

Mentorship Matters: Graduate Student Mentorship of Undergraduate Mentees

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DERIVED FROM Athena's disguised character Méntōr providing advice to Telemachus in Homer's *Odyssey*, mentorship refers to both a process and a relationship in which an individual with experience and knowledge provides guidance to someone else with less experience. Although graduate students are the beneficiaries of mentorship, they occasionally have the opportunity to serve as mentors to junior students during graduate training; however, not much literature or advice exists to characterize this relationship. This article aims to define and identify domains of mentorship, raise considerations for engaging in the process of providing mentorship while a graduate student, offer recommendations for initiating and maintaining the mentorship relationship, and suggest possibilities for additional levels of involvement beyond an academic department. The principles discussed in this paper likely apply to mentorship across disciplines, yet a goal of this article is to offer some guidance for graduate students engaged in the mentorship of undergraduate mentees (UMs) in psychology departments more generally (with some points specific to clinical psychology).

Common components of mentorship relationships include mutual reciprocity, direct interaction, and role modeling (Palmer, Hunt, Neal, & Wuetherick, 2015). Mentors, who wield greater experience than mentees, provide practical and emotional support and assistance with career and professional development. Palmer and colleagues (2015) identified numerous theories associated with mentorship, including Bandura's social learning theory, developmental perspectives, the relationship continuum model, and "adaptive mentorship" (Ralph & Walker, 2010). Although the theoretical underpinnings of mentorship extend beyond the scope of this article, published theories are available (e.g., Brown, Daly, & Leong, 2009). As described below ("Getting Started"), graduate students may wish to review this body of liter-

ature when developing their own mentorship philosophy.

Undergraduate mentorship by graduate students within clinical psychology departments spans various domains, including research, professional development, and clinical endeavors. Graduate students may mentor undergraduates who serve as research assistants for a study (e.g., the graduate student's dissertation project), conduct independent research (e.g., a literature review or secondary data analysis), or carry out a senior thesis project. Tasks may include helping an undergraduate identify a body of literature and develop a research question; engage with data collection, entry, and coding; and/or prepare findings for presentation or publication. In the domain of professional development, graduate school mentors may aid UMs in preparing for graduate school or considering career choices. Although undergraduate mentorship by graduate students may include some clinical responsibilities, the current article will not address clinical supervision in a vertical structure (for information regarding this topic, see Scott, Ingram, Vitanza, & Smith, 2000). Still, it is acknowledged that graduate students may mentor undergraduates as they conduct clinically informed tasks such as simple risk assessments (e.g., scanning the results of a participant's Beck Depression Inventory-II [BDI-II]) in the context of a research study.

Why Become a Mentor? Should I Do It at All?

Benefits to the Graduate Student

There are numerous advantages to mentoring UMs while a graduate student. First, some research projects cannot be executed without ample assistance. For instance, studies involving confederates or simultaneous protocols with multiple participants are more easily implemented with the help of UMs. Beyond the scope of data collection, including undergraduates in research may help increase research pro-

ductivity as UMs may be interested in collaborating on conference presentations or publications.

Including UMs in research also enables graduate students to learn valuable skills in providing high-quality mentorship. It is advantageous to mentor undergraduates during graduate school given available vertical mentorship opportunities (e.g., learning from a faculty advisor and other senior graduate students with more experience). Additionally, whether in a faculty position, at an academically affiliated medical center, or even within industry, providing mentorship to others will likely be of great value in any leadership role, so it is ideal to start developing these skills early. For example, you will gain practice communicating both positive and negative feedback to your mentees—an essential communication skill across many careers. This skill may not come easily; thus, repeated practice is essential to developing finesse in delivering feedback.

Finally, undergraduates often come to the table with unbridled energy and an eagerness to learn and contribute by virtue of their desire to become entrenched within the field of psychology. Undergraduates may bring innovative research ideas—for example, a novel way to recruit participants through social media. Working with UMs is a way of passing the torch to those who may realize their passion for clinical psychology through a process of working with role models. Importantly, many UMs may be participating in psychology research for the first time, so graduate mentors are well-positioned to profoundly affect their values about the conduct of research. These early experiences have the potential to influence mentees' sense of confidence and self-efficacy and shape the way they see themselves "making it" in this field.

