

Guidelines for the Wharton School Faculty Mentoring Program

The primary objective of the Wharton School's faculty mentoring program for junior faculty is to provide an environment that supports their professional development. The mentoring program is not focused narrowly on achieving tenure at the Wharton School, but rather is intended to help promote aspects of the faculty member's professional development that include concerns of junior faculty regarding teaching and research activities, outreach, career aspirations, establishing an appropriate balance between teaching, research and service and adjusting to a new environment. The Faculty Mentoring Program is intended to complement all other means of support provided by the department/school that is separate from the performance evaluation process.

Program Oversight

The Deputy Dean will be responsible for overall management of the faculty mentoring program throughout the School. Information about the mentoring program will be given to each incoming faculty member at the new faculty orientation. Each September, the department chair will submit a list of all junior faculty and their mentors to the deputy dean's office for the next academic year. The department chair will also be asked to report on the mentorship relationships in their departments and comment on how well they are functioning.

The Responsibility of the Department Chair

The department chair has overall responsibility for the success of the faculty mentoring process within their unit. The department chair must assign one senior faculty mentor to each new junior faculty member, and the junior faculty member should be consulted regarding potential mentors.

Selecting the Mentor

While more than one mentor may be selected for a particular junior faculty member, for the School's reporting purposes, one of these mentors must be designated the primary mentor for a particular year. The primary mentor must be at the rank of associate professor with tenure or above. Usually the faculty mentor is a member of the junior faculty's department, but the mentor may be chosen from among other faculty if more appropriate based on the junior faculty member's needs and interests.

Though not ideal, department chairs may be the most suitable match to serve as mentor for a particular junior faculty member. Additionally, a faculty member may become department chair during the course of a successful mentorship pairing. As noted below, junior faculty members should be encouraged to contact the deputy dean's office should issues arise with the mentoring relationship. The deputy dean's office will reach out to junior faculty whose mentor is the department chair to reinforce this message.

The Responsibility of the Mentor

The mentor should be accessible to the junior faculty member and meet with him/her on a regular basis over at least the first two years. The mentor should provide advice to the junior faculty member on issues relevant to developing an academic career such as teaching, research and committee work or be able to direct the new faculty member to appropriate individuals. The mentor should treat all dealings and discussions in confidence. The mentor should provide supportive guidance and constructive feedback.

The Responsibility of the Junior Faculty Member

Ultimately, the junior faculty member is responsible for her/his own professional development. Mentors can provide advice, but the junior faculty member has to, in the final analysis, sort through the information and make his/her own decisions. Furthermore, the mentor is not the sole resource available for advice, but other resources such as the junior faculty member's department chair and the deputy dean are available as well. The mentor is one among many resources available to the junior faculty member.

Changing Mentors

Mentors may be changed either to provide a variety of perspectives and relationships to a junior faculty or due to a changing sense of appropriate fit. In cases of incompatibility, or where the relationship is not mutually fulfilling, either the junior faculty member or the mentor should seek confidential advice from her/his chair. It is important to realize that changes can and should be made without prejudice or fault. The junior faculty member, in any case, should be encouraged to seek out additional mentors as the need arises. The junior faculty member is also encouraged to confer with the deputy dean if the mentorship relationship is not meeting her/his needs or expectations.