Department of Environmental Science and Ecology

Faculty Mentoring Program – Guidelines and Policies

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Purpose

Mentoring and career guidance are important aspects of successful career development of newly appointed faculty members. The goals of the mentoring program are to have senior, experienced faculty members assist incoming junior faculty in the development of a career plan to facilitate a successful transition to UTSA; and to provide the means to assess their progress towards achieving the goals of their career development plan, and tenure and promotion.

Eligibility and Expectations

All faculty have the option of participating in the mentoring program as a mentee. It is required by all Assistant and Associate Professors.

Structure of Mentoring Program in Department of Environmental Science and Ecology

Early Career Development Plan

The mentoring process will center on the development of an early career development plan for junior faculty which will include goals and timelines tailored to meet the needs and areas of technical interest of the particular faculty member. The early career development plan will be created through a joint effort between the faculty mentor(s), the faculty member, and the chair of the department. Setting specific goals and timelines will allow assessment of progress towards tenure by the junior faculty member on a continuous basis upon their arrival to UTSA.

Issues to be Included in the Career Development Plan

The early career development plan will serve as a roadmap for the new faculty member so they can focus their efforts on making adequate and timely progress towards promotion and tenure. This plan must address the three main areas of academic performance in which the candidate will be evaluated when seeking promotion and tenure: research, teaching, and service. A Manuscript Submittal Plan and Grant Submittal Plan must be a part of the Career Development Plan. For each of the three areas, the career plan will include milestones and specific targets to be achieved during the entire period preceding promotion. The role of the faculty mentor is to provide advice in setting the goals of the career plan and to provide feedback on a periodic basis about the progress made towards those goals. It is strongly encouraged that the faculty mentor and mentee meet with the chair of the department to show the career plan so that the chair can have input to any changes that are necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mentee

Roles and responsibilities by year are detailed in Tables 1 and 2 below. It is expected that the mentee will take responsibility and be actively involved in the mentoring relationship. Mentees are expected to establish goals based on their needs. The goals should be specific, measureable, actionable, realistic, and timely. It is important that the mentee be prepared, including providing agendas in advance of the meetings with their mentor. Mentees should be

active listeners, maintain confidentiality, recognize the importance of the mentor's time, have a willingness to request and act on feedback, and follow through with recommendations.

Assistant Professors: Assistant Professors are expected to meet with their mentor at least seven (7) times over the nine (9) months of the academic year for the first three years. Within the first year, the assistant professor mentee should have developed their career development plan, consultant with the mentor regarding the plan, and make any adjustments to the plan based on the consultation.Associate Professors: Associate Professors are expected to meet with their mentor at least three (3) times over the nine (9) months of the academic year. The major of the role of the associate mentee is to prepare a plan for promotion to full professor.Non-tenure Track Faculty: While not required, non-tenure track faculty may request mentoring. The mentoring goals will be determined by the mentee and mentor to achieve the personal goals of the mentee.**Mentor**

Faculty mentors, under the supervision of the department chair, will work with junior faculty in the development of their career plans and provide feedback on the progress towards tenure on a periodic basis. Their primary role is to provide guidance and support to the mentee based on the mentee's needs. The role of the mentor will be dependent on the needs of the mentee, and may be as a coach/advisor, where they will give advice, share ideas, and provide feedback on the mentee's career development plan. The mentor may be a source of encouragement and support, acting as a sounding board regarding external stresses, such as family obligations, time management, or other issues impeding the success of the mentee. ***Acknowledgement*** of the efforts will occur through the merit review process. The departmental merit review form has been modified and mentorship has been included in the Service portion of the rubric.

Department Chair

The Department Chair will assign the mentors to the mentees soon after the new faculty member has been hired. The chair will assess the mentoring relationship by communicating with the mentees and mentors at the beginning of each semester and at the end of the academic year. To determine the effectiveness, the Chair will request feedback from mentees and mentors regarding the relationship and progress. Based on the feedback, the Chair will make any modifications to the relationship to assure that the relationship is effective. If needed, the Chair will assign a new mentor if the relationship is not effective.

Timelines and Benchmarks

Timelines and Benchmarks are found in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Review of Mentoring Plan

The Department of Environmental Science and Ecology Mentoring plan will be reviewed at the end of the each year. Feedback will be solicited by the Chair from the participants (mentees and mentors) to determine any changes that are needed.

Possible Mentoring Activities

The following are a list of mentoring actives and points of discussion.

1. Providing information about promotion and tenure processes
2. Describing and illustrating departmental, research center, college, and university culture
3. Providing constructive and supportive feedback on specific work or on career progress
4. Providing encouragement, support and listening to concerns of the new faculty member
5. Helping to foster important connections and visibility within and outside of the department and university
6. Research issues including
    a. Assisting in locating external funding sources and opportunities
    b. Identifying resources and opportunities within the department and institution
    c. Navigating the proposal preparation and approval process
    d. Internal review and advice regarding proposals
    e. Publishing expectations
    f. Expectations of external funding
    g. Mentoring graduate students
7. Teaching issues including
    a. Course assignment
    b. Evaluation of teaching
    c. Expectation of students
    d. Grading policy
    e. Resources for teaching improvement available at UTSA
    f. Resources for teaching improvement outside of UTSA
8. Obtaining and supporting graduate students
9. Important individuals to know and relationships to cultivate
10. Understanding practical politics
11. Providing service to the department, college, university, and profession