Benefits to the UM

Participating in research before applying to graduate programs (or even paid RA positions) is of enormous benefit to UMs seeking a career in clinical research, and is described in detail elsewhere (see <http://www.abct.org/Resources/?m=mResources&fa=GettingGraduate>). Working with a graduate student mentor may offer unique advantages. For example, undergraduates working with graduate students are likely to benefit from guidance on a range of professional development issues. Graduate mentors serve as role models, slightly "ahead" of where UMs hope to be in a few short years. By virtue of recently

going through the process themselves, graduate students are well-positioned to mentor UMs through every step of the graduate and/or job application process, including identifying which programs best fit their career goals, evaluating strengths and weaknesses of their experiences to date, providing feedback on cover letters, curriculum vitae, and other aspects of the application, scheduling mock interviews, and navigating the decision process after interviews. Graduate students may be more up-to-date on changes to standardized testing, having recently completed the process themselves, or more aware of specific mentors' styles given peers in the field enrolled at other institutions. Graduate students may also be more adept than faculty members at understanding the typical trials and tribulations of UMs. In considering work-life balance, UMs may be faced with making difficult decisions, such as needing to relocate from family or moving to expensive locations. Undergraduates may feel more comfortable turning to graduate students, who may be more "in touch" or current (relative to faculty members) with these concerns.

Letters of recommendation are another important benefit to undergraduates. Notably, graduate students may have more time to spend mentoring undergraduates compared to faculty members, who are typically already consumed with intensive mentorship of their own graduate students, among other professional obligations. Because graduate students often have more intimate knowledge of the UM's contributions, they may be better positioned to write a personalized letter of recommendation. Of note, most letters of recommendation can be written by a graduate student and cosigned by the principal faculty member in charge of the lab.

Last, UMs can receive mentorship in soft skills and professionalism. For example, graduate students can coach UMs in writing letters to potential mentors by providing examples of their own emails and helping to wordsmith a brief introduction. Additionally, UMs can receive guidance in appropriate etiquette and attire for situations ranging from running participants to attending a job interview. Although a UM may be reluctant to ask an older faculty member for advice on such a question, the UM may feel more comfortable approaching a younger (and perhaps more contemporaneously dressed) graduate student mentor given the smaller power/age differential between UMs and graduate students in comparison to UMs and faculty. Gradu-

ate students may also be better positioned to normalize and gently correct "student" behaviors incompatible with "professional" behaviors.

Potential Drawbacks

Despite the myriad benefits of mentoring undergraduates in research, it is important to acknowledge potential drawbacks as well. Time is a precious, finite resource, and taking on UMs detracts from valuable time dedicated to priorities such as writing. Depending on the extent to which UMs have prior research experience, graduate students may need to devote considerable time to training. In addition, although repetitive, painstaking work is a central part of most research, UMs will likely be dissatisfied if their only responsibility is a rote task such as data entry. Thus, graduate mentors will want to optimize the menu of roles and responsibilities entrusted to UMs. This will require the provision of training sessions (necessitating preparation and planning), as well as a willingness to continuously monitor progress and remain vigilant for potential misunderstandings and errors. Undergraduates seeking mentorship on independent research projects, secondary data analyses, or honors theses may require an even greater time commitment.

It is also important to consider the potential for complicated dual relationships. Graduate students serve many roles and may be employed as course instructors or teaching assistants (TAs). Accordingly, a graduate student may find that they are simultaneously serving as a TA for a course (e.g., grading undergraduates' assignments) while recruiting UMs for their lab. In this case, the graduate student may elect to wait until the conclusion of a given term (e.g., after submitting final grades) to include a certain UM in the lab so as to minimize difficulty with this dual relationship or any potential perceptions of favoritism. Graduate students should also be mindful of the social issues that may arise given the potential similar age of the mentor and UM. In a small college town, graduate students and undergraduates may socialize in similar spaces; discussion up front is recommended.

