

College of Education

Mentoring Plan

8-10-17

In the last decade colleges and universities have become more concerned with enhancing productivity to survive in an increasingly competitive environment. Inherent within the concept of productivity in academic circles is the need to develop faculty, enabling them to make full use of their knowledge and skills. In order to make sure that the academy is a healthy work environment for research, teaching and service, the need to provide the proper guidance and nurturing to future academicians is essential to their and the college or university success (Gasman, 2009). While most, if not all, new faculty members have spent many years in a university environment learning the content of their subject areas, they typically receive little, if any, formal preparation and guidance in the knowledge, skills, and procedures necessary for them to become successful in their professorial roles. Recent recognition and acknowledgement of this void by institutions of higher education are motivating universities to initiate mentoring programs as a means to address this problem and help to decrease the gap of faculty members who leave within the first five years of employment. At the core of the mentoring process is an interpersonal relationship between an experienced faculty member and a new faculty member. The underpinning assumption of mentoring as a form of learning and professional development originates from the belief that learning occurs through observing, role modeling and/or apprenticeship, and questioning.

Who is the Mentor?

A mentor is usually considered as a teacher, friend, sponsor, counselor, or a person that expresses the willingness to “pay back to the profession.” Mentors are those who have successfully traveled the path to achieving tenure and promotion at their institution. They have the knowledge and experience to provide vital information as the new faculty member proceeds towards acquiring resources that can also lead to their success. Mentors understand the institutional culture, rules and processes. They also know about the day-to-day operations of planning and teaching for success in the area of teaching. The mentor also has the practical experience of suggesting various service opportunities that exist at the department, college, university and community levels (Rosser, 2003). In addition, the mentor can guide and help new faculty balance the appropriate levels of service, teaching, and research.

Rosser, 2003 stated the importance of the new faculty member to move from the status of graduate student to that of faculty or a faculty member moving to a new institution. The importance of getting to know the culture of the department, college and university is vital to the success of being accepted, promoted and tenured at the college or university. Pursuing these goals can be the most challenging and rewarding steps for the mentor and the new faculty member. For the mentor, there is no greater reward than to be part of a successful partnership of supporting new faculty members who can handle the requirements of collegiality, service, teaching and research. Other findings suggest that new faculty who are mentored feel more connected to their work environments than their non-mentored peers. They also claim to have a greater sense of ownership of their departments, and to receive information about tenure and promotion, research, teaching,

College of Education

Mentoring Plan

8-10-17

and service expectations with greater frequency than their non-mentored peers (Schrodt, 2003).

Collegial support is the hallmark of a mentor's work, and the development of a trusting relationship between the mentor and the mentee is essential in order for mutual respect to develop. This relationship requires time, appropriate pacing, and availability of the mentor. The mentor should offer positive feedback and encouragement and should counsel the mentee to reflect on their professional activities, as well as to recognize, through the modeling of the mentor, the importance of reflective practice. The primary goal of the mentoring process is to nurture the professional development of new colleagues in order to help them succeed in their teaching, research, and service activities so that they, in turn, can mentor others (Danielson, 1999; Odell & Huling, 2000). The authors suggest that mentors can provide a valuable service by "showing the ropes" to their new colleagues so that they become accustomed to the unique culture into which they have moved. **There is no one size fits all (Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014) program in mentoring.** Acknowledging there is no one program that meet the needs of mentoring whether it is formal or informal, we believe there are important components that are vital to the mentoring programs success.

- Mentor and mentee meeting with some regularity
- Mentor and mentee setting achievable and attainable goals
- Mentor and mentee meeting to reflect on the progress toward goals

Difference! An Asset Not a Deficit

Having diversity in the higher education setting is critical to the growth of all who are involved. It is a key ingredient of a quality education, scholarly discourse, and reflection. Faculty, staff and students alike can benefit from learning within a setting that allows or demands that one adapt to the complex social structures of having to learn from, teach or work with those who are not like oneself. Working with or learning from or among diverse groups of people is an education in itself. With increasing racial/ethnic diversity in the United States, it becomes even more critical to have faculty and staff of color who can support students and serve as role models. And with efforts aimed toward increasing diversity in the US workforce, institutions of higher education must identify and undertake efforts that will help ensure a climate that is inclusive, embracing a wide array of differences that will be "value added" to the institution.

