Mentoring of Junior Faculty

A Guide for Mentors (and Mentees)

From the *Strategic Plan for the University of Maryland* (2008)

"Departments will articulate explicit expectations for faculty mentoring. Quality of mentoring will be an important factor in the review of faculty for promotion and merit pay and in five year post tenure reviews." (Page 13)

"We will ensure that non-tenured/tenure track teaching faculty are carefully selected, regularly reviewed, appropriately mentored, and retained when performance is high. We will integrate non-tenure track faculty into the university community." (Page 30)

Background

There is a critical problem facing the American professoriate. We are on the verge of a demographic shift as the cohort of faculty members hired in the late 1960s start to retire. However, the generation of faculty appointed to replace the retirees, as well as to infuse research and pedagogy with new ideas, directions, and techniques, is not faring well. In a national study by Dooris and Guidos (2006), approximately half (53%) of the untenured faculty hired at research universities became tenured, while about 42% resigned before reaching the point where a tenure decision was to be made.[1]

A similar pattern is found at the University of Maryland in analyses of the tenure decisions of faculty hired between 1993 and 2001. Of this group, only 59% were promoted, while 31% left the university or withdrew from tenure review consideration. [2] Moreover, both nationally and locally, the withdrawal rate was most pronounced among underrepresented groups (e.g. women and persons of color). Consequently attempts to create a more diverse faculty have been slowed, and the university has lost important talent and the considerable funding expended in recruitment efforts.

What can we do to facilitate the successful beginning of an academic career at our university? One contributor to the problem appears to be that junior faculty do not arrive with all the knowledge and experience necessary to achieve tenure. A recent national report found that early in their academic career, fewer than half of pre-tenure faculty felt adequately prepared to obtain grants, conduct research, teach, advise undergraduates, and serve on faculty committees.[3] They often have trouble with time management and multitasking. One answer to this problem is the provision of mentoring services since new faculty receiving mentoring find adaptation to their new job less stressful and are better teachers and more productive scholars.[4]

The University of Maryland has begun to realize that a critical component of the growth of a junior faculty member, and a critical component of his/her achieving success (as measured by timely receipt of promotion and tenure, and then moving on to full professor), is learning to "navigate" the complexities of the life of a faculty member. [5] These complexities not only include teaching and research, but the myriad of other things that are expected such as committee service, mentoring of students, getting grants, setting up labs, etc. And, all of this comes at a time of life when faculty often have young

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[1] Dooris, M. J. & Guidos, M. (May, 2006). Tenure achievement rates at research universities. Chicago, IL: Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research.

[2] The remaining cases were denied promotion or their cases are pending due to delays on the tenure clock.

[3] Berberet, J. (June, 2008). Perceptions of early career faculty: Managing the transition from graduate school to professional career. TIAA-CREF Institute. http://www.tiaa-crefinstitute.org/pdf/research/research_dialogue/92.pdf

[4] Boice, R (1992). *The new faculty member: Supporting and fostering professional development.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

[5] In a July 17, 2008 directive to its constituent campuses, the USM also endorses mentoring programs as a mechanism for recruitment and retention of high-quality faculty.

families, and are trying to balance their interests and responsibilities professionally with their interests and responsibilities in their personal lives.

A recent Task Force set up by the Provost and University Senate strongly supported a much enhanced set of mentoring practices on campus.[6] The Task Force report provides the background material for each unit to develop a mentoring philosophy, culture and program that will meet the campus's APT policy requirements and, more importantly, help to ensure the success of our junior colleagues.

Additionally, in revising the UM APT document several years ago, two added components were required mentoring of junior faculty and increased emphasis on evaluation of the nature and quality of mentoring of students provided by the junior faculty member.

The basis for the current document is the observation that every mentor has a different view of what constitutes the mentoring role, and that no two mentors undertake this important task in the same way. Similarly, no two junior faculty have the same understanding of mentoring, nor have the same idea of what they should expect of the mentor-mentee relationship, nor have the same needs with regard to mentoring. Administrators charged with the creation and assessment of mentoring programs also differ in their definitions of mentoring and indices of success. We are providing this document to all faculty and academic administrators, since at any time each person might act as a mentor (formally or informally) or a mentee, or be responsible for fostering a climate conducive to mentoring. As a consequence, it is useful for all of us to think through these roles, and how they might interact.

