Dear Colleagues,

There are many roles we play or hats that we wear in our lives. With so many roles and so little time, it may seem absurd to listen to someone who encourages you to take on yet another role and add another task to your overbooked life. But that is exactly what I’m going to do; I am convinced that despite the competition for your time and energy, being a mentor is one of the best things you can do for your career. I am asking that you consider becoming a mentor.

In the past, the traditional mentor was someone in a management/supervisory position with decades of experience. However, as our organizations change we find highly skilled individuals in various positions across the university, not necessarily managers/supervisors, who have a wealth of experience and breadth of knowledge to share. How many times have you been in a class or workshop and a colleague from another department made a statement about how he or she does something, and you said, “Wow, I never thought of that,” or “Hey! That’s a great idea. I am going to try that”? Everything you do—from entering transactions into KFS, to running reports, helping with budgets, working with requisitions/e-SHOP or with grants/contracts —is important, and each one of those tasks represents a skill that keeps the university running. Everyone has something to share and to give to another person who may not have the same exposure or experience. That is what we are looking for in a mentor.

On November 1, we are starting our third round of the DFA Finance Mentor Program. The program runs for 18-20 months, depending on the number of participants. The mentees rotate to a new mentor every few months, which gives participants exposure to many different people and business activities.

As a mentor, you will act as a guidance counselor to one person who will touch base with you during the entire program. So the big question is “How much time does it take for me to do this?” It depends. It depends on your schedule and the availability of the mentee and his or her needs. But it is entirely under your control and flexible. In the past, people met for an hour each time, as few as four times or as many as ten times in a two-month period.

As the facilitator of the program, I will act as a resource for participants, and there are resources available also in our mentor system, called Wisdomshare. The only
expectation is that you meet when you can during each round, and that you share your knowledge. It’s that simple!

So what’s in it for you? Here are just a few benefits you might derive from being a mentor:

- **Networking.** We can never have enough relationships/contacts and it’s likely that your mentee will be someone you benefit from being around. After all, mentees are interested in improving themselves, care about learning, and are likely excited about the possibilities for the future. Which brings me to the second benefit....
- **You’ll be re-energized personally.** Get around someone enthusiastic, and you naturally become more enthusiastic yourself!
- **You’ll learn more by talking about and teaching things.** It is funny how our brains work. When we teach something or explain something to someone else, we then understand it more clearly ourselves. As a mentor you will relive experiences, teach or share ideas. As a result, you will learn and re-learn these concepts for yourself. Often you will find yourself “taking your own advice” to your great personal or professional benefit.
- **You’ll expand your impact in your organization.** Not only will your personal commitment grow, but as you help others become more successful, the organization will succeed at higher levels. Think of the satisfaction you will get from knowing that you are playing a part in making that happen.
- **You’ll enhance your self-esteem.** It just feels good to help others. You will feel better about yourself and your abilities when you share your wealth of knowledge and experience with others. Your self-esteem will rise because you are doing good things for someone else.
- **You’ll increase your skills.** As you mentor others, you will become a better mentor. The skills that make you a better mentor—empathy, listening, caring, building trust (to name just a few)—make you more effective in many other parts of your life. Being a mentor is actually great training in itself!
• **You’ll grow more confident.** The culmination of many of these other benefits is that your confidence will increase in many sorts of interpersonal relationships and conversations. You’ll know that you can have a positive impact. You’ll know that you can make a difference.

• **You’ll leave a legacy.** This is a statement of your influence and impact on the university. By mentoring others with care and compassion you will be adding directly to your legacy.

Please take a minute to think about what you can share to help someone learn more about the world of finance at Cornell. We are trying to gather as many interested people as possible to be mentors and will put them on a list. Then, we will have the mentor software Wisdomshare match mentors with mentees, based on mentee needs and mentor skills and experience.

If you are interested, or have questions about the program, please feel free to call me at 255-2175 or email me at (sj1@cornell.edu). **The deadline for this round is September 14, 2015.** Please think about becoming a mentor…you’ll be glad you did!

Best,
Steve Jackson