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Mentoring Graduate Students in the Publishing Process: Making it Manageable and Meaningful for Academics

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In universities all over the world, academics are compelled to increase the quality and quantity of their own research while also attempting to mentor a new generation of scholars. In this work we explore literature surrounding significant issues in higher education affecting faculty mentors of graduate students who are themselves engaged in the publishing process. In light of this literature, we propose a spectrum of approaches for mentoring graduate scholars in ways that are professionally meaningful and manageable for faculty mentors.

As university professors engaged with graduate education, we often participate in presentations for graduate students about "how to publish." We also engage in informal conversations with faculty colleagues about how to best mentor graduate students interested in moving their academic writing into publishable pieces. Just as often, we sit down with our own graduate students to help them begin their publication journeys via thesis, dissertation, or course paper. Embedded within these requests to elevate graduate students' knowledge about research, writing, and publishing practices are indicators of gaps in the knowledge transfer between accomplished academic authors and graduate students aspiring to become accomplished academic authors.

These "gaps in knowledge" represent two interrelated problems, which we believe impact many institutions of higher education worldwide. First, they represent *a pedagogical problem within graduate education* (e.g., what are the best ways to teach graduate students how to navigate the publishing process?). Second, they represent *a persistent problem of increasing demands on faculty time and complex workload expectations related to research, teaching, and service, including mentoring numerous graduate students* (e.g., how do these important teaching/mentoring activities move from being invisible, unrewarded work to visible, rewarded work?). The purpose of our current work is to review literature that illuminates these interrelated challenges. From this, we propose approaches for mentoring graduate students in ways that are professionally meaningful and manageable for a variety of faculty mentors.

Statement of Positionality

Graduate education occurs in many types of institutions and disciplines. We provide this statement of positionality because we believe that our own mentorship experiences may resonate with those experienced by many similarly situated graduate educators in the international teaching community who can benefit from our work. We are all women who teach and research with graduate students in the United States. We work in three separate non-STEM disciplines (communication studies, higher education, and sport administration). Although one of us has recently changed institutional affiliation, at the time of this writing we held various ranks (assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor) at Ball State University, a mid-sized (22,513 students) *Higher Research Activity Doctoral University*[1] in the Midwestern U.S. Like many others of its kind, our institution requires that we excel at teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses, as well as engage deeply in research and service activities.

The primary educational focus at this university is on undergraduate education. However, the university has 153 graduate programs, including 13 providing doctorates (Ball State University Graduate School, n.d.), and serves 5,509 graduate students (Ball State University Fact Book, n.d.). Each of us has served as the principal advisor for many graduate students at the master's level and has published manuscripts with some of these students based on their work. Although only one of us has served officially as the principal advisor for doctoral-level students, we have all served as committee members on numerous doctoral committees. Additionally, we all have provided considerable

[1] The Carnegie classification system categorizes institutions' level of research activity based upon research and development expenditures, research staff, and doctoral conferrals. Two indices emerge from these factors, including level of research activity and per-capita research activity. Using these indices, institutions are classified as one of the following: *highest research activity*, *higher research activity*, and *moderate research activity*. In the United States, there are 115 *highest research activity doctoral universities*, 107 four-year or above *higher research activity doctoral universities*, and 112 moderate research activity doctoral universities.

informal mentoring to a wide number of doctoral students as they have worked toward publication goals.

Literature Review

We conducted a *scoping literature review* in order to shape our understanding of the types of persistent problems in higher education, which impact the ways in which faculty members worldwide mentor graduate students who wish to learn about publishing. Colquhoun et al. (2014) define a scoping literature review as a "form of knowledge synthesis that addresses an exploratory research question aimed at mapping key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in research related to a defined area or field by systematically searching, selecting and synthesizing existing knowledge" (p. 1295). We used Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) six-step process[2] to guide our choices in producing the literature review organized by our selected domains (as represented by sub-headings) that follow.

