

Planning for and Defining a Mentoring Relationship New Mentees

It is important to spend some time thinking about what you want out of your mentoring relationship(s). Since mentoring in this program involves perfect strangers, the most successful relationships happen when partners have thought through their definition of mentoring, and their own preferences and parameters for their relationships.

Once you have defined for yourself what mentoring means (see worksheets attached), confer with your Mentoring Partners to see whether they share your view of mentoring. Having this initial discussion with your Mentoring Team will help to avoid potential problems.

In the past, the problems that have surfaced in some of the established mentoring relationships are:

- A. Miscommunication: Mentees have been hesitant to “bother” their mentors with “silly questions” when they are obviously such busy people. Conversely, Mentors who were not being asked for help did not want to interfere in their Mentee’s life by seeming pushy and thus did not contact their Mentees without express invitation. In certain cases, this concern for the mentoring partner’s freedom, time and independence lessened the impact and usefulness of the mentoring relationship for new women faculty. *It is important for you to be pro-active in your relationship with your mentors* so that you get what you need. Your mentors cannot begin to help if they do not know what your questions and concerns are.
- B. Expectations: Mentees’ expectations for their partners can be unrealistic. One or two Mentors cannot be the *only* resource on every topic. Mentors should be able to admit that they do not have expertise in a particular area, but should then look for other people who might be appropriate resources on that topic.
- C. Realities: Remember that we are putting complete strangers into a mentoring team. This is a somewhat artificial way of establishing mentoring relationships, and means that, through no fault of the Mentee or the Mentors, some relationships may not gel. This possibility is much less likely if you begin your mentoring relationships with a frank and honest discussion about what you want and need, and have the Mentors speak frankly about how they see the role of Mentor.

Important: as a new faculty member, you need to look for several mentors so that you get all relevant information and guidance that you need.

One—even two—mentors are not enough!

The following pages are designed to help you think through your relationship with your Mentors and mentoring teams.

Please turn to the next page →

Planning your mentoring Relationships*

This worksheet is designed to help you plan your relationships and guide your first meeting with your mentors and mentoring team. Please add your own items whenever you do not find them listed.

1. A mentor might be defined as
 - a. a guide, trusted counselor
 - b. an advocate
 - c. a friend
 - d. a sympathetic ear
 - e. a resource for information
 - f. other?

Ideally, which of these roles do I see my mentors playing for the next 18 months?

What do I see as the most useful role my peers in the mentoring team can play?

2. What types of issues do I want to discuss with my mentors and mentoring team?
(Rank the topics from most important [1] to least important [10])

- Feedback on my teaching
- Feedback on my research agenda
- Assistance in developing a coherent service agenda
- Guidance in setting pre-tenure goals and preparing my tenure packet
- Assistance in developing networks on campus or nationally
- Balancing family obligations and my career
- Managing my time
- Handling conflict (in the classroom, with colleagues)
- Dealing with departmental politics
- Other?

3. What kinds of activities would I like to engage in with my mentors or mentoring team members?

- Go to formal mentoring events
- Meet over coffee, lunch or dinner
- Go to educational events (lectures, talks, discussions etc)
- Engage in non-academic activities (hiking, art museums, movies)
- Other?

4. What kinds of things are off-limits in our mentoring relationship?

- Going to restaurants to meet
- Using non-public places to meet
- Sharing private aspects of our lives
- Other:

5. How much time can I spend with my mentors or mentoring team each week?

6. How much time each month?

***Use these sheets for talking with your Mentoring Team about your *Mentoring Agreement* on DATE**

Faculty Mentoring Program for Women

The following list represents a compilation of activities in which past participants of the ADVANCE Faculty Mentoring Program for Women have engaged. These are merely *examples* of the kinds of things from which new faculty members can benefit. No single relationship, whether formal or informal, can engage in all of these activities—this is why we have increased opportunities for peer mentoring within the program.

Mentoring Topics/Activities

Research

- Read and respond to grant proposals
- Advice on establishing a publication record
- Conference involvement and selection
- Recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students
- Research group organization

Teaching

- Preparing for excellence in teaching
- Creating a teaching portfolio
- Review and design of syllabi
- Publication of education-related papers
- Work on strategies for advising students
- Classroom management

Professional Service

- Committee involvement
- Professional organization involvement

Community Service

- Outreach for UTEP as an institution
- Community involvement, organizations, charities
- Neighborhood organizations

Tenure and Promotion Issues

- Prepare for third year reviews, CVs and annual merit reviews
- Create a professional file
- Communicate and explore P and T expectations

University/School/Departmental Environment and Acculturation

- Departmental funding
- Development of collegial relationships
- Associations, teams, interest groups, etc. in department or school
- Resources available at the university for faculty

Mutual interests and experiences

Family and Balance Issues

- Single and childless
- Faculty spouse
- Single parent
- Childcare responsibilities and options
- Eldercare responsibilities and options

Culture and Religion

- Local arts and music
- Churches, church groups and related activities
- Ethnic events, festivals, resources

Personal Interests

- Hiking
- Camping
- Bicycling
- Handicrafts
- Antiques
- Other

Your Goals: A Reflection

Being successful as a faculty member requires skill in teaching, research and service, as well as skill in networking with others in the department and the university. It also requires being able to balance these demands in such a way that you keep personal equilibrium and health. The following questions are designed to give you the opportunity to explore where you stand on these issues.

1. In what ways are you satisfied with your progress in personal and professional development at this point?

Professional

Personal

2. In what ways are you dissatisfied with your progress in personal and professional development at this point? What would you like to develop?

Professional:

Personal:

3. What groups/networks are you already in that help you personally and professionally?

4. What groups might you join or people might you get to know for personal or professional development?

5. What steps do you need to take to make contacts with such groups or people?

Long-term Goals

1. What questions do you have about what you need to do in the next 5 years as you work toward tenure?

2. Envision your role in the University and in the community in six years.

What are your major aspirations for how you will interact with this community? What adjectives or metaphors come to mind that describe your intended role?

What steps will you need to take to achieve such a role?

Now you have a document with which you can approach your Mentoring Team. Those who have been in a faculty position and have attained tenure should be able to help you to decide whether your timelines are reasonable, given the expectations of your College.