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To Our Forever Mentor

Carol Sandborn

University of New Hampshire

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To Our Forever Mentor

Carol Sandborn

University of New Hampshire

In this session, the presenter discusses the concerns, successes and pitfalls of the mentoring relationship, and outlines phases or stages of developing this relationship over time.

In 1994 the Coordinator of Minority Recruitment and Retention at the University of New Hampshire developed a mentoring program for new students of color. As there were not enough faculty, staff or community members of color available to serve as mentors, White faculty and staff were asked to volunteer. In the third year of the program the goals expanded to a Peer Mentoring Triad Model which included the mentor, upper class peer mentor of color and new protégé.

Can a White faculty or staff member of a predominantly white institution successfully mentor a student of color? How does one develop a mentoring relationship that looks beyond color? There are a variety of steps that can or need to be taken to work toward the success of such a mentoring program. These include:

- 1) A commitment to making it work.
- 2) Being yourself. Do not try to be a college student or someone you think that protégé may want you to be. Enjoy the age and cultural difference.
- 3) Genuinely caring about and respecting the protégé. Learn about them. This will take some time but is started by first finding some common areas of interest each can talk about. This eventually leads to many more topics.
- 4) Think back to a time when you were mentored and how much you valued the attention you were given and how it spurred you on to achieve higher goals. Apply your past experiences to your role now as a mentor.
- 5) Do not dwell on what you can not do time-wise or do not have the resources to do. Put into action what you can do.
- 6) Do not see differences in the color of skin, see the person.

These are just a few examples of what can be done to aid in enhancing the mentoring relationship. It is not a relationship that happens immediately but one develops and strengthens over time. Any mentor will find it is time well invested.

PRESENTER:

Carol Sandborn has been at the University of New Hampshire for over twenty years, ten as an athletic coach and instructor of physical education and eleven and a half years as an academic advisor. Carol attended Mary Washington College for one year then transferred to the University of Maryland College Park where she earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education and her Master of Arts degree in Sport Psychology.

At the University of New Hampshire Carol was head coach of the Women's Swimming and Diving Team. She then switched to academic advising and is now an Assistant Director in the University Advising Center working with students who are undeclared in

the College of Liberal Arts as well as provisional majors in psychology, English and history.

Carol serves on a variety of university committees including the Committee for the Connect Program, which is a pre-orientation for students of color. Carol has also served as a mentor for new students of color at UNH for the past five years.