Finally, graduate students may be concerned about their competence to mentor undergraduates and, similar to many times throughout their education, may find themselves experiencing imposter syndrome or in a position of "fake it till you make it." Indeed, there may be times when

the graduate student is problem-solving a research-related task for the very first time, only days before training UMs. Other situations may necessitate delivering difficult or challenging feedback to a mentee, which can be anxiety-provoking for both the graduate student and the UM. These confidence issues will likely be alleviated after getting started. The following principles and strategies laid out below will aim to help navigate the complexities of mentoring undergraduates.

Recommendations and How-Tos

Before Getting Started

Prior to mentoring UMs, graduate students can benefit from conducting a brief self-assessment to clarify their own goals, values, and availability. Professional goals could be either research/task-oriented or personal. For example, a graduate student may identify a professional research goal of completing a study requiring multiple UMs simultaneously to run a paradigm. Alternatively, graduate students with a professional goal of obtaining a faculty position at a teaching institution may wish to explore whether they enjoy mentoring or demonstrate that they are capable of undergraduate mentorship.

Regarding availability, graduate students should consider questions such as, "Do I have the time given my current workload/course load?" Graduate students may conclude that the time spent mentoring a UM and providing instructions for data entry could be better spent completing the task independently. Graduate students ought to assess their needs and identify whether these needs can be met by an undergraduate skill set. Although an undergraduate may be able to assist with conducting and scoring certain measures, they are unlikely to serve as a blind independent rater and conduct diagnostic assessments. Graduate students also must consider how many students they will mentor. Responsibilities involved with training a small cohort of UMs who will do data entry and advising one student on a year-long thesis project diverge; although the former group may be mentored with group sessions that fade in frequency as students acclimate to the software/procedures, the latter may require more in-depth, time-consuming meetings for an extended period of time. Graduate students should also consider UMs' previous research experience. For example, have they completed a research methods course? Have they opened SPSS before? Do not

underestimate the time required to respond to student's inquiries!

Getting Started

Start by capitalizing on the many resources available to you! There are numerous excellent guides on how to mentor undergraduates in psychology research (see Table 1). We recommend meeting with your faculty advisor to delineate a plan for UMs' research involvement and seeking any resources or standard operating procedures (SOPs) they may have based on past graduate student mentorship endeavors. Informal discussions with mentors about their perspective on effective mentorship and wisdom garnered throughout their career are helpful. This also provides an opportunity for you and the faculty member to establish a process for checking in and developing an ongoing process for evaluating the experience. Engaging in similar conversations with senior graduate students or other trusted faculty is likely to be fruitful as well. Finally, it is not a bad idea to touch base with staff/faculty in the undergraduate psychology department, who may have some excellent ideas for getting started.

Ideally, before serving as a primary graduate student mentor, you would have the opportunity to collaborate with or co-mentor other graduate students. In doing so, the development of your mentorship skills can be scaffolded through the process of mentoring UMs across projects involving increasing levels of leadership. A great way to start is by observing others—for

example, sitting in on lab meetings of more senior graduate students in your lab. It is also helpful to work in tandem with other graduate students on a faculty mentor's project to learn from one another. Ideally, occasional direct observation and feedback from senior graduate students or a faculty mentor is beneficial prior to mentoring undergraduates independently.

We recommend reflecting on your philosophy of research mentorship in the same way you would mull over your pedagogical values prior to teaching a course. Start by reflecting upon personal experiences working with research mentors. What were some of the most positive and formative experiences you had during your training? What skills ended up being essential to your success in research? Who do you want to emulate and how? On the flip side, when it comes to ineffective mentor-mentee relationships, do you have any "horror stories"? If you've had negative experiences along the way, how can you avoid repeating them with your own mentees? Putting yourself in the shoes of your UMs so you can be tuned in with their needs and preferences is a critical piece of providing high-quality mentorship.

