring handbook to enrich undergraduate students' hands-on research experiences, and is interested in training new college teachers. Her teaching interests include research methods, statistics, and evolutionary psychology.

Christine A. Stanley is Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity and a professor of higher education administration in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University.

Brian Stone, PhD, is a visiting assistant professor of psychology at Franklin and Marshall College. He co-founded the Psychology Educator Development Association at The University of Georgia. His research investigates how humans and other animals perceive, represent, and track their body and its parts, especially during tool use.

Jane Van Slembrouck is a postdoctoral teaching fellow in the Department of English at Fordham University. Her research interests include medicine, disability, gender, and sexuality in nineteenth-century American literature.

Julie Welch is Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs and Professional Development (OFAPD) at Indiana University School of Medicine (IUSM) and Co-director of Mentoring Training for the Indiana Center for Translational Science Institute (CTSI). She works to advance mentoring initiatives across the institution for trainees and faculty. In addition, she oversees programs for the advancement

of women in medicine and science. As an associate professor of clinical emergency medicine at IUSM and a board-certified physician, she practices medicine at an urban, level-one trauma center and teaching hospital. She was honored in 2014 with the EMRA (Emergency Medicine Residency Association) National Mentorship Award and the AMA (American Medical Association) Inspirational Physician Award.

Grace Williams earned an undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Georgia (UGA) and a master's degree in social work from the University of Texas at Austin. While at UGA, she contributed to a large-scale study of the impact of peer mentoring on graduate student teaching assistant development. In her final graduate internship, Grace focused on using group-based therapy in individuals with severe mental illness.

Glenn Wright is Director of Graduate School Programs at Syracuse University. He holds a BA in English from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and an MA and PhD from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He has worked in academic assessment, publishing, and administration, and has taught English at the University of Michigan and the University at Albany, SUNY.

Introduction

Glenn Wright

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.

Graduate Student	*Assistant Professor*
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 missional 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.

2 Graduate School–Facilitated Peer Mentoring for Degree Completion: Dissertation-Writing Boot Camps

Jan Allen

Most of the existing research and literature on mentoring emphasizes the mentoring dyad and specifically the roles, responsibilities, effective functions, and potential pitfalls and dysfunctions in faculty–graduate student or senior faculty–junior faculty relationships.[1] There has been much less attention to peer mentoring as an effective means to provide academic and psychological support in the graduate student experience.[2] In this chapter, I will make a case for the important role that graduate students have as peer mentors, including the ways that peer mentors make distinct and unique contributions to the support and advancement of their fellow students. I also will describe ways that the Graduate School (and other central offices or disciplinary departments) can promote peer mentoring and peer support communities that facilitate degree completion. To a large degree, I base my comments and suggestions for peer mentoring programs on my faculty and administrative experiences with programs at the University of Tennessee, Columbia University, and Cornell University.

For several decades, since at least the 1980s, there has been general agreement and research evidence that graduate students are more successful when they have supportive and effective mentoring (Allen forthcoming; National Academy of Sciences 1997; Nicoloff and Forrest 1988; Ulke-Steiner, Kurtz-Costes, and Kinlaw 2000). Yet over the past decade or so, the increasing expectations for faculty teaching and student engagement, research, publishing, securing research funding, and engaging in university service and shared governance have continued to make it difficult for faculty to provide consistent and effective mentoring to all graduate students in their

programs. As a result, mentoring accessibility and effectiveness can be highly variable across individual faculty and programs.

Given the evidence that good mentors can have a critical impact on students' confidence, competence, degree completion, and career advancement, it is ironic that, at the point that students may feel the most anxiety and pressure to complete their degree—when they are tasked with the one responsibility, to write a thesis or dissertation, that students have never done before (save the very few who seek a second research master's or doctorate)—we as faculty send the message, "Now go away and write. Contact me when you have a chapter (or two or all of them) ready for me to read. Good luck with that." Whatever sense of community, camaraderie, and support that new student orientation events, or taking coursework with one's entering cohort, or passing the qualifying exams to enter into the ABD club have engendered, the independence expected of most students—especially in the humanities and social sciences—at the thesis and dissertation stage only increases the stress and isolation reported by graduate students as they begin to write, in the last months or years of graduate school.

The research and literature focusing on peer support that does exist has emphasized the psychological and social support provided by peers in graduate school. There has been little attention given to the role of peers in academic support and degree completion. Johnson and Huwe (2003), in their comprehensive book on mentoring in graduate school, describe peer mentoring as an "alternative mentor form." Peer mentoring is a "lateral relationship in which a fellow graduate student provides career-enhancing and psychosocial functions to another student" (179). Another alternative form, peer-group mentoring, consists in "a group of peers who agree to meet regularly for the purpose of providing role modeling, networking, and psychosocial support" (179). In what ways, then, do peers, as individuals or in groups, function in a mentoring role?

Peer Mentoring Contributions

Peers function as mentors by providing supportive relationships, empathizing through shared experiences, and offering social networks in ways that faculty cannot, especially in the ways described here.

Mentoring always involves a relationship that extends beyond simply an advising role (Allen forthcoming). And although a faculty

mentor can provide advocacy, guidance, and financial and other critical forms of support, many roles are beyond the boundaries of appropriate faculty-student relationships. For example, peers, whether as individuals or in groups, have far more opportunities for academic conversation and nonacademic socializing outside the classroom, office, and lab than would generally be considered appropriate for faculty-student interactions. Peers can go to restaurants and bars together. They are more likely to travel to and room together at conferences. They share offices and occasionally residences. In contrast, there are many fewer situations where faculty-student pairs engage and socialize in these ways and settings.

Peers provide lateral exposure and perspective. Peers experience in real time the same or similar issues related to the graduate school experience. Peers who share an advisor or the same program faculty can offer advice based on their direct experience with the work style, temperament, and expectations of the shared advisor and faculty. Further, even the most supportive, communicative, and empathetic advisor shares experiences and advice reflecting their own graduate school experience years or decades in the past, and most often at a different institution. To paraphrase Heraclitus, peers step in the same river.

Peers are important for the social network they provide beyond academic support. One of the many differences between the undergraduate and the graduate experience is that students' focus and work narrow in significant ways in graduate school. Especially beyond the coursework stage, graduate students have a much smaller academic world. At the thesis- and dissertation-writing stage, especially in the humanities and social sciences, students engage primarily with one faculty chair/director/sponsor. When that relationship is fraught with conflict or excessive expectations, students may forget one of the most important (but often uncommunicated) rules of graduate school: "You are *not* your thesis or dissertation. It is your *work*. It is *not you*. You remain a worthy person deserving of care and support. And this includes taking care of yourself." Even in constructive, healthy student-faculty relationships, students benefit from multiple sources of support and information.

Graduate students have multiple needs that multiple mentors can meet. Distinguishing the research on mentoring in business from research on mentors in higher education, Lyons, Scroggins, and Rule (1990) identified three functions in the "peculiar intimacy" of mentoring essential to a successful experience in graduate school.[3] First,

mentors transmit formal scientific knowledge and skills (see Reskin 1979). Second, mentors help their students understand and practice the "rules, values and ethics of the discipline, or what Phillips (1979) accurately called 'the lore and mysteries of the profession'" (Lyons, Scroggins, and Rule 1990, 279). And third, mentors praise and encourage their students to build confidence (Alleman, Cochran, and New 1984; Blank 1988). More recently, Johnson and Huwe (2003) identified additional functions of a mentor, listed comprehensively in Table 2.1.

Fischer and Zigmond (1998) have identified four areas of "survival skills" that graduate students must develop to succeed in graduate school and beyond. All four categories reflect information and skill-building that mentor are expected to provide to their students: (1) basic skills, including navigating and thriving in graduate school; (2) communication skills, including presenting and publishing research; (3) skills for finding employment; and (4) advanced skills (including teaching, writing funding proposals, and managing people). Central to all these skills is the core ability to act responsibly and professionally. No one faculty mentor has either the time or the ability to fulfill all of the various needs that students may require or expect. So students are encouraged to have multiple mentors for multiple purposes, offering information and expertise in different domains; this includes finding and using supportive, informative mentors among their peers.