This booklet is intended to give mentors "food for thought" about how to be a mentor. It is not expected that every mentor will undertake every suggestion given here. However, it is anticipated that mentors will construct a framework for their mentoring that will ensure that they not only work with their mentees in areas such as research and teaching, but also that they extend their mentoring, as appropriate, to other aspects of their mentees' professional lives. And, of course, the ultimate goal of the mentoring relationship is to assure that new faculty are given guidance that will ultimately lead them to successful careers as scholars and teachers, and recognition nationally and internationally for their accomplishments.

The document is also intended to: (a) help mentees clarity their needs and expectations of the mentoring relationship; and (b) be instructive to chairs and administrators who are charged with designing, participating in, and overseeing mentoring programs. Each audience may find discussions of the nature and presumed benefits of mentoring programs helpful.

The Nature of Faculty Mentoring

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[6] http://www.education.umd.edu/EDMS/SFinfo/SenateMentoringReport.pdf

The Task Force Report makes a distinction between two types of mentoring, evaluative and developmental. *Evaluative mentoring* provides clear benchmarks and guidelines for career success and provides feedback about the mentee's success in achieving those benchmarks. An example is the "three-year" or "reappointment" review.

Developmental mentoring provides socialization into the scholarly community. To quote from the Task Force report, "within academe, mentors demonstrate a road map for career success and help faculty members gain the skills necessary to travel their own career path successfully. They also provide professional socialization including entry into a disciplinary network. Ideally, the mentor also becomes a sounding board and supporter, who teaches the 'tricks of the trade' and survival strategies to the mentee. Most often the mentor serves to help the mentee become successful at his/her academic institution. It is also possible that the mentor will be able to serve as a guide and resource in dealing with the broader scholarly and academic community, both nationally and internationally."

Clearly, this definition of the expectations for a developmental mentor may go beyond what most of us think about. However, it is critical for the success of the mentee that the mentor consider expanding his/her role, and develop a relationship with the mentee that is supportive, confidential, and open.

Typically, developmental mentors are faculty members with more experience in the field than the mentee. These may range from the person who has just achieved a benchmark to which the mentee aspires, to a very senior expert in the field. Mentees are usually, but not always junior faculty members.
Many evaluative mentors are chairs and deans. But they serve an additional role as facilitators and overseers of the mentoring process.

The Task Force Report notes that mentoring takes place at three levels:[7]

- o Tier 1: Unit – provides individual developmental and evaluative mentoring and support.
- o Tier 2: College level – oversees unit/programs and provides developmental mentoring in the form of workshops and seminars on topics such as grantsmanship, how to mentor students, how to run a lab, etc.
- o Tier 3: Campus level – provides developmental mentoring programs on topics such as the tenure review process; assures that faculty, particularly members of underrepresented groups, are provided adequate mentoring; and coordinates meetings of senior administrators with junior faculty.

While the programs at the college and campus level are valuable in helping faculty navigate broader issues, it is the departmental (or non-departmentalized college) level one-on-one mentoring that is the most crucial. The remainder of this document focuses on suggestions for the contributors to this activity: the mentor and the mentee, as well as

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[7] These three items are paraphrased from the Task Force report.

the unit head, who acts as evaluator and facilitator. Most of the comments are also directed towards individuals formally assigned to a mentoring role.

Faculty Mentors

Who should be a mentor?

Most of the scholarly literature on mentoring focuses on developmental mentoring by senior faculty members who have been formally assigned the task of mentoring, although it is clear that contemporaries may also be able to offer informal advice. The Washington State University website suggests that the mentor should be the kind of person who can offer the best information and can serve as advocate for junior faculty.[8] In effect, the recommendation is that mentors should be influential and experienced faculty members familiar with the university system. Ideally, mentors should be mature or recognized teachers/scholars in their field and usually higher up the organizational ladder than their mentee.