Recruiting UMs

You may be able to recruit UMs already working in your lab depending on their availability; this can be advantageous because other graduate students can comment upon their strengths and weaknesses. You may also be interested in putting out a call to the wider psychology department.

Ask staff working in the undergraduate psychology department about centralized ways of recruiting UMs; typically, there is an active list serve or a particular course (e.g., Research Methods) to draw from. You will want to provide a brief description of the time commitment, responsibilities, and any benefits (e.g., opportunity to learn to administer a computerized cognitive assessment) to the undergraduate. To help you evaluate potential applicants, you might request that all undergraduates complete an application form. In addition to requesting basic information, this form could include questions such as the following: Why are you applying for this position? What do you hope to gain from this experience? Describe any previous experience you have had as a research assistant. You may also want to request academic transcripts to ensure potential UMs are in good academic standing. See Table 2 for additional suggestions.

Interviewing prospective UMs to evaluate the goodness of fit for each UM for a given project is vital. Gain a sense of what each applicant is hoping to achieve by serving as a research assistant so you can determine whether you would be able to provide those experiences. Consider each applicant's prior research experiences and assess how many hours they can devote to the lab each week. For applicants whose GPA presents concern, provide applicants the chance to justify grades while also keeping in mind that it may be hard for a UM to devote adequate time to the lab if they are not keeping up with their studies. Finally, it is useful to get a sense of each applicant's level of enthusiasm for the project as well as their general demeanor, as this will affect the atmosphere of lab meetings. Be sure to share any standards of practice that would be important for applicants to know prior to agreeing to join the lab and offer time for questions. Prior to making offers, consider the number of UMs you will need to help with a given project; ultimately, this will depend on the scope of the project and number of hours each UM is able to devote to the lab per week.

Staying Organized

Upon taking on UMs, you will want to develop, review aloud, and have them sign a lab "contract" or SOP to ensure complete understanding of roles and responsibilities in the lab. Include your contact information and outline steps for notifying you in the case of unexpected leave or illness. Direct students to communicate with you as soon as they are aware of any deviation

Table 1. Recommendations for Future Reading

Evans, S. E., Perry, A. R., Kras, A., Gale, E. B., & Campbell, C. (2009). Supervising and mentoring undergraduates: A graduate student perspective. *the Behavior Therapist*, 32, 77-82.

Lee, A., Dennis, C., & Campbell, P. (2007). Nature's guide for mentors. *Nature*, 447, 791-797.

Reimers, T. *Mentoring best practices: A handbook*. Accessible online at: <https://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.chapter3.shtml>

Website of University of Kansas' Center for Undergraduate Research: <https://ugresearch.ku.edu/mentor/tips-for-effective-mentoring>

Website of Cornell University Graduate School: <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/diversity-inclusion/signature-initiatives/graduate-students-mentoring-undergraduates/>

from protocol and stress the importance of ethical conduct in research. Explain that everyone is responsible for knowing and adhering to the honor code and treating one another without discrimination to maintain a rewarding learning environment. It is beneficial to specify a dress code for UMs who interact with participants and include guidelines for UMs asking for letters of recommendation. The “contract” or SOP should be a living document that is continually revised and revisited at important junctures (e.g., beginning of each semester).

Next, depending on the project at hand, a syllabus that includes assigned guided readings and trainings can help to get UMs up to speed. The purpose of this is twofold. Most obviously, your UMs will need to learn the responsibilities expected of them as part of the lab. It is helpful to have written guides to completing all tasks, though, depending on the task, it will also be critical to provide walk-throughs in person. The other purpose of assigning readings and trainings is to teach UMs why they are being asked to complete a given task. Remember, UMs are not merely there to assist; they are also eager to learn. To introduce your UMs to the science, you will want to share with them a list of seminal readings informing your project. Your UMs will likely become more passionate and put more effort into producing good work if they understand the importance of the work you are doing (e.g., how are you advancing existing literature, how did you select your methods). For example, you might wish to present your dissertation proposal informing the project (stripped of information that might interfere with blinding) to your mentees and encourage questions.

