

# International Conference on Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies

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#### **BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL MENTORING OF TODAY'S GRADUATE STUDENTS**

In the social sciences and other disciplines, student success can be measured by a number of variables: retention, graduation rate, course completion, etc. Among these variables, there are a number of constants. One of these constants has to do with mentoring. Previous research has revealed a strong correlation between faculty mentorship and graduate student success. Effective mentoring advances the discipline because these students often begin making significant contributions long before they complete their graduate degrees. Such students are more likely to have productive and distinguished careers that enrich the discipline. However, mentoring graduate students can be time-consuming and oftentimes very challenging. Effective mentoring requires a commitment to advancing the student's career and involves developing a professional and interpersonal relationship that facilitates sharing guidance, experience, and expertise. It also requires continuous re-evaluation of student progress and feedback. The fact that today's students come from increasingly diverse backgrounds, have different ways of communicating, and are increasingly more technological may add complexity but may also be a source of enrichment. The purpose of this workshop is to engage in a dialog about the best practices for successfully mentoring today's graduate students including serving as a role model, maintaining professional and ethical standards, providing support and guidance, providing training and oversight of research projects, and providing the framework for students to become independent researchers. Ultimately, effective mentoring can be transformative for students who are preparing to be colleagues with their mentors as they move to the next phase of professional life.

#### **Biography**

Chana Akins is a professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Kentucky. Her research interests focus on how drugs of abuse affect behavior and motivation. She has published over 45 peer-reviewed papers and has served on the editorial board for the Psychology of Addictive Behaviors and as Associate Editor for Psychology of Women Quarterly and Learning & Behavior. She has held several leadership positions including Inaugural Class of Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology for the American Psychological Association (APA) and President of APA's Division 6 (Society for Behavioral Neuroscience and Comparative Psychology).

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