

## **Getting to Know your Mentee**

### **What are the student's goals for graduate school and beyond?**

- Ask about the student's prior educational and professional experiences, and how s/he connects these to graduate study. What does the student hope to accomplish with an advanced degree?
- Discuss your own research or creative projects and how they complement or diverge from the student's interests.
- Offer suggestions about courses, other training, and work experiences inside and outside the department that would aid the student in reaching his/her goals.
- Refer the student to colleagues inside and outside the department/University who could serve as additional mentors to assist the students' learning and professional goals. If you know someone well, send a letter of introduction on the student's behalf.
- Realize that the student's career goals will likely change over the course of graduate study, especially as he or she begins to learn about the labor market within the discipline. A student may seek to become a faculty member in a research institution, to have an academic career in other educational institutions, or to pursue a career outside the academy.
- Increase your awareness of how students' identities shape the graduate experience and how the graduate experience shapes students' identities. Well formed identities are springboards to greater self-confidence and connectedness to wider communities of experience.

### **What are the student's strengths and weaknesses?**

- Ask the student to describe broadly the skills he or she brings to graduate study (e.g., creative, analytical, statistical, organizational, etc.).
- Share your impressions about strengths and areas for improvement if you know the student well enough from classes or projects
- Suggest courses or experiences the student needs in order to improve important skill sets or gain broader exposure.

### **What is the student's preferred work style?**

- Discuss what type of guidance the student needs to learn most effectively (e.g. independent versus on-one-one work).
- Discuss your own work style and how you typically interact with graduate students (e.g., do you prefer to meet only during office hours? Do you hold informal meetings? Do you invite students to collaborate on teaching and research projects, and papers and presentations?).
- Ask the student to describe people who have been valuable mentors in the past, and what these mentors did that helped him/her achieve important goals.