



Junior Faculty Mentoring Program

Policy Statement:

The Curry School of Education strives to provide an environment that supports the learning and success of our junior faculty. Their growth and contributions to the school are the foundation for our future success. Each new junior faculty member is assigned a mentor to serve as a guide and coach throughout their career. This policy lays out the mentor assignment process and the expectations of the mentor and the mentee.

Mentoring Arrangements and Responsibilities

The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, in consultation with the mentee's Department Chair, will assign each junior faculty member an official mentor whose expertise is either in the same area as that of the mentee or in a closely related field. In addition, the official mentor should possess both an interest in and the capacity for coaching the mentee on teaching, scholarship, service, professional goals, and research activities. The Associate Dean and Department Chairs will monitor these mentoring arrangements, making certain that they are operating smoothly and effectively. It is also important that junior faculty seek and receive informal and complementary forms of mentoring, whether from mid-level and senior faculty in the Curry School or other schools, from Program Coordinators, or from their own peers. Although having multiple mentors can be beneficial for junior faculty, the possibility of receiving conflicting advice may arise. In such cases, the official mentor, in consultation with the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, should ensure that such differences are resolved to the satisfaction of the mentee.

Despite the best of intentions, some mentoring relationships may not work out satisfactorily – whether from the perspective of the mentee, the mentor, or both. An unfortunate situation of this kind could be attributable to any of a number of factors, including for example: incompatible approaches to scholarship or the designing and carrying out of empirical research (i.e., despite common interests in a given field); an inability to work well together on a personal level; unexpected changes in one or the other's responsibilities, commitments, or research interests. In such cases, the mentee, the mentor, or both should seek advice and counsel from the Chair in consultation with the Associate Dean. If a change in mentors is to be made, this process should be carried out in a confidential and professional manner that minimizes if not avoids any ill will or concerns about the potential for reprisal – especially against the mentee. The Associate Dean will make contact annually with each mentor and mentee to inquire about their desire to continue with the current match, as goals, responsibilities, and priorities may shift over the course of the year or the mentee's time in Curry, thereby warranting a change in the mentor/mentee pairing.

Responsibilities of mentors. Official mentors are expected to coach the mentee on teaching, scholarship, and research activities. Responsibilities include:

- meeting with the junior faculty member at least once a semester;
- being accessible, and making time to read and review drafts of grant proposals and papers;
- offering advice, guidance, and constructive feedback in a professional and supportive manner;
- contributing to the development of a timeline and deliverables for the mentee (see details below);
- assisting the mentee in developing viable strategies for achieving his/her scholarly objectives;
- monitoring the mentee's progress in achieving the agreed upon goals and providing periodic reviews of progress;
- conducting an observation of the mentee's teaching and providing constructive feedback;
- identifying resources related to teaching supports;
- providing consultation and support on service involvement;
- reviewing and providing feedback on the annual review, pre-tenure review, and promotion materials prior to their submission;
- consulting with the Department Chair and the Associate Dean periodically to ensure proper oversight and coordination of the mentoring process.

If a mentor believes that his/her mentee is not fulfilling his/her requisite obligations, then he /she should first discuss these matters with the mentee. If the issues or problems are not resolved to the satisfaction of the mentor, then he or she should consult with the Chair, and if necessary the Associate Dean, to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to ameliorate the situation. The mentors' role is one of coach and support, not as a critical evaluator in the reappointment, promotion, or accountability process. They are, however, encouraged to provide direct feedback to their mentees on their progress toward goals, fulfillment of responsibilities, and overall trajectory toward promotion. Official mentors should also list the names of their mentees in their annual reports, and in addition, should delineate the ways in which they have mentored these individuals.

Finally, the responsibilities of official mentors should count toward service. Mentors are eligible to receive travel funds or some other form of recompense from the Dean's Office in recognition of the importance of their service.

Responsibilities of mentees. Junior faculty should prepare documentation of their teaching, research, scholarly plans, and progress when meeting with their mentors as per the designated timelines and deliverables described below. If a mentee feels that his/her official mentor is not providing adequate oversight of and support for these documented efforts, he/she should report these concerns to the Chair or the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development. Appropriate steps will be taken by the Chair or Associate Dean to ameliorate the situation to the satisfaction of the mentee. If the issues or concerns persist, a new mentor will be assigned.

Responsibilities of the Department Chair/Center Director. The Department Chair (or Center Director in the case of research faculty) will work with the Associate Dean to make the initial assignment of

mentor and provide input on any decision to change the mentor. They will inquire about the mentoring relationship and progress toward goals during the annual review process. They serve as the supervisor for the mentee and solicit input on progress toward goals from the mentor.

Eligibility for Participation in the Mentorship Program

Eligible mentees. All new early career faculty (i.e., tenure-track and non-tenure track) are eligible for a mentor through the Curry Mentoring Program. Midcareer or senior faculty new to the Curry School may also receive a mentor through the program if they so choose; given that their needs may differ from the early career faculty, this assignment will be made in conjunction with the new faculty member, as well as the Chair and Associate Dean.

