A BRIEF GUIDE TO FACULTY MENTORING

University of Pittsburgh | **Pitt** | Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences

Prepared by Dietrich School Diversity Committee, 2016; revised 2022

The Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences strongly recommends that each new and new to role tenure-stream and appointment stream faculty member be provided with appropriate mentoring. If the Dietrich School's ambition for excellence is to be sustained, outstanding faculty must not only be hired, but supported as they develop their careers as teachers, scholars, and researchers. Mentoring is essential to achieving long-term diversity by ensuring that faculty from groupsunderrepresented in a department are integrated into networks of information and receive collegial and informed career guidance.

DEFINITIONS

Mentoring is a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship that facilitates professional development, retention and promotion and work-life balance at each stage of one's career. Mentoring facilitates the success of a faculty member and thus facilitates well-being in a department, school, university and in wider communities.

Mentoring is a collaborative learning experience that can draw from many individuals who can help guide various facets of an individual's career. These can be referred to as **Mentoring Networks**, recognizing that no one person (mentor) can provide all forms of support or knowledge to assist the mentee in developing the skills and knowledge to succeed in their career and life.

Culturally Aware Mentoring effectively addresses cultural diversity in mentoring relationships. Mentors acknowledge that their beliefs, perspectives and judgments are shaped by their cultural backgrounds, and understand the cultural differences and similarities that inform their mentoring relationships. **Culturally Responsive Mentoring** considers diverse cultural lived experiences of both the mentor and mentee as well as the cultural context of the work environment (e.g., values and norms) to establish more effective mentoring relationships.

Effective Mentoring promotes a relationship based on trust which is mutually beneficial for the mentor and mentee and helps mentees move towards their goals. It fosters an environment conducive to learning, retention, and career progression. **Mentoring Up** is a concept that empowers mentees to be active participants in their mentoring relationships by shifting the emphasis from the mentors' responsibilities in the mentor-mentee. relationship to an emphasis on the mentees' contributions.

Formal mentorship is a relationship or **Mentoring Program** in which mentor(s) and mentee(s) are formally assigned. Each mentor has specific responsibilities or a **Mentoring Plan** they are expected to fulfill, to further their mentees' professional success. **Informal mentorship** occurs in unofficial, spontaneous mentoring relationships that are not prefigured by formal mentor-mentee assignments and, therefore, involve no specific mentoring responsibilities.

BEST PRACTICES IN CREATING AN EFFECTIVE DEPARTMENTAL MENTORING PROGRAM

An effective departmental mentoring program…

- Is integrated into the routine life of the department.
- Facilitates the formation of mentor-mentee relationships with the understanding that it is the department's responsibility to facilitate mentorship.
- Acknowledges the cultural/social backgrounds, academic lives, and positionality-based experiences of mentees. Mentor assignments should take these factors into account, recognizing that mentorship both from people with similar backgrounds/identities as well as cross-cultural mentorship can be productive.
- Addresses diversity by 1) establishing a culture in which mentees of all cultural/social identities can successfully progress; 2) addressing diversity within these mentoring relationships; and 3) acknowledging that culture plays a role. How people work, what they think is important, motivation and vision are all culturally informed. Mentors should intentionally create opportunities to discuss diversity issues with their mentees and be able to respectfully broach the topic of race/ethnicity and other social differences in their mentoring relationships.
- Supports mentor-mentee relationships that foster camaraderie and collaboration in teaching and research and incorporate aspects of coaching.
- Builds mentors' capacity to introduce and engage in thoughtful, pertinent, and respectful discussions about the cultural/social identities of mentees from historically underrepresented groups

Recommendations:

- All new and new to role faculty members should be offered one or more mentors at the time arrival.
- All new and new to role faculty mentees should be presented with the opportunity to select or be appointed a mentor annually. The faculty member may choose not to participate or to opt-in at a later point, depending on their evolving needs.
- Associate professors and mid-career appointment stream faculty members may also benefit from the assignment of a mentor to help them move towards their next promotion.
- It may be beneficial to establish a departmental standing mentoring committee charged with drafting a statement on mentoring and overseeing the design, administration, evaluation, and ongoing

improvement of the mentoring program. Alternatively, the department chair, in consultation with senior faculty, may oversee mentor assignments.

