

Part 2: Establishing a Support Network

Inclusion Considerations:

Establishing a support network can be influenced by individual differences:

- **Our needs are different:** students from different backgrounds (e.g., race, gender, age, nationality) may prioritize the roles of their mentors differently.
- **Networking can be uncomfortable:** students from marginalized groups may feel *intimidated* and/or *isolated* when attending networking events or interacting with others in their department.
- **Networking can be challenging:** communities are not always welcoming of students with identities that fall outside of their status quo.

Closing Tips:

1. **Leverage multiple sources of support.**
Don't expect one person to be everything.
2. **Discuss your short- and long-term goals within your mentoring network.**
People can't help you if they don't know where you're headed.
3. **Study the milestones and degree requirements for your program.**
This will provide a context for knowing what you need and when.



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Additional Resources:

- **Getting to Know a New Mentor:** Questions to Ask During an Informational Interview (from UC Berkeley Career Center): This guide could be helpful for you as you get to know a new potential mentor
<https://career.berkeley.edu/start-exploring/informational-interviews/questions/>
- **How to Find Mentors:** Refer to page 5 of the 2020 Graduate Student Mentoring Guidebook (from UMich)
<https://rackham.umich.edu/downloads/student-mentoring-handbook.pdf>
- **Hokie Mentorship Connect:**
Virginia Tech graduate students have access to Hokie Mentorship Connect, an official online platform that will help foster connections between students and alumni around the world. Hokie Mentorship Connect will help facilitate career-related conversations between graduate students and Virginia Tech alumni, <https://career.vt.edu/>
email: cpdmentorship@vt.edu or cpdmentorship@groups.office365.vt.edu
- **Professional Societies:** Ask your advisor or senior students in your discipline about opportunities to engage in professional societies related to your area of study.
- **Virginia Tech Cultural and Community Centers (CCC):** The mission of the CCC is to create the conditions for underrepresented student success and to develop the cultural competence of every Virginia Tech student.
 - CCCs include the American Indian and Indigenous Community Center, Asian Cultural Engagement Center, Black Cultural Center, El Centro (Hispanic and Latinx Cultural and Community Center), LGBTQA+ Resource Center, and Intercultural Engagement Center.
 - Learn more here about the CCCs: <https://ccc.vt.edu/>
 - View CCC Resources here: <https://ccc.vt.edu/resources.html>
- **Student Orgs:** Explore Virginia Tech's Student Organizations at <https://gobblerconnect.vt.edu/> Many groups are explicitly for graduate students.
- **Meet other Grad Students:** The Graduate School hosts events where you can engage with other graduate students as well as Grad School administrators.
 - Their event calendar is available online here:
<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/calendar-and-events.html>



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- Also, keep an eye out for the weekly GLC emails sent on Mondays; announcements from this newsletter are cross-posted online here: <https://glcweekly.graduateschool.vt.edu/>
- **Writing support:** Schedule an appointment with the Writing Center to get free writing support at any stage of the writing process. Graduate writing coaching are available for virtual appointments. Learn more: <https://lib.vt.edu/study-learn/writing-center.html>

