



# ENVISAGE

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Dear BHC Community,

We are dedicating this issue of Envisage to the faculty and staff who serve as mentors and, often, guiding lights for BHC Scholars. Throughout their careers at UCF, BHC Scholars are impacted by the faculty and staff in ways they couldn't have anticipated. It might have been the class that sparked their passion for a field of study, the undergraduate research opportunity that ignited their curiosity, advice that encouraged them to reach for the stars, or just the conversation that supported them through a difficult or confusing time. As I thought about my faculty mentor, Dr. Steve Pejovich, and how instrumental he was to my professional path, I decided it would only be fitting to share my tribute to him at his memorial service this March.



Dean Sheila with her mentor, Dr. Steve Pejovich

*"Before I start, I want to thank the Pejovich family. Dr. Pejovich was an amazing man, and he brought a lot of stray cats to y'all. There are a lot of former students who can say they are now part of the family and you really welcomed us with open arms. You didn't just do it for one year or two — you did it for 30 years and we keep coming back.*

*To be honest, I really didn't believe this day would ever come. I think about how different my life would have been if I hadn't been in that elevator with Chemi and Dr. Jackie Browning. I mentioned that I found my people and wanted to be an economist. She told me then there is only one person you need to get to know: Dr. Pejovich. She said that he knows everyone and (my apologies to the rest of you) that he is the smartest. Brian, I bet you remember that class that for the first month none of us had any idea what he was saying with that thick accent. We would all sit, take notes, and nod but eventually we got the hang of it. Once you figured out what he was saying, and you took every class he taught. I also interned in the Center for Free Enterprise while doing undergraduate research under his guidance.*

*There are so many of us who know that, without a doubt, we are who we are because of the time and energy he invested in us. He challenged us to be more than we ever imagined we could be. I will never forget when he told me, "You have so much potential." All I could think was, "Seriously? This is going to be one long journey and I hope you have the energy because I am not sure we are on the same wavelength." He never gave up on any of us — 35 years later. He persevered through our ups and downs, never losing faith that we would eventually arrive at the point he knew we could reach. He did this with everyone who was a part of his life. He was a true risk-taker, and he wasn't afraid to take risks with people. As we look around, it is clear he generated one hell of a return on his investments. He expected us all to have the same courage to invest in others. We will miss his daily emails, his jokes, and his reminders of the importance of freedom. But, most of all, we will miss the man who was always there for us when we needed him. Dr. Pejovich, may you rest in peace knowing the legacy you left behind will live in your image and we will strive to live up to the potential you saw in us. We will invest in all those around us so that they, too, will grow, dream, and reach their potential — like you did in us. We love you and pray you left us with enough wisdom to thrive until we meet again."*

In 2010, I received the UT System Regents Outstanding Teaching Award and, with the award, endowed the Professor Svetozar Pejovich Future Leaders Award which provides scholarships to the top economics students at my alma mater Texas A&M University. Why commemorate him with a named scholarship? Because it is important to support future generations and, also, to recognize that without his influence I would not have become the professional I am today. As you move through life, remember the faculty and staff who impacted you and may have forever changed the trajectory of your life. Keep in touch and share your stories with them. You may think that we don't remember you, but we do.

**Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, Ph.D.**  
Dean, UCF Burnett Honors College

## Featured Spotlight



Dr. Tyler Fisher and his mentee, Jenna Dovydaite in Iraqi Kurdistan, July 2019

### The Prototype and Paradox of Mentorship

By Dr. Tyler Fisher

*Mentor* is one of those rare words that is identical across many languages. In English, German, Spanish, French, Welsh, Swedish, Polish, Croatian, among others, it remains invariably *mentor*. This unusual consistency reflects a common origin: the word derives from a source predating the various languages in which it appears.

Sometimes my students ask why I so frequently bring up etymologies. Aside from the inherent linguistic interest and mnemonic motives for exploring a word's derivation and development over time, etymologies can unearth forgotten insights afresh. Etymology peels back layers of assumptions, dusts off the disregard that comes with casual usage, and often reveals a deeper conceptual core that gave rise to a

word.

Indeed, the etymology of the word *etymology* itself points to this. The Greek root is *étymos*, meaning "real, true, authentic, essential" — the quintessence of a thing. Etymology is a quest for the deep, primordial headwaters of a word, a rediscovery of intrinsic truths. Such is the case with *mentor*.

[Read the full essay here.](#)

## Cultivating Talent

We asked scholars about their mentorship experiences, and here is what they told us:

### Riley Havel

Physics

#### How do you feel that your faculty mentor(s) have helped you in finding your path and succeeding?

During my first semester, Dr. Dove had a huge impact on my decision to remain a physics major. There was a time when I was struggling in my courses and questioning whether or not I would be able to take on even more challenging upper division coursework. One or two open and honest conversations with Dr. Dove reinstilled my self-confidence and gave me the push I needed to power through the initial challenges. Dr. Fisher helped me find my path through conversation and consistent check-ins. During tutorial sessions and his Windows to the World course I was taught to be intentional about my approach to taking on challenges and selecting opportunities; these lessons became an essential piece in my decision-making process. Dr. Bennett has facilitated many opportunities to try out various types of research and discover what I prefer to work on and how I prefer to employ my skills.

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### Padmavathi Ganduri

Integrated Business

#### How important is/was having a mentor and how did you find ones that were right for you?

Having mentors is incredibly important to me because I deeply value having someone to talk to and ask for advice as I move through my professional development journey. The many conversations I've had with Dr. Fisher and Dr. Piñeres over the years have helped me gain a better understanding of what I want to do in the future because they have always provided unique perspectives on my situation. Because they have worked with several students and have been through a lot of the same things I am facing now, they have been able to suggest alternative courses of action that help me get to where I'm going while avoiding the potential pitfalls.

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### Abigail Reynolds

Political Science

#### What doors has your mentor opened that you feel you wouldn't have had access to otherwise?

The cumulative investment of my mentors has prepared me for and allowed me to pursue opportunities that, without their guidance, would not have been possible. Dr. Fisher has helped me tease out a cohesive narrative from my undergraduate experience, which is essential to crafting a stand-out application. Dr. Powell has taught me research skills that will be ambassador in both the academic and professional world. Ambassador Elam-Thomas has provided great insight into what it takes to be an effective diplomat. Without the contributions and devotion of these individuals, I would not be as competitive a candidate for any of the opportunities I have pursued.

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### Abdullah Saqib

Biomedical Sciences

#### What words of appreciation can you share about your mentor(s)?

I will never be able to thank Dr. Fisher, Dr. Hashim, or Dr. Borgon enough for their support, advice, and help in my academic and professional career. I am privileged and honored to be their mentee and will continuously benefit from their teachings and wisdoms for life. I thank them sincerely and will give back by mentoring and passing on what I have learned to other students. Being a mentor or a mentee is a beautiful thing, and I am happy to be a part of something so

beautiful.

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