Gonzaga University

The Repository of Gonzaga University

Building Community in the Academy through Mentoring: Reflections and Directions

Richie Neil Hao
Antelope Valley College

Bryant Keith Alexander
Loyola Marymount University

Bernadette Marie Calafell
Gonzaga University, calafell@gonzaga.edu

Kate Willink
University of Denver

Amy Kilgard
San Francisco State University

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.gonzaga.edu/cresschol

Part of the Sociology Commons

Authors

Richie Neil Hao, Bryant Keith Alexander, Bernadette Marie Calafell, Kate Willink, Amy Kilgard, and John T. Warren

Building Community in the Academy Through Mentoring: Reflections and Directions

Richie Neil Hao, Bryant Keith Alexander, Bernadette Marie Calafell, Kate Willink, Amy Kilgard, and John T. Warren

When we think about our relationship with our mentors while attending undergraduate and graduate programs, our mentors served as advisers who guided us in the academy. However, the mentoring relationship does not end with the formal relationship between teacher and student; it continues in and goes beyond the varying realms of apprenticeship and the formal processes of entering the academy in the relationship between junior and senior faculty. While important to all incoming new temporary or full-time assistant professors, mentoring is particularly vital for minority professors who are underrepresented in higher education at large and the university context in particular. Generated from the 2011 Western States Communication Association (WSCA) conference panel, six junior and senior faculty members share in this collection of essays how they have come to understand what mentoring means for them and others in the academy, as well as offer pedagogical suggestions in the future.

Keywords: Academy; Community; Faculty; Mentoring; Performative

✿

Richie Neil Hao, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor), **Bernadette Marie Calafell**, Ph.D. (Associate Professor and Chair), and **Kate Willink**, Ph.D. (Associate Professor) are affiliated with the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Denver. **Bryant Keith Alexander**, Ph.D. is Dean, College of Communication and Fine Arts at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, CA. At the time of the panel at the Western States Communication Association Conference, Alexander was Professor and Interim Dean, College of Arts and Letters at California State University Los Angeles. **Amy Kilgard**, Ph.D. is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at San Francisco State University. **John T. Warren**, Ph.D. was Professor in the Department of Speech Communication at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. An earlier version of this manuscript was presented at the 2011 Western States Communication Association Convention in Monterey, California.

Mentoring as/and Community: An Introduction To Diverse Voices and Perspectives
(Richie Neil Hao)

I walk into the conference room, and my eyes look directly at familiar faces. These are the faces of people that I am happy to see every time I encounter them in academic and non-academic settings. They are not only my colleagues, friends, teachers, but they are also my mentors.

As I get closer to the long table with six chairs, I do not know if my colleagues have left intentionally for me to sit somewhere in the middle, given that I am the chair of this panel, "Building Community in the Academy Through Mentoring," at the 2011 Western States Communication Association (WSCA) conference in Monterey, California. Of the six participants, I am the newest member of the academy as a second-year Chinese Filipino faculty member, so being surrounded by wonderful colleagues/mentors is comforting. I look around the table, and the seating arrangement is as follows (from my right to left): my doctoral adviser, a White bisexual male in his 30s who recently became a full professor; my departmental colleague, a recently tenured associate professor who is a queer bisexual woman of color; a White heterosexual female departmental colleague who is an assistant professor going up for tenure and promotion review the following year; to my left, a newly tenured White heterosexual female associate professor; finally, my master's adviser, an African American gay male full professor and administrator. All of the participants on the panel are not by accident. I have thought all of them as my mentors in different ways during various academic transitional stages as an undergraduate student, graduate student/teaching assistant, and now as an assistant professor.

When we think about our relationship with our mentors while attending undergraduate and graduate programs, our mentors served as advisers who guided us in the academy. There is no doubt that mentoring is important in our own personal and professional development. However, the mentoring relationship does not end with the formal relationship between teacher and student; it continues in and goes beyond the varying realms of apprenticeship and the formal processes of entering the academy in the relationship between junior and senior faculty. In so many ways, mentoring is not limited to mentor/mentee relationships; I argue (as do others in this collection of essays) that it is about community building, which means mentoring can be a positive and enriching experience if we have the support of those around us in our daily academic lives (e.g., advisers, committee members, colleagues, department chair, dean, students, among others).

The mentoring relationship, while important to all incoming new temporary or full-time assistant professors, is particularly vital for minority professors who are underrepresented in higher education at large and the university context in particular. In fact,

> faculty of color at predominantly white institutions or in predominantly white departments may face additional pressures…These include emotional stresses, such as

feelings of exclusion, isolation, alienation, and devaluation as well as increased de-
mands on the time given to campus service. These pressures can result in an uncom-
fortable work environment that undermines the productivity and satisfaction of fac-
ulty of color. It may even discourage their entry into academic life entirely. (Turner
23)

Given that faculty of color and other minority faculty often face additional pressures
and challenges to succeed in the academy, it is important to reconstruct mentoring
beyond "the traditional confines of research, teaching, and service" (Calafell "Mentor-
ing and Love" 438); it is also about creating a site to question and challenge power in
the academy that could affect faculty of color and other minority faculty's success and
well-being. Calafell's definition of mentoring emphasizes that the "act of caring"
("Mentoring and Love" 437) can have a huge impact in the junior faculty's life. There-
fore, I argue that mentoring can also be enacted in informal relationships. In my case,
even though some of my fellow panelists do not serve as my mentors in designated
mentoring programs, they are my mentors for the mere fact that they have engaged in
the act of caring that Calafell talks about by providing me advice or guidance over the
years.

The purpose of our panel, and this collection of essays, is to ask about our com-
mitment to mentoring as teachers and scholars to build an academic community that
is culturally inclusive where "homeplace" could be established. As hooks notes,
homeplace is about creating a "community of resistance" ("Homeplace" 449). Given
that the classroom or the university is never safe (Alexander 18), it is imperative to
consider mentoring as "a site of embodied resistance and 'homeplace' for faculty of
color" (Calafell, "mentoring and Love" 425) and other minority faculty.

In order to create an academic community that fosters mentoring as a commit-
ment, we must ask ourselves the following: How can departments and senior faculty
members get involved in mentoring? When does mentoring begin and end? Should
mentoring be an ongoing commitment? While mentoring has been discussed previ-
ously, very few, if anyone, actually examines it from different perspectives—voices of
junior and senior faculty members from different stages of their professional lives.
Our hope is that our voices could provide different perspectives in understanding of
what mentoring can be and what we can do individually and collectively to make it a
positive experience for everyone involved. In the following pieces, junior and senior
faculty members share their experiences about mentoring and how they have come to
understand what that means for them and others in the academy.

From trying to offer lessons in cultural performance that situate bodies in the
context of schooling and teaching to an examination of the reciprocal role and needs
of the mentor/mentee relationship, Bryant Keith Alexander plays with a performance
metaphor of mentor as director to discuss how complex mentoring is and the chal-
lenges that mentors and mentees face in the process. By explaining different tenets of
mentoring, Alexander's piece allows us to think of mentoring as a "bounded need"
across time and space and within communities of difference, as well as mentoring as a

journey from which we begin our academic and professional journey and to which we return as a cultural pilgrimage of necessity.

Bernadette Marie Calafell writes about the connection between mentoring and "professional development" and what that means to different mentors and mentees. Calafell also talks about the importance of alliance building in mentoring beyond faculty and students who are queer and of color by reflecting from her experience working with a critical and reflexive feminist White female mentee. Calafell's essay provides an insight that many minority faculty and students are still searching for their home in the academy and how it is often difficult to find it without mentors who can guide them to transition in academic spaces that silence them.

