the benefits are much more tangible: wisdom, support, and most of all strategic suggestions.

Protégés should be aware that mentors often risk their own credibility and reputation to aid in protégé development. When a protégé stumbles, the failure often reflect poorly on the mentor. Protégés should be careful not to underestimate the risks that their mentors assume on their behalf and should publicly acknowledge the mentor's assistance. Moreover, protégés should seek out opportunities to provide their mentors with technical information, new knowledge, or emotional support, as "the goal of building networks is to contribute to others."[44] Mentoring is a reciprocal relationship; mentors assist protégés, and in turn protégés should assist their mentors. Helping others increases the likelihood of receiving assistance in the future as well as increasing the trust and credibility of the relationship.[45] Protégés should provide positive feedback and thanks when their mentors help them. If mentors don't know that they have been helpful, they may be less willing to share valuable insights or opportunities in the future.[46]

Because mentors are identified based upon their wisdom and reputations for developing others, expect quality mentors to be in high demand. Realize that mentors have work demands and personal lives as well as other protégés in their networks. Protégés must discuss their needs and ascertain the mentor's willingness to provide corresponding time and effort; they also need to be proactive in maintaining contact with their mentors. For example, mentoring researchers Lillian Eby and Tammy Allen found that 55 per cent of 242 protégés studied reported that their mentors had occasionally neglected them.[47] Executives we interviewed suggest that they relied not just on one mentor but had several trusted mentors to whom they could turn.

Mentoring is all about learning—for both the protégé and the mentor.[48] Protégés should develop the knowing why, how, and whom competencies and learn from different types of mentors; in return, those mentors will learn and grow. In addition, protégés should seek development from formal mentors as well as through coaches, sponsors, friends, and peers.[49] By honestly sharing successes as well as mistakes, protégés enable learning—both theirs and their mentors.[50] Todd Smart, marketing vice president of Tabin Corporation, advises sharing with mentors "what happened as opposed to the story we all made up about what happened . . . you don't get the benefits unless you take the risks."[51]

Several of the executives whom we interviewed acknowledged that they saw their advisor or friend as a mentor only in hindsight, as illustrated by Ed Hartman, director of technical services with Avaya Corporation:

> *Working with Jim, Scott, and Ann on the management team was the best time I had at work. We had fun; we made things happen. Jim retired, Scott took a new job, and Ann moved. With them gone, suddenly I realized that I had counted on these people for more than support and fun . . . I had lost a trusted group of advisors.*

Development may also come through co-mentors—a pair of close, collegial friends committed to facilitating each other's development—who take turns mentoring each other at particular stages of their careers/lives.[52] The real key to successful mentoring relationships is to participate in a power-free facilitation of learning.

Mentoring is all about learning—for both the protégé and the mentor.

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2. Engage in 360-Degree Networking.

In a study of fifteen high ranking women executives in the male-dominated entertainment industry, Ellen Ensher, Susan Murphy, and Sherry Sullivan found that while only a few of the women had traditional mentors, many had developed a 360-degree approach to networking.[53] The women shared information and strove to maintain good relationships with those above, below, and at the same status level as themselves. Their social lives were built around, and integrated with, work contacts and friendships. Hiking outings or monthly women-only industry parties provided social satisfaction as well as a means to connect and share resources with many different types of developers.

Aspiring managers can adapt the 360-degree technique of these successful women by seeking out developers and mentors who are at different career stages and levels. Some junior executives turn to senior executives, such as Cameron Burr who sought out the advice of his father and People Express Airlines founder Don Burr, explaining, "You want someone who's been around the block a few times, who has a more seasoned perspective on life issues."[54] Others, like Ellen Aschendorf, CEO of Egg Electric Inc., approach peers who are facing similar challenges. She sought advice from

a CEO who shared several similarities: both are women, in the same industry, have children, and are about the same age.[55] In addition to competency matching with mentors, aiming for similarity in values, personality, or other attributes can further enhance the value of the mentor relationship.[56] Cindy Hovanec, a retired human resource consultant with Medical Mutual, described her 360-degree networking approach and how she became a link in other people's networks:

> You really need a strong mentor. While working as the manager of electronic transfers for a major bank, I began to develop relationships with peers, my boss, and people in other departments. I used this network to find my next job. Then as a senior consultant I still had my network from my previous job, and I found people coming to me with questions. I guess I became a mentor to them, especially the women. So it really came full circle.