With rare exception, all labs have regular meetings designed to get everyone working on a project on the same page with efficiency. Depending on the study, you will likely spend time reviewing protocols in detail, followed by conducting practice assignments and observations, and providing regular feedback. UMs should also be encouraged to ask questions and work through minor missteps, without fear of reprisal. Additionally, you may hold additional meetings for subcommittees (e.g., coding teams comprised of a subset of lab members). Small team meetings are a wonderful way to accomplish projects that extend beyond the time allotted for lab meetings.

Lab meetings also offer an opportunity to build group cohesion and UMs’ sense of

confidence. You can facilitate your mentees’ ability to develop informal presentation skills by encouraging them to provide updates and share progress aloud. To help increase your UMs’ confidence and passion for research, you may set aside time for journal clubs, in which individual members can select an article of their choosing and present it aloud to the team. Lab meetings are also an excellent setting for professional development discussions. For example, you could develop a mini-lecture on getting into graduate school and use this to begin a discussion with your mentees about their career goals. For those who are interested, you could devote a lab meeting to conducting a round-robin-style editing session for curriculum vitae and personal statements.

It is also important to offer time to meet with UMs individually as needed. UMs may wish to meet individually for a range of personal (e.g., navigating a difficult interpersonal issue, requesting to change their responsibilities) or professional topics (e.g., seeking advice related to graduate school, initiating a secondary data analysis). Because mentees may be hesitant to initiate a meeting, it can be useful to have established office hours during which they are encouraged to visit. Ideally, you should also initiate individual meetings with each UM semi-regularly (e.g., once/semester) to obtain and provide feedback and assist them in working toward their professional goals.

Developmental Considerations

As the UM’s skills evolve, so too do their needs. Accordingly, graduate school mentors can help with academic goal setting as well as professional development (e.g., professionalism, networking, leadership) and preparation for graduate school. With regard to academic goal setting, a graduate student may gradually scaffold expectations for a UM to increase lab-related responsibilities from data entry to managing other UMs doing data entry. Similarly, a UM may mature from conducting literature searches to submitting their own poster abstract for a local student conference. Making adjustments to training plans over time not only serves to meet the needs of budding UMs, but also helps to keep the mentorship process stimulating, as new developments unfold. Further, as individual workloads shift with the flow of the academic calendar (e.g., additional grading during midterms) as well as graduate program milestones (e.g., lengthy assessment reports in the second year of training), mentorship expectations must adapt. Depending on timing, graduate students may need to alter the frequency of mentorship meetings and pause certain study tasks. By looking ahead, graduate students can also budget time and prioritize to ensure minimal disruption to their calendar. This is also useful for considering who to take as a UM; training a younger sophomore student may require additional attention and supervision up front but could result in 2 years of dedicated work in the lab, as opposed to investing in training a second-semester senior who may catch on

Table 2. Suggested Questions for Undergraduate Mentee/RA Application

Class Year, expected graduation date (month/year), major, GPA
Relevant completed coursework (e.g., research methods, clinical psychology)
Current employment, if applicable (approximate hours/week)
Why are you applying for this position?
What do you hope to gain from this experience?
Why are you interested in joining this lab?
What are your plans for after graduation/career goals?
Describe any previous experience you have had as a research assistant.
Describe any experience with [statistical package, study technique such as imaging].
Indicate the number of hours you want to work per week and your available time frames.
Indicate summer availability.

quickly but fade quickly given end-of-year/graduation commitments.

Graduate students should continuously monitor their own needs and availability. Reevaluating at the beginning and end of semesters, as well as following the completion of milestones, helps assess the goals of the given project/task (e.g., Has the rate of data entry been sufficient and prompt?). Consider availability (Have I been spending my mentorship time efficiently?), anticipated shifts in needs (e.g., Given the next cycle of the project what, if anything, needs to be adjusted?), boundaries (Are my boundaries too rigid? Nonexistent?), and enjoyment and personal growth (Is this professional relationship adding value or undue burden?). Mentors may also wish to solicit feedback from their mentees in advance of self-reflection. Tools for soliciting feedback and promoting self-reflection are available online (e.g., <https://ictr.wisc.edu/mentoring/mentor-evaluation-form-examples/>).

