

## **Sociology Department Mentoring Plan**

### **Overview**

The Sociology Department mentoring plan is designed to provide support for Lecturer Faculty seeking promotion, Assistant Professors seeking tenure, for Associate Professors seeking promotion, or for faculty interested in new endeavors regardless of career stage (e.g., administration, grant writing, or book publishing). For faculty new to UK, this mentorship plan provides the opportunity to promote the successful integration into the UK community and foster faculty retention. Also, it provides assistance in the development of research productivity, teaching effectiveness, expansion of professional networks, and guidance regarding the necessary elements for academic advancement within the discipline. Mentoring is optional for faculty. The mentoring plan outlines the principles agreed upon by Sociology Department faculty as well as describes possible foci of mentoring relationships. The suggested roles and responsibilities of the Department Chair, Mentor, and Mentee are described below.

### **Mentoring Principles**

- Mentorship is a two-way collaborative learning process, requiring involvement of the mentor and mentee. Faculty seeking advancement should play an active role in identifying and seeking mentorship support to fulfill their needs.
- Mentoring needs vary based on faculty member's career stage, title series, and training history. These needs may be scholarly, professional, or psychosocial. Mentorship should be individually tailored to meet faculty needs.
- Faculty mentorship needs are dynamic, and change over time.
- The use of a mentorship mosaic model is encouraged, as it is rare that one mentor can meet all of a faculty's mentoring needs (e.g., research, teaching, professional development, administrative, psychosocial, etc.). In addition to having a mentor within the Sociology Department, faculty are encouraged to seek additional mentorship opportunities to address specific domains of career development.
- Faculty with mentoring needs may contact the Department Chair for help in identifying the most appropriate source for mentorship.
- Mentors should seek to acknowledge, address, and lessen the factors that disproportionately negatively impact underrepresented minority faculty and women.
- The department should develop a climate of mentoring, in which all members of the department are supportive and provide informal mentorship as needed. As such, senior faculty not assigned as a mentor are encouraged to commit to one mentoring activity per year, such as taking early-career or new colleagues out for coffee/lunch or engaging in a more structured mentoring activity (e.g., providing feedback on a manuscript, or co-organizing a guest speaker).

### **Mentoring Relationships and Foci**

Mentorships should organically evolve. Mentor-mentee dyads should identify the frequency of meetings and meeting modality; however, it's suggested that meetings occur at least once a semester. The foci of a mentoring relationship should be individually tailored, and mutually agreed upon to meet a mentee's specific career development needs. Examples of mentoring efforts may focus on:

- Fostering the growth of internal and external professional networks
- Teaching proficiencies
- Developing an independent research program
- Training on a methodological approach
- Skills in grant writing

- Skills in book publishing
- Developing strengths in leadership/administration
- Pursuing applied sociological research
- Strategies for academic advancement within the Department, College, University, and discipline
- Departmental requirements for tenure and promotion
- Short and long-term goal setting
- Career challenges specific to faculty from underrepresented minority groups or gender
- Time management to fulfill all areas of DOE

### **Chair Role and Responsibilities**

The Department Chair is the responsible person for ensuring faculty have the opportunity for mentorship appropriate to their career stage and title series. The Chair will:

- Reach out to faculty within a month of arrival to UK to discuss their current mentoring needs. If mentorship outside the Sociology Department is needed, the Chair, with support from other departmental members, will serve as a liaison to possible mentors.
- Facilitate a sociology department faculty mentor relationship, if desired. This mentor will ideally be at a career stage above the mentee and have similar teaching/research interests, whenever possible.
- Meet with each new faculty at the end of the academic year to discuss FMER ratings, research and teaching plans for the next year, discuss and address mentorship needs, and continue to outline the path towards 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> year reviews and tenure and promotion review. Potential mentoring needs can be discussed as part of the FMER process, or at any time, for all faculty regardless of career stage.
- Meet with mentors and mentees at the end of the academic year to assess the effectiveness of the mentorship program and determine if areas of improvement are needed, if requested.

### **Mentor Role and Responsibilities**

A mentor is someone who shares knowledge, serves as an advisor, and takes a sincere interest in a colleague's professional advancement. Usually a mentor is a more senior colleague with similar teaching or research interests. Mentor responsibilities include:

- Willing to invest time for mentorship
- Communicating with the mentee if s/he asks for too much (or too little) time.
- Providing constructive feedback and recognition.
- Sharing information about institutional support, practices, and policies.
- Providing guidance on formal and informal criteria for tenure and promotion at all career stages.
- Assisting the mentored faculty to identify career goals and strategies for achieving goals within a designated timeline.
- Providing attention to measuring progress toward career goals.
- Facilitating the development of professional networks.
- Willingness to address unique needs related to gender, race/ethnicity, gender/sexual identity, culture, religion, or personal circumstances.
- Respecting boundaries while co-creating an environment of trust.

**Mentee Role and Responsibilities**

A faculty mentee is seeking academic advancement or is pursuing a new endeavor and believes that guidance from a mentor can help them achieve their professional goals. While the mentoring program is optional, faculty seeking promotion and/or tenure must take an active role in promoting their professional advancement. Faculty mentee responsibilities include:

- Willing to take an honest inventory of mentorship needs.
- Communicating mentorship needs with mentors and/or the Department Chair.
- Willingness to being mentored, if the mentee expresses interest in working with a mentor.
- Organizing meeting times and agendas to ensure mentorship needs are met.
- Sharing career goals and strategies for achieving goals within a designated timeframe.
- Openness to constructive feedback.
- Committing to take action to promote one's professional growth.
- Being accountable to the mentor.
- Being mindful of the mentor's other time commitments.
- Respecting boundaries while co-creating an environment of trust.