3. Commit to Assessing, Building, and Adjusting the Mentor Network.

The executives quoted throughout this article attest to the fact that they have relied on various mentors and developers for different types of support at different points in their careers. Further, a survey of 649 professional women found that approximately 50 per cent of them had three or more mentors.[57] However, it is not enough just to increase the size of the mentoring network; it is important to conduct a careful analysis of what competencies you wish to build (knowing why, how, whom) and find the best resources for development. While multiple mentors might be willing to participate in a mentoring network, there can be a point of diminishing returns.[58] A healthy mentoring relationship is based on mutual trust and mutual obligations. Too many individuals in a network can impede the building of trust and hinder support, information, and assistance.

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The analysis process begins by assessing the current mentor network and identifying which mentors currently provide support for which competences. Individuals should be available to help identify a career path and determine how to succeed to the next level within the organization. If not available, other trusted individuals who know the protégés can develop their knowing-why competency. Individuals who can help develop critical job skills and corporate knowledge provide a lifeline for developing knowing-how competence. Mentors can open their networks and assist in the development of knowing-who competencies. With network assessment, gaps and needed mentor competencies can be identified.

As experiences and knowledge are gained and professional goals shift, a mentor network must also change. With passing time and changing needs, the frequency and intensity of interactions may alter, and members may enter and leave the network based on shifting goals and demands. Whether the employee is starting out in a new position or considering a shift in current career status, the network must be reviewed to determine if additional assistance is needed. Even after you have mastered the job, think ahead to your next career move in determining whether your current network is adequate. As networks evolve, they should be continuously monitored and updated—advice that is reinforced by Bob Donaldson, managing partner of Wasatch Mountain Adventure Consultants.

> I advise my executive clients to stay connected. As these executives develop more focused careers, higher income expectations, and fewer attractive job opportunities, it is critical to have a growing network of professional connections. It is these connections that will provide future job opportunities.

4. Develop Diverse, Synergistic Connections.

In the same way that work teams realize benefits such as increased creativity, innovation, and effectiveness from the synergistic combination of multiple, diverse perspectives,[59] individuals should be able to reach their greatest potential through interaction with multiple, diverse mentors. The unique combination of the guidance, information, and support of this diverse team of developers can exceed the sum of its parts, enabling protégés to expand their competencies.

Organizational or geographic boundaries should not preclude developing a diverse set of mentors. Improved technology (e.g., Internet, inexpensive air fares) and the growth and globalization of professional organizations have made it easier for professionals to develop effective working relationships

with individuals from different backgrounds and in different firms and countries.[60] For example, a manager might select an internal mentor to learn about the ins and outs of an organization's culture, policies, and practices; s/he may also seek advice from those outside the firm, industry, or country to glean specific information about external job opportunities, international market trends, best practices, and obtaining new skills.

Moreover, formal and informal mentoring opportunities offer unique benefits; protégés might consider drawing from both. Many organizations have formal mentoring programs that assist in matching individuals based on their career plans and goals in addition to other firm-sponsored opportunities (e.g., conferences, women and minority network groups) that can expand the mentor network. Recognizing that gains can arise from the mutual-selection aspect of informal mentoring,[61] some organizational mentoring programs allow individuals to take a role in choosing their mentors. For example, GE selects the top 20 per cent of their performers and permits these protégés to personally choose their own mentors from a list of top executives. Jan Johnson, former vice president of marketing of Zions Bank, commented on the value of such programs:

I realize now that my career could be a lot different if I had mentors to introduce me to the right people and to provide visibility within organizations. I chose to work in start-up companies while some of my friends went to work in large corporations with formal mentor programs. I saw how their mentors could open doors for them. There is a lot to be said for having a mentor to stand up for you, introduce you, and shine their successes back on you.

In addition to seeking both internal and external, informal and formal mentors, the synergy of diversity—facilitated by seeking out mentors and developers of different races, educational backgrounds, industries, and of the opposite gender—should be considered. A diverse set of mentors provides different worldviews that will open new and refreshing ways to view old problems while also providing potentially exciting and novel career opportunities.

In sum, by consciously targeting a diverse team of mentors, professionals building an intelligent network can capitalize on the strengths of distinct mentor characteristics as well as the synergy that often comes from a diversity of opinions, information, and knowledge.

