

Faculty Mentoring: Considerations for Rising Faculty



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Agenda

Group Discussion: What Does Mentoring Mean to You?

Mentoring Models, Mechanics, and Best Practices

Assessing Your Needs

Pitfalls and Special Considerations

“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.

Although we may have an intuitive sense about what defines a good mentoring relationship, engaging in a more structured analysis is likely a valuable activity for both mentors and junior faculty. This workshop provides an opportunity to:

- Share your experiences and concerns
- Concretely identify your particular mentoring preferences or needs as a junior faculty member
- Know what you, as a mentee, are entitled to expect, and what is expected from you
- Consider ways to improve your mentoring relationships, if necessary

What Does Mentoring Mean to You?

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- How well are faculty mentored now in your department?
- What makes an ideal mentor?
- What topics do/would you discuss with your mentor? What ones don't you discuss?
- What are your needs and expectations of your mentor and the relationship?

Facts about Faculty Mentoring

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

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

(and one Myth: mentoring comes naturally)

(Johnson, 2007; Cartwright, 2008)

Why is it Important?

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- Increasingly competitive scholarly climate
- Increasing expectations about teaching & service
- Increasing challenges in balancing life/family and work
- Learning curve can be drastically reduced
- Faculty diversity is increasing
- Greater focus on multi- and interdisciplinary scholarship
- Informal networks wield great power
- Isolation is a key contributor to attrition

And yet, how does mentoring often happen?

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- Sporadically – *haphazard communication*
- Informally – *little training or accountability*
- 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*

Qualities to Strive For

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What Makes a Good Mentee?

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

What Makes a Good Mentor?

- Availability (proactive communication, approachability, TIME)
- Knowledge Sharing (across many areas, informal and formal)
- Support/Guidance (interest, acceptance, respect, advocacy, advice)
- Networking (ongoing - social, professional)

Johnson, W. B. (2007). *On being a mentor – A guide for higher education faculty*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

Be Available, Share Knowledge, Be Supportive, Provide Networks, Listen

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- **Career guidance and advocacy**
 - Research, teaching, service → workload balance, priorities
 - Tenure and promotion 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

Mentee Expectation Workshee

Adapted from A Curriculum for Training Mentors and Mentees Brainard, Harkus and St. George

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The reasons I want a mentor are to:

Receive encouragement and support from more senior faculty

Increase my confidence

Challenge myself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives

Gain a realistic perspective of the academic workplace

Get advice on how to balance work and other responsibilities and set priorities

Gain knowledge of the unwritten “do’s and don’ts”

Network

Other reasons I want a mentor: _____

I want my mentor and me to:

Tour my mentor’s labs/facilities, learn about my mentor’s projects/activities

Go to formal mentoring events

Meet over coffee, lunch, or dinner

Go to educational events such as lectures, talks, documentaries

Go to local professional meetings

Other activities I want to do with my mentor: _____

I hope my mentor and I will discuss:

Academic activities that will most benefit my future career

Promotion and tenure preparation

The realities of the academic workplace



My mentor's work

Collaboration with my mentor's research group and potential contributions to his/her funded grants

How to network

How to manage work and family life

Other topics I hope to discuss with my mentor: _____

The things I feel are off limits in my mentoring relationship include:

Going to restaurants to meet

Using non-public places for meeting

Sharing private aspects of our lives

Meeting behind closed doors

Other situations or topics that I feel are confidential or off-limits with my mentor: _____

I hope that my mentor will help me with professional advancement by:

Creating opportunities for my advancement

Introducing me to people who might be helpful to my advancement

Helping me prepare for tenure/promotion

Suggesting potential professional contacts for me to pursue on my own

Critiquing my proposals/tenure packet

Other ways to help me advance professionally: _____

The amount of time I can spend with my mentor will be, on average: _____

Some things to consider . . .

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- 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

Stages of Mentoring Relationship

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1. **Initiation** → *mutual screening*
2. **Cultivation** → *confidence builds, professional identity, career optimism*
3. **Separation** → *less dependent*
4. **Redefinition** → *may evolve into collaboration, less contact*

Relationship Mechanics at Initiation

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- **Assess your needs and the strengths of your mentor**
 - why have you been matched together?
- **Assess your own stereotypes and implicit biases**
 - Self-sabotaging - Race, gender, age, ability, discipline, power status, neediness
- **Define your roles and establish rules of engagement**
 - what is the imagined length, depth, and breadth of your relationship?
- **Establish a specific plan for regular communication**
- **Agree on an assessment strategy for your relationship**
 - Take the temperature regularly
 - Agree on a no-fault plan for changing or adding mentors

Questions and Pitfalls

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- How do you find a mentor?
- What do you do if it doesn't work out?
- How long do you sustain the relationship?
- What if your mentor is paternalistic? Condescending? Doesn't listen? Unavailable?
- What if your mentor is younger than you?
- How do you decline advice?
- What if you "drop the ball" with your mentor?
- What if you feel like you are "bothering" your mentor?
- How do you thank your mentor?

URI ADVANCE Program Faculty Mentor Online Tutorial:
http://www.uri.edu/advance/MentorTutorial/mentoring_introduction.html

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Thank you.
Questions?

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