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Mentoring and Developing Doctoral Students and Junior Faculty: Introduction to the Special Section in Honor of the Contribution of Gary W. Dickson to Student and Colleague Mentoring

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MENTORING AND DEVELOPING DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND JUNIOR FACULTY: INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL SECTION IN HONOR OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF GARY W. DICKSON TO STUDENT AND COLLEAGUE MENTORING

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An academic discipline thrives through the quality of its members. Many disciplines, including our own Information Systems discipline, use a mentoring system to prepare and introduce new members. Hence, the mentoring and development of our doctoral students and junior colleagues is a critical endeavor. This importance is felt by all constituents. For doctoral students, the student has the most immediate interest in being the best candidate possible, in order to stand out from the crowd in the job market. The supervisory team has the responsibility to prepare students to the best of its ability. Further, we actually develop a scholarly community through the training that we give our students during their doctoral work. We carry a responsibility to the community to mentor and develop students appropriately and to socialize them to the community's norms. There is also a responsibility to society, because many in-depth advances in scientific inquiry are made in the context of doctoral programs. To maximize the effectiveness of those efforts, we need to invest in mentoring students. Finally, the institution from which a student graduates has an interest in having a program that turns out strong, well-received doctoral candidates in order to attract future students and build the reputation of the institution. Many of these same issues also hold for junior faculty.

Notwithstanding its importance, however, the mentoring of doctoral students and junior faculty is not straightforward. Most of us have to rely on our own experiences and common sense to do the best job we can. We all have our own favored and successful approaches, but we rarely have the opportunity to share our mentoring practices. It is our belief that by collecting in one place some of the best practices in the mentoring and development of doctoral students and junior faculty, we can provide benefit to all stakeholders in the process.

Gary W. Dickson is one of the founders of the field of Information Systems, and his influence is fundamental. From among the many contributions he has made, his mentoring and development of doctoral students especially stands out. This Special Section of the *Communications of the Association for Information Systems* has been developed to recognize that contribution and serve as a repository of knowledge for current and future doctoral students, faculty, and their mentors.

We received a number of outstanding contributions from colleagues who were influenced by Gary Dickson's mentorship. Each of them interacted with Gary as a student or colleague. Each of them expressed how they benefited from his mentorship, and they distilled general approaches and

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best practices for mentorship and development from these experiences. The papers fall into three general themes.

The first group of papers covers different *perspectives on mentoring*. The first paper in this group is by Dawson and Watson, and it discusses parallels between successful mentoring behaviors in the academic and business worlds. The authors' analysis shows how academia can benefit from mentoring approaches in the business world. The second paper is by Payton, and it uses Boice's IRSS Theory as a guiding framework for junior faculty development. Payton presents various examples to illustrate what it means to be a "complete" junior faculty member. The final paper in this group is by Nunamaker, who presents a unique view on mentorship between colleagues. He discusses different approaches in the research programs at the Universities of Minnesota and Arizona in the early days of research in group decision support systems and how collegial mentorship served to advance the field during that era.

The second group of papers addresses *mentoring to develop and disseminate research*. The first paper in this second group is by Gallupe, who discusses the importance of recognizing good ideas. He presents a number of insights to filter highly promising research ideas from more mundane ones. Niederman's paper addresses the relevance and fit of research topics with the discipline. He shows how asking simple questions can stimulate critical discussions between and among researchers and mentors. The third and final paper in this group is by Lee, who presents thoughtful guidance on how to disseminate research findings to the discipline. He discusses a number of best practices for crafting an academic paper for a major journal.

The final group of papers in this special section focuses on *mentoring to prepare for being an academic*. Lee-Partridge discusses how to prepare doctoral students for becoming part of the academic community. She elaborates on three critical lessons that can guide doctoral students toward a successful entrance to their scholar communities. The second paper by Vician discusses the demands of an academic career. She provides an insightful discussion of the challenge of depth versus breadth in an academic career. Finally, the paper by Hovorka, Kozar, and Miaskiewicz presents a conversation on generational perceptions on the academic profession. Their conversation shows the importance of setting priorities and creating self-awareness in order to be a successful academic at every stage of one's career.

This special section would not have been complete without an essay on mentorship by the mentor to whom this section is a tribute. We feel privileged to conclude this special section with a paper by Gary Dickson, in which he presents his personal recollections on mentoring.

Taken together, the contributions in this special section represent a valuable and lasting repository of guidance for those who mentor and are mentored. We believe that through better mentoring, our discipline as a whole will benefit. We therefore hope that this collection of articles will serve as a permanent repository for use in doctoral seminars and in faculty development. We warmly recommend these papers to your reading and trust that they will be thought provoking for students and faculty around the world.

In closing, we would like to thank the reviewers for their time and constructive guidance, Joey George for his support to make this special section a reality, Halbana Tarmizi for his editorial assistance, and of course Gary Dickson for helping us to develop professionally and personally to where we are today.

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