Achieving Success in Academic Publishing

Arriving on campus with an already-established publication record is an expectation that has evolved over the past 25 years for those entering the academy (Bartkowski, Deem, & Ellison, 2015). As Mullen (2001) noted nearly two decades ago, "[T]he practice of assistant professors beginning their publication journeys after being hired is arguably a luxury of the past" (p. 119). Despite this important norm, Sword (2017) laments that many graduate students have not been trained adequately in the skills needed to succeed in academic publishing. Scholars writing on the issue have articulated many reasons for this. For example, some graduate programs mystify the writing process for their graduate students (Cuthbert & Spark, 2008). And even when faculty members are transparent, they may coach students on what Belcher (2009) terms "the micro aspects of writing," such as documentation styles, rather than focusing on the more critical (but more challenging to teach) "macro aspects of writing" (p. 191) such as articulating and supporting one's argument and maintaining a clear structure. Graduate students can also fall into a cycle of procrastination and binge-writing (Boice, 2000), which can derail them as they enter their professional life when they must demonstrate tenacity, consistency, self-efficacy and discipline in order to see their work published (Sword, 2017). Belcher (2009) observes that although universities sporadically offer workshops on academic writing, such workshops rarely focus explicitly on the writing process or provide specific strategies for improving writing productivity.

As a redress to the issues articulated above, there is an extensive body of work designed to help faculty members and graduate students increase their research productivity. Perhaps the best-known scholar in this realm is Boice (1989; 2000) who, in order to address the procrastination-binge cycle, developed an intervention whereby academics established regular writing routines. The notion of maintaining a moderate, but inviolable, writing schedule has become a staple piece of advice for many authors researching and writing on the topic (e.g., Goodson, 2017; Jenson, 2017; Silva, 2007; Sword, 2017).

Much of the writing on this topic stresses the importance of building the types of psychological habits and social structures that support productive academic writing. For example, Goodson (2017) discusses the need for adjusting one's attitude toward writing and provides clear strategies for achieving this goal. Others (e.g., Boice 1983; Goodson 2017; Silva 2007) provide advice for managing distractions that impede writers. Others explain tactics, such "separating the generating from the editing" (Goodson 2017, p. 32), to help writers push past writer's block. Still others accentuate the importance of peer writing groups (e.g., Aitchison, 2014; Chittum & Bryant, 2014; Harris, 2006) to help writers stay motivated, stay accountable, and receive social support from peers with similar goals.

The literature also provides a wealth of advice on the more instrumental aspects of academic writing. For example, Silva (2007) provides clear strategies for writers to use when prioritizing goals. Mikhailova and Nilson (2007) detail a method designed to help writers organize the necessary materials, structure their writing time, and keep clear records of the submission process. Belcher (2009) takes readers through a 12-week plan for publishing a scholarly piece in an academic journal, offering detailed instruction on every aspect of

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[2] Arksey and O'Malley (2005) articulated the following 6-step process for conducting a scoping literature review:

1. Identify the research questions: Decide upon the domain that needs to be explored.
2. Find the relevant studies, through the usual means: electronic databases, reference lists (ancestor searching), websites of organizations, conference proceedings, etc.
3. Select the studies that are relevant to the question(s).
4. Chart the data (i.e. the information on and from the relevant studies).
5. Collate, summarize and report the results.
6. (Optional) consult stakeholders (clinicians, patients and families, policy makers, or whatever is the appropriate group) to get more references, provide insights on what the literature fails to highlight, etc.

manuscript development including designing a writing plan, building and advancing one's argument, strengthening structure, sending the article to the most appropriate journal, and even responding to editors' feedback. In sum, the literature articulates many empirically-supported methods for increasing scholars' writing capabilities. However, mentoring graduate students to follow these methods is often problematic, given the myriad time and resource pressures that many faculty members experience.

How "Invisible Work" can Affect Academic Advancement

To greater or lesser degrees, academic service is part of most faculty members' lives. A number of authors (Austin, 2002; Buckholdt, 2013) have reported on the challenges faculty members face trying to balance their service commitments with their teaching and research responsibilities. Other authors (Edley, Hammers, & Shabazian, 2015; Green, 2015) have unpacked the various forms of "academic labor" that intensify faculty members' already large service load. According to Edley et al., such academic labor is often "rendered invisible, or at least unintelligible by common institutional discourses of evaluation" (p. 106). In other words, as Green observes, "[T]here's no place [to document invisible academic labor] on a CV or in an end-of-year report" (para 9). Common forms of "invisible care work" include counseling peers and students through personal crises and locating appropriate resources to help meet their needs. Edley et al. add that such work also includes helping students and colleagues as they navigate institutional processes, advocating (often in opposition to administration) for better policies, and building interpersonal and community relations within departments. Mentoring graduate students through the writing process can often be perceived as a form of invisible academic labor, especially when there is no tangible product for the faculty mentor. Indeed, as Edley et al. ask, "[I]f there is no formal, peer-reviewed publication at the end of the day, how does the research-related intellectual effort of this kind of labor get articulated for purposes of professional advancement" (p. 106)?

