

23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

# The Right Direction: Elements of Effective Mentoring



THE  
COMPACT *for*  
FACULTY  
**DIVERSITY**

October 2016

*“If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.”*

African Proverb

# FOREWORD

by Dr. Stacy Blake-Beard

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Mentoring, this process of a senior, more advanced person looking after the interests and well-being of a more junior colleague, is, at its heart, about going further together. It is through mentoring that we see junior scholars being supported and guided through the halls and tunnels of academia. From the early research of Dr. Kathy Kram<sup>1</sup>, we know that this guidance happens through the provision of career support (coaching, exposure and visibility, challenging assignments, and sponsorship) and psychosocial support (counseling, friendship, confirmation and acceptance). The outcomes of mentoring, ranging from completion of degrees to attainment of jobs to publication of research, have been well studied. All indicators suggest that protégés benefit from being in mentoring relationships.



Dr. Stacy Blake-Beard  
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But the achievement of these sought-after objectives tells only a small part of why mentoring is such a powerful and dynamic process. The sharing of experiences in this publication provides critical evidence of what mentoring truly does. Mentoring is a forum in which we may safely bare our souls, reveal our vulnerable selves, celebrate our achievements, mourn our defeats, and prepare for the next step — no matter the discipline or area of study. It is heartening and reassuring to see the stories of the mentors portrayed in these pages and their understanding of the importance of supporting students holistically, seeing them not only as professionals in preparation but also as people who are often entering disciplines and fields in which they are one of few. Audre Lorde<sup>2</sup> speaks to the power of mentoring as she encourages us with these words: “When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.” The examples of mentoring that are offered here speak to a critical aspect of mentoring. These mentors provide a model of and support for moving ahead . . . even when we are afraid. For this gift, they deserve our gratitude.

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<sup>1</sup> Kram, K.E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26, 608-625.

<sup>2</sup> Lorde, A. (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.



# MENTORSHIP

Each year, the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring honors mentors who guide scholars through the rewarding but challenging process of obtaining the Ph.D. Most people think of a mentor as someone who teaches or gives advice. These faculty mentors take it to the next level. Counselor. Advocate. Even family member. These individuals are the scaffolding that scholars lean on in their academic careers, and occasionally turn to during personal crises.

Along with teaching, mentoring has been a guiding principle for the Institute. Sessions such as “Finding the Sweet Spot: Developing a Positive Relationship with Your Advisor and Mentor” and “Going Beyond Doctoral Advising: Being a Mentor for Aspiring Academics,” have directly addressed the significance of mentoring in doctoral programs. In 2015, The Institute began partnering with the National Research Mentoring Network to offer sessions that help junior faculty become effective mentors to the next generation of scholars. Having an individual to encourage and hold scholars accountable is absolutely necessary for a scholars’ overall success.

Effective mentorship requires many talents. This publication highlights eight qualities past Faculty Mentor of the Year Award Winners and their mentees have identified as important components of their relationships. Appearing in this publication are individuals from various fellowship programs, universities, and states from across the country who exemplify these qualities. The Institute is pleased to recognize previous Mentor of the Year Award recipients receiving their awards from Dr. Ken Pepion, senior project director of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.



The 2014 Mentor of the Year Award and Extra Mile Award recipients from left to right: Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Dr. Elizabeth Boylan, Joshua Dorsey, Dr. Pamela Fitzgerald, Dr. Teresa Shakespeare, Dr. Sandra Murray, Christina Chu, Dr. Stephanie Lansing, Dr. Ashley Belle, Pearl Pennington.

# PERSONAL INVESTMENT

Mentors recognize the importance of personally investing in the future of their students.

“I view mentorship as a way to invest and give back. Being a first generation college student, I know how difficult it is to navigate the college experience — from bachelor’s to graduate school.”

## **Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez**

Associate Dean for Student Success and Instructional Innovation  
University of Texas, San Antonio  
Alfred P. Sloan Mentor Award Recipient

Enrique Sosa has had to be an expert in balancing work, life and school. He began his Ph.D. at the same time his wife began a program, and he was a new father to one-year-old twins. At the beginning of their programs, Sosa and his wife saved two months of rent money, and set a family budget with the intention of receiving their first doctoral stipend payments on the first of the month. Unfortunately, the couple was informed they would not be paid until the start of the next pay period. Twenty other students in their department were in the same predicament with no real options. Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez stepped in and loaned the equivalent of a month’s stipend to each one who needed help. This act of kindness allowed Sosa to pay daycare for his children so that he and his wife could continue their studies during the day. Dr. Barea-Rodriguez’s investment meant Sosa could start his first semester stress free and begin the journey that led to a career as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles.



