A Best Practices Guide to

FACULTY-STUDENT MENTORSHIP AT YALE LAW SCHOOL

A Complement to Yale Law Women's Speak Up! Series

YLW
Yale Law Women

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Motivated by previous research on mentorship disparities at Yale Law School ("YLS" or "the Law School"), Yale Law Women ("YLW") organized a Mentorship Committee in the fall of 2016 to conduct further research and create a best practices guide for students, faculty, and administrators.

We looked to five sources of evidence to guide this report and its recommendations. First, to contextualize mentorship at Yale Law School with mentorship in the legal profession at large, we reviewed academic scholarship on the topic. Second, we conducted surveys of 1L and 3L students to understand mentorship from both a new and graduating student perspective. We then conducted in-depth interviews of faculty to learn about the most, and least, satisfying aspects of mentorship. Fourth, we conducted a series of interviews with women's organizations comparable to Yale Law Women at three peer institutions to learn how mentorship works at other top law schools, and to see how Yale can continue to be a leader in this field. Finally, we reviewed the in-depth research and findings of previous *Speak Up!* reports, upon which the findings in this Guide are largely based, to inform our recommendations.

Speak Up! *and Background*

Yale Law Women has released three reports on gender at Yale Law School. In 2002, YLW released *Yale Law School Faculty and Students Speak Up About Gender: A Report on Faculty-Student Relations at Yale Law School.* In 2012, YLW published *Yale Law School Faculty & Students Speak Up About Gender: Ten Years Later*. These first two reports brought gender to the forefront of conversations within the Yale and broader legal community, particularly the gender disparities that exist in and outside of the classroom. Moreover, they have proven to be useful tools for measuring progress at the Law School towards gender equity, as the Law School does not appear to collect and publish this type of data.[1]

In 2015, YLW released *Speak Up! Now What?* to answer three questions related to gender and diversity: whether diversity should matter as an institutional value; what steps had been taken between 2012 and 2015 to improve diversity; and what diversity-related steps students, professors, and administrators could take next. *Speak Up! Now What?* found that the Law School still had significant strides to make in terms of diversity and inclusion, ultimately making five recommendations for action: (1) develop a vision for inclusion; (2) recruit a more diverse faculty; (3) address needs of diverse prospective students; (4) foster student achievement; and (5) improve data collection and transparency.[2] Notably, the report found that increasing mentorship opportunities for all students would lead to more successful, innovative, and diverse career opportunities for students and faculty alike.[3]

[1] *See Speak Up! Now What?* (2015) at i.
[2] *Id.* at iv.
[3] *Id.* at 33

This Guide serves as a complement to Yale Law Women's *Speak Up!* reports. It builds on the comprehensive research on mentorship, gender, and diversity in the 2002, 2012, and 2015 reports and contextualizes its recommendations against the background of current student and faculty perspectives.

Our Recommendations

While students and faculty see mentorship as one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of life at Yale Law School, both parties define mentorship in different ways and identify different areas for improvement. In doing so, the findings suggest that, as a leader among peer institutions in its mentorship offerings, Yale Law School has a particularly important platform to improve mentorship in the law school and in the legal profession at large.

For students, we hope these recommendations address the disconnect between what students *think they need* from professors to pursue their career goals and what *they actually need* to succeed. Often, when students say they are looking for mentors, what they really seek is help or advocacy related to achieving specific goals, such as providing a reference for a 1L summer job or writing a clerkship recommendation letter. For the purpose of this Guide, "mentorship" can encompass both these kinds of direct, one-time asks and more general, long-term career advice. One of this Guide's goals is to help students differentiate between the two asks when forming mentorship relationships. For example, when students express a desire for long-term, generalized mentorship—a need distinct from specific tasks—they often unnecessarily limit themselves to a small segment of tenured academic professors, viewed as more desirable by the student body, when in reality a host of clinical or junior professors may also provide excellent advice. This Guide seeks to help students identify what they want from mentorship and empower them to make more informed, concrete choices in pursuing mentors.

For faculty, we hope these recommendations will help them determine the ways in which they are best equipped to be a mentor for students, as well as how to manage these roles with their other responsibilities. This Guide also seeks to provide advice for professors who may not know how best to reach out to students as a potential mentor, but nevertheless have valuable advice and wisdom to impart.

Finally, for the Administration, we provide recommendations to spur specific actions and improvements to facilitate more and better mentorship relationships. In particular, many student groups, including affinity groups, do significant amounts of work in order to connect their members with alumni and other mentors. Many of the recommendations for administrators are specifically directed to help institutionalize mentorship programming from year-to-year so that student groups, if they so choose, can focus their funding and time on other efforts within the Law School.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose & Origin

Yale Law Women (YLW) presents this Guide as a follow-up to the Yale Law School (YLS) 2016 Report on Diversity and Inclusion.[4] In this report, the YLS Administration called for a "Best Mentoring Practices" guide akin to Yale Law Women's *Speak Up!* report series.[5] In response, YLW assembled a committee of students ("the Committee") to study mentorship at YLS, as well as at its peer institutions and the professional sphere, to identify areas for improvement at YLS.[6] Over the course of the Fall 2016 semester, the Committee used this research to develop a list of concrete, immediate steps for faculty, the Administration, and students to take to help rectify systemic imbalances in students' mentorship experiences, particularly as they pertain to gender.

