

Mentoring UP

Getting the mentoring you need and deserve

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Zia Isola, PhD
UCSC Research Mentoring Institute

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA CRUZ

What is a mentor?

- Advisor
- Teacher
- Role model
- Resource
- Ally
- Friend (?)

Who is a mentor?

- Professors/PI's
- TA's & graduate researchers
- Staff
- Peers
- Family members
- Think "multiple mentors" - the more mentors, the better!

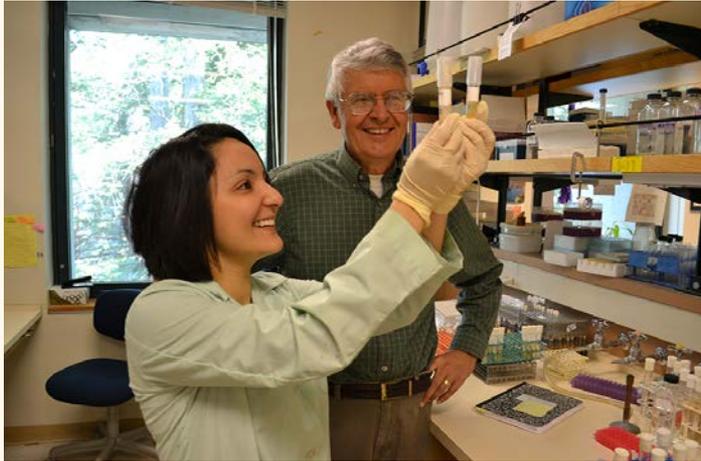
What is mentoring
and how do I get some?

Essential functions of the mentoring relationship in the context of university research:

- Training in skills or knowledge
- Providing structure and guidance
- Motivation
- Providing feedback
- Identification of strengths/areas that can be improved
- Career planning
- Building professional network

Putting yourself in the path of mentoring

- Get to know your professors, post-docs, program managers, and TA's
- Go to office hours, department talks, colloquia, etc.
- Be pro-active in scheduling meetings with your mentors
- Show up on time, and be prepared with questions or topics that you want to discuss
- Value the information-take notes
- Be sure to acknowledge your mentor's contribution of time and energy- say thank you!



Reflect on a good mentoring experience and share with the person next to you.

What are some key aspects of this experience that made it useful or meaningful to you?

How does that shape your expectations of mentoring in other contexts?

3 KEYS TO GOOD MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

- **Self awareness**
 - What do you want/expect from this mentoring relationship?
 - What will you bring to it?
- **Awareness about your mentor**
 - What areas or strengths?
 - Availability?
 - Communication style?
 - Mentoring style?
- **Communication**

What is “mentoring up”?

Recognizing your specific needs and goals and taking the initiative to help your mentor provide the information or skills required to fulfill them.

STEP ONE: Clarify Expectations

- **Know what your assumptions and expectations are**
 - What do you need in order to achieve your goals?
 - Specific types of knowledge or skills
 - Understanding of the culture of the profession
 - Models for professional conduct
 - Constructive feedback
 - Check: Are your assumptions in line with the reality of the situation or the capacity of your mentor?
- **Know what your mentor's expectations are for you**
 - Contribution to a project
 - Pro-active problem solving
 - Taking initiative in learning about the research
 - Professional conduct

Establishing clear and explicit expectations is the foundation of a good mentoring relationship.

STEP TWO: Set Concrete Goals

Mentors and Mentees can work together to set goals for learning outcomes

Outcome

- What will the I achieve as a result of this project or assignment?

Activity

- What will I 'do' during the project to accomplish the outcome?

Evidence/Product

- What will result from these activities?

Criteria

- How will those products be evaluated?

SCENARIO #1

You have just started in a lab. After the general orientation, your PI explains the research project you'll be assigned to. As she explains, you listen and nod as if you understand every word she is saying. When she finishes, she asks if you have any questions. Because there is so much information to take in, you feel a bit overwhelmed, and just say "no" because you aren't sure what else to say. She then introduces you to a graduate student in the lab and says "I've got to get going now, but Tim's here if you need any help." Tim doesn't stop what he's doing, but does look up and smile, then goes back to work.

Three days later, back in lab. Having had time to learn your way around lab and think about what your mentor explained to you on day one, you realize you have a lot of questions. Your mentor has been out of the lab because of a pending deadline for a grant proposal that she's working on. You haven't seen Tim since the PI introduced you on the first day. Everyone else in the lab seems really busy, which makes you hesitant to ask for advice. You go to your work station and are trying to follow the instructions you received on the first day, feeling confused. Suddenly your PI is standing next to you and asking how the project is progressing.

What will you say to your PI?

Looking back, what could you have done differently on the first day?

What are some of the other ways you might have gotten support from your senior colleagues in the lab?

Tools to Improve Communication

- Be proactive: schedule meetings, communicate clearly, ask good questions, follow-up
- Mentor-Mentee interview and contract (handout)
- Request assessments (handout)
- Individual Development Plans
(AAAS Science Careers www.myidp.com)

Characteristics of the Ideal Mentee

- Self-assessment
- Receptivity
- Honesty
- Initiative
- Responsibility
- Appreciation for the mentor

Two Resources

- Pathways to Science Mentoring Manual
www.pathwaystoscience.org
- University of Washington “How to obtain the mentoring you need”
www.grad.washington.edu/mentoring/students



Zia Isola, PhD
Director, Research Mentoring Institute
zisola@ucsc.edu
(831) 459-1702
www.cbse.ucsc.edu/diversity/rmi

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What can I do to be a better mentee?

(continued)

- Communicate if you need more/less structure and guidance
- Ask for introductions to professional networks
- Ask for feedback about your strengths/areas that can be improved
- Career planning – “how did you do it?”
- Not all mentors are people you have formal “mentor-mentee” agreements with; think of people who have been ready to help with advice and encouragement, or just by being an example for you.

What can I do to be a better mentee?

- Develop self-understanding: what is your vision of the mentoring you need?
- Think of previous mentors in your life and the kind of support they provided; look for mentors that might have similar qualities.
- Don't be afraid to communicate your needs-your mentor is not a mind reader
- Reach out to your mentors and let them know when you need support and what kind of support will best benefit you
 - Clarification about expectations
 - Introduction to the culture of the department/lab/profession