

## MENTORING SCENARIOS, WITH DISCUSSION NOTES & RESOURCES

The following sixteen scenarios were discussed by University of Illinois faculty and staff at the January 13, 2010 event, "Challenging Assumptions: Building a Supportive and Inclusive Environment," a Graduate College-sponsored event focusing on the practical mentoring of graduate students. Each scenario is supplemented here with discussion notes as well as resources and suggestions. At the end of the document, links to the resources are provided.

### **Scenario 1**

You are co-directing a dissertation in the humanities with a senior colleague. Over the past few months, your advisee Diane has written two chapters of the dissertation, the most recent one four weeks ago. You have read and returned both chapters in a timely fashion and returned them with comments to the student. Diane now comes to you and tells you that she has not received any feedback from your colleague on the chapter she handed in four weeks ago and she has not received any feedback from him on the previous chapter either.

Questions to consider:

- What would you do?
- What can students do to try to prevent such problems?
- How could you change your practices with future students and colleagues to avoid similar conflicts?
- What campus resources could be helpful?

Campus resources:

- Director of Graduate Study
- Mentoring resources available for students & faculty on the Graduate College web site
- Graduate College Workshops
  - Dissertation Writing Workshop
  - Taking Charge Workshops

Notes from discussion:

- If you are an assistant professor: talk to the Director of Graduate Study, encourage student to keep working, encourage student to ask for feedback
- Share your feedback with senior professor and ask for particular advice on target areas
  - Meet to discuss—be intermediary
- New practice: co-directors share feedback with each other. Student writes responses to each.
- Consult department head as last recourse



- Clarify expectations and timeline
- Single director until very end of process
- When providing feedback to students, always send that email also to the other faculty member; kind of as a prompt
- Send email to senior professor asking for a date to discuss the student's chapter(s); i.e., ask senior professor to talk about the kind of feedback to provide (particularly useful if one is an assistant professor as this email can be written/read as deferring to expertise of senior faculty member)
- Very common problem
  - Student seems to be dragging the advisor into the middle and indirectly
  - Perhaps the professor should encourage the student to talk to other students
- Is there really such a thing as "co-direction"?
- Junior faculty member is doing more than senior as far as committee work
- What should the junior say to the senior director? Should they say anything?
- Solution should be what is in the best interest to the student
- Student should not be a "prisoner" to the power struggle
- Junior faculty should just take on the extra work to benefit student
  - Does the junior member go to someone else or ask senior colleague if he should take the lead on the paper?
- Main issue is that the student should not be affected
- What about what the student should do?
  - He should go where he gets feedback...tends to be the trend anyway



## Scenario 2

Xiao, a Chinese international doctoral student in engineering, is interested in a career in industry and plans to graduate in two years. Through connections he made at a recent conference, he has been offered a summer internship with a large corporation on a project related to his doctoral studies. He wants to take the internship, which starts in four months, but doing so would require putting his research project in his adviser's lab on hold for the summer. Xiao doesn't know how his adviser will react to this and fears losing his adviser's support if he pursues the internship. In addition to informing the adviser of the opportunity, the student needs to request a letter of recommendation from the adviser in order to receive a work authorization through International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS). Xiao approaches you for advice on how to proceed.

Questions to consider:

- Is the student's request reasonable?
- How should the student approach the adviser about the internship?
- As the adviser, how would you respond to the request?
- What questions or concerns about the internship would need to be addressed before you could be supportive of the opportunity?

Campus resources:

- ISSS—information re: request for work authorization
- Director of Graduate Study in his department
- Graduate College
- Counseling Center
- Departmental policy/expectations for summer work
- Career Services across campus, including the Graduate College Career Services Office, Engineering Career Services, The Career Center

Notes from discussion:

- Is this student's request reasonable: YES! It's his life.
- The student could say: this is an opportunity to further my personal and career goals. What is your perspective (as opposed to asking permission)?
- Advisor should support these kind of opportunities, since they often don't know how to help students interested in non-academic careers
- Advisor could have reservations about project deadlines being met
  - Advisor could work ahead of time to find someone to take over this student's responsibilities.
- Advisor could ask student how they plan to get responsibilities covered while gone.
  - This would help socialize students in how to handle blips in plans and to remind them that they are members of a team—they will need to consider their own needs as well as how their actions impact others.
- We need to remember that advisors hold a lot of power of students, partly in the form of future funding
- Advisor should model flexibility in finding mutual solutions



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- Just as advisor might work to make this internship happen, they might also help the student determine if this opportunity is necessary and their “only chance” at practical experience.
- Are there conflicts of commitment with external activity, such as intellectual property?