Left: Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez and Dr. Ken Pepion who presented the award on behalf of the Institute



Dr. Enrique Sosa,  
Postdoctoral Fellow,  
Reproductive and Child Health,  
University of California, Los Angeles

# INSPIRE

Mentors remind scholars that hard work, determination and self-trust overshadow the thought of “Am I good enough?”

“It takes a village to build and sustain the confidence needed to succeed and make a difference.”



Left to Right: Dr. Anarina Le Murillo, Postdoctoral Scholar, Nutrition, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Dr. Arlene Evangelista, Mathematics Faculty, Applied Mathematics, Arizona State University; Dr. Ken Pepion and Dr. Carlos Castillo-Chavez

## **Dr. Carlos Castillo-Chavez**

Regents Professor and Joaquin Bustoz Jr. Professor of Mathematical Biology  
Arizona State University, Tempe  
Alfred P. Sloan Mentor Award Recipient

“Though I had a desire to attend graduate school, my fear and intimidation of the challenges ahead left me convinced that I was not fit for STEM fields.” Ph.D. candidate, Anarina Murillo was anxious about her decision to major in psychology with a minor in biochemistry. Her mentor, Dr. Carlos Castillo-Chavez counseled her to believe in her own capabilities by assigning Murillo with some homework: looking in a mirror and reciting, “I will go to graduate school, and I want to get a Ph.D.” Eventually, Dr. Castillo-Chavez was convinced Anarina’s confidence had improved, so he continued to counsel and support her. Two math-biology research projects and three presentation awards later, Murillo embodies confidence in her doctoral work. Dr. Castillo-Chavez brought a first-generation college student to the conclusion that hard work and discipline make self-doubt disappear.

# STABILITY

Mentors help students develop support systems to ease the transition to graduate school.

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“A Ph.D. program can be a lonely place, and you need personal connections to buffer a life of being prodded and poked to excel academically.”

## Dr. Paula Fitzgerald

Nathan Haddad Professor of Business Administration  
West Virginia University, Morgantown  
SREB-DSP Mentor Award Recipient

Joshua Dorsey began the journey to a doctoral degree in 2012 at West Virginia University. He was far from his home in North Carolina, and he knew no one upon arrival to campus. The rigors of a challenging program and the isolation of a Ph.D. program began to take its toll. His mentor and advisor, Dr. Paula Fitzgerald, recognized his situation and opened her home and family to Dorsey. He was regularly a part of holidays, school breaks and celebrations at Dr. Fitzgerald’s residence. Dorsey noted that Dr. Fitzgerald had “the foresight to understand the importance of a support system, and how a sustained level of comfort would provide me with a greater likelihood of success in the program.” Dorsey feels that this may have been the most crucial element to his mentorship. As the Ph.D. program has grown, new students are now becoming a part of Dr. Fitzgerald’s holiday and celebration events. However, Dorsey, her first student, will always remember the impact of her first invitation.



Left to Right: Joshua Dorsey, Ph.D. candidate, Marketing, West Virginia University; Dr. Paula Fitzgerald and Dr. Ken Pepion

# ADVOCACY

Even in difficult times, mentors advocate on behalf of students.

“As a mentor, I work to be constantly mindful of the whole self within each student I work with. At the same time, I am aware of the forces at work to undermine this self. It is at the particularly difficult junctures where institutional forces can be brought to bear to derail a student emotionally or programmatically, that we are called upon as mentors to draw on this deeper knowing to support our students.”



Left to Right: Dr. Marcus Bernard, Director, Rural Training Research Center, Epes, Alabama; Dr. Rosalind Harris; Dr. B. Nalani Butler, Assistant Professor, Sport Management, University of Tampa, Florida; and Dr. Ken Pepion

## **Dr. Rosalind P. Harris**

Associate Professor of Community and Leadership Development  
University of Kentucky, Lexington  
SREB-DSP Mentor Award Recipient

“Two years ago, I handed Dr. Harris the kind of challenge and controversy that should have ended my doctoral career. However, she saw opportunity where I saw disaster.” Marcus Bernard encountered a difficult academic situation during his doctoral program which caused him to struggle with a core class for two years. The professor of this course was also his dissertation committee co-chair. Instead of allowing Bernard to face the possibility of having to be removed from the program, Dr. Harris advocated for Bernard and persuaded the department to allow him to take two other seminars and teach three courses to show his ability to stay in the program. Dr. Harris stayed active in this process, coaching Bernard in the areas he was weakest. As a result, Bernard received A’s in all courses, excellent teaching evaluations, and is now a Ph.D. graduate.

