

Top 10 Tips On How to be Mentored

Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession
<http://www.cswep.org/TopTenLists.htm>

- 1. Mentors come in all shapes and sizes.** Your junior colleagues who have been in the department a year or two longer can provide valuable advice about how things work. Likewise, friends from graduate school can provide advice, support, and comment on your work. Even colleagues outside of the economics department can provide support and useful information about your institution's culture.
- 2. Seek advice according to the individual strengths of members of your department.** That is, you can have many different mentors, each with a characteristic that you admire.
- 3. Good mentors should be able to give advice that matches a mentee's preferences and needs rather than their own.** Keep in mind that your mentor might not be the average person in the profession and reflects a certain age cohort, subfield, preferences etc. This is not to say anyone should "discount" the advice of the mentor, but rather weight parts of it according to the match with self. In short, you want to get a standard error around the advice and imitation is not necessary.
- 4. When attending conferences, introduce yourself to senior scholars who do work in your area.** Tell them a little bit about yourself (where you're at and what you're working on). Even if it feels awkward, every economist likes to be asked, 'What are you working on these days?'
- 5. When at conferences, ask your senior colleagues to introduce you to economists who work in your area.** Make plans to have lunch and dinner with friends and colleagues. Do not hide in your room! Similarly, invite your senior colleagues to lunch: professional and personal relationships are complements.
- 6. Ask your mentor specific questions about conferences, publications, and journal policies;** The economics profession has a lot of tacit knowledge that can only be discovered by experience or asking someone who knows the score.
- 7. Ask senior colleagues in your area to read and comment on your work,** at the same time, offer to give feedback on their work. Don't be disappointed if your colleagues don't provide any comments, though. Your senior colleague may not have the time to be helpful. If that's the case, give a seminar in your department and ask them to attend.
- 8. When you're evaluated for reappointment or tenure make sure to ask senior colleagues about the process.** Solicit their opinions when you're preparing personal statements, summaries of your research, or choosing external reviewers for your dossier. You might even ask senior colleagues if you can view some of the materials they prepared for their own evaluations.
- 9. Be a good department citizen.** The more active and engaged you are in the department, the better others in the department will know you and will be inclined to mentor you.
- 10. Finally, remember that making yourself vulnerable is part of being mentored.** This said, making yourself vulnerable may not be the smart thing to do with every one of your senior colleagues.