### Scenario 3

Andrea is a graduate student in the laboratory sciences who is in good standing and has received A's or B's in all of her graduate coursework and has started a project in your research lab. Your program does not have an annual review process, and she believes she is doing well in the program. However, in private discussions, faculty have shared their concerns about her ability to think analytically and conduct meaningful research, and she is having difficulty conducting independent research.

Questions to consider:

- What do you do?
- What should the student have done?
- What implicit assumptions do the student and adviser have?
- What actions can you take to prevent this situation in the future?
- What campus resources can help the student?

Campus resources:

- Director of Graduate Study
- Annual review process
- Graduate College online resources for mentors at [grad.illinois.edu/mentoring-information](http://grad.illinois.edu/mentoring-information)
- Graduate College Workshops
  - Dissertation Writing Workshop
  - Taking Charge Workshops
- Graduate College online resources on advising
- Counseling Center
  - Online resources on topics such as perfectionism & procrastination
  - Group counseling
  - Individual counseling
- Graduate College Career Services Office

Notes from discussion:

- Questions to consider: is student unclear about tasks? Is there an external focus? Depression?
- Need to address early
- Is there a gap in her background that the student might now want to admit?
- Classroom skills don't necessarily translate to laboratory skills.



## Scenario 4

One of your advisees, an international graduate student named Anu, meets with you to discuss her project. You mention a few relevant papers and Anu takes notes on their titles. Since she appears unfamiliar with the papers, you summarize the work for a few minutes and then ask her a question. She replies, indicating that she has already read these papers. You are irritated about spending time summarizing material the student had already read. Anu is confused about what she should have done differently.

Questions to consider:

- How could you have responded differently?
- What should the student have done?
- What implicit assumptions do the student and adviser have?
- What cultural differences might be influencing the actions of each party?
- How do you advise students who are not familiar with the culture of U.S. higher education institutions?
- What actions can you take to prevent this situation in the future?
- What campus resources can help the student or faculty member?

Campus resources:

- ISSS
  - Faculty could attend ISSS workshops geared toward faculty/staff
  - Interlink mentoring program
  - ISSS advisers
  - ISSS also has online resource list, re: help with English and acculturation
- Graduate College
  - “Taking Charge” workshops for students, especially on working with your adviser
  - Graduate College online resources for mentors at [grad.illinois.edu/mentoring-information](http://grad.illinois.edu/mentoring-information)
  - Graduate College online resources on advising [grad.illinois.edu/advising](http://grad.illinois.edu/advising)
- Counseling Center
  - Online resources on topics such as perfectionism & procrastination
  - Group counseling
  - Individual counseling

Notes from discussion:

- The professor could be more aware of cultural differences (e.g., student expects advisor to be the expert and may not feel comfortable offering information about her understanding unless directly asked)
- It is important not to make assumptions that a student understands something, especially when English may not be their first language. You could ask the student questions—to check in on whether you have reached a shared understanding about a particular task, the content of articles, etc.
- We wondered whether this professor's frustration was even warranted—is it that problematic to have to give a summary of the articles—sometimes hearing a



different perspective is useful. Providing a verbal summary could also be a way to model how to summarize something verbally.

- The professor could be more interactive and engaging, to better understand the student.
  - The student may have read the article, but not understood (either due to language or technical content).
  - Many graduate students are afraid of looking “stupid” or “incompetent.” Further, they may feel extra pressure to perform if they are a member of a minority group.
  - As a result, students may present as more knowledgeable than they really are.
  - Misunderstandings or limits in knowledge may not emerge until much later, so better to gain mutual clarity as early as possible.
- Professors could have articulated his expectations more clearly up front.
- Many faculty have little training in mentoring, and could use more.
- Departments should have grad student acculturation events.
- The students plays a role too:
  - Could ask the professor for clarification of expectations
  - Could consult with peers or another professor if too intimidating to speak with advisor
- Most departments have a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), but unfortunately, many students and even faculty are not aware of who this person is, and how they can be a resource.
  - Many students first seek support from the Graduate College, either due to a lack of knowledge or because it can seem too threatening to share concerns with a faculty member from their home department.
- Encourage new students to talk to older students to foster students mentoring each other
- Professor could have used opportunity to address communication issue
- Students need to be introduced to expectations at multiple points within program (not just at the beginning).



