Mentoring

“Inspire Change, Empower Others”
- Anonymous

April 2013
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Mentoring is a wonderful opportunity for both the mentor and mentee. It provides an invaluable experience for both people. But which role is better? Typically, a person is a mentee first and then a mentor. Mentees are allowed the chance to gain new knowledge from their mentor and grow as an individual. However, there are several benefits to being a mentor as well, like strengthening leadership skills and the rewarding feeling of helping someone grow. Regardless of whether you are a mentee or mentor, both positions work hand in hand and more often than not, learn from each other.

At Northern Illinois University, there are many mentor programs, including the Honors Mentor Program, Alumni Mentor Program, and many mentoring positions in clubs and activities. Hopefully, many new mentoring programs will be implemented in future years.

Interestingly, many people hold mentoring positions and may not even realize that they are a mentor or mentee. For example, many sororities have a “big sister” and “little sister.” This is a perfect example of mentoring because the “big sister” often teaches the “little sister” everything she needs to know about the sorority and introduces her to new people. The “big sister” often guides the “little sister” and helps her become more involved.

In addition, there is a lot of mentoring involved in internships. A student, the mentee, will learn the skills and techniques in their career field by observing the work of a boss or advisor, the mentor. A mentor will give the mentee the tools and knowledge needed in order to succeed, and allow the mentee the opportunity to use these new skills.

Mentoring is an important part of life not only for a college student, but also for teachers, employers, parents, friends, etc. It is a unique tool that has been around for years and will continue to be used for many years to come. Students at Northern Illinois University are very fortunate to be surrounded by many mentoring opportunities, many of which will only continue to grow in the next few years.
A Tribute to Mentoring
by Nicki Sablotny

Like most things, mentoring can come in several forms. Whether by a structured program or just as a role model, the best way to become a true mentor is to lead by example. It’s easy for anyone to be a boss, but to be a true leader and a mentor, one must give unselfishly.

I’m sure most of you have heard of Ellen DeGeneres. Better yet, I’m sure that most of you can recognize her encounter with short-term memory loss. Many of you probably know her by her Disney name, Dory, from the popular animated film Finding Nemo, but Ellen DeGeneres is so much more than a fish with a terrible memory. Her positivity is contagious, and she is, in my opinion, one of the greatest role models of the 21st Century. Even though I don’t have millions of dollars to donate to those less fortunate, I am no stranger to philanthropy. Community service has consumed my life since I can remember, but even more so in my college career after becoming a part of the service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega. I would like to take the time to appreciate all that Ellen has done for her community and the nation as a whole through her activism, charity, and positivity.

Ellen is an activist for gay rights, animal rights, and the good of humanity. Though I am not a member of the LGBT community, I have always been taught to respect others. Ellen DeGeneres is a genuine believer in the good of humanity. In 1997, Ellen came out openly to the public about her sexual orientation knowing she would face criticism. She handles her lifestyle with elegance and grace, and doesn’t let the views of others hold her back from success. Not only does Ellen support the fight for gay rights, but also for those of animals. In 2011, Ellen received the PETCO foundation’s HOPE award for her work to promote animal rights and was quoted according to earthtimes.org as saying, “I wish we lived in a world where caring for animals wasn’t so rare that it deserved an award.” Just two years prior, Ellen was named Woman of the Year by PETA for her support in raising awareness of animal cruelty.

