

FACULTY MENTORSHIP POLICY

[Adopted 08-19-2016]

Department of Architecture Mentoring Program

The Department of Architecture Faculty Mentorship policy is intended to improve teaching, research, and service commitments among its junior faculty. It pairs together senior faculty with tenure with those in the tenure-track as a means to provide guidance, support, information, and advice. This departmental policy works in concert and reference to the *UTSA Faculty Mentoring Program Resource Manual* developed by the Office of the Provost (available at: provost.utsa.edu/VPAFS/documents/Faculty-Mentoring-Resource-Manual.pdf)

Requirements:

- A. All tenure-track faculty are required to select at least one mentor during their first year of tenure-track period.
- B. Selection / Change of Mentor will occur in consultation with the Department Chair.
- C. Any tenured faculty within the Department can serve as a mentor and all senior faculty are expected to be available and/or amenable to serving as a mentor to junior faculty.
- D. Tenure-track faculty are permitted to work with any senior faculty in addition in a formal or informal capacity as they require, but one faculty member must be on record as a Mentor and filed using the forms provided on the Department website.
- E. Meetings between mentee and mentor will occur at least once per semester.
- F. Mentorship process will include at least one incidence of peer observation - preferably at the outset of the mentorship - using the Peer Observation process at outlined by the Department.

Recommendations:

1. Tenure-track faculty should seek as much council as they can to improve their teaching, extend and expand their research, and focus and diversify their service so as to have a broad and beneficial career in the Department.
2. Collegiality, in its fullest sense, is central to high quality mentorship.
3. Mentees should develop a career development plan in concert with their mentor aimed at improving the faculty member's future planning and ability to measure progress towards goals. The role of the faculty mentor in this is to provide advice in setting the goals of the career plan and to provide feedback on a periodic basis about the progress made towards those goals. Suggested aspects of a career plan are:
 - Research -
 - a. Identify research topics
 - b. Identify venues for funding and/or publication.
 - c. Establish goals for year by year productivity
 - Teaching –
 - a. Identify and develop teaching goals (courses, topics, etc.)
 - b. Establish performance standards
 - c. Review and develop teaching skills and methodology (delivery, syllabus, course design)
 - d. Identify available and beneficial teaching improvement resources
 - Service
 - a. Identify internal and external service goals
 - b. Discuss appropriate levels of service commitment
 - c. Target specific service activities (internal and external) for focus.
4. Mentors should work to provide the mentee with the following:
 - a. Information about promotion and tenure processes
 - b. Information about departmental, research center, college, and university culture
 - c. Constructive and supportive feedback on specific work or on career progress
 - d. Encouragement, support and listening to concerns of the new faculty member

- e. Aid in fostering connections and visibility within and outside of the department and university.
 - f. Support in research endeavors, teaching improvement, and service engagement.
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UTSA Faculty Mentoring Program (text from Provost document)

The goal of the Faculty Mentoring Program is to support and retain assistant professors as they progress toward tenure and provide guidance to associate professors to enhance their probability for success in becoming full professors. More broadly, it helps junior faculty members get to know the institution, excel in teaching and research, understand tenure and evaluation, create work-life balance and develop professional networks.

What is Mentoring?

There are many definitions of mentoring. Most have a common theme of providing support to a colleague, which can be either emotional or content based. Mentoring is often most successful when it happens naturally and informally. Faculty may not realize that mentoring includes informal ways of checking in with colleagues, reviewing papers and proposals, and providing introductions to key people in the field. When these relationships do not exist, pre-tenure faculty can be at a disadvantage unless the department or college provides a more formal mentoring structure.

Mentoring is both a formal and informal activity, and can address all aspects of academic life, from balancing professional and family obligations to advice about professional milestones that must be reached in order to advance through the ranks. In addition to one-to-one pairing of pre-tenure faculty with more senior faculty, faculty mentoring may include departmental social events, invitations to professional conferences, teaching and research collaborations, and assistance with developing individualized career plans. Ideally, pre-tenure faculty will have a network of peers and more senior colleagues as mentors and advisors to get a complete overview of the requirements for academic success.