- Formal assessment mechanisms to gauge effectiveness of the program to fulfill expectations and achieve goals should be developed.
- The mentoring relationship should be compensated—as effort by the mentor and mentee for the department, school, and university.
- The department should identify, structurally support and fund opportunities for mentees from historically underrepresented groups to have relevant professional interactions and experience connectedness with other faculty—within and beyond the department—who are members of their socio-cultural group.

BEST PRACTICES IN MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

A strong mentoring relationship…

- Involves looking for opportunities to develop skills related to mentoring consistent with the recommendations in this document, focusing on evidence-based practices.
- Equips mentees with knowledge, skills and confidence that will empower them to navigate through difficult situations, including conversations with their mentors.
- Develops useful professional skills
- Centers on mentoring "moments" in which prospective mentees transition to new roles and responsibilities in the department—hiring, promotion, etc.— or negotiate significant life events
- Includes both team and one-on-one mentoring approaches. Teams may include both AS and TS faculty as appropriate.
- Provides a process for expectation and goal setting in the mentoring relationship that balances anticipatable support with individual needs. Explicit declarations of the expectations of both mentors and mentees at the initiation of mentorship---revisited periodically and possibly recorded in writing—can help create an effective mentoring relationship.
- Works to develop trust by having mentors and mentees work together to identify and respond to their mutual goals, needs and priorities. These change over time and thus may require adjustment. Critical and honest self-reflection occurs at multiple stages of effective mentoring processes.
- Acknowledges that mentorship goes through a series of stages,

including initialization, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. Ongoing collaboration and discussions are key to initiation and sustaining an effective mentoring relationship that is responsive to the needs, goals, and interests, and priorities of both mentors and mentees.

BEST PRACTICES IN CULTURALLY AWARE MENTORING

Mentoring often involves establishing a relationship across shared and differing aspects of personal identity, such as those associated with race, culture, gender, socioeconomic background, and generation. Being able to comfortably engage in conversation about cross-identity differences improves the mentoring relationship and contributes positively to the larger organizational climate in which the mentoring relationship is situated.

Culturally aware mentoring involves…
- Building a good relationship involves both the mentor and the mentee working to recognize and identify the assumptions they each hold and reflecting on how these assumptions might impact the mentoring relationship.
- Expressing curiosity about your differences, including how they may impact your research, teaching and service interests, priorities, and approaches.
- Establishing a comfortable context for open and honest discussion of identity differences, sensitivities, and realities, for instance by initiating a conversation that invites examples from the mentee of how identity differences might be affecting the mentoring relationship or how the differences are experienced at the departmental, institutional, or disciplinary level.
- Encouraging and supporting the mentee's formation of a broader mentorship plan and mentoring "mosaic" in which a variety of individuals meet different but complementary mentoring needs. For instance, some mentors may primarily provide access to resources and opportunities, others may serve as allies and advocates in promoting an inclusive environment, and others may provide psychosocial support that comes from sharing lived experiences.

- Accepting that your understanding of each other's perspectives and experiences is imperfect. Welcome feedback from mentees, even when it runs counter to intentions, perspectives and/or experiences. Resist normal human reactions of defensiveness, dismissiveness, and casting of blame. Take the time to carefully listen to and acknowledge the feedback before responding; reflect on how your own desires for yourself, the department, or the institution to be seen as "good" or "right" might be impacting your assessment of the situation; ask yourself what changes, support, or advocacy you might provide to improve outcomes.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

We are a diverse community of scholars, learners, partners, and leaders dedicated to a common cause: the pursuit of knowledge. We look forward to welcoming new faculty to our community that will contribute to our mission of creating an inclusive and equitable campus environment—one that welcomes, values, and embraces the diverse perspectives of every member of our community. Our University-wide commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable environment that nurtures opportunities for Pitt community members to grow individually and to collectively create, use and share knowledge is highlighted in our strategic plan, [Plan for Pitt](#).

