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**WISEST INITIATIVES / *POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM***

## **The Post-doc Institute**

**Mentors, networking,  
developing sponsors,  
and collaborations**

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# Mentors and Networking

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# Main Message

- Building a network of mentors, research acquaintances, sponsors, and collaborators is *essential*:
  - It is both: *what* you know and *whom* you know
  - Your “*competition*” does it
  - You are *expected* (by your department and by the community) to do it
  - It *enriches* your life in general and the lives of your networking partners
  - Must include people *outside* your department and university
  - May ultimately be your *key to success*

# Case Studies

- Case 1 (Teaching)
  - How many different courses should I be teaching before tenure?
- Case 2 (Research)
  - What is the appropriate venue to submit this work/proposal to?
- Case 3 (Service)
  - How can I serve on a prestigious conference program committee?
- Case 4 (Recognition)
  - What awards are there I can apply to? How can I apply to this award?
- Case 5 (Performance review)
  - Who should write my reference letters?
- Case 6 (Overall performance and motivation)
  - Am I on schedule? What is my next big goal? How am I doing?

# Mentor

a person who has achieved career success and counsels and guides another for the purpose of helping him or her achieve like success

# Mentor Roles

- Teacher
- Guide
- Counselor
- Motivator
- Sponsor
- Coach
- Advisor
- Role model
- Referral agent
- Door opener

# Teacher

- share experiences as a seasoned professional
- share the wisdom of past mistakes

# Guide

- helps navigate through the inner workings of the organization, i.e., "behind the scenes" dynamics, or office politics, that are not always apparent, but are crucial to know
- decipher the "unwritten office rules", i.e., the "kernels of knowledge" that one only acquires over a period of time

# Counselor

- think through problems, develop problem-solving skills

# Motivator

- motivate to complete a difficult assignment, or to pursue an ambitious goal
- provide positive feedback

# Sponsor

- creates opportunities that may not otherwise be made available
- provide as much exposure as possible, with a minimum of risk

# Coach

- positive and negative feedback as the situation demands, critical to professional growth

# Advisor

- develop professional interests and set realistic career goals
- goals: specific, time-framed, results-oriented, relevant, reachable, and flexible

# Role model

- a living example of the values, ethics, and high standards of professionalism

# Referral Agent

- action plan: outlines knowledge, skills, abilities needed to reach career goals
- enable according to plan

# Door Opener

- introduce to contacts to help build network structure
- direct to resources that may be helpful

# Mentor Characteristics

- Supportive
- Patient
- Respected
- People oriented
- Good motivator
- Effective teacher
- Secure in position
- An achiever
- Able to provide visibility
- Accepts others

# An Achiever

- a professional achiever, one who sets lofty career goals, continually evaluates these goals, and strives to reach them.
- one who takes on more responsibilities than is required, volunteers for more activities, and tends to climb the proverbial career ladder at a quick pace.
- inspires with this same drive for achievement, to set, evaluate, and reach career goals.

# To Receive Effective Mentoring

- both mutually agree to the relationship
- a personal fit: congruent values
- many mentors
- natural evolution of relationship

# Networking

- making connections with others in order to build a sort of "database" of people with whom you can exchange information for various purposes
- two-way street
- a PhD student at a research conference has in common with a businessman on a golf course: the opportunity for an informal chat with colleagues
- engaging in exchange of ideas can enrich your own research and reveal opportunities in related fields

# Who?

- Research supervisors: Ph.D. and post-doctoral adviser
- Assigned senior faculty mentors within the department
- In the field, outside the institution

# Who?

## **your core community of scholars**

- Who are the people working in your research subfield?
- Who are the top 30 people in your research subfield internationally (“center of influence” for their area of technical expertise)
- What other projects have been funded in your field of research or related areas?

# Who?

## **multi- and cross-disciplinary research is becoming the norm**

- Whose research in different disciplines impacts on your own?
- Where exactly are the borders of your field today? Where will they be tomorrow?
- Talk to people outside your field!