The purpose of this Guide is primarily to offer recommendations for facilitating mentorship between students and faculty members. It also provides important background to contextualize the importance of mentorship in academic and professional settings.

The Guide first maps out a framework for the different types of mentorship students may seek out during law school.

It then provides a broad overview of the status of mentorship at YLS, particularly since the last comprehensive mentorship survey conducted during the 2014-15 academic year: *Speak Up! Now What?*. This section integrates both student and faculty perspectives on mentorship.

The next section provides context about why mentorship matters, particularly for law students. Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that mentorship is a predictor of professional success.[7] Our surveys of peer institutions suggest that YLS has the opportunity to lead the way in systematizing mentorship. As a top institution with a uniquely small faculty to student ratio, we should be the first to introduce innovative, proactive mentorship practices for students.

Finally, the last and most substantial portion of this Guide details the Committee's specific recommendations and action items for faculty, the Administration, and students, respectively.

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[4] *See* James Forman, Jr. et al., *Report of the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion* (Mar. 2016), 8 ("One of our main proposals is to work with the Dean of Students Office, YLW, and affinity groups to develop a "Best Mentoring Practices" guide akin to YLW's best teaching practices guide."), https://www.law.yale.edu/system/files/documents/pdf/Deans_Office/appendix_recommendations_3_23_2016.pdf.

[5] *Id.*

[6] Students of all genders and class years were invited to join the Committee via several emails to the Wall and additional follow-up emails to affinity groups.

[7] *See infra* footnotes 19-27 and accompanying text.

Methodology

The Committee drew from a variety of research sources to craft this Guide's recommendations.

Data from YLW's *Speak Up!* series are interspersed and cited throughout this Guide. Rather than duplicate the in-depth research and analysis conducted for the most recent reports in 2012 and 2015, the Committee chose to utilize and build on their findings.[8] In building on these findings, the Committee issued two surveys – one to 1Ls and one to 3Ls – about their experience.[9] Because of the limited response rates inherent to a student group survey versus one conducted by the Administration, this Guide does not directly cite the surveys' empirical results.[10] Specific comments submitted to the survey, which provide qualitative descriptions of individual students' experiences, are included. Overall, the survey responses suggested that the *Speak Up!* findings are largely unchanged, and thus remain accurate and relevant.[11] Many of the explicit recommendations from both *Speak Up! 10 Years Later* (2012) and *Speak Up! Now What* (2015) have yet to be implemented, and we include them once again in this Guide.[12] In addition, this Guide recommends that the YLS Administration institutionalize periodic mentorship surveys, in order to supplement the qualitative data presented in this report and quantitative data from previous years.[13] While YLS has made many strides since YLW's first *Speak Up!* report in 2002, subsequent *Speak Up!* Reports and this Guide indicate that there remains much room for improvement.

The Committee also conducted interviews with YLS faculty to inform its recommendations. For these interviews, the Committee prepared a detailed template of questions asking for feedback in these categories: the professor's general reflections on the state of faculty-student mentorship at YLS; the professor's understanding of their duties and responsibilities as a mentor to students; what the professor looks for in a student mentee; the professor's office hour practices and preferences; and the professor's view of what roles faculty, students, and the Administration should play in improving mentorship

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[8] To inform their mentorship findings, the authors of *Speak Up About Gender: 10 Years Later* (2012) conducted 54 faculty interviews and conducted a 48-question survey of the entire student body, of which 61.8% filled out the survey. Yale Law Women, *Speak Up About Gender: 10 Years Later* (2012), at 18-20. *The Speak Up! Now What?* (2015) authors conducted nine YLS faculty interviews, and four interviews with deans or deputy deans in the administration. The team also conducted eight interviews with representatives of student affinity groups, two interviews with representatives of student-run extracurricular activities, and two interviews with representatives from legal employers in the New York City metropolitan area. *Speak Up! Now What?*, *supra* note 1, at 3.

[9] These groups were identified because of their fresh perspective on the 1L fall experience and because of their unique perspective on mentorship at the culmination of the law school experience, respectively.

[10] Specifically, 22% of the 1L class and 15% of the 3L class completed the full survey.

[11] YLW has included questions regarding mentorship in surveys conducted in 2002, 2012 and 2015 in addition to last fall's survey. All of the surveys had similar results, reflecting that mentorship has been a pervasive concern amongst the student body for over a decade. Furthermore, the similarity of the results suggests that additional student surveys may add limited substantive value.

[12] For example, the Fall 2016 survey results continued to find that a majority of student respondents saw room for improvement in mentorship, as approximately 45% of students had in 2012.

[13] *See infra* Recommendations for Administrators.

experiences going forward. We will cite professors by name where they have given us permission to do so, and leave them anonymous where they requested anonymity.

Finally, the Committee also conducted phone interviews with women's law associations at three other top law schools to develop a sense of the status of mentorship at peer institutions. The names of these peer institutions have been left anonymous in this Guide. We asked our peer organizations to discuss the following four topics in our interviews: their overall description of their school's mentorship climate; their key mentorship concerns; existing programming related to mentorship; and any future plans, student or institution-led, to improve mentorship.

DEFINING MENTORSHIP AT YLS

What is Mentorship?