In service of these goals, we ask that applicants seeking faculty positions in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences submit a statement about their past, present, and future contributions to promoting equity, inclusion, and diversity in their professional careers.

In evaluating Statements of Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, search committees often consider the applicant's:
- **Awareness** of inequities and challenges faced by underrepresented minority students and faculty.
- **Track record** (commensurate to career stage) of activities that reduce barriers in education or research for underrepresented minority students and faculty.
- **Vision and plans** for how their work will continue to contribute to Pitt's mission to serve the needs of our diverse student population and create an inclusive campus.

There are many ways in which Pitt faculty can and have contributed to our diversity mission. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- **Commitment** to using a faculty position to be a force of enlightenment and change by opening up opportunities to students who may have never known of the intellectual and life options that abound at our university.
- **Creation** of programs that provide access and establish a pipeline in disciplines for students in traditionally underrepresented groups.
- **Enriching** the classroom environment through providing exposure to new perspectives on cultures, beliefs, identities, or practices, or the teaching of cultural humility or other aptitudes and skills to enhance the ability of our students to engage with inclusivity in a pluralistic society.
- **Exposure** to research opportunities for individuals historically excluded from disciplines on the basis of their gender or ethnic identity.
- **Leadership** in any capacity that tangibly promotes an environment where diversity is welcomed, fostered, and celebrated.
- **Mentoring** students from traditionally underrepresented groups and atrisk students to provide the guidance needed to help ensure their academic experience is a welcoming and positive one, to promote university resources when needed for retention, and to serve as transformative role models for those who may not yet understand their real potential in an academic environment.
- **Outreach** to members of student clubs, private organizations, or community groups whose mission includes service, education, or extending opportunity to disadvantaged people.
- **Service** that promotes inclusion by striving to dismantle barriers to people historically excluded from the opportunities that all have a right to enjoy.
- **Research** that seeks to improve the lives of under-served communities or the promotion of knowledge or understanding through research and scholarship that sheds light on the experiences of oppressed or underrepresented communities.

Through your own Statement of your Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion you can tell us how your past and present activities have shaped your perspective on this issue and express how you believe that your future activities will contribute to Pitt's mission of promoting equity and inclusion. In formulating your statement, you may choose how much or how little to reveal about your own identity/ies in relation to Pitt's

diversity mission. It is not expected that you will be active in all of the dimensions described in the list above but rather that your statement will reflect those activities (past, present and future) that you believe represent your personal commitment to creating an inclusive environment for all.

These guidelines were adapted and include text from a set of guidelines for diversity statements posted by UC Davis at https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/guidelines-writing-diversitystatement

TIPS FOR MENTORS*

<u>CREATING A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP:</u>

- **Time Commitment:** Mentors should be able to commit to and honor the time required for meeting and advising their mentee(s).
- **Skills and Needs:** Mentors should assess their skills for mentorship and determine their developmental needs.
- **Collaboration:** Mentors should work with the mentee(s) on the development of realistic career goals and timelines for achieving those goals.
- **Scope of Guidance:** Mentors should be able to provide guidance on setting objectives, vision and strategies for the specific scope of advising.
- **Mentoring Plan:** It is the responsibility of the mentee to provide the mentor with his or her goals, CV, teaching portfolio, research statement, and whatever other materials will be useful in forming a mentorship plan; it is the responsibility of the mentor to collaborate with the mentee to develop attainable goals, types of guidance and resources for developing necessary academic competencies, relationships, and measurement of progress.
- **Communication:** For mentorship to be most effective, both the mentee and the mentor must establish a level of trust with each other. Both should practice careful and active listening and be able to communicate respect–fully and confidentially. Potential communication barriers based on race, ethnicity, culture, or background are important to consider. Mechanisms to provide constructive feedback should be thoughtfully considered.
- **Mentee Agency:** The mentee should have agency in determining the proceedings and permissions of the Mentorship Team. For example, they may give permission for the Mentorship Team to meet with one another to discuss the mentee's progression and development. The mentee may also choose to not grant permission for the disclosing of any information about the mentee between the mentors.
- **Network Development:** A key role of a mentor is to help facilitate the development of academic networks.
- **Sponsorship:** Some faculty may benefit from sponsorship in addition to technical mentorship. Sponsors advocate for their mentees and use their influence to help a mentee's career advance.
  Additional recommendations:
    - Listen carefully and make suggestions rather than prescriptions.
    - Help your mentee identify and build on his/her strengths.
    - Be forthright in your assessments, providing constructive criticism as wellas praise and support.
    - Provide advice as a representative of the department's senior

