

Mentor Pre-First-Meeting Assessment, Adapted¹ for Physics Department Mentoring Forum, May 2009

Develop Your Own Vision of Good Mentoring:

- Reflecting on your “days” as a graduate student, consider the following questions:
 - What kind of mentoring did I receive?
 - How did it compare to the mentoring received by students who were different from me in race, gender, age, ability, or family background?
 - What did I find helpful and unhelpful about the mentoring I received?
 - How well would the mentoring I received apply to the graduate student population today?
 - How well did my mentors help me progress developmentally through my graduate program?
 - How do the people and questions in my field present challenges that differ from when I was in graduate school?
 - How well did my mentors prepare me for my career?
 - What kinds of mentoring did I not receive that would have been helpful for me?
- Reflect on the “basics of good mentoring”:
 - To what degree do I feel that the following qualities are “strengths” of mine?:
 - Engaging students in ongoing conversations
 - Demystifying graduate school for students (being aware of program requirements and leading students through the processes, both departmental and university-wide, required to obtain a degree)
 - Providing constructive and supportive feedback
 - Providing encouragement
 - Listening well
 - Providing stability and flexibility
 - Fostering networks and multiple mentors
 - Looking out for students’ interests
 - Treating students with respect
 - Providing a “personal touch”
 - Acting with honesty, patience, and trustworthiness
- Consider what you will offer a mentee by completing the “Mentor Expectations” Worksheet from the Graduate School Resource (Worksheet 2, page 41)

¹ From the CWD Guide for Administrators, the CWD Handbook for Mentees, and the Graduate School Faculty Mentoring Resource

Questions that a potential mentee might have, and topics that you might bring up when you and your mentee get to know one another:

- Why did you choose to pursue Physics as a career, and why specifically in the academy? What strengths do you feel you have that have positively contributed to your professional development?
- What other jobs have you held? What skills did you develop in these jobs, and what is the relationship between these skills and those you use in your current position?
- What skills did you need to learn specifically for your current position, and how did you acquire those skills?
- What other jobs could you do with your skill-set?
- What do you like most about your job? What would you change about your job?
- What interpersonal skills do you find most important at work, and why?
- What attitudes and values are important to you, and how are these reflected in your work?
- What are obstacles or barriers that you had to overcome? If you have faced discrimination, how did you overcome it?
- How has your family life/personal life affected your career? How have you balanced personal relationships, family, and a career?
- Do you prefer to work collaboratively or independently?
- What do you perceive as your future?
- Do you have insights into the basic “political” realities and interpersonal conflicts which are common in the professional or academic setting?
- Did you ever feel like quitting school, and what changed your mind?