Dr. Thorkildsen’s advisory work with students extends her commitment to building opportunities for early career scholars. In the past decade, she has learned with undergraduate and high school students as well as the graduate students who are members of her research team. Seeking to diversify the professorate, Dr. Thorkildsen has served on one or more dissertation awards committees across the duration of her career, and participated in regular fireside chats, mentor dinners, and informal opportunities to meet with students who are looking for suggestions on how to maintain a work-life balance in higher education. Participants in these conversations are often looking for details on which research community will offer the best fit for their interests and talents or for targeted feedback on specific research papers they might be crafting.

In addition to meeting the qualifications of multiple teaching awards earned while at UIC, Dr. Thorkildsen has consistently generated research teams that focus on individuals foster their own and others’ moral motivation. She has served as Director of Graduate Studies, first for the College of Education and later for the Department of Educational Psychology, Inaugural Chair of the College of Education’s Doctoral Programs Steering Committee, and Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in Educational Psychology. She builds ethnically and internationally diverse research teams and assist students in the process of naming and developing their talents and priorities. Dr. Thorkildsen also regularly advises undergraduates and high school students as they complete capstone research projects to meet academic program requirements. Dr. Thorkildsen’s students typically progress to find educational or employment opportunities that align well with their life plans, opportunities that often fall outside the formal academy.