

APPENDIX 5: Mentoring Guidelines

Overview

The Geography Department has a mentoring system for junior faculty. To date, however, there has been no set of departmental guidelines clarifying the mentoring relationship. Typically, mentors pick a mentor or mentors in discussion with the head, and it is important that mentors know enough about the general professional field of new faculty that they can provide effective guidance. For new faculty with joint appointments with other programs, it is important that mentors know something about the other program in which the new faculty is also working.

While it is important to recognize that there is no consistent “formula” for a good mentoring relationship, the following points are provided to serve as a kind of “template” to which junior faculty and mentors might look in order to make the relationship both effective and rewarding. This is not meant to be a comprehensive, exhaustive, or even essential list. It is, however, meant to provide a basis from which effective mentoring might be built.

First Year

The crucial period in the mentoring relationship is during the first few months of a new faculty member’s appointment. In fact, this period can even include the months leading up to his/her arrival on campus. Contact between mentors and new faculty is very important during this period. Mentors should make initial contact during this period *as early as possible*, and maintain frequent regular contact during the first year. Possible issues or topics to consider discussing during these first crucial months:

- **Basics** –How does the department work
 - Key documents, policies
 - How does the university work?
 - Key points of contact for getting things done beyond the department.
 - Key figures in university governance
 - Campus resources (personal as well as professional)

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- Contracts and Grants, CETL, etc.
- Identifying other faculty in the department and around the university who have expertise in particular areas of relevance, or, simply, who are “good people to know” (this one is very important because mentors should recognize that they can’t possibly answer *all* questions, but *can* help identify where answers may be found).
- Travel funds, handling purchases, travel arrangements, etc.
- Network and computing set up, including email, HuskyDM, other systems, etc.
 - Learning about various computing resources in the department and around campus
 - Getting course materials online
- **Teaching plan** – it is very important for new faculty to be able to develop an initial teaching plan within the context of the department’s needs as well as the needs of their own professional development. Mentors can provide new faculty with a picture of where their teaching fits in with the overall curriculum, and this is very important for new faculty to know.
 - What are the relevant equity issues in one’s teaching load?
 - What courses must s/he teach? What kind of content is expected of these courses?
 - What new courses should s/he develop?
 - How to propose a new course?
- **Developing a basic annual plan** – the nature and detail of such a plan will obviously vary from person to person, but mentors should provide advice for a realistic set of goals in terms of research and teaching. Some possible topics for inclusion:
 - Deadlines for campus resources for research funding (e.g. JFDA)
 - Other proposal deadlines
 - Strategies for publication (i.e. types of journals, types of publications, etc.) in terms of reappointment and tenure expectations
 - Set up peer evaluations for classes and consider other teaching evaluation mechanisms

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- **Schedule a meeting** with head to go over these plans and clarify curriculum issues, department expectations, etc. Mentors and new faculty should keep a written record of this meeting so that department expectations are clear and can be referenced in the future.

Second Year to Third Year Review

After the initial intensity of the first year (or, really, the first several months) mentoring meetings may be less frequent. In addition to continuing to develop annual plans aimed at meeting reappointment and tenure expectations, the following are issues that junior faculty may seek guidance on:

- Strategies for recruiting new graduate students
 - How does the department admissions process work?
 - How is dept. funding (Teaching Assistantships) distributed among grad students?
- Advising graduate students
 - How much time should new faculty devote to advising grad students?
 - What are department requirements for completing degrees? What are the various “hoops” grads have to go through and when are they expected to go through them?
 - How many grad students should new faculty advise?
 - How many grad student committees should new faculty participate in?
- Developing and maintaining a teaching portfolio for reappointment/tenure
 - Scheduling a classroom evaluation at least once per semester
 - Saving other kinds of course evaluations and/or feedback
 - Resources for improving teaching.
- Cultivating contacts beyond the department and beyond the university
 - Strategies for conferences, workshops, travel, etc. (i.e. “should I run for secretary of my specialty group?”)

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- Having a “life”, or “should I really be working 80 hours a week?”
- Plans for research semester and options for course-banking
- On-going annual meetings with the head to assess progress toward reappointment/tenure.

Fourth Year to Promotion and Tenure

These final three years can be treated essentially the same as in the above section, with a few important additional points, as suggested below:

- Make any necessary adjustments in the annual plan according to reappointment evaluation and recommendations
- Clarify timing of putting together materials for promotion and tenure
 - When will ad hoc committee be formed and who will be on it?
 - When do external reviewers need to be selected and what materials should be prepared for them?