# ACCESSIBILITY

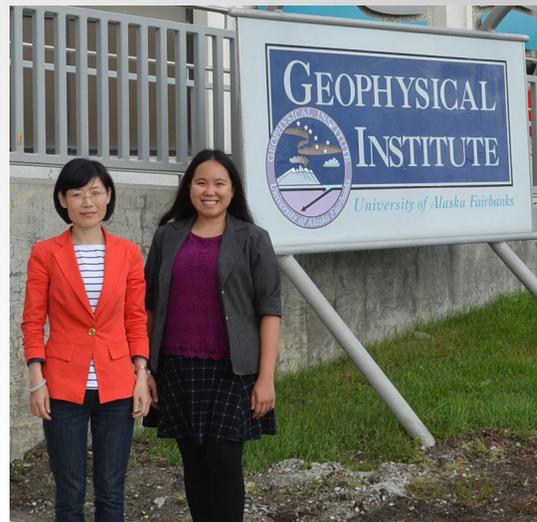
## Mentors create consistent opportunities for communication with mentees.

“Students deserve our support and attention. It’s important for mentors to be available to their students so that mentors can effectively help students to make progress in their study.”

### Dr. Hui Zhang

Assistant Professor of Physics  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
NASA Mentor Award Recipient

Dr. Hui Zhang frequently pulls “all-nighters” and is on call Saturdays and Sundays. Her full schedule is due not only to research, classes and proposals but also to her weekly research meetings with students and additional office hours. Christina Chu feels like one of the “lucky few,” because Dr. Zhang also facilitates contact between her students and experts in the space physics field when a second opinion is called for to review their latest research results. Because of Dr. Zhang, senior scientists know her name and work. Her guidance led to Chu’s NASA Jenkins Graduate Research Program Fellowship and Alaska Space Grant Research Fellowship. Dr. Zhang’s open door policy is leading students to their own doors of success.



Left to Right: Dr. Hui Zhang and Christina Chu, Ph.D. candidate, Physics, University of Alaska Fairbanks

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Mentors ensure that there will always be someone to hand the torch to.

“It is vital for mentors to provide opportunities for their mentees to enhance their laboratory and writing skills while nourishing their leadership abilities. Seeing the passion in my students for our ‘Waste-To-Energy’ research is just the initial spark in the process.”



Left to Right: Dr. Ken Pepion; Dr. Stephanie Lansing; Dr. Ashley Belle, Assistant Professor, Environmental Science and Technology, Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania

## **Dr. Stephanie Lansing**

Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Technology  
University of Maryland, College Park  
AGEP Mentor Award Recipient

Dr. Stephanie Lansing, Associate Professor of Ecological Engineering and Sustainable Technologies at the University of Maryland, College Park, led Ashley Belle to her first lead author publication after involving her in a manuscript submission to the journal, *Bioresource Technology*. Belle was ready for this challenge because Dr. Lansing offered a special topic seminar on manuscript preparation and grant writing. Dr. Lansing did not just have a keen eye for seeing how her students could improve, she also provided the workshops and seminars to give students training to advance in STEM. Through her active role in her student’s professional development, Dr. Lansing has helped to create another torch bearer.

## CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Mentors help scholars make a successful transition from program graduate to academic professional.

“The balance between giving sound advice, pushing the mentee to perfect or gain skills and being a good listener is a critical mentoring skill for facilitating mentee growth and survival.”

### **Dr. Sandra Murray**

Professor of Cell Biology  
University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Bridges Mentor Award Recipient

Dr. Teresa Shakespeare met Dr. Sandra Murray at an American Society for Cell Biology poster session in 2007. Shakespeare recalls Dr. Murray “becoming her mentor the first time they met.” She was six months from completing her Ph.D. and unsure of next steps. In less than ten minutes of meeting, Dr. Murray provided career advice and offered Shakespeare a postdoctoral position in her lab. Since 2012, Dr. Murray has hosted Shakespeare in her lab three times, with full funding. Two of those times included a student Shakespeare was mentoring. Even when the path is unclear, Dr. Murray is described as pointing scholars in the right direction, while giving them freedom to carve their own path.



Left to Right: Dr. Ken Pepion; Dr. Teresa Shakespeare, Associate Professor, Fort Valley State University, Georgia and Dr. Sandra Murray

# COMPASSION

Mentors know that students need compassion and support during times of personal crisis.

“During difficult times, a mentor is a valuable sounding board that can help the mentee in a reflective process to reach their goals and fulfill their promise.”



