

# Order of The Golden Bear



ESTABLISHED 1900

## Temporary Meeting Location March 3, 2020

The meeting was convened at 6:01pm.

### Items for the Good of the Order:

A fellow mentions the Warden's challenge in regards to going back to our home at the Usual Place. Fellows or others who feel led to contribute to the Order or the Senior Hall Restoration Program can do so at [give.berkeley.edu](https://give.berkeley.edu).

The Warden also reminds the Fellowship about the recent launch of the campus-wide Light the Way campaign, and the approach of Big Give (9:00pm March 11 – 9:00pm March 12).

A fellow spoke about recent developments regarding Senior Hall. Two projects vital to the Hall's reopening will be initiated soon, and this fellow hopes that the projects will be completed in a number of weeks. This is exciting news for the Hall, as it has been closed now for over two years.

### Items for the Good of the University: Mentorship

Before the meeting, the Warden prepared the Fellowship for the topic of conversation with some questions to consider:

- *How do we define a healthy, productive mentor/mentee relationship?*
- *How important is it for a U.C. Berkeley student to have a designated mentor?*
- *How can students, staff, and faculty find mentors?*
- *How important is it for a mentor figure to share the same identities as their mentee?*
- *What role can peer mentoring play in the experiences of students, staff, and faculty?*
- *How can Cal students, staff, and faculty be mentors to others in the larger Berkeley/Bay Area community?*

Here are links to just a few existing mentorship programs:

- <https://ls.berkeley.edu/advising/tools-forms/ls-peer-advising>
  - <https://bsa.berkeley.edu/committees-programs/career-development-and-mentorship-committee/mentorship-program>
  - <https://transfers.berkeley.edu/startingpoint>
  - <https://www.berkeleyconnect.berkeley.edu>
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The Warden opened our discussion by commenting that mentorship can oftentimes be a defining factor in student success on our campus. The Warden encourages fellows to share about what they think are good and bad qualities of a mentorship relationship, and welcomes personal experiences with mentorship.

A fellow who was involved with mentorship on our campus stresses the importance of common academic backgrounds, interests, or aspirations to a mentorship relationship, in addition to other qualities like the ability to listen. The fellow shares about a mentor that was significantly impactful to them, that has lasted through many years. The fellow also stresses the necessity of faculty mentorship, even with student issues that are not academic. Faculty members might need some training when it comes to effective mentoring of students.

A fellow shares about their very first mentor, who they met at Cal. This particular person was an administrator who really cared about students, even his student interns. This individual was a real success to the fellow's life, as someone who was able to give advice and support the fellow.

A fellow who was a student athlete with aspirations to go into science recalled emailing professors in STEM, asking if they would show them some of the ropes in their fields. The fellow recalls how only one professor emailed back, but was able to help them through their academic struggles.

A fellow thinks it is interesting to consider the different types of mentors- cheerleader, hard love, practical, or in-depth knowledge. Most valuable mentors are able to see into you or provide wisdom. Mentors really helping students figure out their own path, rather than simply directing them to the one they walked.

A fellow agrees, that there are lots of different types of mentors. Lots of people really stand out at Cal. Bill Ellsworth, advisor to the Rally Committee, was a mentor to this fellow when they were a student. The fellow recalls a piece of advice that Ellsworth once said- "remember what you represent wherever you are." This advice changed this fellow's focus on life, even with the little things they did.

The Warden asks about the purpose of a mentor? Why do people think that we need mentors? What would happen if we did not have mentors?

A fellow makes a distinction between a mentor and a coach- we need both. A coach is a person you go to when you want to get from point A to point B, whereas a mentor will ask why you want B, and not C, D, or E. A conversation can then take place about what one wants in life, and in their career. This fellow had several coaches in their life at Cal. But, a mentor is critically important in helping us understand where we want to be, especially when the world opens up in terms of countless possibilities.

The mentors that have been most impactful to this fellow are ones that have opened up possibilities. They are also able to help get out of stuck places, get access to things that seemed previously inaccessible. A mentor helps one learn how to navigate, and takes on an inspiring role.

