

## **Department of Geography Mentoring Policy**

### **Introduction:**

The Geography Department as a collective adopts this mentoring policy as part of its commitment to faculty success and believes that all faculty can, and should, act as “mentors,” whether officially assigned that duty or not. The mentoring process is intended to support faculty needs and development and comes from a spirit of mutual support in our department community. We intend mentoring to be backed by a department milieu of fairness, equity, and transparency, even as we recognize that mentoring means different things to different people at different stages of their careers and in different title series positions. We are particularly committed to the proposition that there is no “silver bullet” for mentoring (i.e. a “one size fits all” approach). Mentoring accordingly must be a purposeful department commitment and an individually tailored practice that takes account of mentee’s professional development needs as well as work-life balance.

### **Department Ground Rules:**

- Preliminary groundwork and ongoing reminders of institutional rules and policies will remain the responsibility of the Chair (e.g. initial distribution and ongoing clarification of promotion and tenure guidelines, faculty progress reviews, committee assignments, etc.)
- The Department’s mentoring program will be coordinated and overseen by a Department Mentoring Coordinator, who shall hold the rank of Professor and be appointed to a 3-year term.
- The department will make available support and training for department mentors, whether through current, web-based training material, support for faculty to engage in College and University training opportunities, or periodic department reassessments of the policy.
- Mentoring will be permanent agenda item at the Department annual fall retreat.
- The Department will periodically evaluate its mentoring policy.
- The Department recognizes that relationships change, that no mentoring relationship is permanent, and that mentoring relationship can be altered by mutual consent or, if necessary, adjudicated by the Mentoring Coordinator, Chair or a Chair designee.
- Mentoring relationships are confidential.
- Faculty mentoring work will be included in the FMER process.
- Primary mentor-mentee relationships will be designed for a fixed term to coincide with the mentee’s professional development needs (e.g. until the tenure process begins for assistant professors).
- Mentoring shall be offered to all faculty as desired or needed, but is mandatory for untenured faculty and lecturers.
- The Department Chair and Personnel Committee will remain current on mentoring discussions and opportunities provided for faculty at the University, especially by the Dean and the Provost.

### **Mentoring in Practice:**

Mentoring of individual faculty members may take multiple forms. The Department Mentoring Coordinator will work with new faculty members in their first semester (and any other faculty members upon request) to present a list of potential mentoring topics, undertake a needs assessment, and

prepare a flexible mentoring plan, as well as to assist the faculty member in operationalizing it, usually in the new faculty member's second semester. It is recommended that a primary mentor be assigned to the mentee, and that specific faculty needs may be met through meetings facilitated with other (secondary) faculty mentors, inside or outside the Department.

The Mentoring Coordinator also will hold a yearly, early fall mentoring meeting with all untenured faculty members, to assess general concerns and issues and to introduce any new faculty members. Untenured faculty members will be invited as a cohort to establish a schedule of meetings *amongst themselves* for the year and will be encouraged (and helped) to arrange short visits by other faculty members at those meetings to discuss any topics the mentees (or the chair) feel are pertinent. The same process may take place for a lecturer or associate professor cohort if desired. The Mentoring Coordinator will meet annually (or upon request) with any faculty member mentee in a formalized mentoring relationship to "check in" on its progress.

April 22, 2022