

# Best Mentoring Practices for Princeton Academic Departments

## SCHOOLS/DEPARTMENTS

- **Clearly articulate career priorities and expectations for faculty that mentorship programs will address**

- Develop independent scholarship /research productivity
- Develop important professional networks
- Provide guidance regarding the determinants (both formal and informal) essential for academic advancement in that unit
- Support teaching performance
- Proactively recognize and mitigate factors that disproportionately deter the advancement of women and underrepresented minority faculty
- Identify whether additional psychosocial aspects of mentoring will be addressed by departmentally facilitated programs

\*School/departmental programs should aim, at minimum, to provide technical career support but may also facilitate psychosocial support

- **Identify mentoring-models most feasible for the unit**

- Senior-junior dyads
- Group seminars
- Peer or near peer mentoring
- Demographically based peer groups
- Sponsorship
- Coaching

- **Identify the structure and resources needed**

- Mentorship training for senior faculty
- Departmental reward for mentoring work
- Curriculum and facilitators for group programs

- Facilitation of peer, near peer, or group meetings and demographically focused groups
- Establish meeting parameters (i.e., frequency of meetings; content; record keeping)
- Determine tools and skills needed by mentors
- Determine tools and skills needed by mentees

- **Identify and articulate roles and responsibilities**

- Define specific expectations for each kind of mentoring relationship
- Define and communicate individual and shared responsibilities of mentors and mentees
- Communicate expectations surrounding deliverables and measures of progress for department, mentor, and mentee

- **Establishing Oversight, Evaluation, and Sustainability**

- Identify metrics that the unit will use for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of mentoring programs and relationships (i.e., mentee/mentor satisfaction, specific scholarly product delivery, promotion)
- Establish methodology to assure that needs of mentors and mentees are met
- Assess junior faculty satisfaction with the quality and quantity of mentoring
- Assess mentor satisfaction with preparation for/ support of his or her role
- Identify and provide tools and resources to ensure ongoing support
- Determine tools and skills needed and responsibilities needed by mentees
- Decide on a confidential process for mentors and mentees to voice concerns

- Decide on a confidential mechanism to resolve mentor and mentee differences

## MENTORS

- **Time Commitment:** Mentors should be able to commit to and honor the time required for meeting and advising their mentee(s).
- **Skills and Needs:** Mentors should assess their skills for mentorship and determine their developmental needs.
- **Collaboration:** Mentors should work with the mentee(s) on the development of realistic career goals and timelines for achieving those goals.
- **Scope of Guidance:** Mentors should be able to provide guidance on setting objectives, vision, and strategies for the specific scope of advising.
- **Mentoring Plan:** It is the responsibility of the mentee to provide the mentor with his or her goals, a CV, teaching portfolio, research statement, and whatever other materials will be useful in forming a mentorship plan; it is the responsibility of the mentor to collaborate with the mentee to develop attainable goals, types of guidance, and resources for developing necessary academic competencies, relationships, and measurement of progress.
- **Communication:** In order for mentorship to be most effective, both the mentee and the mentor must establish a level of trust with each other. Both should practice careful and active listening and be able to communicate respectfully and confidentially. Potential communication barriers based on race, ethnicity, culture, or background are important to consider. Mechanisms to provide constructive feedback should be thoughtfully considered.

- **Network Development:** A key role of a mentor is to help facilitate the development of academic networks.

- **Sponsorship:** Some faculty may benefit from sponsorship in addition to technical mentorship. Sponsors advocate for their mentees and use their influence to help a mentee's career advance.
- **Diversity in Mentorship:** Careful consideration of issues that may arise with mentorship across boundaries of gender/race/ethnicity/sexual orientation/culture/religion.

## MENTEES

- **Identify Needs and Interests:** Mentees should start by identifying their own needs and interests in order to create a draft of career goals and objectives. These needs and interests should be provided to the mentor, along with a draft of goals and any supporting materials (i.e., CV, research statement, teaching portfolio, individual development plan, etc.), prior to an initial meeting.
- **Active Engagement:** To ensure effective mentorship, it is essential for the mentee to be actively engaged in the mentoring relationship. This includes listening attentively, a willingness to work outside of one's "comfort zone," identifying specific developmental goals for which guidance is sought, initiation of meetings, adequate preparation for meetings, soliciting feedback and willingness to listen to feedback both positive and negative, and taking responsibility for developing scholarly independence.
- **Identify Any Gaps in Competencies/Skill Sets:** A responsible mentee will also reflect on their own activities and goals and identify gaps in competencies and/or skill sets that may be

essential to the mentee's ability to successfully attain his or her goals.

- **Setting Meeting Times and Agendas:** It is the responsibility of the mentee to set meeting times and agendas with a mentor. Though the agendas may be set collaboratively, a successful mentoring relationship requires the mentees to be respectful of the time of his or her mentor(s) and to be prepared for meetings with questions, materials, and a commitment to work hard.
- **Developing Networks:** The mentee should be actively engaged in developing a broad network of developmental relationships.

Source: Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring, Columbia University