A fellow comments on the Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program (URAP). The fellow thinks that this is a really good and constructive program, that gives students a bunch of different resources that prove to be useful. The program provides good grad school recommendations, and provides quality care to students.

The Warden asks about the importance of programs like URAP, even installations or practices on campus that are more informal (ie, cold emailing professors).

A fellow mentions different formal routes on campus, like the Transfer Center that provides a mentorship program. This is an example of a more specific one, but general pathways exist too.

A fellow thinks that formal programs are terrific in that they provide students with an avenue to access mentors. Even within the formal programs, the true mentorship relationships that develop are because of personal relationships, which happen just as much (if not more) in informal ways.

A fellow mentions the [Berkeley Connect](#) program, where graduate students mentor cohorts of undergraduates in their discipline. This gives graduate students the opportunity to step into a mentorship role, and allows them to learn a lot as well.

A fellow offers their experience, in that the best mentors actually get to know you as a person. They can discover important things about you, and encourage you to be yourself. Students come to Cal with few specific academic passions, and it is hard to figure out what they love. As you go through years at Cal, you get to understand what you love, and what you are good at and not so good at. Mentors who can help with this, and actually form a relationship, are invaluable.

The Warden wonders if there are any specific types of mentoring programs that the campus has a need for. Do we need more identity-specific programs? What about specific fields or professions?

A fellow remarks that Cal is famous for its many student groups, but the LEAD center only has a few advisors. Can we facilitate a way for faculty or staff to become mentors for groups in which they have interest? This idea has been around for a while, but nothing has been able to come together. Nevertheless, the need may very well be there, since our advisors get stretched so thin.

A fellow wonders if there is an organization of people who understand the types of mentorship opportunities. One problem of Cal is that it is so large; have we worked on providing a road map of sorts, to mentorship? If one does not know what the campus has available, then they will not be able to take advantage of quality mentorship opportunities.

A fellow agrees with the previous fellow. Many programs offering mentorship opportunities do not have the word “mentor” in them, and this makes them more difficult to find. In terms of types of mentors, having mentors that are ethnically and racially like you is also important. There are shared experiences that can only be offered through diversity in our staff. This also helps students see what is possible for them, to see what is attainable for them.

Another area of need is mentorship between alumni and students, comments a fellow. They recognize some effort through Career Center and Handshake, to make this possible. This fellow thinks that there are a lot of alumni who would be eager to get connected in mentoring relationships if there is a more accessible platform to do so.

A fellow shares about a personal finance class at Haas that a lot of peers took that benefitted them in years after graduation. However, if you did not take this class, you did not get these skills or experience. This fellow wishes that the University would help in making these skills more accessible to everybody.

A fellow comments on the usefulness of career specialists in each department, and their value in contrast with the campus-wide career center at Cal. Because the career advisor is staffed in a particular department, they have specific knowledge in opportunities in that career.

A fellow thinks it would be beneficial if the emails from the Career Center would automatically be sent to new students. Many students would want them, but they do not know that there is even an email list. The career center provides resume building lessons, interview skills, career fairs and more.

A fellow continues the thought of the last fellow, and posits that it might be part of Berkeley's "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mentality. You have to go and seek out the resources that you want to succeed.

A fellow agrees with the previous fellow, and shares experience with Berkeley faculty urging undergraduates to reach out if they want help or resources. In their experience, a professor did not even respond to first emails about research opportunities, waiting for students to send second or third emails to show they actually are interested.

A fellow remarks that this is a problematic take on mentorship. Some students here are the first in their family to go to college, and the difficulty to find mentors on this campus could automatically set some students at a disadvantage.

A fellow agrees, asserting that this is not just unhelpful for the students, but also unhelpful for the University on a financial basis. Cal alumni who feel like the University did not help them are unwilling to give back to the campus. Alumni just simply want more. Notre Dame, for example, does a great job in this regard. Students are assigned to a dorm for 4 years, and each housing unit has a leader who looks after the students under them. Although this is very involved management, it creates a unity among alumni. Berkeley has a sink or swim mentality, forcing students to seek out resources, a mentality which could ultimately be damaging.

