Mentoring

From Cornell Engineering website.

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Purpose of Mentoring

- Enable the success of the Assistant Professor by fostering excellence in teaching, research, and professional service early in their academic career. Acclimate to the university, college, and department culture and environment,
- Support the young faculty to:
  - Learn about the campus resources, opportunities, and policies,
  - Build constructive internal and external networks to promote relationships and ventures,
  - Build a successful funded research program,
  - Teach and advise effectively and efficiently,
  - Budget time and prioritize teaching, research, and service responsibilities,
  - Balance professional and personal responsibilities,
  - Receive constructive feedback, encouragement, and compliments,
  - Develop visibility and prominence within the profession,
  - Develop short-term goals to facilitate promotion and tenure,
  - Develop long-term career goals.

At the Astani Department

- Chair ensure that each Assistant Professor will be supported and advised by 2+ mentors.
  - One mentor will focus on teaching and research
  - One mentor (another young faculty) will focus on issues faced by young faculty
  - Chair is the 3rd mentor providing support and guidance on all broad and general issues.
  - Outside the department mentor when needed

Roles and Responsibilities of Mentors

- May serve myriad purposes including friend, confidant, advocate, career and intellectual guide, and as a source of information to the Assistant Professor they mentor.
- Minimum, expected to:
  - Meet regularly with the Assistant Professor and provide for him or her a safe venue to bring questions and problems, and,
  - Provide the Assistant Professor with constructive suggestions and advice without being prescriptive.
  - Assist in developing a career plan that addresses the Assistant Professor's annual and long-term goals in teaching, research and service. Include items such as how to:
    - Provide focus in research,
    - Obtain research funding,
    - Effectively disseminate research results and enhance their impact and visibility,
    - Effectively and efficiently enhance teaching and advising performance, and,
    - Effectively manage time.

Role of the Chair

- Responsible for assigning mentors and monitoring the interactions taking place to ensure they are positive and constructive.
- Should review the career plans developed by the Assistant Professor in conjunction with the mentor
- Additional steps will often include:
  - Meeting occasionally with the faculty member,
  - Limiting the number of unique and challenging classes a faculty member teaches before tenure,
  - Providing opportunities for the Assistant Professor to teach existing and/or develop new graduate offerings in areas that will help their research.
  - Limiting the service loads for the Assistant Professor,
  - Encouraging the Assistant Professor to travel to conferences and to funding agencies, and,
  - Steering promising graduate students to the new faculty member.

Role of the Dean's office

- The Dean office should provide financial assistance to attend workshops and for other activities associated with the mentoring process.
- The Dean office should meet with the new Assistant Professor and the Chair/Director of the department to discuss the tenure and promotion process.
- The Dean office should provide information to the mentors, Chairs/Directors and Assistant Professors on workshops, best practices and other activities related to the mentoring process.

Effective mentors in academia are typically:

- Tenured and well-respected by their colleagues,
- Committed to supporting new faculty and willing to spend time helping them succeed,
- Familiar with department, college, and university resources, offices, and culture,
- Positive about their position, department, college, and the university,
- Politically aware, and,
- Good listeners.

Term of the Mentor Relationship

- In some instances, a mentor/Assistant Professor pairing may prove unproductive or detrimental for myriad reasons. In these instances, either the mentor or Assistant Professor may end the relationship. This will be done by communicating the request to the department Director/Chair.
- This should be understood by all parties that these are no-fault conclusions – How?

Recognition of Mentors

- We are not very good on this!!!!
- Mentors should receive:
  - Appropriate relief from other service obligations,
  - Formal and informal recognition at the department level,
  - Assistance to attend workshops on mentoring.