## Scenario 5

HeaSook, a 3<sup>rd</sup> year international graduate student, and you, her research adviser (in a STEM field), are preparing a co-authored publication describing an important experimental result for an upcoming special journal issue. This will be HeaSook's first co-authored publication. She writes and submits a draft to you before your next meeting. You are dismayed by the poor quality of the writing and thinks the paper needs to be rewritten. Without improvement, you believe that the student's writing will limit her career progress. The submission deadline is approaching rapidly.

Questions to consider:

- How should you address this situation?
- Are there conflicts of interest? How can these be managed?
- What implicit assumptions do the student and adviser have?
- What actions can you take to prevent this situation in the future?
- What campus resources can help the student?

Campus resources:

- Writers Workshop
  - Individual advising
  - Online ESL resources
  - List of local editors
- List of resources on ISSS web site, including:
  - Parkland College ESL courses
  - Intensive English Institute
  - Division of English as an International Language (DEIL)-offered courses
  - Urbana Adult Education
- Graduate College resources on setting expectations/conflict resolution
- Annual review process
- Departmental resources to support student writing
- Research ethics training/Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research

Notes from discussion:

- For this situation, the professor and the student will discuss and edit the paper together.
- However, to help eliminate this situation from occurring the following suggestions were made:
- Set a time line to ensure that the first draft is not submitted a week prior to the deadline.
- Have the student read similar research papers and break down/analyze how the paper was structured, and organized. Discuss how the information was presented and break down the writing method.
- Allow time for the student to have the paper reviewed and critiqued by senior peers before submitting the paper to the professor for review.
- A suggestion for the department: possibly create a required 3-credit technical writing course that is relevant to the field of study.





## Scenario 6

A female graduate student in the lab sciences named Patricia has recently learned she is pregnant. Since her research involves chemicals that could be harmful during pregnancy, Patricia informs you of her pregnancy and requests assistance finding appropriate approaches such as respirators, changes to the experiment or a new project.

Questions to consider:

- How can you respond as her adviser?
- Are there ways that this discussion can go badly?
- What campus resources can help Patricia?

Campus resources:

- Academic Human Resources
- Division of Research Safety/Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
- Student Insurance
- Departmental & Graduate College policies re: academic leave
- ISSS should be consulted if the student is a foreign national looking to decrease hours or take a semester off, as status could be affected.

Notes from discussion:

- Try to accommodate, change order of tasks (if possible)
- May affect time to degree



## Scenario 7

A female graduate student (Ellen) recently informed her adviser of her pregnancy. Ellen's adviser did not respond positively to the news and made comments about how she must not be serious about her studies. Ellen arranges a meeting with you, the Director of Graduate Studies, to ask for assistance in approaching this situation.

Questions to consider:

- How can you respond as the Director of Graduate Studies?
- Are there ways that this discussion can go badly?
- What campus resources can help the student?

Campus resources:

- Academic Human Resources (re: assistantship policies)
- Student Insurance
- Departmental & Graduate College policies re: academic leave
- ISSS should be consulted if the student is a foreign national looking to decrease hours or take a semester off, as status could be affected.

Notes from discussion:

- Need to determine the student's level of discomfort with adviser
- Ask if the pregnancy was planned. If so, congratulate her and discuss her plan and strategy to complete in light of pregnancy.
- Ask questions of both the adviser and of the student in separate meetings to understand the issue with the pregnancy occurring at this time in the student's academic program
- Discuss the student's situation, also asking the adviser if they are aware of the family leave policy, etc. to give the adviser some understanding of the ways in which the student may be provided time to complete her program.
- Ask the student what kind of follow-up she would recommend and/or what she would feel most comfortable with you doing to help with the situation
- Should remain neutral so that there is no further distance between student and adviser



## Scenario 8

Seema, an international graduate student from India, has been working in a research lab for the last 5 years. She has passed her prelims and is now working on her dissertation. Because of financial and familial pressures from home, she is expecting to graduate in December 2010. However, her research is a central aspect of a project that will take another two years to complete. Her adviser is hoping she can stay at least until December 2011. During a meeting with you, a member of her committee, she expresses frustration at the delayed graduation date because she thinks she has enough work to graduate.