Another reason for Ellen’s success is the fact that she gives those less fortunate a second chance. According to looktothestars.org, Ellen actively supports more than thirty charitable organizations ranging from Project Cuddle to Feeding America. On her popular daytime television show, The Ellen Show, Ellen often surprises deserving guests with gifts of outstanding values as she embraces her motto to “be kind to one another.” I know nearly all of you have probably been affected by cancer in one way or another. During the month of October, Ellen heads her own campaign, “Ellen for the Cure” in order to support all those affected by cancer, or more specifically, breast cancer. She is an avid supporter of Susan G. Komen for the Cure and encourages others to donate as well. Whether it be a car, a check, or a Christmas giveaway, Ellen always seems to find a new creative way to support those in need. I have watched as she has funded inner city schools, given a new start to a struggling family, or even as she shares the amazing stories of miraculous individuals.
It is true that Ellen’s charity brightens people’s day, but it is not her only means of spreading joy. Somehow, Ellen always finds a way to bring out the best in people. Ellen invites celebrity guests to speak on her talk show, as several hosts do, but she adds a twist, literally. Ellen encourages a positive attitude, and nearly all of her guests take part in one of her passions, dance, when entering for the show. It is clear that Ellen brings out the best in people, and for that, they thank her. She has been the recipient of 35 Daytime Emmy Awards, and 11 People’s Choice Awards, among many others as mentioned by her website. Now, let’s venture back a couple years to the days of cliques, clichés, and countless daydreams. Every day I would come home from school and every day I’d walk into a house full of tears brought on by Ellen DeGeneres. My mom would sit on the couch weeping as I stormed through the door after school, but after a while, I knew not to ask why. Every day the salty droplets would seep into my mother’s sleeve like a raging river with a broken levee. It wasn’t all bad though. You see, these tears were tears of joy. I’d come home to Ellen on screen either reuniting a military family, rewarding a family with nothing but optimism, or just sharing a laugh with America. Obviously, Ellen has become a strong role model deserving admiration. As I mentioned, Ellen has proven herself worthy of praise all across the nation for her unwavering faith, charitable actions, and positive attitude. I believe that Ellen sets an example far above what the average person expects to achieve. She is undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with for those with the slightest pessimistic view. Ellen truly lives by her own motto to “live, laugh, dance” and spreads her contagious smile with the world around her. She encourages people to put their best foot forward, or fin, as her friendly fish counterpart would say, and “just keep swimming.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Providing Access to Higher Education Through Mentoring
By Emmanuel Almaraz

Many student organizations have collaborated to give back to the Latino youth in the surrounding DeKalb community. Several Northern Illinois University students actively mentor and tutor local DeKalb High School students on a weekly basis. “Vanguardia Afirmativa de los Latinos Unidos,” (VALU) is an after school program at DHS designed to promote academic excellence, cultural awareness, and leadership empowerment. VALU was founded in 2007, when high school student leaders decided they wanted to know more about their culture, and succeed in their courses. With the help of Dr. Emily Prieto, former Director of the Latino Resource Center, VALU was created, and has now evolved into a strong organization, which has served numerous students since its inception.

NIU students meet with the high school students every Wednesday for over two hours, and also regularly create events and attend outings. Sergio Noriega, majoring in Marketing, says he enjoys being a part of this program because growing up, “there weren’t many Latinos that [he] could look up to in higher education,” so he sees it as his duty to support others walking in those same shoes. The greatest reward to being in VALU as Erick Salazar explained, “is being able to grow as a leader within the group, and in my
community.” VALU challenges its students to think critically about society, and their own high school experience. Not only does it work on breaking down stereotypes, but also focuses greatly on having a safe space where the students can have a home away from home to build long lasting friendships.

At the end of the day, many of the NIU and DHS students feel that academic excellence is a priority. All of these students look forward to attending college in the near future, so one of the main concentrations has now evolved into a strict study session. During this study session students do their homework, and also prepare for exams with the help of tutors such as Randy Nambo, Lizzy Garcia, Sara Briseño, among others. Through the help and collaboration of many student at NIU, we are better able to assist the students, and grow together. It is an honor to be part of such a group that is supportive, yet at the same time expects you to give it your all as a student, and a member of society.

Program Coordinator: Ivonne Uqillas

Mentors: Damian Almaraz, Anthony Almaraz, Sara Briseño, Jaime Camargo, Lizzy Garcia, Abbie Jolie, Adam Lopez, Luis Lopez, Randy Nambo, Sergio Noriega
February 14th is a day of remembrance and a day of unity for this campus. It is a day to reflect back on your time as a Huskie and to focus on achieving your potential. It is a day to think warmly of the past and of those we've lost, while also looking forward to NIU's bright future. Six years ago we lost five of NIU's best and brightest; let us never forget the fragile nature of life, but instead, treat each day as a lesson and celebrate each day as a gift. This scholarship memorializes both the dedication to those we’ve lost and the commitment to moving this university forward. It is my sincerest wish to uphold those promises and reflect the spirit of the NIU campus with this award.

I have been fortunate enough to be involved in a number of truly incredible and exciting opportunities during my time at NIU. I’ve traveled all over the country, participated in a number of conferences, worked with several inspiring people and have even donned the Victor E. Huskie suit at various events. I have made it my goal to take advantage of all the programs and challenges that NIU has presented me with and it is my hope to continue this trend long past graduation. Whatever the event, whatever the situation, I do my best to just seize the moment. I never thought I’d be on the sidelines of the Orange Bowl taking pictures for a Pace-maker Award winning college newspaper, nor did I ever think that I’d be honored with such a momentous scholarship. Life happens: grab hold and enjoy the ride.