Next, Kate Willink considers mentoring as a "space between sweetness and snark" in which it can offer "relationships of desire" but can also be reduced to creating "mini-mes" of academic offspring. A junior faculty who is currently going through the promotion and tenure review process, Willink suggests junior faculty to be proactive in building and maintaining a community of relationships early on. Perhaps it has become a standard practice to sugarcoat the unpleasant realities of the life in the academy, but Willink ultimately asks us: who does it benefit in the end?

Amy Kilgard uses growing as a metaphor to describe mentoring and what it means to be in a liminal space as a newly tenured associate professor. She talks about mentoring as coalitional politics which constantly changes over time and adds that mentoring is about "putting your body on the line not for another but with another." Kilgard's emphasis on "with another" is a poignant statement, as it communicates the relational aspect of mentoring.

Finally, it is fitting to end with John T. Warren's essay, who suddenly passed away shortly after our panel. Warren's contribution to this collection of essays sums up beautifully everybody's insights, reflections, and directions on mentoring. If anything else, his essay makes us want to aspire to become better mentors and people. Warren considers mentoring as "momentary" where moments of "unevenness" occur in different interactions and engagements between mentors and mentees. In the end, he provides us some directions to reflect on as we continue to engage in mentoring.

୶

Mentoring as Lessons in Cultural Performance, Bound/Less/Ness of Need, Destination and a Return
(Bryant Keith Alexander)

In 1981, as a Black male entering the university setting, I was immediately looking for a mentor. At the time, maybe my search was really for a *role-model,* someone on whom I could code on and emulate; an individual whose professional demeanor and accomplishments would set a standard for my own aspirations and would make real the possibilities of my desire—even from a distance, even without direct engagement. At the time, I was looking for someone who was Black (African American) because I felt,

thought and needed at the time to see the professional accomplishment mirrored in a materiality of presence that linked us in a delimited racial past yet projected a potential for future accomplishment that transcended (or worked through) the particularity of race. In my six years of education at that university, completing both a bachelor's and a master's degree, I did not encounter any Black faculty in my primary discipline, and through the campus only a few Black male administrators served as role models. But I find that what sustained me during this time was shifting my desire from seeking a role model with my racial particularity to embracing encounters with several individuals who became mentors, individuals who took an interest in helping me to craft skills of expression and understanding my own potential as a student, scholar and future professor. They served as critical and compassionate guides leading me to the horizon of my own potential while meeting their own needs/roles.

Mentoring as Lessons in Cultural Performance

As a student, during my mentoring relationships with an undergraduate professor in the Education Department, a professor in the Speech Communication Department, a professor in the English Department and a series of beloved administrative assistants (secretaries in the varying departments and units that I frequented), I discovered that the mentoring relationships offered me lessons in cultural performance. The senior or experienced individual provides structured guidance to the neophyte in a particular cultural context. And of course, all contexts are cultural; locations and situations with practiced ways of being that require new arrivals to learn the scripts and perform to the standards. These cultural contexts are human political and social relations with expected norms in order to gain legitimacy (e.g., graduation, appointment, retention, tenure, and promotion in the academy). They are organizational structures that establish relational expectations sanctioning passage and advancement within the ranks of the known-to-be valued—to which we all strive. And such cultural contexts engage acts of performance and performativity—things done, things doing, and things to be done as the expectations of believability and acceptability, always evaluated, and always under surveillance. These are the same lessons that I believe that colleague Kate Willink speaks of (in this essay) when she encourages junior faculty to "take time to learn the culture and history of your university."

And it is this demand/command performance to which the neophyte rehearses with the mentor offering stage directions (or staging directions): Offering suggestions about blocking and movement (navigating the cultural context of the institution); offering suggestions about gesture and gaze (how to behave and what to look out for); offering suggestions about rhythm and momentum (timelines to accomplishment to meet your mark); offering suggestions about voice and volume (how to voice opinion, how to write, and later where to publish and how much); offering suggestions about relations to space and other characters (who to engage for what purposes and to what degree); offering suggestions about finding your light, which is always about promoting your potential and helping others to see your value and the worth of your contri-

bution; and offering suggestions about limits and constraints, as well as performance choices, levels of engagement, and when to say the lines of your script and when to subvert the master narrative. Each of the professors and the administrative assistants who became mentors helped me to not only navigate the practiced places of the university, but they also offered me deep understandings of my role within the cultural performance of academia—a role (and my potential) to not only navigate and maintain the system, but when needed—empowered me with the critical tools and insights to resist and transform the mechanism and machinations of that same system.

Mentoring as a Bound/less/ness of Need

In being a mentee I came to understand the mentoring relationship as a bound/less/ness of need that is not unidirectional, but reciprocal. For me the construction of mentoring as a *bound/less/ness of need* captures the complexity of the relationships that I had with the individuals noted above and with future mentor/mentee relationships that I have subsequently had in my own shifting roles as each. To be bounded is to have limits and be limited, a finite system of capability. In many ways entering in mentoring relationships (as a mentee) I often felt bounded, limited in my own knowledge and my own experiences, with a narrow scope of seeing beyond the moment—especially as entering a new cultural system or in relation to what I saw as the range of experience of the mentor. My *mentors each helped to broaden my scope and my range of vision*—each systematically introduced me to a range of possibility and new ways of seeing myself in relation to theory, in relation to policy and practice, in relation to social constructions of acceptability within the area of study or arena of practice. My *mentors each helped me to unshackle the expanse of my reach.* They did this in ways that both showed me possibility, but forced me to embark on a journey of questioning and critiquing my own internalization of limits, my own internal oppression, and see how I contributed to the limited range of my own expression. My mentors each introduced me a critical vocabulary and a critical set of methodologies that helped me to *articulate and identify the hidden forces and ambiguities that operate beneath the appearance*; to *guide judgment and evaluation emanating from my own discontents*; to help critically and sensitively understand my sense of being in relation to *other interpretive communities*, tools that helped me to *demystify the ubiquity and magnitude of power*, and tools that helped me *name and analyze what is intuitively felt* as a way of trusting my instincts and using them as impetus for engaging acts of *social justice* (drawn from Madison). In these ways the skills they taught and embodied as a critical praxis, helped me beyond just solving an immediate problem—but offered me a way of forever seeing the boundlessness of my own potential—that was never just about my own personal accomplishment, but what I could also do to help others through my work and my being.

But like the acting/directing/performance metaphor that I have been playing out, such mentoring relationships sometimes demand improvisation—the kind of encouraged chance-taking that individualizes the career or educational experience of any player/actor/student/scholar on shifting stages of their cultural engagement, differen-

tiating the mentor from the mentee. Hence mentoring is not a problem of replicating the self in the other, but an encouraged exploration of the self that expands a field of knowing, and maybe dynamizes a particular field of shared engagement. And in this sense, I found that my mentoring relationships at this stage of my academic life were also reciprocal in nature. My mentors were not just altruistically giving of themselves—they were also getting something. Maybe this was *mentoring as a performance of professionalism*, affecting the future of the discipline and of the academy. Maybe this was *mentoring as a social activism and cultural intervention*. Maybe this was *mentoring as engaged pedagogy*, the formal and informal means of disseminating knowledge to educate the whole student. Maybe this was *mentoring as a form of giving back (or paying forward)* to what may have been a positive experience with his or her own mentor—or maybe even a recuperation from a bad or missing experience. In either case, the reciprocity of giving and receiving in mentoring feeds a dynamic of what my colleague Bernadette Calafell (in this essay) calls "an ethics of love, care, and politics" bounded in the reciprocal needs of both the mentor and mentee, a relational dynamic in which both benefits. I know I did and do in my continuing mentoring relationships.

Mentoring as a Destination and Return: A Conclusion

I have been most lucky in finding and maintaining mentoring relationships at varying stages of my professional and academic career (student, professor and administrator). I entered my doctoral program and was immediately embraced by a teacher/scholar, Elyse Lamm Pineau, who understood the nature of my interests, a relationship that crossed borders of race and gender; a professor who fostered my academic growth as we settled into a meaningful friendship based in mutual respect, and dare I say it, love (hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*). My dear, recently departed, friend John Warren (who also speaks of his experience in this issue) and I shared the same pleasure.

