

I hope that Winter Quarter is off to a great, if chilly, start. And I hope that your mentoring experience is helping to make that true for you! *Research shows that mentoring helps you by providing you with a spokesperson and advocate.* Having someone higher up in the power structure and better connected in the organization's network who can speak knowledgeably about you and your work gives you a real boost. As always, the goal of our **monthly e-newsletters** are to provide information on resources, upcoming events, mentoring tips and other items of interest designed to help you be more effective.

***Be sure to squeeze in a meeting with your Mentor before the Christmas Break.** December is one of the busiest months, with the start of the quarter and holiday break. It can be tempting to skip a meeting with everything else that you have going on! So make this month a lunch meeting - meet at the Ropp Center, grab a table by the fireplace and some hot soup with your meal. It won't take much time and it will be a great way to catch up and let your Mentor know what's going on in your world. Given that the break can be a good time for you to finish a paper or work on a grant, you don't want to miss a chance to solicit some input. Remember - *mentoring can't benefit you if you don't meet.* Take the initiative, email or phone your Mentor and set up a lunch meeting before the break!

***Do a mid-year check!** With the end of the calendar year approaching, it is a good time for you to stop, take stock and make some mid-year adjustments. Take some time to review with your Mentor your top 2 - 3 goals in teaching, research (grants, publications, graduate students), and service for this year. How are things going? Are you where you thought they would be? Did something derail your progress? If so, how can you get on track? Were there roadblocks that weren't anticipated? What can you do to work around those and move on? Do you need to re-tool or re-focus in one or more areas? In any case, just taking time to stop and talk about these things with your Mentor can be really helpful!

***Volunteer as a Reviewer.** One of the best ways to improve your own grant-writing and grant-getting skills is to serve as a reviewer. Federal agencies, such as NSF, actively encourage faculty to participate in this process. Faculty can email the program officer in the division in which they would like to submit/receive a grant and volunteer to serve as a reviewer. I know of number of faculty here who have been successful in being appointed to review panels using this process. The opportunity to see first-hand how the process works, to review multiple proposals from across the country (some of which are well-written and others not so much), to listen to the opinions and ideas of other, more experience reviewers, all provide great learning opportunities that can inform your own grant writing. If you haven't served in this capacity, give it a try.

***Catch some Holiday Events, on- and off-campus!** First on the list would be the **COES Christmas Party on Friday, Dec. 16 from 2:30 - 4:00 p.m. in the Biomed Rotunda.** Many programs also have parties where faculty can get to know one another, bring family members, and enjoy the holidays. There will be a presentation of **Handel's Messiah by the Louisiana Tech Choirs on Tuesday, Dec. 13 at 7:30 p.m.** (tickets are required - contact the SPA Office in Room 204 of Howard Auditorium). The **Christmas Festival of Lights in Natchitoches, Louisiana,** is not to be missed, on display through January 6 downtown along the Cane River, with carriage rides and stores/restaurants open late.

Mentoring Tip for December:

*Everyone these days is trying to increase productivity and reduce costs. In academia, busy faculty are no less interested in getting more done in less time. I ran across an interesting article on how to increase productivity of groups, based on ***The Hidden Power of Social Networks: Understanding How Work Really Gets Done in Organizations*** by Rob Cross and Andrew Parker. They studied over 60 organizational networks and concluded that *energy* was a key factor in understanding which groups and people are productive and effective at work and why. They identified two groups of workers, dubbed "Energizers" and "De-Energizers", that had the most influence. Energizers are not only more productive workers themselves, but they also increase the productivity, creativity, motivation and engagement of *everyone who works with them*. Just having an Energizer in the room at a meeting, for example, increases the likelihood that ideas will be heard/acted upon and that positive results will follow! De-Energizers, on the other hand, undermine productivity, big time. Cross and Parker's research suggests that a De-Energizer has a *seven-fold negative influence* on the group over the positive influence of an Energizer. De-Energizers see the problems, but no solutions. They are often inflexible, focus primarily on themselves and their issues, and aren't good at following through on commitments. People will go to great lengths to avoid a De-Energizer. Consequently, their ability to impede productivity is far-reaching. To learn more, check out these articles: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gretchen-rubin/energy-at-work_b_1033541.html and <http://www.thomrainer.com/2011/07/energizers-and-de-energizers.php>

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