5. Realize That Change Is Inevitable and That All Good Things Must Come to an End.

We know that mentoring relationships vary in intensity and change over time. Some relationships never mature beyond the minimum mentoring based upon on-the-job training. Other relationships are characterized by marginal mentoring; these mentors provide limited developmental assistance and are just "good enough."[62] Still others develop into powerful co-learning relationships where the parties begin to view themselves as family.[63] Mentor relationships that are characterized by different processes and outcomes, vary in how long they last, and change over time are illustrated by Kirk Wessel, corporate consultant with Organizational Consultants to Management, Inc.:

A mentor network is dynamic. It has to be. As a manager at Pepsi Corporation and Associated Food Stores, I would turn to a mentor in my functional area for job-related support. When I moved on from a job, I normally left my mentor relationship along with the job. In the Navy, however, as an ensign, I had a "Sea Daddy" [the Navy term for mentors]. "Sea Daddies" stick with you; it is a permanent relationship. In fact, I'm still in contact with my Navy mentor.

Ideally, mentor relationships provide rich learning experiences. Over the course of a healthy mentoring relationship, shared experiences, insights, and sacred knowledge are exchanged. At some point, however, relationships change. According to Burt Chase, a member of Gore Industries' board of directors, there came a time in his mentoring relationship with the company's founder, Bill Gore, when distance, growth, and experience deemed it time to adopt a new sponsor. His relationship with Bill stayed strong, yet the relationship changed from a mentor-type relationship to a friendship. Burt Chase commented:

Gore Industries has a mentor-type program which we call "sponsorship." Your sponsor is a supportive individual from whom you seek out advice. I was very fortunate as a new employee at Gore Industries to have Bill Gore as my first sponsor. Bill was a visionary leader who revolutionized the concept of corporate culture. I learned as great deal from Bill. Over time, I moved on to other sponsors. It is interesting how I identified my sponsors. I really looked for ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

All mentor relationships will change over time, and at some point they will end. Although some mentoring relationships grow across decades, research indicates that most mentoring relationships last an average of five years.[64] Some relationships, like that of Burt Chase and Bill Gore, will grow in mutual respect indicating an end of a mentor-protégé relationship and the start of a friendship; Other mentor relationships may become distant or dysfunctional. When the relationship ceases to be beneficial, ties with those mentors need to be cut.[65].

"It is interesting how I identified my sponsors. I really looked for ordinary people doing extraordinary things."

Regardless of how the relationship ends, individuals should write a note expressing appreciation for the sponsor's influence on their careers. This communication is not only thoughtful but also may keep the door open for future conversations. An intelligent network is one that is fed and pruned as necessary.

Lessons Learned

Throughout my career, the mentors that I have had are very different. What was the same across all of them is that in each relationship there was mutual respect. I've had numerous mentors, and I've been a mentor. It seems that there are people out there with sharp, strategic minds who can take what they learn and apply it. It's intangible, but these people have a knowledge base, they carry themselves with self-confidence, and they know lots of people. These are the people who can make sure that mentees will continue to evolve and grow.
—Mike Dougherty, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Cookietree Bakery

Just as the leaders of democratic nations rely on a group of advisors to make decisions about governmental issues, individuals also need a portfolio of trustworthy mentors to provide insights and help them make decisions about complex and changing issues. This article has emphasized the desirability of professionals developing a cadre of multiple mentors to support their career development. These mentors can assist professionals in knowing the why, how, and whom in developing intelligent networks for future opportunities. Dick Graham, CEO of Au-

gusta Medical Center, explained why building a network of multiple mentors is so important:

The higher you rise in an organization [by whatever means], the more the skill set changes. At some point you climb beyond some imaginary clouds that keep you from recalling and exercising the skills that got you to that level in the first place. Many of these skills are no less necessary at the top than during the climb. So high perch dwellers need to find young mentors still making the climb and learn or relearn from them. You can always find bright young executives who are far better than you were on your best day and be humbled in knowing that about half of your perch came to you by sheer luck . . . and humility is also a mentorable attribute.

As can be seen from the comments of high-level executives, we are never too old or too experienced to have mentors in our lives. We all have something to learn. In the same way that organizations seek partnerships in an effort to capitalize on collaborative strengths, so can individuals at any level of an organization or any stage in their careers form facilitative mentor relationships. Arie deGeus, former coordinator of group planning of Royal Dutch/Shell, notes that "the ability to learn may be the only sustainable competitive advantage."[66] For an individual, this learning comes most directly from mentor relationships. To that end, we have outlined five specific strategies for identifying, managing, and nurturing these mentor relationships. We think that these strategies should aid in developing effective relationships and intelligent networks that will promote success and satisfaction in these complex and changing times.

