

Teaching is an art, while mentorship serves as the foundation for growth in academia. Students' confidence levels and motivation often stem from conversations that shape their ambition and drive them to excel. I am a firm advocate of one-on-one mentoring sessions, where I engage with students to discuss course assignments, future career plans, graduate school options, and resources that can support their academic and professional journey. These sessions allow me to approach each meeting with an open mind, embrace the students' strengths, and offer supportive guidance.

Years ago, I reconnected with a former student who had completed an internship under my supervision in cardiac rehabilitation. He told me, "Thank you for never giving up on me." Perplexed, I asked, "Why do you say this?" He responded, "You were the only person who had faith in me and pushed me to achieve foundational application in cardiac medicine. Others told me my GPA was too low for graduate school and that I would never become a nurse." He chuckled and said, "I proved them wrong. I did not go to nursing school—I am now a board-certified neurosurgeon!" Words are not merely words; they can either hinder or inspire. It is not the events in our lives that define us, but how we react to and learn from them that shapes who we become.

My philosophy of teaching is to mentor undergraduates for a lifetime. I have provided my cell phone number to every student in lectures and on the syllabus since day one. Throughout my decades-long teaching career, I have received daily phone calls, text messages, emails, social media tags, and requests for meetups with alumni to discuss their successes, seek career advice, and extend invitations to celebrate their achievements. Recently, I had the privilege of attending a live Zoom white coat ceremony for an alum pursuing a medical degree. These shared moments are what I call life's "golden nuggets."

The safety of our undergraduates is always paramount. As the internship coordinator, it is my responsibility to provide educational insights on professional work boundaries before students enter the workforce. I implemented a compliance-based learning requirement within KINES 495B on ethics and work relationship boundaries, in collaboration with Penn State Title IX and The Office of Gender Equity. This approach reflects my commitment to addressing mental health issues without stigma. An alum once shared that they keep a photo of me on their work desk, saying, "Lori Gravish, you are my hero! You helped me overcome a suicide attempt on that day when my life seemed empty."

My scholarly approach as an educator is driven by a desire to elevate undergraduates to higher levels of learning, outreach, and career planning. My teaching strategy aims to heighten awareness of fundamental learning principles that foster peer-to-peer discussions, active listening, academic engagement, and outreach, which I hope will inspire students' curiosity, compassion, and, eventually, advocacy. During my career, I have developed a diverse portfolio of new courses that focus on global learning, professional development, and health disparities.

Collaborating with alumni on various initiatives within my teaching portfolio has enhanced student learning. I achieved this by introducing students to innovative workforce development principles, specialized expertise, and effective assessment strategies. Currently, five of my former students serve on the Penn State Kinesiology teaching faculty, and four of them co-teach with me in the same course.

Chinese philosopher Xunzi once said, *"Tell me and I forgot, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."* What defines me as an educator is my passion for bringing creative ideas to life that can enhance the fundamentals of student learning, outreach, and humanitarianism.