Peers likely have no supervisory or evaluative function with other graduate students. Leadership and managing functions, yes. But supervisory and evaluative roles with their peers are appropriate only in extraordinary and controlled circumstances. So, as with secondary faculty mentors, students' boundaries with peers can extend beyond those with a faculty mentor who is also in the advisor/chair/sponsor role; peers can offer even more candid advice on a myriad of topics. One benefit of peer mentors over faculty members has been described in the context of students' community of practice (Wenger 2013). In writing support groups, peers have no authority or power over each other; to have an effect, they must negotiate and persuade their fellow writers: "The language of negotiation is simultaneously shaping the writer as other group members challenge her to defend her ideas, to respond authoritatively to questions about her work, and to position herself as a scholar. By responding … a writer is practicing for later engagement with the rest of her discipline" (Phillips 2012, 6). This safe

Function	Provided by Faculty Mentor	Provided by Peer Mentor
Is accessible and available	x	x
Provides encouragement and support	x	x
Shares mutual trust and respect	x	x
Offers essential information and advice	x	x
Models professional traits and behaviors in intentional, visible ways	x	x
Provides introduction to colleagues in the discipline and profession	x	
Willing to self-disclose	x	x
Is selective based on match of important factors (research topic and approach, work style, temperament, expectations, etc.)	x	
Provides constructive feedback, evaluation, and appropriate challenge	x	x
Advocates for student in the program, field, discipline, profession	x	
Provides help with navigating program politics	x	x
Helps to provide exposure and visibility of the student's work	x	
Provides protection and defense from challenges by others	x	
Provides acculturation/socialization into the discipline/profession	x	
Encourages student's development from protégé to independent scholar and colleague	x	

TABLE 2.1. Mentor functions. ***Sources:*** **Adapted from Johnson and Huwe 2003, Kram 1985, and Kram and Isbella 1985.**

environment with peers helps students to prepare for and transition into the role of independent scholar and researcher.

Peers can discuss the "underground folklore" of the graduate program. This information is seldom in writing, yet is as invaluable guide to graduate school success. As an assistant professor, one year away from my own graduate experience, I developed and gave my graduate students a one-page document called the "Underground Guide to Graduate School." It included all the tips and advice I wish I had known sooner than I did in graduate school—for example, "Submit your IRB protocol as soon as you can; even experienced researchers report that the approval process takes longer than expected." Each year my list grew longer as my graduate students added their own advice for new students. Within five years the underground guide had become a standard part of the department's graduate handbook (and retained its name for two decades to prompt students to read it). In addition, peers share advice on how to navigate departmental and institutional bureaucracy. And although information about faculty work styles, temperament, and eccentricities won't be codified in a departmental graduate student handbook ("Don't ask both Dick and Cheryl to be on your committee. They are close friends and always vote as a block. If one doesn't vote to accept your dissertation, it's guaranteed that the other won't either."), peers share information about departmental politics and personalities that faculty should never discuss with students.

Peers can refer their fellow students to university and other resources with greater ease, acceptance, and sometimes credibility. There are "dark sides" to mentoring. Sometimes there is a mismatch in work styles, expectations, or temperament. Some faculty neglect or exploit their students. Sometimes there are boundary violations, unwelcome attraction issues, or other conflicts. For students experiencing dysfunctional mentoring relationships, peers are often their first recourse for advice, support, and referral to campus resources (for example, the Ombuds office, Graduate School, or counseling center).

There are reciprocal benefits in peer mentor relationships, just as there are with faculty-student mentoring relationships. With peer mentoring, advanced students gain confidence by sharing their knowledge and experience with new graduate students; the former develop and refine their own skills as mentors in advance of completing their degree and beginning to mentor their own undergraduate and graduate students (or new colleagues).

To illustrate these roles and contributions of peers as mentors, I

describe below some peer mentoring models that vary from institution to institution based on student needs and institutional resources. These programs focus on academic success, psychological support, and degree completion, with peer mentoring as a central component. I first describe programs with which I have direct experience; I also describe programs at Stanford and the University of Pennsylvania, both among the first of their kind among U.S. graduate schools and boasting documented effectiveness. Finally, I conclude with recommendations for developing programs that encourage peer support and mentoring for degree completion.

Developing Future Faculty as Teacher-Scholars at the University of Tennessee

For me, the idea of peer mentoring for degree completion came about quite by accident. In 1996, my colleague at the University of Tennessee, Sky Huck, and I founded and directed for six years the Developing Future Faculty as Teacher-Scholars Program, an interdisciplinary, campus-wide mentoring program for master's and doctoral students who held Graduate Teaching Assistant and Graduate Teaching Associate positions. The former served as TAs working with a faculty member; the latter were responsible for their own classes. Each year in the mentoring program, we formed mentoring teams of six to ten graduate students, facilitated by a faculty member from a department different from that of any member of the team. The primary focus was on professional development and support for students' instructional roles and responsibilities. In addition, the faculty mentor for each team also facilitated discussions and provided resources to help students prepare for making fellowship applications and grant proposals, writing and publishing their research, making effective conference presentations, addressing ethical and legal issues in higher education, and entering the academic and professional job market. The program began with five primary objectives: (1) to improve the quality of instruction provided to undergraduates by graduate students; (2) to elevate the status of teaching in the minds of graduate students who would soon join faculty ranks; (3) to increase team-building skills among graduate students regardless of whether they would become faculty members or take positions in business, private research, NGOs, the government, or elsewhere; (4) to provide a year-long mechanism through which faculty who are recipients of the university's Outstanding Teaching Award can share their insights about teaching,

learning, and student engagement with graduate students; and (5) to develop and share the model with other colleges and universities to adapt and use (Gaia, Corts, Tatum, and Allen 2003).

In our initial plans for the mentoring program, the goal had been to find outstanding faculty, with strong credentials in both teaching and research, who were known to be effective graduate mentors. They would guide their teams, share their knowledge and experience, and inspire their graduate students for future faculty and professional roles. What we never anticipated was the peer mentoring and support that developed among team members. Students shared their own knowledge and experiences about teaching undergraduate students, securing graduate funding, getting papers and conference presentations accepted, and resolving challenging situations with their advisors and mentors. When a faculty mentor had to miss a bimonthly team meeting, the students provided the necessary facilitation and leadership for their team. At the end of the first year, as we prepared to select another 100 or so students for the next year's mentoring program, students from our inaugural group began to ask, "Wait, are you cutting us loose? We want to continue in the program." So some of the teams continued to meet beyond their first year, facilitated by one or more of the group members. In addition, our plans for the subsequent years of the program included the co-facilitation of each team by a faculty member and a mentoring team member from the previous year. These Mentoring Fellows served as peer mentors and provided some of the strongest, most effective contributions to the program for its duration.[4]

Dissertation- and Proposal-Writing Boot Camps at Columbia University

At Columbia University, beginning in 2008, doctoral students were invited to participate in an intensive week-long dissertation-writing boot camp.[5] Our boot camps were designed, using Simpson's (2013) later terminology, to be "outward-focused" rather than "inward-focused" activities. The former are part of a more comprehensive effort to provide writing support across programs and through multiple approaches, while the latter often "lack strategic planning and explicit discussion of program goals with students and university stakeholders" (Simpson 2013, 2).[6]

Our specific goals at Columbia were to

- help students identify and use effective strategies to become

more productive writers;

- encourage students to develop a strategic plan that includes daily goals, effective writing habits and strategies, interim deadlines, and a target completion date;
- provide an environment conducive to writing, with space for individual writing and team meetings, with food and beverages throughout the day;
- create a writing support community for students that would continue to provide peer support and coaching beyond boot camp.

Twelve to fifteen students, each from a different doctoral program, were assigned to a boot-camp group. Throughout the year we offered three-day, five-day, six-day, and eight-day versions of the boot camp during semester, spring, and summer breaks. We provided distraction-free writing space from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with team meetings, facilitated by the Graduate School associate dean for PhD programs, at the start and end of each day. During lunch we offered optional presentations by the facilitator and professional development staff. The day after the first boot camp ended, one of the participants emailed: "My entire team met today at an undisclosed location and wrote all day long." Another student wrote: "It was an incredible experience that continued for us once the official boot camp ended. We're gathering to write and use the good habits we learned in boot camp."

From both the formal assessment and anecdotal information, we knew that our boot camp had been successful. Students reported that while the advice and encouragement, guest speakers over lunch, and nonstop food buffet were all appreciated, the most valuable part of boot camp was the opportunity to be part of a writing community that continued the conversations and support. Following the first boot camp, we began to schedule weekly "Write-In" events, where students could return and write together as a group. As word spread, we opened the Write-Ins to all graduate students who wanted a quiet writing space, not just those who had participated in boot camp.

In designing and implementing our Columbia boot camps, we were helped by developers of two of the programs that preceded us and who also have reported outcome data. The University of Pennsylvania is credited with having the first dissertation boot camp, developed collaboratively by Penn's Graduate Student Center, Graduate School of Education, and Weingarten Learning Resources

Center in 2005. The creators describe their two-week event as one that "motivates students using intense, structured writing time" combining "components of structure, accountability, advising, comfort, and community" (Mastroieni and Cheung 2011, 4). Writing is mandatory from 9:00 in the morning to 1:00 each afternoon, with optional writing time until 5:00 PM. On the first day of the event, Learning Resources Center staff present a workshop with tips on time management and staying on schedule. Up to 25 students participate in each boot camp. A 2008 survey of Penn Boot Camp alums revealed that 70% of the "campers" felt the event helped them to meet their writing goals; the majority of respondents had a dissertation defense within three months of their boot camp participation (Mastroieni and Cheung 2011, 6).

