

GUIDELINES FOR DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY MENTORING PLANS

Departmental Recommendations from the Committee on Faculty Mentoring in A & S

1. It is the responsibility of all departments to develop and implement a *formal* mentoring system. Consequently, all departments should take this opportunity to update their faculty mentoring program.
2. Departments should take the mentoring of Associate Professors as seriously as mentoring for other ranks.
3. The mentoring process should be transparent and there should be an assurance of confidentiality when required.
4. Mentors should receive training to enable them to carry out this role. They should be encouraged to attend mentor training workshops.
5. Mentors should be recognized for their service and held accountable for their engagement.
6. Individual departments as well as the College should provide systematic oversight and assessment of faculty mentoring on a regular basis.

Guidelines for Developing/Updating Departmental Faculty Mentoring Plans

1. **Establish the goals of a faculty mentoring program:**
 - a. Mentees must have a clear understanding of the process and expectations for (tenure and) promotion;
 - b. Mentees should be made aware of professional resources relevant to their work and their professional and personal development;
 - c. Counsel should be available to mentees on the full range of career issues (research, teaching, service, work-life balance)
 - d. Mentoring should help faculty to develop independent scholarship and professional networks.
 - e. A mentoring program should also include recognition and mitigation of the factors that disproportionately negatively impact women and URM faculty members.
2. **Selecting mentors.** A thoughtful process of identifying good mentors and good matches of mentors and mentees is critical to developing an effective mentoring program.
 - a. A common model is for the Chair – sometimes in consultation with other faculty members – to assign a tenured faculty as mentor to an incoming faculty member. A new faculty member often lacks familiarity with new colleagues and so is not in a position to select a mentor on their own. However, the selection process should include the new faculty member in the discussion. Perhaps she has developed connections with one or more faculty members. Even if she has not, her criteria for a good mentoring match should be considered in the selection process. A similar process should be in place for Lecturers, STS Faculty, and Associate Professors.
 - b. It is vital that both members of a mentoring partnership trust each other. We recommend that the mentoring partnership explicitly agree that communications between mentor and mentee be considered confidential unless the mentee approves sharing of specific communications with, for example, the Chair. (Exceptions may be necessary for Title IX or IEEO reporting).

- c. There should be *safe exit* plan for a mentoring relationship which is not working well. Vital to the process of matching mentees and mentors is having a no-fault mechanism for changing mentoring partnerships should either member of the partnership desire a change at any point. Note that having such a mechanism implies that mentoring partnerships should be reviewed on a regular basis (e.g., yearly).
3. **Training mentors.** Conspicuously absent from all departmental mentoring programs is systematic training of the mentors. Perhaps the single most effective way to improve faculty mentoring is to provide training of mentors so they may have clear understanding of their role. Departments should encourage mentors to review mentoring materials and best practices, to review the resources available via the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, and to attend training workshops.
4. **Mentors as advocates:** One of the roles of mentors can be to act as advocates for their mentees. Their goal should always be the success of their mentees and, ideally, they might take a leadership role in presenting their mentees at reviews, including tenure and/or promotion reviews. One department has a policy of FMER reviews of junior faculty involving a yearly meeting of the Chair, the mentor and the mentee. This process gives the mentor an opportunity to provide useful context to the Chair in evaluating the mentee, and it communicates to the mentee the intended constructive nature of the performance review.
5. **Expectations and Accountability**
 - a. To ensure that mentors and mentees have consistent expectations, it would be beneficial for each pair to develop a mentoring plan that addresses issues such as frequency of contact and mutual expectations. Mentors should work with junior faculty to set both short term goals for the coming year, and long-term goals over the several years leading to the tenure review
 - b. Potential mentors should be informed about the time expectations for quality mentoring and be willing to make that commitment. Further, they should be held accountable for following through.
 - c. Mentoring should be recognized in the mentor's DOE and evaluated via the FMER process.
 - d. Mentoring work should be fairly distributed among senior faculty.
 - e. The mentoring plan should identify the areas of assistance mentors are expected to provide, i.e., clarification about tenure/promotion processes, strengthening teaching skills, building research capabilities, personal development, diverse student learning, student conduct, service, navigating the university, orientation to unit culture and processes, disciplinary expectations, career development, faculty advocacy, and providing a safe space to share concerns, fears, and challenges.
 - f. Mentoring plans should establish expectations for confidentiality.
6. **Mentoring for Associate Professors, STS, and Lecturers:** Departmental mentoring plans should ensure comprehensive mentoring for Associate Professors, STS faculty, and Lecturers. There needs to be clarity in expectations for both STS faculty and Lecturers so that their mentors can function effectively as their advocates.
7. **Implementation plan.** When a department has designed its mentoring plan, thought must be given to how the plan will be implemented. Specifically:

- a. When and how will mentors be selected and matched to mentees? How will mentees be consulted in this process?
- b. What will be the nature of mentor training? When will it be scheduled?
- c. Will mentors be included in the meeting of Chair and mentee during FMER reviews?
- d. What type of review of mentoring processes will be implemented? When will such reviews take place?
- e. How will it be determined when mentoring partnerships need to be changed? How will that process be enacted?
- f. What types of initiatives (if any) will the department take to facilitate the development of informal mentoring networks? How will the department facilitate the development of a culture that supports informal mentoring?
- g. What data will be gathered for evaluation of the overall mentoring program? How often and when will such evaluation take place?
- h. When do mentor relationships start and stop?
- i. Is mentee participation mandatory? Are there consequences for non-participants?
- j. Who is responsible for overseeing and implementing the mentoring program (note: this does not necessarily need to be the chair, but could be a service role in the department)?

Other Considerations and Suggestions

Departments may also consider including some of the following in their formal mentoring plans or departmental practices:

- Form small mentoring groups or mentoring networks to decrease the burden on senior faculty
- Devote a faculty meeting or department retreat time to facilitate learning on the subjects of mentoring and faculty advancement. Regularly assess department faculty mentoring practices.
- Encourage junior faculty to meet with outside seminar speakers for career development advice.
- Provide mentors with up-to-date information on policies, etc.
- Ask for feedback from junior faculty on impact of mentoring.
- Not all aspects of mentoring need be formalized. There is great value in faculty members developing an informal network of colleagues who can share their experiences and perspectives. Toward this end, departments can facilitate networking through professional and social events and by developing a culture of mutual support. Finally, some dimensions of faculty development might be best addressed by the mentees themselves in the form of peer mentoring and peer support groups (e.g., writing groups).
- Departments can intentionally work to develop a "climate of mentoring" in which all members of the department/school spontaneously and informally mentor their new colleagues. Collegial conversations about the intellectual concerns of the department/school are one of the best modes of informal mentoring.
- One is not born a mentor but learns to become a mentor. Faculty mentors in a department/school should meet regularly, to discuss problems and strategies around mentoring and to share their knowledge.