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An occasional communication with colleagues serving as mentors to CUNY Baccalaureate students.

"Reflections on Mentors and Mentoring" with excerpts from:

- **"One Professor's Dialectic of Mentoring" by Harvey J. Kaye, The Chronicle of Higher Education, April 21, 2000**
- **June 8, 2000 commencement speech of faculty mentor Professor David Traverso Galarza**
- **June 8, 2000 commencement speech of student speaker Susan Orzel-Biggs**

One Professor's Dialectic of Mentoring
Harvey J. Kaye

. . . Having recently turned 50, . . . I find myself more reflective about my own role as a mentor.

Increasingly, I appreciate the dialectical character of the relationship. Indeed – though I would hate to give my students swelled heads – I have come to recognize just how much my own development has depended on those whom I have mentored.

With seven classes per year, up to 200 students each semester in my introductory course alone, and no graduate assistants (plus scholarly, community, and familial obligations), I have had only so much time to devote to individual students. . . . I would love working with graduate students; but I know that, being an undergraduate teacher, I don't have to feel guilty about pursuing the pleasures of intellectual nomadism but can range over a variety of topics and areas (and I don't have to agonize over the academic job market). My best students have inspired me and helped prepare me for the classroom by making me explain myself more clearly, before I face their more reserved comrades. They also have pushed me in new directions.

Back in the 1980's, before we hired a women's-history professor, feminist students motivated me to read the growing corpus of scholarship with them. Other students picked up my interest in the British Marxist historians and cajoled me into reading English cultural studies (though I abjured postmodernism). And just last semester, three young women persuaded me to tutor them on Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Doing so, they not only gave me another chance to reconsider Durkheim, and scorn Weber, but also to more deeply appreciate Marx's dictum that "even the educators need to be educated."

Harvey J. Kaye is a professor of social change and development at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay and the author of, among other books, "Why Do Ruling Classes Fear History?" and Other Questions (1996, St. Martin's Press).

**Excerpt from June 8, 2000 commencement speech of faculty mentor
Professor David Traverso Galarza
(Assistant Professor of Black and Hispanic Studies, Baruch College)**

I am most impressed with the CUNY Baccalaureate Program. I am even more impressed with the caliber and commitment of its students. We sometimes forget in academia that without the students we have no educational institution. The students should always be on the top of the list, not the bottom as is practiced in some schools. The faculty and mentors also merit a strong round of applause. They have shared much creativity and support to these students and this Program.

This Program demonstrates what true education is all about. This is an education whose learning and teaching objective is not strictly theoretical and abstract knowledge, but an education that strives to transform the world around and inside us. I myself have been deeply rewarded and changed in this process. I had the privilege to serve as Alma Jimenez' mentor in the field of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies. There is so much I could say about the character and commitment of Alma, but allow me to lift up two specific research projects that she produced while studying with me.

First, the "Historical Roots and Theological Underpinnings of Latino Pentecostalism." Alma produced a remarkable piece of work that included an interview with one of the foremost Puerto Rican Pentecostal Pastors in N.Y. City, Rev. Cleofe Vargas, from John 3:16, Assemblies of God in the Bronx.

Second, a "Socio-historical and Political Comparison of Luis Munoz Marin and Pedro Albizu Campos," two of the most significant political and national voices in the history of contemporary Puerto Rico. The former became the first elected Puerto Rican governor of the island; the second was an internationally acclaimed Nationalist leader to whom this year's Puerto Rican Day Parade is dedicated.

**Excerpt from June 8, 2000 commencement speech of Susan Orzel-Biggs
(Summa Cum Laude Graduate)**

Acceptance into the CUNY BA/BS Program meant being able to select a program of study that would answer, or at least shed light on, some of the questions raised during my tenure as a tutor in an adult literacy program. I felt it was necessary to have a better understanding of this thing we call language and decided to focus on linguistics. But I had also realized when I was tutoring that much more than the mechanics of language was involved in helping a student to progress in her ability to read.

With the help of my mentor, Professor Edward Bendix [Anthropology, Hunter College and The Graduate Center], I was able to develop a program that encompassed the history of the English language and its structure today, and exposed me to the interaction between language and culture and how the structures of languages change as a result of contact with one another over time. To better understand how the human mind processes language — as well as to better understand my own difficulty with learning a second language; my admiration for those who are bilingual is unbounded! — I undertook an independent study in psycholinguistics to look at the differences in the processing of specific grammatical structures between first and second language speakers.

To my fellow graduates, I wish continued success along the paths you have chosen; to our mentors, thanks for guiding us on our way. To the CUNY BA/BS Program, thanks for making all the difference.