As a new Assistant Professor, and as a part of a university-based mentoring program, matching junior faculty with tenured/senior faculty, I was assigned a senior professor in my area of study, Professor Keith Henning, but it was my department chair at the time, Judith Hamera, who offered me a template of personal and professional sociality that helped me to focus my activities in the retention, tenure and promotion process while providing me with a sense of place in the department, the university, and the academy at large. That mentoring relationship has extended to professional collaborations and a deep and meaningful friendship.

In my stint as an Associate Dean and Dean my role model and mentor was a strong university president who is a Black (African American) man. And while the trajectory of my own personal movement from faculty to academic dean may not have been easily predicted, it was my faculty mentor, Judith Hamera, during my initial days on the campus, who marshaled me to the Office of the President to meet James M. Rosser, who was also a graduate from the institution where I had recently completed my doctoral degree. And while there may have been many intentions in that act, I believe that mentors create opportunities and experiences that mentees need to

further their success, helping them to see and encounter their own potential. For me this was such an act of mentoring.

My relationship as a mentor has been rewarding with students at varying levels of their personal and academic journeys and differing goals and aspirations, but all of whom either approached me directly or I approached them—sensing a need for a particular connection that was as much about what I thought they needed from me, and what I needed from them. My personal actions towards initiating a mentoring relationship are sometimes located within the complexity of needs that bridge the borders of community building, collaboration, and consignment as a particular service/advisement requirement of the department or university (drawn from Johnson and Ridley). But sometimes it is also about two important needs that are not always discussed openly and honestly because of some suspicion of intellectual or creative pouching. For sometimes I approach a student about a mentoring relationship as an acknowledgment of their brilliance or talent in a certain area—and how I might be better informed in those areas knowing that I also bring knowledge/accomplishment/ stature that might also inform the student's education in other ways. Such an admission on my part is about revealing the reciprocal desire of the mentee/mentor relationship while respecting the necessary boundaries of intellectual and creative property; using the relationships to facilitate the personal and respectful growth of each; as John Warren writes in this essay, a mentoring relationship that is *collaborative* and grounded in *mutual respect*.

The second issue that I must confess to, as I believe Bernadette Calafell attests and yearns to in this essay as well, is an actual need on my part to mentor students of color and sometimes in my own particularity, Black (African American) students. The ability to have had a Black (African American) teacher/professor/mentor during my years as a student is a missing part of my educational experience. It is a wound that has yet to heal. And while I valued the non-Black (African American) mentors who embraced me along the way, I wonder what insights I would have gathered through the particularity of the missing experience that would have helped prepare me for my own encounters. Hence, I have spent a large component of my initial career and research excavating the politics of race in the academy and the performance of culture in the classroom through my own experiences to document and make prevalent the articulate experiences of Black (African American) students, professors and administrators, often with the necessity to foreground, as does Calafell relative to being a "queer bisexual woman of color," my added specificity as a Black gay man. I engage such work not only as scholarly production but also as an act of mentoring Black (African American) students and young queer scholars who encounter my work. And while such a mentoring is not immediate in our personal encounter, it is still intimate in a sharing of experience. It is a narration of experience designed to help them to navigate cultural spaces. The scholarship serves as a potential lens to help them see around corners and to anticipate potential aspects of their own experiences. *Hence scholarly production on the particularity of race and gendered experience becomes a performance of mentoring.*

So I unabashedly confess that, whether as an academic dean or a classroom professor, I pay special attention to the Black (African American) students and even the gay/queer identified students because I also understand the isolation of that particular identity construct and the search for role models and mentors. I welcome their diverse concerns to be addressed with directness—as I sense that they are approaching the nexus of my identity as a Black/Gay/Professor/Administrator. Recently, as a sidebar while waiting for the copy machine in our department mailroom (as I returned to teaching for the 2011-2012 academic year), a non-Black (African American) colleague commented on passing my office one day and with the door opened, seeing what appeared to him to be "all the Black students in the department." He was curious to know what was going on in my office that day. My simple remark was, "We were having a meeting." And the nature of my comment, while slightly crass, pivoted on both his unspoken assessment (*that birds of a feather flock together*) and the actuality of the occasion as some presumed conspiratorial engagement of Black slaves planning an escape.

For outside of some organized group meeting, a group of Black students had come to my office for mentoring to talk about experiences they were having in the department, college or other sectors of the university. They wanted to get my take. And in that moment, like all moments of mentoring, there was a communion of spirits: meeting the needs of all parties to connect, share and inform each other. And in this sense, I have completed the pilgrimage of my own desire as a mentor with all my attending specificity—I begin to address the needs of the mentee that once was made manifested in the Black students now seeking my advice.

Mentoring has the potential to establish genealogies of professional and academic engagements that enrich the cultural contexts of the happening and the lives of those involved in such relational encounters. The fact that Richie Hao, a former master's student of mine and a former doctoral student of John Warren, is the lead author on this essay and organizer of the conference panel that gave rise to this discussion serves as testament to the enduring legacy of positive mentoring relationships and the boundlessness of love across borders of geography, as well as life and death.

<div align="center">❧</div>

Mentoring and "Professional Development" From an Other Perspective
(Bernadette Marie Calafell)

Many years ago, when I was a new faculty member in my first job, one of my mentors from graduate school was invited to campus to speak. The invitation allowed him to share his knowledge with people across the university and the department, but, more importantly, it gave me the opportunity to feel a little bit of home in a new and faraway place.

Upon entering college, the thought of leaving home was unfathomable, so after finishing two years at the local community college, I stayed in state at the largest and closest university. I first encountered this soon-to-be mentor when I was an under-

graduate student and he was a young faculty member fresh out of his doctoral program. Though I initially found him a bit surly, when I became a faculty member myself, I came to appreciate and understand this performance. I was drawn to him because, like me, he was Mexican American and his work focused on Chicana/o and Latina/o studies in communication. As time passed and I entered a master's program at the same university, I began to work more closely with him, and he became a key member of my committee. When I finished my master's program and had finally gotten the gumption to leave my home state, spurred by queer glimpses of freedom offered in my master's research, my mentor supported my choice, even if most of my family didn't understand why I had to leave. He continued to mentor me through collaboration in publication, through networking, and by simply being a sounding board for my anxiety. Though I had long left the university in which he worked, he was still a mentor to me.

When I finished my doctorate and started a job as a new faculty member, there he was to support me once again when I invited him out to give a talk. His visit was research focused, but, in some ways, it was also the opportunity for him to "check on me," particularly because he knew I was not happy in my current situation. This intention was not patriarchal as some might have interpreted his actions, rather it was a part of the ethics, love, and care that underlie a shared understanding of our relationality as academics of color. Similar to the queer relationality in mentoring theorized by Krishna Pattisapu and myself, his mentoring was based in our shared affect of Otherness. His mentoring was ethical, loving, and *political*. I didn't need to explicitly communicate why I needed him to come; he knew. He understood the challenges I had been facing as a recent graduate of a Ph.D. program who was now a faculty of color because he had also *felt* them.

Now as an associate professor and Department Chair, many years removed from that visit and the "moment" of our mentoring, as John T. Warren writes in this essay, I reflect on the cycle of mentoring and my positionality as continual mentee and mentor. These spaces are always in flux, but, each time, they are undergirded by an ethics of love, care, and politics. However, I'm not afraid to say that I've been hurt. Maybe one too many times I've been hurt. It's probably not a popular affect to acknowledge here. I value reciprocity and vulnerability, but as a queer bisexual woman of color, I know this is a dangerous move. I have been hurt by students and colleagues who fail to acknowledge their white privilege, potential mentors and mentees. But they are not the only ones. They do not hurt me the most. I cannot assume that all Othered people in the academy, whether students or colleagues, want to be involved in a political committed reciprocal mentoring relationship. I cannot assume that they recognize the ways they are complicit and actively engaged with the hegemonic civility based on white middle class passive aggressiveness that governs the academy. And so I've been hurt.

