

THE Excellence in Mentoring Initiative AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY



Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between an experienced professional (mentor) who shares their knowledge, skills and experience with a less experienced professional (mentee) to support their academic and career progression. At Northwestern, faculty mentors play a crucial role in the success of graduate students, other faculty, and post-doctoral fellows. In addition, pre- and post-docs learn from their mentors how to mentor others, and participate in a “mentoring chain” that incorporates undergraduates, master’s students, and earlier-career doctoral students.

Mentors advise, guide and positively influence their mentees through:



Goal Setting



**Project Design
& Management**



**Feedback &
Problem Solving**



**Career Planning
& Encouragement**



Networking

While mentoring is a one-on-one relationship, it is also a partnership. Strong mentoring partnerships are forged — and benefits accrue to each partner — when attention is paid to mutual roles and responsibilities.

1 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Mentor:

- Commit to and meet with your mentee regularly.
- Listen and learn. Discover who your mentee is as a person and what his/her goals are.
- Have an honest interest in your mentee’s chosen career path.
- Jointly set goals and clear expectations.
- Guide, encourage and support your mentee in their academic and personal life.
- Be a role model, share experiences and demonstrate personal integrity.
- Teach mentees how to learn from their mistakes.
- Make relevant introductions and create opportunities for collaboration and professional development.

Mentee:

- Choose your mentor wisely. Ensure he/she is compatible with you in the areas of your research interest and personality.
- Initiate and schedule discussions with your mentor regularly.
- Be honest and share a true self-assessment of who you are and what your goals are.
- Make a commitment to prepare, attend meetings and take action after meetings.
- Listen. Consider all suggestions without being defensive.
- Follow through on suggestions that make sense.
- Participate. Take full advantage of the introductions, services and assistance offered.
- Give back. Share how you’ve used your mentor’s advice.

2 THE BENEFITS

Mentor:

- Satisfaction that comes from giving back, guiding others toward their own self-discovery.
- Cultivating collaborators for current and future projects.
- Sharing competencies across cohorts.
- Enhanced lab productivity and efficiency.
- Optimizing preparation for tenure and promotion.
- Learning from peers and mentee’s experiences.
- Supporting the Provost’s initiatives on undergraduate research.
- Sharing successes with the goals and experiences met by your mentee.
- Recognizing your own expertise.

Mentee:

- Understanding more about the support offered by your advisor.
- Increased clarity on career path.
- Growing knowledge and experience under expert guidance.
- Research experiences guided to a higher level.
- Developing and strengthening more connections at Northwestern and beyond.
- Building a stronger professional skill set.
- Reflecting with others on growing competencies and challenges.
- Building stronger networking contacts.

3 TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

The Excellence in Mentoring Initiative sponsors special topic sessions and provides ongoing support and biannual training to faculty mentors. It also provides mentors and mentees with thoughtful questionnaires and opportunities to cultivate more meaningful relationships for their current and future roles.

Associate Dean Tracy Davis has created the following tools to help you excel. We encourage you to explore the list below and discover the tools from which you will benefit.

Training Opportunities for Mentors:

- [“Mentor Your Summer Student”](#).
- [“Mentor Your Undergraduate Student”](#).
- [Specific school-based programming.](#)
- [FSM departmental training.](#)
- [Workshop on ethics in the field.](#)
- [Workshop on mentoring writing.](#)
- [Mentoring workshops for mentors of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.](#)

Tools for Mentors:

- [Planning the first meeting with your new mentee.](#)
- [Research compacts.](#)
- [IDPs for T32-funded postdocs and others.](#)
- [Best practices for mentors of PhD students.](#)

Tools for Mentees:

- [What Kind of Mentee Are You?](#)
- [“Mentee Expectations” self-questionnaire.](#)
- [Cultivating relationships with mentors.](#)
- [Optimizing relationships with advisors.](#)

At the end of the mentoring process, the mentee should feel:

- Strengthened by the experience
- Able to see things with greater clarity
- Have a defined career path
- The professional skill set to move forward independently

The mentor should experience the satisfaction that comes from:

- Giving back
- Knowing they’ve positively guided another towards their own self-discovery
- Knowing they’ve actively participated in the chain of knowledge

