

## **GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING JUNIOR FACULTY IN THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

The School of Arts and Sciences regards the mentoring of junior faculty as important to the professional and personal development of junior colleagues, as well as to the School's ability to achieve its highest aspirations in research and teaching. In accordance with the University's "Mentoring Guidelines for Junior Faculty" (see appendix), the School has established the following framework for mentoring junior faculty members.

SAS is committed to ensuring that each junior faculty member has the opportunity to obtain appropriate mentoring. It is, however, the responsibility of each junior faculty member to avail him- or herself of that opportunity. In addition, junior faculty must recognize that no amount of advice from colleagues can guarantee promotion, and that ultimately the individual junior faculty member is responsible for compiling a record of scholarship and teaching that merits promotion.

### **PURPOSE**

The goal of the SAS mentoring program for junior faculty is to:

1. Monitor progress toward tenure; inform junior faculty as to what is expected of them and when
2. Provide guidance on scholarship
3. Provide guidance on teaching responsibilities
4. Discuss overall career development, including within the context of personal circumstances (e.g., family issues, level of experience in American higher education system, gender, race)

While performance is the most significant measure of effectiveness in mentoring, perception of effectiveness is important as well: junior faculty should feel that the department is looking after their interests and that they have someone to go to for advice.

### **DUTIES OF THE DEAN'S OFFICE**

Each of the School's three "divisional" associate deans is responsible for ensuring that the departments under his or her purview are in compliance with SAS mentoring guidelines. Such compliance includes confirmation that each junior faculty member has been assigned a mentor or mentors by his or department and that appropriate efforts are made to make the mentoring relationship a productive one. The associate deans will serve as a general resource for questions and will also be available to junior faculty who have a concern about some aspect of their mentoring that they do not wish to discuss with their chair.

### **DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR**

The chair is responsible for ensuring that every junior faculty member is offered mentorship by whatever means is customary in the department. It should be clear to the junior faculty member

how that mentoring will take place. The chair should also try to ensure some degree of consistency in the advice mentors give.

Upon arrival at Penn, each new junior faculty member should be informed by the chair as to who his or her mentor is. Chairs should also provide the junior faculty member with a copy of this mentoring statement and the SAS guidelines for reappointment and promotion to tenure.

It is incumbent upon the chair to ensure that a focused discussion of a junior faculty member's progress takes place at least annually, regardless of whether the chair is involved personally in the review. Mentors are required to hold such a discussion (see the section "Duties of the Mentor/s" below); in many departments the chair holds an annual meeting with each junior faculty member as well.

While mentors can provide helpful advice on personal or "life" matters, it is the responsibility of the chair to make certain that junior faculty are aware of the relevant University "family friendly" policies, particularly those affecting the tenure clock, and the corresponding application deadlines for them.

#### SELECTING A MENTOR OR MENTORS

It is understood that each department has its own custom for appointing mentors. Some designate a single mentor, while others appoint teams of two or more faculty. While there is no single formula for assigning mentors, chairs should ensure that mentorship takes into account both a junior colleagues' academic interests (i.e., the mentor should be in the same subfield or a closely related one if possible) as well as personal factors (e.g., family issues, experience at American universities, gender, race). Because it can sometimes be difficult to find a single person who meets all of these needs, and because multiple mentors can provide a variety of perspectives, many departments find a team approach to be most effective. If a suitable mentor does not exist among the faculty in one's own department, it is perfectly acceptable to appoint a mentor from another department.

Over time it may become appropriate for junior faculty to switch mentors if they find an assigned mentor personally incompatible or if their research evolves into areas where the assigned mentor is not well-versed.

#### DUTIES OF THE MENTOR/S

Mentoring can take a variety of forms, both formal and informal. Regardless of whatever informal discussions take place on a regular basis between mentor and mentee, mentors are required to have a focused discussion of the mentee's progress at least once per year. Mentoring should cover the following areas:

**Scholarship:** The emphasis should be on providing guidance about how the mentee might focus his or her energy to achieve short- and long-term career goals. Mentors can be a sounding board

as junior faculty make decisions about research strategies, the pace and quantity of publication, or the grant application process.

**Teaching:** Mentors can be helpful in reinforcing the message that teaching performance will be an important consideration in the tenure review. They may offer advice about teaching themselves or they may refer the mentee to other faculty in the department; they should also remind junior faculty about the services of the Center for Teaching and Learning. Advice on teaching can address topics such as developing courses, crafting syllabi, structuring assignments, and facilitating classroom discussion. In some departments mentors conduct classroom visits to provide informal feedback; in others junior faculty are encouraged to sit in on classes led by more experienced teachers.

**Career-Related Personal or Life Matters:** Discussion of these topics is entirely optional and should take place only when mutually agreeable to the mentor and mentee. Mentors can be a source of advice on the management of family or personal issues in relation to the mentee's career. The mentee may wish to seek out others for advice on these matters; the chair and the Dean's office can be helpful in identifying such individuals.

#### OTHER MATTERS REGARDING THE MENTEE

If the junior faculty member is not satisfied with the quality of mentoring, he or she may discuss alternatives with the department chair or a divisional associate dean.

Junior faculty will be asked to complete a survey about their mentoring as part of their Annual Report of Faculty Activity.