Developing a Mentoring Plan for New Faculty

Mentoring provides new faculty with an explicit connection to more senior faculty members to provide guidance, advice, and socialization to the new department and institution (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

- Mentoring offers **role models** for new faculty, who learn by simply watching the behavior of the more senior faculty.
- Mentoring offers **information transmission**, wherein senior faculty share tricks of the trade and strategies for success with new faculty.
- Mentoring establishes **informal relationships** that may offer opportunities to collaborate, network, and feel more comfortable in and satisfied with the home unit (Croson & McGoldrick, 2007).
- Mentoring **creates opportunities** for junior faculty to realize their own potential.

Arranging Mentoring in Your Unit

- Mentoring relationships can be arranged **in pairs** (new faculty member with senior faculty member) or **in groups** (new faculty member with several senior faculty members).
  - A group mentoring format may allow for more flexibility of mentors' schedules and will allow for certain individuals to focus on particular areas of strength (teaching, research, service, university politics, etc.), with the goal of creating a mentoring mosaic.
- Search committee chairs can also be enlisted to assist in matching mentors with new faculty, given their familiarity with the new faculty member.
- To best determine new faculty members' needs, a questionnaire can be provided:
  - Please describe in a few sentences your research interests.
  - Please describe in a few sentences the kinds of teaching you do or expect to do (i.e., lectures, seminars, labs, graduate advising, etc.).
  - Please state 3 areas where you feel a mentor could help you.
  - Please state any preferences you might have regarding your potential mentor (i.e., gender, race, emeritus vs. current faculty, etc.). Do you desire a mentor inside or outside your department? Interdisciplinary mentors?
- Similarly, senior faculty members can be provided a questionnaire:
  - Please describe in a few sentences your research interests.
  - Please describe in a few sentences the kinds of teaching you do (i.e., lectures, seminars, labs, graduate advising, etc.).
  - Please describe your particular strengths as a mentor (e.g., teaching techniques, time management, networking with other faculty, etc.).
  - How available can you be to your protégé?

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Structuring the Mentoring Relationship

- Mentors and protégés should be expected to meet on a regular basis; we suggest monthly but certainly no less than once per semester. Given the circumstances of many faculty members, mentoring meetings can also take place using distance technology.

- The department chair should be charged with ensuring that the mentoring relationship is formalized.

- Relationships should be established for the first two years of the new faculty's appointment at a minimum.

- Mentors and protégés should be provided with evaluations at the end of each semester to determine how the relationship is progressing and if additional assistance is required. These evaluations can be reviewed confidentially by the Chair/Director. A simple online questionnaire might include:
  - How often do you and your mentor/protégé meet?
  - Do you feel these meetings are sufficient?
  - How has your mentor assisted you?
  - (For protégés) What other areas of assistance do you still require?
  - (For mentors) What areas of assistance do you require? Any resources or information that would help you be a better mentor?

- Mentors and departments should encourage new faculty to connect with existing resources, such as:
  - Teaching and assessment information through CITL or the Office of Assessment
  - Time management, work-life balance, and networking strategies through Rising Tide workshops
  - Technological assistance through CITL and Fogler Library workshops
  - Support with personal-professional issues through the Employee Assistance Program

- The mentoring relationship will focus both on short-term issues (How do I post grades on MaineStreet? How do I deal with an incidence of plagiarism?) as well as long-term (How do I achieve tenure? How do I articulate my research agenda? How do I achieve work-life balance?)

- Many mentoring relationships will focus largely on the tenure-promotion process.
  - Mentors should provide a copy of the Peer Committee guidelines (if not already provided) and discuss the procedures and guidelines in detail with the new faculty member
  - Mentors can provide sample letters from past successful annual reviews and tenure packets

- Mentors can meet monthly with the new faculty member to discuss his/her CV and provide feedback in relation to the promotion-tenure expectations of the unit
  - Mentors should also consider the more "implicit" expectations of the tenure-promotion process – or those not generally expressed in writing. For example, is the expectation that the faculty member should be in his/her office each day? Is there an expectation that new faculty attend certain conferences or publish in certain places?
  - See other examples of possible questions and concerns below

- Mentors can also assist new faculty in providing network connections and potential collaborative relationships
  - Introduce new faculty to peers with similar research interests on-campus and beyond
  - You can find details of other faculty members' expertise at UMaine at https://library.umaine.edu/fsprofile/expertisesearch/index.aspx