At YLS, mentorship means different things to different people. One professor noted that at its best, mentorship "is an organic outgrowth of relationships of common interest and shared passion."[14] At its worst, it is "this functional thing that stresses students and professors out because students try to seek it and professors begin to question the intentions of students."[15] No career or academic journey should or can be undertaken alone. This Guide seeks to give individuals of all different backgrounds and skillsets the tools to experience mentorship at its best.

When surveyed, Yale Law School students primarily viewed mentorship as a form of professional career guidance, followed closely by professors' willingness to write letters of recommendation and to connect students to professional networks and resources. Almost every student surveyed in 2016 expressed that sharing personal experiences and advice was a crucial component of professional career guidance, confirming that while some students may seek out faculty only for recommendations, and others as mentors solely for personal guidance, many students seek a combination of both.[16]

Students overwhelmingly expressed dissatisfaction when professors assumed they wanted advice solely for applying to clerkships, when in fact they were seeking other forms of professional advice as well. One 3L woman summarized her experience: "There's a skepticism among professors that we're just seeking mentors for clerkship recs—while that would be nice, mostly I just want a mentor because I really want help from an adult figuring out my career!" Other students reported that the best form of mentorship is simply hearing faculty "speak candidly about work and life and lawyering,"[17] and in the chaos of finding clerkships personal, nuanced guidance is often sacrificed.

In general, students and faculty expressed the most satisfaction with their mentorship experiences when their relationships had "the right fit."[18] This Guide seeks to increase the number of students and faculty who find this fit—when a student feels that a professor is responsive to and supportive of their professional goals, and a professor in turn feels rewarded by supporting the student. As one professor summarized the ideal mentorship

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[14] Interview with Issa Kohler-Hausmann, Associate Professor of Law and Associate Professor of Sociology, Yale Law School, in New Haven, Conn. (2016).

[15] *Id.*

[16] For example, a 3L participant in the 2016 survey commented: "I would . . . love to build not only a professional but also a personal relationship with at least some of the professors."

[17] 3L student survey participant.

[18] According to Judge Pamela A.M. Campbell, the "right fit" requires a "relationship of two people who are willing to spend some time together listening or observing each other and where trust and respect are critical elements of the bond." Paula Hinton et. al, *Xavier or Magneto? Mentoring Lessons from the X-Men* 3 (Apr. 2012) (unpublished manuscript) (citing Sabrina Beavens, Interview with Judge Pamela A.M. Campbell, Circuit Court Judge, in Pinellas County, Florida), http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/litigation/materials/sac_2012/08-4_mentoring_by-karen_lisko.doc.

relationship, both students and faculty are happier when there is a "partnership" rather than a "one-sided, nurturing" relationship from faculty to student.[19]

Why Does Mentorship Matter?

Mentorship as a Predictor of Professional Success

Facilitating mentorship relationships is crucial to realizing Yale Law Women's mission of advancing the status of women at Yale Law School and in the legal profession at large. Before students even enter the workforce, mentorship is a crucial aspect of navigating potential career paths and interests in law school. This is particularly true for women and people of color, who often feel isolated from the law school experience and remain noticeably absent at the top levels of leadership in the legal community.[20] As Yale Law School admits increasingly diverse classes, mentorship becomes even more important.[21]

Research shows definitively that having *any* sort of mentorship relationship is overwhelmingly better than having no mentorship relationship at all. In the legal community, mentoring improves professional and socioemotional outcomes for both men and women lawyers, as well as higher earnings,[22] greater job satisfaction,[23] and greater likelihood of obtaining partner status at a firm.[24]

It is important to note that women-to-women mentorships can create valuable dialogues on the realities and dynamics of gender segregation and discrimination, and how women students can empower themselves to overcome these challenges—as much as is possible in the face of bias—through preemptive strategies.[25] Educational experts recommend that administrators of mentorship programs take both race and gender into account to best

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[19] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured woman professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[20] *Speak Up! Now What?* (2015) at 7 (summarizing the fact that YLW's 2002 and 2012 reports, as well as other student-written reports such as *Class/Action* (2013) and *Falling Through the Cracks* (2014), show that feelings of isolation at YLS stem from characteristics including race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation). *See also* Catherine Weiss & Louise Melling, *The Legal Education of Twenty Women*, 40 STAN. L. REV. 1299 (1988) (concluding from interviews of twenty women students regarding their experience at YLS that men and women experienced law school differently due to feelings of alienation and exclusion that disproportionately affected women students).
[21] 53% of the class of 2020 are women, and 48% are students of color. *See* Yale Law School, *Statistical Profile of the Class of 2020*, *available at* https://law.yale.edu/admissions/profiles-statistics/entering-class-profile.
[22] *See, e.g.*, David N. Laband & Bernard F. Lentz, *Is There Sex Discrimination in the Legal Profession? Further Evidence on Tangible and Intangible Margins*, 28 J. HUM. RESOURCES 230, 238 (1993).
[23] *Id.* at 251-53.
[24] *Id.* at 244. *But see* Fiona M. Kay & Jean E. Wallace, *Mentors as Social Capital: Gender, Mentors, and Career Rewards in Law Practice,* 79 SOC. INQUIRY 418, 445 (2009) (finding that male lawyers utilize their mentorship relationships more productively to realize career rewards than female lawyers, suggesting that Career Development training may help women and underrepresented students better take advantage of mentorship relationships).
[25] *See, e.g.*, Aarti Ramaswami et. al, *The Interactive Effects of Gender and Mentoring on Career Attainment: Making the Case for Female Lawyers*, 37 J. CAREER DEV. 692, 710 (2010) (citing Daniels et. al, *Potentials to Meet and Promises to Keep: Empowering Women through Academic and Career Counseling*, 26 COLLEGE STUDENT J., 26, 237–242) (1992)).