Difficult Conversations

The organic, nuanced nature of mentorship heralds inevitable difficulties. Faux pas ranging from a UM arriving in gym clothes to a participant session, a busy graduate student double-booking a meeting with a UM, to mounting concerns regarding data integrity, all necessitate difficult conversations and trouble-shooting. Several steps and approaches are recommended. Difficult conversations are often easier with an existing foundation of trust and respect. Beginning with a review of expectations (timeliness, dress, goals, etc.) can serve as a helpful reference point for difficult conversations (e.g., “As we discussed in September, the expectation is...”). Addressing and documenting concerns privately in a prompt, direct manner is valuable. After identifying a specific concern, allow the mentee time to respond, and listen to their response and explanation. Rather than providing a solution, suggest potential options and engage in collaborative discussion for troubleshooting to minimize the power imbalance. If the situation allows, disclosing a time when you were in a similar position may be helpful for normalizing the experience. If you are struggling with what to say when, consult your peers or faculty advisor for guidance. All in all, avoid the urge to avoid! For further reading, Johnson and Huwe (2002) offer strategies for addressing dysfunction in the mentorship relationship.

Building Trust, Keeping Up Morale, and Mentoring the Whole Individual

Bidirectional trust is vital in the mentor-mentee relationship. A UM can gradually earn a mentor’s trust in myriad ways, including timeliness (meetings, deadlines) and accuracy (data entry, IRB correspondence). With a mentor’s trust, a mentee can earn increased levels of responsibility (e.g., running participants during evening time slots), which can, in turn, engender additional opportunities for the UM. Increased UM autonomy can benefit a graduate student mentor by allowing them to devote more time to other tasks. Mentors must also demonstrate and promote trustworthiness. This can be verbalized explicitly (e.g., describing ways of preserving confidentiality), displayed through action (e.g., providing timely edits to a UM’s personal statement, holding appointments consistently), and demonstrated through role modeling (e.g., demonstrating ethical practices with regard to data analysis, expressing vulnerability, and normalizing uncertainty). A mentee who trusts their mentor may be more open and willing to ask questions and acknowledge difficulties, weaknesses, or concerns. When the aforementioned principles are neglected, trust can erode—or break entirely—and mentors and mentees should be prepared for what to do next. The mentor and mentee should discuss the incident (or series of infractions) and develop a plan for remediation. The graduate mentor may seek consultation from peers or from their faculty advisor and may wish to include the advisor to mediate concerns. The graduate student may also consult with the University Ombudsperson, if the service is available. In some cases, the decision to end the mentor-mentee relationship may be warranted.

Undergraduates can bring a fresh, optimistic, and curious mindset to research. Although this perspective can be refreshing, energy is not limitless. Given the slow pace of research, combined with the tedium of some tasks UMs endure, keeping up morale is essential for mentees. Beyond overtly displaying enthusiasm, providing positive reinforcement via genuine feedback is vital. For example, congratulatory comments to address milestones related to recruitment (e.g., “25% of the way there!”), effort or time (“6 months of hard work!”), or outcomes (“Less than 10 data discrepancies in a massive dataset—great attention to detail.”) can help to foster continued enthusiasm while conveying that you are

paying attention to the UM’s progress and valuing their efforts. Depending on the level of accomplishment, providing an appropriately sized celebration or recognition can be a powerful motivator. Examples include an email to the entire lab following a students’ conference abstract acceptance or a pizza party for a group of mentees after completing data entry. Scheduled low-stakes events that bring the group together can help to build mentor-mentee relationships and foster a sense of community.

Graduate students may be particularly attuned to the UM’s well-being, including school-life balance and propensity for coping with stress. Do not underestimate the power of dedicating time at the beginning or end of each individual meeting to check in with the UM about how things are going outside of research. Given that college is a stressful time for many students and many psychological disorders onset during this period, the mentor may elect to take a holistic approach and, when necessary, recommend counseling services or additional support. Graduate students should be aware of the tendency for students to self-disclose mental health concerns and prepared to acknowledge the dual-relationship in order to triage appropriately. Indeed, an explicit mention and psychoeducation about avoiding a dual role (e.g., mentor and therapist) is recommended.