- Monthly meetings can be informal and discussion-oriented but can also be arranged around specific topics and questions, including:
  - **Department/unit organization** (divisions, committees)
  - **Decision-making** in the unit and what role junior faculty play in the process
  - **Support staff** in the unit and what are expected of them
  - **Conferences:** What travel funding and support is available? How many papers should be presented annually? How do you make the most of networking at professional meetings and conferences?
  - **Publishing:** Where should new faculty publish? What should they publish? How much/how often? How do different kinds of publications count (i.e., articles, book chapters, conference proceedings, etc.)? Is collaborative work encouraged or discouraged? Interdisciplinary work? Authorship etiquette: What is expected of pre-tenure faculty related to authorship? What about graduate student authors?
  - **Grants**: What are the grant expectations for pre-tenure faculty? What resources are available for finding grants, managing budgets? What are unit expectations for percent of salary to be covered by grants? What are different expectations for research faculty versus traditional tenure-track faculty?
  - **Teaching**: What should a teaching philosophy statement look like? How is the teaching schedule managed? Should new faculty consider developing new courses? How much time should be spent on course preparations? Will new faculty receive teaching assistants? What are the expectations of TAs? What are unit standards for grading? How much freedom in developing course content? How is teaching evaluated? Can the mentor observe teaching? What are some additional forms of evaluation that can be used? What documentation of teaching should be kept?
  - **Advising**: How much time is expected for advising undergraduate and graduate students? How many is too many? What qualities should a new faculty member look for in a new graduate student? How do you identify a problem graduate student? How do you become graduate faculty? What are the expectations for serving as chair or

dissertation advisor, on committees, etc.? How do you write good recommendations? How do you hire post-docs and supervise them? What are the pay scales for graduate students?

- o **Service**: How much service is expected? How much is too much? Which committees are the best to serve on and which should be avoided? How important is professional service? Which kinds are valued more? How do you say "no"?
- o **Annual Review**: Schedule of annual reviews? What documentation is needed? How is the third-year review different? When are new faculty informed in each review? How do you address inaccuracies in review letters?
- o **Tenure**: How many letters are required from external reviewers? Who should they be? Do you seek out your own or does the chair/director? Who are good reviewers? What information should be included in a CV? What's too trivial to include? How are raises determined?
- o **Personal issues**: What are the policies for family and personal leave? How do you stop the clock before tenure? What support is available for the birth or adoption of a child? What childcare options are available? Is it acceptable to work at home? How can EAP help? Where do you go for help if involved in a controversy or dispute?

- ● Mentors should be aware that not all new faculty will be comfortable asking for help – even if they need it. Being aware of and anticipating issues at particular times of the year may assist mentors in reaching out to faculty. For example:
  - o Beginning of year: Ordering books from Bookstore, using Blackboard, syllabus format and university policies required on syllabi
  - o Mid-term: MaineStreet assistance for mid-term grades and final grades
  - o End of semester: Dealing with plagiarism and the student conduct process, preparation for first-year peer committee review, the significance of student evaluations

Additionally, you might consider the following points:
- ● Provide one senior faculty mentor within the department and one outside of it – this arrangement may assist in better understanding promotion-tenure expectations both within the unit and in the larger college
- ● Provide additional mentoring relationship opportunities for faculty with particular interests (e.g., grant writing, community partnerships) or with particular backgrounds (e.g., international faculty, faculty of color); however, gender of the mentor does not appear to make a difference in mentoring outcomes (Posey, Reimers, & Andronicos, 2007)
- ● Implement peer-mentoring networks where "newer" faculty members (e.g., those hired in last 6 years) may assist each other and provide support and advice\

Sample Mentoring Plan for Department of XYZ

Department XYZ at the University of Maine recognizes the importance of mentoring relationships between new faculty and their more senior colleagues.

New faculty members will be provided with a brief questionnaire in advance of their first semester asking for areas of interest and expertise. Senior faculty members who wish to serve as mentors will be provided with a similar questionnaire to best match new faculty and mentor areas of interest and expertise.

The department chair/director will be tasked with matching new faculty members with a mentor (in the department, outside of the department) and/or will be provided with a mentoring committee of senior faculty.

Mentors and their protégés will be expected to meet at least monthly to discuss areas of professional development, expectations for promotion-tenure, and to provide insight into the department's organization and functioning. Topics for these meetings may include, but are not limited to: teaching, research, publication, external funding, advising, service, professional association memberships and networking, promotion-tenure and annual review criteria, and work-life balance.

The Chair of Department XYZ will send confidential evaluations of the mentoring relationship at the end of each semester in the first two years of the new faculty member's appointment. These evaluations will allow for the Chair to provide additional mentoring or resources to both the new faculty member and the mentor or to provide alternate mentoring should the relationship not prove fruitful. Should a mentoring relationship require dissolution, another senior faculty member will be matched with the new faculty member using the questionnaire process described above.

References

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