Informal Mentoring Programs in Cornell’s College of Engineering

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Outline

• What we are supplementing

• Why we are doing it

• How we are doing it

• Outcomes and success metrics
Formal Mentoring at Cornell’s College of Engineering

- Mentoring for junior faculty is officially the responsibility of the departments.

- Most departments have a “formal” program in place. Multiple approaches:
  - Single-mentor, within department.
  - Two mentors (teaching and research), within department.

- Current ongoing effort to formalize a uniform approach across departments.
  - Two mentors, internal teaching/research and external.
  - Two-year terms.
Challenges

• Mentor/protege pairing has variable success.

• Mentor and protege training is not institutionalized.

• Non-uniformity of the mentoring experience across junior faculty leaves some junior faculty behind.

• Non-type-A personalities can still get left behind.

• Our challenge — what to do for junior faculty for whom the departmental program is not all it can be?
Two Approaches to Supplement Existing Mentoring

- Peer mentoring lunches for assistant professors.
  - Begun in Fall 2004 after Mentoring for Engineering Academia (I) (my initiative).
  - Started with an NSF grant and now institutionalized by the College.

- Senior women faculty mentors.
  - Begun in Spring 2006.
  - A group effort — created by the tenured women faculty in the college.
Peer Mentoring Lunches for Junior Faculty

- Monthly lunches in a private dining room.

- Organization has been taken over (from me) by the Associate Dean for Faculty Development.

- Speakers at the request of the junior faculty:
  - Preparing for the 3-year review
  - Teaching and TA Management for the Large Class
  - Balancing Service with Teaching and Research
  - Time management
  - Graduate student development and advising
  - Grantsmanship strategies
Positive Outcomes

- Junior faculty who are singletons in their departments develop a group of peers.

- Women junior faculty who do not come to “women faculty events” come to these lunches.

- Junior faculty with little or no mentoring gain important information to which they may otherwise have no access.

- The Associate Dean interacts regularly with junior faculty and therefore their issues and concerns are directly heard in the administration.
• Women faculty in the College of Engineering in Spring 2006:
  • Approximately 25 at the time.
  • Gathered regularly.
  • Very proactive, organized group (spearheaded university parental leave policy; proposed & administer Term Chair Awards for Women in Science and Engineering — $250K start-up awards).

• A feature of this group has always been mentoring, but it required *action* on the part of the junior faculty.
  • Example — some junior women asked senior women to critique their 3-year and tenure dossiers.
A New Program: Senior Women Faculty Mentors

• Senior women initiative in Spring 2006: an active mentoring program.

• All junior women were asked to select a senior woman outside of their departments as a mentor.

• Mentor responsibilities:
  • Preparation of 3-year review dossier.
  • Detailed discussion of 3-year review, including developing a response strategy and timeline.
  • Preparation of tenure dossier.
Outcomes

- Two promotions to full professor.
- Two promotions to associate professor.
- New women faculty have had an automatic mechanism to get drawn into the group.