Why is mentoring important to new UTSA faculty?

Junior and senior faculty participate in the program as mentors and mentees, respectively. Every department will develop their own mentoring program. Thus, there is no one size fits all. Interested faculty will consult with their department chair to learn about the elements of their department's mentoring program. Mentors are available to assistant professors seeking to acquire skills and to begin preparing for the tenure process. Additionally, associate professors may be assigned mentors to prepare for promotion to full professor.

The program should address entry-level skills for new faculty, a supportive academic environment, career advancement, balance between work, family, and personal lives, and competencies as educators. An article from the Chronicle of Higher Education entitled "The Difference Mentoring Makes" articulates the importance of mentoring in higher education (see page 8 under "Mentoring Resources").

The faculty mentoring program should provide information on a variety of topics of interest to mentees and mentors, such as tenure and promotion, publication strategies, grant writing skills, assessment of student learning and strategies for effective teaching. General guidelines for mentors and mentees are available on the following pages to help you get started. In fact, "Guidelines for Mentors" on page 5 and "Guidelines for Mentees" on page 7 of this manual can be shared with those respective individuals.

Selection and identification of mentors

The selection of mentors is critical. Do not assume any senior faculty member can serve as an effective mentor. An effective mentor has both a particular set of skills and a desire to help his or her colleagues. One without the other is likely to result in an unproductive relationship for the 3 mentee. The selection of mentors should be a very thoughtful and well-designed process. We encourage each department to think carefully about how this is done.

Matching mentors to mentees

Each department should match new faculty at their request with senior faculty mentors from the same department or college. If a new faculty member has been assigned a mentor from within his or her department or college, he or she can request additional mentors from outside his or her department or college. Mentors are usually identified through personal contacts or recommendations of the deans, chairs and colleagues.

As the research on successful mentoring suggests, mentors are generally of the same gender as the new faculty. However, mentors of particular gender, race, ethnicity, or background can be requested for multicultural development or other professional development reasons.

Expectations of mentors and mentees

Once a mentor and mentee have been matched together, it is critical to gain a shared understanding of expectations of one another. Otherwise, if expectations are not explicitly agreed upon, the likelihood for misunderstanding and miscommunication heightens. We recommend that each department create a template for a mentor/mentee contract to lay out minimal expectations and have the parties agree and sign the document to indicate their commitment to the process.

Possible topics for discussion in a mentoring session

In addition to simply learning the ropes of academia, there are many additional sources of stress that junior faculty face. A few examples include:

1. Navigating an increasingly demanding career
 - Job preparation – Managing your time and commitments
 - Developing and preparing courses
 - Managing student issues
 - Navigating relationships with co-workers and colleagues.
 - Securing funding or other support for research
 - Writing and publishing papers Participating on committees
 - Engaging in campus or off-campus service work
 - Balancing personal/professional life
2. Unrealistic expectations
 - Set unreasonable self-expectations
 - Expect high levels of initial success
 - Expect close collegial ties
 - Expect high intellectual stimulation
3. Feelings of isolation
 - Colleague indifference
 - Lack of support from chair or supervisor
 - Unfamiliarity with institutional process and culture
 - Lack of access to information
4. Inadequate feedback and recognition
 - Poor student feedback or evaluations
 - Lack of clear expectations about performance
 - Little participation in department/unit decisions
 - Salary

Assessing the mentoring process

We encourage all departments to develop some type of assessment process to determine the effectiveness of their mentoring program and how it can be continually improved to meet the needs of mentees and mentors. Do not assume your mentoring program is going well unless you have data to support such a finding.

GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

A good mentor seeks to understand what junior faculty members want to accomplish and helps illuminate the path that will take them there. Topics for discussion can range from the technical, such as which conferences to attend, to the philosophical, such as how to survive the pre-tenure grind without burning out.

Because mentoring relationships come in all shapes and sizes, the following guidelines should be taken only as suggestions.