Acknowledgments

Appendix

Following from Alvesson, we used a reflexive approach to gathering interview data.[67] Specifically, we developed a framework which identified potential lines of thinking, beginning with the initial question asked of the executives: "Can you tell me a bit about a person who made a difference to you in terms of your career with [company name]?"

Based on the response to the initial question, the interview followed the logic flow of the interviewee's statements in an effort to understand the aspects of career networks which contributed to the interviewee's success. The reflexive interview technique allowed the interviewer to consider the interviewee's responses from a variety of angles, thereby allowing greater exploration of the topic. Moreover, the nature of the reflexive interview allowed the interviewees to clarify and explain their statements in an effort to ensure that the researcher understood the point they were making.[68]

Next, we integrated the reflexive approach with a narrative-analysis strategy to synthesize the interview data. Following this method's protocols, we considered the stories told by the interviewee in light of the topic being studied as well as the individual's life experiences. Content analysis of these narratives yielded several mentoring-related themes.

A recent study of developmental relationships among women demonstrates that individuals often did not recognize the significant contribution of these friendships to their professional and personal lives until they narrated their experiences for the researcher.[69] Although the initial interview question did not use the term "mentoring" or suggest that there would be more than one individual who served in the mentor capacity, each interviewee identified several individuals who served in a developmental role.

We used a target-sample approach to select our executives, focusing on individuals with rich career experiences in diverse industries. We stopped adding to our sample when the stories told became redundant. All fifteen individuals granted permission to quote them in this article, and we are indebted to them for their time and assistance. The professionals we interviewed are as follows: Burt Chase, Member, Board of Directors, Gore Industries; Bob Donaldson, Managing Partner, Wasatch Mountain Adventure Consultants; Mike Dougherty, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Cookietree Bakery; Jeff Dye, CEO, GE Corporate Payment Services; Dick Graham, CEO, Augusta Medical Center; Cindy Hovanec, retired HR Consultant, Medical Mutual; Ed Hartman, Director, Technical Services, Avaya Corporation; Jan Johnson, former Vice President of Marketing, Zions Bank; D. McDonough, Managing Shareholder, retired, Lozano Smith Professional Corporation; Bill Radiger, President, Karma Media, LLC; John Swenson, Division Warehouse Performance Manager, Starfleet Captain Warehousing, Frito Lay Incorporated; Kirk Wessel, Corporate Consultant, Organization Consultants to Management Inc.; Jeff Whiting, Presi-

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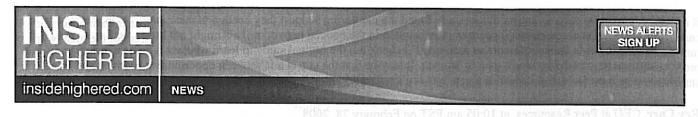
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Feb. 28

The Mentoring Gap for Women in Science

Differences between the ways male and female science students relate to mentors could have a significant impact on efforts to attract more women to certain fields, according to a new study focused on chemistry and published in the journal *Sex Roles*.

The study tracked those who graduated from top doctoral programs in chemistry from 1988 to 1992, and asked the graduates a series of questions about their experience with mentors, finding notable differences. Authors of the study say that while much has changed in society since the period studied, the findings are consistent with more recent analyses of women in science, and also promote understanding of a generation of women currently in academe.

Among the findings:

- Reflecting on their undergraduate years, men were more likely than women to remember receiving help from a professor (62 percent for men and 54 percent for women).
- Asked who helped them the most in selecting a graduate school, 83 percent of men and only 71 percent of women cited a professor. The percentage reporting that they helped themselves or that no one helped them was nearly double for women (15 percent) as for men (8 percent).
- A higher proportion of women (35 percent) than men (24 percent) would have used different criteria to select a dissertation adviser, given the choice again.
- A higher proportion of men (79 percent) than women (63 percent) relied in part on advice from their dissertation adviser on selecting a postdoctoral adviser.

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Cumulatively, the authors suggest, these results point to the ways that mentoring differences affect the experience of female science students throughout their educations.

