Personal Perspective on Being a Successful Mentor
In my view, mentoring is a malleable and flexible way of thinking that meets students where they are and guides them toward the journey ahead. The growth and development each student receives from my mentoring differs greatly depending on their needs, so that some students may achieve astronomical new heights and some make only small, but crucial strides. As a mentor, I see my students as moving targets...ready to take assistance and soar, if only I can find the right combination for each of them. This means for some I am cheerleader and confidant, while for others I am supervisor and challenger. The unique mix I bring to each mentoring relationship fluctuates by individual, time, locale and goal and no matter what relationship holds, I continually challenge myself to mentor better. **My goal is not only to show them how to achieve their goals (even the ones they do not know they have), but teach them techniques to sustain and inspire them to reach higher.**

Fostering the Students as Scholars Culture at Mason
**Beyond the classroom: The LAB --** Although, classroom learning is intimately intertwined with mentoring, the place where mentorship ensues is often outside the classroom. For me, this often occurs within the context of the Undergraduate Research Lab (the Lab) that I developed. Housed within the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence (ACE!) where I am Deputy Director, the Lab provides opportunities for Mason’s undergraduate students to gain experience in a real-world research setting by becoming actively involved in on-going (mostly externally funded) research. Through the Lab, I bring research to life for many undergraduate students via first-hand experiences. Each semester and over the summer, I admit three to five undergraduate research assistants (UGRAs) into the Lab (some for course credit through CRIM 498: Research Practicum and others volunteer between five and twenty hours weekly.) To date, I mentored 38 UGRAs in the Lab. All UGRAs receive an orientation session and specific project training. Each UGRA receives mentorship from me and one of my graduate students or post-doctoral fellows. **Under my mentorship, UGRA’s work includes data coding, analysis, presentation preparation assistance, literature searches, beta/pilot testing and systematic reviews.** We also incorporate fieldtrips to local corrections agencies to get the UGRAs out of the office and into justice settings. They also have opportunities to publish from their experiences in the ACE! publication, *Advancing Practice* (see attached evidence of mentorship for examples) All ACE! UGRAs learn about and experience real research “in action” which helps them understand the value of using research to improve practice in correctional organizations. Through the Lab, I also work with UGRAs from several disciplines as Labs are not abundant at GMU. To help fill this need, I consult with faculty in various Mason departments. The Social Work department just began their own lab (SWiRL) modeled after mine.

**Mentoring Beyond the Classroom: URSP** – My current URSP student (formerly a UGRA), Sarah Soliman, is completing the third year of her mixed-method study examining how juvenile probation/intake officers understand and use their organization’s data management system during casework with juveniles. Sarah is a computer software major who could not find the mentorship she needed to do independent empirical research in her own department, so she sought me out in her freshman year. Sarah learned to use Atlas.ti (qualitative data management software) during her UGRA semester and uses that skill to code/analyze the interview data she collects. She also designed a survey and is analyzing that data. Her juvenile justice agency partner is planning to use Sarah’s final report to solicit system changes through the Department of Juvenile Justice. Sarah is a rising star who already presented this work at an undergraduate conference at Harvard once and is applying to go a second time next year.

**Mentoring in the Classroom:** For me, classroom mentoring occurs via teaching, specifically in two Research Scholarship (RS) designated courses. Here, I provide opportunities for undergraduates to *really* experience the research process. In these classes, students collect their own data and write an empirical research paper complete with an introduction, literature review, methods, findings and implication/discussion sections (processes/outcomes published in Rudes et al. 2014 and Portillo et al. 2013). I incorporate research and writing instruction, one-on-one paper workshops and poster presentations into the research experience as well. Although the courses are difficult, for some students the paper inspires them to go a step further. Under my mentorship, six students (to date) have worked with me up to five weeks beyond the course, editing and revising their work for publication. Two students published in the *George Mason Review* (one receiving the top paper award) and two others are currently preparing their papers for submission to external undergraduate journals.