

Chemistry Department Guidelines for Mentoring Assistant Professors

Historically, assistant professors in the Chemistry Department were unofficially assigned a faculty mentor within the first semester of starting at UMass Boston. The assignment was allowed to happen organically, in that it was determined to whom the junior faculty member went to for advice the most frequently and the DPC chair would approach said senior faculty member about serving as a mentor. The DPC chair would then share major personnel expectations with the mentor to pass along to the junior faculty member.

From now on, this mentoring relationship will be made formal, and happen earlier, to help ensure the success of any Assistant Professors the Chemistry Department is allowed to hire.

Department Chair:

The Department Chair, in consultation with the executive committee, will appoint a mentor as soon as possible after the hire, based on overlap in research expertise and courses taught. This will allow the mentor to begin welcoming the junior faculty member into the department, to help figure out a sequence of courses with him/her, orient the new hire to departmental procedures, and be available to answer questions.

In addition to assigning a faculty mentor, the Chair will meet regularly and separately with the junior faculty member and the mentor to assess the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship and take action if it is not fulfilling its goals.

Faculty Mentor:

The mentor and junior faculty member should make plans for scholarship, teaching and service. Together, they should develop a year-by-year timeline that ensures that the candidate has adequate time and resources to develop their research program. Mentors are expected to meet with mentees 2-3 times a semester during the first year, and then an agreed upon time for subsequent semesters, with a minimum of one meeting a semester.

The mentor should be available to participate in discussing:

- a research trajectory and possible venues for submitting publications
- research-related funding requests
- cross-departmental collaborations with faculty and centers
- a sequence of courses that balances new and repeated courses and meets college expectations for range
- the development of a syllabi, expected types of assignments, grading systems, etc.
- possible changes in one's teaching style or syllabi based on course evaluations and reflection on one's teaching experiences
- possible "in-class observations" to provide feedback on teaching effectiveness or style, if desired by the junior faculty member
- possible service opportunities inside and outside the department
- the fourth year review personal statement and cv
- provide support around "big-picture" thinking like
 - how to balance teaching, service, research and other commitments
 - how to set up and manage a research group
 - how to set multi-year plans for one's work across these arenas
 - how to make choices about service requests and other responsibilities

After the assistant professor undergoes their fourth year review, the mentor, who should be familiar with the candidate's file, as well as the recommendations of the DPC, Chair, CPC, Dean and Provost, will meet with the candidate to examine at these documents with a view to planning what needs to be done to strengthen the case for tenure in terms of scholarship, teaching and service. They should meet with the department chair at least once to confirm the direction they are taking and to clarify any ambiguities among the reports. It might be helpful to work backwards from the expected tenure file (what the candidate hopes to submit) in developing a plan for what needs to be done between the 4th year review and tenure.

Effective faculty mentors, as judged by the departmental chair in consultation with the junior faculty member, will be recognized during AFR reviews.