Additionally, there are some important personal characteristics for mentors. These should include: interest in the mentee's professional growth and development, willingness to commit time and attention to the relationship, sensitivity but readiness to give honest feedback, and commitment to act on behalf of the mentee.

It is also clear that the mentor has to be proactive and should not wait for the junior faculty to reach out for assistance. Instead, the mentor should not only reach out to the mentee initially, but should continue to do so over the years prior to the granting of tenure (and beyond, if appropriate). Finally, since the mentoring relationship involves working on anxieties and vulnerable areas, the mentor must build trust by keeping interactions confidential. If a good relationship cannot be established, the Chair of the unit should be so informed and possibly a new mentor appointed.

What do mentors do?

There are a number of basic roles mentors can play as they work with their mentees. Not all mentors need play all roles, but the mentors should consider which role(s) are most appropriate for each mentee. Overall, mentors should act as advocates, protectors, coaches and challengers to:

- o Provide guidance on scholarly activities (e.g., read manuscripts, grant proposals) and in advancement of the mentee's career, with the goal of helping them achieve national and international peer recognition for their scholarship.
- o Introduce the mentee to colleagues and experts across campus.

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[8] http://provost.wsu.edu/faculty_mentoring/guidelines.html

- Provide tips about how to get advice and help on teaching, research, and personal issues.
- Provide insight into funding and help in access to funds.
- Provide career guidance.
- Provide guidance on campus politics (at all levels).
- Work with mentee as they start to mentor their own students.
- Provide significant feedback on teaching.[9]
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Appendix B provides some more specific topics of discussions between mentors and mentees.

It is particularly critical that the mentoring of a junior faculty member be open, two-way, and fluid. The mentor should be available to the mentee, perhaps at regular meetings, or informal lunches. "Dropping in" on the mentee for a chat from time to time is certainly acceptable and encouraged as are informal visits to the mentor by the mentee.

The University of Pennsylvania provides some suggested short and long-term goals for the mentoring process.[10]

Short-term goals:

- Familiarize the mentee with the campus and its environment to ensure new faculty members can effectively fulfill their responsibilities.
- Clarify mutual expectations about the frequency of content and accessibility of mentor and mentee.
- Educate the new faculty member about the system of shared governance between the administration and the faculty.
- Network-introduce the mentee to colleagues, identify other possible mentors.
- Develop awareness-help new faculty understand policies and procedures that are relevant to the new faculty member's work.
- Help the mentee sort out priorities-budget time, balance research, teaching, and service

Long-term goals:

- Offer constructive criticism and encouragement, compliment professional growth and achievements.
- Assist the mentee in developing visibility and prominence within the profession.

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[9]At the same time, units may wish to designate a group of "teaching mentors" who are expert teachers to work one-on-one with young faculty the first term they do large class teaching to help them improve their skills. Senior mentors are also encouraged to attend classes and provide feedback, but the teaching mentors might do this on a more regular basis.

[10] http://www.lhup.edu/provost/mentor-project.htm

- Provide guidance on how to achieve career advancement through scholarly publication, conference participation, etc.

Why be a mentor?
- Mentoring relations can develop into collaborations and friendships.
- Mentoring is expected and valued by the university.
- Successful mentoring enhances the reputation of the unit and the mentor within the university and the discipline.

The Role of Mentee

Benefits

The mentee does not have a passive role in the mentoring process. Indeed, it takes a degree of openness and investment to enter into and profit from a mentoring relationship. Benefits for a new faculty member in having a mentor are well described by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.[11]

Good mentoring interactions will:
- Expand the mentee's view of the university.
- Provide honest and informal feedback.
- Provide advice on how to balance teaching, research, and other responsibilities and set professional priorities.
- Provide knowledge of informal rules for advancement (as well as political and substantive pitfalls to be avoided) and coping strategies.
- Provide knowledge of skills for showcasing one's own work.
- Enhance understanding of how to build a circle of friends and contacts both within and outside one's department or team.
- Provide a perspective on long-term career planning.
- Connect mentees closer to the university and to other employees.
- Expand growth in the mentee's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness as a professional.
- Provide an outlet to discuss concerns.

