

Mentoring

Directory

- [On Being a Mentor](#) [Katie Hirschboek--University of Arizona and Pamela Moss--University of Victoria]
 - Now Available: Moss, Pamela, Karen De Bres, Altha Cravey, Jennifer Hyndman, Katie Hirschboek, and Michele Masucci (1999) Mentoring as Feminist Praxis: Strategies for Ourselves and Others, [Journal of Geography in Higher Education](#), 23(3), 413-427.
 - MEMO: There are now four SWIG groups and another one in the process of forming. You can see our web page <http://www.unc.edu/depts/geog/swig/index.html> for more information on these groups (including some links) or on starting your own SWIG group. We've just set up a new listserv designed to keep the different groups in touch with each other, called swig-global. To subscribe to this list, use the web-based list functions at unc-ch <http://listserv.unc.edu/>. Among other things, this list will help us coordinate a SWIG get-together at Pittsburgh! Note our SWIG web address is slightly different from the one that has been posted before. The address for updated t-shirt info is a little different too: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/geog/swig/swigt.html> . We have plenty of t-shirts still for sale, so check that page out! [Becky Dobbs, UNC-CH SWIG
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On being a Mentor ...

[Katie Hirschboek](#) [University of Arizona] and [Pamela Moss](#) [University of Victoria]

Introduction and Notes on Mentoring by Pamela Moss

We had a great session [at the Boston Meetings of the AAG] on thoughts about being a mentor within the academy.

Some of the ideas emanating from the session are listed below. Most of the discussion focused on reflections of our own experiences. Katie Hirschboek prepared a set of notes highlighting things for faculty to think about during different parts of their careers. These notes are not meant only for faculty; there are many useful insights and strategies for non-faculty as well.

I think that this is one of those things that you print out and then look at when you are thinking about advice! I hope you find the comments useful!

Notes on Mentoring ...

Mentoring is part of acting on feminist politics. Mentoring is often an 'in the moment' act: you seek advice when there is a problem and you give advice when someone asks. There may or may not be an overall strategy for obtaining advice on career development. Make the transition from graduate student to faculty member smooth by: recognizing styles are

different being flexible mentoring in groups drawing on experience of peers thinking about various career paths and professional development strategies.

Piece together your own set of mentors and mentoring strategies. Find someone with whom you 'click'. This may take precedence over sex, gender, or subject area. Use different mentors for different things. Look at *Lifting a Ton of Feathers* by Paula Caplan. Recognize that some female graduate students do not want to be identified with young female faculty because when they see what young female faculty go through, they don't want to be part of the academy.

Formalizing mentor assignments and mentoring within the university can be both positive and negative -- it may assist you through the tenure process or it may be used against you during the process. Seek advice from a variety of mentors.

Considering age in the process of mentoring is important. (More than half of the people attending the session considered themselves to be 'older' students when they went through graduate school.) Issues as for example being threatening (as in being too smart) or being focused (as in knowing what you want to do) become problematic issues for women older than the 'fresh-out-of-university' students and can result in being ostracized.

How to Mentor by Katie Hirschboeck

In order to benefit most fully from the advice of a mentor or mentors, it is important that you "know yourself" well. Only you can discern if the counsel of another "fits" with who you are. Without being grounded in the self-knowledge of your own strengths, weaknesses, gifts, and talents, you may find yourself torn in different directions when under the influence of multiple mentors, or even the influence of a single trusted mentor. In our careers we get so busy that it is hard to take time for ourselves to think about who we are, where we are going, and why. Discernment begins inside ourselves and often this is where we most critically need to look when evaluating the advice from the mentoring process.

How does one self mentor? One way might be making the commitment to take time for yourself regularly so that you can think deeply (in whatever way works for you -- walking, exercising, meditating, etc.). Another way might be by keeping a journal -- it allows you to explore the pros and cons of mentoring advice and forces you to take the time to think things through in writing. It can also record your evolution of thinking about an issue, remind you where you've been, and can encourage you with a record of your changes and growth. Of course most of us do this kind of "self-mentoring" in one form or another all the time to keep our lives together. I'm suggesting that it also can be focused and channeled when needed, in order to enhance the mentoring process.

Notes on Mentoring ...

- **Pre-Tenure Years**
 - **Formal:**
 - appointed mentor in dept
 - mentoring committee in dept
 - extra-dept mentoring/support group
 - administration-sponsored group
 - **Informal:**
 - former advisor(s)
 - peers/friends at other campuses
 - colleague in dept

- colleagues in other depts on campus
- specialty group mentoring connections
- support/networking group
- Associate & Beyond
 - formal structures may disappear
 - extra-dept mentoring and networking
 - specialty group mentoring connections
 - physical geographers & human geographers need to mentor each other
- Becoming a Mentor
 - just "being there" as role model is important
 - mentoring needs vary from person to person
 - talk about mentoring: reality vs. expectations
 - provide both informal & formal mentoring settings
 - socialize and promote grads in the larger academic community
 - prepare grads for what to expect beyond graduation
- Cautions & Suggestions
 - trust essential
 - don't become too "identified" with your mentor
 - understand or define friend/mentor boundaries
 - seek broad-based support
 - obtain multiple insights
- Self-Mentoring

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