Stanford University followed the University of Pennsylvania in 2008, with a Dissertation Boot Camp (DBC) focusing on "reinforcing the writing process through opening and closing workshops, scheduled follow-up discussions, individualized one-hour tutorials, daily writing logs, and multiple check-in points" (Lee and Golde n.d., 2). Stanford's DBC events are intended to help students write more and develop greater awareness of the writing process. A 2010 survey of former Stanford participants revealed that over 30% reported that their boot camp experience helped them finish their dissertation one or more quarters sooner than anticipated, which reflected actual dollars saved by the students in tuition or by their department in tuition and stipend costs. A majority of students also reported that their writing skills and practices had improved as a result of their DBC experience. The authors attributed the DBC's effectiveness to writing consultations that were available to students during DBC and to helping students understand the "collaborative and community-based" nature of writing rather than pursuing writing goals in isolation. Students benefit from multiple forms of collaboration, such as "conversations with advisors and writing consultants and feedback given by writing support groups, peers at conferences, reviewers in journals, and book editors," (Lee and Golde n.d., 4).

Boot Camps for Dissertations, Theses, and Proposals at Cornell University

Cornell University began offering dissertation-, thesis-, and proposal-writing boot camps in Spring 2013. (Details about those events are

included in Appendix A; Figure 2.1 below shows the daily schedule for a six-day event.) In addition to facilitators from the Graduate School, we utilize writing consultants, statistical consultants, and data/information management consultants who are available to meet with boot campers during the event. Concurrent with each on-site boot camp, we also offer a concurrent "Virtual Boot Camp" for students away from campus. And incorporating Stanford's model, there are also "After Dark Boot Camps" for students with lab, teaching, and employment responsibilities during the day.

Following each boot camp, there are regular follow-ups via email to offer support and encouragement. We host monthly "Re-Boots" that provide space, food, and additional support for the ongoing community of writers who attended boot camp. Coinciding with our first boot camp, the Graduate School began funding a Graduate Writing Consultant program through Cornell's Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines, which offers one-hour consultations (individual sessions or a series) by trained graduate peers. We also offer a daily Write-In (8:00 to 11:00 AM, Monday through Friday) at Cornell's Graduate Student Center so that students working on any writing project can write in a designated space with free coffee and tea. Finally, as part of this suite of writing support mechanisms for graduate students, we send out biweekly emails with writing strategies, advice, and encouragement to over 10,000 graduate student subscribers through our Productive Writer listserv.

What the Organizers Learned at Boot Camp

From the initial Dissertation Boot Camp at Columbia to subsequent events at Cornell, I have come to recognize a number of outcomes, some expected and some unanticipated, about boot camp.

Students recognize and appreciate the *diversity of disciplines and programs* represented among, for instance, the mentoring teams at the University of Tennessee, where groups were populated with no more than one member from any one graduate program. For several reasons students find value in this. One rule of boot camp is, "What Happens at Boot Camp Stays at Boot Camp!" We promise confidentiality in our discussions. Facilitators and graduate student peers in the group agree at the outset that we will not report or repeat participants' comments to their advisor or program faculty. Students can speak candidly about their struggles, fears, or problems, even those concerning their advisor, and their comments

Day One (Friday)

7:30–9:00	Breakfast available; optional writing time
9:00–11:30	Orientation and introductions
11:30–12:30	Lunch available
11:30–3:30	Writing time (Students are encouraged to write in 45- to 90-minute blocks without interrupting their writing.)
3:30–4:00	End-of-day check-in group meeting
4:00–7:00	Optional writing time

Day Two (Monday) and Day Three (Tuesday)

7:30–9:00	Breakfast available; optional writing time
9:00–10:00	Group meeting to share daily goal and any obstacles
10:00–12:00	Writing time
12:00–1:00	Lunch
1:00–3:30	Writing time
3:30–4:00	End-of-day check-in group meeting
4:00–7:00	Optional writing time

Day Four (Wednesday) and Day Five (Thursday)

7:30–9:00	Breakfast available; optional writing time
9:00–9:30	Group meeting to share daily goals and any obstacles (optional for individuals; facilitator included if/as needed)
9:30–12:00	Writing time
12:00–1:00	Lunch available (optional mini-lecture and discussion on related topic: managing stress, maximizing time and energy for greater productivity, tools for managing data and notes, thesis/dissertation submission guidelines)
1:00–3:30	Writing time
3:30–4:00	End of day check-in group meeting (optional for individual students; facilitator included if/as needed)
4:00–7:00	Optional writing time

Day Six (Friday)

7:30–9:00	Breakfast available; optional writing time
9:00–9:30	Group meeting to share daily goals and any challenges (if needed)
9:30–12:00	Writing time
12:00–1:00	Lunch (with celebratory cake and ice cream) Awarding of completion certificates and T-shirts
1:00–2:00	Group meeting to finalize plans for “Taking Boot Camp Home” (i.e., to maintain writing pairs, small group, or large group writing support beyond Boot Camp)
2:00–5:00	Optional writing time

FIGURE 2.1. Six-day boot camp schedule.

remain within the group. Students also report their surprise at how many of their own experiences and struggles are shared by other students in different disciplines. Music and psychology students have the same anxiety about never finishing. Engineers and historians alike have advisors who don't make their expectations clear. Both art historians and anthropologists don't know when to stop writing. And almost none of the students anticipate how long getting feedback can take. At boot camp we frequently hear, "I didn't know anyone else had *my* problem." Many of the writing pairs or small groups that splinter into permanent writing communities maintain this interdisciplinary composition, for the support and confidentiality that non-departmental peers provide.

Another kind of diversity among the team members is that students are at different stages of dissertation writing. With more resources we might have created different events for students at the beginning, middle, or close to the end of writing. As it turned out, students benefit from this mix. Students at the beginning of writing learn from their more experienced peers, who discover they have advice to share, which serves as a confidence-booster.

And finally, students appreciate the opportunity to socialize, beyond boot camp and apart from their academic writing, with peers outside their graduate programs. When students are in the final months or years of their degree program, they are hesitant to be seen socializing by their program peers. Taking time away from research and writing with boot camp peers helps students to maintain much needed life-work balance.

Students report that the best part of boot camp is what happens after the intensive experience ends. Five- or six-day events seem to provide the optimal amount of time for students to really bond as a *support group and writing community*. I usually see this group formation and bonding by day three or four in the boot camps. In the most recent session, I saw the supportive community emerge within the first few hours. As students were introducing themselves, giving a two-minute presentation of their research and describing the obstacles and challenges they face, one student began to describe her struggles with her dissertation writing and conflicts with her advisor. After a few minutes of listening to her anguished description of her lack of progress, one of the other students in her group said, "We've got this. We'll help you get through this. We'll find a way out of this for you." (At the end of the boot camp, the congratulatory cake had a new inscription: We've got this!)

Our first Dissertation Boot Camp at Columbia University taught us the value of ongoing *communal writing space* for graduate students. We began to reserve a room for "Write-Ins," advertised first to our boot camp alums. But some students, because of work schedules or family commitments, were never able to attend a week-long event, so we soon invited the entire graduate student population to join the Write-In community. For these come-and-go sessions, we asked students to sign in with their name and writing goals. On their way out, they indicated how long they wrote and whether they accomplished their goals. We wanted this simple sign-in/sign-out procedure to create accountability to this ad hoc writing community and underscore their commitment to writing and degree completion.

Multiple approaches and models can be effective. Some elements of boot camp are difficult to plan for and some student needs can't be anticipated. In some boot camp models, space is reserved, food is provided, and students write for the duration of the event. Other models engage campus writing consultants to meet with participants during the event; consultants work with participants on organization, thesis statements, shaping arguments, presenting evidence, sentence structure, voice and style, and editing strategies. At Cornell, we also schedule time for statistical consultants and for data/information management specialists to come to our events and meet with students by their request. And on the last day, in a session we call "Taking Boot Camp Home," students commit to a writing schedule and strategies, including continuing to write with a virtual or in-person writing buddy or group as they work to complete their thesis or dissertation.

Careful consideration should be given to the size of the group. We try to admit as many students as possible to our events, yet eight to twelve students seems to be the optimal group size to allow introductions on the first day and sharing of goals, strategies, and obstacles during the team meetings. Maria Gardiner at Flinders University in Australia hosts a wonderful two-day writing productivity program and deals with the issue of group size by having half of the students introduce themselves, their research, and their challenges on the first day, while the others introduce themselves on the second day. Although the purposes of this event are somewhat different from a week-long boot camp, at Cornell we have divided a group of 20 into two groups of 10 and staggered the start times, one in the morning and one in the afternoon; this works well to support

bonding and group formation, insofar as it promotes an authentic rather than a hurried and obligatory exchange.

A skilled facilitator contributes to the development of the peer community. The facilitator welcomes the group of boot camp participants by email prior to the start of the event. These messages set expectations, explain some of the logistics, and, for our events, prompt students to begin a productivity and reflection log at least a week before the start of boot camp. During the event, the facilitator welcomes participants, guides the introductions and orientation to the program, and continues to facilitate the daily goal-setting and check-in meetings, at least through the second or third day. The facilitator then checks with the group members to decide when they are ready to meet, guide, and support each other in their group times without the facilitator's help.

