

Response to Dean's Charge #2

The dean's charge asked the committee to "develop a prioritized list of actions to improve graduate student mentoring."

In response, we suggest the following as ways to improve the mentoring practices in the College. The College should:

- ⇒ Develop a cohesive message about the importance of establishing and maintaining effective graduate mentoring relationships.
- ⇒ Advertise the expectations of both the student and the mentor, as they are set out in the College's Best Practices for Graduate mentoring ([here](#)). Faculty and students should be made aware that written mentoring agreements can increase the likelihood that a mentoring relationship is successful.
- ⇒ Require departments to develop measures of mentoring success and quality that can be used to reward faculty as part of their annual evaluations. The College should also consider developing and including similar such measures in its own promotion and tenure evaluations.
- ⇒ Assist departments (where necessary) in smoothing the transition from one advisor to another—which may include help in making the necessary financial arrangements.
- ⇒ Clarify the status of intellectual property rights, within university frameworks (see [here](#)), in cases of conflicts among graduate students and their mentors. This could also be a future Dean's Charge.
- ⇒ Provide new graduate students with non-discipline-specific training on sound mentoring practices.
- ⇒ Require departments to make readily available (for example in their [Graduate Handbook](#) or on their website) a link to the College's mentoring and conflict resolution resources ([here](#)), including the College's grievance procedures.
- ⇒ Support department efforts to connect with alumni and professionals outside of academia.

Some further possibilities:

- ⇒ Departments should be encouraged to have a member of the College Office of Graduate Affairs speak to their incoming graduate students about best practices in mentoring relationships.
- ⇒ During the new faculty orientation, part of a session should be devoted to best practices in graduate mentoring.
- ⇒ A forum for developing inter-collegiate connections should be developed.
- ⇒ A KU-specific mentoring template should be developed (for some models, see [here](#)).
- ⇒ Graduate students should be encouraged to seek mentors other than their academic advisors. This may be especially the case for (1) graduate students working on interdisciplinary projects—where a mentor or even co-advisor in a different department may be helpful; (2) graduate students looking for a career outside of academia—where a mentor outside of

academia may be helpful; (3) graduate students looking for careers as teachers in community colleges—where a mentor at a community college may be helpful.