Mentoring Guidelines for Assistant and Associate Professors
October 2018

Intention: Mentoring for faculty is intended to provide guidance and support in regard to the context in which they work, peer and college expectations for reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and the ways in which they may have a successful and satisfying career in the department, the college and the university. Mentoring is recognized as both informal and formal, but a formal mentoring process must be established for all untenured faculty. The Office of Faculty Development and Diversity has published Cornell's best practices on faculty mentoring, https://facultydevelopment.cornell.edu/faculty-resources/mentoring/.

Process: Within six months of starting employment, the unit chair/director will set up a mentoring committee for untenured faculty, consisting minimally of two tenured, senior faculty and assign a chair for the committee. The department chair is not a member of the mentoring committee, however, the importance of an informal mentoring relationship between the unit chair/director and junior faculty cannot be overstated. While the chair proposes a committee based on discussions with the new faculty member, membership is based on mutual agreement of all parties. It is strongly suggested that at least one member of the committee should come from outside the department. Once per year the mentee provides a progress report to the mentoring committee and the unit chair/director, and the mentoring committee provides a report to the chair/director that briefly describes their mentoring activities and gives input on how things are going. This report helps to inform the chair/director’s annual review meeting and letter to the mentee. Mentoring committee communications are not included in promotion dossiers.

Mentoring Committee: Mentors may review grant proposals and other products, visit classes and research spaces, talk to graduate and undergraduate students and advise on the preparation of reappointment and tenure review materials. The mentoring committee may find it useful to meet with the mentee soon after the committee is established. Informal mentoring will happen throughout the year, with full committee meetings scheduled with the mentee at least once a year in preparation for the committee report. Common discussion questions (from the OFDD website above, “The Mentoring Relationship”) include:

- What does the promotion and tenure process look like? What are the formal and informal criteria for promotion and tenure? How do I build a tenure file?
- How do I find or get nominated for fellowships, grants, awards?
- How do I write a winning grant?
- What organizations should I join? What conferences should I attend? Who can help me get on the program of important meetings?
- What are the leading journals in the field? How do I handle co-authors in my dossier?
- How do I get the attention of editors? What are the best ways to get feedback on a paper?
- How do I handle concerns, issues and problems in the department? What are appropriate ways to bring them up?
- What are strategies for handling the balance of research, teaching and service? Between career and home–life?

Annual Reviews: The unit chair/director meets annually with the untenured faculty member, after which they will write a formal evaluation letter of the professor’s performance. As the annual review process complements the faculty mentoring process, please refer to Periodic Review of Faculty https://cals.cornell.edu/sites/cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/SAD/Periodic_Review_of_Faculty.CALSSAD.pdf