Among the Graduate Schools hosting boot camps, some use staff from the Graduate School or writing center as facilitators. In some cases facilitation teams include two or more assistant/associate deans, writing instructors, and consultants. In my experience as facilitator, I draw heavily on my 20 years as a faculty member advising and supervising graduate students as well as what I have learned from students across dozens and dozens of disciplines and programs in my role as a graduate school associate dean for 15 years. And selfishly, I enjoy boot camp for many reasons, not the least is that each boot camp is like a six-day focus group: I learn a great deal about students' experiences as graduate students as well as about the careful and effective mentoring by our faculty.

At Cornell we have recently begun to invite advanced graduate student "alumni" of previous boot camps to facilitate one of the boot camp groups (usually the proposal- or thesis-writing students). Students have been both enthusiastic and effective in their facilitator role. There are, of course, pros and cons to using faculty, administrators, and students. It can be an enormous time commitment for all. And because students are paid or given an honorarium for their time (faculty and administrators are "volunteers"), advanced students create an extra expense—though one that is well worth the cost, because students identify with their peer-facilitator, and advanced students are developing and using valuable skills in managing groups, on-the-spot problem-solving, and providing appropriate encouragement and support for (sometimes) struggling students. I believe students can feel intimidated by or be less candid with faculty than with Graduate School staff or other students;

however, when Cornell's Director of Graduate Studies in History hosted a semester-break boot camp for students last year, and invited faculty to participate and write for the week along with the doctoral students, the faculty "jumped right in" to share their struggles and obstacles in the group meetings. And often the students were the ones offering their advice and support to the faculty!

While deciding who has the expertise and availability to facilitate, consider other important qualities of effective facilitators. First and foremost, facilitators "think on their feet." When students describe their challenges, the facilitator responds with a solution or strategy. "I find that what works for many students is…." "How do you think your advisor would respond if you…?" "Here's a strategy to try; if it works for you, make it a habit." When students express fear or anxiety, facilitators are prepared with stress-reducing suggestions or referrals to campus resources. This dialogue will continue throughout boot camp, and the facilitator's ability to help students move forward in the face of anxieties and other obstacles is one of the most critical, and daunting, responsibilities. Simultaneously, effective facilitators are able to hold back when needed and instead of offering advice, ask, "Does someone have a strategy to suggest or a similar experience to share? What works for some of you?"

Different institutions use various boot camp models (briefly described in Appendix B), with shared goals: to create intellectual and psychological support within a peer-writing community to promote degree completion. Writing boot camps provide much-needed community-building and, even more, an opportunity for graduate students to reflect on their skills and identity as writers and scholars. We emphasize that being the *authors* of their dissertations gives them the *authority* to critique, argue, and write with a confidence perhaps not heretofore available or possible for them. And we provide a set of strategies to develop their confidence and skills as both authors and scholars.

There are positive outcomes, both planned and unplanned, at boot camp. Each event provides new information for the planners that can be incorporated into future events, resources, and training. Our boot camps at both Columbia and Cornell have prompted individual academic programs to create writing space and communities for their own students. For example, as mentioned above, Cornell's History program started a winter break boot camp for history and anthropology doctoral students (the two programs share

the same building). These events, both campus-wide and program-specific, build writing and support communities, offer training in writing and other skills needed for successful academic and other professional careers, and encourage and develop peer mentors to both competently and confidently serve as sources of academic and psychological support for fellow graduate students.

Notes

1. The author wishes to thank vice provost and dean of the Graduate School Barbara Knuth at Cornell University, former GSAS dean Henry Pinkham at Columbia University, and former chancellor Bill Snyder, former provost John Peters, and former dean of the Graduate School C. W. Minkel at the University of Tennessee for their enthusiastic support and engagement in our mentoring and boot camp programs at their respective institutions.

2. Throughout the chapter I used the term *graduate student* to refer to both graduate and professional students, i.e., those in doctoral, research master's, and non-research master's and other professional programs.

3. The phrase "peculiar intimacy" is from Phillips 1979.

4. A detailed guide to program elements and outcomes can be found in Gaia et al. 2003, and in Allen, forthcoming.

5. Following our second boot camp, during which one of the humanities doctoral students announced, "I wish I had known all this when I was writing my dissertation proposal three years ago," we added proposal-writing boot camps for students at the proposal/prospectus stage.

6. Lee and Golde (2013) have proposed a comparable model of "Writing Process" as opposed to "Just Write" events. In the former, students have the opportunity to consider their writing process, identify and use effective strategies, and overcome the challenges that delay progress in conversation with fellow boot campers, facilitators, and writing consultants. "Just Write" events, conversely, support students' writing productivity by providing space, food, and structured time. Other support, such as writing consultants, presentations on writing topics, and encouragement to reflect on the writing process, is minimal.

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APPENDIX A: Creating, Implementing, and Evaluating Boot Camp

Preparing for Boot Camp

Several months before the start of boot camp, identify appropriate space. The environment should include writing space with one or two students per table. (We prefer tables that can accommodate two students; these pairs often end up continuing as writing buddies, virtually or in person, after boot camp ends.) Comfortable chairs can't be overrated. At one of our boot camps, students suggested we replace the end-of-event T-shirt with a seat cushion and suggested that, instead of the "I Survived Dissertation Boot Camp" slogan on the shirt, it would not be inappropriate to embroider the seat cushions with "Keep Your Butt in this Seat and Write!" (We agreed with the need for the cushions; we remain undecided about the proposed slogan.) Space is needed for group meetings of 12 to 15 students, plus facilitator(s). There also should be space for food service (breakfast and lunch, as well as refreshments throughout the day). Some students prefer to work through meals; they get their food and return to their table to continue to write. Other students

want the break for eating and socializing. (It's only during these breaks that students are allowed to use phones and check email.) For about half the days of boot camp, we schedule a group lunch and offer a 20- to 30-minute presentation and discussion on a pertinent topic, such as developing editing skills, working with advisors, managing time, or staying healthy. We include a visit from the thesis/dissertation manager or a reference librarian who talks about information management tools relevant to students' work. These lunchtime group meetings are optional; students may also use the time to write.

In addition to individual work and group meeting spaces, and space for buffet-style food service, we created a "Stress-Free Zone" with "Re-charge Stations" to our most recent boot camp. The Zone was simply a corner of the room that included de-stressing activities: Play-Doh, crayons and drawing pencils, small hand weights, and craft materials. And because there is evidence that people who are appreciative or grateful for something or someone are more resilient and healthy, we provided cards, envelopes, and postage to encourage our boot campers to write a thank-you note during their break from writing. Posted signs indicated, "No Stressful Conversations Here," "Just Breathe," and "Relax … Take a Break." Some students found the Stress-Free Zone very helpful. (We added the Zone when, during the initial orientation, as students were talking about the struggles and challenges they were facing, the student seated next to me leaned in and whispered, "Listening to this is making me so anxious, I think I'm going to throw up.")

Along with the space considerations, we include amenities and accessories ranging from the essential to the thoughtful. Only once has our space included enough electrical outlets, so determine in advance if you'll need to bring extension/surge-protector cords. An environment where tables can be placed against the walls, rather in the middle of the room, helps to avoid tripping hazards from the maze of cords. We provide table tents preprinted with students' names and graduate programs; these remain in place to identify students' work space for the week. We place the name placards in dollar-store picture frames; students can keep the frames and insert their end-of-event certificate when boot camp concludes. And although we bring in breakfast and lunch each day, we also keep a large bowl of (mostly) healthy snacks on hand with several beverage choices throughout the day. An extra thoughtful touch is the presence of a massage therapist who gives hand and neck massages

midway through the event (boot camp becomes known as Dissertation Spa on that day).

Publicizing Boot Camp and Soliciting Applications

Through our Graduate School website (https://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/thesis-and-dissertation/cornell-proposal-thesis-and-dissertation-writing-boot-camps) and weekly email events calendar, we announce upcoming boot camp dates and the application deadline. After the first boot camp, word spread as students encouraged their colleagues, and faculty encouraged their students, to attend. In reviewing applications, we are especially interested in identifying students who are ready to begin writing or are already in the writing stage of their dissertation. A surprising number of students who apply are within a month or two of their deadline to submit a complete draft to their advisors or committees. As mentioned earlier, these students add "stage" diversity and are among the most highly motivated of our boot campers. We try to accommodate everyone who applies, including creating separate teams of 10 to 12 and staggering the start time or day; different groups work in the same space, share meals, and socialize during breaks as one large group.