Questions to consider:

- How do you respond?
- What implicit assumptions do the student and adviser have?
- What campus resources can help the student?

Campus resources:

- ISSS, re: extension of time and work authorization options
- Counseling Center
- Graduate College Thesis Office web resources
- Graduate College academic calendar, including thesis deposit deadlines

Notes from discussion:

- To help eliminate this issue a list of tasks, quantifiable expectations should be created and agreed upon at the beginning of program. Create this first "contract" one year before projected defense date or two years after start of program. This contract could be flexible and renegotiated as student's personal/career goals have changed, as long as the work produced is PhD level. Additionally, yearly, the advisor and student should meet and review progress. This meet could evolve to involve the advisor, committee, and student.
- The discussion for this particular student, evaluate scope of what is completed and if is PhD level work.



## Scenario 9

Jung Woo is an international student who is nearing completion of his program and would like to apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT), which is authorization to work off-campus after completion of his degree. In order to apply for OPT he needs a signature and confirmation from his adviser of when he will complete his degree. The student is not confident of when he will complete his program, but needs to start the OPT application process in advance, as it takes 90 days to process. He schedules an appointment with you, the Director of Graduate Studies, because he is having difficulty setting a date for completion with his adviser.

Questions to consider:

- How do you respond?
- What can the adviser do to help the student?
- What campus resources can help the student?

Campus resources:

- ISSS (including workshops for faculty and staff)
- Career Services on campus, including Graduate College Career Services
- Annual review process
- Graduate College Thesis Office web resources
- Graduate College academic calendar, including thesis deposit deadlines

Notes from discussion:

- Mediation role: bring adviser in and learn more about situation
- Can the student complete? If yes, set out strategy and then leave rest to student/adviser
- Deadlines help things go more smoothly
- Help student understand adviser's other time commitments, see the larger picture
- Reframe this as an opportunity to develop a mutually beneficial contract



## Scenario 10

China was recently hit with an intense earthquake that resulted in major casualties, property damage, and displacement of thousands of citizens. One of your advisees, Jing, is a female student from a region near the epicenter, and she has had difficulty connecting with her family and friends. She is still attending lab meetings and fulfilling her academic obligations. You have checked in with her to see if she needs to take a few days off, and she replied that she is doing okay, and that it is better for her to come to work. However, you notice that she seems unusually tired and distracted. You are tempted to check in with her for a second time, but you are worried about causing her any more stress.

Questions to consider:

- As her adviser, how do you approach this situation?
- What campus resources could assist the student?

Campus resources:

- Counseling Center
- ISSS
- Chinese Student and Scholars Association (RSO)

Notes from discussion:

- All students may have difficulties outside their academic life. Adviser can set climate where he/she can express concern and offer help:
  - Restructured timeline of work with adviser/supervisor
  - Counseling, etc. support/technical support
    - Provide an introduction to a person not an office
  - ISSS/International student organizations (visa help)
- Graduate College/University Administration should send an announcement to faculty when such disasters happen and suggest resources
- DGSs in departments should know resources and set climate of concern
- Talk to other grad students/faculty who you know are close to the student
- When you approach the student explicitly say that your observations are not admonishment but actual concern for the student, that is, cast the entire interaction as inquiry in how you can help.



## Scenario 11

You are working with Isabela, a first-year graduate student from Brazil. She is one of your RAs, and you have assigned her to work on a portion of a large research project. She appears to understand the project goals and the tasks she is supposed to accomplish. However, when she turns in her work 2 weeks later, it becomes clear that she didn't understand the directions and completed the task incorrectly. This is the third time this has happened. You wonder whether there is a language barrier or whether she simply doesn't understand the material.