Not all my graduate advisees are students of color, though most would identity as cultural Others. Those are the students who are drawn to me. I've often wondered what expectations or perceptions my advisees who do not identify as cultural Others

have of me. I am not talking about resistance or backlash. I've written about that already (Calafell "When Will"). Very few straight, white men or women ask me to be their advisor. For those who do, I wonder about their choices. I don't wonder because I am narcissistic, but because I consider what I might bring to them outside of research overlap, specifically in regards to "professional development" that may be different than the "professional development" I offer to my students who identify as cultural Others. Certainly, the "professional development" my mentor provided me could not have been dispensed by just anyone. His experiences as a Chicano in the academy were invaluable to me. Now as a faculty many times I have longed to pass similar lessons on to Chicana/o graduate students, but they are few and far between. I also recognize my experience is unique as a woman of color who had women of color formal advisors for each of my degrees: Lisa A. Flores, Olga Davis, and D. Soyini Madison, respectively. More often than not, students of color, regardless of their topic or political consciousness, find themselves working with a majority white faculty. I turn this around to consider what white straight students might get in terms of "professional development" from a queer woman of color faculty. I don't do this to center whiteness, but rather to nuance the experience of faculty of color, who hold precarious spaces in departments where they and their research are often tokenized or exoticized, particularly when they teach in the area of culture and communication. What do we risk and gain in our "professional development" or mentoring of culturally dominant students? What is at stake in presenting our vulnerable selves? Like Thomas Nakayama, another invaluable mentor, I wonder in order to reverse the gaze and to understand what we can learn about Otherness in relationship to dominance.

   I always hold out hope…
…and sometimes it comes in the most unexpected places.

   Dawn Marie is one of the brightest and most committed doctoral students I have ever encountered. She works hard, she's smart, and she has so much motivation. With or without me, she will get where she needs to be. She is the kind of student any advisor would be happy to work with. I was her advisor for four years and now she has graduated. We've been in several classes together and sat many times over in my office talking about a multitude of subjects. In each course we've been in together, she has visibly acted as an ally to queer and/or people of color. She's not just an ally when it is convenient to her. She's white, she's straight, and she's a feminist. She continually puts herself on the line. As my colleague Amy Kilgard writes in this essay, part of mentoring means "putting your body on the line not for another but with another." Feminists of color have long documented troubled histories between white women and women of color (for examples see Moraga and Anzaldúa). I have also addressed the tenuous and successful relationship I've had in making alliances with white women (Calafell "When Will"; "Notes From"). But there is something about Dawn Marie that *feels* different. She's not the kind of feminist who ignores intersectionality and her own whiteness. She's not the kind of feminist who needs high theory to justify her voice in the academy. She's not the kind of feminist who's oppressive. In her performances of ally, she's teaching me a great deal about mentoring, ethics, love, care, and

politics. As Bryant Alexander writes in this essay, I am also gaining a great deal from her in this mentoring relationship.

Like my mentor, I impart upon Dawn Marie those things that one might call "professional development"; the work that extends beyond the classroom and is more about academic survival. However, the "professional development" I'm imparting is from an Other view: how to be accountable and reflexive about your white and heterosexual privilege in your research and, professionally, how to not use (white) womanhood to trump or silence Others, to consider things from an Other perspective as well as your own, and to know not just the dominant side of the research story, but know that many of us (people of color) have done the work already even if it's not always acknowledged or cited. How do I know these things? I know them because they have been spaces of hurt and oppression for me as a scholar of color. I know them from an Other perspective. As a person who is an ally, Dawn Marie already knows much about each of these things I have listed, but I hope through our mentoring relationship she can feel the pain that occurs when these things are overlooked as I share my experiences. *Do I expect too much from her? Do others ask the same of their advisees?*

Dawn Marie has taught me a great deal about being open to alliances and the textures of critical love and mentoring. The basis of our relationship and its "professional development" is based in one of my former doctoral advisees' Rachel Griffin's notion of critical love. Griffin writes, "an ethic of care roots in critical love supports humanization, dialogue, and strong emotions such as fear, frustration, and anger. This type of love recognizes the pride and pain of humanness at the intersections of complex identities" (216). Griffin offers critical love as a space of hope in the academy. Like Griffin, I have also theorized about the possibility of love in the academy (Calafell "Mentoring and Love"). I have located this love in the homeplace established through mentoring relationships between faculty and students of color. Griffin starts to texture critical love across relations of difference. In this piece I have started to engage her work in an attempt to theorize critical love across power differentials and consider how it informs our mentoring and what we pass on as "professional development" to our mentees (as well as what they pass on to us). Much remains to be said, but I bring forth the words of John T. Warren, another informal mentor who left us too soon, as an invitation to dialogue and to signal the possibility and hope of our relations as acts of social justice, "Social justice is about love, about leading with a critically engaged love that seeks not just community, but community with a purpose, a goal, a hope, a vision of equality that trumps hate and division" (*Performing Purity* 3).

John's words, the momentary mentoring (as he describes in this essay) he gifted us with, still resonate even if *our* moment has passed.

<p style="text-align:center">❧</p>

Between Sweetness and Snark: Mentoring's Many Manifestations
(Kate Willink)

I am grateful to scholar-teachers who are deeply invested in critical pedagogy, subjectivity (DeLissevoy) and relationality (Leibniz)—"a type of relationship grounded in mutuality, reciprocity, and an understanding of an essential human equality that defies traditional educational hierarchies" (Jacobs). John T. Warren shone as one of those bright lights in our discipline who reminds me of the promise and potential of mentoring in the academy—something I often lose sight of in my laundry list of overcommitments and overwhelm. So I locate my comments on mentoring in this space between sweetness and snark—between potentiality, possibility (see Alexander in this essay), and actuality of what mentoring means for developing scholars, and specifically for the overwhelmed, overcommitted junior faculty member.

On my more pessimistic days, I have been known to argue that academia is a pyramid scheme. Like Tupperware sales people, faculty try to recruit students to work hard under them so that they can capitalize on that labor and grow in status, if not wealth. Alternately, sometimes I wonder if the academy is about creating "mini-mes" (what Alexander calls "a problem of replicating the self in the other"), molding people in our own image in order to grow our own importance through our academic offspring. But on my better days I remember that mentoring relationships are relationships of desire. They are funded by attention, care, and love and built on mutuality. As a dedicated teacher and model mentor, John affirms for me that mentoring is a much more sacred and serious responsibility. I offer a few thoughts to express my gratitude for the legacy John leaves and the hope he offers all of us as we stop to mark his passing as a great loss for our discipline.

The legacy of John Warren, two or three things I know for sure (see Langellier)

I first met John Warren on the page in 2003. As is common in the academy, scholars become our conversation partners, and, when we are lucky, mentors, long before we meet them in the flesh. As a communication scholar studying race and school desegregation, his newly published book *Performing Purity: Whiteness, Pedagogy, and the Reconstitution of Power* constituted a foundational tome in my graduate education. As time passed, I went on to explore John's work published in such venues as *Communication Education*, *Cultural Studies⇔Critical Methodologies*, and *Text and Performance Quarterly*. His articles, adorned with stars, squiggles, and vigorous underlines, belie the intensity of my appreciation for his contributions and for the ways they shaped my thought, pedagogy, and subsequent mentoring.