It is to be noted that faculty of color working in primarily white institutions (PWI's) and women encounter challenges above and beyond those normally faced by all new faculty navigating the tenure and promotion processes. As documented in the literature (Chai et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006; Stein, 1994; Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood, 2008), it is a reality that faculty of color and other underrepresented groups such as women of color and women in general tend to be impacted differently by organizational structures and practices because of historical factors and societal practices. Institutional racism, prejudice, cultural insensitivity, marginalization, and devaluation of research interests are some factors that can have adverse impact on the performance of members of underrepresented groups. Mentoring programs, whether they are formal or informal in nature, must give special concern for the complexity that arises when categories such as

College of Education Mentoring Plan

8-10-17


gender, race, disability and or sexual orientation intersect. For instance, women faculty of color most likely experience discrimination due to their gender and their race and mentoring programs must be adjusted accordingly to account for these intersections.

Myers (2002) suggests that mentors do not have to be of the same race or gender as their mentees; however, they must be aware of the politics of difference. Mentors need to be aware of the circumstances that could emerge because of race and gender, as well as how those characteristics alone set underrepresented professional women apart from their majority colleagues on their campuses. Given the extreme shortage of African American faculty and staff at predominantly white institutions, it is important that culturally different faculty and staff—especially white professors and administrators, who remain the majority—willingly reach out to assist underrepresented faculty whether in a mentoring capacity or simply providing general guidance and encouragement. Non-African American faculty and staff must also be reflective in recognizing and alleviating the biases and stereotypes that they may personally hold and respond more empathetically to the issues and concerns of this population. Furthermore, considering that trust issues tend to be a significant barrier, it is important that culturally different faculty and staff members ensure confidentiality when mentoring and or providing guidance and support.

Developing a Mentoring Program

Recently, there has been a surge of interest in mentoring for professional development within higher education settings. While the reasons for this is varied, there is an extensive body of literature that suggests mentoring programs lead to important benefits in university settings for new faculty, senior faculty, and the institution in general. Mentoring programs help new faculty to develop as leaders through the receipt of professional and institutional information, sponsorship, advice, and guidance. As such, new faculty involved in mentoring are more likely to have opportunities to develop not only professionally (career orientation) but also personally (psycho-social needs) throughout their careers.

Many institutions, of various types, provide formal or informal mentoring programs for new faculty. These programs may be organized at the departmental, school/college, or institutional level. We believe that departments that operate without an explicit, intentional structure or those that are serendipitously structured are not positioned to achieve full educational effectiveness and advance the success of their faculty and students. **We can no longer assume that one style of mentoring will be congruent with the mission, vision, and ways of operating for a specific department. Thus, this document provides an overarching framework for academic departments within the College of Education to use to develop a mentoring program that meets the needs of that department.**

-  A formal mentoring program usually includes the assignment of one or more mentors, requires participation in regularly scheduled meetings with the mentor(s), and provides training and compensation for the mentor. In addition,

College of Education

Mentoring Plan

8-10-17

formal programs usually include some type of written evaluation of the process by everyone involved so that improvements to the program can be implemented.

- An informal mentoring process usually permits a new faculty member to choose whether or not to have a mentor, with the mentor frequently chosen by the new faculty member based on shared interests. Conversations and activities between the mentor and new colleague occur sporadically and on an "as needed" basis in an informal process. Typically, the informal mentor volunteers and, thus, receives no training, compensation, or evaluation.