At least a month before the event, we let participants know they have been selected to participate. We send logistical details (dates, times, and location), including the ground rules: We expect students to attend each day, to attend all required team meetings (usually once in the morning and again in the afternoon), and to submit paperwork (brief assignments, such as daily goals and progress) each day. We also ask participants to begin keeping a writing log at least a week before the start of boot camp, recording on a log sheet we provide their daily goals, daily word count, and thoughts about their writing process and progress as well as any obstacles they encountered. We let participants know that breakfast, lunch, and snacks will be provided, including vegetarian options, and that they are welcome to bring their own food as well. Following the practice at the University of Pennsylvania, we have experimented with requiring a deposit to reserve a spot in boot camp. At Columbia University we asked students to give us a $50 check in a sealed envelope, which we held. If students completed Boot Camp, we returned the sealed envelope. (Organizers at Penn now tell students that their account will be charged the deposit amount if they fail to complete boot camp.) At Cornell we don't charge a deposit; we keep a wait list in

case someone has to drop out prior to the start of boot camp, so we always have a full cohort of at least 12 in each group.

Boot Camp Week

Students consistently report that the best schedule involves starting boot camp on a Friday. The Friday introduction and orientation provides students with a good sense of what will be expected of them in their upcoming intensive week. They use the weekend to find and organize needed articles and books for their writing goals for the subsequent five days.

The first half-day of boot camp begins with the facilitator describing the purpose and goals of boot camp, previewing the week's schedule, and sharing expectations for students' engagement and commitment to their writing, progress, and peers. Students introduce themselves in three to five minutes (name, program, point in program, schedule for completion, and so forth). After this round of introductions, and following a short break (if needed), the facilitator asks students, one by one, to announce their writing goal for the day. Students also write their daily goal on an easel to make them public. The facilitator also invites students to share any obstacle or challenge they have encountered with their writing or progress to completion. The facilitator suggests strategies to address and overcome the obstacle (a tip sheet listing 30 such strategies, "The Boot Camp Way," is available from the author). After this session—two to three hours, depending on the size and engagement of the group—students are free to write.

Our daily schedule is shown in Figure 2.1 above. The groups proceed through the week based on individual and team needs. After the first day there is a daily minimum of four hours of writing, with extended optional hours each day. Most students write during all the available optional sessions. By the third day, groups decide how many group meetings each day they need (zero, one, or two) and whether the facilitator is needed to meet with them. Most often, groups choose to meet once a day and invite the facilitator to join them. On the last day, several important things happen. Cake and ice cream are served with lunch, to celebrate the productive week. Students are awarded certificates and T-shirts ("I Write Therefore I Finish" in Latin). Very important is the last group meeting, in which students complete a "Strategic Plan for Taking Boot Camp Home" and commit to maintain their good writing habits and progress,

using their peers for support and as resources. This support can take any of several forms. For example, our first boot camp of 14 participants (four of whom have graduated) includes a pair who continue to meet in a department office to write together three days a week. Another group of three meets every Friday afternoon, with one of them sharing pages in advance and then discussing what is working, or not, about his or her writing process; the other two provide feedback on the content.

Assessing Boot Camp Effectiveness

We evaluate our boot camp planning and implementation in several ways. Midway through boot camp we offer a one-page "taking stock" opportunity for students to let us know (anonymously) what is working and not working for them during boot camp. We request more comprehensive feedback at the end of the event. As part of the application, we ask students to share their expectations for boot camp and indicate the degree to which they struggle with setting and meeting deadlines, overcoming procrastination or perfectionistic tendencies, staying motivated, avoiding writer's block, and getting timely and useful feedback on their writing. We tailor a final evaluation form using the expectations the students conveyed in the application. We also ask students to indicate (on a Likert scale) which aspects of boot camp were most effective in helping them to manage or overcome the challenges above (setting and meeting deadlines, overcoming procrastination, etc.) The final evaluation also asks students to describe changes in their writing approach, habits and attitudes that they believe will support their writing and degree completion. This instrument is distributed on the final day of the event, and most students complete it thoroughly. We then send it electronically to students a month later, asking if they have additional insights and feedback to share as they have tried "to take boot camp home" and continue their writing productivity and accomplishments.

Appendix B: Dissertation-Writing Boot Camps and Retreats

Boston College, Office of Graduate Student Life (since 2011)
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/offices/gsc/about/programs/dissertation-boot-camp.html

Dissertation Boot Camp at Boston College is a three-day event each semester for ten doctoral students. The event includes "intense,

focused writing time" with "structure and motivation to overcome typical roadblocks in the dissertation process."

Claremont Graduate University, Writing Center (since 2007)
http://www.cgu.edu/pages/8913.asp

Claremont offers weekend events once a month, with all-day "quiet space with no distractions or interruptions" as a "writing retreat for graduate students who must balance their dissertation writing with the demands of home and work." Claremont also offers a week-long boot camp with "guest faculty, peer speakers, and 35 hours of quiet writing time."

Lehigh University, Graduate Life Office (since 2008)
http://gradlife.web.lehigh.edu/programs/boot-camp

Lehigh offers a two-day (weekend), "entirely distraction-free" event for up to 25 students. The $25 cost includes "four meals, a refocusing yoga exercise, chair massages to reduce stress, and all supplies." A 10-minute motivational speech on the first morning is designed to increase students' focus and productivity.

Loyola University Chicago, Graduate School (since 2008)
http://www.luc.edu/gradschool/pcap/dissertationbootcamp/

Loyola offers two week-long sessions each summer for doctoral students. The two facilitators, a faculty member and an assistant dean, "coach Ph.D. candidates on strategies for writing success, offer tales from those who made it to the other side … and support hard work and time devoted to writing."

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Writing Center (since 2011)
http://www.nmt.edu/academic-affairs-section-list/344-title-v-ppoha/4586-boot-camp

New Mexico Tech offers a week-long event, twice a year, for 12 students writing their theses or dissertations. Coffee and snacks are provided, as well as a "focused writing environment with an element of peer pressure [that] motivates better than writing alone."

Northwestern University, Graduate School and Writing Center (since 2011)

http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/documents/professional-development/Boot_Camp_CFP_2012_December.pdf

Northwestern offers a two-week event with "required writing from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, optional lunchtime workshops, and optional individual writing consultations."

Princeton University, Writing Center (since 2009)
http://www.princeton.edu/writing/university/graduate/

Princeton provides "quiet space and the camaraderie of a writer's community" that includes workshops and debriefing sessions for doctoral students.

Stanford University, Writing Center (since 2008)
https://undergrad.stanford.edu/tutoring-support/hume-center/writing/graduate-students/dissertation-boot-camp

Stanford offers 10-day events (four hours per day) for up to 12 students working on a dissertation, thesis, or other academic writing project. The program helps them "learn to write more productively and often to produce better writing" by providing space, routine, peer motivation, and writing consultants. Stanford also offers "After Dark" (5:00 to 9:00 PM) and "Before Dawn" (7:00 to 11:00 AM) versions of their boot camps.

University of Chicago, Graduate School (since 2011)
http://grad.uchicago.edu/training_support/dissertation_writing_skills/dissertation_write_in/

Chicago's Dissertation Write-Ins are five-day workshops for up to 20 graduate students, "to help break through personal procrastination habits and make good progress on writing." Participants write four hours a day with an additional three hours of optional writing time. During spring break there is a concurrent Thesis Write-In for master's students.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Writing Center (since 2010)
http://writingcenter.unc.edu/dissertation-boot-camp-resources/

UNC–Chapel Hill offers a week-long event (9:00 AM to 1:00 PM) to help students "set writing goals, practice disciplined writing habits, learn new strategies, and connect with other dissertation writers."

The cost to students is $20.

University of Pennsylvania, Graduate Student Center (since 2006)
http://dissertationbootcampnetwork.wordpress.com/dissertation-bootcamps/

University of Pennsylvania's boot camp, credited as the first in the nation, "was developed to help students progress through the difficult writing stages of the dissertation process." The biannual, two-week long events for up to 20 students provide "structure and motivation to overcome typical roadblocks in the dissertation process."

University of Wisconsin, Graduate School and Writing Center (since 2011)
http://grad.wisc.edu/pd/dissertation/bootcamp

The University of Wisconsin offers a week-long event for 18 students selected on the basis of their "anticipated time to degree completion, the importance of boot camp at stage of project, and broad disciplinary representation." (The first boot camp drew 84 applications.) The event includes "structured writing time for at least six hours a day, one-to-one conferences, daily writing exercises, and optional lunchtime workshops."

West Virginia University, Writing Center (since 2011)
http://tlcommons.wvu.edu/GraduateAcademy/WritingAndResearch/

West Virginia University offers two one-week events each summer, one for students in the humanities and social sciences and another for students in the physical/life sciences and engineering. The program "combines workshops, peer review, individual consultations, and dedicated writing time."