Susan Nolan, one of the authors and an associate dean at Seton Hall University, said that the data help to provide not "just a snapshot," but the impressions of men and women in science "looking back at their career trajectories." Nolan said she and her fellow authors hope the study will help academics "pinpoint the patterns that lead to gender disparities we still see."

It's clear, she said, "that women do not perceive that they are receiving the same level of advising and mentoring as men."

Nolan and the others at Seton Hall involved in the study — Janine P. Buckner, Cecilia H. Marzabadi and Valerie J. Kuck — plan a follow-up study looking at the fields of physics, electrical and chemical engineering, and mathematics.

— Scott Jaschik

Comments

Professors may not be the best option as mentors

It may be that the women scientists in this study found the mentoring support they needed to make progress in their academic careers from other sources, namely, peers or other women in their social networks. This might not have true for the men, who may gravitate towards their professors as mentors. I'll check out the orginal study to learn whether it made a difference if the professor/dissertaton advisor was a man or woman. It may be that the gap is not between opportunities for male and female students to gain mentors, but instead is a gap between availability of male and female professors in the sciences.

Rey Carr, CEO at Peer Resources, at 10:05 am EST on February 28, 2008

Some first-hand observations

I received my PhD in chemistry in 1988 and so fall just outside the cohort reviewed in this study; however, I wanted to add some first-hand observations as a female graduate student in chemistry and, later, as the first female faculty member in chemistry at a particular research university.

During my graduate years, fully one-half of the incoming graduate classes were female; yet when the time came to hand out the doctorates, the proportion of females receiving them had decreased to one-quarter. Based on my knowledge of the quality of mind and quality of work done by my peers, this had nothing to do with whether females had the intellectual and personal fortitude to "make it" in chemistry, and a lot to do with the messages we received and the mentoring we didn't receive (even though we tried). In my case, there was not a single female on the department staff who was not in a clerical position — no faculty members or research faculty members. And yes, it does make a difference to have someone of the same gender (or race) as an example and as someone who can communicate with you on your terms. Yes, other staff members can be helpful, but clerical staff cannot help me decide which is the best post-doc or whether I am ready to launch my academic career. Within a given lab, male students were routinely encouraged to 'shoot for the moon' (the prestigious post-doc, staying on the doctoral track versus opting out for the master's), whereas females were urged to play it safe. Reaons why ran from "it's too competitive there; you'll fit in better here" to "why don't you look into teaching? It's easier if you want to have a family." Again, these comments are based on conversations I had, as well as data that I later gathered. It is not the proverbially trend of one or two.

I also encountered the same sorts of biases when as the lone female faculty member I became a de facto mentor — gladly — to many female graduate students in our department. I spent a lot of time encouraging these talented young women to 'shoot for the moon' when that was appropriate, and to help them see the possibilities that lay beyond completing their PhD. I am happy to report that this department, of which I am no longer a member, has a number of female faculty members and that its leadership — mainly through the tenacious advocacy of a male associate chair who was my mentor — has finally "gotten it," and the data and environment for female graduate students is much improved.

I wanted to write because so often when lack of mentoring, or the right mentoring, is cited as a reason for disparities in achievement, it is often brushed off. We think that the disadvantaged group is too soft, not aggressive enough, that if they 'really wanted it' they could find it. My own experience, however, suggests that there was a real difference in what was offered to male students versus female students, and that it is as much what is said and expected and by whom, and not simply whether or not one has a good mentor, that ultimately affects a student's experience. The good news is that things do change, but it takes time, persistence, and willing champions to shepherd those changes.

Laurie, VP at Research U in NE, at 12:00 pm EST on February 28, 2008

It would be great if women were getting mentoring from their peers, but I suspect the situation may be even worse — there is also a gap between male and female grad students in these fields. People often argue that men and women can never realistically be "just" friends (citing peer-reviewed evidence like "When Harry Met Sally") and this drives me crazy, because they are also effectively arguing that women in fields like science will never have a chance to compete equally. After all, many academic collaborations are between people who first got to know each other as friends. At least when male professors mentor female students, there is an expectation that a romantic relationship would be inappropriate.

jcl, lecturer, at 12:00 pm EST on February 28, 2008

Control variables in Science/Gender study?