prepare underrepresented young people for the workforce they are preparing to enter.[26] Nevertheless, women need not find mentors who look like them in order to succeed. Indeed, women lawyers with senior male mentors consistently outperform their male colleagues with senior male mentors, demonstrating that simply providing access to informal advice networks can create systemic change.[27] Equipping YLS students with the skills to seek out and successfully navigate mentorship relationships to benefit from these networks is crucial to their future professional success.

Research on race in mentoring relationships similarly suggests that racially underrepresented students disproportionately lose out on mentorship opportunities both in law school and the professional sphere, yet stand to gain substantially from them.[28] A nationally representative survey of young American lawyers found that white lawyers were more likely to be mentored than minority lawyers, yet minority lawyers were more likely to desire more mentorship opportunities.[29] As a result, racially underrepresented lawyers are less likely to be satisfied with their jobs, and more likely to plan on leaving their firm in the next year.[30] Given the mentorship challenges racially underrepresented students are likely to face following law school, it is especially important for YLS and peer institutions to help facilitate strong mentorship relationships during law school.

Mentorship as a Responsibility & Opportunity for YLS to Lead

Inequities in mentorship relationships are pervasive throughout law schools in the United States.[31] A series of interviews conducted by the Committee with women's organizations at three of the Law School's peer institutions found that all three schools lacked effective mentorship guidelines for students, that students at all three schools desired more formal implementation by the administration of mentorship programs, and that students at all three schools believed mentorship could be improved in significant ways.

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[26] *See, e.g.*, Lisa C. Ehrich et al., *Formal Mentoring Programs in Education and Other Professions: A Review of the Literature*, 40 EDUC. ADMIN. Q. 518, 533 (2004); Celestial S.D. Cassman & Lisa R. Pruitt, *A Kinder, Gentler Law School? Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Legal Education at King Hall*, *UC Davis Legal Studies Research Paper Series Research Paper No. 41*, 1929, 2003 (2009) (finding that women and students of color at UC Davis Law School reported that "the quality of their legal education is diminished by the dearth of professor-mentors who are demographically similar to them").

[27] *See* Aarti Ramaswami et al., *supra* note 39 at 237 ("Female lawyers with senior-male mentors had higher compensation and career progress satisfaction than those without mentors, and were more likely to be partners or hold senior executive positions than women without mentors or women with female or junior male mentors.").

[28] *See, e.g.*, Monique R. Payne-Pikus et al., *Experiencing Discrimination: Race and Retention in America's Largest Law Firms*, 44 L. & SOC'Y REV. 567, 579 (2010) (noting that white lawyers were more likely to take advantage of informal mentorship gateways, such as joining partners for lunch).

[29] *Id.* at 558.

[30] *Id.* at 569.

[31] *See,* Cassman & Pruit, *supra* note 39, at 1984 (finding that men not only received more informal time with professors than women, but also that men seemed more "comfortable" and "entitled in doing so," while women and students of color were more likely to feel "intimidated" by professor sand afraid that not appearing intelligent enough could "negatively influence professors' perceptions" of them).

The women's organization at School A, a larger institution, noted that while no substantial research on mentorship has been done at their school, there is a general "sentiment that the law school could do more to bring out relationships between faculty and students, especially women." Students expressed that the large size of the student body and faculty created "distance" between faculty and students, with both parties lacking knowledge on how to develop mentorship relationships with one another. To the organization's best knowledge, School A has no formal plans to improve upon its existing mentorship programming but hopes to continue its existing coffee chat series with professors.

The women's organization at School B, a smaller institution, had a better mentorship satisfaction climate and felt that "more professors are interested in mentorship than aren't." However, students found a particular weakness in clerkship mentorship, noting that it was often difficult to get faculty to respond to email requests for advice or information. School B's women's organization found that professor-led groups and programming—such as stress-release workshops, group office hours to decrease stress, and Legal Studies workshops—were low cost, relatively successful methods for helping faculty and students begin mentorship relationships. The organization specifically mentioned a YLS faculty member who has been active in these workshops; this suggests that best practices in New Haven do spread to peer institutions. At the time of this publication, School B's women's organization noted that the school is exploring ways to formalize this mentorship programming.

Lastly, the women's organization at School C, another larger institution, found that students were not made aware of or advised on the importance of mentorship until their 2L or 3L year, when they were forced to "scramble" for recommenders and advisors. The institution has no formal mentorship programming, aside from informal lunches with professors on new scholarship. The organization at School C did not know of any plans to improve upon mentorship in the future.

