

Faculty Mentoring Program

IST_AC-08 Administrative Guideline

An effective Faculty Mentoring Program can help faculty members (mentors) share and acquire (mentees) the professional skills and attitudes for personal, institutional, and career success. It can promote the development of self-confidence and professional achievement, and ultimately enhance institutional stability and continuity. Faculty mentors can contribute significantly to the development of their mentees' research, teaching, and service activities, particularly with respect to career satisfaction, career management, and collegial networking.

The mentoring program is focused on the mentee's career and individual development, with the goal of providing guidance and support for professional development that leads to promotion and/or tenure and to fixed-term promotion. Since no single activity will provide all of the input and guidance necessary for success, the IST mentoring program is comprised of multiple activities:

1. **Statement of Expectations:** When new faculty are hired, a meeting will be arranged with the dean to discuss expectations. The end result of this meeting, and follow-up communications, should be a collaboratively generated statement regarding expectations for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. This process will be repeated in year three resulting in an update to the statement. The original and revised statements will be included in the formal tenure-review process.
2. **Annual Reviews:** Annual reviews are part of the mentoring process as they provide an opportunity for feedback regarding progress and areas where additional attention may be appropriate.
3. **Dean's Expectations:** After the P&T process is complete, the dean will share a written statement regarding expectations for promotion and tenure, providing insight into expectations as they were applied during the current review process.
4. **Meeting with Dean:** A meeting will be arranged each year with the dean. All assistant professors will be invited to attend this meeting to discuss tenure expectations.
5. **Meeting with P&T Committee:** A meeting will be arranged each year with the P&T committee. All assistant professors will be invited to attend this meeting to discuss tenure expectations. Confidentiality regarding the actual P&T cases is an absolute requirement, so this discussion should focus on expectations without referencing any actual cases.
6. **Internal Mentor:** Tenure-track faculty will have a formal mentor selected from among the tenured faculty. The mentor should be available to coach, guide, and champion the mentee. Effective mentoring involves regular interaction between mentor and mentee, but the relationship should not consume so much time as to become burdensome. While there is no rule dictating the frequency of meeting, the mentor and mentee should talk or meet as often as necessary to meet the needs of both parties. Mentoring should be recognized as an aspect of College service and be included in faculty activity reports. Conversations between mentor/mentee are regarded as confidential. Effective mentoring requires that the mentee be proactive, reaching out to the mentor to seek advice and guidance. Mentors should also reach out to their mentees periodically to make it clear they are available for conversations and advice.
7. **External Mentor:** External mentors, from beyond Penn State, may be established for tenure-track faculty. Most often, these relationships will focus on research-related advice. Junior faculty will be invited to identify one or more individuals who may be appropriate as mentors. External

mentors should be recognized by the community for their expertise, having distinguished careers as a result of the impact they have had on the field. Proposed mentors will be reviewed. If an appropriate external mentor is identified, the College will reach out to invite the external mentor to be part of this process. When external mentors are identified financial support will be provided to support a visit by the external mentor to Penn State. During this visit, the external mentor will be asked to give a talk about their research, which will be open to the community, but the remaining time will be allocated to interactions with the mentee. Financial support will also be provided for the mentee to travel to one conference the mentor will be attending, so they can interact in this environment and to provide opportunities for the mentor to introduce the mentee to other members of the community.

Associate Professors

Activities 1-3 above also apply directly to Associate Professors. Activities 4 and 5 can be arranged if there is sufficient interest. Activity 6, Internal Mentors, can be arranged upon request.

Lecturers and Assistant Teaching Professors

Activities 1-3 and activity 6 above also apply directly to Lecturers. Activities 4 and 5 can be arranged if there is sufficient interest.

Expectations

Faculty Affairs Office

- Guide/facilitate faculty members in their search for a mentor. Formally establish mentee/mentor pairs within the first year of their employment.
- Organize mentoring meetings.
- Annual review of mentee/mentor pairs.

Mentor

- Seek out the mentee and build a relationship.
- Be understanding. Some mentees may not feel comfortable asking certain questions. Be prepared to solicit more information when necessary.
- Be available. Schedule opportunities to meet, communicate, and collaborate.
- Listen. Be a sounding board. Empathize. Focus on specific interests and concerns.
- Facilitate. Lead the way. Help locate local resources or solutions. Share teaching and research practices, tips, and techniques.
- Be an interpreter. Decipher policies, campus acronyms, and other related information.

Mentee

- Engage. Ask the mentor questions, share comments, voice concerns.
- Seek. Look for and utilize opportunities for professional growth and excellence in teaching, research, and service.
- Take personal responsibility for your career.
- Take responsibility to develop a portfolio of mentors, formal and informal, within the College, across the University, and beyond.

Best Practices

- A diversity of mentoring activities beyond the one-on-one are encouraged, including peer groups, mentoring activities organized at the College level, including seminars and workshops.
- Mentorship should continue beyond tenure for Associate Professors.

- Mentoring tasks should include: Discussion of professional goals, scientific leadership, access to professional opportunities for advancement, including, funding and speaking opportunities, and ways to balance priorities and expectations in the academic environment.
- Mentoring can also aid the junior faculty member's understanding of governance and finances within the university, professional relationships, and management skills to better guide students. Many junior faculty might benefit from mentoring that addresses work-life balance issues and techniques for effective time management.
- Clear and open communication of perspectives and interests. Increasing your awareness of others, active listening and being able to share your own experiences are key.
- High standards of ethics and professionalism. Mentors have the responsibility of teaching and role modeling the appropriate ethical behavior of academic professionals.
- Awareness and ability to openly discuss differences.
- Strategies for addressing challenges as they arise.

Senior Faculty Mentor, The Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity

In line with the commitment of Penn State to excellence and long-term diversity of its faculty, the [Senior Faculty Mentor](#) provides supportive services to tenure-track faculty members belonging to underrepresented racial/ethnic groups to facilitate the attainment of tenure and promotion. Initiatives include one-on-one consultations, including reviews of dossiers, regarding faculty members' professional progress; provision for supplemental funding for faculty members to participate in professional conferences, thus strengthening cases for tenure and promotion; and networking activities such as receptions, colloquia, and the maintenance of a listserve.

References:

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- College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University, website accessed January 2014 and June 2016. <http://www.ems.psu.edu/sites/default/files/u5/facstaff/FacultyMentoringBestPractices.pdf>.
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