

Learning Objective:

Engage in open dialogue on balancing the competing demands, needs, and interests of mentors and mentees.

Case Study

To Be or Not to Be a PhD

You are currently mentoring two undergraduate researchers. Both are very talented and hardworking; however, one has made it clear that his career goals do not include going to graduate school. He is interested in going to medical school. The other scholar has her heart set on pursuing her PhD and eventually becoming a professor. Lately, you find yourself spending more time giving professional development advice to the student who intends to go to graduate school. You rationalize this by saying that you are more familiar with this career path and thus have more to offer. Secretly you worry that you are writing off the other student, believing that he is not worth your time and advice if he is going to medical school.

Guiding Questions for Discussion:

1. What are the main themes raised in this case study?
2. What should the mentor do now? What value judgments are being made by the mentor?
3. How do you advise on career paths with which you do not have personal experience? How can you discuss potential career paths with your mentee in an unbiased manner?

From *Pfund, C., Branchaw, J. and Handelsman, J. (2015). Entering Mentoring 2nd Edition. New York, NY: W.H. Freeman & Co.*

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