Left to Right: Dr. Cheryl Seals, Dr. Ken Pepion and Dr. Cheryl Swanier, Associate Professor, Computer Science, Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina

## Dr. Cheryl Seals

Associate Professor of Computer Science and Software Engineering  
Auburn University, Alabama  
SREB-DSP Mentor Award Recipient

Cheryl Swanier faced many obstacles during her Ph.D. program. Her dissertation advisor left the institution and within a span of nine months, Swanier had three children hospitalized in two different cities that were hours apart. Dr. Cheryl Seals, Swanier’s mentor, was more than up to the task of supporting Swanier. Dr. Seals transitioned from Swanier’s committee member to dissertation advisor, allowed her to continue to pursue her original area of research, and provided financial support for Swanier to attend conferences. Swanier noted that “Dr. Seals’ acts of generosity and kindness let me know she not only cared about the academic part of my life, but she cared for me as a person.” Dr. Seals believes in going “all-in” for her students, and any student who applied themselves could be successful with adequate support.

# 2015 INSTITUTE FACTS AND FIGURES

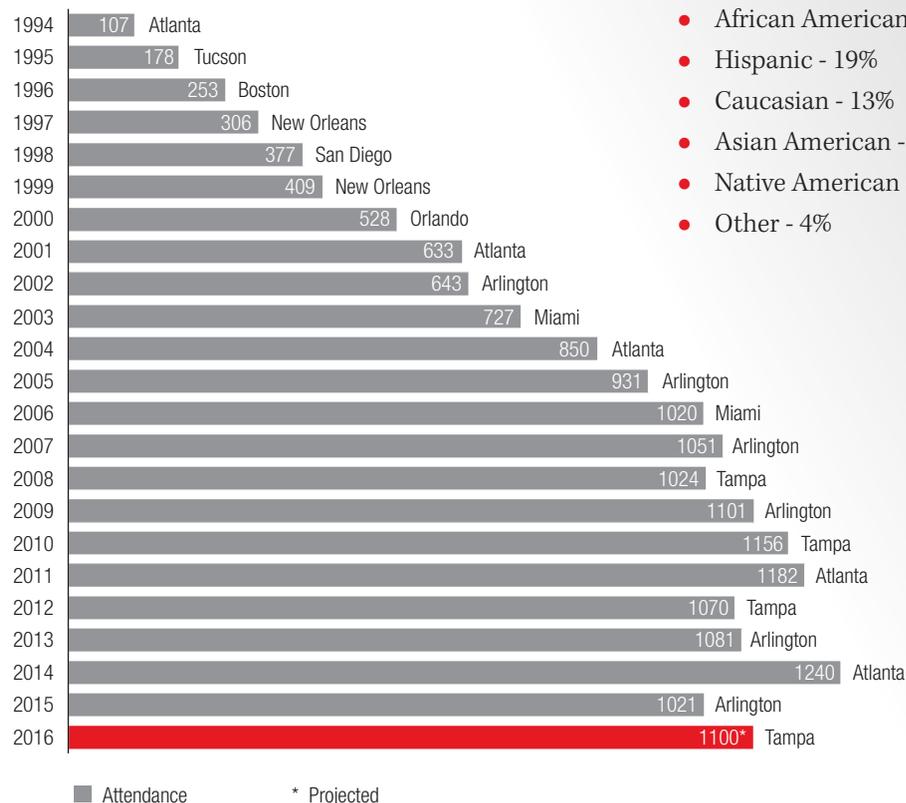
## Attendance by Discipline

- Business and Management - 3%
- Education - 16 %
- Health Professions - 5 %
- Humanities - 7 %
- Mathematics - 4%
- Science & Technology - 33%
- Engineering - 16 %
- Social & Behavioral Sciences - 16 %

## Institute Data

- 1,021 attendees
- first time attendee - 43%
- 46 states represented by participants (includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico)
- 50 graduates recognized
- 70 universities represented at Recruitment Fair
- 177 recruiter representatives
- 103 disciplines represented
- female - 62%, male - 38%

## Institute attendance by year



## Race and Ethnicity

- African American - 58%
- Hispanic - 19%
- Caucasian - 13%
- Asian American - 4%
- Native American - 2%
- Other - 4%

# 2015 INSTITUTE GRADUATES



The Compact for Faculty Diversity is pleased to recognize these partner organizations:

- Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Minority Ph.D. Program
- Gates Millennium Scholars Program
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration Harriett G. Jenkins Predoctoral Fellowship Project
- NIH Common Fund/National Research Mentoring Network
- National Science Foundation Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate
- Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program
- Southern Regional Education Board
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

*“In order to be a mentor, and an  
effective one, one must care.*

*You must care.”*

Maya Angelou, Poet and Civil Rights Activist

Photo Credit: Charles West, CW Studios

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**SREB.org**

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