

NETWORK FOR ENRICHED ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIPS

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Development




Quick Survey

1. Formal university-wide mentoring program that matches students with faculty?
2. College/unit mentoring program that matches students with faculty?
3. Formal university-wide **faculty** mentoring program for specific populations (FirstGen, URM, Women)?
4. Formal university-wide **peer** mentoring program for specific populations (FirstGen, URM, Women)?
5. College/unit mentoring program for specific populations (FirstGen, URM, Women)?
6. Formal university-wide **peer** mentoring program that is open to any student?
7. Informal mentoring groups or programs?
8. Other

Network for Enriched Academic Relationships





NEAR is a transdisciplinary university-wide **mentoring program** that provides graduate students access to mentoring regarding developmental issues beyond their coursework, exams and dissertations.

Founding Principle

Dr. Laina Bay-Cheng, from the School of Social Work, founded NEAR on the principle that creative and rigorous intellectual work requires not only expert guidance in a substantive area or methodological approach, but also **meaningful support**, especially when contending with systemic bias and marginalization or personal stressors and hardships.



Theoretical Approach

Network approach to flatten the mentoring hierarchy.

Reach more people by making it easier to access support.

Grounded in feminist theory.

How NEAR Works

- 1** Interested faculty submit their information indicating issues they are willing to discuss with a student.
- 2** Students search the NEAR directory to find faculty open to discussing a relevant issue.
- 3** Students reach out to faculty with whom they would like to connect.
- 4** The faculty member and student meet up however and whenever they wish.

NEAR Directory



Graves Monroe, Amy



Hakala, Walter



Hands, Africa



Hequembourg, Amy



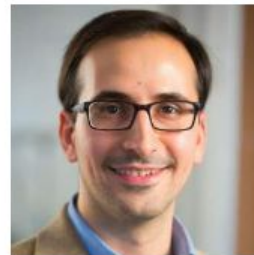
Hess, Daniel



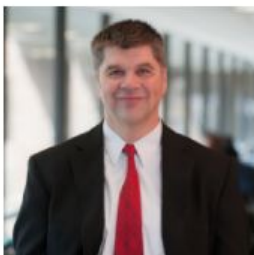
Johnson, Danielle



Kamina, Anyango



Karami, Amin



Keefe, Robert



Kim, Isok



Kim, Namsook



Kim, Wooksoo

Graduate students can use the filter option to find a mentor open to discussing a relevant issue.

Filters

PERSONAL IDENTITIES

- › [Identifies as a Racial Ethnic Minority \(19\)](#)
- › [Identifies as a Sexual or Gender Minority \(4\)](#)