Mentee responsibilities:
- Meet regularly with the mentor.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Keep informed in regard to the requirements for tenure and promotion and your progress toward meeting those requirements.
- Ask for and give feedback.
- Take responsibility for your own growth and success.

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[11] http://www.uwosh.edu/mentoring/faculty/benefits2.html

- o Follow through on referrals to appropriate offices for specific information or assistance.
- o Listen actively.
- o Ask your mentor for guidance and assistance whenever it is needed.
- o Present needs in an articulate way.

The Contributions of Unit Heads to Mentoring

Unit heads play an important role in mentoring by creating a climate for mentoring.[12]

They should:

- o Seek ways to determine senior faculty who are most appropriate to serve as mentors.
- o Find ways to recognize and 'reward" senior faculty for good mentoring.
- o Set expectations for mentoring by senior faculty.
- o Encourage senior faculty to initiate contact with newcomers, e.g., facilitate welcoming coffee hours.
- o Find ways to establish collaborations of newcomers with senior faculty (e.g., in team teaching).
- o Develop additional mentoring resources, such as emeritus faculty.
- o Foster interchanges among mentors about experiences, best practices.
- o Be particularly welcoming to new non-majority faculty, as well as faculty whose scholarship is unique within the department.

Unit heads also play a crucial role in fostering their junior faculty's success. They contribute to developmental mentoring by finding the appropriate mentor for junior faculty. They can, in addition to clarifying departmental expectations, help newcomers gain the resources to meet those expectations and reduce impediments to progress by adopting some of the following strategies:

- o Exercise care in initial assignments to newcomers, e.g., minimize the number of different
- o teaching preparations and committee assignments.
- o Nominate faculty for prestigious early career awards.
- o Use invited colloquia as a way to introduce new faculty to senior people in the field.
- o Find ways to support pre-tenure faculty, such as earmarked travel funds and good start-up packages delivered on time.
- o Be sensitive to dual-career and family issues and provide information about relevant policies, such as tenure delay, and local resources.

Unit heads are also a prime information resource (See Appendix A). They should meet

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[12] Sorcinelli, M.D. (2000). Principles of good practice: Supporting early-career faculty. Washington, D.C. AAHE, Olmstead, M. A. (1993). Mentoring new faculty: Advice to department chairs. *CSWP Gazette, 13, 1* (August).

with incoming faculty very early to:

- o Explain the promotion and tenure process within the department.
- o Explain the process for contract renewal and merit reviews.
- o Provide department criteria for promotion and other faculty expectations.
- o Learn about, and provide advice regarding, the faculty member's plans for attaining tenure, including research interests and anticipated timeline.

Overall Benefits of Having an Excellent Mentoring System in Units

Attention to mentoring is time consuming, but it is crucial to the success of any unit because faculty are the unit's major resource. Thus the benefits of mentoring for the unit heads include:[13]

- o Enhancement of unit quality.
- o Enrichment of the program.
- o Retention of investment in promising faculty.
- o Satisfaction in assisting the development of a colleague.
- o Enhancement of one's own reputation as an effective administrator.

APPENDIX A[14]

A Department Chair's Mentoring Activities

The Chair should:

Initial Tasks- Assign someone (staff/grad student guide) to help the newcomer to:

Sign up for:

- o Retirement benefits.
- o Health insurance.
- o Pay schedule.
- o Obtain office key.
- o Obtain University ID card and building pass.
- o Obtain parking permit.
- o Obtain email account.
- o Receive information about photocopying, ordering textbooks, obtaining supplies.

Mentoring Tasks:

- o Arrange some way to introduce the new faculty member to department faculty and staff.

