

Building a Strong Mentoring Culture at the University of Mississippi



Image Credit: UK GCS Mentor Programme

Effective mentoring is critical for a healthy University. Faculty provide mentoring for graduate students when they conduct research, discuss career goals, model effective teaching, and assist graduate students in solving vocational problems. Faculty mentor other faculty, postdocs, and undergraduate students. Graduate students mentor undergraduate students. Almost everyone who has found success in their professional lives can recall the impact of a mentor, and point – often dramatically – to how that mentor encouraged them to overcome challenges, to persist in the face of adversity, and to find deeper meaning from the work in their field.

But often mentors are given little guidance in building effective mentoring practices. When people in mentoring roles are able to devote time to thinking about their mentoring practices, they may say that they “do what comes naturally” or try to model the behaviors of mentors who made an impact on their careers.

Effective mentoring is too important to the achievement of our mission to be left to chance. By learning more about the best practices of mentoring, and sharing experiences and goals, we can articulate better outcomes for the mentoring of graduate students.

The Graduate School, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement, and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are collaborating to provide two workshops this spring to start a longer term conversation on effective mentoring. These workshops will focus on topics such as:

- how to support effective mentoring practices
- how to avoid mentoring pitfalls
- how the unique needs of mentees can be identified and addressed
- how to consider the varied and specific perspectives of mentors and of mentees
- the importance of supporting the mental health and work/life balance of mentees
- the value of effective mentorship
- how to improve as a mentor
- what to expect and to request as a mentee.

These workshops will be of particular interest to current and future faculty members, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students. Each workshop will be repeated—so we suggest that you plan to attend one of each—and takeaway lunches will be available for those who RSVP.

Workshop 1: A Panel Discussion on Mentoring Experiences

21 March 2022, 12:00 to 12:50 p.m., Student Union 124 [RSVP link](#)

22 March 2022, 12:00 to 12:50 p.m., Student Union 124 [RSVP link](#)

What are effective mentoring practices? How do we support effective mentors, and how do we share their knowledge and experiences? This panel will address their experiences with mentoring at the University of Mississippi.

- Dr. Cristiane Surbeck, Chair and Professor of Civil Engineering
- Dr. Leigh Anne Duck, Associate Professor of English
- Dr. John Bentley, Professor of Pharmacy Administration
- Dr. Norris “EJ” Edney III, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion
- Kritika Gupta, Ph.D. Student in Nutrition and Hospitality Management
- Dr. Annette Kluck, Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Leadership & Counselor Education, Moderator

Workshop 2: Case Studies and Vignettes of Mentoring Challenges

28 March 2022, 12:00 to 12:50 p.m., Student Union 321 [RSVP link](#)

29 March 2022 12:00 to 12:50 p.m., Student Union 321 [RSVP link](#)

By examining realistic scenarios, difficulties in mentoring and steps needed for effective mentoring can be addressed. In this session, hosts will present three mentoring vignettes. Participants will work in groups to discuss responses to the mentoring challenges and identify best practices.

Dr. Norris “EJ” Edney III, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, Moderator.

Online Courses on Effective Mentoring Provided by the University of Minnesota

Want to know more about effective mentoring? Check out the online mentoring courses created and hosted by the University of Minnesota at <https://ctsi.umn.edu/training/mentors/mentor-training>:

- “Optimizing the Practice of Mentoring 101: For Research Mentors of Graduate Students, Fellows, and Early-Career Faculty”
- “Optimizing the Practice of Mentoring 102: For Research Mentors of Undergraduate Students”
- “Enhancing Motivation Using the CARES Mentoring Model”.

Register as an “External user” and Select Section 001 “Any User”.

Each course is self-paced and will require less than two hours of time for most to complete. Participants who complete a course may save the completion certificate to be included in your annual review or report. Completed course certificates can also be used as evidence of the value you place on effective mentoring in grant applications.

We will build upon the content of the online U Minnesota courses during our University of Mississippi Mentoring Workshops.

Note that a website regarding mentoring at University of Mississippi is being developed and updated at: <https://gradschool.olemiss.edu/mentoring>

Please direct questions or accommodation requests to cetl@olemiss.edu



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