Ensuring Effective Faculty Mentoring: Tips for Chairs

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Agenda

Group Discussion: Mentoring in Your Department

Mentoring: Benefits, Models, Mechanics, and Best Practices

Developing a Mentor Program

Your Mentor Profile

Mentoring Dilemmas

"Successful mentors view the act of mentoring as an opportunity for thoughtful reflection and personal growth."

- Enz, 1992

Enz, B. J. (1992) Guidelines for selecting mentors and creating an environment for mentoring. In T. Bey and C. Holmes (Eds.) *Mentoring: Contemporary Principles and Issues*. Reston, VA: Association of Teachers Educators.

What Role Does Mentoring Play in Your Department ?

- What does mentoring look like in your department? What would you like it to look like?

- As a faculty member-turned-chair, how (if at all) has your thinking about faculty mentoring changed?

- How has mentoring changed since you were a new faculty member?

- What is the most important lesson you have learned as a mentor that you would like to pass on?

Facts about Faculty Mentoring

Compared to non-mentored faculty, formally mentored faculty experience :

- Higher levels of job satisfaction
- Better student evaluations
- Greater academic productivity
- More promotions
- Report greater commitment to their institution and greater commitment to their profession
- Stronger likelihood of remaining at the institution
- Greater likelihood to mentors others in the future

(Johnson, 2007; Cartwright, 2008)

And yet, how does mentoring often happen?

- Sporadically – *haphazard communication*
- Informally – *little accountability or expectations*
- Inconsistently – *great mentoring → no mentoring*
- Partially – *meeting only some needs*
- Transitory – *relationships fizzle and end*
- Fuzzy expectations – *lack of ground rules*
- Unrecognized – *little formal or informal recognition*

Why is it Important?

- **The Academy Today**
  - Working longer hours
  - Increasingly competitive scholarly climate
  - Increasing expectations about teaching & service
  - Changing expectations about balancing life and work
  - Faculty diversity is increasing
  - Focus on multi- and interdisciplinary scholarship
- **Recruitment & Retention Tool**
  - Important perk, especially in this economic climate
  - Informal networks wield great power
  - Isolation is a key contributor to attrition

Models and Types of Mentors

- One-to-one
- Multiple Mentors
- Group or Peer Mentors
- Mentor Networks
- Expert Mentor Teams
- "Synergistic" Mentoring
- E-mentors or paper mentors

Mentors Should: Be Available, Share Knowledge, Be Supportive, Provide Networks, Listen

- **Career guidance and advocacy**
  - Research, teaching, service → workload balance, priorities
  - T&P process
  - Grants, publications
  - Access to resources
  - Establish professional networks and collaborations
  - Advocate and protect
- **Organizational**
  - Navigating university systems
  - Share "local knowledge"
  - Help settling in
  - Promote mentoring within department
  - Instill a sense of citizenship
- **Psychosocial**
  - Offer support, advice, sympathetic ear, sounding board
  - Work-life integration
  - Establish social and community networks
  - Be a role model
  - Develop trust

Some things to consider . . .

- Sociocultural assumptions
- Underrepresented or "solo" faculty
- Tokenism/generalization
- Care giving responsibilities
- Harassment and discrimination
- Status/power differences
- Diversity in scholarship, talents, styles, and career paths

Gender
Race, ethnicity
Age
Sexual orientation
Disability

10 Components of a Great Mentor Program

1. **Visible, overt, regular communication from leadership that good mentoring is a department priority**

2. **Formal program management**

3. **Thoughtful mentor matching at hire, and prior to arrival on campus**

4. **Multiple mentors, one outside department, until T&P decision**

5. **Provision for training of mentors**

6. **Provision for training of junior faculty (mentees)**

7. **Opportunities for junior faculty to network/meet as a group**

8. **Opportunities to check on success of mentoring relationships for every junior faculty, and re-assign/augment, etc., as needed**

9. **Evaluation of program as a whole on a regular basis**

10. **Provision of formal recognition, acknowledgment, awards, etc., for mentoring**

1.

Communication from leadership that mentoring is a priority.

- Be diligent about mentor assignments
- Establish a formal policy and guidelines
- Provide resources and incentives!!
- Acknowledge work of mentors
- Host social gatherings
- Encourage departmental mentoring as a way to increase social capital
- Foster a culture of mentoring - normalize mentoring in the department – resist the deficit model
- Be a role model - have a mentor (peer?) yourself

- Mentoring is the intangible benefit
- Otherwise slippage is inevitable
- Designated person or committee to:
  - Manage
  - assign,
  - check-in and re-assign
  - ensure training occurs
  - Plan gatherings
  - acknowledge efforts of mentors

3.

Thoughtful mentor matching at hire, prior to arrival.

- Automatic process – not voluntary
- Who assigns? Search committee? Chair? FAN?
- Assessing individual faculty needs – ask!
- Contact prior to arrival on campus, and immediately upon arrival

4.

- Few people are a "one-man-band"
- Less is not more
- Cross disciplinary/department exposure is helpful
- One year is NOT ENOUGH ! Remember going through the tenure process?

5.

- Few people are natural mentors
- See Slide 5!
- Annual workshop, tutorial and/or handbook
- Occasional informal gatherings to compare notes
- Occasional informal gatherings with mentees

6.

Learning to be a good mentees:

- Initiating behaviors (motivation to engage/disengage)
- "Coachability" (willingness to learn and use advice)
- Competencies (clarity of goals, communication style)

People don't know what they don't know, and may be hesitant to ask

Expectations of a mentoring relationship

7. Opportunities for junior faculty to network as a group

- Informal networks are extremely valuable
- Junior faculty are very busy and may tend to isolate themselves
- Shared local knowledge
- Shared challenges
- Opportunities for collaboration

- Mentoring relationships should not be left on their own (see Slide 5!)

- After first semester, and one year

- Be wary of silence or quick answers

- Informal, face-to-face conversations – "chats" - very important as subtle issues rise to the surface

- Suggest additional mentors rather than ditching ineffective one

- Stress no-fault policy – be *ready* to mediate or finesse

Regular program evaluation

- Accountability, Accountability, Accountability,
- Be careful of self-perception bias (differences in satisfaction in relationship between mentors and mentees)
- Formal evaluation campus-wide is best
- Short survey or topic at department meeting annually

10.

- Mentoring should not be a thankless job

- Formal service contribution

- Partial course release, stipend, etc.

- Verbal acknowledgement, pat on the back

- Elevate mentoring to a high status activity

Your Mentor Profile

. . . Or, if you prefer these categories:

- I am really skilled and comfortable with this and I can do it just fine
- I am really skilled and comfortable with this, but I have to admit I don't think to do it enough
- I know something about this, but I could learn a little more
- This is an area I'm not really knowledgeable about
- This is an area I'm not comfortable talking about
- What other people can I suggest to help address this?

Thank You.
Questions?

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