faculty, not asyour own opinion.
- Provide emotional encouragement as well as career advice.
- Be willing to discuss the social dimension of becoming a departmental colleague.
- If you are not comfortable providing advice in some area, suggest another qualified faculty member who may be able to do so.

SEVEN THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE INITIAL MEETING:

- Review the mentee's curriculum vitae.
- Assess what you can offer as a mentor and what you cannot.
- Ensure that you have current knowledge about your discipline's and yourdepartment's expectations for tenure.
- Make sure that you understand the Dietrich School's and the University of Pittsburgh's reappointment, tenure and promotion policies and practices.
- Acquaint yourself with university policies and resources for junior faculty, such as criteria for promotion and tenure, family medical and family leave policies, and opportunities for internal and external funding in your field.
- Think about what enabled/hindered your progress as a new faculty member and what lessons might be useful to convey.

TWO THINGS TO DO AT THE INITIAL MEETING:

- Discuss the expectations that each of you has for this mentoringrelationship.
- Establish a regular meeting time and setting, perhaps for coffee or lunch.Meet at least once per term; preferably once per month.

BEYOND THE MENTORING MEETINGS:

- Promote the mentee by introducing them to professional networks, collaborators, and opportunities.
- Nominate the mentee for appropriate editorial boards, professional committees, and awards.

A significant portion of the material in this section was adopted verbatim or with small modifications from the Appendix A Checklist: Best Practices For Schools/Departments, Mentors, And Mentees in Columbia University Office of the Provost's Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring 2016.

TIPS FOR MENTEES*

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP:

- **Identify Your Needs and Interests:** Mentees should share with their mentors drafted career goals and the interests and needs that inform them, and materials that provide details (e.g., teaching portfolio, CV, research trajectory, individual development plan).
- **Actively engage:** Effective mentorship cannot occur without the mentee's active engagement. Mentees should identify goals for development purposes; initiate and be prepared for meetings, and set meeting agendas; actively listen; be willing to think and act beyond their "comfort zones;" seek and reflect on constructive feedback; and generally work towards independence.
- **Communicate respectfully:** Active listening and other forms of respectful communication are prerequisites for effective mentoring relationships. Effective and appropriate communication is vital to the success of mentoring relationships. Be aware of how socially constructed differences and hierarchies of race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, culture, etc., influence and present potential barriers to communication. Practice speaking/writing and listening/reading with thoughtfulness and respect.
- **Identify gaps in competencies/skill sets:** Reflect on your current competencies and skill sets and identify any significant gaps between them and the ones you'll need to achieve your goals.
- **Be proactive setting meetings and agendas:** Decide early on with your mentor how meetings and agendas will be set. In most cases, agenda setting is done by the mentee. If you are tasked with scheduling meetings and setting agendas, do this with sufficient time to allow your mentor(s) to prepare. Arrive with questions and relevant information to move the conversation forward.
- **Be proactive in your mentoring relationships:** Express what types of knowledge, relationships, or advice would be most helpful to you. Take advantage of mutually created opportunities to provide feedback to your mentor on how the mentoring relationship is working.
  Additional recommendations
  - Seek advice from multiple people so that you fully understand the reappointment, tenure, or promotion process.
  - Review the faculty handbook and policies so you can ask informed questions.
  - Seek help early about difficulties in the classroom or in your research.
  - Make connections with other junior faculty inside and outside of your department or program. Be a peer mentor.