Our interviews with these women's organizations reflect three key findings: (1) students elsewhere are generally under-resourced in terms of mentorship support and opportunities; (2) peer institutions have similarly few institutionalized mechanisms for mentorship; and (3) other law schools' existing programs are similar to those offered by YLS. These findings suggest that YLS has an important opportunity to pave the way for its peer institutions by creating robust programs to facilitate mentorship relationships, including by formally implementing the recommendations described in this report. YLS is a top law school, and has the benefit of a uniquely small faculty to student ratio. However, student organizations at YLS have taken on the significant and burdensome responsibility of facilitating mentorship opportunities by organizing faculty dinners, facilitating alumni-student relationships, and engaging in various other mentorship-based support activities. As recommended below, the Administration can take on the responsibility of surveying students and faculty on their mentorship satisfaction, expanding the CDO's responsibilities to include mentorship workshops, and increasing funding to student groups that facilitate faculty-student mentorship programs.

The Status of Mentorship at YLS

Student Perspective

The Committee's work confirms that the *Speak Up!* reports' earlier findings of student dissatisfaction in mentorship remain pervasive in the law school community. One student succinctly described mentorship as "the most competitive aspect thus far of Yale."[32]

YLW's *Speak Up! Ten Years Later* report, published in 2012, showed that 45 percent of students reported that they were "unsatisfied" or "very unsatisfied" with mentorship opportunities available at YLS.[33] Women were generally more unsatisfied with mentoring opportunities than men.[34] In 2012, 51 percent of students reported that they did not consider *any* YLS faculty member a mentor.[35] A slightly higher percentage of women (51.8 percent) than men (45.5 percent) reported that they considered at least one YLS faculty member a mentor, but men reported having slightly more mentors of both genders than women did.[36] While much has changed since 2012including the publication of the Diversity Report—including the hiring of numerous faculty members of diverse backgrounds and specialties, and the appointment of Yale Law School's first female dean—numerous 1Ls continued to express dissatisfaction in 2016.[37]

Furthermore, the 2016 Committee found that for 1Ls, mentorship opportunities depend heavily on randomly assigned small group professors. Discussing mentorship without discussing small group assignments is nearly impossible; indeed, Yale's admissions website highlights the relationship between small groups and mentorship by describing the "small size of [a small group]" as a method of "ensur[ing] that students develop a close relationship with the professor and with each other."[38] However, many small group professors are not fulfilling what students saw as basic mentorship duties. Although the authors of this report do not expect a small group professor to become a long-term mentor to all students in the small group, students should be able to expect some basic level of academic and professional guidance from their small group professors. This mentorship is especially important given that many decisions—including 1L summer employment, spring course selection, and spring RA opportunities—must occur before students have completed their first semester. These decisions come before students have had the

[32] 3L student survey participant.
[33] *See Speak Up About Gender: 10 Years Later* (2012) at 7.
[34] *Id.*
[35] *Id.*
[36] *Id.*
[37] Although survey participation in 2016 was very limited (22%), an overwhelming majority of 1L students surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with mentorship; roughly half also indicated that they had yet to find a mentor at YLS. Seventeen 1Ls specifically noted they were unsure if they would ever find a professor who could serve a mentorship role in the future. Due to the importance of mentorship in the legal profession and to YLS's uniquely small student-to-faculty ration, discussed on pages 12-13 *supra,* Yale has both the obligation and the opportunity to better serve these students.
[38] J.D. Program, https://law.yale.edu/study-law-yale/degree-programs/jd-program (last visited Sept. 11, 2017).

opportunity to seek out mentors and build relationships through clinical and RA work.[39] As such, 1L fall professors play a critical role in helping students chart their path going forward.

In addition to small groups, the Committee also found that Office Hours played a crucial role in helping 1L students identify mentors. Three out of every four 1L students who identified a mentorship relationship with a professor other than their small group professor established that relationship in office hours. The data was remarkably similar for 3Ls interviewed by the committee. This demonstrates the importance of the accessibility of office hours, including holding regular office hours, using the online scheduling tool, and encouraging students to come with questions.

Unfortunately, the Committee's qualitative findings also confirmed the persistence of a gender gap in which students attend office hours. The *Speak Up!* survey revealed that in the fall of 2012, men attended office hours an average of 3.6 times in total throughout the semester, while women attended only 2.6 times on average.[40] Our Committee's interviews with faculty suggested that the disparity remains. For example, a woman faculty member noted that those who approach her still tend to be well-connected students with prior relationships to institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, reflecting an "old boys network of students who already have strong and prestigious institutional connections."[41] A male professor similarly noted that fewer female students come to him for mentorship, office hours, and paper writing, reflecting a broader gender disparity in mentorship generally at YLS.[42] When men disproportionately take up office hour time, women students miss out on crucial connection-building opportunities.

Students suggested that the gender disparity around office hours may be partially attributable to the perception that professors only wish to mentor select students. One 1L woman reflected: "I get the sense that some professors deliberately look for the "stars" of their class—those they can go on to recommend for very competitive clerkships, etc. This can have a chilling effect on students who are not clearly favorites."[43]

The ongoing gender disparity in office hours is notable particularly because it has multiple, readily available solutions. While hiring a more diverse faculty is in the long-term paramount for ensuring all students can choose a mentor with whom they identify, requiring professors to hold office hours and use the online sign-up tool, as discussed below in our recommendations, are excellent short-term strategies for inviting more students into office hours.

