

Tenure Stream Faculty Mentoring Program Guidelines

Adopted September 19, 2013

Rationale

It is important that new faculty members receive advice and guidance to most effectively become productive members of the Department and to smoothly advance to tenure. In the past, such mentoring has been entirely informal and has been mainly successful, but with the recent rapid growth in the number of junior faculty, it would seem appropriate to establish a somewhat more formal mentoring program.

Such a program would have the general goals of helping new faculty members to:

- Learn about support resources available at OSU.
- Address questions, concerns, and special needs in a confidential manner.
- Gain insight about scholarship, teaching, and career development from an experienced faculty member.
- Network with other faculty and develop a personal support system within OSU.

Approach

For mentoring to succeed, the mentor and mentee need to have a good relationship, so a rigid structure in which mentors are appointed by the Chair seems less likely to succeed than a system that is driven by the faculty member's interactions with his/her colleagues. At the same time, it is important that a new faculty member is encouraged to quickly establish a mentor relationship.

There are two areas where new faculty probably need the most assistance. The first is being aware of the local requirements, deadlines and evaluation procedures. The second is developing a knowledge of grantsmanship, successful publishing and effective teaching methods. These are best dealt with in separate ways.

Understanding expectations

We suggest that a new faculty member is provided at the outset with a written list of OSU and Departmental requirements, deadlines and evaluation procedures. These should include:

- Copies of the promotion and tenure guidelines for the department, including a copy of the "checklist" for a promotion case. Specify which records should be kept, or filed in the department office.

- A listing of formal deadlines e.g. mid-tenure review, and informal expectations, such as an implicit date by which the first grant proposal should be submitted or funded or the first paper accepted.
- Explanations of the relative importance of teaching evaluations, peer evaluations, and letters from inside or outside the institution; the role of publications with former or new collaborators, versus those with students.
- Explication of the general expectations for funding and publications in their particular area required to achieve tenure.
- A description of expected teaching loads and procedures.

Assistance in research and teaching

We envisage the principal role of a mentor as assisting the junior faculty member in establishing a successful research program and in being an effective teacher. We expect senior faculty to gladly accept such a role.

The mentor should assist by performing such activities as:

- Critiquing grant proposals and papers and assessing proposal reviews.
- Providing advice on building collaborations, and seeking matching funds.
- Discussing effective instructional techniques, course development, and curricular issues.
- Exploring student issues such as advising, motivating, and preventing academic dishonesty.
- Share experiences on stress management, life/work balance, and effectively managing time.