A number of authors (Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Morley, 2014; Terosky, O'Meara, & Campbell, 2014) argue that women in particular lag behind their male counterparts because they often perform the types of vital, yet invisible, undervalued, and unrewarded forms of academic work articulated above. Terosky, Phifer, and Neumann (2008) observe that "women find themselves in vulnerable positions in regard to career advancement because they carry disproportionately higher workloads in the areas of teaching, service, and lower-level administration" (p. 60). For example, in one study of productivity at a research-intensive university, Misra, Lundquist, Dahlberg Holmes, and Agiomavritis (2011) found that women associate professors spent up to eight hours more per week (over 200 hours per year) on service, mentoring, and teaching than did their male counterparts, while male associate professors spent nearly eight hours more per week on research (over 200 hours per year) than did their female counterparts. Given that research productivity is often viewed as the chief criterion for faculty advancement, this differentiation gave men a distinct advantage over women. The question remains then, how can faculty (and in particular, women) be effective mentors for graduate students while simultaneously protecting their academic advancement and work/life balance?

Mentoring Graduate Students in the Publishing Process

A large body of scholarship exists defining mentorship/advising and delineating the many functions subsumed therein (e.g., Anderson & Anderson, 2012; Titus & Ballou, 2013). As a whole, mentoring and advising focus on the relationship between faculty and students in which the faculty mentor guides the student toward desired outcomes such as publishing (Titus & Ballou, 2013). Scholars (e.g., Kamler, 2008) suggest that strong academic mentorship factors heavily into graduate students' ability to learn about disciplinary writing practices and to publish successfully. Literature on how faculty mentors influence novice researchers can be usefully divided into two broad categories: (1) that which demonstrates how faculty mentors can serve graduate students in more traditional mentor/protégé roles; and (2) that which demonstrates how faculty mentors can facilitate more formal, structured opportunities for promoting scholarly activity, such as writing groups, workshops, and/or courses.

Mentor-protégé models. Kamler (2008) argues that close mentor/protégé relationships between faculty and graduate students are imperative for helping graduate students negotiate the challenges inherent in academic publishing, such as learning how to write for a given scholarly community, strategically selecting publication outlets, and interpreting, contextualizing, and appropriately addressing commentary from journal reviewers. Engstrom (2003) suggests that mentors also perform social support and esteem-building tasks, as well as model for protégés "the discipline, habits, and commitment required of prolific writers" (p. 270). Overall, Deane, and Peterson (2011) argue that mentors must support the development of student autonomy by "acknowledging the student's perspective, encouraging the student to be open with their ideas and providing opportunities for students to make their own decisions" (p. 794). Simpson and Matsuda (2008) emphasize four

roles faculty mentors should assume as they help develop graduate students' publishing skills. These include creating opportunities for graduate students to publish with them, ensuring that graduate collaborators have the resources needed for success, allowing protégés to observe them "in action," and introducing protégés to professional social networks.

Writing workshop/course models. Scholars (e.g., Aitchison, 2010; 2014; Cuthbert & Spark 2008) argue the importance of faculty mentorship in designing and facilitating graduate-level writing groups. The success of such writing groups depends on clearly articulated expectations and goals (Belcher, 2009; Plakhotnik & Rocco 2012), as well as opportunities for writers to receive constructive critique from colleagues (Aitchison, 2014; Belcher, 2009). Writing groups come with a number of challenges, including expert members assuming excessive control over group decisions and differences in group members' expectations about appropriate levels of productivity (Nairn et al., 2015). However, benefits of such groups include the fostering of supportive communities in which graduate students share the challenges encountered in the writing process and strategies for managing such challenges (Belcher, 2009). Other benefits include the demystification of the publication process, diminished feelings of isolation, increased comfort and confidence in one's ability to publish (Belcher, 2009), and increases in graduate students' submission of manuscripts to academic outlets (Kamler 2008) — perhaps the most tangible benefit of participation in such a group.

