

Public Abstract

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Desperately Seeking Mentors: The Impact of Department-Level and Gender-Related Characteristics on Mentoring in Graduate Departments of Sociology

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This project focuses on a nationwide sample of graduate departments in sociology and looks closely at how department-level and gender-related characteristics are linked to “mentoring-friendliness” and mentoring structures in these departments. The specific research questions this thesis addresses are: What department-level characteristics are related to the level of “mentoring-friendliness” and mentoring structures in graduate departments of sociology? What gender-related characteristics are related to the level of “mentoring-friendliness” and mentoring structures in graduate departments of sociology? This project analyzes data gathered from the *2005 American Sociological Association Guide to Graduate Departments*, an online survey, and websites. The results indicate that the above characteristics are associated with departmental mentoring. In particular, gender/feminist research and the influence of Women’s Studies had a particularly significant effect on mentoring in graduate departments. Departments should implement mentoring policies, have annual meetings with the administration to discuss mentoring, and ongoing evaluation of mentoring programs. Furthermore, departments should give awards/recognition for excellent mentoring and student evaluations of mentoring should be considered in faculty hiring, promotion, and/or tenure decisions. Departments should work towards creating a culture of mentoring where mentoring beliefs and processes are discussed openly.