[39] In 2016, 3L students identified clinical and RA work as channels for identifying potential mentors.
[40] *Id.* at 6.
[41] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured woman professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[42] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured male professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[43] 1L student survey participant.

Faculty Perspective

Faculty members generally indicated a desire to mentor more students in greater depth, yet expressed frustration at either not having enough time, or in some cases not knowing how best to reach out to students.

One male faculty member described the students at YLS as "awesome" and mentorship as "the best form of faculty-student engagement," yet qualified that "students have much higher expectations for mentorship at YLS," creating heavy burdens for junior faculty and uncertainty amongst professors who do not feel as they though they have access to clerkship information.[44]

Overwhelmingly, female faculty members carry the weight of mentoring duties and responsibilities at YLS. Surveyed students reported an even split between male and female faculty mentors. Because female faculty members still make up significantly less of the faculty, these numbers indicate that some women faculty are doing substantially more mentoring work than some of their male counterparts.[45] Women faculty members also write *significantly* more letters of recommendation. The 14 women faculty members interviewed for *Speak Up! 10 Years Later* reported writing 99 letters, an average of 7.1 letters per person, while the 40 men interviewed reported writing 158 letters, an average of 4.0 letters per person.[46]

A woman professor interviewed by the Committee affirmed that mentorship can be "physically draining," particularly after she holds 12 hours of office hours each week in order to meet her students' needs. She suggested that there may be "older, male professors" who are particularly suited to mentorship, particularly for students who wish to enter legal academia, yet are unsure as to how to let students know that they are willing to help.[47] A male professor suggested that some professors simply "like people more than others."[48]

Women faculty hold a disproportionately large share of office hours despite their smaller numbers within the faculty. While 72 percent of professors report that they hold regular office hours, 86 percent of women professors do so.[49] A female faculty member acknowledged, "timing is incredibly hard. It's especially hard for junior professors who have to get their work done, but have also decided to continue with their advocacy."[50] One senior faculty member in particular noted that there is a "life cycle of mentorship" that should correspond with faculty members' familial obligations outside of the Law School.

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[44] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured male professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[45] According to Yale Law School's 2016-17 online faculty directory, just 37, or 29.6 percent, of its 125 faculty members are women. This percentage includes visiting faculty as well as clinical faculty. *See* https://law.yale.edu/faculty?combine=&field_type_value=Lecturers-Affiliates.
[46] *See Speak Up About Gender: 10 Years Later* (2012) at 6.
[47] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured woman professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[48] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured male professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[49] *See Speak Up About Gender: 10 Years Later* (2012) at 6.
[50] Interview with Issa Kohler-Hausmann, *supra* note 8.

Within this framework, law professors who are "empty nesters," that is, with generally more free time than their younger colleagues, should dedicate more of their time to mentorship. This would allow professors with young children or caring obligations—disproportionately, but not solely, women faculty—to be parents *and* professors without mentoring disproportionately large portions of the student body.[51]

Despite the time that mentoring can require of professors, each faculty member interviewed emphatically confirmed that their dedication to mentoring outweighed any concerns and was a primarily "happy duty."[52] One professor explained that he teaches at YLS because of the opportunities to mentor and have intellectual discussions with students.[53] Another professor expressed that developing lifelong friendships and finding students that they can "really help grow" were some of the most rewarding aspects of her career.[54]

[51] Interview with Ian Ayres, William K. Townsend Professor of Law, Yale Law School in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[52] *Id.*
[53] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured male professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[54] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured woman professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).

CONCLUSION

Our findings indicate that while students and faculty may have differing views on what mentorship entails, there is a general consensus that there is significant room for improvement at YLS. Students are often unsure of what they should ask of professors and who specifically they should ask, while faculty are often either overwhelmed with mentorship requests, or unsure of how to engage in mentorship altogether.

Mentorship is at its best a two-way duty between faculty and students, and the preceding recommendations provide concrete steps for both groups to take in improving their mentorship skills. We also include administrative recommendations, with the goal of institutionalizing mentorship knowledge from year to year. We hope this Guide inspires dialogue and concerted action towards improving mentorship not just for the 2017-2018 school year, but for many years to come.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Faculty

1. As a professor, you wield an enormous amount of power during students' time at the law school and throughout their careers. *All* faculty members should see themselves as potential mentors and advocates for students, particularly those whose background has not given them access to informal networks in the legal profession.

2. Before the school year begins, establish your norms and what type of mentorship role you're comfortable offering to your students. Examples of those roles may include writing and other academic guidance; clerkship advice and recommendations; general career guidance and serving as a reference; or a combination of all three roles.

3. Be explicit about these mentorship preferences when introducing yourself to new students and when posting about office hours. Consider clearly writing your mentorship norms on syllabi at the beginning of the semester. This can be a clear and helpful way to communicate your norms, as well as to communicate your openness to mentoring students for either long-term or short-term needs.

