SLOANCONNECT

BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

University of South Florida Sloan Scholar, Erica Dasi, with her faculty mentor, Dr. Sarina Ergas
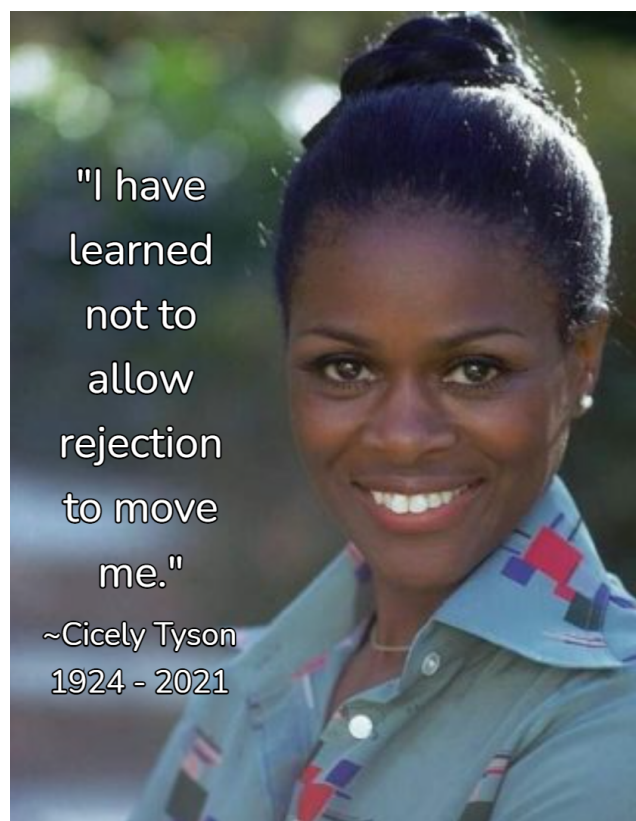
WHAT'S INSIDE

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SEVEN MENTORS YOU NEED IN YOUR LIFE

We often think of a mentor as a single person who is knowledgeable in multiple areas. But according to *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*, doctoral students should have a team of mentors, each with their own strength.

Topic Person – to help make sense of key debates in your subfield so you can design a dissertation project that speaks to these issues.

Methods Person – to help you design a solid research project and get back on track if things go wrong.

Advice Person – to help you strategize and make a plan for your graduate career; someone who will be frank with you about the strengths and limitations of your work.

Writing Person – to inspire you with their writing in your field and offer a model of effective communication.

Feedback Person – to engage with your work and explain why something you wrote needs improvement rather than just pointing out problems.

Networking Person – to help you build your own connections; someone well connected and respected in the field where you want to work post-degree.

Listener Person – to listen when you are dealing with challenges in your program and in your life.

Calarco, J. M. (2020). *A Field Guide to Grad School: Uncovering the Hidden Curriculum*. Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press.

"I have learned not to allow rejection to move me."
~Cicely Tyson
1924 - 2021

SLOAN SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT: SHAMARIA ENGRAM MAKES HISTORY AS UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA'S FIRST BLACK PH.D. GRADUATE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Shamaria Engram initially enrolled at Bethune Cookman University to pursue a career in computer engineering. While there, a professor of engineering and computer science, Dr. Morrison Obeng, recommended that she apply for an undergraduate research internship at Iowa State University. During her internship, she learned about conducting research in computer science from a graduate student, sparking her desire to get her doctorate in the field. Today, she is the University of South Florida's first African American Ph.D. graduate in computer science.

Both her internship at Iowa State and her decision to get her Ph.D. can be tracked to her relationships with mentors and her own curiosity to learn more.

University of South Florida Sloan Scholar, Shamaria Engram

"Shamaria is not only truly gifted but she has the innate ability to see the BIG picture. To this end, she has always been receptive to the guidance of mentors which has led to unimaginable opportunities throughout her career".

- Bernard Batson

SHAMARIA'S ADVICE TO SLOAN SCHOLARS

- Talk to other grad students before committing to an advisor; learn about their working style and make sure your goals are aligned.

- Communicate your career goals to your advisor. Doing so will help them understand how to guide you.

- Evaluate whether your advisor has time to devote to helping you get published.