If it were not for Northern, I would never have been able to reach the heights I have, nor would I have the plans I do for my life following graduation. I would love to one day work in a government position wherein I could help shape the defense policies and practices which protect the lives of people everywhere. Between University Honors and the great staff of the Political Science department, I wouldn’t have the motivation, direction or goals that I do presently. For this I’m thankful.

The most important thing I can possibly say about my time here is this: just be yourself. If you live your life with character, show respect and a commitment to your dreams, then Northern will help you get to where you need to be. This university is special. It caters to every dream, supports every student and just wants you to be prepared to face life head-on. I don’t think I’ll ever be able to properly express the joy and love I have for this university, so instead I'll leave it with this simple hope: it is my sincerest greatest wish that all members of this wonderful community achieve all they are capable of and that their lives are fulfilling and rich. I hope all of you will join me in moving Forward, Together Forward.
I am extremely honored to have received the Forward, Together Forward Scholarship. There were 5 recipients of this award including myself. One of the requirements was that the applicants had to show a strong strength of character. Examples of this would be through a strong work ethic, motivation, inspiration, and a high regard for others. Applicants also needed to have solid academic credentials. This scholarship means a lot to me because it is a way of remembering those lives that were lost on February 14, 2008. It is nice to see NIU reflect back on that day and embrace the wonderful 5 students who passed away. Those 5 students will always have a place in the NIU community and they will never be forgotten.

My major is Speech-Language Pathology. One of my goals is to get my masters in SLP. I am a junior in school, I will be applying for grad school this fall, I’m not sure where I will be going yet. I plan on working with children whether it is in a school, private practice, or hospital. I love kids and I can’t wait to work with them and see them make personal accomplishments. At NIU, I am on the NIU women’s soccer team. I am so fortunate to have had this opportunity because I couldn’t imaginemy college career without it in my life. Within the community, I always go to the DeKalb County Nursing home on Tuesday nights to play BINGO with the residents. I have gone here basically every Tuesday of the school year since sophomore year. I started going my freshman year, but it wasn’t as consistent. I am also a mentor to an 8th grade girl at Clinton-Rosette Middle School. I hangout with her, make crafts, and we just talk sometimes. She has a rough background and I go to see her twice a week usually to try and get her mind off of things and be a positive role model in her life. I have been her mentor for a little over a year now and she seems like my little sister, I love it.

I would tell future NIU students to get involved in whatever they have a passion in. If you find activities you enjoy and do them every week you just feel better and it is an awesome feeling to see people so happy to see you each week. It is also very rewarding to know that you are helping others out who need it.
Forward, Together Forward
Scholarship Recipient:
Juan Molina Hernandez

Forward, Together Forward

Being named a Forward, Together Forward Scholar is extremely humbling. It’s a little hard at times, just knowing the nature and history of the scholarship, the tragedy that struck NIU, and the lives that were lost that day. At the same time, there is something beautiful about it. Knowing that, from tragedy, five students are selected each year and awarded this honor and scholarship is amazing. These students’ education and achievements are being invested in and recognized. It’s a remarkable way to keep a memory going, to create a legacy.

The awards ceremony was amazing. The speech given by Interim Provost Lisa Freeman was equally powerful and touching. Standing next to the other recipients and hearing their stories was remarkable. Seeing how involved and accomplished they are, made me feel proud and humbled to be able to stand next to them. Having my family there, especially my parents, who are a great source of inspiration, made the event even more rewarding.

I’m currently pursuing my Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA). I want to pursue a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in photography in the very near future. My main career objective is to be a gallery artist and have my work in museums and venues in places like L.A. and New York. Furthermore, I want to teach art at the college level upon attaining my MFA. I aspire to give back to my community the way they have given me by promoting the arts, being a mentor to the youth, advocating for higher education among minorities, and advocating for the rights of underprivileged and underserved communities. On campus, I’m involved in various activities and organizations, such as Best Buddies, Dream Action NIU, and the Northern Light Ambassador Program.

I’m forever thankful to the committee who saw something in me, who thought I fulfilled the qualities that Forward, Together Scholars possess, for selecting me for such an honor, and for believing in me and what I’m striving for.
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