10 Graduate Student Peer-Mentoring Programs: Benefiting Students, Faculty, and Academic Programs

Beth A. Boehm and Amy J. Lueck

Peer mentoring—students mentoring other students—is an area of increasing interest for scholars and administrators of graduate education. The range of activities that constitute peer mentoring is vast, but includes providing insights into the departmental culture, guidance through major program milestones, psychosocial support, and friendship (Kram and Isabella 1985; Grant-Vallone and Ensher 2000). While most students are assigned a faculty advisor or mentor, the perspectives of peer mentors who may be only a year or two ahead of the mentee are valuable in different but powerful ways (Kram and Isabella 1985). While it is most common to talk about peer mentors helping new students adapt to a graduate program, peer mentees and mentors both can benefit from the mentoring relationship by co-presenting at conferences, forming study groups, or co-authoring articles. These other models of co-mentoring and group support are increasingly recognized alongside one-on-one peer mentoring as supportive of student retention, satisfaction, and success in graduate studies (Allen, McManus, and Russell 1999; McGuire and Reger 2003).

In this chapter, we will draw on our diverse experiences with peer mentoring programs, Beth from the perspective of an English faculty program advisor and administrator and Amy as a graduate student mentor/mentee at our institution, the University of Louisville. What unites our experiences is the programming we have developed to support peer mentoring programs across the disciplines through the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies (SIGS), where Amy works as a research assistant to Beth, who now serves as the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of SIGS at the University of Louisville. Through the following dialogue,[1] we will

address the benefits of peer mentoring to various constituencies involved in graduate education and describe our own institutional attempts to foster peer mentoring across the disciplines.

While peer mentoring has always occurred informally through advice-seeking and collegial relationships among students, facilitating peer mentoring formally through departmental and university-wide programming is important for ensuring that all students have access to the benefits of peer mentoring and for maximizing the benefits of peer mentoring for faculty and programs. Some students do not seek out or secure fruitful peer-mentoring relationships on their own, and informal mentoring does not help faculty and programs in their work with graduate students. We argue that formal peer-mentoring programs support faculty by relieving the full burden of mentoring from the primary mentor and benefit graduate programs by dispersing the efforts of recruitment, orientation, and acculturation of incoming students. We describe the various forms of peer mentoring that we have supported and participated in—from one-on-one mentor pairings to intergenerational writing groups and interdisciplinary support groups—focusing throughout on the specific benefits to faculty and programs as well as students. By demonstrating the varied benefits of formalized peer-mentoring programs, we hope to increase the faculty and departmental support necessary for the success of such programs.

Peer-mentoring programs provide ways for students to take control of their own learning and professional development process, but these efforts need to be supported. Formalizing peer-mentoring programs provides that support, and a well-functioning peer-mentoring program subsequently releases crucial faculty time and resources, which can be allocated to more focused and effective forms of student support. Though some research suggests that informal mentoring is perceived by protégés as more effective than formal mentoring (Chao, Walz, and Gardner 1992; Allen, McManus, and Russell 1999), especially on career-related functions such as sponsorship, coaching, exposure, and visibility, these two models certainly need not be mutually exclusive. Instead, assigned peer mentors represent just one node in what should be a network of formal and informal mentoring relationships for graduate students.

Beginnings

AMY: Arriving in Louisville on a cold March day in 2010, I was greeted at the airport by a warm and energetic Nepalese man named

Shyam. I was coming to Louisville at that time for a visitation day that welcomed newly accepted PhD applicants to the program, and though I hadn't accepted my position in the program yet, Shyam had been assigned as my peer mentor. He had already contacted me prior to visitation day to extend his welcome to the program, answer any questions I might have, and, yes, offer to cart me around Louisville during my first visit. As a third-year student, Shyam had successfully navigated the transition to Louisville and the first years of coursework and exams. As Beth would say, he had been vetted as a student who could represent the program well and guide others through. He had first-hand knowledge of the program that he was willing to share, and wasn't too far removed from the experience himself to remember how difficult it can be to find one's way through the first days, months, and years of graduate study at a new university.

Coming from Pittsburgh, with no local network or friends in Kentucky, I was comforted to have someone to help show me the ropes. From my first call home to Pittsburgh that night from the bed-and-breakfast, Shyam's was the first name my family would know, and one they would hear again and again throughout my first years at the University of Louisville, as he moved from being a mentor, to being a colleague, to being a friend.

BETH: The idea to begin a "peer mentoring" program at the University of Louisville was born of necessity. I was in my second or third year as the director of graduate studies (DGS) in English (in 1998 or 1999), making my annual calls to doctoral students, letting them know that we had chosen them for a spot in our program. I gave a standard spiel about the strengths of our program: that we hosted the then-still-new biennial Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition and in the off years had a prestigious visiting professor in the discipline, and that it was an extremely collegial program, where collaboration between doctoral students was valued far more than competition, and where students frequently presented together at conferences and co-authored articles. I bragged about how this collaborative spirit made our program unique. I always ended my recruitment phone calls by asking what questions they had for me, and the questions were usually quite basic, about timelines, teaching loads, and so on.

But this year, students asked questions that I really couldn't answer. "What is the social life like for graduate students? Is there a Louisville music scene? How do graduate students meet each other outside of class?"

As the mother of two children under the age of three at the time, whose music scene consisted of The Wiggles and Raffi, I laughed out loud: I had no idea what the music scene was like, and while I knew graduate students quite well from the courses I taught and from sitting with them in my office, I really had no idea what most of them did outside of class. A question from the very next student I called was similar, in that she asked what kind of lifestyle she could maintain in Louisville on the stipend, how much an average one-bedroom apartment in areas where students wanted to live would cost, and how safe people felt walking in areas close to campus. I realized that while I knew what rents were ten years before when I had first moved to Louisville, I hadn't bothered to keep up since buying my own home, and as a faculty member, I had parking on campus and did not walk in the neighborhood after dark. My inability to honestly answer these questions led me to ask several of the graduate students who I knew were friendly, smart, and helpful folks to call not only these students, but all the students we had given admittance to that year, so that they could answer the recruits' questions about what it was really like to live and learn in Louisville, and all of them leapt at the opportunity to help recruit the next cohort.

I didn't conceive of these initial phone calls as part of a peer mentoring program or even as part of a recruitment program, but every potential student who was called and every current student who made a call thanked me for putting them in touch with one another. That first year, we had a 100% acceptance rate, and thus the practice was established as a regular part of the recruitment process. The next year, most of those first-year students who had received a call from a student further along in the program volunteered to call a student we were hoping to recruit. Over the years, as each successive DGS modified and further formalized the program, it has become stronger and more useful to both departmental administrators and students. It allows the work of recruitment to be distributed among many, and it also encourages a cross-cohort engagement of students with one another. What began simply as a way for me to find answers to prospective students' questions has become a program that has strengthened the collaborative culture of the doctoral program and of the department as a whole.

Recruitment

AMY: Having applied to several doctoral programs, I had not decided whether to attend the University of Louisville by the time of my visit in March 2010. With Louisville's early notification, I was still

waiting to hear from two other prestigious programs in my field. However, with the personalized attention afforded me through my peer mentor and the overall collegial and welcoming atmosphere of the program, my mind was all but made up by the time I left Louisville that weekend. Other programs were difficult to contact, and the information I received from administrative assistants often felt rehearsed. At Louisville, communicating with my peer mentor made me feel as though I was already a part of the community, and provided a personal touch to the decision process that was nothing if not persuasive.

As a peer mentor myself now, I have built a network of contacts both through students who have matriculated to our program and even some of those who decided to go elsewhere. I now serve as coordinator of our department's peer-mentoring program, and I encourage all of our peer mentors to make early connections with prospective students and to attend as many of the visitation day activities as possible. But this effort involves more than salesmanship. As my relationships with my peer mentor Shyam and my peer mentees Meghan and Jamila attest, structured peer-mentoring assignments can greatly aid in the transition of new students into the program, and can establish a collegial connection that benefits both mentor and mentee throughout their time in the program. Of course, not all peer-mentoring matches will result in meaningful personal and professional connections. However, my experience has been that providing this opportunity to students is particularly useful early on. After they matriculate into the program, students may certainly develop other, perhaps more successful mentoring relationships and friendships. But they also may not. Those students who are shy or who don't want to seem like they "need help" may particularly benefit from the assignment of a peer mentor early on.

Asking peer mentors to participate in recruitment activities also builds the mentor's connection to and interaction with the department. The PhD can feel like a lonely journey, and student engagement among graduate students tends to be low due to their research obligations and their difference from the undergraduate students who are the emphasis of most Student Affairs efforts (Kern-Bowen and Gardner 2010). But as they help with the recruitment activities, students also interact with other peer mentors and faculty members, gaining valuable personal and professional networking opportunities.

Transitioning to the Program

AMY: The importance of formalized peer mentoring to me lies in the fact that students transitioning to graduate school often don't understand how graduate school is different from their undergraduate experience, what the expectations are for coursework or other departmental activities, etc.—but they don't always know that they don't know these things. I am always drawn to the idea of what learning theorists call "unconscious incompetence." This is identified with the first of four stages of development towards skill acquisition (also applicable to cultural acclimation and proficiency), when the inductees don't even know what questions they should be asking—they don't know what they don't know. This concept resonates with me because it perfectly describes my own experience in my master's program. In my first semester of coursework, I was assigned what I now understand to be a staple genre of graduate education: a seminar paper. I knew this term was new to me but, like so many new students, didn't want to ask what seemed like a stupid question. Everyone else clearly knew what a seminar paper was, so I used my experience as an undergrad to arrive at my own definition. I was wrong. Instead of producing an original, researched argument, I simply reported on the sources I located. To be honest, it may not have even been a very strong undergraduate paper, but the archival research methods we were using in the class were so unfamiliar to me, this was all I could imagine producing from them.