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[13] Adapted from http://lhup.edu/edu/provost/mentor-project.htm (University of Pennsylvania)

[14] Suggestions provided by Kent Cartwright, Department of English

- Arrange an initial individual welcoming/orientation meeting for new faculty.
- Provide department directory.
- Clarify teaching assignments.
- Discuss faculty member's interests and plans.
- Provide APT Policies/Procedures Manual.
- Discuss the reappointment review.
- Provide a written copy of Unit Promotion Criteria.
- Provide a copy of the Annual Teaching Polices and Guidelines booklet.
- Discuss the selection of mentor.
- Assign mentors to new faculty.
- Meet with the mentors to discuss their role as a **developmental** mentor, planned activities and an end-of-the-year reporting mechanism.
- Provide then with this guide.
- Solicit an activity and progress report after Spring break from each mentor.
- At the end of Spring semester, review year's activity and future plans and their mentoring relationship and give feedback on their progress and then write a brief letter summarizing this conversation.
- In each subsequent year meet with continuing assistant professors in the early fall and spring to discuss progress towards tenure and promotion and mentoring assignment

APPENDIX B
Suggested Topics for Discussion[15]

Setting up the relationship:

- How often shall we meet? When and how should I seek assistance? Are our conversations confidential?

General:

- How is the department organized (e.g., areas, committees)? How are decisions made? What roles do junior faculty play in decision making?
- What kind of support staff is available for junior faculty? What can be expected of support staff? What supplies and expenses are covered by the department? Are there other internal resources available for research and teaching expenses?

Research
- How important is it to present research at other universities/institutions/public settings? How do you get invited to give these talks?

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[15] Emory University Passages Program: http://www.emory.edu/PROVOST/passages

- What conferences should I attend? How are travel funds obtained? What can you do at meetings to get the kind of exposure that leads to good contacts and potential external referees during the tenure process?
- Authorship: How important is first authorship? What are the issues in collaborative research such as determining order of authorship, roles of graduate students? Is collaborative work encouraged or discouraged? How important is it to have single authored papers and papers in which you are the first or senior author?
- Where should you publish? How much is expected? What kinds of publications are valued-books, chapters, refereed journal articles, conference proceedings papers?
- Is it useful to send publications or working papers to colleagues?
- How important are grants? Where can you get assistance in writing grants? Reviewing the budget?
- What does the department understand about my research niche? How much do they value it?

Teaching:

- What electronic resources are available to support teaching and how do I gain access to them?
- What is the expected course load? How much say does one have about course assignments and class scheduling? How many different class preparations should I be expected to make?
- How much time should be spent on teaching?
- What can you expect of a teaching assistant and what is one's responsibility for evaluating their performance?
- Are there standards for grading? What freedom do you have in determining course contact? Scheduling exams?
- How is teaching evaluated? Will I be expected to have a teaching portfolio and what goes into it?
- Where can I go for help if I need assistance with my teaching?
- What documentation related to a course should I keep? Syllabi? Exams? Grades? For how long?
- How do I handle students who need some form of assistance (e.g., mental health, writing skills, learning disabilities)?

Student supervision:

- How important is working with graduate students? How many should one expect to supervise?
- How much advising is expected and are their limits I can set?
- How do you select good graduate students? What do you look for?

Service:

- How much committee work should I do? What committees should I seek out/avoid?
- How important is professional service outside the university? What are desirable service venues?

Reviews:
- How and when can I get feedback on my progress?
- When will I come up for tenure review? What is involved in the reappointment review? The tenure review?
- What is the process for both the reappointment and tenure review?
- What materials are needed and when?
- Who does the review?
- How do I hear the outcome?
- How do I choose external reviewers?
- What should be included in a *c.v.*? In my Personal Statement?

Personal:
- Is there a tenure delay policy? What are the drawbacks of using it?
- How visible should one be in the department? Are there drawbacks to working at home?
- If I am involved in a controversy or dispute, where can I go for help?

Finally, the unit chair is a very important *evaluative* mentor serving as the junior faculty member's supervisor, conductor of performance evaluations and key player in the tenure review process. The chair should be informed of the newcomer's goals and accomplishments and provide regular feedback.