

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FACULTY MENTORING POLICY

Mentoring plays a crucial role in becoming a successful scholar, teacher, and member of a university community. For this reason, the College of Arts and Sciences has developed a mentoring program for its tenure-track faculty, which enables them to take advantage of the expertise, experience, and judgment of departmental colleagues who are equally invested in their academic and professional success. This document describes the college's *Faculty Mentoring Policy*.

The Role of Mentoring

The College of Arts and Sciences defines mentoring as a collegial, advisory, and affirmative activity. Its purpose is not to replace the standard evaluation processes of departments, the college, and the University, but rather to provide additional support for faculty members. The specific goals of the college's mentoring program are to assist faculty members in the following ways:

1. establishing a strong scholarly/artistic career, including, but not limited to, setting a research agenda, finding and winning research support, preparing and publishing research, and forging the scholarly networks of support necessary for success;
2. developing the techniques to be an outstanding teacher;
3. prioritizing service commitments within the university and to external organizations to maximize service alongside research and publication and to build an integrated record of service, research, and teaching;
4. understanding the benefits and opportunities available to University of Miami faculty.

This is an important responsibility for those serving in the role of mentor as well as the chairs who oversee the program within each department. Accordingly, it should be should be recognized as such in the evaluation of faculty for merit, promotion, etc.

Administration

Respecting the different academic cultures of disciplines and departments, the college establishes only a minimum requirement for mentoring, with departments implementing and enhancing the program in their local contexts. As such, the mentoring process is administered through the departments with chairs assuming responsibility for appointing and guiding mentors in their work. For new assistant professors, the department chair assigns mentors during the first semester on campus, at the latest, and informs the Dean's Office of the mentor assigned to the new faculty member.

Based on consultation with the new appointee, the mentoring relationship is established, usually between mentors and mentees who have related research and teaching interests. In some cases, especially for faculty with interdisciplinary interests, it may be advantageous to appoint more than one mentor or a mentor from another department or school. During the pre-tenure period, mentor and mentee should consult at least once a semester, but typically their interactions are more frequent. In addition to regular mentoring meetings, the college encourages informal mentoring that develops as part of collegial interactions.

Also within the first semester of the new faculty member's appointment and independent of the mentoring process, the department chair must provide the new faculty member with the current department, college, and university standards and procedures for reappointment, promotion, and tenure in writing. The chair is responsible for reviewing and explaining the reappointment process over the six-year probationary period.

While mentoring should make attaining tenure and promotion more likely, the ultimate responsibility for attaining tenure and promotion lies with the individual faculty member. The provision of mentoring support is an endeavor different from the evaluation process that governs the official reviews for tenure and promotion. Although it does not does not commit a department, the college, or the university to a particular

action or outcome regarding promotion or tenure, its aim is to offer collegial support of a kind that will lead a faculty member to succeed. Any perceived or demonstrated deficiency in mentoring cannot be grounds for reconsidering promotion, reappointment, or tenure.

In this context it should be noted that, in the college, mentoring is not envisioned as a process that ends once tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor have been earned. An advisory process, it can and often should continue formally or informally across an academic career. In fact, tenured professors may find a mentor particularly helpful when they are turning their research in a new direction (especially when taking on new or more interdisciplinary issues) or expanding their research or teaching focus. Also, tenured faculty members who find their scholarly productivity stalled for some reason may find a mentor useful in re-focusing or re-energizing their research, publishing, or artistic activities. A tenured faculty member who might find a mentor valuable may identify the mentor independently or seek the chair's advice.

If for any reason, a mentee (or mentor) determines that the mentorship is ineffective, s/he should consult with their department chair so that a more productive mentorship can be arranged. *It should be stressed that the success of mentoring is not in its defined requirements but in the mutual commitment to establishing a productive relationship.*

Other Opportunities

As part of its mentoring efforts, the college also has a college-wide committee on mentoring with two chief functions: to hold periodic events for junior faculty to integrate them more fully into the campus network and community and to provide mentors with advice on their role.

10/03/07