Mentorship in the Economics Program

The principal mentors for level 1 and 2 students in the program are the EO and the DEOs with the support of the APO. For level 3 students the advisor and the dissertation committee members take the main role supported by the EO and the DEOs. In addition to this, the program offers the following:

1. Orientation for incoming students
   Each student is paired with a current student according to their field of interest, nationality and other considerations (for instance, preference of location to live within NYC). The current student guides the new student and provides information about the program, housing, NYC life, the GC, and administration. The focus is on supporting the incoming students so that they succeed in the program.

2. First year student support for quantitative courses
   Students work with senior students in labs and office hours, solve problems, discuss specific parts of the lectures they need help with. Faculty teaching these first-year courses work closely with these assistants who give them feedback.

3. GCFs campus placement
   (i) The EO/DEO organizes an annual meeting with the new cohort to explain the structure of CUNY, expectations of the departments, professional relations with the department staff, teaching tips, evaluation process in campuses. Current GCFs are also invited from each campus to provide their perspective and pair with the next year’s GCF(s) that are assigned to the same campus and they continue their mentorship in the campus. The meeting is open to all incoming students including TFs who also need guidance in their adjunct teaching.
   (ii) The EO introduces new GCFs to each campus department chair and/or deputy chair of the campus to which they are assigned. The EO organizes a direct meeting with the student and advises the students to visit the department, and sit in courses to understand the way lectures are delivered.

4. Academic progress for level 2 and 3 students
   (i) The EO/DEO follows up students’ progress and schedules regular meetings with those who are struggling, to help them overcome difficulties.
   (ii) When students are ready to move to level 3, they have individual meetings with the EO to review expectations, decide about the dissertation topic, the advisor and the committee.

5. First year of dissertation
   The student is expected to defend the dissertation proposal within 12 months of moving to level 3. The student works under the guidance of the advisor and the committee members.

6. Dissertation Seminars and Student-led workshops
   A dissertation seminar course is offered each term and is open to all level 3 students. This is organized and taught by a faculty member who is active in advising dissertations. It seeks to
provide help for students at all three levels of dissertation writing: Beginners who have just started and are actively looking for a topic can get help with exploring certain areas and topics and probe initial dissertation level questions; Students who are mid-way in their dissertation and have a topic that they have developed some work on who seek to make it sharper and/or develop further questions; Students with almost fully developed dissertations who are in the stage of polishing and refining their work.

Our Spring 2020 dissertation seminar was extended until August and expanded in participation as students realize this is very helpful as they develop their work.

In student-led workshops students organize themselves into groups around their interests and meet regularly to discuss important academic work and/or their own research.

7. Mentoring for job market: Professional Development

Back in 2000 the program established job market meetings with the view of mentoring students in level 3 regarding job market and ultimately placement in academia, public institutions and industry. The meetings are open to all students and over the years have evolved (especially for the academic job market) into a series of four different meetings. These now consist of:

(i) Three regular meetings for the academic job market from summer or each year until the American Economic Association annual meeting that takes place in the beginning of each January and is the major job market for economists internationally. A faculty member with long experience in advising students (usually EO/DEO) holds these well-structured meetings that provide students with detailed guidance for every step of the job seeking process. This series of three seminars/meetings is followed by specially organized “mock interviews” during December for each student in the job market. In Spring, students who didn’t find a job until then are prepared for the secondary job market where the visiting positions and post-docs come up.

(ii) Invited talks by alumni about the non-academic job market: The program hosts talks by alumni who are in leadership positions outside academia, mostly in industry but also in institutions and organizations. Alumni talk about their professional journey, the skills required in today’s job market to be successful, and how students can use the expertise gained in the program to successfully seek non-academic jobs and enhance their career. These meetings also constitute an opportunity for students to network.

The department also creates a similar venue for students during the annual alumni day.

8. Frequency of meetings of students with mentors/advisors

This varies from the function associated with these meetings. Most dissertation advisors meet their students several times every semester. In rare cases that happens only once or twice a semester.

There is no formal requirement for meetings with students’ mentors. Mentors make themselves available at the request of their mentee.

Academic placement mentorship is well structured and involves at least four meetings during summer and fall. Industry placement mentorship meetings are less frequent, organized typically around a visit of alumni who work at various organizations and firms and usually happen a couple of times a year.

9. Resource organization regarding mentorship
Our APO regularly informs students about resources and support services as well as about organized meetings by using our listserv. Our APO also regularly posts information and relevant documents on our web site.

Plans for the future:
1. Adding the discussion of academic standing of struggling students to the agenda of the EC meetings.
2. Introducing possibly annual student surveys regarding the advising that they are receiving, the strengths and weaknesses of the existing mentoring process and suggestions for improving their experience and the effectiveness of the system.
3. Invite newly hired faculty members from CUNY and other schools to present/informally talk to students about their recent job market experiences.
4. Offer some seminar on grant management and grant writing to encourage students in applying for grants
5. Connect incoming cohorts with students who have applied and received the DSRG grants (or other grants) to encourage confidence in submitting grants applications
6. Connect more formally new students to older students specifically for tutoring (when the new student is struggling in classes)
7. A luncheon each semester sponsored by the program where more senior students mingle and informally mentor less-senior students. And job market candidates talk to more junior students about their last year experience. This will offer students a safe-space grapevine.