Welcome Mentors!

Chemistry Peer Mentoring Program
Workshop 9/26/2019
“I thought I was the only one...”
Agenda

I. Logistics
II. What is mentorship?
III. Fun Activity!!!
IV. Conflicts in Mentoring
V. Wellness
VI. Fun activity!!!
VII. Resilience
VIII. Surprise c:
Learning outcomes:

Mentors will be able to...

○ Define mentorship
○ List qualities that make a good mentor
○ Describe techniques for maintaining health and wellness in graduate school
○ Recognize ways in which conflict can occur in mentorship and propose ways to avoid those types of conflict
MISSION STATEMENT: As second-year graduate students, our mission is to provide support for incoming graduate students during their first and second quarters in the Department of Chemistry at UC Irvine.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Mentors and mentees will meet to discuss general concerns that will come up throughout the first year, such as selecting a lab, adjusting to Irvine, and coursework. Our goal is to help incoming students build a network of support, feel more connected to the department, and increase confidence/motivation among students.

Please note that this program is separate from the Chemistry Teaching Assistant Mentoring Program (CTAMP). Click here for more information about CTAMP.

PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS:
- Mentor-mentee pairs should, ideally, meet once a month. We strongly encourage the mentor and mentee to set up their own schedule beyond the minimum requirement.
- Mentors are required to attend a 2-hour mentor workshop at the beginning of the academic year.
Resources for Mentors

We have a Chem Graduate Mentoring Program website for you and your mentee to reference. There are resources for you as a mentor and a Common Q&A question for first years.

https://sites.uci.edu/gradmentoring
MENTORING

Below are list of mentoring resources for you as a graduate student.

- How to Get the Mentoring You Want: A Guide for Graduate Students
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln Graduate Mentoring Guidebook
- Illinois Graduate College Mentoring Information for Graduate Students
- University of Washington Mentoring Guide for Graduate Students

If you are interesting in improving your mentoring skills, we highly recommend UCI Graduate Division’s Mentoring Excellence Program (MEP) which is offered every quarter.

https://sites.uci.edu/gradmentoring/mentoring/
COMMON Q&A FOR 1ST YEARS

Below are general questions that you might come across as a first-year graduate student. Please note that these are general questions. The UCI Chemistry Current Student page is an excellent resource for current graduate students.

Research/Academics

Q: What are rotations and how do I ‘rotate’?
A: Rotation is a formal way to know your prospective lab and to get familiar with the projects you will work on if you join a group. Expectations for rotations vary depending on the field of study and labs. It is always best to ask the graduate students/PI for rotation expectations.

https://sites.uci.edu/gradmentoring/firstyear/
Expectations for the program

Mentors are required to attend a 2-hour mentor workshop at the beginning of the academic year.

Mentor-mentee pairs should, ideally, meet once a month. We strongly encourage the mentor and mentee to set up their own schedule beyond the minimum requirement.
Avoid Misinformation

- **Do not gossip.**
  - It is in **nobody’s** best interest for you to gossip
  - If you feel so strongly about something that you think your mentee has a right to know, direct them to the PI, lab members, or former lab members
  - Chemistry is a small world: Never burn bridges.
- **Maintain a professional relationship**
  - Make it clear to your mentee that you have no influence or control over which lab they are placed in.
  - Do not use your position as a mentor to “recruit” incoming students to your lab over other labs.
Rotation Schedule

- **Everyone** is on the same rotation schedule
- First years submit their rotation preference form on Wednesday, October 2nd
- Four 3 week rotations

**Rotation #1:**
Monday, October 7th - Friday, October 25th

**Rotation #2:**
Monday, October 28th - Friday, November 15th

**Rotation #3:**
Monday, November 18th - Friday, December 13th

**Rotation #4:**
Monday, January 6th - Friday, January 24th
Lab Placement

Every student will be submitting their advisor selection form (top 5 advisors) at the end of rotations.

Area advisors will meet and discuss lab placement for each student.

New to physical students!
Just your friendly neighborhood reminder that as you choose a research lab, if you find yourself saying:
- how bad can it be
- it’s only 5 years
- it will be different for me...

...it can be bad (really bad), 5 years is a long time, and it will not be different for you. #PhDchat
What is mentorship?
Stages of Mentorship

- **Selection**: surveys, matching mentors with mentees
- **Alignment**: setting goals as a mentor with your mentee
- **Cultivation**: maintaining a mentor/mentee relationship
- **Closure**: end of the official mentoring obligation: Winter 2020
Mentor Qualities

Bad Qualities
- Doesn’t make an effort to meet with mentees
- Can’t communicate effectively/unreachable to mentees
- Vents to the mentees about hardships instead of trying to give mentees their perspective
- Tells mentees what to do

Good Qualities!
- Reaches out to mentees “reliably”
- Doesn’t ignore mentees, makes themselves available for questions
- Allows meetings with mentees to be about the mentees
- Gives mentees their perspective, without expecting mentees to do what they say
Communication: Do’s and Don’ts

- **DO**: establish your **forms of communication**: Email? Texting? In-person?
- **DON’T**: Expect your mentees to initiate contact!
- **DO**: *Focus* on your mentee - give them your undivided attention!
- **DON’T**: force conversations that make your mentees uncomfortable.
- **DO**: Allow your mentee to control your meetings
- **DON’T**: talk *at* your mentees, have real conversations with them.
Fun Activity!!!
Conflict in mentoring

