

EDITOR'S CORNER

The Joy of Being an Advisor to Graduate Students

This has been an unusually busy semester for me as an adviser of graduate students. I completed as the major professor my 77th, 78th and 79th graduate student in one semester, all Ph.D. students in Food Microbiology. I still have ten graduate students in the laboratory and probably will graduate my 80th and 81st graduate student before the end of Summer 2001. This number does not include about one hundred graduate student committees I have served on throughout my long academic career, first at Pennsylvania State University, and now at Kansas State University.

When I told a friend about the number of graduate students I am working with, he asked "Why?"

This stimulated my own search for an answer. First of all, I love graduate education as a whole and am honored to be a graduate faculty member at Penn State and at K-State. I find immense pleasure in teaching graduate courses, seminars, workshops, symposia, etc. because I need to keep abreast of all that is in the cutting edge of my field. I also find great joy in working with students on research projects from the conceptual stage to the experimental stage and finally to the completion of the thesis or dissertation and ultimately having the work published in journals, books, abstracts, proceedings, etc. I also take it upon myself to make sure my students obtain good jobs and move on to bigger and better things in their careers.

I treat my graduate students as my sons and daughters. I respect their individuality and creativity in all areas of their pursuit. I work with them in times of difficulty and in times of triumph. I share joy with them and sometimes even sorrow in their personal lives. We work as a big family and help each other in joint projects and share ideas and solutions. I also reward my graduate students by taking them to national and even international meetings so that they can experience the excitement of meeting outstanding scientists and observing the world of food microbiology and food science in action in national gatherings. My students interests in their careers grow exponentially after participating in one or more large national meetings. Those meetings truly open their minds and eyes and sometimes even open opportunities for job placement. I feel good watching them grow and mature. I nominate my students to all kinds of academic competitions and when they receive their award I feel proud in their achievements. As much as possible I find scholarships, assistantships and other forms of financial support so that they can concentrate on their studies and research endeavors.

What do I get in return? I have former students scattered throughout the four corners of the world. Wherever I travel, I can usually find one or two or

even ten former students in many cities around the globe. It is truly a great joy to see them in their own new environments with great jobs, wonderful spouses and even children. It is always so nostalgic at reunions with former students. We all grow older, more mature, more gray, sometimes more weight, but definitely wiser. Because of my current and former students I managed to publish more than 600 papers of all kinds. Without them I could never have had this productivity. I put their names before my name when they had the ideas, did the work and constructed the publications. I give them the honor and glory they deserve. I have spent many, many sleepless nights correcting their drafts and helping them perfect their works. I practice with them many times before their theses defense and I sweat along with them in preliminary examinations, oral defenses, and final closed door examinations. I jump with joy when they pass the last hurdle and happily hood them on the stage during graduation ceremonies. I gain their loyalty and dedication in my pursuit for deeper understanding of my field in research and teaching. Ah, it is so good to be an advisor. I wish all of you professors had advisees like mine. They make me feel young and energetic and they keep me alert and working all the time. There is not a dull moment in my environment. There is always some more work to do, some more experiments to run, and some more papers to write.

There is no better job than being a graduate student advisor. If I am healthy, I might, just might, complete 100 graduate students before I hang up my lab coat and test tubes.

Have a great career being advisers and advisees in academia.

DANIEL Y.C. FUNG