

## Generic Mentor Guidelines

### DO:

- **Understand what the department expects of you.** Will you be helping to prepare the tenure dossier? Do you have an evaluative role or are you just there for advice and support? How formal is the relationship supposed to be? Are there any milestones that you should be taking into account?
- **Discuss expectations for the mentoring relationship in your first meeting** with the mentee. Listen for what the mentee expects, be clear on what you expect. Come to an agreement about how your relationship will work.
- **Meet once a month for the early period.** This can become less (twice a semester?) after the first or second review, IF the review showed that the mentee is progressing well. Maintaining a regular schedule is important, whether or not the mentee is doing well. It is even more important if a mentee is struggling.
- **Make sure to meet** (don't cancel meetings), even if there is no specific urgency: having regular conversations ensures that you develop a positive relationship with your mentee before there is any problem that he or she needs to discuss with you. Mentees will be more forthcoming about seeking help if they know you better.
- **Prepare a topic** for discussion for each meeting. Make sure you are discussing expectations for teaching, research and service.
- **Ask the mentee how all three areas are going at each meeting.** Do not take “fine” for an answer, but push gently for specifics. Mentees can hide behind “everything’s fine”.
- **Listen to the mentee:** what is he or she proud of? What is s/he spending time on? Is this the right place to spend time? Does s/he need to re-prioritize? Where do you hear hesitation or silence—what is the mentee not sharing?
- **Listen for personal problems** (even if you do not plan to become a ‘counselor’): Is there anything in the mentee’s personal life that may need attention or which might occasion a tenure clock stop? (personal illness, ill parents or partner, new parenthood, single parenthood etc.)
- **Offer options not advice.** Explain the pros and cons of each option. Mentees must choose their own success, and mentors who force mentees to do it “their way” are not serving junior faculty well.
- **Give specific, constructive feedback.** Mentees need not only to know what they should be doing, but how they might do it. (‘Publish more’ is a very complex activity: it has many specific steps!)
- **Help connect the mentee to the right people.** These can be other researchers in the field, editors, peers who might become collaborators, etc.
- **Encourage the mentee to get extra mentors.** They can be in other departments, at other institutions, it doesn't matter. The more mentors the better.
- **Maintain confidentiality** about issues the mentee wishes to keep confidential.

## DO NOT

- **Go it alone.** There's no reason you should know everything. Look for other people who might have solutions or answers to questions your mentee comes to you with. Be aware of all the possible resources the University has for faculty.
- **Assume the mentee is doing well** because you are not hearing from him/her and because s/he is so talented already. Silence can be the sign of a serious problem.
- **Take things personally.** Mentees come with their own personalities, their own trajectories, their own quirks. You can offer support, but do not take it personally if the mentee does not listen, listens but does not achieve, responds negatively, etc.
- **Beat yourself up:** If you have followed this checklist, and the mentee a) does not listen or b) does not get tenure, you still did what you were supposed to do. Junior faculty have to do their part too.