

***Ad Hoc* Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee Report to the Faculty**

Proposal

The Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee is recommending that the Dean establish a standing faculty committee, the Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee, devoted to addressing junior faculty's needs for: (1) information, (2) resources, (3) accountability, and (4) counsel to realize their own, as well as the University's, highest aspirations in research, teaching and service. The standing faculty committee members would be recommended by the faculty at large based on the faculty's recognition of their unique talents to serve on this committee. The Dean would consider faculty recommendations and appoint the committee. The following outlines the work of the *Ad Hoc* Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee and provides more details regarding the substance of this proposal.

Committee Charge

The Charge of Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee (JFMC) was as follows:

The Ad Hoc Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee is charged with bringing to the faculty for consideration a proposal to establish a formal mentoring program to serve junior faculty members at GSE. The purpose of this program is to provide junior faculty members with constructive support and guidance from senior colleagues to allow them to realize their own, as well as the University's, highest aspirations in research, teaching and service.

To carry out this charge the JFMC set out to accomplish four major tasks:

1. Identify the essential 'what's' and 'how's' of a GSE Junior Faculty Mentoring Program.
2. Seek input from the Faculty and Executive Committee.
3. Formulate a draft proposal for review by the Faculty
4. Revise draft proposal and submit to faculty for final consideration in 2007.

Essential Elements of Support and Guidance

The JFMC identified four major categories of support and guidance that would constitute the substance of the GSE Junior Faculty Mentoring program. These included: (1) essential information, (2) standard package of concrete school resources, (3) accountability, and (4) counsel. Committee deliberation, input received from faculty surveys, and discussions with the Executive Committee yielded the following proposed items to include under each category:

Essential Information

- Information about University, School, Program policies/practices related to research, teaching/advising, and service (e.g. IRB, student handbook, teaching evaluations)

- Information about University and School resources that can be accessed to maximize the new faculty member's performance related to research and teaching (e.g., training, awards).
- Information/orientation about general Human Resources issues (e.g., family or medical leaves).
- Clear presentation of the expectations and criteria for tenure and promotion including time tables and deadlines. This process should be made explicit and include essential documents from the faculty handbook.

Standard Package of Standard Resources

- Standard office with bookcase and lateral file.
- Choice of standard computer equipment provided through the university.
- 20 hour/week RA for the AY through tenure decision.
- Reduction of one course in the first year of teaching
- One semester academic leave provided after first 3 year review
- Start up research fund approximately \$5,000

Accountability

- Develop a standard annual progress review in conjunction with the Dean for annual self-evaluation. This would include:
 - Provide junior faculty with a standard format for their written annual self-evaluation.
 - Provide feedback on their self-evaluation reports.
- The provision of annual feedback should recognize that scholars come to GSE with different disciplinary orientations. Therefore, feedback on productivity should be appropriate to the expectations for evaluating the contribution of a scholar in a given discipline.
- Encourage the Faculty Personnel Committee to develop a standard format for providing feedback to junior faculty after their reappointment review reflecting the recommendations of their Faculty Reappointment Committee.

Counsel

- Encourage junior faculty to set realistic short-term and long-term goals and objectives for research, teaching, and service and provide them with feedback.
- Identify potential GSE and Penn colleagues to network with to facilitate goal attainment.

- Identify their need to access school and university resources in addition to the standard package of resources provided to facilitate goal attainment.
- Provide proactive guidance on resources for and expectations regarding external support for research.
- Provide guidance on appropriate expectations for publication, given their discipline including the guidance on the relative merits of books, refereed articles, monographs, etc.
- Provide a context to discuss questions about norms/customs (oral history/traditions).
- Identify and problem solve any impediments to progress that arise particularly with respect to any activities involving the life of the school (e.g., development of new programs or consultations) that threaten planned time devoted to scholarship and teaching.
- Provide a venue for junior faculty to respond to and evaluate junior mentoring programs in both a corporate and individual voice – including encouraging their representation on the Executive Committee and encouraging their meeting as a group providing mentoring and counsel to each other.

Method for Providing Essential Elements of Support and Guidance

Prior to considering viable “how” options, the JFMC developed a purpose statement and a set of criteria to guide its deliberations.

‘How’ Purpose Statement:

The purpose of the How part of JFMC’s proposal is to identify viable, sustainable mechanisms that will make the provision of the essential elements of support and guidance an intentional, systematic, and dependable part of the Graduate School of Education. We want to avoid an *ad hoc* process that is ambiguous, idiosyncratic and relies too much on individual junior faculty to create the structure and advocate for their needs.

Criteria Used to Consider the Best ‘How’ Options:

The following criteria reflect the high value that the GSE Faculty place on providing support and assistance to junior faculty to help them maximize their contribution to GSE, Penn, and Education.

- It will be commissioned by the Dean and centralized to ensure equity.
- The mechanism will provide reliable, consistent, and sustainable services to our junior faculty across the years.
- The services provided will be overseen and administered by tenured faculty.
- Faculty providing these services will have recognized talents to provide these services as judged by the faculty at large.

- Faculty providing these services will be aware of the concerns and needs of the entire group of junior faculty and therefore can represent these concerns to the Dean and faculty at large.
- Faculty who are providing these services are doing so as part of recognized 'load' and contribution to the faculty as charged by the Dean (not extra).
- It will provide junior faculty with a means of offering constructive suggestions to the Dean for improvement of the support they receive through this mechanism (i.e., it provides a means of checks and balances and annual evaluation).

The JFMC carefully considered three options before it made its decision. The three that were considered are:

1. Dean & Dean's staff
2. Standing Faculty Committee dedicated to Junior Faculty Members, whose members are recommended to serve by the standing faculty and commissioned by the Dean.
3. Individual Senior Faculty Mentor selected by the Dean and the junior faculty member to serve the junior faculty member through the tenure decision process .

Of these three options, the JFMC unanimously agreed that the Standing Faculty Committee (SFC) would best fit the above purpose and criteria. A SFC would have the following advantages over the other two options:

- Centralized standing committee of senior faculty would reflect well GSE's Faculty commitment to Junior Faculty.
- Faculty serving on this committee would possess a combination of talents (i.e., source of information, awareness of resources, accountability, and counsel), assessed by the faculty at large and the Dean, that would well serve the junior faculty.
- Individual faculty members will be assigned as mentors, but the SFC could oversee the mentoring program and evaluate its operation annually.
- A SFC would be a sustainable means of providing a stable structure across time to serve junior faculty. Faculty could be rotated on and off the committee without a reduction in the quality of services provided by the committee.
- SFC would provide a sound mechanism for supporting the corporate voice of junior faculty. It would provide them with a forum as a group to discuss issues and seek counsel.
- SFC would provide checks and balances that would allow junior faculty an annual opportunity to evaluate the services that SFC provides.