I try not to blame my past self for not asking for more guidance from my professor, but I also believe that this situation could have been addressed quite easily if I had had a peer mentor to discuss my progress with. In the conversation I imagine, a peer mentor might ask what the argument of my paper was going to be, and I might then realize that an original researched argument was what was expected. Even if this conversation would not have occurred with my imagined mentor, I nonetheless draw on this memory to shape my own interactions with my mentees, and share this example with others to help them consider what knowledge their mentees might be assuming—to uncover and address their unconscious incompetencies.

New graduate students also do not know the departmental culture they are entering. If there are tensions or politics within the department, a new graduate student may not know they are there until they trigger them. Academic advisors and faculty mentors are not usually in a position to discuss their colleagues with incoming

students, but fellow graduate students certainly are. This "gossip" is not just senseless chatter, but important to understanding and successfully navigating the discourse community of the department. While the students will pick up on much of this culture through their experience, it is helpful to have a guide who can provide insider knowledge and a "safe space" for asking sticky questions. In my own department, it was my peers who thought to clue me in to the fact that certain faculty members were actually married to one another, which helped me avoid any *faux pas* in my conversations with them.

The safe space afforded by peer interactions is an important psychosocial support mechanism that faculty often cannot provide. Because of the clear power differential between graduate students and faculty, I am more likely to experience "imposter syndrome" in my relations with faculty, afraid to ask questions that may reveal my own ignorance. With peers, I have a greater sense of trust, confident in the expectation that they may have quite recently asked the same questions and faced the same uncertainties.

BETH: Amy clearly articulates why official peer mentoring programs are useful to students as they transition to graduate school. As her own story illustrates, the differences in expectations between undergraduate work and graduate work are not always transparent, and faculty often fail to explicitly define the skills they hope to see demonstrated in graduate work. Whether in the classroom or the lab, more experienced graduate students can help guide new students in learning the skills they will need to survive in that particular environment. And when the relationship between experienced and inexperienced students is formalized by the program as a peer-mentoring relationship, the experienced student can take pride in the mentee's successes, rather than feeling threatened by them. Additionally, if all students are provided a peer mentor, then no student need feel embarrassed to ask for one or "remediated" if encouraged to seek one out: students who don't know what they don't know (and thus won't seek out a mentor on their own through informal processes) won't be left out if a formal mentoring program is in place for all students.

Perhaps even more important to new students is the vital role peer mentors play as explicators of the unwritten rules of department culture regarding things such as whether students are expected to attend departmental talks and receptions, whether to call faculty by title or first name, whether there are departmental politics (or partnerships) that might make it awkward to ask some faculty members to be on the same committee, and so on. A colleague once jokingly told me to stop encouraging

graduate students to talk to one another: "It's like the telephone game. What begins as a simple statement winds up as a full-blown drama." Of course, there's some truth to the claim that student anxieties can escalate in a culture of gossip, but peer mentoring programs can actually work toward limiting those anxieties and runaway gossip by giving students a mentor from whom they can expect accurate, professional advice. When peer mentors are properly trained and understand their roles as both helping the program (by improving its recruitment and retention of students) AND supporting new students in their transition from undergraduate work to graduate work, most will be professional AND supportive. Peer mentors occupy a space between representing the program and university and being a friend to the new student. Training in how to manage this space is terrific preparation for assuming a faculty position, which is likewise suspended between the sometimes competing interests of institution, programs, colleagues, and students.

Ongoing Co-Mentoring

AMY: While the role of my peer mentor, Shyam, was central to my matriculation and transition into the program, it is our later collegial engagements that I found the most valuable. Once I found my footing in the program, the peer-mentoring relationship Shyam and I had developed morphed into a collegial co-mentoring that helped us both to meet our professional goals (McGuire and Reger 2003). During my first summer as a PhD student, Shyam and I organized a writing "partnership." We each selected a seminar paper that we wanted to develop into a publishable article, and met twice each month to share and comment on each other's drafts. These meetings made us accountable to continue to write over the unstructured summer months, and resulted in conference papers as well as a collaboratively designed essay that was published in 2013 (Lueck and Sharma 2013).

In addition, Shyam invited me co-present with him at our field's largest national conference. The content we presented was not in my area of expertise, but Shyam recognized both that I had useful contributions to offer and that I would benefit from the experience. Never having presented at this conference, I was what Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) have termed a "legitimate peripheral participant." Nonetheless, the experience was invaluable in my transition towards full scholarly participation at conferences in my field. As a way to describe and theorize the process by which a newcomer is invited to learn through participating alongside the experts in a

"community of practice," I find Lave and Wenger's concept of legitimate peripheral participation to be particularly useful for understanding the affordances of peer mentoring relationships where students learn through collaboration.

But I was not the only one who benefited from these collaborative endeavors with Shyam. Of course, Shyam stood to benefit from the writing accountability group and from sharing the burden of the conference presentation. In addition, though, when it came time for Shyam to go on the job market, I was there to help proofread application documents. He got an editor; I got early and valuable insight into the process of applying for academic jobs. Though I'm not the only person Shyam sought feedback from on these documents, I was probably one of the only ones whom he could email in the middle of the night and ask for an immediate turnaround. And he knew I would be glad to do it, because of our professional and "official" commitment to one another's progress as peers and co-mentors. In other words, he knew he wouldn't be putting me out, as he might if asking a friend; as a peer-mentoring pair, we both saw it as "our job" to help one another, and did so willingly. I think this is one of the particular benefits of a strong peer-mentoring program—making it "official" that we have someone to rely on, and even to impose on if necessary.

As a mentor myself, I draw on my experience with Shyam to try to develop effective mentoring relationships. Though I quickly learned that I couldn't replicate the experience I had with Shyam for my own mentees, I've learned some important insights over my last three years as a peer mentor.

Every mentee is different, so my strategies as a mentor have to be different too. Though I really benefited from Shyam's direct and structured approach to our peer mentoring relationship, other students may not be as receptive to this mentoring style, which can seem overbearing or simply too clinical. When I was assigned my first mentee, my initial instinct was to set up a writing group and to talk about collaborating on a project. But I found that she wasn't necessarily interested in this kind of experience, or wasn't interested in pursuing it with me. Either way, that strategy was not going to work in this relationship. And each subsequent mentee has brought out a different kind of mentor in me, as I respond to their personalities and styles. Sometimes, the mentoring pair might just not be right regardless of my approach, and that's okay too. Formalizing peer mentoring runs that risk, but it also opens possibilities for

relationships that wouldn't evolve on their own. This has led me to the next realization, which is…

My mentee might not need me in the ways I expected. Since the first mentee that I was assigned was a student who had come through our university's master's program and had been in Louisville longer than I had, I had a hard time imagining how I could be useful to her. I was prepared to introduce someone to the city, to give insider's knowledge about the department and program, to help someone meet new friends—but what did I have to offer to a student who didn't need these things? What did *I* know? This was quite difficult for me, as it required me to more actively acknowledge my own expertise, as well as my own limitations. As it turns out, there was one thing the new student definitely did not know yet: what it was like to be a PhD student. In particular, I could share my experiences and provide guidance as my mentee navigated program requirements. In fact, I have come to recognize that…

Peer mentors are invaluable as guides through program milestones. Many program benchmarks and milestones—passing qualifying exams, writing dissertation proposals, etc.—are isolated genre performances that students have never before and will never again be asked to practice. There is little reliable information on the Web, because the expectations vary across departments and programs. But peer mentors are uniquely valuable in helping students navigate program milestones because they have just recently navigated them themselves. They know what it's *really* like and how to be successful. And, having already passed through themselves, they are minimally defensive and competitive, like peers in one's cohort might be.

My mentoring relationship is inflected by my informal, social relationship with my mentee. As Kathy Kram noted in her germinal work on mentoring (1985), mentors perform both career and psychosocial functions for their mentees. In other words, mentors provide more than professional advice; they also provide confirmation, acceptance, role modeling and friendship. In peer-mentoring relationships, this may be particularly true. I have found that when I am good friends with my mentee, I sometimes have a hard time performing my role as "mentor" in the same way. I may be less prone to give advice, as asking to meet over coffee simply as a way to check in seems artificial. Though it sometimes feels difficult to strike a balance between my role as friend and role as mentor in these cases, I have less anxiety about it than I used to now that I have begun to think more about "networked mentoring."