UB AFFILIATION

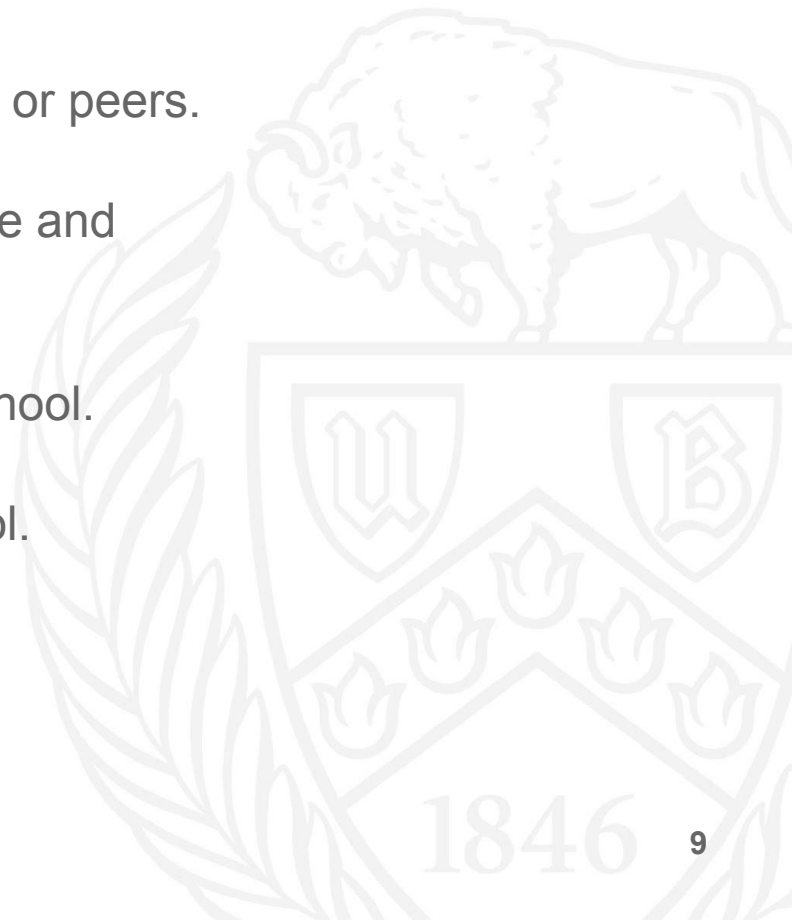
- › [Alumni \(2\)](#)
- › [Faculty \(58\)](#)
- › [Staff \(6\)](#)

EDUCATION LEVEL

- › [Doctorate \(73\)](#)
- › [Masters \(4\)](#)

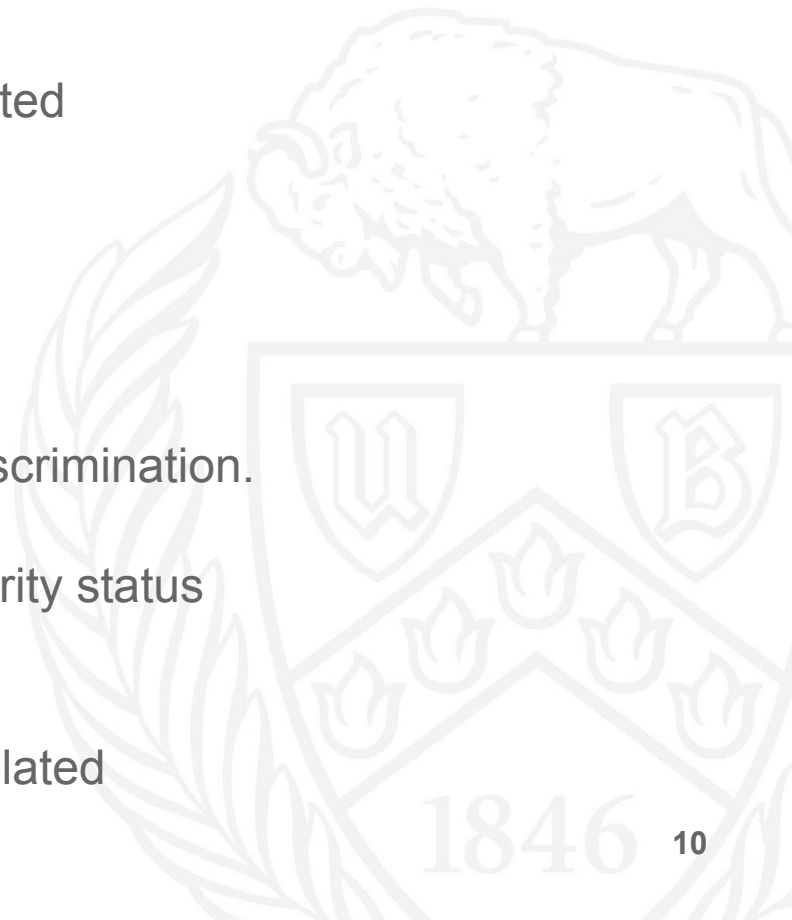
Mentoring Topics: Academic Culture

- Considering a non-academic path after graduate school.
- Dealing with politics and conflict with faculty or peers.
- Decoding and demystifying academic culture and norms.
- Taking a non-traditional path to graduate school.
- Uncertainty about staying in graduate school.



