

Mentoring Program Core Elements

Program Organization

- Component of comprehensive faculty career development program
- Mentoring process distinct from annual evaluation process
- Inclusive of tenure-track and fixed-term faculty
- Program addresses needs of specific groups (e.g. assistant vs. associate professors, women, underrepresented in medicine)
- Provide incentives for mentoring (e.g. intra-departmental and extra-departmental recognition, awards)

Mentor Selection/Development

- Process to facilitate mentee selection and/or assignment of mentor(s)
- Formal development of mentorship skills
- Process for reassignment of mentor/ mentee

Mentoring Process

- Timing (duration and frequency) of mentoring is explicit
- Includes orientation to mentoring process and expectations for mentors/mentees
- Inclusive of the following types of mentoring:
 - Personal development
 - Professional development
 - Skill development
 - Academic career guidance
 - Research

Program Outcomes

- Annual evaluation by mentors/mentees to include satisfaction with program
- Faculty retention and promotion

Report of the
Subcommittee on Mentorship Regarding Promotion and Tenure
of the
Provost's Task Force on Tenure and Promotion

Introduction

Mentoring is central to both individual and institutional success. Good mentorship is a hallmark of prosperous academic units. The department chair or school dean is responsible for ensuring mentoring is available and for establishing an environment conducive to and supportive of mentorship. Senior faculty members have a responsibility to support and advise their junior colleagues. Junior faculty should be proactive in developing mentoring relationships and are responsible for taking advantage of the mentorship opportunities available to them.

Mentoring should be designed to meet the goals of the mentee. Mentoring requires a trusting, confidential relationship built on mutual respect, so optimal mentoring relationships are voluntarily established rather than dictated. The best mentoring relationship creates a safe space in which the junior faculty member can openly and honestly discuss challenges, problems and concerns, and be assured of confidentiality as well as advice and support. It may be desirable for an early-career faculty to have multiple mentors. One mentor might assist a junior faculty member develop an independent academic identity, but a different mentor might be better prepared to help the junior faculty member balance professional and personal demands.

While the subcommittee is aware of many instances of exemplary mentoring at Carolina, our sense is that mentoring remains sporadic and variable across campus. Our hope is that this report will serve to stimulate a campus-wide discussion of and commitment to mentorship. Toward that end, this report is divided into three parts:

1. The functions of a mentor.
2. Mentorship Best Practices.
3. Enhancing mentoring on the Carolina campus.

1. The Functions of a Mentor

(a) Developing an academic identity and a body of scholarship

While it is the unit head's responsibility to inform junior faculty members of the steps, deadlines and paperwork required in the promotion and tenure process and to clearly convey the unit's performance expectations, a mentor goes beyond this basic advising function to assist the junior faculty member in developing an academic identity and a coherent research, teaching, engagement and service agenda. In other words, a mentor

helps a junior faculty member learn how to weave his or her research, teaching, engagement and service into a coherent whole, thereby identifying a clear path to promotion and tenure.

(b) Introduction to the institutional culture

Every organization has both formal and informal structures, written and unwritten standards and expectations, which together comprise the institutional culture. Formal promotion and tenure structures include the written tenure regulations, the number of external letters required, and the process through which teaching is evaluated. Informal promotion and tenure structures include such things as what activities dominate the tenure decision, the weight placed on external letters, and whether it is wise to chair committees before tenure. Mentors can be invaluable in helping junior faculty understand the informal structures within the University and their academic units. Indeed, an appreciation of the institutional culture and the ethos that guide and define acceptable behavior and actions both within the University and across the profession can be the difference between promotion and termination.

Any successful senior faculty member who has some sense of the institution and involvement in the profession can help junior faculty understand the informal structures. The most important factor is the experienced professor's willingness to spend time with the junior faculty member. Chairs and deans can play a role in the process, but sometimes the unit head's outlooks and preferences are an integral part of the institutional culture with which the junior faculty member must become familiar, and a different voice is needed to provide perspective. Since junior faculty must be able to work with the chair or dean to be successful, other senior faculty, perhaps even faculty from outside the department or school, may be better situated to help assistant professors understand internal issues.

(c) Networking and establishing linkages

Exposure to positive, career-building opportunities at the right time is crucial to success in academia. Guiding young faculty to the correct individuals and resources, both locally and nationally, is an important service that can help ensure a successful career start for a faculty member. In addition to promoting participation in disciplinary meetings and activities, a mentor can encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary involvement when the benefits for tenure and promotion are clear.

2. Mentorship Best Practices

The chair or dean has the responsibility to ensure that all junior faculty develop clear plans leading to promotion and tenure.

- The chair or dean should provide all junior faculty, in writing, with a timetable showing when reviews will occur and what steps the junior faculty member must take to succeed at each review stage.

- The chair or dean should convey to the junior faculty member, in writing, what the department's or school's expectations are for a successful third-year and tenure-promotion review in the faculty member's discipline or field.
- The chair or dean is responsible for ensuring all paperwork is complete and deadlines met.