Peer mentors are never a student's sole mentor, but can be an important node in a network of mentors. As Kerry Ann Rockquemore notes in a recent article in *Inside Higher Ed* (2013), mentees have a wide range of needs. These will not be met by one person—the "guru mentor," as she calls it—but instead will be addressed by a network of mentors at different levels. In focusing on the diverse needs of mentees, Rockquemore's networked approach proposes a different role for mentors: "Instead of YOU meeting all those needs, the network model suggests you initiate the conversation, ask powerful questions, validate needs, help brainstorm solutions, make connections, and confirm next steps" (n.p.). Though she is discussing the mentoring of new faculty by senior faculty, her comments apply just as well to peer mentors at the graduate level, if not better. As most new peer mentors fear, they indeed *don't* know all of the answers, and don't always have the best advice. What they do have, though, is the knowledge and experience to point newer students in the right direction, and they can encourage, validate, and follow up with the student.

Utilizing Peer Mentoring to Improve Faculty Mentoring

BETH: After serving as a director of graduate studies in English for almost ten years, I was asked to take on an associate dean's position in the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies (SIGS) at the University of Louisville in late 2008; I was charged with advocating for graduate student welfare and professional development in the newly formed unit (prior to the summer of 2008, the unit was called the Graduate School). After a stint as interim dean when the previous holder of that office left for another position in the university, I was chosen to lead the unit as the dean and vice provost for graduate studies. With Amy as my assistant, we designated 2012–2013 the "Year of the Mentor" and developed a year-long series of workshops designed to increase awareness of the importance of faculty mentors to graduate students, and to improve the quality of mentoring at the university. We launched the year with a half-day program that included a graduate student improv troupe from the Department of Theatre Arts performing a series of vignettes, written by graduate students, that illustrated mentoring moments gone wrong; faculty and students were invited to step in as each vignette was performed a second time, to offer different perspectives and different ways of handling the same mentoring moments. The event also included a panel session with four of the first six winners

of the SIGS Faculty Mentor Award, which has been given since 2009. The mentors who spoke were some of the university's most rigorous, most successful (in terms of number of students who had earned their doctorates), and most beloved. Since the improvised vignettes mostly depicted mentors as non-caring, selfish, or inadequate (remember, they were written from the students' perspective!), the panel in many ways served as an antidote; these expert faculty mentors spoke persuasively and passionately about the importance of mentoring and on the rewards of mentoring well.

What is most relevant about that panel conversation to this discussion, however, is the way these very successful faculty mentors used informal peer mentoring to improve their own efficiency. One, a highly funded and very productive diabetes researcher, talked about his lab, and how he brings together postdocs, graduate students at different stages of their work, and undergraduates, all of whom are working on individual projects that are part of his research. Each student is expected to mentor a student who is junior, so that even new graduate students begin immediately mentoring undergraduates. This informal peer mentoring, which the faculty member oversees to make sure no one is left "unmentored," encourages all the students in the lab to be problem solvers who seek to help each other when experiments do not work out as planned. This arrangement also saves the faculty member from having to answer every new student's questions and reading every draft of every student's papers. Having trained the first two or three students to mentor other students well, he effectively trains the entire lab, and while he holds weekly lab meetings with the entire group, this method allows him to mentor a higher number of students than he could possibly train one-by-one. While this peer-mentoring system clearly helps the faculty member both maintain his research productivity and mentor many students, his students also feel they benefit from the system: many of his former students wrote about him as part of his nomination, particularly praising him for giving them that early opportunity to mentor others. Just as Amy learned so much from being mentored by Shyam and by mentoring the new students who were assigned to her, I am willing to bet that the students who leave his lab begin their careers as stronger mentors than most new faculty.

While scientists often work in teams in the lab and rely upon supervised peer mentoring, such arrangements are much less common in the humanities. Yet faculty in library-based disciplines can also create peer-mentoring groups that benefit themselves and their students. Another of our "Outstanding Mentors," a professor of English, spoke about the

reading group she has established for her doctoral students. All students who have asked her to direct their dissertations meet regularly as a group to discuss their progress, to share drafts, to comment on each other's work, and to suggest possible avenues for revision or further exploration. While the faculty member oversees the group meetings and continues to meet individually with students, the group cuts her workload and individual meetings almost in half, she said, by distributing responsibility for leading the discussion of drafts and by providing feedback that keeps students writing between individual meetings. Because the students who work under this professor share a common methodology and theoretical perspective, they are able to offer substantial advice to each other, despite their sometimes very different dissertation topics. I am not suggesting that such writing groups and lab teams are equivalent to a "formal peer-mentoring program," but like those programs, these faculty-organized groups help to create a sense of community, provide examples of others who are struggling and succeeding in similar ways, and help future faculty learn how to respond to colleagues' and students' presentations in productive ways.

Another benefit of bringing small groups of students together to discuss their work with a faculty mentor is that the conventions of dissertation work (or experimental design) become more transparent: as one student's lab tragedy or badly written chapter is discussed by the group, the others learn how the work could be done "better." When one student learns to survive a failed experiment or having to start a chapter over, the entire group learns that failure is indeed part of the process. They also learn the importance of resiliency. When the group is composed of students at different stages of their work, students who are just beginning their programs learn what a dissertation "proposal" or a "literature review" looks like before they have to produce one. And frankly, all mentors—but particularly new faculty mentors—benefit from being forced to articulate those conventions and life skills in a more explicit fashion than they might if they were working one-on-one with students.

Taking It on the Road: Programs to Support Peer Mentoring

Since Beth began the peer-mentoring program in our English department, it has continued to grow and become more formalized each year as we become more strategic about drawing on the benefits we've witnessed. This last year, Amy advocated for and eventually established an MA peer-mentoring program, and we've begun to see the effects of this effort in the increased involvement of both funded

and unfunded MA students in department activities. In addition, students revived an English Graduate Organization Facebook page to connect students to one another and support a networked approach to peer mentoring. This has been a very effective strategy, whereby common questions can be answered just once, for the benefit of all, rather than individually by each mentor. The answers provided in this forum are generally more thorough and more accurate than those that one peer mentor could provide, further extending the initial informational function Beth sought from peer mentoring in the beginning.

Because we have had such a positive experience with a formal peer-mentoring program in our English department, we have worked centrally at the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies to help spread such programs to other departments to benefit the recruitment, retention, and success of their students, and to build a culture of mentoring on our campus.

Our effort to foster peer mentoring on campus began with several workshops for graduate students, introducing them to the idea of peer mentoring and sharing some of the research on how it can help students and programs. From those workshops, we found that there was really a low level of knowledge and engagement around the topic of mentoring on our campus, with many students understanding mentorship quite narrowly as pertaining only to their dissertation director or lab advisor. Without knowledge about alternative forms of mentoring, many students expressed dissatisfaction with their mentoring experiences but seemed to have no strategies for taking responsibility and improving their situations. We came to see peer mentoring as part of a larger conversation about mentoring on our campus, and organized the half-day workshop described above to initiate a campus-wide conversation about the role of mentoring in graduate education at our university. This "Mentoring Kick-Off" was a great success, and generated energy and interest among faculty and students to think more purposefully about both faculty- and peer-mentoring practices.

Out of that Kick-Off, we developed more workshops dealing with different aspects of peer mentoring for students, including sessions on how to start a peer-mentoring program in one's department, strategies for effective peer mentoring, and models for networked mentoring and co-mentoring for students in later stages of graduate study. We present these workshops to graduate students from across the departments through SIGS' program for graduate student

professional development, called the PLAN (Professional development, Life skills, Academic development, and Networking). The many activities and workshops that SIGS sponsors to improve the graduate student experience are organized under the PLAN umbrella.[2] In addition, we offer targeted workshops for individual departments or programs, such as the peer-mentoring orientation we recently organized and presented for the College of Education.

In addition to these more pragmatic workshops, we organized reading groups and learning communities targeted at both graduate students and faculty. In these contexts we read research on mentoring and discussed the implications of mentoring—both peer and faculty—as a praxis. These discussions were productive as a means both to share strategies and to consider mentoring and changes to graduate education in the twenty-first century more theoretically.

Finally, we developed the MentorCenter, an online repository of resources and FAQ-style information about faculty and peer mentoring. Included on that site is a MentorConnect portal, which provides faculty and graduate students an outlet for asking their own mentoring questions in a more anonymous interdisciplinary forum. The questions are forwarded to our Mentoring Advisory Board, which is comprised of faculty recipients of the Outstanding Mentor Award. We are continuing to build this site and develop digital resources to support mentoring across the departments, including a series of video introductions to peer mentoring and program development.

From our centralized position at the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies, we can support formalized peer mentoring programs by providing information, trainings, and resources, and by fostering a culture of mentoring in which conversations about mentoring as a praxis are the norm. From there, it is up to students and faculty in each department to establish and support a peer-mentoring program of their own. The work of this chapter, we hope, is to use our own experiences to make clear the affordances of such a program not only to students, but also to faculty mentors, program directors, and perhaps even graduate education as a whole.

Notes

1. We introduce our respective sections by name. Additionally, Amy's sections appear in roman type, Beth's in italics.

2. See our website at http://louisville.edu/graduate/plan.

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