4. If you're teaching a 1L fall course, consider using brief pre-class surveys to get to know your students, as well as their goals and anxieties, before it begins or at the beginning of the semester. Doing so will allow you to learn what students in your class are worrying and wondering about, and therefore make you a better, more communicative mentor.[55]

5. Consider students with accomplishments and interests in different areas when creating mentorship relationships. Instead of rewarding only a stellar exam or impressive credentials, try to recognize thoughtful class participation or a willingness to engage in intellectual discussion during office hours. Similarly, think broadly about mentoring students both "on track" for conventional standards of law school success, such as clerking, and "off track" with more outside-the-box ambitions.[56]

6. Consider managing your time and responsibilities by inviting students into projects and issue areas you care about and are working on. Matched interests and skillsets can help facilitate strong, mutually beneficial mentorship relationships.[57]

7. YLW strongly recommends using the online office hours tool. This helps signal to students that you hold office hours and that you invite them to meet with you. It also

[55] One tenured male faculty member identified this as a practice he had implemented to great effect.
[56] Interview with a Yale Law School tenured male professor in New Haven, Conn. (2016).
[57] *See, e.g.*, Interview with Ian Ayres, *supra* note 31; Interview with Issa Kohler-Hausmann, *supra* note 8.

provides students with a logistically easy way to sign up. If you prefer not to use the online tool, we recommend that you post alternative instructions on the online site so that students know how to sign up.[58]

8. Place a clear door-knocking policy outside of your door. Many students reported having embarrassing encounters with new professors when they were scolded for either not knocking *or* knocking at their scheduled office hour time—placing a clear sign is a small, but simple way to indicate your desire to interact with students.

9. If you are a 1L fall professor, consider offering to serve as a 1L summer job reference for all of your students. 41 percent of small group professors offered to do so in the fall of 2016 without being asked.

10. If your personal and professional schedule permits, serve as a 1L small group professor! 1Ls and 3Ls reported that their small group professor often played a pivotal role in shaping their law school experience and future professional career. Volunteering just one semester of your time provides you an opportunity to have a meaningful impact on students' experiences at YLS and beyond.

11. Regularly evaluate your professional and personal responsibilities. Do you have the bandwidth to mentor a few students, or even one? If so, consider adopting any of the recommendations listed here, or reaching out to the Yale Law School Administration to indicate your desire to help. Remember that increasing your mentorship footprint is a valuable service not only to students, but also to those of your colleagues who "punch above their weight" in the mentorship arena, especially women and junior faculty.

Recommendations for Administrators

1. In order to provide for more accurate data for future work, consider institutionalizing school-wide surveys to track student feedback on mentorship, as well as additional metrics such as gender equity in the classroom and diversity among the student body.

2. Incorporate mentorship into an annual pedagogical workshop for faculty. While sharing these best practices with new or visiting faculty is important, it is equally important to share them with veteran faculty members. Successful mentorship is a skill that takes years, not weeks, to develop.

3. Consider using the CDO to match students and professors with relevant interests into mentorship pairs, especially those faculty who wish to mentor students but are

[58] 60 percent of 1L and 3L students surveyed by the Committee expressed a preference for online sign-ups.

unsure of how to begin doing so. Multiple professors expressed that academically inclined students are often not aware of potentially outstanding faculty mentors.[59]

4. Introduce CDO programming and coaching to create more transparency in how students can establish a mentorship relationship. Many students surveyed wanted advice on how to ask a professor for advice or a recommendation without it seeming "contrived" or overly "transactional."

5. Continue efforts to hire more faculty members who reflect the increasingly diverse YLS student body, with an emphasis on professors who prioritize mentorship as part of their job responsibilities. Consider broadening the student faculty hiring committee's influence and participation in hiring efforts.[60]

6. Continue to provide funding for faculty to take small groups of students to a meal or coffee in order to facilitate relationship-building outside the classroom.[61] Encourage faculty to use these resources rather than relying on student groups to organize get-togethers.

7. Generate a list of faculty assistants and distribute it to students each fall. Ensure that faculty assistants are also included on each professor's biography page on the Yale website. Faculty repeatedly report that they lose and forget about e-mails due to sheer volume and that the best way to reach them is through their assistants. While students in a professor's class may know the assistant from a syllabus, students who wish to cold e-mail professors may not and thus feel rejected when the faculty member does not respond to a request to meet.

8. Organize or fund cross small group activities to expose students to other professors earlier in the year. Many 1Ls articulated a desire to meet professors outside of their 1L fall line-up, particularly if they felt they had a small group professor with whom they did not "click."

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[59] For example, a 3L survey participant commented: "The more it is left up to informal opt-in methods, the more certain people benefit. The way to equalize access is not to promote events with affinity groups, which only perpetuates inequality of access in its own way."

[60] Studies suggest, for example, that African American women mentors can provide African American women students with "special advice that might not be present in other relationships," as well as a general level of mutual understanding and respect. Lori D. Patton, *My Sister's Keeper: A Qualitative Examination of Mentoring Experiences Among African American Women in Graduate and Professional Schools*, 80 J. HIGHER EDUC. 510, 524 (2009). *See also* Ellen A. Ensher & Susan E. Murphy, *Effects of Race, Gender, Perceived Similarity, and Contact on Mentor Relationships*, 50 J. VOCATIONAL BEHAV. 460, 469-470, 472 (1997) (finding that interns assigned to mentors of the same race received more instrumental support and were more satisfied with their mentoring experience).

[61] *See Speak Up About Gender: 10 Years Later* (2012) at 6.