Mentorship Approaches that Serve Faculty Interests

Our scoping literature review, as well as our combined 47 years' collective experience working with graduate students, highlights a number of academic realities that affect how we mentor graduate students as they learn about academic writing and publishing. First, we know that graduate students need help when learning how to navigate the research, writing, and publishing process. Second, we know that faculty members are most often the people best equipped to help students in this journey. Third, we know that providing graduate students with appropriate mentorship is often challenging for faculty in light of demanding professional expectations that do not recognize or reward it adequately.

The spectrum of approaches we recommend in this section derive from our own extensive experience as graduate mentors (collectively, we have used all of the approaches we recommend). Additionally, all of the approaches we recommend are well supported by the literature. While institutional context, faculty workload demands, and levels of faculty interest/disinterest can vary greatly for those engaged in graduate education, there are some unifying dimensions that make it possible to offer these broad approaches to help faculty who mentor graduate students.

Approach One: Improve One-on-One Mentorship Practice

Assess the strengths and weaknesses in your own mentorship abilities. In order for faculty research mentors to be both effective and efficient in their mentor role, they must first possess a general awareness of their own mentorship preferences, behaviors, and competencies. Through guided self-reflection and assessment, faculty can learn their unique style of mentorship and gauge areas of strength and opportunities for development. Self-assessment tools which can aid faculty in this effort include the *Principles of Adult Mentoring Scale* (Cohen 1995), which assesses six interpersonal behaviors and functions identified by experts as significant in mentor relationships between faculty and adult learners in higher education (relationship emphasis, information emphasis, facilitative focus, confrontive focus, mentor modeling, and student vision). The *Mentoring Competency Assessment* (Fleming et al., 2013) is a shorter inventory that examines six mentoring competencies (maintaining effective communication, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, addressing diversity, fostering independence, and promoting professional development). When considering self-reflection of one's mentoring behaviors and competencies, these assessments can be used as a baseline from which to understand, analyze, and improve one's academic mentoring practices.

While mentor development may lead to greater student outcomes, the time invested may also inhibit faculty academic achievement and lead to poor work/life balance. Bird (2001) recognized that there is often an "over-expectation" about what mentors will provide. It is essential for faculty to monitor their own research productivity and periodically reassess work/life balance in order to maintain healthy boundaries with respect to mentor obligations. The 15-item modified *Work/Life Balance Self-Assessment* scale (Haymann, 2005) can be used by faculty to examine the extent of work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work/personal life enhancement. If faculty responses reflect low work/life balance, reflection on the extent of one's mentoring obligations may lead to healthy changes.

Develop systematic, codified strategies to promote better one-on-one mentorship.

While one-on-one membership carries numerous benefits for faculty and is a powerful factor in graduate

students' writing success, it can also require tremendous time and intellectual investments that do not always translate to professional recognition and advancement. Rackham Graduate School at the University of Michigan (2015) provides an extensive guide for developing excellent academic mentors. Here we have adapted a number of approaches articulated in that document, which we believe promote more effective and *efficient* methods of mentoring graduate writers.

Introductions. Meet with your protégé to find out about their previous educational experience and the research projects that interest them.

Establish expectations. Establish clear expectations about your protégé's writing goals, helping them to focus such goals and set feasible timetables, establishing boundaries about meetings and access to you, discussing with the student your expectations of the quality of work they should submit to you, articulating how you will assess their work, and explaining the standards for authorship in your field.

Lift the veil on 'academic' writing. Have an honest discussion(s) with your protégé about how academic writing happens. As a touchstone to guide your discussion, assign one of the many recent, but accessible books on the topic (e.g., Jensen, 2017; Silva, 2007; Sword, 2017). Be sure to listen to your protégé's experiences, but also share your own. Help them to understand that it is normal to struggle with writing, but also that they can develop an excellent set of skills for writing in the academy.

Invest in formal mentorship training. A number of scholars (e.g., Pfund et al., 2013) propose mentor training workshops that address targeted mentoring techniques. These include helping mentors to develop a mentorship plan, use clear communication strategies with their protégés, set clear goals and expectations for the mentor-protégé relationship, manage their own time, provide and receive feedback, work effectively with diverse students, foster protégé independence, and promote professional development.