Taking into account the biases and prejudices you bring to the mentor/mentee relationship is vital for working effectively with mentees whose personal background differs from your own (with regard to age, race, gender, class, religion, and more). In addition to fostering knowledge and awareness of your own identity, seeking knowledge about your mentee’s identity is requisite for effective mentorship. In order to gradually get to know your mentee, regular explicit discussions are valuable. This includes acknowledging barriers that may result from differences in communication styles. For example, Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) highlighted cultural differences in respect and conflict management, noting that “students from traditionally high-power distance cultures (e.g., Latinos/Latinas and Asian Americans) place a relatively high premium on respect for people of greater power and status and may be less willing to participate in discussions or debates that suggest they are questioning the authority of a mentor” (p. 558). With regard to conflict management style, differences “vary according to cultural group membership,” and responses to con-

flict situations by graduate students from various cultures will differ from what might be considered “acceptable” by the school culture (p. 559). Failure to get to know your mentee’s background can stifle conversation, trust, and openness. Of course, the mentor should also be mindful of heterogeneity within groups and avoid making assumptions accordingly. Relatedly, graduate mentors should take time to acknowledge outside events—on campus, in the community, or in the national or global environment. For example, mentors may consider how recent campus dialogue has affected them or check in on international students’ concerns given potential changes in federal policy to student visas.

Identity may also influence a UM’s research aims. For example, a second-generation Chinese-American student may express an interest in pursuing research related to stigma and parenting beliefs in mental health treatment-seeking behaviors among Asian-American college students. In this situation, identity-related conversation might permeate not only the research design and recruitment considerations, but also the process of identifying postbaccalaureate research opportunities and constructing cover letters with varying levels of self disclosure. In this case, a willingness to explore opportunities alongside your UM while having candid conversations about the marked lack of Asian researchers in clinical psychology could be beneficial.

Beyond the Department

Through interdisciplinary career development centers or campus orientation programs, some universities may provide interdisciplinary opportunities for undergraduate mentorship. In this setup, current graduate students serve as advisors who give UMs a firsthand sense of the graduate school experience. Graduate students in psychology may find themselves mentoring undergraduates of different disciplines as they explore the GRE, graduate admission processes, gap years, differences between masters and doctoral programs, and tools for identifying potential research mentors. In addition to ongoing services offered in career development centers, graduate students may also become involved with undergraduate programming, such as orientation events. In this capacity, graduate students can provide briefer mentorship sessions aimed at helping UMs acclimate to the institution as a whole and elements of student life.

Graduate students may also wish to mentor undergraduate students for rea-

sons other than shared academic interests. Many graduate students find meaning in mentoring undergraduates with shared identities as they navigate academia. For example, international graduate students may offer mentorship to international UMs regarding U.S. campus culture or strategies for navigating visa-related questions. First-generation graduate students may offer mentorship to undergraduates whose upbringing bears similarity to their own. For example, first-generation graduate students may help UMs navigate difficult conversations with their parents regarding the utility of a gap year or the preference to pursue additional schooling despite familial financial strain.

Outside of the university, graduate students may enlist in options to provide mentorship through professional organizations. For example, the Association for Psychological Science (APS) launched a student caucus (APSSC), which offers opportunities to network and socialize via events and workshops. Through the APSSC Mentorship Program, graduate students are connected with an undergraduate mentee. Some organizations also offer virtual mentorship programs.

Conclusion

Mentorship is a complex, effortful, yet meaningful relationship offering many potential benefits to graduate students and undergraduates alike. Deciding whether or not to mentor and determining what type of mentor you want to be requires significant consideration, and the act of mentorship demands time and continual care. The considerations, suggestions, and tools outlined throughout this article are designed to serve as a reference for what may be one of the most rewarding aspects of your career in psychology.

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