

Desirae Mellor



The Student Success Center's Mentor Spotlight

Quick Facts:

Year: 4th Year Ph.D. Student

Program: Chemistry & Biochemistry

Outside Interests: Desirae enjoys activities like hiking, baking, and making additions to her vast collection of unicorns. Her favorite quote is "You have to be odd to be number 1," and she hopes to inspire future scientists to change the world, one oddity at a time.

What does being a mentor mean to you?

To me it is not just being a mentor but being a GOOD mentor. Being a mentor typically means being a teacher and a resource. However, to be a good mentor, you must be ready to meet a variety of needs that are usually met by many people in a person's life. You must be a teacher, a counselor, a guide, an example of both what to do AND what not to do, a confidant, an advocate, and their biggest fan. You must be ready to adapt quickly to the needs of your mentee and recognize what they need from you to help them accomplish their goals. It is more than filling a role, it is building a relationship that will last as long as your mentee needs.

Why is it important to have a mentor?

There is a saying I was told in my youth that has resonated with me over the years. “A smart person will learn from their experiences, but a wise person will learn from the experiences of someone else.” Having a mentor is important because it allows you to be wise rather than just smart. It allows you direct access to first-hand knowledge of what works or doesn’t work. Having a mentor gives you a safe and personalized space to figure out what choices will make your journey more difficult or be the sling-shot to reaching your goals.

How many students have you mentored?

In my academic career I have mentored fifteen students, five of which I am currently mentoring at UCSD. Many of my former mentees have moved on to bigger and better things, but we have maintained contact and I love hearing about their new adventures and continued success.