Questions to consider:

- How do you address this situation with the student?
- What approaches could be helpful in determining if the student understood the task when you assigned it?
- What campus resources could assist the student?

Campus resources:

- Annual review process
- Writers Workshop
  - Individual advising
  - Online ESL resources
  - List of local editors
- List of resources on ISSS web site, including:
  - Parkland College ESL courses
  - Intensive English Institute
  - Division of English as an International Language (DEIL)-offered courses
  - Urbana Adult Education
  - International Hospitality Committee
  - Practicing English independently

Notes from discussion:

- Individual instruction and advising
- Schedule informal but regular appointments rather than simply working with the student in a group setting
- Developing written and clear expectations, including a timeline, will allow student to print and process the instructions.
- Have the student reiterate instruction and provide examples
- Detail what help can be given to the student in the lab, e.g. "Holly can also assist". Also talk to Holly and let her know you have suggested Isabela contact her if she needs help.
- Start off providing positive encouragement and then discuss ways to improve.
- If this is a language issue, you can tell student that there should be some time taken to work on the language issue and point them to resources—recognizing however that international students are also having to deal with a number of other issues with respect to acclimation
- Write down important material to overcome language issue
- Ask student to reiterate instructions.



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- Ask for more intermediate updates, touch base with student more often (balance with concern about micromanaging)
- If it is a competency issue, are there other factors that could be affecting work?
- Learn to be flexible to switch student to a different topic. Be patient...let student grow.
- Match student to projects that fit their interest and background. Or give them several small projects to try out.



## Scenario 12

An international student in your department is not making good progress in the program. During Shaohui's annual review six months ago, you discussed this with the student and laid out the necessary steps for him to stay in good standing. Since the annual review, his work has not improved. Recently, a notification email from ISSS indicated that this student's eligibility documentation is going to expire in a month. In order to renew the document, the department/adviser must sign a letter indicating that the student is making progress. As such, you forward this email to Shaohui, and let him know that his lack of academic progress is jeopardizing his status as a student in good standing. Therefore, he is not likely to get the department's support to extend his documents. The student sends an email response pleading for another chance.

Questions to consider:

- How do you respond?
- What are good practices for students who are not making progress?
- What are the responsibilities of the department for extending eligibility documents?
- What campus resources would be of assistance to the student?

Campus resources:

- Counseling Center,
  - Online resources on topics such as perfectionism & procrastination
  - Group counseling
  - Individual counseling
- ISSS
- Graduate College resources on setting expectations/conflict resolution

Notes from discussion:

- Communicate with the student and identify what the situation is. If personal issues kept the student from progressing, refer the student to different resources on campus (i.e. Counseling Center). After communicating with the student, you may feel that giving the student another opportunity may be appropriate. In this case, have the student create a detailed plan on projected progress. Based on the plan, the advisor could allow for a short extension, which will build in checkpoint. If the student made progress during the short extension, then allow the student to extend for an additional period and document future progress. This option should involve frequent communication, defined expectations and being positive which could increase motivation.
- In some cases, it is not possible to extend further; therefore, ending the program maybe appropriate and necessary. If possible and, look to see if the student could graduate with a Masters to ease the severity of situation.
- To help prevent this situation, the mentoring process should help define if the unit and field is appropriate for the student early on. The student and advisor should be proactive and make necessary changes for the student progress. The





advising relationship should be a shared responsibility between the student and advisor.

- A side conversation on motivation...Advisors should help identify what type of motivation assists and pushes students. Some students may benefit from short-term goals. This may involve using conference papers as check-points for the student to reach which adds some perks of traveling.



### Scenario 13

A student in your department, Sandy, has been MIA for several months. You are the Director for Graduate Studies and his adviser has asked you for help. You have attempted to contact him several times, and received no response. You let him know that his lack of academic progress is jeopardizing his status as a student in good standing. The student reappears, and sends an email response filled with depressive language—that if he doesn't finish graduate school, he doesn't see any point to living.

Questions to consider:

- Who should you contact when you receive the email from the student?
- What are good practices for keeping in touch with students?
- What campus resources would be of assistance to the student?

