

Faculty Mentoring



Lewis and Walker

UNC Charlotte Faculty See Shared Benefits of Mentoring

Mentor Lisa Slattery Walker and mentee Janaka Lewis have established an easy, natural rhythm in their mentoring relationship, much like the balance Lewis has achieved since she joined UNC Charlotte's English Department as an assistant professor in 2009.

"What I really have learned is balance and that it's important to have that balance," Lewis says. "To have someone to talk with was helpful."

Walker, professor and chair of the Sociology Department, enjoys helping mentees discover their unique paths to success. "How I see my job as a mentor is not to tell people how to do things but to help them figure out what works for

them," Walker says. "The way to be successful as a faculty member is to figure out what works for you."

Lewis has applied what she gained from Walker as well as what her department chair has shared. "This has helped to supplement the information I was receiving in my department," Lewis says. "It helps the interactions to be very human. I see what is possible at UNC Charlotte. I haven't seen limits."

Serving as a mentor is fulfilling for Walker. "Part of it is because I've had some great mentors in life," she says. "This is part of being a senior faculty member. I really do love UNC Charlotte also, so for me, part of the mentoring process is sharing that."

Mentoring Initiatives Enable Faculty Success

"We invite faculty members at UNC Charlotte to learn more about the ADVANCE Faculty Affairs mentoring initiative, which supplements the mentoring efforts provided by each college.

In the ADVANCE Faculty Affairs Office, we match junior faculty members with senior colleagues outside the junior faculty members' home units. Mentors and mentees meet in person and also on the phone or on-line throughout the year to talk about career advancement, work-life balance and other issues.

Mid-career and senior faculty members from across the university also meet in group settings to share information and support each other, especially as relates to career advancement and transitioning to full professor. Additionally, we have launched pilot programs with some colleges to provide mid-career mentors. A career development plan guides faculty members as they move toward tenure and promotion.

Learn more at advance.uncc.edu, under the Mentoring tab in the Initiatives section. Also, feel free to contact us if you want to talk!"

Sincerely,

**Dr. Yvette Huet, Director
ADVANCE Faculty Affairs Office
Professor, Biology**

Mentor, Mentee Say Trust Is Key

Mentors and mentees need to understand each other's expectations to be successful, Robin Coger and Xiuxia Du say. "You have to be on the same page as to what the mentee is hoping to gain from the relationship," Coger says. "It's important to have that discussion early. Another critical step is establishing trust."

Du joined UNC Charlotte's Department of Bioinformatics & Genomics as an assistant professor in 2008. She has found invaluable the relationships and knowledge that Coger has generously shared, most recently in Coger's roles as professor of Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Science and director of the Center for Biomedical Engineering Systems.

"Robin thinks of me when we're talking in person and also at other times," Du says. "She is so gracious. She has sent me articles and told me about workshops. She has a broader perspective. She gives specific solutions when I have issues, but she also sees deeper."



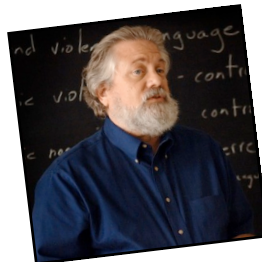
Coger and Du

By mentoring people at earlier points in their careers, Coger believes she is fulfilling an element of her responsibility as a senior faculty member. "To be a good mentor, you have to care," she says. "It's part of the connectedness that makes an organization work. The mentee-mentor relationship is a two-way street."

For Du, she has seen opportunities for mentoring students in her classes and her lab, drawing upon the lessons she's learned from Coger about how to be a committed and supportive mentor.

Mentoring Enhances Climate For UNC Charlotte Faculty

- Faculty learn of resources, opportunities and expectations
- Mentees obtain clarity on goals and receive confidential feedback from neutral sources
- Mentors and mentees gain new relationships that can expand over time
- UNC Charlotte benefits from inclusive, supportive institutional climate



"Over the last two years the ADVANCE university-wide mentoring effort has been very beneficial to me and to my two mentees--both first-year, foreign-born women in fields quite distinct from my own. As a senior, white-male professor, I have been able to "show them the ropes" -- academically and politically. Likewise, I have learned from them aspects of their cutting-edge research and the diverse cultures from which they come. Together we have made connections that exhibit a welcoming university community in which faculty members from diverse backgrounds can feel comfortable and on-track for success."

Bill Gay, Professor of Philosophy, mentor

UNC Charlotte ADVANCE is a centerpiece of the university's efforts to create an institutional climate to support recruitment, retention and advancement of women faculty, especially in STEM disciplines - Science, Technology, Engineering and Math - and of all faculty at UNC Charlotte. The ADVANCE Faculty Affairs Office offers leadership and career development, mentoring programs, policy work, recruitment workshops, grants, a speakers' series, and other initiatives. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under grant number 0548401. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.