I understand that no brief account of a study's findings can be expected fully to describe itsthodology, etc. But I wish we knew more about what variables were controlled for in the reported percentages. The most obvious question is whether the reported gender differences hold up when some sort of performance or assessment ranking is controlled for. In the case of graduate students at dissertation level, this is hard, because evaluative criteria that are not well reflected in "grade point average" and the like come into play. Indeed, part of the way grad students may assess their own and their peers' standing is

to see which professors deign to be their dissertation advisors. And even for a cohort of students working under the same professor, there may be some whose work is considered important and promising, and others whose work will never make it into a prestigious journal and may even fail to qualify as a Ph.D. dissertation. We can be confident that, as a rule, students who are evaluated positively will experience more and better interactions with their evaluators than students who are evaluated less positively; we also know that there is a gender-related performance gap in the "harder" sciences, like physics; hence to see if gender is an independent, causal variable explaining all or part of gender differences in patterns of interaction among students and advisors, we should control for this gap. (Of course, many will believe that if a performance gap exists, then the evidence of gender discrimination is even more obvious. But that's a different research question.)

Rod Bell, Adjunct Professor at College of DuPage, at 12:00 pm EST on February 28, 2008

Another Perspective

I wanted to give a perspective from my experience in graduate school. In general, the women were coddled by the Professors, mostly so that they would not be accused of being sexist. This meant that the female graduate students all got women fellowships — meaning that they did not have to do any of the work in labs. This freed up time for the women to pursue their own research. The male graduate students were very strongly discouraged from applying for fellowships, as we were all told that the odds of winning were much greater for women (they were). In addition, the male graduate student funding came from lab work, so there was little time for males to do independent research. This lopsided spoils system actually ended up damaging all involved. The male graduate students ended up having to work much harder than the females for the same degree, and the women came to expect that life would be easy. It was (and still is) a lose-lose situation.

ACF, at 8:45 pm EST on February 28, 2008

Three cheers for the hands-off advisor

On the other hand, my thesis advisor gave me a ton of freedom and not much advice. At the time I didn't like it, now I'm thrilled that it worked out that way. I got advice when I sought it, but that was rare. As a postdoc I often clashed with my advisor, and I think we were both happy on multiple levels when I got a faculty position. I did seek some advice from my thesis advisor when I got a faculty position, and he was helpful, but overall I mentored myself and I'm glad for it.

I won't pretend to speak for everybody; some do need and benefit from mentoring. But for me, I was glad that I didn't get it.

On the other side of the coin, I wonder if the most independent are also the most likely to become professors, and if that skews our ability to advise and mentor students. I won't suggest that my students _should_ be like me, and I know there's more than one way to do things, but I wonder if my independence impairs my ability to mentor talented people who would genuinely benefit from it.

New Asst. Prof. of Physics, at 1:35 pm EST on February 29, 2008

Dear NAPP,

mentoring is not just advice giving. It also includes things such as promoting your mentee: for example nominating them to be considered for journal editorships or committee functions, or putting a word in wih your colleagues so they get invited to participate in symposia, all things that the modern scientist needs to have on their cv to show evidence of "international recognition". It also includes things such as making sure they get at least equal access to resources (e.g. technicians time, project collaborations with other scientists, etc)- all things which go along way towards boosting a scientist's publication record in today's poly-multi-author publication world. It is great that you feel successful without having had any of the advantages of being mentored, but just imagine how successful you may have been if you had...

REH, at 5:50 am EST on March 2, 2008

OK, I see your point. My advisor was always good about research resources, and he wrote good letters for me. He never did much for promoting me to people for conferences and committees and stuff, but I think part of the reason is that it took me a long time to find my feet in grad school, so for a while I didn't have much to show. Also, my research kind of meanders. I do a little of this, a little of that, I have fun with it, I get a paper, and I move on. I haven't really firmly planted my feet in a particular community of researchers. That would be a problem if I were at a research university and needed a lot of grant money, but I'm a theorist (so I don't need as much money) and I'm in an undergraduate department (so publishing decent stuff is enough, I don't have to become a star in a particular community).

Some might say that my meandering research is a sign of bad mentoring, but I'm having fun with it. I find a problem, I work on it, I get something out of it, and then I find another problem. I'm learning and contributing and having fun, I'll produce enough to get tenure in the environment that I'm in, and some of my projects are perfectly suited to undergraduate involvement (a key factor in my department). So from my perspective, doing it my own way without much input or guidance has worked out well. Besides, while I may not be rooted in a community, I can look at problems in a variety of fields and find something to work on. That kind of intellectual versatility comes from being allowed to do my own thing.

New Asst. Prof. of Physics, at 11:45 am EST on March 2, 2008

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