1. Suggested etiquette for mentors

- You are not expected to evaluate your mentee's work. While your professional areas may overlap enough that you feel competent to evaluate his/her work, this is NOT expected of you. Rather, your role is helping your mentee find resources to evaluate his/her work and give him/her emotional support.*
- Take the initiative in the relationship. Invite your mentee to meet with you and suggest topics to discuss. Ask if you can offer assistance. • Respect your mentee's time as much as you respect your own.*
- Always ask if you can make a suggestion or offer support before you proceed to do so.*
- Be explicit with your mentee that you are only offering suggestions and that s/he should weigh your advice along with that received from other mentors.*
- Make only positive or neutral comments about your mentee to others.*
- Your mentee must trust that anything s/he says to you will be held in the strictest confidence.*
- If you don't believe that either you or your mentee are able to keep to the terms of your mentoring agreement, don't be afraid to end the relationship. It may be helpful for you to annually review your mentoring relationship.*
- Keep the door open for your mentee to return in the future.*

2. Here are a few ideas for items to discuss with your mentee:

- Ask about how they are doing and encourage them in their pursuits*
- Provide honest and constructive criticism and informal feedback*
- Review teaching, research and service*
- Discuss specific "difficult" situations faced by one's mentee and suggest follow-up actions s/he might take to turn an unfortunate circumstance into an opportunity for opening a dialogue*
- Help the mentee understand the current culture of UTSA. Review expectations as they pertain to becoming involved in activities at UTSA, earning tenure or indefinite status, and developing one's line of research*
- Discuss career and service*
- Utilize mentoring to help the new hire become part of the UTSA family.*
- Review important dates that the mentee should be aware of and discuss how s/he can be prepared for them. Such dates might include interviews for Graduate School research proposals, submission of materials for annual peer reviews, and preparation of materials to the department for annual written progress evaluations and tenure*
- Utilize mentoring to break down any feelings of isolation by including the mentee in campus activities you are aware of so that the mentee gets to know more people*
- Discuss balancing work and personal life*

Probably the greatest challenge faced by pairs is finding enough time and energy to meet together. Even finding half an hour can be difficult. Use phone calls, e-mail, etc., as ways of staying in touch when your schedules are the busiest.

Mentoring Resources

- SUNY Albany
<http://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.chapter2.shtml>
- University of Michigan (while this one pertains to graduate students, I believe a lot of the information is applicable to junior faculty)
<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/publications/Fmentoring.pdf>
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/faculty/facment>
- Cornell University (This is a compilation of 5 exemplary mentoring programs)
<http://www.advance.cornell.edu/documents/Exemplary-Junior-Faculty-Mentoring-Programs.pdf>
- Harvard University
<http://www.faculty.harvard.edu/development-and-mentoring/faculty-mentoring-resources>
- Michigan State University
<http://fod.msu.edu/resources-faculty-mentoring>
- Northern Illinois University
<http://www.niu.edu/facdev/services/newfacmentoring.shtml>
- The Center for Teaching and Faculty Development at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst – Mutual Mentoring, Mentoring Circles
<http://www.umass.edu/ctfd/mentoring/index.shtml>
- University of New Mexico Mentoring Institute
<http://mentor.unm.edu/home/>

Chronicle of Higher Education articles:

- The Difference Mentoring Makes:
<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Difference-Mentoring/147765/?key=SmNxlgZrZS9EZHhhMWpBMT4EPCZsNUI1aiMZan1zbI9QFg==>
- Seeing the Mentors You Need:
<http://chronicle.com/article/Seeking-the-Mentors-You-Need/131747/>
- Why We Need 'Reverse Mentoring':
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2012/09/06/why-we-need-reverse-mentoring/>
- The Contributions of Mentees to Mentors:
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/innovations/the-contributions-of-mentees-to-mentors/30022>
- Midcareer Mentoring:
<http://chronicle.com/article/Midcareer-Mentoring-Part-3/132157/>
- How to Treat Your New Faculty Colleagues:
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/innovations/how-to-treat-your-new-faculty-colleagues/32789>
- Why Not to Set Up a Formal New Faculty Mentoring Program:
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/why-not-to-set-up-a-formal-new-faculty-mentoring-program/22766>