9. Enforce mandatory office hours for all larger lecture courses. Even more so than within small groups, individual mentorship that starts in a lecture class has been proven to have high rates of mentee success.[62]

10. Enforce a requirement for exclusively online office hour sign-ups. As articulated above, students found signing up for office hours via email potentially uncomfortable and uninviting, especially when professors do not respond.

11. Hire a student (or two) as a research assistant to track the amount of time professors spend on mentorship and determine ways to compensate for this extra labor. Rewarding good mentorship in addition to scholarship will both create a more well-rounded faculty and better equip students to succeed academically and professionally. Specifically, consider tracking, by semester: 1) how many office hours each professor hosts; 2) how many student papers each professor supervises; 3) how many papers each faculty member co-authors with students; and 4) how many letters of recommendation each professor writes.

12. Consider sharing data about faculty-student mentorship with the faculty at large. Faculty members may be surprised to learn how much "extra" mentorship their peers are doing and inspired to step up their own efforts.

13. Consider creating a working group or using the student faculty hiring committee to determine how best to incentivize volunteering to be a small group professor. Small group professors wield enormous influence on students' law school experience. As such, we need a broad, diverse array of faculty to enthusiastically participate in this system.

Recommendations for Students

Identifying Your Mentorship Needs

1. Determine what you want from a mentorship relationship and adjust your expectations accordingly. Not every professor is equipped to connect you to a Supreme Court clerkship, just as not every professor can advise on the best path to a career in corporate law or public interest. If you're unsure whether a professor can help you with your question, don't be afraid to ask.

2. Understand that a close, personal mentorship relationship is *not* a prerequisite for many types of help that faculty can and should provide. A professor who taught you in a seminar (including small group), supervised a paper you wrote, hired you as a Research Assistant, or gave you an H (or even a P!) in their lecture class may be

[62] Sandra Riley & David Wrench, *Mentoring Among Women Lawyers*, 15 J. APPLIED SOC. PSYCHOL. 374, 380-84 (finding that individually mentored protégées perceived higher levels of career success and satisfaction than group-mentored protégées, who in turn, had higher levels of perceived success and satisfaction than those without mentors).

willing to write you a clerkship letter, even if you do not know each other outside that limited academic context. Each faculty member has their own standards, but for the most part, they are not as high as many students fear.

3. Have the courage to pursue what you really want, regardless of conventional "gold stars" of legal success. As one woman faculty member emphasized, "This is the point where you finally trade your silver tickets in for something that you care about. No one said you're going to get big ups for doing what's right—you're going to have to be willing to forego praise and acknowledge that maybe people won't be super impressed."[63]

4. Consider a broad array of potential mentors and types of faculty, especially clinical and non-tenured professors. For example, many 3Ls established successful mentorship relationships through clinical opportunities. Not every mentor has to share exactly your own background, opinions, or career interests, and broadening your search will expose you to new perspectives, ideas, and insights. Remember that you will also have opportunities to find mentors through your summer jobs.

5. Allow yourself a generous margin of error. A professor you might have identified as the ideal mentor may not work out, and an unexpected professor may end up being one of your most influential supporters. Seeking out mentorship takes time and practice, and you can only fail by not trying.

6. If you are looking for a faculty mentor and can't find one during your first year, relax. Unless you have an immediate job application or other time-sensitive request, there is no need to acquire a mentor for the sake of having one. You will likely naturally develop relationships with professors as you find your way to subjects and activities that ignite your interest.

Beginning Mentorship Relationships

7. Prepare for office hours. Be ready to clearly articulate what advice you're seeking, rather than saying that you simply want a mentor. It also doesn't hurt to do some homework on the professor and their research so you can speak genuinely to how your goals align with their background.

8. Don't question your qualifications, even if you don't have all H's or background knowledge about the law before your 1L year. Professors interviewed for this guide stated that they particularly enjoy mentoring students who do not already have access to informal networks and who may be otherwise overlooked or unexpected. Similarly, never apologize for seeking out mentorship or advice; professors are paid to be both scholars and teachers.

[63] Interview with Issa Kohler-Hausmann, *supra* note 8.

9. Consider your strengths. Seek out professors whose research interests or professional background align with your own to work on projects that will be mutually beneficial. If you're shy or nervous about reaching out to a professor for a first appointment unsolicited, sign up to RA for them. Alternatively, one student noted, "I wouldn't underestimate the power of doing well on a professor's exam. It's not a requirement, but some people might actually find it more straightforward/simpler than some of these other avenues of 'getting close' to a professor."[64]

Nurturing Mentorship Relationships

10. Pace the time you take from your mentor. Chances are you sought out your mentor because they are successful, which means that they will be navigating many different professional responsibilities and challenges at once. Actively determine how and when your mentor likes to meet, as well as their preferred communication style, and do your best to stick to their preferences when seeking their advice.[65]

11. Remember that maintaining mentorship relationships is just as important as identifying mentors, and that mentorship is a two-way street. Stay in touch with your mentors as you progress through the law school and beyond, whether it's to give them updates on your professional progress or to just say hello. Numerous professors expressed that their most successful mentorship relationships have continued to be life-long sources of professional development and personal enjoyment.

[64] 3L student survey participant.

[65] In the Committee's 3L survey, 50 percent of 3Ls reported checking in with their mentor one to two times a month throughout law school, and another 38 percent reported checking in one or two times per semester.