The chair or dean is responsible for creating an organizational culture that encourages junior and senior faculty to develop mentoring relationships and rewards effective mentorship. Each department or school should have a mentoring plan. Among the elements that a mentorship plan might include are:

- Informal opportunities for junior and senior faculty members to interact with and get to know one another, such as coffees and lunches, to pave the way for development of mentoring relationships.
- A faculty research venue in which both junior and senior faculty members present their work in progress and share research ideas.
- Writing groups among the faculty, small groups of faculty members who meet regularly to share what they have written, critique one another's work, offer each other advice, guidance and encouragement.
- Periodic teaching colloquia at which faculty are brought together to discuss issues related to effective teaching and/or explore new ideas and teaching techniques.
- A plan for regular peer teaching reviews of junior faculty by senior faculty.
- Junior faculty development workshops, addressing such issues as how to get funding, write grant proposals, select an appropriate journal or publisher for your work, obtain invitations to speak at conferences, etc.
- Sessions for senior faculty that focus on how to be a mentor, what constitutes successful mentorship, the value of mentorship for junior faculty members, senior faculty members, and the institution.
- Recognition of and rewards for mentoring, e.g., recognizing mentoring as important departmental service, establishment of a mentor-of-the-year award, recognition of a mentor's contributions when acknowledging the success of a junior faculty member (similar to the way in which dissertation advisors are recognized).

Ultimately the success of a mentoring relationship depends on the commitment of the individuals involved. A good mentor does some or all of the following:

- Meet regularly with his or her mentee.
- Act as an advocate for the mentee.
- Assist the mentee in developing a professional plan of action.
- Provide advice and support on grant-writing and publication.
- Introduce the mentee to colleagues both on and off campus.
- Invite the mentee to collaborate on projects that might result in publication and/or grants or paves the way for the mentee to collaborate with others.
- Provide teaching advice and guidance, volunteer to observe the mentee's classes and provide feedback, share teaching materials, invite the mentee to serve on graduate and/or undergraduate honors committees.

- Make sure the mentee is aware of the many resources available on campus, such as the Center for Faculty Excellence, the Provost's Website with critical promotion and tenure information, junior faculty development grants, etc.
- Recommend the mentee for activities that will help him or her establish a national reputation, such as speaking at conferences and participating in symposia workshops.
- Help the mentee determine which types of service activities are best to undertake at each stage of his or her career.
- Assist the mentee in identifying colleagues at other institutions who might eventually serve as external reviewers for promotion and/or tenure.
- Provide advice on the composition and compilation of the mentee's promotion and tenure dossier.

3. Recommendations

(a) Gathering information

The first step in improving the mentoring environment on campus should be to gather data about the current state of mentoring. The results of the 2005-07 COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey of job satisfaction among junior faculty, indicated room for improvement in the quality and availability of mentoring on the UNC campus. A new survey of assistant professors in their fourth and/or fifth years — more detailed and targeted than COACHE survey — would be useful in ascertaining not only what the mentoring environment is on campus but also what the mentoring expectations and needs of junior faculty are. Alternative sources of mentoring information might come from focus groups or interviews with junior faculty.

Recommendation: A survey of junior faculty (perhaps those in their fourth or fifth year) should be conducted to determine what is the mentorship environment on campus as well as to identify the mentoring needs and expectations of junior faculty.

(b) Improving mentorship

Junior faculty rely on their department chairs and school deans for information and guidance about tenure and promotion procedures, and the department chair's letter is one of the most important parts of the tenure dossier. Consequently, unit heads should receive guidance on tenure and promotion practices and procedures and how to present effective promotion and tenure dossiers. In addition, chairs and deans should receive guidance on how to create a culture of mentorship within their units, develop a mentorship plan and reward mentorship. The existence and effectiveness of a departmental mentorship plan should be part of the chair's regular evaluation.

Effective mentoring requires widespread faculty commitment and effort. Consequently, campus-wide mentorship awareness and training are needed. The Center of Faculty Excellence may be the appropriate entity to undertake this effort. Workshops, panel discussions, written materials, and online training and discussion boards are just a few of the vehicles that might be used. Deans and chairs should be encouraged to devote a portion of the first faculty meeting of each academic year to a discussion of mentorship.

New faculty orientation, at both the university and unit level, should include discussion of the need for and functions of mentoring. New faculty must be urged to seek out and develop strong relationships with mentors of their choice.

Recommendation: Regular workshops on how to prepare a promotion and tenure package and how to encourage and ensure mentoring of junior faculty should be provided for all department chairs and school deans.

Recommendation: Each academic unit should have a mentorship plan in place.

Recommendation: Campus-wide mentorship programs and workshops for senior faculty should be provided.

(c) Rewards

Mentorship should be recognized as an important aspect of departmental service. Tenured faculty should view mentoring as part of their service obligation. Mechanisms for recognizing and awarding outstanding mentoring should also be created. The Faculty Mentoring Award, given since 2006 by the Carolina Women's Leadership Council, is a great start but needs to be supplemented by other awards and recognitions, both on a campus and departmental or school level. Just as all Ph.D. graduates in a given year are invited to nominate their doctoral advisors for the Graduate School's Faculty Award for Excellence in Doctoral Mentoring, all faculty members tenured during an academic year could be invited to nominate senior faculty who mentored them for recognition.

Recommendation: Faculty members should list their mentoring activities as part of their departmental or school service.

Recommendation: Mentoring awards should be instituted by the University, College, schools and departments.