



# **Creating a Successful and Effective Mentor-Protégé Relationship Based on Empirical Studies**

**Chyi-Lyi (Kathleen) Liang**

**Kellogg Distinguished Professor of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems  
Director, Center for Environmental Farming Systems  
Coltrane Hall 105 B, [cliang@ncat.edu](mailto:cliang@ncat.edu) 336 285 4683**

# Summary of Literature and Background

- **Transition between learning stages**
  - » Learn what to learn
  - » Learn how to learn
  - » Help others to learn
- **Dimensions of mentoring**
- **Outcomes of mentoring**

## **Who and Why Needs a Mentor?**

- **Everyone who makes it, has a good mentor!**
- **A good mentor will**
  - » **Share perspective in life and career**
  - » **Provide constructive feedback**
  - » **Validate ideas and decisions**
  - » **Support others to become mentors**



## Define Mentorship

- **Homer's *Odyssey***. When the king of Ithaca, Odysseus, fought in the Trojan War, he entrusted Mentor to serve as a teacher for his son, Telemachus.
  - » Provide guidance and advice to support growth and development of another person
- **A reciprocal relationship**

# What a Good Mentor is Like?

## ■ Professional setting

- » Knowledgeable
- » Competent
- » Positive communication
- » Confident and supportive
- » Successful and be respected

## ■ Personal setting

- » Trustworthy and respectful
- » Encouraging and inspiring
- » Willing to invest time, effort, and energy to support others
- » People-oriented with good listening skills

# What is Protégé's Responsibility?

- **Professional setting**

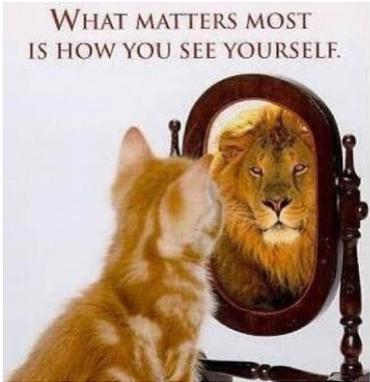
- » Be prepared to learn
- » Be active in mentorship

- **Personal setting**

- » Be receptive and open
- » Be realistic
- » Be respectful



# A Proposed Framework to Create and Maintain a Successful and Effective Mentor-Protégé Relationship



- **M1 (male, senior faculty and administrator) P1 (female, assistant professor)**
- **Met** in a social event at a professional conference for the first time
- Challenge – to develop a new program outside ag econ
- Goal – to achieve the highest recognition as an educator and a scholar
- Plan – step by step development strategies
  - » Publications, grants, professional development for knowledge/networks/skills, services
- Communication – daily, weekly, monthly
- Duration of the mentoring – 10 years
- Duration of collaboration and support – 20 years
- Outcomes – mission accomplished!

- **M2 (female, midcareer/senior faculty) P2 (female, assistant professor)**
- Matched in an official mentoring workshop organized by a professional organization
- Challenge – to identify personal and professional interests
- Goal – to achieve tenure and promotion and to match with interests
- Plan – step by step development strategies
  - » Preparation of resume and dossier, balance between family and career goals
- Communication – monthly and as needed
- Duration of the mentoring – 7 years
- Duration of collaboration and support – 7 years
- Outcomes – new opportunities to fulfill personal/family career goals for both

- **M3 (female, senior faculty) P3 (female, assistant professor)**
- **Met** in an official mentoring workshop organized by a professional organization
  - » Not directly matched as a team in the workshop, connected after the workshop
- Challenge – to balance personal/family life and career (heavy teaching load, expectation on research and service, and long-distance commute each day)
- Goal – to achieve tenure and promotion
- Plan – step by step development strategies
  - » self confidence, innovative teaching, and negotiation
- Communication – monthly and as needed
- Duration of the mentoring – 4+ years
- Outcomes – mission accomplished!

- **M4 (female, senior faculty and administrator)**
- **P4 (male, transitioning assistant professor)**
- Never officially met and Cold call
- Challenge – to find an academic job and transition into academia
- Goal – to find a dream job that pays the bill
- Plan – step by step development strategies
  - » interview preparation, self confidence, and negotiation
- Communication – 3 phone conversations (total 5 hours) in 4 months
- Duration of mentoring – on-going
- Outcomes – mission accomplished and next steps to tenure and promotion!

## Discussion

- **Additional characteristics of mentoring relationship – patience and honesty**
- **Keep it simple and achievable in a timely manner**
- **Should personality match?**
- **Do age, gender, and ethnicity matter?**
- **Does distance matter?**
- **Best practices – utilize professional events and take a chance to cold call!**