Mentoring Topics: Minority Experiences

- Being a woman and related discrimination.
- Class and/or socioeconomic status and related discrimination.
- Physical health and/or abilities and related discrimination.
- Mental health and/or abilities and related discrimination.
- Racial, ethnic, cultural and/or religious minority status and related discrimination.
- Sexual and/or gender minority status and related discrimination.



Mentoring Topics: Personal Circumstances

- Caregiving for children.
- Caregiving for other loved ones.
- Financial stress and strain.
- Non-U.S. citizen or immigrant experiences.
- Veteran and military family experiences.



Faculty Profile

Amy Graves Monroe

Associate Professor
Romance Languages and Literatures
acgraves@buffalo.edu

Education:

- PhD, French, University of Chicago, 2004

Professional experience:

- Associate Professor, Academia, University at Buffalo



What mentoring means to me:

Mentoring is a bond with future colleagues who are still in their formative years. I find that the contact with junior scholars is energizing and thought provoking, and often gives me a positive feeling. I endured a grueling graduate school experience, often filled with doubts and hesitations that an unforgiving academic environment did little to assuage. I survived, though; and you can too! However, no one said you have to go at it alone! I'm a compassionate ear, a truth teller, an ass-kicker and a cheerleader; we all need this kind of motivation in our lives at different points. The trick is knowing when the moment for each has arrived. The best part of mentoring is the part when you get to help the mentee prepare to be a good mentor.

Topics I am willing to discuss with students:

MINORITY EXPERIENCES

- Being a woman and related discrimination.
- Class and/or socioeconomic status and related discrimination.

Valuing Mentorship

Mentoring is often:

- Invisible.
- Time consuming.
- Essential.





Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring

Presented annually, the Excellence in Graduate Student Mentoring award honors and publicly recognizes exceptional excellence in faculty mentoring of graduate students at UB.

