

## GETTING MENTORED IN GRADUATE SCHOOL: A BRIEF GUIDE FOR LATINAS AND LATINOS

The following comments were posted to the listserv of the National Latina/Latino Psychological Association by Dr. Melanie Domenech-Rodriguez, assistant professor in Utah State University's Psychology Department. Dr. Domenech-Rodriguez's work on family functioning and adolescent development is widely published, and is currently supported by research grants from the National Institute of Mental Health and Utah State University. Dr. Domenech-Rodriguez has generously allowed us to share her comments on the University of Kentucky Department of Psychology website. More information on Dr. Domenech-Rodriguez and her research can be found at <http://cc.usu.edu/~mdr88/>. It is our hope that Latinas and Latinos interested in graduate school will find this information helpful. For further information on Latino / Latina life at the University of Kentucky, please download our brief resource page <http://www.uky.edu/AS/Psychology/graduate/mso3B00D.pdf> or contact any of the current Latino / Latina members of our department directly.

*"... as a Latina mentor, I really appreciate the idea of matching with Latino/a students, and I agree (with Esteban) that we need more Latino/a mentors. Mentoring Latino/a students is probably the thing I am most passionate about as an academic. However, there are not enough Latinos/as out there to mentor Latino/a students in the pipeline and –let's be real- not all Latino/a academics know how to do it well or are interested in it (pigeonholing Latino/a academics as working on Latino/a issues and with Latino/a students is unfair to all of us). Additionally, many of us are junior-level and may really want to do a great job but still not have the experience and savvy to pull it off immediately.*

*I had an outstanding scholar as a mentor during my Master's degree. He was White and male, and very committed to seeing me succeed. When I first arrived on campus he asked me about my research interests. I told him I was interested in working with Latinos/as and he saw to it that we sampled Latinos/as in his grant-funded research study. He sought grant support for me (my own grant), mentored me through my thesis, encouraged me to present the work at a national conference, and ultimately get it published. He also gave me ample other opportunities to publish with him. I would not be where I am today without his mentorship and support.*

*It seems that another approach to our sticky situation is to help students identify mentors, of whatever color, that are committed to developing the careers of their mentees. Remember that we don't have a one and only mentor in life or school ... when getting into graduate school the most important thing, in my estimation, is getting \*out\* so we can do the work we want to do, so finding a rock-solid academic mentor is essential. That may or may not be the Latino faculty member on campus.*

*Here are some things I think are important:*

*(a) When applying to grad school, make sure there is a good match between you and at least one but preferably two or three faculty members*

*(b) Get info on those faculty from current (and if possible past) students about mentorship style, availability, approachability, etc.*

*(c) Check out their CVs to see if they're publishing with students; if not, that could be a warning sign.*

*d) If possible, go meet the faculty member to see how the two of you click. If not possible, try to do this over the phone or e-mail, you can still get a vibe.*

*For those of you that feel stuck and unsupported in your programs, you might consider changing programs. It could set you back a year or two but it could put you ahead in the long run if you've used your time well.*

*I am sure there are many more recommendations and it might be nice to start compiling them and perhaps put them on our website. I think if we can encourage prospective students to find a good match, then good things are more likely to follow."*