CPH Faculty Mentoring Policy

College of Public Health
Faculty Mentorship Program

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Mentoring is a personalized, one-on-one approach to learning. The term signifies a trust-based arrangement by which a senior person provides beneficial counsel for a person with less experience. Mentoring takes many forms, both formal and informal, and there is a rich tradition of mentoring in many professions. Being mentored by persons with experience and excellent skills should be an integral part of everyone's professional development. We recognize that mentoring requires time, energy, and enthusiastic participation but we also recognize that the results of a successful mentorship program can be extraordinary.

In what follows, we present the key elements of a successful mentorship program. These include establishing a viable structure, identifying critical mentorship activities, establishing a process for matching and maintaining mentorships, and developing a method for program evaluation.

Mentoring Structure

An assistant professor, whether on a tenure, clinical or research track, must have a formal mentoring plan. An associate professor has the option of having a formal mentoring plan. This plan should include a minimum of two mentors. One of the mentors might be described as a "hands-on" mentor and the other might be a "meta-mentor." A hands-on mentor would share a common scholarly interest with the mentee, and provide advice (and collaborate) with a mentee on matters pertaining to scholarship, research, and teaching. For example, the hands-on mentor might provide feedback on grant proposals, review manuscripts, help prepare lectures, and other such activities. The hands-on mentor and mentee would meet on a regular basis.

Because a relationship with a hands-on mentor has the potential for professional conflicts of interest, a meta-mentor is also needed. Ideally, this meta-mentor would be someone who does not collaborate closely with or derive any patent professional benefit from either the mentee or the other mentor. As such, the meta-mentor can provide opinions on any number of issues such as mentee workload expectations, department performance criteria, college service responsibilities, and more general advice about personal health, workplace

harassment, or family planning. The meta-mentor would meet on a less frequent basis than the hands-on mentor. A meta-mentor might also help overcome problems that might occur if a hands-on mentor is not sufficiently engaged with the mentee and could advocate for the mentee should the need arise.

While it is important that at least one mentor represent the mentee's department, there may be some difficulty identifying two mentors from the same department. As such, it may be necessary (and encouraged) to seek a mentor from outside the department or the college, and in today's interdisciplinary research environment, it certainly should not be unexpected that at least one of the mentors would come from a different department or college.

The period of mentorship should last throughout the probationary period for tenure-track faculty, and through the contractual period for clinical and research track faculty. The period of mentorship for associate professors will be mutually determined by mentor and mentee.

Mentoring Activities
Mentors are expected to assist mentees' in developing their academic careers by providing support in the area of teaching, research and service. The following are some examples of discrete mentoring activities that one or both mentors may provide:

1. Tenure and Promotion
    Mentors may play an important role in the mentee's tenure and promotion by:

    a. Discussing with the mentee, the department's tenure/promotion requirements (as a complement to what was presented by the DEO);
    b. Periodically evaluating the mentee's progress towards achieving these requirements and working with the mentee to identify gaps or areas that require further development (as a complement to the DEO annual review);
    c. Helping to prepare annual review and promotion materials;
    d. Helping to respond to annual and promotion reviews

2. Scholarship
    Mentors can play an important role in mentee's scholarship by enhancing the mentee's progress in several areas including research, grant writing, publishing, and professional networking and visibility. Examples of mentoring activities that might be included under scholarship include:

    a. Grant writing and funding:
        ☐ Providing mentee opportunities to serve as a co-investigator;
        ☐ Identifying grant-funding opportunities;
        ☐ Referring mentee to grant skill development workshops; and resources as needed;

    ☐ Reviewing mentee's grant applications.

   b. Publications
- ☐ Offering opportunities for co-authorship;
- ☐ Developing ideas for papers on which the mentee can serve as a lead author;
- ☐ Identifying journals for manuscript submission;
- ☐ Reviewing manuscript drafts

   c. Professional development
- ☐ Assisting with identifying professional associations and conferences;
- ☐ Recommending mentee to editors to serve as a reviewer or on editorial board;
- ☐ Recommending mentee to serve on grant review panels;
- ☐ Nominate mentee for awards that are appropriate for their fields, work and career level.

3. Teaching
Mentors can enhance their mentee's teaching skills by

   a. Reviewing course syllabi and lecture materials;
   b. Discussing ways to enhance teaching skills;
   c. Identifying opportunities, resources and workshops for skill development
   d. Providing feedback on students' class evaluations and other presentations

4. Service
Mentors are expected to advise their mentee on the appropriate level of service to their department, college and university as well as to national organizations.

   a. Underscoring the role of service relative to scholarship and teaching;
   b. Monitoring number of committees appointed to and workload expectations;
   c. Identifying service opportunities in local, state, or national organizations;
   d. Providing feedback on mentees actual service activity.

5. Project and personnel management
   a. Inform mentee of university resources and processes available to resolve problems at work including personnel and project management;
   b. Provide advice on successful strategies for personnel and project management.

6. Balancing work and life

       a. Inform mentee of university resources available to promote individual health;

       b. Invite/encourage to join in outside, non-professional activities.

Matching Mentors and Mentees

A mutual agreement between the mentor and mentee is critical for the relationship to succeed. An unwilling mentor is unlikely to be helpful, and an unwilling mentee is unlikely to accept guidance.

The departmental executive officer (DEO) should facilitate the initial pairing between mentees and potential mentors, something likely to occur during the hiring process or during the first semester of employment. Mentors should generally be of a higher rank than mentees.

After arranging meetings with a variety of potential mentors, the mentee should determine which mentors are most suitable and then ask these individuals to engage in a relationship for no less than a year. The mentee and mentor should then develop a memorandum of understanding that lists out the nature of the relationship, the actual tasks being performed, and the expected frequency of contact. This MOU should be sent to the DEO.

Accountability and Tracking of Success

Although the mentor may provide advice in many areas, it is the responsibility of the mentee to develop and achieve goals to meet the standards for productivity and promotion. Individual mentor-mentee relationships should be evaluated and possibly revised annually. The DEO will have the MOUs at hand and can engage the mentee and mentor in separate conversations, as he or she sees fit. This conversation should include a discussion on the progress of the mentor-mentee relationship with both the mentor and mentee. In regard to the mentee, the DEO may use this as a time to suggest changes to the mentoring relationship as part of a more general plan to overcome areas of deficiency in the mentee's professional development. Moreover, the DEO might request a separate report be filed by the mentor about the mentee's progress as a way to get another perspective on mentee's performance or document mentor's level of engagement with mentee. The DEO should be encouraged to incentivize the mentor's successful involvement with the mentee. The DEO also should provide an opportunity for either party to request and be released from a mentoring relationship without penalty.

From the department and college perspective, several metrics might be considered for evaluating the success of a mentoring program. These include:
- Level of engagement (how many times did mentee-mentor meet, what tasks were addressed);
- Levels of satisfaction of mentees and mentors with relationship
- Continuation or dissolution of relationships;

- Correlations between mentee success in teaching, scholarship and service with level of engagement, satisfaction and continuation of relationship.