After that, our relationship progressed as I lurked as an eager and intimidated graduate student at his NCA panels—enjoying seeing in person the author who had occupied my work cited page for some time. John was one of those academic rock stars of my sub-discipline. Of course, I didn't talk to him. I just watched and wondered. I couldn't figure out how he had accomplished all that he did in such a short

time. Should I have mustered the courage to initiate a conversation with John? He probably would have reciprocated. But I didn't know at the time that mentoring and relationships come in many forms and indeed are the lifeblood of the academy.

Since our first encounters at NCA, I have exchanged emails with John as I served as a reviewer for his special issue of *Text and Performance Quarterly*, "SomeBodies(?) in School." In our email I thanked him for sending his advisee, Richie Hao, our way as a new faculty member. We exchanged pleasantries. It wasn't until WSCA 2011 on our panel on mentoring that I first talked to John.

For the panel, I had been assigned, as a faculty up for tenure, to address advice on mentoring for junior faculty members. Enter the snark. But first I should note that while pre-tenure is a time we need mentoring the most, it is often least formalized or easy to find. You have left the shelter of your doctoral adviser. You have entered the space of time-starved faculty. And now you have students looking at you to be their mentor. You are under extreme pressure to perform and half the time you are not sure what the heck to do in this new role.

These are just a few permutations of the scene you are entering that make it imperative that you protect yourself, have a plan, and build your own community of mentors and supporters. I offer a few practical tips to survive and hopefully thrive as a junior faculty member. My take home point is to be promiscuous yet savvy! There is a particularity and intensity to the actuality of pre-tenure mentoring needs. It is easy to forget your communities and become isolated and fearful as you frantically move with myopic focus toward the brass ring. Yet this is exactly the time to seek out multiple sources and particular types of support—to remember and draw strength from what Amy Kilgard calls the "coalitional politics of mentoring." Here are a few mentors to seek out:

Organizational Historian/Cultural Guide: As a junior faculty, take time to learn the culture and history of your university. When I first came to my current university, I remember being baffled and incensed by the decentralized nature of the university. Sitting down with one of my mentors who had been at the university for two decades helped me understand the particular economic history of the university that created a decentralized structure. Although I don't always like it, I did learn to maximize some of the freedoms in this model and stopped wasting time resenting a deeply entrenched system. Learning about the values, histories, and practices within your institution helps you figure out how to navigate the system successfully.

Work-Life Mentor: I first identified my desire for a work-life mentor in graduate school. My professor, George Noblit, lived on a farm thirty minutes from campus, did not have Internet at home, and disappeared from campus for the entire summer unapologetically. He also happened to be a prolific, well-respected, endowed professor. I quickly recognized that I wanted him to be my mentor in relation to negotiating a work-life balance. George wasn't in my discipline. He wasn't much like me—a jolly, bearded, middle-aged man who plays in a blues band several evenings a week. But he was happy, unconventional, gentle, and successful—just the combination of qualities I desired in my own career. I am grateful for my work-life mentors who remind me to

be jolly, escape the constant demands of the university, and connect with communities of choice who have nothing to do with life in the ivory tower.

Venting Mentors/Friendtors: Peer mentors are invaluable. I have one junior faculty colleague who used to say to me, "agita!" His point was that we had a great ability to create agita when we vented our frustrations. To live in agita-land, which can function temporarily as a twisted and necessary form of community, would be counterproductive purgatory. But sometimes it is so confirming and cathartic to talk things through with people who see things the same way you do. I have another friend, from a different department. We try to go on weekly walks together. Here is a taste of our conversations: "****! ****! ****! Can you believe… How could they possibly…. We don't get paid enough to …." These venting, consoling, supporting sessions have done wonders for my spirit and my sanity. Every time that I connect to peers across campus who I admire and adore I am reminded of the better selves of academia and all the wonderful people I get to work with. I feel proud of my scholarly community and my profession. I am affirmed through these relationships (and lord knows academics could use some affirming!).

The No Committee: Form this committee before you start your first job. It is quite possibly the most important committee to your success. When you are asked to be on another university committee, to speak to a community organization, to write a piece for an edited-collection, you reply: "I will think about it and get back to you." Whatever you do, do not say yes! Then take this request to your no committee and have them advise you on what you should do. Academics are often bad at saying no. You could sabotage a brilliant career by not saying no enough. So, find some badass friends who love you fiercely and want you to succeed and ask them to be on your no committee. Choose folks who are tougher than you. They will no doubt need to mentor you in the art of saying no. I am indebted to my no committee beyond measure. You will be too. For more on the saying no and other vital skills, read *The Black Academic's Guide to Winning Tenure—Without Losing Your Soul.*

Finally, I should mention a mentor I wish I knew to ask for. I wish I had sought out a mentor for my spirit. Some folks with traditional religious affiliations have this. But since I do not affiliate with institutionalized religion, I did not have or create this safe haven. And yet sometimes the academy can feel soul crushing. Many times I could have used a mentor to nurture my spirit, remind me to have faith, and relieve me of self-delusions of grandeur and control. There are many ways to navigate this path. But in retrospect I wish I had not walked it alone so often. There are many communities who will lift you up, hold you in the light, and help you connect to your higher purpose. I wish I had known that those of us invested in the life of the mind or even the materiality of community could benefit from regularly connecting to the life and community of the spirit.

On the mentoring panel at WSCA, there was a marked difference from the frenetic cynicism and pragmatism of my comments on mentoring in contrast to the contemplative comments John offered. John spoke of his own mentors with tenderness and longing and his advisees with humility and love. He spoke with regret about the

fact that one of his mentors had yet to meet his younger son and how more broadly he missed the closeness of their relationship—now separated by geography and time. He spoke of the lifecycles and varying intensities of mentoring relationships. His vision was so profound and yet so human and humble. John's talk (in this essay) reminded me of two or three things I know for sure.

One of the pleasures of being a faculty member is the small acts that ask so little of us can have such a large impact on our students' lives. But the relationships that sustain us, that nurture the next generation of scholars, that fund the kind of academic community to which we all long to belong, are built with immense attention, intention, and commitment to a vision of pedagogy, education, and social justice that demands heroic efforts, deep love, and a profound relational ethic (see both Alexander and Warren in this essay). One thing I know for sure is that I am a better teacher scholar because of John's contributions to our discipline and aspire to be a better mentor inspired by his example.

John and I exchanged emails the day before he passed. I anticipated our deepening relationship, fueled in part by the goodwill and good company of his advisees Krishna (who is now a doctoral student) and Richie traveling between Carbondale, IL and Denver. Through Richie and Krishna, I have felt his touch, observed his mentoring ethic, and seen the kind of scholar-teacher he was. And now his vitality, care, and love shine through them. John's legacy of dedicated mentoring across difference lives on—embodied in his students, his mentors, his coauthors, and his many friends and inscribed in his numerous articles on whiteness, pedagogy, and power.

As a former Carnegie Foundation president wrote in his article, "Taking Learning Seriously,"

> We cannot treat all acts of scholarship indiscriminately. We have to ask which of them meet certain standards and genuinely contribute to knowledge. We care about standards of quality because we recognize that scholars are engaged in work that none can accomplish alone. Since we can't do it alone, we depend on the scholarship of others as the building blocks for our own scholarship. Thoughtless critics often ridicule the fact that our acts of scholarship usually end with long lists of references. A list of references is a set of thank-you notes. It is our way of acknowledging that, without the people whom we reference, we could not have done the work we did. We are members of a community of scholars. (Shulman 15)

There are days when being in the academy feels a lonely place. But days like today, scholars like John remind me of two or three things I know for sure. As scholars, we are pathologically indebted to one another. We leave thank you notes in our references, invite people into our conversations in our literature reviews, and recognize long before we ever meet our colleagues that we are engaged in work that cannot be accomplished alone. I know as I continue to write I will leave many thank-you notes to John in my list of references. I only regret that I could not deliver them in person.