Despite the promise of mentorship training, educators are often faced with barriers to enacting these efforts. For example, many faculty members believe mentoring skills are developed solely through experiential learning that occurs during engagement in the mentor-protégé dyad, in which formal mentor training is perceived as unnecessary (Cohen, 1995). Furthermore, given that faculty may already be overloaded by the "invisible work" of mentorship, mentor education is often treated as a low priority by faculty given the current demands on their time (Cohen, 1995). With respect to the administration of mentor training programs, institutions of higher education may not have the resources to implement a formal training program (Pfund et al., 2013).

Approach Two: Institute "Writing for the Academy" into Existing Program Curriculum

A useful place to start is by meeting with other graduate faculty members to gather their perspectives about mentoring students through the writing process. Such a "mentoring audit" should target what has worked (and why), what has not worked (and why not), frustrations, roadblocks, program constraints, and taken-for-granted assumptions surrounding faculty-student writing mentorship efforts.

After performing a mentoring audit, involved faculty members should discuss the extent to which they can institute systematic training about the writing process into the existing curriculum. Some programs may be able to dedicate a full course to such training (see Belcher, 2009; Nolan & Rocco, 2009), for clear guidelines for developing such a course). However, this may not be possible or particularly useful for many programs (e.g., "master's only" programs in which less emphasis may be placed on producing academic writers than in doctoral programs). A more moderate approach might include the development of "modules" on various topics related to academic writing into already-existing courses. For example, most graduate programs have an "introduction to graduate studies" course, a number of "methods" courses, or required graduate colloquia—any of which would be appropriate places for placing modules that focus on academic writing.

Within course modules, faculty can point graduate students to available online resources and materials to supplement course curriculum on academic publishing. For instance, social media pages discussing academic writing and publishing—such as Acwri (@Acwri; http://phd2published.com/acwri) or Dr. Raul Pacheco-Vega's pages (@raulpacheco; http://raulpacheco.org) — could be integrated into the reading. Faculty could also discuss how key modules (e.g., "strategies for overcoming common writing roadblocks," or "tools for reviewing literature more efficiently and effectively") could be integrated into courses/colloquia throughout the academic year. Institution of such modules into the curriculum ensures consistency of message among graduate students and can be developed over time. Because such a program is highly visible, recognition for the teaching and service efforts of faculty who have developed the program and developed individual modules can be documented and quantified in faculty CVs. Collateral benefits include the fact that, as the modules diffuse throughout the unit, both faculty and students can benefit from the teachings.

Graduate departments may also adapt a manuscript-style approach in which the expectations for graduate student scholarship shifts from more traditional comprehensive research projects such as theses or dissertations, to multiple publishable

manuscripts (Jackson, 2013). Most often students submit one article by the time of proposal and the remaining two articles by the defense, mitigating the delay of transforming the comprehensive project into smaller articles at the conclusion of the thesis/dissertation process. Although this approach has a number of potential pitfalls such as lack of student ability and ownership (Pretorious, 2017), it also carries a number of potential benefits, including graduate students' increased competency initiating new projects post-graduation, faculty advisors benefiting from guaranteed article submissions, and increases in the reputation of graduate programs (Jackson, 2013).

Approach Three: Institute Interdisciplinary Workshops for Graduate Researchers

As we acknowledged earlier, this essay came about because we are scholars from three different disciplines who have often conducted university-wide workshops for graduate students on "how to publish." The fact that we are asked to facilitate a 90-minute workshop at least once a year speaks to the reality (in our university at least) that few structured educational opportunities exist to help graduate students understand the writing and publishing process. However, scholars (e.g., Silberman, Biech, & Auerbach, 2015) critique such short "one-shot" forms of adult learning for providing low-levels of learning.