- Listen to advice but remember that you are ultimately responsible for your career.
- Realize that one mentor cannot address every issue. Expand your mentoring network beyond one mentor and beyond your home department. Clarify your expectations about mentoring relationships and discuss these up front with your mentors.
- If you do not find a mentoring relationship to be helpful or constructive, talk to the department chair or mentoring program director about adding or substituting another faculty mentor.
- Thank and acknowledge a mentor's assistance when appropriate.

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TOPICS FOR MENTORING MEETINGS

As appropriate for the mentee and their stage of development, the following topics should be addressed regularly.

CAREER:
- Disciplinary, departmental, and University expectations for reappointment, tenure, and promotion.
- How to build networks with colleagues at Pitt and elsewhere.
- Building a career trajectory with short- and long-term goals and a planfor achieving these.
- How to become visible and respected in your field.

RESEARCH (if applicable):
- Feedback on scholarship and grant proposals.
- Sources of support for internal funding.
- Practices of the discipline in applying for grants/fellowships, publishingresearch, awards, etc.
- How to create a research plan, where to publish and how often, and howto negotiate collaborations.
- The department's norms about presenting research in-progress,
  - circulating published work to colleagues, asking colleagues to readdrafts, and collaborative research.
- Which conferences to attend and how to get invited.

TEACHING (if applicable):
- How to establish an excellent teaching record.
- Expectations about teaching, grading, and teaching evaluations.
- Sources of support for teaching at the University of Pittsburgh.

MENTORING (if applicable):
- Expectations for mentoring and supervising graduate students andserving on graduate student committees.
- Expectations for mentoring and supervising undergraduate research projects, undergraduate thesis, honors program, undergraduate Tas, and for serving on undergraduate student committees.

LIFE IN THE DEPARTMENT:
- The informal norms of academic life, such as the department's academicculture, how to balance service, teaching, and research responsibilities, and rebounding from publication rejection or poor teaching evaluations.
- Social dimensions of becoming a departmental colleague.
- Which departmental and university events it is important to attend.

SERVICE (if applicable):
- How to evaluate requests for service to the department and profession.
- Guidance on which kinds of service are more highly valued or promotable service
- Steering on which University and external committee work should be pursued
- Sources of support for professional development opportunities
- Guidance on ways to decline service requests

LIFE OUTSIDE ACADEMIA:
- Where to turn for help and advice on achieving a good work-life balanceor other personal and family concerns.

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP:
- Clarify unfolding expectations about what is desired in the mentoringrelationship.
- Recognize that norms and expectations evolve over time.

SOURCES USED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS GUIDE

Appendix A Checklist: Best Practices For Schools/Departments, Mentors, And Mentees in Columbia University Office of the Provost's *Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring.* 2016.

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Department of Communication, "Recommendations for a Mentoring Program for NTS faculty." Fall 2019. University of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, PA.

Alexis Short, Glossary of NRMN Terms, National Research Mentoring Network, May 8, 2019.

Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research, Culturally Aware Mentoring Resources.

National Academies of Sciences. "Mentorship Defined." The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM Online Guide v1.0.

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Resources

- **Pitt Policies:**
  - Dietrich School Policies & Procedures: https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policies-and-procedures
  - Criteria for Promotion & Tenure: https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/governance/criteria-promotion-or-appointment-tenured-rank
  - Family Medical & Leave Policies: https://www.as.pitt.edu/family-and-medical-leave-policies
- **Pitt Resources:**
  - Opportunities for internal & external funding in your field: https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/research
  - University Center for Teaching and Learning Mentoring Center: https://teaching.pitt.edu/center-for-mentoring/
  - Resources and Readings for Assessing Mentoring: https://teaching.pitt.edu/resources/assessment-of-mentoring/
- **Faculty Development & Diversity:**
  - National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity: Activate your Pitt membership: https://www.facultydiversity.pitt.edu/development/national-center-faculty-development-diversity