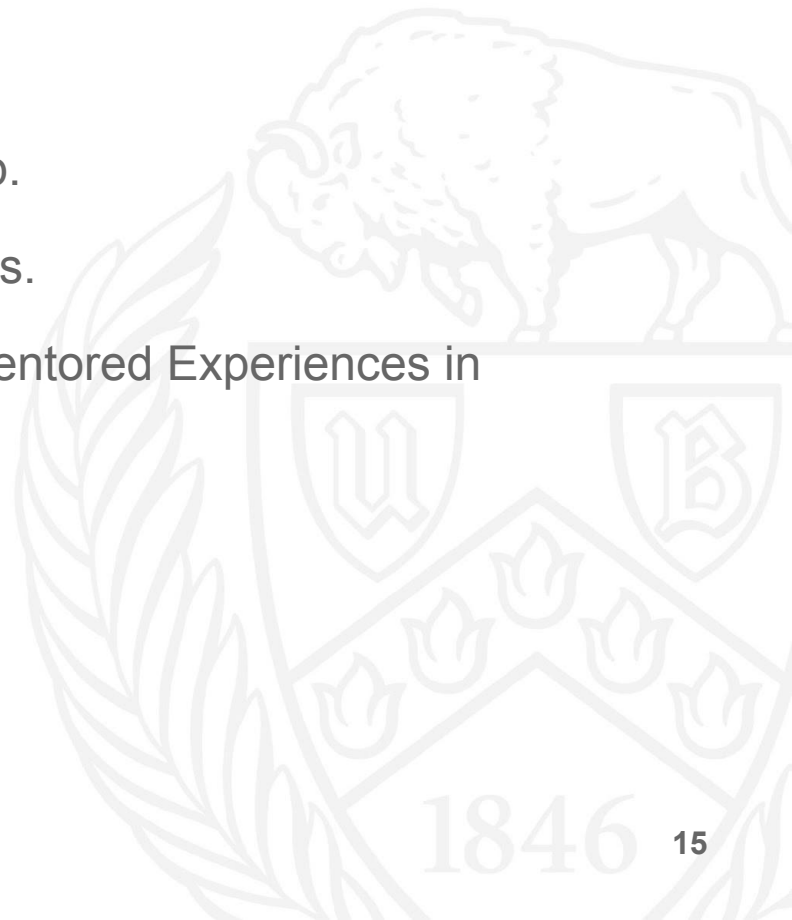
Mentor Training

Past training topics:

- Overview of Student Wellness resources.
- Trauma-informed care—two-part workshop.
- Restorative justice and restorative practices.
- CIMER—Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research.
- Linguistic justice in the Center for Writing.

Upcoming programming for NEAR mentors:

- Students of Concern.



Programmatic Details

- New mentors are invited each fall. Faculty who won mentoring awards in the previous year are a priority.
- Communication plan for mentors and students.
- Website refresh.
- Expand mentor recruitment to increase the diversity of mentors.
- NEAR slides for presentations.

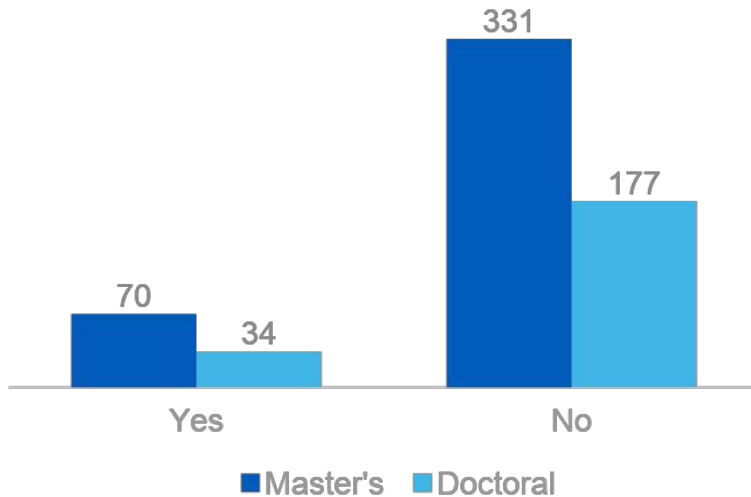


Was it working?

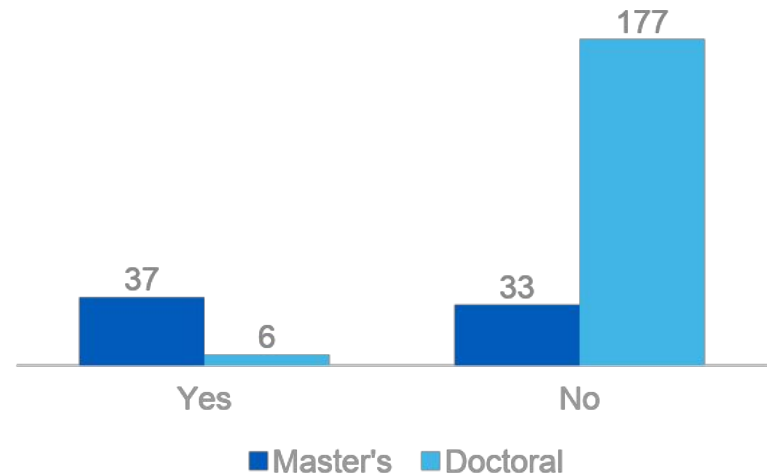


Assessment of Student Engagement

Are you aware of the Network for Enriched Academic Relationships (NEAR) mentoring program?



Have you used the Network for Enriched Academic Relationships (NEAR) mentoring program?