- Publish as soon as possible; it will help you adjust to getting critiqued. If you wish to pursue a career in the academy, you will need to publish five to six papers and at least one journal paper.

- Establish, maintain, and expand a supportive network of peers and mentors, and start this process early in your career.

Even after her internship, the benefits of mentorship continued: Dr. Obeng recommended that she meet with Bernard Batson, director of diversity and inclusion programs at the University of South Florida (USF) College of Engineering, and Obeng also recommended her for graduate study to Batson. On her end, Shamaria introduced herself to Dr. Jay Ligatti, a computer science and engineering professor at USF, because she was intrigued by his research.

These connections influenced Shamaria's decision to enroll at USF far more than a single course of study. When on campus, she felt a sense of community, especially as a recipient of a Sloan Scholarship in the University of South Florida's University Center of Exemplary Mentoring. As part of the program, she benefited from access to supportive mentors, student workshops, diversity conference travel grants, social dinners, and professional networks.

Bernard also credits Shamaria's commitment to expanding her circle of mentors and, at the same time, serving as a mentor to others as keys to her success. "Shamaria is not only truly gifted but she has the innate ability to see the BIG picture. To this end, she has always been receptive to the guidance of mentors which has led to unimaginable opportunities throughout her career."

Until three years ago, Shamaria was the only Black female in computer science and engineering at USF, and she was the first to graduate from the department. Shamaria is now on the research staff at the MIT Lincoln Lab.

Have a story to tell? We want to hear it! Email us at sloanphds@nacme.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Build Your Mentoring Network: A Panel Discussion](#) (virtual)

February 25, 2021
6:30 - 7:45 p.m. EST

[RIT Future Faculty Career Exploration Program](#)

Application deadline: March 15, 2021

[Institute on Teaching and Mentoring](#) (virtual)

April 16 -18, 2021

Front Row (Left to right): Genesis Higueros, Mechanical Engineering; Grayson Rice, Biomedical Engineering; Jacqueline Looney, Sr. Associate Dean and Duke UCEM Director; Eric Yeats, Electrical & Computer Engineering; **Back Row (Left to right):** Cameron Darwin, Mathematics; Adriana Stohn, Electrical & Computer Engineering; Francisco Ramos, Assistant Dean; Christina Hanson, Chemistry; Brian Kundiger, Statistical Science.

MENTORING MATTERS

Mentoring is both essential to graduate students' success and beneficial to their mentors. Mentoring helps ensure that students are well-trained in their disciplines, successfully complete their degrees, and have promising career opportunities. Students who have mentoring relationships are more productive, more involved in their departments, and are more satisfied with their programs. And whether acquiring a fresh perspective in a particular field or gaining a reputation for identifying and developing top-notch talent, mentors themselves receive immeasurable benefits from the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring is a sustained partnership that is multifaceted and is enhanced by mutual respect and concern. While a mentor can be defined in many ways, a mentor for graduate students is fundamentally someone who serves as a guide throughout their professional training. Far from being an advisor, a mentor serves as teacher, advocate, sponsor, and role model. Even when they do not fill a particular role, good mentors have access to a network of helpful resources they can tap for students at the appropriate times in their careers.

The best mentors:

- clearly communicate their expectations;
- foster relationships between students and other mentors in the graduate program and beyond;
- connect students with service and professional development opportunities;
- encourage students to be creative and to take chances;
- have open conversations about the challenges of graduate school and how institutions work;
- help students develop short- and long-term career goals;
- maintain open lines of communication;
- model professional responsibility; and
- offer honest, constructive feedback.

Contributed by Jacqueline Looney, Duke University UCEM • Director and Senior Associate Dean & Associate Vice Provost. Adapted from The Graduate School's Mentoring Resources at Duke University.

Want to feature a faculty advisor or mentor? Email us at sloanphds@nacme.org.

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Meet Your Representatives

Special thanks to the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Student Advisory Committee (SAC) and for their invaluable help and advice on community engagement.

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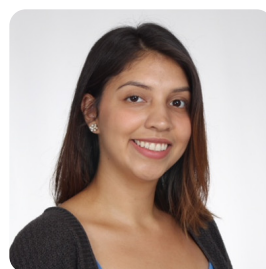
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SloanConnect is a newsletter for the Sloan Scholar community: Scholars, graduates, faculty, and administrators. It highlights news, best practices, and successes across programs.