Best practices and recommendations for mentoring junior tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty through promotion and tenure

CLAS Faculty Council
(Approved April 9, 2019)

Effective mentorship is crucial for supporting and retaining a diverse faculty. Over the 2017-2018 academic year, the Faculty Council surveyed the mentoring policies of UF peer institutions and also collected existing departmental mentoring policies in CLAS - we found that only 10 out of 16 reporting CLAS departments, programs, and centers had written mentorship policies and guidelines. Over the 2018-2019 academic year, CLAS Faculty Council solicited feedback from junior and recently promoted faculty, with the goal of developing a series of recommendations and best practices for mentoring within CLAS. The following recommendations were synthesized after extensive discussions with new and junior tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty in focus group luncheons (26 attendees), post-luncheon surveys (11 responses), and personal correspondence with eight recently promoted faculty. The list below is comprised of recommendations repeatedly encountered in these discussions, surveys, correspondence, and in the mentoring policies of UF peer institutions.

INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

I. **Resources and guidelines for mentors and mentees**
    A. The college or university should create a webpage that assembles relevant information on college mentoring policies, information on best practices for mentors, and information for new faculty regarding making the most of mentor relationships. Our review of "top 10" public university websites revealed that most provide information on best practices for mentoring via a single website assembled at the "provost" level (i.e., across multiple colleges). The UC Berkeley website provides an example of such a site: https://vpf.berkeley.edu/faculty-mentoring. In 2016, the UF College of Journalism and Communications held a workshop on the mentoring of faculty. The workshop website also contains links to several useful documents: (https://www.jou.ufl.edu/home/about/governance/faculty-mentoring/).
    B. The college should provide training for mentors and reward them for outstanding performance. The Mentor Academy at UF, developed by the UF Clinical and Translation Science Institute - https://www.ctsi.ufl.edu/education/faculty-career-development/mentor-academy/ provides a model. The college should explore opportunities for CLAS faculty members to participate in this program. Additional training programs should include focus on the unique needs of scholars from under-represented groups. Mentors should be recognized for completion of such a training program, and mentorship should also be recognized as meaningful service on annual activity reports. CLAS should consider creating awards for outstanding mentorship, similar to awards established for outstanding mentoring of graduate students.
    C. In addition to the types of informational websites described above, several of the peer institutions have university or college level committees that are charged with organizing and enhancing mentoring activities. One example is UCLA's Council of Advisors, which is specifically aimed at matching new faculty with advisors that are outside of their home department: https://apo.ucla.edu/faculty-career-development/mentoring-resources-council-of-advisors.

II. **Task-specific guidance**
    A. Faculty orientations should include specific instruction and guidance on mundane but important tasks that new faculty find mysterious: using Canvas, myufl, ONE.UF; how to interact with the DRC

and provide student accommodations, interacting with the Office of Sponsored Research, how to write a syllabus.

B. The college should consider holding workshops, panel discussions, and/or other informal professional development opportunities for new faculty. Topics suggested include: finding grant funding, effective teaching, college T&P guidelines, exploring college and university service opportunities, research budget issues (IDC, student tuition, etc.). At our focus sessions, new faculty indicated that 1 or 2 such events per semester would be helpful, but that too many events would become burdensome. In scheduling such events, it is important to consider that new faculty with young children may not be able to attend events in the evening.

II. Cohort building
The college should consider holding cohort-building activities for new faculty to grow together and develop interdisciplinary connections. In addition to the professional development guidance discussed above, some events could be primarily social, with a loosely-defined agenda focused on diversity issues, work/life balance, parenting solutions, finding a community on campus and in Gainesville, etc. Such social events should also provide attention to the unique considerations of faculty from under-represented groups.

III. Clear promotion guidelines
Departments and the college should provide clear guidelines and criteria for tenure and promotion. Chairs/Directors should be informed about the work of the college T&P committee on a yearly basis, so that departments and mentors can keep track of changes that occur as membership cycles. Most of the new faculty we spoke with, especially lecturers, were very unsure about their pathways to promotion.

IV. Mentorship and learning continue beyond tenure
Chairs/Directors and university administrators need to be mindful of the fact that the need for mentorship and learning does not end with tenure and/or promotions. Chairs/Directors in particular need to be educated and reminded that all faculty need assistance, support and encouragement throughout their careers. The Chairs/Directors must actively work on identifying opportunities that can help promote careers of their faculty members such as awards and training opportunities on and off-campus.

V. National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity
CLAS faculty should be encouraged to take advantage of the UF membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. CLAS and UF should fund participation of individual faculty members in the Center's acclaimed Faculty Bootcamps and courses.

DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Assignment of mentors
A. Consider appointing two or more mentors (e.g., a mentorship committee) to provide diverse social and academic perspectives. Mentorship committees may include members from outside the department.

The Psychology department provides a well-praised model to follow for mentorship committees (quoted from their written policies for tenure and non-non-tenure track faculty):

For tenure-track faculty
Committees will be appointed by the Department Chair, who will consult with the tenure- track faculty in making appointments. Committees will normally consist of:

a. Two tenured in-area faculty members with one serving as chair.
In cases where there is only one tenured faculty in an area, the committee can either be reduced by one person, or an additional out-of-area faculty can be added if desired by the tenure-track faculty member.
b. One tenured out-of-area faculty member.
c. One tenured out-of-department faculty member. If this committee member is in another college (i.e., not in CLAS), the chair of the mentoring committee will ensure that this committee member understands the department and college guidelines for tenure and promotion.

<u>For non-tenure track faculty</u>
Committees will be appointed by the Department Chair, who will consult with non-tenure track faculty in making appointments. Committees will normally consist of:
a. Two tenured faculty members in the department, with one serving as chair
b. If available, a Senior Lecturer from within the department or from another department within CLAS. If this committee member is in another department, the chair of the mentoring committee will ensure that this committee member understands the department guidelines for promotion.

    B. Allow the mentee to have input in choosing their mentor(s). "Interim" mentors can be assigned while the mentor is learning more about their colleagues.
    C. Formalize the role of the mentor(s) by creating written guidelines and policies specific to the department.
    D. The mentor(s) should be assigned as soon as possible after the appointment is accepted rather than waiting until after the mentee has already begun their first semester.

II. Role of mentor
    A. Formalized written mentorship policies should include requirements for regular meetings, and suggest the frequency and scope of meetings between the mentor and the mentee.
    B. Mentors should provide meaningful and clear guidance on making progress toward promotion and tenure, including examples of successful pathways and milestones toward distinction in teaching, research, and service.

III. Mentoring of faculty members from under-represented groups
    A. Departments must ensure that unique needs of faculty members from under-represented groups are clearly identified, recognized and addressed.
    B. Additional mentors, including designated "persons of confidence" inside or outside the department, and/or additional mentoring activities should be organized for faculty members from underrepresented groups in their departments.
    C. All faculty should be engaged in conversations about specific challenges facing underrepresented or minority faculty in the course of their academic careers, such as citations gaps, different levels of service activities and expectations, gendered/racialized hurdles in teaching evaluations, isolation, and low institutional expectation and support.