

## 2009 Personal Mentoring Program Report

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### Description of Program:

The Personal Mentoring Program was launched by the Program Committee for the 2008 meetings and is now in its second year. This program is designed to match mentees with mentors who are willing to develop a longer-term relationship than is available through the meeting mentor program, for a period of up to one year. Interested members filled out an application form indicating areas in which they wanted/were willing to share assistance (e.g. manuscript preparation, job hunting), the length of desired relationship (3, 6, 9, or 12 months), and whether they wanted to meet at the annual meetings. I matched mentees with mentors on the basis of these criteria and contacted them together via e-mail. Participants were then able to make contact and determine the specifics of their mentoring relationships.

### Assessment:

The initial call for mentors/mentees yielded 8 mentees and 1 mentor. With the help of Michele Koontz, we sent a second request for mentors based on the areas of interest designated by the mentees. Within two weeks, 18 additional mentors and 5 additional mentees applied to the program, for a total of 13 mentees and 19 mentors. I was able to match the applicants with few problems, although they often did not match on each of the criteria listed above. I also matched myself with a mentor that remained available after completing the other matches.

Now that the program is in its second year, we also have information from the evaluations from year one. We have received evaluations from 3 mentors and 1 mentee, all of whom indicated that their relationships did not work as intended. In addition, we received two e-mails from mentors who were never contacted by their mentees. One mentor indicated that s/he had a successful meeting with the mentee at the annual meetings, but the relationship had not continued. Most of the others found that their relationship was not sustained after an initial e-mail contact. I have tried to address these concerns by supplying more information in the initial e-mail. By including information about research interests and skills to be shared, I hope to provide the basis for an initial conversation.

The only other problem that arose in the process of coordinating the program was confusion among members about the two different mentoring programs. After communicating about the matches, I received several e-mails from mentors who had already been matched with mentees through the meeting mentor program. They were unaware that they had volunteered for two different programs and were surprised that they had more than one mentee. I would strongly suggest that SSSP consider merging the two programs to avoid confusion and consolidate the work of coordinating the programs. This work could be done within the Program Committee.