❧

Mentoring as Coalitional Politics
(Amy Kilgard)

Is it possible that you grow into mentoring, like you grow into your older cousin's hand-me-down sweater? At first, the sleeves are too long, so you stretch your arms out or roll up the sleeves—like your mentor Craig Gingrich-Philbrook always rolls up his sleeves to begin a performance[1]. And this mentoring is a performance, too, and you have to begin somewhere. You feel like a phony as you try on the old/new garment and perform as if you know the right advice to give—and through your performance, you know you are "making not faking" this mentoring role (Turner 93).

But maybe your growth spurt is over and you're left with the oversized, stretched-out, once fashionable now questionable garb left by others. The mentoring you've received relies on old-fashioned or culturally biased patterns that do not fit your own experiences or desires as a mentor.

And sometimes you want to grow faster because you admire that mentoring so much, but you're just not ready to wear it yet. Or maybe the sweater you were left with spent a little too long in the dryer and shrunk so that when you put it on now it bursts at the seams; your own life experience exceeds the mentoring you've received.

I like the image of growing into (and even exceeding) mentoring because it implies a constantly changing process. It implies, or requires, openness—to process, to people, to putting your body on the line not for another but with another. In short, it implies a coalitional politics. Bernadette Calafell's reminder in this essay that "mentoring is always political" is foundational here. Coalitional politics means intentionally joining together across differences to enact social change and combat oppression. What would a coalitional politics of mentoring look like? In this section, I postulate that a coalitional mentoring practice might resemble a hand-me-down garment in several ways. First, such mentoring makes explicit its lineages, highlighting our connections and access (or lack thereof) to cultures of power. Second, it is a crafted/produced/patchworked endeavor, a practice that is performative and embodied as we alter what has come before to try it anew in our own experience. Third, like a hand-me-down, coalitional mentoring is, or should be, a sustainable practice. It makes use of finite resources in innovative and purposeful ways.

---

[1] Craig Gingrich-Philbrook often begins his solo performances by rolling up his sleeves. In the stage directions for his script, "Refreshment," he states, "If theatre lighting is used, it comes up in a general wash upon me seated in the chair, looking out at the audience, taking stock of them for a moment and rolling up my sleeves before I begin" (353).

Tangled Webs

> On the first Friday of every month for many years, I attended a seminar on feminist scholarship comprised of interested faculty from all over the university. Three of the members of that seminar wrote unsolicited letters on my behalf for my retention, tenure, and promotion file.

In the academy, networking can feel like a game (with winners and losers) of "who knows the most important people?" We develop mentoring relationships from our overlapping webs of cultural memberships and associations. However, sometimes those connections and the ways of making those connections are obscured or deliberately hidden from some participants. Bryant Alexander acknowledges in this essay that "mentoring has the potential to establish genealogies of professional and academic engagement." To practice coalitional mentoring, we need to make visible/explicit these genealogies. We also need to work to acknowledge longstanding lineages of mentoring that have been erased in the traditionally white academy. One place to look is in the necessary "informal relationships" Richie Hao highlights in his framing remarks as imperative tactics for many scholars of color in the academy.

> When I was an undergraduate theatre and communication double major, esteemed performance studies scholar Beverly Whitaker Long agreed to serve on my honor's thesis committee. After seeing the show I directed, she turned to me and said, in her gorgeous southern accent, "Amy, that was just beautiful," and that was all, for the moment.

In their article "Treading Across *Lines in the Sand*: Performing Bodies in Coalitional Subjectivity," Kimberlee Pérez and Dustin Goltz discuss the coalitional and relational nature of collaborative personal narrative. By thinking of mentoring as an always/already collaborative and relational performance, we may use their insights to consider the coalitional elements of mentoring. Specifically, Pérez and Goltz posit the need to focus on "the narration of self [as mentor] in dialogue, in discussion, in contestation, and in collaborative relation" (248). My colleagues in this essay each identify the complex and beautiful ways that such relationality is an important aspect of mentoring for them. Bryant Alexander's discussion of the critical praxis of mentors helping him understand "the boundlessness of [his] own potential—that was never just about [his] personal accomplishment, but what [he] could also do to help others through [his] work and [his] being," highlights the processual nature of becoming a mentor by becoming more bound/less in our quest for self (and other) actualization and social justice.

> When I was a graduate student teacher for the first time, I remember multiple conversations with my mentor Deanna Fassett about my fears and successes. Now, when I go to visit with her graduate student teachers at their orientation, I am thrilled when I get to discuss my fears and successes with them and with Deanna again.

Arts and Crafts

> At my first graduate performance hour during my first month of graduate work, I watched Bryant Alexander perform a narrative/poem that demonstrated reflexivity, cultural situatedness, and exceptional performance savvy—qualities that I strive to develop in my own work. As he writes in this essay, "Maybe this was *mentoring as social activism and cultural intervention*. Maybe this was *mentoring as engaged pedagogy*."

The hand-me-down metaphor highlights for me the ways mentoring is partially about making-do. As any recipient of a hand-me-down garment knows, the item rarely fits perfectly as it is. I remember my mother hemming too-long pants, sewing patches on the elbows of my cousins' worn shirts, and adding fabric to extend one particularly awful 1970s skirt. These (often gendered) practices point to an element of craftiness or craftedness that is an important component of coalitional mentoring. We must take an active role in creating a mentoring practice that rejects oppressive, exclusionary, and uncaring acts that may have been a part of our mentoring legacy and that adds to or alters those acts to help make a kind of mentoring that fits better.

> At my first panel at a professional conference, I looked out into the audience and saw three of my faculty members sitting among the ten audience members.

I would be remiss if I did not highlight the importance of the body to this part of my metaphor. Mentoring is an embodied practice that relies on the particularities and situatedness of our bodies in time, space, and culture. When we try to alter mentoring practices that have been passed down/over to us, we must attend to our own embodied relationships to people and to the world. One way we might do this is through intentional co-presence in disparate situations and experiences. I know I have felt the power of such co-presence as a powerful coalitional tool in classrooms, at conferences, and in community groups.

> At an earlier panel at the conference where we initially presented this work on mentoring, six of my current and former graduate students performed about artifacts and identity. I looked out into the audience and saw four of my faculty colleagues, six of my peers and friends from graduate school, and esteemed mentors from three or four other performance studies programs sitting in the audience.

Sustainability

> When I got an interview for a performance studies position, Craig Gingrich-Philbrook sat down with me and said, "You have to be a little flashy. You already are. Just don't be afraid to show them."

The last way coalitional mentoring is like a hand-me-down is that it is a sustainable practice. Kate Willink astutely argues in this essay the need to have and cultivate multiple kinds of mentors. Having different people serve different kinds of mentoring roles provides sustainability of these relationships over time. These multiple mentoring relationships may help better sustain the mentored person, as well. We might imagine the legion of mentors standing with each one of us, not always united with us or

with one another in viewpoint or experience, but in coalition with us, sustaining us in the academy.

As my dear friend John Warren wrote in his section of this essay, mentoring is momentary, partial, fleeting. It happens in our interactions with others as we are successfully mentored (or not) and as we attempt to successfully mentor others. It is multidirectional, as we are sometimes mentored and mentoring in the same interaction. As a person who has recently been promoted and granted tenure, I know that I have passed through and I'm now on the other side of an important transitional moment in academic life. However, I am still in the liminal space of coming to know how to be a "senior colleague." In this time/space of reflection, I remember fragments of mentoring interactions. They sustain me.

> As I sit writing this paper in the house John Warren shared with his spouse and children before his untimely death, I remember the many hours we spent here (and elsewhere) together: writing, playing cards, eating "cardiac death macaroni and cheese," talking about teaching, complaining about university administrations, drinking wine. I look at the photos of John with his family and friends and I know he is here as I write this and as you read this.

