

# Mentoring Tips that Prepare Scholars for Success

January is National Mentorship Month. At UMD, few have been more enthusiastically pressed into service than the mentors of UMD's Presidential Postdocs: Dr. Mia Smith Bynum (Public Health), Dr. Kevin Roy (Public Health), Dr. Li-Qun Zhang (Bioengineering), Dr. Ernesto Calvo (Government and Politics), Dr. Susan Dwyer (Honors College), Dr. Kimberly Griffin (Education), and Dr. Elsa Barkley Brown (History and Women's Studies). For one academic year—and often, for many years after—these knowledgeable faculty members guide fledgling scholars as they hone their research, navigate professional life, and develop the skills necessary to gain successful careers in higher education, publication, or their chosen specialty. “A postdoctoral fellowship is a great way to prepare for the transition to a tenure-track faculty position,” says Mia Smith Bynum. “It gives early career professionals a bit of time to catch their breath after the intensity of doctoral training and the dissertation, as well as the opportunity to benefit from mentoring of a different style, context, and content.”



To mark National Mentorship Month, we asked our postdoc mentors to share tips for successful mentorship:

Encourage them to get out of the office: According to Bynum, who is an Associate Professor of Family Science, autonomy mixed with structure helps postdocs take advantage of all campus has to offer. “I've advised my new fellow, Dr. Erica Coates, to arrange her time as a fellow into thirds: a third on training, a third on writing up her research from graduate school, and a third on new writing projects with me and her other departmental mentor, Dr. Kevin Roy,” said Bynum. “I've also encouraged her to reach out to other members of the UMD faculty with related research interests and to attend the various brown bags and research talks held in the School of Public Health and across campus.”

Work with purpose: Postdocs are pulled in many directions and acutely feel the pressure to produce, which can often leave them overwhelmed. Early on, Associate Professor of Student Affairs Kimberly Griffin encouraged her mentee, Dr. Kelly Slay, to approach both her work and personal life with “intentionality.” “Being intentional about how we structure our time, keep track of our commitments and make progress towards our goals is at the cornerstone of the work Kelly and I do together. We met over the summer and took some time to identify both our personal and professional goals and values. Recognizing what is important in our lives allows us to draw boundaries and intentionally work towards cultivating a life outside of work. Identifying professional goals and benchmarks for the

year allows us to put an action plan in place.” The process, explains Griffin, helps a mentee track their progress, leverage opportunities, and make calculated decisions.

Increase their comfort level: Postdocs—and all faculty members for that matter—come from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and environments, each with their own unique strengths and abilities. Making sure that they feel welcome and are getting the support they need, both in and out of academic life, is critical, says Dr. Li-Qun “Larry” Zhang, Professor of Bioengineering. “My mentee, Dr. Dongwon Kim, came from a different lab and different university,” says Zhang. “We made sure he settled down well, lives comfortably and has convenient access to labs and work, which is important for his success. We team him up with others with complementary skills; we help him develop new projects matching his interests and strengths, but also involve him in other related projects through team work. I chat with him often not only about projects but also other things, like his living and plan for future development.”

Learn more about UMD’s President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program, [here](#).

Article by Maggie Haslam

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## Recognition & Awards

### Campus Awards

#### A call for nominations has been issued for the following awards:

##### 2017-2018 Provost's Professional Track Faculty Excellence Awards

Nomination Period: January 15–February 15

Full Nomination Dossier Due: February 28, 2018

##### 2018 Kirwan Awards

Kirwan Faculty Research and Scholarship Prize

Nomination Deadline: February 28, 2018

Kirwan Undergraduate Education Award

Nomination Deadline: February 28, 2018

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## Faculty Tips and Resources



## A Memo to My Students as the New Semester Begins

By: Maryellen Weimer, PhD, Faculty Focus

This is just a brief note to let you know how committed I am to making this a good course. But I can't do my best teaching without your help. So, I thought I'd share a list of things you can do that will make this a better experience for all of us.... [Read More](#)

## News

University of Maryland Receives \$5M National Science Foundation Grant to Support Next Generation of Cyber Leaders

North American Waterways are Becoming Saltier and More Alkaline

As U.S. Maternal Deaths Rise, UMD Research Underscores Impact of Flawed Data

Curbing Climate Change



## Mentoring Tips: How to Find, Keep, and be a Mentor

By: Gail M. Staines, Ph.D., HERC

There was a time, years ago, when it was common to learn a craft or trade by being an apprentice to a master teacher. The transferring of skills was achieved through watching and practicing under the guidance of someone with significant experience... [Read More](#)

## Events

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- 2/6 Emeriti Event: "The Post" Movie Panel Discussion
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- 2/19, Information Session: PTK Faculty Promotion  
2/22 Processes
- 
- 2/21\* UMD @ Home and In the World: Ability and Disability
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- March Preparing for Activity Insight: Telling Y(our)  
1 Story Using Google Scholar and ResearcherID to Track Publications
- 
- 3/5, Town Hall: Annual Activity Reporting for PTK  
3/13 Faculty
- 
- 3/7\* Sexual Misconduct: A Panel Discussion for Chairs and Department Leaders
- 
- 4/17 Preparing for Activity Insight: Telling Y(our)  
Story Using Google Scholar and ResearcherID to Track Publications

\*Registration opens soon. Check our website for

additional details.

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