2022-23 Year-End NEAR Mentor Survey

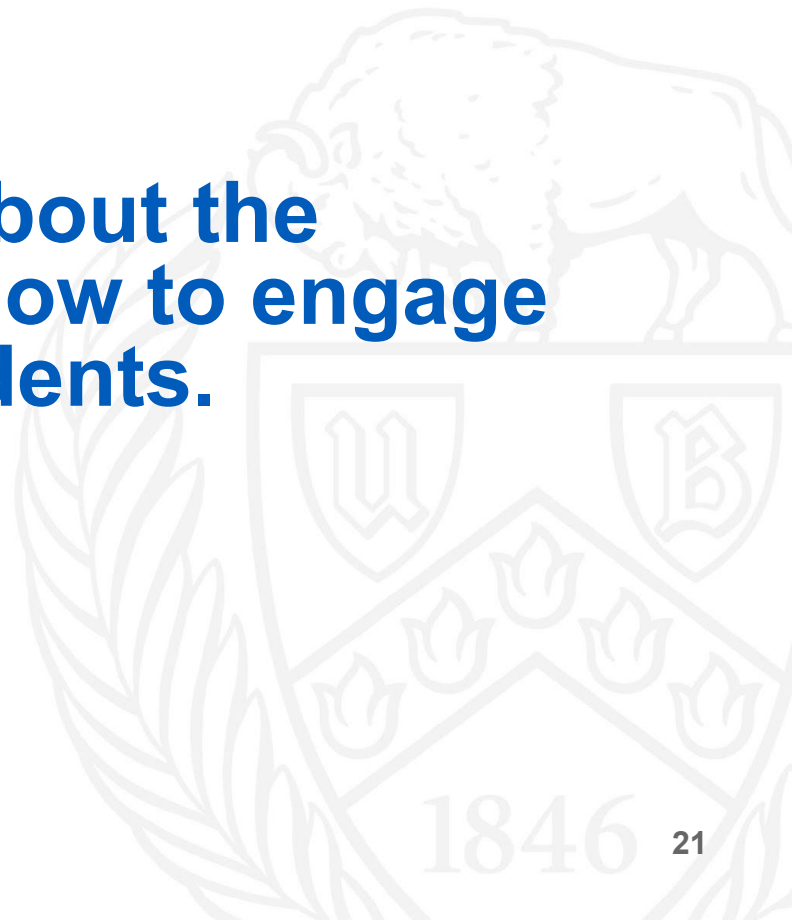
- **60** NEAR Mentors.
- **13** NEAR mentors responded.
- **8** NEAR mentors had zero contact with any students.
- **4** NEAR mentors had 1-7 contacts with students for a total of 20.

**We looked at the
data.**

It wasn't working.



So, we started thinking about the program's purpose and how to engage faculty and graduate students.



**NEAR = Situational
Mentoring**

What we did this past year.

- Changed the language in our communication with students and mentors. Situational!
- Added postdoctoral scholars.
- Changed language from "discriminated" to "experiences related to".
- Added more categories.
- Recruited more NEAR mentors to widen our impact.
- Included staff with PhDs.
- Created a sign for NEAR mentor doors.
- Bought Stress Bulls for NEAR mentors



Mentoring Topics: Personal Experiences

- Caregiving for Children.
- Caregiving for Loved Ones.
- Experiences Related to Being a Woman.
- Experiences Related to Class and/or Socioeconomic Status.
- Experiences Related to Mental Health and/or Abilities.
- Experiences Related to Physical Health and/or Abilities.
- Experiences Related to Racial, Ethnic, Cultural and/or Religious Minority Status.
- Experiences Related to Sexual and/or Gender Minority Status



What's next?

- Expand the NEAR mentors to 100.
 - Invite new faculty.
 - Invite EDJI Fellows.
- Assess.



The Network for Enriched
Academic Relationships

Guiding students
to *success.*

buffalo.edu/grad/near

Questions?