Campus resources:

- Counseling Center
- Office of the Dean of Students/Emergency Dean
- ISSS, if this is an international student—for considerations re: visa status
- Campus Police

Notes from discussion:

- This scenario was considered "scary"
- First try to make personal contact with this student.
- Refer this student to the Counseling Center
- DGS in our group shared a similar story of going to an MIA student's apartment, to find them in bed in a messy apartment that they hadn't really left for months; she then escorted this student to McKinley Health Center
- We reviewed Suicide Prevention Policy, notably the Suicide Incident Report (SIR) Form
  - Not being afraid to ask about suicide, but not feeling pressured to do a clinical assessment
  - Can refer to McKinley or the Counseling Center for more thorough evaluation
    - Faculty/staff can call one of these offices for a consult
    - Can help student schedule an appointment or even accompany them to the center/appointment
  - Outside of SIR policy, counseling cannot be mandated
- Office of Dean of Students can be a good resource; can perform wellness checks
- Realization that most departments don't have a strict protocol to follow in these situations
- Good practices for keeping in touch:
  - Make sure you have a current cell phone # each semester
  - Not letting too much time go by before you check in
  - Ask the student's peers if they have seen or heard from them
  - Social networking sites can be a resource (are they posting anything odd on Facebook?)



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- Is the student really MIA? Normally someone knows something about the student
- What if you find the student but they've not been doing any work?
- Mental health issues may be involved
- Experience has been that there is a mental health issue or an exceptional story
- What do we do when it happens?
  - Not completing isn't always failure. Sometimes the best advice is to advise the student to consider a different path
- How to guide a student that is MIA:
- Is pushing through always the best solution?
- There are clear guidelines for faculty with students with mental health situations
- Main issue is the program progress
- How should the advisor respond?
- Is the student trying to pressure the professor into getting a degree?
- Perhaps advise the student on opportunities if they do not get their degree
- Also should look at what's going on in the student's life... Baby? Death? Maturity?



## Scenario 14

At the start of the semester you have a new international advisee, Yoon-Ho. Typically, the advisees come from foreign universities where choice in class selection and various academic and student services such as academic advising are not part the university system. During the initial appointments with you, the student does not ask many questions or make good use of the time. However, you feel certain that the student could use your advice.

Questions to consider:

- How do you approach the new advisee and inform them of the opportunities available and the purpose of an academic adviser and advising session?
- What do you see as the student's responsibilities in the advising relationship?
- In the future, how can you make the purpose of academic advising clear and set expectations for the student's role in advising?

Campus resources:

- Graduate College
  - Graduate College online resources for mentors at [grad.illinois.edu/mentoring-information](http://grad.illinois.edu/mentoring-information)
  - Graduate College online resources on advising [grad.illinois.edu/advising](http://grad.illinois.edu/advising)
  - Taking Charge workshop for students on optimizing their advising relationship
  - Graduate Student Resource Fair (held each September)
- ISSS
- Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)
- Writers Workshop
- Counseling Center

Notes from discussion:

- For this scenario much of the discussion revolved around setting expectations from the beginning. We identified that at times that some international students do not feel that they should question their advisor.
- To help guide the student, the first encounter should identify explain the expectations for the students and their role as an advisee.
- It was suggested the each advisor has a "Mentoring Checklist" which includes the different topics that should be discussed in the first meeting, to ensure that each student is receiving the same information. The "Mentoring Checklist" should include the list of workshops and services for the student. It was suggested that the Graduate College would create the "Mentoring Checklist."
- To help continue the support for the student and facilitate discussion on progress the student should write a summary of research that was completed on a weekly basis, at least in the beginning of the student's academic career.



## Scenario 15

You are advising a first year graduate student Melissa who has recently graduated from a small Historically Black College or University (HBCU) institution where the student was accustomed to small classes and individualized attention. Melissa visits you weekly during your office hours and wants to discuss her studies in great detail. You enjoy the conversations and think she has interesting points; however, you don't have the ability to spend so much time each week with the student.

Questions to consider:

- How do you address this topic with the student?
- What assumptions might the student be making about the advising relationship based on her previous experience?
- In the future, how can you avoid a similar situation with a future student?