There are good reasons why different arrangements work better at different institutions, but what is important is that guidance is offered to new colleagues so that they are not left to search for answers or do without needed information. New faculty members (Mentees) need access to formal and informal supportive networks, through which unwritten rules or common practices are shared. Informal networks can lead to scholarly collaborations that may not otherwise form or exist. While mentees seek advice, it is imperative to fully understand the departmental promotion and tenure criteria, begin to implement their research agenda as early as possible, and always strive to achieve excellence.

Suggestions for being an Effective Mentor

- Schedule a meeting with the faculty member(s) you will be mentoring, and get acquainted with them. Provide your mentee(s) with your phone numbers and email addresses as well as the best times to reach you. This should be completed within the first two weeks of pairing.
- Let your mentee(s) talk with you about their background and goals.
- When you first begin a mentoring relationship, set aside time to answer questions and discuss pertinent information, such as university policies, grading, preparing syllabi, faculty responsibilities, or setting office hours. Help them identify deadlines critical to courses such as drop/add dates. Help them determine midterm and final exam periods.
- During the first few months, you should set up a time to meet regularly with your mentee(s) so they will find you accessible during the time when they have numerous questions. During this time, you can begin to review the university and departmental guidelines for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.
- Help your mentee(s) become aware of existing professional development opportunities, such as grant workshops, faculty showcases, or technology workshops.
- Ask your mentees if they have any concerns or questions about any aspect of teaching, research, or service. Let them talk about their agendas in each of these areas and guide them according to the expectations of your department and university. Also, look for ways to assist them in developing their research agendas, such as directing them toward relevant manuscripts you may have read, or calls for papers or presentations you may be aware of.
- Stay in contact with your mentees to provide feedback and encouragement about the activities they have completed which lead toward promotion and tenure.

College of Education Mentoring Plan

8-10-17

- If your mentee(s) is/are new to the world of writing and publishing, think of a project you can do together so that you can serve as a model. Talk to them about projects or special interests and provide suggestions for how to turn those into articles.
- Offer to proofread manuscripts or serve as a sounding board to help your mentees in their thinking as they write.
- Steer your mentees toward committees they might find interesting and that will help them in their study and areas of interest. Check to make sure they are serving both departmental and university committees without being overburdened, thus preventing them from having time to write.
- Submit your mentees names for recognition for their accomplishments on the beyond campus, such as the university or college awards, campus newsletters, local, state, and national organizations, local newspaper, etc.
- Encourage your mentee(s) to apply for grants, awards, or other forms of recognition or participation that fit with their research, teaching, and service agendas.
- Schedule casual meetings, such as lunch, with other mentor(s) and their mentee(s) to help your mentee(s) develop a sense they are members of a learning community.

Suggestions for being a Good Mentee

- Schedule a meeting with the faculty member(s) you will be mentored by, and get acquainted with them. Provide your mentor(s) with your phone numbers and email addresses as well as the best times to reach you.
- When you first begin a mentoring relationship, set aside time to discuss pertinent information, such as university policies, grading, preparing syllabi, faculty responsibilities, or setting office hours. Get acquainted with deadlines critical to courses such as drop/add dates, midterm and final exam periods.
- During the first few months, you should set up a time to meet regularly with your mentor(s). During this time, you can begin to review the university and departmental guidelines for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.
- Ask your mentor(s) to proofread manuscripts or serve as a sounding board to help you in your writing.
- Seek the advice of your mentor(s) in relation to committees you might find interesting or will assist you in your professional journey. Check to make sure you are serving both departmental and university committees without being overburdened, thus preventing you from having time to write.
- Seek out grants, awards, or other forms of recognition or participation that fit your research, teaching, and service agendas.
- Schedule with your mentor(s) casual meetings, such as lunch, with other mentor(s) and their mentee(s) to help you develop a sense you are a valued member of a learning community.
- To reduce the perception that this is busy work, it will be important to add a self-assessment during or prior to the first meeting to ensure the mentor understands the level of support that is needed. The program needs to be differentiated.