Prescribed Mentoring Activities

Prescribed mentoring activities are defined in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Roles and responsibilities for mentee, mentor, and chair for Assistant Professors. *Benchmarks are shown in bold.*

Assistant Professor Year 1 - Roles and Responsibilities	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Mentee		
Schedule monthly meeting with mentor	1-Aug	10-Aug
Meet monthly with mentor	1-Sep	30-Apr
Attend teaching and research workshops	1-Sep	31-May
Complete Draft of Career Plan	1-Sep	1-Jan
Manuscript submittal plan	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Grant submittal plan	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Respond to Feedback to Career Plan	1-Jan	31-Mar
Complete Career Plan	**1-Apr**	**31-May**
Mentor		
Reach out to mentee regarding move to San Antonio	1-Jun	1-Aug
Meet monthly with mentee	1-Sep	30-Apr
Provide feedback regarding Career Plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Provide feedback to manuscript submittal plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Provide feedback to grant submittal plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Introduction to VPR	1-Sep	30-Nov
Chair		
Assign mentorships	1-May	1-Jun
Initial meetings with mentees and mentors	1-Sep	30-Sep
End-of-semester communication with mentee and mentor	1-Dec	15-Dec
Request feedback	1-Sep	1-Aug
Make any modification needed to improve effectiveness	1-Sep	1-Aug
Assistant Professor Year 2 - Roles and Responsibilities	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Mentee		
Schedule monthly meeting with mentor	1-Aug	10-Aug
Meet monthly with mentor	1-Sep	30-Apr
Review Career Plan and Progress	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Mentor		
Meet monthly with mentee	1-Sep	30-Apr
Discuss process for third year review	**1-Jan**	**31-May**
Provide feedback regarding progress towards Career Plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Chair		
Initial meetings with mentees and mentors	1-Sep	30-Sep
End-of-semester communication with mentee and mentor	1-Dec	15-Dec
Request feedback	1-Sep	1-Aug
Make any modification needed to improve effectiveness	1-Sep	1-Aug
Assistant Professor Year 3 -Roles and Responsibilities	**Start Date**	**End Date**

Mentee		
Schedule monthly meeting with mentor	1-Aug	10-Aug
Meet monthly with mentor	1-Sep	30-Apr
Review Career Plan and Progress	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Mentor		
Meet monthly with mentee	1-Sep	30-Apr
Provide advice regarding preparing third year review packet	**1-Sep**	**1-Dec**
Provide feedback regarding progress towards Career Plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Chair		
Initial meetings with mentees and mentors	1-Sep	30-Sep
End-of-semester communication with mentee and mentor	1-Dec	15-Dec
Request feedback	1-Sep	1-Aug
Make any modification needed to improve effectiveness	1-Sep	1-Aug

Table 2. Roles and responsibilities for mentee, mentor, and chair for Associate Professors. Benchmarks are shown in bold.

Associate Professor Year 1 - Roles and Responsibilities	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Mentee		
Schedule meetings with mentor	1-Aug	10-Aug
Meet with mentor	1-Sep	30-Apr
Attend teaching and research workshops	1-Sep	31-May
Complete draft of Promotion Plan	1-Sep	1-Jan
Manuscript submittal plan	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Grant submittal plan	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Respond to Feedback to Promotion Plan	1-Jan	31-Mar
Complete Promotion Plan	**1-Apr**	**31-May**
Mentor		
Meet with mentee	1-Sep	30-Apr
Provide feedback regarding Promotion Plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Provide feedback to manuscript submittal plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Provide feedback to grant submittal plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Chair		
Assign mentorships	1-May	1-Jun
Initial meetings with mentees and mentors	1-Sep	30-Sep
End-of-semester communication with mentee and mentor	1-Dec	15-Dec
Request feedback	1-Sep	1-Aug
Make any modification needed to improve effectiveness	1-Sep	1-Aug
Associate Professor Year 2 - Roles and Responsibilities	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Mentee		
Schedule meeting with mentor	1-Aug	10-Aug
Meet with mentor	1-Sep	30-Apr
Review Promotion Plan and Progress	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Mentor		
Meet with mentee	1-Sep	30-Apr
Discuss process for promotion	**1-Jan**	**31-May**
Provide feedback regarding progress towards Promotion Plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Chair		
Initial meetings with mentees and mentors	1-Sep	30-Sep
End-of-semester communication with mentee and mentor	1-Dec	15-Dec
Request feedback	1-Sep	1-Aug
Make any modification needed to improve effectiveness	1-Sep	1-Aug
Associate Professor Year 3 -Roles and Responsibilities	**Start Date**	**End Date**
Mentee		
Schedule meeting with mentor	1-Aug	10-Aug

Meet with mentor	1-Sep	30-Apr
Review Promotion Plan and Progress	**1-Sep**	**1-Jan**
Mentor		
Meet with mentee	1-Sep	30-Apr
Provide feedback regarding progress towards Promotion Plan	**1-Jan**	**1-Feb**
Chair		
Initial meetings with mentees and mentors	1-Sep	30-Sep
End-of-semester communication with mentee and mentor	1-Dec	15-Dec
Request feedback	1-Sep	1-Aug
Make any modification needed to improve effectiveness	1-Sep	1-Aug