A fellow thinks about another possible opportunity for mentorship that our campus lacks. They recall a student who created Nav Cal, a class which helped students navigate the campus. The program has since been expanded, but at its core, it was about matching students up with their need. This type of program could be very beneficial to students struggling to find mentors.

The Warden wonders how members of the Cal community can be mentors, even students.

A fellow mentions [OASES](#) (Oakland Asian Student Educational Services), which has allowed Cal students to take an active mentorship role in the greater Bay Area.

A fellow considers the ASUC as the ultimate example of mentorship. We have one of the most unique examples of student government of any school, its autonomy makes it stand out as exceptional.

A fellow recalls another mentorship example in clubs centered around different majors. For example, the Anthropology Club is run by students: one can meet other students, and professors in the department through the club. Students can be a resource to each other in this way.

A fellow involved in the ASUC can attest to the role of mentorship there. Though this fellow is an alum, current ASUC senators still contact them to ask questions. The fellow also pushes back on the idea that we can rely wholly on informal mentorship: these relationships are oftentimes less successful than formal ones. Getting stuck in this framework can diminish the quality of help that students can receive.

The Warden wonders if there is something special about Berkeley students that makes them better mentors than students from elsewhere?

A fellow thinks one of the best indicators of a good mentor is that they show that they care, and have empathy. Not just a dry, purely-academic relationship. This could be from students anywhere, not just Berkeley.

A fellow thinks that Berkeley students' focus on equity is really important to mentorship. Bringing important issues in our society to the forefront is something Berkeley students do well, and continue to focus on in their careers.

The Warden transitions to another element of mentorship. How can mentorship relationships be the most healthy and productive? How do we avoid breeches in boundaries in mentorship relationships? What types of boundaries need to be set, when looking to form these relationships? Do there need to be formal guidelines?

A fellow considers that contributions and expectations from mentors and mentees should be in writing, as a formal agreement. Studies show that attaching your signature to something helps you fix yourself to a goal.

A fellow brings up liabilities and inappropriate behaviors that can occur in close relationships. Mentorship relationships, because of their nature in age difference, need guidelines to keep the parties within standard norms.

In addition to written guidelines, a third party presence is helpful, says one fellow. The fellow recalls their Cal in the Capital internship, and how they got paired with a helper who connected them with a mentor, and checked in on occasion to help keep the relationship healthy while providing their own guidance on the periphery.

A fellow encourages that there should be guidelines, even if there is no malicious intent on either party's behalf. It is important to understand intention versus impact. Guidelines in these relationships are helpful to avoid demonizing folks who do not fully understand nuances of modern relationships.

A fellow mentions research on millennials' desire for feedback- this should be an important component of mentorship. It is difficult when one does not know if they are meeting expectations. This can only be done through adequate feedback.

In one fellow's experience, the most important mentors have been alumni, because of their willingness to reach out to current students. This fellow mentions their experience with Externships, and how helpful it was to see how willing alumni are to discuss their experiences. It is often intimidating to reach out to alumni out in the world when you are still a student, so it is helpful when alumni reach out to students.

A fellow raises a concern, and commenting that it is important to be a free flow of communication between mentor and mentee. Mentees looking for a cheerleader, who will approve everything they do, will not be successful in serious mentorship relationships. Some students take analysis and criticism as insults. Good mentors have to tell the truth, otherwise they are not doing the mentee a quality service.

A fellow thinks back to previous speakers, and their comments to work out agreements and expectations. This fellow thinks that at a point, it becomes useful to move away from regular monitoring, to be pushed out of your comfort zone. There is definitely a middle ground to how mentorship should work.

The meeting closed with song, and was adjourned promptly at 7:19 pm.

Meeting minutes taken and compiled by the Chronicler for the Order.

