



The University of Georgia

Teaching Academy®

Date: March 29, 2015

To: Dr. Pamela Whitten
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

From: Mentoring and Professional Development Break-out Group: Gary Green
(*Facilitator*), Bronson Bullock, Paige Carmichael, Chad Clay, Anna Conner, T. J. Godfrey,
Shelley Hooks, Anna Karls, James Lauderdale, Luke Naeher, Paul Quick and Tim Samples

Re: Recommendations for Graduate Student Mentoring and Professional Development

Dear Provost Whitten:

We write on behalf of the working group charged with addressing graduate student mentoring and professional development at the 2015 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. The following recommendations were selected from the many ideas discussed by our group for their potential to have the greatest positive impact on graduate programs across campus through improving productivity, employability, and satisfaction of UGA graduate students in all disciplines. Throughout our discussions, it became clear that not only does individualized and time-intensive mentoring make an enormous difference in graduate students' experience but that such mentoring often goes largely unrecognized and unrewarded at the departmental, unit, or institutional level. As UGA grows its graduate programs, it is important to provide professional development programs and utilize mentoring strategies that help our graduate students to be standouts in the over-crowded, highly-competitive job market for science, engineering and non-science/engineering PhDs (B. Alberts *et al. Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA* **111**, 5773–5777, 2014; <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/digest/2011/nsf13301.pdf>). For that to happen, UGA needs to foster, to develop, and to encourage strong faculty mentoring while also training graduate students to be strong mentors in their future careers.

Recommendation 1 - Incentivize best practices in mentoring by members of the Graduate Faculty:

- Include mentoring activities in unit annual evaluation and promotion & tenure criteria

- Provide teaching EFT credit for mentoring graduate students based on number of credit hours for directing graduate research (7000/9000/9300) and/or a unit-defined measure of excellence in mentoring
- Establish university-wide and unit awards for excellence in mentoring by members of the Graduate faculty (includes tenured/tenure-track faculty members and research scientists)

Effective mentoring of graduate students takes time and effort. For some mentors it may involve learning best practices in mentoring through attending workshops, utilizing literature/local resources on best practices in mentoring, and/or participating in a “mentoring mentors” program (see Recommendation 2). For all mentors it involves spending the time to research and provide individualized guidance and professional development opportunities for each of their graduate students. As we grow the graduate programs, the demands on the time of graduate faculty members also grow; therefore, mentoring graduate students should be a defined element of EFT (whether defined as part of instruction or as a new category) and considered in the calculation for raises utilized by each unit. The measure for excellence in graduate student mentoring should be determined at the unit level, since some best practices in mentoring may vary across disciplines. In addition, recognition for excellence in mentoring should be recognized, as we recognize excellence in teaching and in research with university-wide and unit awards.

Recommendation 2 - Facilitate excellence in mentoring graduate students:

- Develop centralized resource at the Graduate School for best practices in mentoring and professional development opportunities for graduate students
- Provide workshops and programs to train faculty in best practices in mentoring (models are the teaching workshops/seminars provided by CTL and the Lilly/Senior Teaching Fellows programs)
- Create a pipeline from graduate school to the professoriate of excellent mentors by providing training and opportunities for graduate students (and post-doctoral fellows)

CTL and the Graduate School might tackle the development of a centralized resource of best practices in mentoring; academic literature and presentations or papers from UGA faculty members, who are regarded as excellent mentors, could be provided online. The central resource should include updated lists, with links, of graduate professional development opportunities at UGA and through professional organizations. Since so many graduate students are pursuing interdisciplinary studies and research, it would be appropriate to have the centralized resource that reflects unit-specific and cross-unit opportunities. The Teaching Academy, CTL, and Graduate School could work together to develop “Mentoring Mentors” programs that resembles the Teaching Fellows programs for junior and senior graduate faculty members, providing role models and the collaborative deliberation on mentoring issues that the Teaching Fellows programs provide for teaching and pedagogical issues. And thinking forward, we can create a pipeline for our graduate students and post-doctors to enter that leads them to being excellent mentors to graduate students when they enter the professoriate. This involves training and mentoring opportunities for graduate students, such as:

- The development of a Graduate Mentoring Portfolio akin to the Graduate Teaching Portfolio program, which presently offers workshops through CTL to inform and encourage students to develop a teaching philosophy and practice that is informed by scholarly literature and deliberate in design and assessment.
- The addition of a mentoring track to the Graduate Teaching Certificate, thereby providing another focus for course work, project development, and presentation presently required.
- The initiation of links between the CURO program and graduate programs, giving graduate students the opportunity to mentor CURO students in their undergraduate research and providing training in mentoring for graduate students through workshops. A model for the workshops is the “Entering Mentoring” workshop designed by Dr. Jo Handelsman for the Wisconsin Program for Scientific Teaching; the UGA Department of Microbiology provided this workshop during the summer for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in the sciences for several years (2008-2013), and when it was advertised through the Graduate Student and Post-docs in Science (GSPS) listserv over 50 students and post-doctoral fellows enrolled, reflecting a need for this type of training.

Recommendation 3 - Enable and encourage graduate students to seek out suitable mentors and professional training opportunities:

- Organization and funding support through the Graduate School and OVPI for a Graduate Seminar for Mentoring and Professional Development (structured similarly to the FYO program with small course sizes, 1-hour course credit, and Graduate Faculty instruction with remuneration). Unlike FYO seminars, however, the topics would be driven by graduate students and identified through focus groups (see below).
- Small grants through the Graduate School for cross-unit professional development workshops/symposia informing students of careers options (outside of academia) and providing networking opportunities (model is the Annual GSPS Career Symposium funded by BHSI & OVPR)
- Unit-specific focus groups and/or class that identify mentoring and professional development topics that would engage first year graduate students in seeking out appropriate mentors and professional development opportunities

The proposed FYO-like program for graduate students would provide support for classes on topics that graduate students request to fulfill professional training needs. The classes would be open to graduate students in any graduate program and may be on general topics such as applying for grants and fellowships or best practices in mentoring; or the course topics may be discipline-specific topics to which interdisciplinary graduate students would like to be exposed, but not at the level of a graduate course in that discipline. This program would facilitate interdisciplinary research and professional development. Workshops and symposia would bring in academics from an array of higher ed institutional types, academic professionals holding a range of alternative-

academic positions, and non-academic professionals who could talk about career options outside of higher education and how to prepare for those careers; these workshops and symposia would also serve as networking opportunities. The model for this program is the GSPS Annual Career Symposium that brings in professionals, such as editors from major science journals, directors from government agencies, industry professionals, patent law specialists, and entrepreneurs, from around the country to talk about how they got into their careers and what those careers entail. Obviously, this type of symposium requires funding, thus we proposed a mini-grant program through the Graduate School to start such symposia for graduate students outside of the sciences (the GSPS symposium is currently funded primarily by BHSI and OVPR). Finally, last but not least, is the proposal for each unit to develop focus groups or a class that is offered for all first year graduate students that informs them on how to develop productive mentoring relationships and utilize professional development opportunities that are appropriate to their discipline and career goals.

In addition to and perhaps in combination with some of the top suggestions from other break-out groups who participated in the 2015 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium, our proposals attempt to raise the quality of our graduate programs. We believe that these recommendations, along with those of the other groups, have the potential of not only equipping our present graduate students to be more successful while at UGA and in their future professional position but also of being attractive features of UGA graduate education that can attract exceptional candidates for graduate study and that can persuade such candidates of the value-added quality of UGA graduate education. Our recommendations suggest ways for the institution to reward faculty members who are already engaged in mentoring and to encourage other faculty members who are interested in mentoring and professional development that their efforts will be recognized and rewarded. Lastly, our recommendations seek to foster good mentoring and professional development habits in graduate students who are the legacy of graduate study at UGA.

Sincerely,
Gary Green