

# MEET A MENTOR

Dr. Joan Davis, Associate Professor of Counseling and Psychology, and interim chair of that department, participated in the first pilot program for the Quality Enhancement Plan for Mentoring. Along with 14 other administrators, faculty, and staff members, Dr. Davis took on the task of mentoring three students throughout the 2016-2017 academic year.

The pilot program in mentoring was set up according to this plan: in September, October, November, February, March, and April, the mentors would meet once with all three of their mentees. Then for the next three weeks, they would meet with one of their mentees individually. For example, in the first week of September, the mentor would meet with mentees A, B, and C as a group. The next week, the mentor would meet with mentee A, the following week with mentee B, and the final week with mentee C. At the beginning of the next month, the pattern would repeat. In August, the students were assigned to their mentors and a mixer party was held to allow the mentors to meet their students and the students to meet each other in a casual and fun setting. However, Dr. Davis's husband, a local pastor, was injured in a serious car wreck in which his neck was broken in three places. Since she couldn't attend the mixer, Dr. Gail Linam took her place and explained the situation to the three girls selected to be in Dr. Davis's group. Each girl wrote sweet notes of encouragement to Dr. Davis and her husband and placed them in his room where he could see them. In that way, the girls ministered to Dr. Davis before she had even had the opportunity of meeting them.

Throughout the semester, the students continued to pray for Dr. Davis and her husband. In their meetings, the students became close friends with each other and with their mentor. The QEP Committee had prepared a customized curriculum that promoted spiritual, academic, and professional growth. The curriculum included encouragement and background information for the mentors, which Dr. Davis found very helpful. This type of intentional, scheduled mentoring was very different from the mentoring relationships that Dr. Davis had experienced in the past. She was grateful for the framework and the supporting documentation she received, because it helped her ensure that all the proposed topics were covered during the course of the year. Even though they might not always get through everything that was provided in the curriculum, Dr. Davis believes that the girls in her group were able to gain new insights and grow significantly during the course of the program. In fact, all three of her students have expressed interest in becoming peer mentors in the future.

Dr. Davis's mentees enjoyed their one-on-one sessions with their mentor, but they especially enjoyed the group meetings. In fact, at the end of the spring semester, they



asked Dr. Davis if they could have one more group meeting. Although they enjoyed meeting in her office, this time they met at Panera Bread Company and enjoyed sharing a meal as they joined in friendship with one another. All three of her students have returned to DBU this fall, and they have all been in contact with Dr. Davis, who explained that they have formed "eternal relationships" with each other.

Because of this positive experience, Dr. Davis was eager to volunteer for the second year's pilot program. She was pleased to note that several positive improvements had been made to the second year's program. The curriculum was rearranged to allow for a better balance of the three emphases of the program: spiritual, academic, and professional growth. The mentors received copies of their mentees' application papers prior to their first meeting, so they could get a head start on learning about their new crop of students. Finally, the committee provided meal ticket coupons to MOOYAH, DBU's newest dining facility. Dr. Davis was excited to know that she could start the semester with a dinner meeting, instead of waiting until the end of the year to do so.

One of Dr. Davis's inspirations for participating in the new mentoring program came from a book she's been reading by Mark Batterson. Titled *The Grave Robber: How Jesus Can Make Your Impossible Possible* (Baker Books, 2014), this book by the author of *Draw the Circle* (Zondervan, 2012) focuses on the seven miracles of Jesus as reported in the Gospel of John. One thing that Batterson emphasizes again and again in this book is the fact that believers need to be actively on the lookout for the miracles happening around us. Reading this book caused Dr. Davis to realize how many miracles, both large and small, we may be missing out on because we're just not paying attention. By participating in the new QEP mentoring program, Dr. Davis is taking a positive step toward being present and attentive when God-ordained miraculous opportunities arise. As a DBU mentor, she is looking for those "supernatural synchronicities" between herself and others that only God Himself can arrange.