Campus resources:

- Graduate College resources on setting expectations/conflict resolution
- Graduate College Educational Equity Programs (EEP)
- Office of Minority Student Affairs
- Mentoring resources available for students & faculty on the Graduate College web site
- Graduate College Workshops
  - Dissertation Writing Workshop
  - Taking Charge Workshops

Notes from discussion:

- Identify students' needs.
- Provide research advice, invite written comments from student
- Refer to other resources for community, support, advice (senior grad students, interest groups)
- Offer to meet for maybe ½ hour every 2 weeks so student prioritizes topics
- Create supplementary mentoring system for ethnic minority students, similar to resource for international students
- Give student something specific to do and look for deliverables
- Set aside certain amount of time for student and communicate that to student; say you won't be able to discuss everything so student needs to prioritize
- Hook up student with other grad student(s) as she seems to be looking for a sense of community
- Be very explicit with students about your lifestyle (academic, etc.). Lay out the rules about time.
- Need to schedule meetings (on calendar). Define the conditions under which these meeting will take place.
- Peers are also important in helping other students



- A decision early on needs to be made by the mentor as to whether or not more time can be devoted—with the intention of weaning the student to become more independent
- Set clear agendas for students.
- Have an explicit conversation with students asking “how things are going”, “what has been your experience working with faculty during undergrad”. By doing so, a conversation about her expectations can take place.
- Identify the mutual responsibilities. What are yours as a mentor? What are hers as a student? What will be discussed at each meeting (explicit agendas). What kinds of things should be produced by the student in preparation for the next meeting.
- Handbook with outlines student expectations and goals.



## Scenario 16

One of your advisees, Juliana, seems hesitant to get involved in student social activities in the department/research group. When you approach her about this, she is not sure if she is liked and felt like the dynamics in the group were uncomfortable for her. She is the only student in the group from an underrepresented minority and says she finds it hard to connect with the group.

Questions to consider:

- How do you approach this situation?
- What could you do to help the student?
- What campus resources could be of assistance to this student?

Campus resources:

- Graduate College Educational Equity Programs (EEP)
- Office of Minority Student Affairs
- Cultural houses

Notes from discussion:

- Unclear if student explicitly stated that her discomfort was due to cultural differences, so first step might be to ask questions to clarify the reasons for her distress. Is she just shy?
- Could implement a buddy system for new students
- Plan departmental social events
- What role is student playing?
  - Ask questions and don't make assumptions about why they're uncomfortable?
  - Are there things the student could articulate that would be helpful?
- Professor should reinforce the importance and value of student being there
- Develop professional atmosphere of "we're in this together" even though not everyone in a dept/lab/group has to be best friends
- Conveying importance of making social ties to people who are different from you when you are in academic (and other) settings.
  - This a skill set that can be developed
  - Resources: Counseling Center, Leadership Center, student organizations
- Mentor should identify styles and strengths of student and match students in group for peer to peer interactions
- Ask student about what they would be more comfortable doing



## SELECTED CAMPUS RESOURCES

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### Academic Human Resources

[www.ahr.illinois.edu](http://www.ahr.illinois.edu)

### Career Services Network

[www.careerservices.illinois.edu](http://www.careerservices.illinois.edu)

The Career Services Network includes offices from across campus that work with students on their career development and job search. This page is a good place to refer students who are interested in identifying which career services offices to contact.

### Campus Teaching Effectiveness Network (CTEN)

<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/ro/www/CollegeTeachingEffectivenessNetwork>

CTEN is a registered student organization that plans workshops for graduate students on teaching effectiveness and teaching careers.

### Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)

[www.cte.illinois.edu](http://www.cte.illinois.edu)

The Center for Teaching Excellence provides resources and workshops for faculty, departments and graduate students at Illinois. They also have certificate programs for graduate teaching assistants.

### Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)

[www.cic.net](http://www.cic.net)

The CIC is a consortium of the Big Ten universities and the University of Chicago which has numerous programs to support graduate education. These include:

- Traveling Scholar Program, [www.grad.illinois.edu/current/CIC.htm](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/current/CIC.htm)
- Foreign Language Enhancement Program, [www.cic.net/Home/Projects/SharedCourses/FLEP/Introduction.aspx](http://www.cic.net/Home/Projects/SharedCourses/FLEP/Introduction.aspx)
- Course Share, [www.cic.net/Home/Projects/SharedCourses/CourseShare/Introduction.aspx](http://www.cic.net/Home/Projects/SharedCourses/CourseShare/Introduction.aspx)
- CIC Doctoral Directory, [www.cic.net/Home/Students/DoctoralDirectory/Introduction.aspx](http://www.cic.net/Home/Students/DoctoralDirectory/Introduction.aspx)

### Counseling Center

[www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu](http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu)

The Counseling Center offers a number of services to students, including group therapy, individual therapy, referral services and workshops and presentations. The Counseling Center will also provide consultation to faculty or staff with mental health concerns about students.

For more information about helping distressed and distressing students, including the Suicide Prevention Program and the Threat Response Protocol, see:

[http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/?page\\_id=531](http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/?page_id=531)





## English as a Second Language Courses

[www.linguistics.illinois.edu/students/esl](http://www.linguistics.illinois.edu/students/esl)

ESL courses are offered through the Department of Linguistics.

## Graduate College

[www.grad.illinois.edu](http://www.grad.illinois.edu)

The Graduate College offers a number of resources to students, faculty and staff, including:

- Academic calendars: [www.grad.illinois.edu/general/calendar/current](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/general/calendar/current)
- Assistantship Clearinghouse, [www.grad.illinois.edu/clearinghouse](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/clearinghouse)
- Career Services Office, [www.grad.illinois.edu/careerservices](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/careerservices)
- Summer Research Opportunities Program and Summer Pre-Doctoral Institute, [www.grad.illinois.edu/summer-institutes-research](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/summer-institutes-research)
- Fellowship Office, [www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowships](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/fellowships)
- Graduate Student Academic Services, [www.grad.illinois.edu/petitions](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/petitions)
- GradLinks weekly newsletter, [www.grad.illinois.edu/pubs/gradlinks](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/pubs/gradlinks)
- Thesis Office, [www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/thesis)
- Online Toolkit for Graduate Mentors & Advisers, including information about annual review programs, [www.grad.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/mentor-toolkit](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/mentor-toolkit)
- Taking Charge workshops for students to learn about project management strategies for graduate school and developing a productive relationship with advisers
- Advising resources for students, [www.grad.illinois.edu/advising](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/advising)
- Dissertation Writing Workshop
- CareerSTART, [www.grad.illinois.edu/careerstart](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/careerstart)

## Intensive English Institute (IEI)

[www.iei.illinois.edu](http://www.iei.illinois.edu)

The IEI offers intensive English courses during the fall, spring and summer.

## International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS)

[www.iss.illinois.edu](http://www.iss.illinois.edu)

The International Student and Scholar Service Office offers a number of services to both international students and scholars of the University. To help inform and guide students and scholars it offers one-on-one advising appointments, Welcome Orientations, workshops, etc. ISSS works collaboratively with other campus units to create workshops that are specific to the international student population. To inform the staff and faculty who work with international students, ISSS provides various workshops. These workshops are geared to help staff and faculty better understand basic visa regulation, needs for students, and resources.

## McKinley Health Center

[www.mckinley.illinois.edu](http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu)

McKinley Health Center provides students with a range of services including medical clinics, women's health, mental health, travel and immunizations, a pharmacy and an in-house laboratory.



**Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Relations**

[studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/oir.html](http://studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity/oir.html)

Find information about campus cultural centers and diversity education programs on OIR's website.

**Office of Minority Student Affairs**

[www.omsa.illinois.edu](http://www.omsa.illinois.edu)

**Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research (OVCR)**

[www.research.illinois.edu](http://www.research.illinois.edu)

Policies on academic integrity, human subjects research, animal subjects research, and conflicts of interest.

**Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)**

[union.illinois.edu/involvement/rso/a-z\\_list.aspx](http://union.illinois.edu/involvement/rso/a-z_list.aspx)

Locate student organizations and contacts by category.

**Teaching Academies**

[www.teachingandlearning.illinois.edu/directory.html](http://www.teachingandlearning.illinois.edu/directory.html)

**Writers Workshop**

[www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop](http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop)

The Writers Workshop provides writing consultations for students and faculty. The Writers Workshop's website also includes writing resources for students and teachers.

*Links are current as of January 2010.*

