

## **Gaylord-Harden Mentoring Statement**

I believe that the importance of teaching extends beyond the classroom, and I am also actively engaged in mentoring at the undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and graduate student levels, as well as the junior faculty level. Mentoring is one of the most enjoyable aspects of my professional career. My mentoring interactions with students and colleagues are grounded in the idea that the quality of mentoring depends on the quality of the relationship and these relationships develop over an extended time. As such, I focus on building relationships with student and faculty mentees that draw them into the mentoring process as collaborators. Relationship building is intentional, requires my accessibility, and occurs through regular, uninterrupted time with each mentee.

One goal of my mentoring relationships is to assist mentees with defining and achieving goals that advance their professional careers and enhance their personal lives. Through active and reflective listening, I provide individualized attention to the needs of each mentee and identify each mentee's unique talents, insights, challenges, and life circumstances. I learn about each mentee's professional goals, and we work together to develop a plan for achieving these goals. Often, these plans are semester-based and include short-term, attainable, measurable objectives and tasks that allow mentees to actively track the progress towards their overall goals. I work to help them build confidence in their work and skills and validate their ability to be successful. We discuss time management strategies and potential barriers to working on objectives. I also emphasize to them that their work to meet their objectives and overall goals should not come at the expense of their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. We revisit goals regularly to monitor not only their progress, but also their well-being.

A second goal of my mentoring relationships is specific to my research mentees. I aim to provide graduate mentees with the skills and support they need to build a research program and become independent investigators, while providing undergraduate and post-baccalaureate mentees with the skills and support they need for graduate training. I utilize a scaffolding model in which mentees receive more intense support as they are developing new skills and expertise. I feel that it is my responsibility to both teach the research skills that are necessary to be a successful scientist and ensure that mentees develop expertise in the content area of their choosing. As their skills become more developed and their knowledge more solidified, I gradually reduce support and increase autonomy. I provide them with multiple opportunities to develop research ideas, lead aspects of research projects, and train and supervise more junior research assistants. To monitor progress, I meet individually with my research mentees on a regular basis to discuss their developing skills and burgeoning knowledge.

In addition to skills development and content expertise, I strive to encourage my research mentees to see themselves as agents of change through their professional work, and I try to give them the tools and experiences to address social justice issues facing youth and families in economically disadvantaged communities. My research mentees are trained on collaborative, community-based participatory research approaches that emphasize the importance of giving voice to members of the community. At research team meetings, we engage in student-led

discussions to increase understanding of how the disproportionality of stressors in urban communities is linked to economic, racial, and structural inequalities in our society. Students are also exposed to researchers and research findings from other disciplines (e.g., social work, sociology, criminal justice) to gain a more holistic view of community violence and related urban stressors. These experiences ensure that students develop research questions that reflect the complexity of social justice issues. My hope is to provide mentees with mentoring experiences that will inspire them to engage with youth, families, and communities not as “experts,” but as “collaborators,” and not seeking to “help,” but seeking to “empower.”

Finally, I engage in academic acculturation with my mentees, particularly mentees of color. Academic acculturation refers to the idea that, in addition to being capable or talented, new graduate students must also be socialized into the profession (Davis, 2008; Hill, Bahnuik, & Dobos, 1989) through various networks and resources. I also extend this acculturation process to junior faculty members, with the understanding that new faculty members will need to be socialized into their institution and into academia. Formal channels may not always provide all the necessary information regarding unwritten conventions that graduate students and new faculty members need to thrive in the profession and in academia. As such, I support and assist mentees in acclimating to a new professional environment by providing formal and informal information related to values, expected behaviors, and social knowledge of their new environment. Also central to this acculturation process is conveying the message that I will not be their only mentor. Instead, I encourage mentees to advance professionally by developing a network of different types of mentors (or what I call their “dream team” of mentors), and we work together to create these professional connections.

I view and treat my research mentees as collaborators who are actively involved in all stages of the research process. I publish extensively with my graduate, undergraduate, and postbaccalaureate research mentees, with a number of these publications being led by the mentee. Further, I have supervised graduate, undergraduate, and post-baccalaureate students on numerous presentations at research conferences. A number of my students have won university awards and received awards and honors from national research organizations.

I have served as a faculty research mentor for undergraduate students in the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. I have also served as a faculty mentor for a university-level freshman mentoring program that paired incoming freshmen women of color with a woman faculty member to support the mentees’ academic success, well-being, and identity development, and a university-level freshman mentoring program that pairs small groups of incoming Black freshmen with a faculty mentor to provide academic advising, emotional support, and empowerment. I am the Co-Director of the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) Undergraduate Scholars Program. The program, funded by the W.T. Grant Foundation, selects and pairs promising undergraduate students from underrepresented groups who are interested in studying adolescent development with junior mentors (graduate students from underrepresented groups) and senior mentors (senior faculty members). Mentors assist mentees in gaining the skills and knowledge to apply to graduate school in psychology by engaging in scheduled activities during the Biennial Meeting of SRA and maintaining

connections to mentees after the conference. At the postdoctoral and junior faculty level, Dr. Gaylord-Harden has served as a mentor for a university-level Mentoring Program for Underrepresented Minority Faculty and a university-level Mentoring Program for Women Junior Faculty. She developed and chairs the Council on Contemporary Families (CCF) Scholars Early Career Program. The CCF Scholars Early Career Program offers a unique professional development and mentorship opportunity to early career scholars conducting research on American families.

In sum, my teaching and mentoring philosophies not only represent my beliefs but guide my actions both inside and outside of the classroom. My desire as a teacher and mentor is to create a lasting impact in the lives of my students that supports their success in achieving their goals. I want them to gain knowledge of the basic principles of psychology, and I want them to gain the skills to apply the knowledge into their personal and academic endeavors. I hope to serve as a facilitator of students' growth, self-discovery, and mastery of intellectual pursuits that will serve as catalysts to their contributions to a more positive society.

#### References

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