I recognize that in my privileged position as a tenured, white, associate professor, I now have a greater responsibility to foster coalitional mentoring relationships with colleagues and students. Thinking about mentoring as coalitional politics allows me to embrace the momentary and ephemeral nature of mentoring across individual similarities and differences. Mentoring across time and across difference fosters contingent, yet valuable, networks of power and resistance within the academy.

We went through John's clothes yesterday and I tried on one of his jackets—one of the ones he wore to conferences before he lost all that weight that had to be cancer, but we didn't know it yet. It fit. I didn't have to roll up the sleeves or hem it up or lose weight or anything. I put it on and I hope to wear it, like I hope to wear the mentoring he shared with me. I hope to continue to grow into all those hand-me-downs—to continue to grow into mentoring.

<center>❧</center>

Mentoring: Uneven, Under-Researched and Unending
(John T. Warren)

I think mentoring of graduate students and pre-tenured faculty members is largely uneven and under-researched. I suspect many of us believe we do it, though we may not be able to name practices that we do regularly or do with some sort of assessment as to its effectiveness. I suspect that some departments have sophisticated structures for mentoring while others don't; I suspect such matters are much more meaningful, intentional, and/or successful in some places than in others. I would bet most of us say we do a lot to mentoring on the one hand, while on the other report fairly dismal or (at the very least) uneven experiences in being mentored ourselves.

My own experiences were quite uneven. At times, I felt protected. As an undergrad, I had the ear (and heart?) of my advisor. I felt much part of something bigger and it was her guidance and presence that made me become a member of the discipline. I wanted to be just like her. When I went to grad school, choosing a school different than her alma mater, we lost some of the connection. I went 13+ years without talking to her, my emails unanswered. I felt I lost a part of me.

My graduate advisor was my champion, my hero. I placed her on a pedestal so high no one could possibly stand upon it. I modeled myself on her, adopted many of her ways of talking, walking, being. When I graduated and took my first position, I slipped off her radar. I was, effectively, replaced by the next graduate student in the long line of advisees who were waiting for their turn. It took some time, some reflexivity, and some experience before I could understand how and why someone so important can become so distant.

My mentor during my assistant professor days was, essentially, a guardian angel. She was a lunch mate, a best friend, a trusted colleague, a cheerleader for me. I doubt I ever met the praise she sang of me. I returned her love by leaving the university just as she was moving me through tenure, early. We touch base occasionally, but have less and less to say. We talk of what was; we talk of what is now at my former (her still current) institutional home. We trade Christmas cards—"my, how the kids have gotten big!" She has never met my youngest, Isaac, 3 years old next month. Elias, whom she last saw when he was 8 months, is now 5 ½.

Truth is, mentoring is often times momentary. There are important reasons for this—when in the moment of our collaboration (a dissertation, a brief stint at an institution, a developmental phase, etc.), our connection may be very high and intimate; when that moment passes, as they must when we move from one position or status to another, our relationship changes too. There are times when that change is welcome; there are times when it feels abrupt, painful, and disorienting. No one should stay the mentee forever; no one should be expected to hold the role of mentor without reprieve. These are lessons I am learning as I move farther and farther from my undergrad days (now 15 years ago), my grad school days (10 years ago), and my assistant professor years (now 5 years ago). It is only now as a full professor, looking back, that I am able to contextualize those departures, those seemingly severed connections, those spaces of loss.

I have also newly become aware of my role as a mentor in my own right—having directed a dozen dissertations to completion and some six MA thesis/reports, and having served on about 60 dissertation and thesis committees, I have been the mentor, have tried (with, no doubt, some success and some failure) to guide and support the work of those students who seek my assistance. In many ways, this is the nature of the game—we each have our obligations that face us in the morning and each of those little things—the letters of recommendation, the faculty meeting, the update on that standard syllabus—can make it difficult to fulfill the ongoing work of maintaining relationships even if we wish we could do better.

I know that part of our task here is to sketch out practical ideas for mentoring, but part of what I want to offer is more meditative—mentoring is more often ephemeral, less so something that stretches out long term. I think it is important to remember that as we begin dialoguing about what we do, what we should do, and our collective obligation to make this life—the academic life—livable for those who desire it. That said, I do have some things that I believe—a philosophy of mentoring that perhaps might mirror or resonate with others' ideas. I hope they are useful.

Mentoring should be collaborative: For me, this means that mentoring is a relationship where, regardless of status or rank, both should gain and grow. I have a GLBTQ mentee on campus this year—she is an undergraduate, nontraditional, bisexual identifying student who signed up for a faculty mentor through the GLBTQ resource center on campus. We have met every two weeks since September. It has been rich not just because I can provide something for her, but because she also feeds my needs. Our relationship is reciprocal in tangible ways that matter.

Mentoring should be structured: Our department assigns each new assistant professor with 2 mentors—that means each person has two identified people on faculty that they can go to with the hopes that one of the pair might really be someone they can grow to trust and who they know will give them the "true" story on matters in the department. Its place as a structure means that we value these relationships and that we document them as meaningful.

Mentoring should be organic: Structure is good and essential. But there is something vital about people finding the resources they need to build healthy conversation partners. Our TA program uses such a model. We designate a group to advanced grad students as "potential mentors" for teaching the introductory course. Then the new folks meet them in orientation and through the next three weeks get to know them before pairing up—the process is rich because it allows everyone to get to know a group of folks, be "mentored" by all, but form a relationship with someone specific. Those relationships have proven to be a good way to build a cohort of collaborative students.

Mentoring should be done by multiple people with diverse interests and points of views: Gain from me (or any other), but also gather information from diverse sources that occupy diverse positions (of power, of point of view, with different obligations). I encourage, especially new faculty, to gather perspectives on issues from various sources to balance my opinion, noting my own bias and my own location as a tenured full professor. More information and more contextual dialogue only helps.

Mentoring should be communal: It takes a village. I know I sought to study and work in departments and universities that collaboratively worked to provide consistent and meaningful support for students, faculty and our collective work. If possi-

ble, the best mentoring works when there is a joint effort to make the principles and values of effective mentoring part of the community. A culture that makes mentoring normed will be a community that sees successful growth and development across its ranks.

Mentoring should be useful and should meet the needs of all involved: In some ways, the very best experiences I had as a mentee included information that was practical and took into account my own needs and desires. When mentoring, I try to incorporate this—I own my own suggestions and encourage folks to use their own judgment, but I try to meet them with the kind of information, reflection, or opinion they are seeking. I also ask for the same in return, long realizing that I need perspective too. Often I'm seeking their counsel as much they seek mine.

Mentoring should be honest, a place of frank storytelling protected by mutual respect: The notion of frank dialogue is not something I experience often in higher education. Thus, I try to be especially clear when I feel like someone has come to me for assistance. When a grad student asked about whether to take a job that she was concerned wouldn't meet her full hopes and desires, I tried to provide context and support for her choice, but also noted what I would do in her position. I wanted to be useful, to provide more than a sounding board, especially when the stakes were so high. Clearly, the choice was hers and she made the decision, but it was important for her, I think, to have some clarity and some forthcoming information as she made her decision.

Mentoring should be tailored to the needs of those who seek it (special interests recommended): I signed up as a GLBTQ mentor because I believe that, especially on my campus, such students who desire an ally, a mentor, a fellow queer-identified and politically aligned faculty member should have access to one. I identify as bisexual and often have felt a void in my own life—little support and little recognition of my own position. If I can provide some sort of role that helps a student feel welcomed, cared for, and supported, then I am more than happy to do it. Recognition that not all our students (or faculty) find academia welcoming means that efforts should be made to address the needs of those who seek such support.