Thus, we suggest that invested faculty members might institute a more programmatic interdisciplinary structure for helping graduate students learn how to write for the academy. Our own experience provides us with a set of "frequently asked questions" that might guide faculty members as they construct each workshop. Ideally, each workshop would be devoted to addressing one or two of these questions. Ideas for workshops include: (1) What resources are available to students on-campus to help them make the best use of databases? (2) How do students develop both long-term and short-term publishing goals? (3) How do students learn academic writing? (4) How do students learn the time and task management skills needed to publish? (5) What role do academic conferences play in the publishing process? (6) How do scholars select the most appropriate journal for their work? (7) What happens when a scholar receives a "revise and resubmit" decision from an editor? (8) How do scholars emotionally deal with rejection?

The workshop structure could take a number of forms, such as not-for-credit short courses offered university-wide or within disciplines. The courses could be team-taught as well. Belcher (2009, n. d.) offers a model for developing such a course and also offers syllabi of writing courses ranging from six to 15 weeks. Challenges in offering such an interdisciplinary course might include disciplinary differences about "best writing" practices, workload expectations, management of the potentially large numbers of students, and student heterogeneity (Belcher, 2009). Potential benefits are similar to those listed in "approach two," with the exception that teaching this course is likely to result in even wider university or disciplinary recognition.

Practice Implications for Faculty Mentors

Our scoping review demonstrates the ways in which students and institutions can benefit from more robust research mentoring practices. However, it also demonstrates that faculty do not always benefit from mentoring in ways that advance their own professional agendas. As Damrosch (2006) suggests, academic changes are most enduring when they serve not only the students and the institution, but also the faculty. It is with this concept in mind that we articulate a number of practice implications for faculty in a wide variety of institutions and disciplines as they consider developing strategies to integrate research mentorship into their professional practice.

One clear practice implication emerging from our work is that, in order to maximize productivity, mentors should consider seriously co-authorship with protégés. Maher (2014) argues that working alongside mentors and seeing them "in action" is an excellent way for students to experience what it takes to achieve success in academic publishing. It can also maximize faculty members' own research productivity. In order to optimize such a relationship, however, faculty members need to develop a clear set of expectations and benchmarks for protégés, making these explicit to potential protégés early in the mentor/protégé relationship and providing periodic, honest, and critically constructive assessments of the protégé's work as the relationship develops and the graduate students moves from "protégé" to "colleague."

A second way faculty members can ensure that their mentorship efforts also serve their own interests is to help their departments, colleges, and universities institute programs that support mentorship of graduate students in the publishing process. For example, faculty members can develop for their departments a number of policies such as a clear and common set of expectations for faculty mentors and for students to follow in such mentoring relationships. Faculty members can also develop formal programs designed to train mentors at various university levels on such topics as "communicating research standards and responsibilities to graduate students" or "working with an underperforming protégé." Not only could development of such initiatives be included in faculty evaluation for tenure and promotion, they also carry the potential to raise the profile of the department, college, or university.

A third way for faculty members to ensure that their mentorship work is more visible and thus more rewarded is to include it in their own research agenda. The scholarship of teaching and learning, which is, in large part, characterized by reflexive consideration of our own and others' teaching and learning practices (Adcroft & Lockwood 2010), has gained wide purchase within the academy. Clearly mentorship is a key teaching practice, and—as we suggest in the next section—ample room remains for further critical and empirical exploration of the many issues surrounding the ways in which it "plays out" in academic communities.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

While the employment of a scoping literature review enabled us to map out research in higher education and identify gaps related to the issue of faculty mentoring graduate student publishing, we acknowledge the limitations of this methodological approach. As opposed to systematic reviews, scoping reviews do not attend to quality appraisal of the evidence or synthesis of the data, which considers the weight of the evidence based upon the effectiveness of the interventions reviewed (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Moreover, while this paper reviews a breadth of literature from a range of study designs, future researchers should consider conducting a systematic review of one of the three approaches discussed (e.g., instituting a series of interdisciplinary workshops for graduate students) to achieve a more detailed analysis and appraisal. Additionally, future researchers should consider implementing a particular approach at their respective institutions to empirically test the effectiveness of the various strategies reviewed at their particular institution.

Conclusion

For most faculty members, mentoring graduate students as they work to become published scholars is a complex balancing act that often results in graduate students receiving inadequate mentoring and/or faculty members performing too much "invisible labor" for too little professional reward. Drawing from the literature and from our own practices, our current work provides concrete and practical strategies that allow faculty mentors to effectively mentor graduate students toward publication while also enjoying institutional compensation for their labor.

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