Eligible mentors. Any mid-career or senior faculty member in the Curry school may serve as a mentor. Additionally, a junior faculty member with at least five years of experience who has expertise aligned with a prospective mentee may elect to serve as a mentor provided that this service role is endorsed by the Department Chair. The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, in conjunction with the Department Chair, will identify potential mentors for each new cohort of junior faculty; eligible faculty may also identify themselves as a possible mentor. Final assignments will be made by the Associate Dean.

Accountability

Deliverables. Developing a timeline and set of goals for junior faculty in line with the annual review should not only help them to plan and prioritize their teaching and research activities for the coming academic year, but should also assist mentors in directing their advisory efforts. Chairs, in consultations with official mentors, should establish a specific set of plans and deliverables from the outset, with checkpoints or mileposts throughout the academic year. Adhering to this course of action will create a record of progress that will permit evaluation and accountability. In accordance with indicators such as the Faculty Scholar Productivity Index (see <http://chronicle.com/stats/productivity/>), deliverables should at the very least include publications, evidence of applying for research funding, and course evaluations. Although citations of journal publications as well as awards and honors are useful and excellent markers of successful achievement in research, these may not be imminent until a junior faculty member is about to be considered for promotion and tenure (see Curry Promotion & Tenure Policies and Procedures). Specific deliverables should include, but not necessarily be limited to, *all* of the following:

- *Teaching:* Provide constructive feedback to the mentee based on an observation of the mentee teaching a class and/or running a research team meeting, regular review of course evaluations, the inclusion of students as coauthors on publications and presentations, etc.
- *Grant applications:* Evaluate whether these are in development, submitted, awarded, not awarded, or under revision. Take into account the number of such proposals, the amount of funding requested, and the level of student (graduate and undergraduate) involvement.

- *Journal manuscripts*: Assess whether these are in preparation, under review, in revision for resubmission, accepted, in press, or published. Consider both the number of manuscripts, authorship order, and the quality of the journal (i.e., peer-reviewed, impact factor, etc.).
- *Other publications (as appropriate for the mentee's area of specialization), including*: books, book chapters, conference proceedings (abstracts), technical reports, or online journal articles.
- *Conference presentations and posters*: Take into account the number as well as whether these were presented at international, national, regional, or local meetings.

The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development will work with junior faculty members, their mentors, and Chairs to provide the support needed to produce these deliverables. This support can come in the form of

- assistance in developing ideas for external funding;
- preparing grant proposals;
- reviewing drafts of manuscripts for submission to scholarly journals;
- finding statistical or other kinds of training opportunities, and, if necessary, funding travel for such training; and
- providing start-up or seed money for conducting pilot research.

Additionally, the Associate Dean will hold an Early Career Meeting Series focusing on relevant topics, such as: developing grant applications; writing; mentoring; managing a grant; multi-tasking with respect to research, teaching and service; work/life balance, etc.

Timelines. It should be noted that advancement toward producing the agreed upon deliverables cannot be completely linear, and that a variety of factors may influence a junior faculty member's rate of progress. That being said, the use of checkpoints as a basis for making formative evaluations should ensure that the faculty member is (a) making reasonable progress and (b) not working on too many different things simultaneously that few of them would likely come to fruition. Chairs should work closely with mentors and Program Coordinators to make certain that individual timelines are reasonable and the goals achievable, given the required teaching and service responsibilities of junior faculty. If progress is not being made or if milestones are not being reached in a timely fashion, Chairs, mentors, and Program Coordinators, in consultation with the Associate Dean, should make necessary adjustments to ensure that junior faculty have every opportunity to produce the agreed upon deliverables in a timely fashion.

Sample benchmarks: a) the submission of at least two or three manuscripts to a refereed journal by the end of the full first year; b) the submission of at least one grant proposal to an external funding agency by the end of the first full year.

Resources

- **UVA Women's Leadership Council**
<http://www.virginia.edu/uvacommittees/presidentialcommittees/wlc/mentoring.html>
- **UVA Teaching Resource Center**
<http://trc.virginia.edu/>
- **Curry Promotion and Tenure Policy & Pre-Tenure Review Process**
<http://curry.virginia.edu/my-curry/employee>
- **UVA Promotion and Tenure Policy**
<https://policy.itc.virginia.edu/policy/policydisplay?id=PROV-017>
- **National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity**
<http://www.facultydiversity.org/>
- **CLIC Guide on Research Impact**
<http://guides.lib.virginia.edu/promotioncurry>

Suggests Readings on Mentoring

- **Chronicle of Higher Ed, "Starting Fresh" (primer for new faculty)**
<http://chronicle.com/article/Starting-Fresh/45870>
- **Inside Higher Ed, "Mentoring Manifesto"**
<http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/08/12/essay-how-be-good-faculty-mentor-junior-professors>
<http://www.insidehighered.com/users/kerry-ann-rockquemore>