Mentoring should be assessed, even if through reflexivity and dialogue: My bet is that most of us have very little sense of whether what we do helps those whom we serve actually does what we hope it does. I try to be reflexive of my roles as a graduate faculty member, as a senior departmental member, as a professor for a variety of students. But I suspect it might be useful to have more concrete ways of assessment. I don't know exactly what this looks like, but I am growing more and more committed to assessment as a mechanism for self checking, for doing and being better at those things I do in the service of others. If nothing else, careful self-reflexivity and dialogues like this create some space for assessing our efforts—more needs to be done.

52

Mentoring should be researched, studied: More research! We simply need more research on mentoring—I would love to read interpretive and critical research on mentoring, especially studies that seek to understand how people make sense of mentoring in their lives and how mentoring can be used to build collaborative, forward-thinking academic communities that serve all and counter entrenched normative conditions that produce injury and stagnancy.

<center>✥</center>

Community Through Mentoring
(Richie Neil Hao)

As my doctoral adviser and mentor, John T. Warren was everything one would want in a mentor—intelligent, critical, patient, loving, encouraging, supportive, collegial, professional, challenging, and the list goes on and on. I hope to strive to become a mentor like he was to me in the future. I know I will never be like him, but thinking about the fact that I aspire to be like him is a promising thought. The last time I saw him was right before I left the conference hotel in Monterey, California to take the shuttle to the airport. I was about to get into the shuttle when he called out my name to give me a big hug and tell me how proud he was of me before saying good bye. Who knew that good bye would mean I would never see him again. Before his untimely death, I knew he was an important person in my life, but even more so now that he is no longer here. As I write this essay and think of him from time to time, I painfully think about the fact that I just lost my mentor. This is the same person who had taught me a lot of things about life in the academy, had written me numerous recommendation letters, had prepped me for job applications, and had given me advice to prepare me for my transition from a graduate student to faculty member. Even though I got to know and work with him for only around 5 years, his mentoring relationship with me has inspired me to do the same to my future mentees.

John's legacy in his scholarship and commitment to teaching and mentoring continues to live, as evidenced by the contributions of Bryant Keith Alexander, Bernadette Marie Calafell, Kate Willink, and Amy Kilgard in this collection of essays on mentoring. On behalf of my coauthors, we hope that our essays, which were generated from the 2011 WSCA convention, provide us a venue to discuss the promises and challenges of mentoring. As Alexander says, "The university is always a place of challenge—challenge of ideas and ways of seeing and challenge that rocks the very foundations of who you believe yourself to be, hopefully with the intentions of fortifying and building visions of your possibility and the skills to accomplish your goals" (19). Thus, for colleges and universities to incorporate mentoring programs for the entering professoriate, such a commitment speaks a lot about the need to recruit and retain new faculty members, especially minority faculty. Having mentors during the transitional period of new faculty members can be vital in helping navigate difficult and

complex issues they would face. Mentoring, therefore, can help new faculty members understand the "unwritten rules" of the academy and can be a great asset to their own understanding of the communities they are a part of, such as departments and colleges they will call home for the years to come.

All contributors in this essay reflect performatively from our own mentoring experiences to help shed light on different voices and perspectives in which mentors and mentees should work together to go beyond the confines of academic spaces; after all, as Alexander, Calafell, Kilgard, Warren, and Willink mention in their respective pieces, mentoring is critical praxis, cultural performance and performativity, political, and momentary/fleeting. In sum, mentoring happens even after the formal structuring of advising and providing guidance to the mentee in order to graduate, publish, and get a job; it is also about the long-lasting personal, cultural, and professional relationships that are built over the years to feel at home in their respective academic and other organizational communities.

Thinking of academic communities in which I was and am part of, I want to end by saying how thankful I am to all contributors of the convention panel and, now, this collection of essays. As an assistant professor of color who still has insecurities about my place in the academy, all of my colleagues here truly embody what it means to be a mentor. And, for that, I am lucky to have wonderful mentors near and far.

<div align="center">⏴⏵</div>

Works Cited

Alexander, Bryant Keith. "Bordered and Bleeding Identities: An Autocritography of *Shifting* Academic Life." *The Black Professoriat: Negotiating a Habitable Space in the Academy*. Eds. Sandra Jackson and Richard Gregory Johnson III. New York: Peter Lang, 2011. 14-31. Print.

Calafell, Bernadette Marie. "Mentoring and Love: An Open Letter." *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies* 7 (2007): 425-41. Print.

---. "When Will We All Matter?: Exploring Race, Pedagogy, and Sustained Hope For the Academy." *The SAGE Handbook of Communication and Instruction*. Eds. Deanna L. Fassett and John T. Warren. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2010. 343-59. Print.

---. "Notes From an "Angry Woman of Color": Academic Policing and Disciplining Women of Color in a Post (Fill in the Blank) Era." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34 (2010): 240-45. Print.

De Lissovoy, Noah. "Rethinking Education and Emancipation: Being, Teaching, and Power." *Harvard Educational Review* 80 (2010): 203-88. Print.

Gingrich-Philbrook, Craig. "Autobiographical Performance Scripts: Refreshment." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 17 (1997): 352-60. Print.

Giroux, Henry A. "Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 1 (2004): 59-79. Print.

Griffin, Rachel. "Navigating the Politics of Identity/Identities and Exploring the Promise of

Critical Love." *Identity and Communication Research: Intercultural Reflections and Future Directions.* Eds. Nilanjana Bardhan and Mark Orbe. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012. 207-21. Print.

Hill Collins, Patricia. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment.* 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2000. Print.

hooks, bell. "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance." *The Woman that I Am: The Literature and Culture of Contemporary Women of Color.* Ed. D. Soyini Madison. New York: St. Martin's, 1994. 448-54. Print.

---. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.

Jacobs, Jeanne. "Fostering and Foreclosing Student Learning Potential: Portraits of Performativity, Emotion, and Relationality in the Classroom." Diss. U of Denver, 2012. Print.

Johnson, W. Brad, and Charles R. Ridley. *The Elements of Mentoring.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Print.

Langellier, Kristin. "Personal Narrative, Performance, and Performativity: Two or Three Things I know For Sure." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 17.2 (1999): 135-52. Print.

Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *The Monadology.* Charleston, SC: Forgotten Books, 2008. Print.

Madison, D. Soyini. *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics, and Performance.* SAGE: Thousand Oaks, CA, 1995. Print.

Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color.* Brooklyn, NY: Kitchen Table, 1981. Print.

Nakayama, Thomas K. Show/down time: "'Race,' Gender, Sexuality, and Popular Culture." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 11 (1994): 162-79. Print.

Pattisapu, Krishna, and Bernadette Marie Calafell. "(Academic) Families of Choice: Queer Relationality, Mentoring, and Critical Communication Pedagogy." *Identity and Communication Research: Intercultural Reflections and Future Directions.* Eds. Nilanjana Bardhan and Mark Orbe. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012. 51-67. Print.

Pérez, Kimberlee, and Dustin Bradley Goltz. "Treading Across *Lines in the Sand*: Performing Bodies in Coalitional Subjectivity." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 30 (2010): 247-68. Print.

Rockquemore, Kerry, and Tracey A. Laszloffy. *The Black Academic's Guide To Winning Tenure--Without Losing Your Soul.* Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008. Print.

Shulman, Lee S. "Taking Learning Seriously." *Change* 31.4 (1999): 10-17. Print.

Turner, Caroline Sotello Viernes. *Diversifying the Faculty: A Guidebook for Search Committees.* Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2002. Print.

Turner, Victor. *From Ritual to Theatre.* New York: PAJ, 1982. Print.

Warren, John T. *Performing Purity: Whiteness, Pedagogy, and the Reconstitution of Power.* New York: Peter Lang, 2003. Print.

---. "Social Justice and Critical/Performative/Communicative Pedagogy: A Storied Account of Research, Teaching, Love, Identity, Desire, and Loss." *International Review of Qualitative Research* 4 (2011): 21-33. Print.