Mentoring in the First Two years

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Mathematics Faculty Tea
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1. Help incoming graduate students adjust to the graduate program
2. Facilitate peer mentoring
3. Identify and emphasize short and intermediate goals for students.
4. Provide mentorship (at least) until an advisor (e.g. PhD supervisory committee chair) is secured.
5. You have no role in the academic evaluation of your mentee.
Approaches for Implementation of Mentoring Goals

- Be available for questions about integrating into the life of the department from the time you learn the name and contact information of your mentee; invite them to meet you soon after they arrive in Gainesville if they are not established residents.
- Set a pattern of regular meetings with your mentee(s), if mutually agreeable.
Approaches for Implementation of Mentoring Goals

- Discuss the student’s mathematical, teaching and career interests.
- Alert your mentees to opportunities available in our department and our university that are related to their interests.
- Share personal and anecdotal experiences.
Opportunities for those with multiple mentees/advisees

- Some mentors will have a first year mentee, a second year mentee and may be chair of one or more doctoral committees. Invite your students to gather together (once or twice a semester), and allow them to ask questions and to interact with each other.
Opportunities for the First Year

- Many students initially find the level of sophistication desired in proofs and the amount of work expected outside of class increases dramatically from undergraduate classes to graduate classes. Encourage them to talk about mathematics and homework problems with their fellow students and write up their own work.

- The first year for most is focused on first year course work and related First Year Exams. Alert them to the Graduate Mathematics Association (GMA) exam archive. Ask about holiday plans and possible interaction with January exams scheduled just prior to classes in January and early the first week of classes.
Opportunities for the First Year

- Let your mentee know you are not part of the evaluation process which includes short spring interviews reviewing where the student is in the program, and getting input about their plans for the next year. The spring interview is part of the academic evaluation process along with their transcript, and their exam results. They receive an annual letter of evaluation late in the spring.

- After passing at least two First Year Exams, students should be encouraged to start attending one or more seminars.
Opportunities for the First Year

- Summer is a time when students have a chance for more responsibility in teaching, and an opportunity to read with a professor either solely or in a group. Earlier requests are more likely to meet with success. Mentors are encouraged to give students guidance in choosing faculty for reading courses.
- Some students go home during the summer.
- Fellowship students are expected to take 8 credits in the summer.
Opportunities for the Second Year

- Second Year students are expected to write a self-assessment or an Individual Development Plan and turn it in a week before fall classes start.

- After passing at least two First Year Exams, mentors are encouraged to provide gentle guidance as students attempt to choose an area of concentration, a corresponding PhD written exam, and an advisor.

- Your mentee may be in the MS program or may decide that a PhD in mathematics is no longer a goal. Provide support as they focus on building skills and a resume for a career in business or industry or transition to another discipline.
Transition

- While mentors need not completely sever their relationship with mentees, they should facilitate the transition of primary mentorship responsibilities to the student’s advisor once the student has chosen one. Mentors should be especially careful not to undermine the advisor/student relationship in its early stages.