Confidentiality and privacy - Boundaries - Misalignment of expectations

● Respect your mentee’s privacy.
  ○ Mentorship relationships are built on trust, and one of the quickest ways to betray that trust is to share information with others that your mentee understood to be private or confidential.
  ○ Information like what labs someone is considering or how they are doing in classes is at your mentee’s liberty to share, not yours.
● Only exception: We are mandatory reporters for instances of sexual assault.
  ○ Contact UCI CARE: Campus Assault Resources and Education
Conflict in mentoring

Confidentiality and privacy - **Boundaries** - Misalignment of expectations

- Conflict in mentoring can arise from not recognizing or respecting boundaries.
  - Power differential: Differences in perceived power, influence, or authority
    - Examples: PI and researcher, TA and student, mentor and mentee
    - How to avoid conflict: Let the mentee dictate the relationship
  - Exploitation: Fear of retaliation or consequence
    - Example: Strained communication between PI and grad student
    - How to avoid conflict: Know your departmental advocates (Morgan, Alan, Dave)
  - Role strain: Conflicting roles and responsibilities
    - Example: Your mentee wants to join your lab
    - How to avoid conflict: Clearly communicate your two separate roles
The #1 thing to do when starting a new mentorship relationship is to set clear goals and expectations.

- Be clear with your mentee about your role as a mentor:
  - What you are specifically there to help with (sharing first-year experiences, adjusting to graduate school work-life balance)
  - What is outside of your authority or control (you can’t guarantee that they can join your lab!)

- Be clear with your mentee about what they want out of this program:
  - Why did they sign up for the program?
  - What are their concerns or questions about the first year of graduate school?
  - What do they hope to learn from you as someone who recently had those same experiences?
Conflict Resolution Styles

It is good for you as a mentor and a mentee (to your PI, other graduate students) to understand your conflict resolution styles. Fill out the following sheet and follow the directions for your Conflict Resolution Style animal!

Conflict in mentoring (Mini Case Study)

Your mentee is struggling in their classes and neglecting to talk to grad students and PIs during their rotations. You are the head TA for the class they were assigned to teach, and they continually call you to ask you questions about teaching and grading. Because they frequently communicate with you, they have also started requesting your help studying for the class that your PI is teaching. Your mentee hasn’t made many friends among their cohort and considers you their best friend in grad school (regularly texting you to meet up for lunch), but you have your own research and publication deadlines to meet. You can no longer sustain this level of support for this person, but you’re afraid that cutting them off entirely will lead to them failing in one or more aspects of grad school.

- What boundaries were violated?
- How would you resolve the conflicts in this situation?
- What can you communicate to your mentee to avoid a similar situation?
Clearly communicate with your mentee about their goals and boundaries from the very beginning.
so what do you like to do for fun?
me:
Wellness

To be a good mentor, you must balance your own academic and wellness demands:

- Evaluate your daily schedule
- Consider what gives/drains energy
- Build in work blocks/self-care blocks into daily schedule.

Encourage your mentee to work through these 3 things as well.
Fun Activity!!!

At any point in time, if you are distracted by other pressing matters, take some time and do breathing exercises to center your attention. This is good for mentally preparing yourself before meeting with your mentee, but also useful for other things such as group meetings, etc.

**Breathing exercise:** Close your eyes. Inhale slowly for 5 seconds, hold your breath for 5 seconds, slowly exhale for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 more times.
Resilience

When your mentee comes to you with situation they are working through:

- Listen without interruption. **Understand and validate their feelings.**
  - Remember that your experiences are different than your mentees. Validate their feelings, first and foremost.

- Categorize challenges (class, lab, personal).
- Clarify what can and cannot be controlled.
- Understand their motivations and support system, then mutually work on solutions.

To understand your support system, fill out the mentoring map on the following page.
Case Study

Andrew is a first-year student at UCSD physics department. Andrew is an immigrant and a first-gen college/graduate student who looks after his parents financially. Both his parents are admitted to the hospital during Fall quarter. In addition to worrying about losing his parents, Andrew has to pay for their medical bills. Andrew has several other extraneous circumstances that take up his time and energy on top of his graduate student workload. Andrew feels himself being pulled apart in many different directions, perceive he is not doing well in classes, and starts doubting his ability to survive graduate school. All his peers have joined labs at this point and Andrew fears he will be left without a lab and will have to leave graduate school.

- What are the conflicts?
- What would you recommend this student do?
- What do you think Andrew would tell his mentor if he had one during this time?
- If Andrew was your mentee, what would you do/tell him during your meeting? Why?
- What were your assumptions?
Case Study

There are several conflicts in Andrew’s case. As a mentor, listen to Andrew, validate his feelings, and work through the steps in “Resilience” slide. Positively reaffirm him, too. For Andrew, it is really important to categorize his problems and understand what can and cannot be controlled.

It might be easy to say Andrew should just take time off or get a job instead of being a student in graduate school, but understand his motivation. Understand the circumstances your mentee is under, too. For Andrew, taking time off is not an option as he is on an immigrant visa and cannot take off time in order to get paid.

Remember, your opinions of what your mentee should do is not the best option for them. They know themselves best. Guide them, but do not direct them!
Understand, validate, then mutually work on solutions.
Meet your Mentees!!