

Faculty Mentoring Document

School of Social Policy and Practice University of Pennsylvania

Introduction

Our mentoring of junior faculty takes place in a school with 24 standing faculty, without a departmental structure. This document is prepared in conjunction with the SP2 Faculty handbook which outlines our policies and practices.

The School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2) is committed to ensuring that junior faculty are mentored in a way that supports their professional development and helps them achieve their goals in the pursuit of a successful academic career.

This includes achieving an appropriate balance between research teaching and service. It is, however, the responsibility of each junior faculty member to avail of this mentorship opportunity and recognize that each faculty member is responsible for compiling a record of their own scholarship and teaching that merits promotion.

The purpose in mentoring is to provide mentees with

- information about campus resources and facilities
- information and introduction to staff and senior administrative faculty
- opportunities for interactions with senior faculty to facilitate mutual respect and to help foster a sense of community
- knowledge of the unique organizational cultures and understandings of work responsibilities related to teaching, advising, service, etc.
- guidance on balancing commitments to research, teaching, and service
- guidance regarding the policies on promotion and tenure norms

Practices and Policies

1. Newly Hired Assistant Professors

Mentoring of new faculty constitutes an important component in the orientation of faculty members to the life and responsibilities of the University and shall begin immediately upon the appointment of a new faculty member to the Standing Faculty. Thus, SP2 takes seriously its responsibility to provide a formal mechanism for introducing new assistant professors and other untenured and tenured professors at other academic ranks to Penn, its expectations as an institution, and to the School's and the University's rich diversity of human and other resources. To that end, the following policies will guide the selection and appointment of mentors and mentees as well as the responsibilities that are incumbent upon each.

- All faculty hired into the Standing Faculty as untenured Assistant Professors, in consultation with the Dean and the faculty member, is matched by the Chair of the Personnel Committee with a colleague-mentor within one month following the commencement of the new academic year in which the mentee takes up employment at Penn. The match of mentor and mentee is based minimally on the teaching and scholarly interests of the newly hired faculty member and the faculty mentor. In all cases, every effort is to be made to match faculty mentor and mentee as closely as possible based on at least their shared areas of research and teaching interests, administrative responsibilities, or other appropriate criteria.
- Faculty mentors are asked to hold an initial informal meeting with the newly hired faculty member within the first month of the academic year. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the content of the newly hired faculty member's teaching assignments, programs of research, planned or potential scholarly activities (e.g., planned, or potential submission of scholarly articles, planned submissions of proposals for external funding applications, course design, and organization). The faculty mentor also is expected to provide advice concerning the existence of various internal (Penn) and external (local, national, and international) networks and resources of potential use to the mentee in beginning his or her academic career.
- Following the initial meeting, the mentor and mentee then decide on an appropriate schedule of follow-up meetings. At a minimum, such meetings should occur at regular intervals in order to provide ample opportunities for the mentee and mentor to discuss proposed papers and other manuscripts for publications as well as the general substance of and submission plans for research grant applications. These meetings also provide the mentor and mentee the opportunity to discuss other aspects of the academic life of particular interest to the mentee.
- If deemed appropriate by either the mentee or the mentor, or both, either party in the relationship may request the Chair of the Personnel Committee to assign a new mentor to the faculty member based on interests or areas of specializations. These requests will be honored without prejudice to either the mentor or mentee and are understood to reflect a clearer understanding of the changing learning and/or support needs of the mentee.
- At the time of the 3-year review, the mentor is expected to make a presentation to the faculty regarding the faculty member's progress. If specific resources are needed to enhance the faculty member's teaching, scholarship, or service, they are discussed as part of the 3-year review.
- To ensure that the mentoring relationship is meeting the expectations of both parties, the Chair of the Personnel Committee will confer annually with both the mentor and the mentee to ensure that a "goodness of fit" in the match continues to exist.
- Once identified, faculty mentor-mentee relationships at the Assistant Professor levels are formalized by the Dean.

2. Newly Hired Associate and Full Professors With or Without Tenure

The mentoring needs of experienced faculty members, with or without tenure, differ appreciably

from faculty who are new to university life. As such and based on the needs of individual new faculty members, tenured and untenured Associate and Full professors are encouraged to identify an experienced faculty member within the School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) to serve as a mentor. The identification of a mentor should take place early in the appointment process and, in every case, should be completed by not later than the 2 or 3 months of the faculty member's appointment. The Chair of the Personnel Committee may facilitate the mentee-mentor matching process.

The support functions of the faculty mentors with experienced faculty members are four-fold:

- a. To provide insight into the structure, policies, and general organization of Penn. This orientation is to be provided during the new faculty members' first month of employment at the university and is the responsibility of the Dean or the Dean's designate.
- b. To introduce the new faculty member to the rich array of human and fiscal resources that exist within both the School and the University, especially those resources related to the faculty members' areas of research and teaching interest.
- c. When appropriate, to initiate introductions of the mentee to faculty members in other Schools, departments, and other units of the University whose areas of research and or teaching interest bears directly on those of the newly appointed faculty member.
- d. The new faculty member may request the mentor to offer guidance concerning course design, grant proposal development, article and book preparation, and related professional activities at the local, national, and international levels.

Faculty mentors also shall be available to assist newly hired Associate and Full Professors with such other professional matters as seem appropriate to both parties, e.g., manuscript preparation and development, grant proposal preparation and development, course design and organization, and so on. Once identified, faculty mentor-mentee relationships at the Associate and Full Professor levels will be formalized in writing by the Dean.

To ensure that the mentoring relationship is meeting the expectations of both parties, the Chair of the Personnel Committee confers annually with both mentee and mentor to ensure that a "goodness of fit" in the match continues to exist. If deemed desirable by either the mentee or the mentor, or both, either party in the relationship may request the Chair of the Personnel Committee to assign a new mentor to the faculty member based on changing interests or areas of specializations. These requests will be honored without prejudice to either the mentor or mentee and are understood to reflect a clearer understanding of the learning and/or support needs of the mentee.