

**Junior Faculty Mentoring Plan  
Department of Exercise and Health Sciences  
University of Massachusetts Boston**

**IMPORTANT NOTE(S):**

- Before implementing its junior faculty mentoring plan, all tenure-stream faculty in EHS should discuss and approve the plan, including how mentors will receive recognition.
- Once approved, the Chair should guide each new DPC to credit this service in its reviews.

**PURPOSE OF MENTORING PLAN**

The purpose of this document is to outline components of the Department of Exercise and Health Sciences (EHS) mentoring plan for junior faculty (i.e., pre-tenure Assistant Professors). Associate Professors who do not have tenure may want to consult with the Department Chair for an appropriate mentoring plan. The plan is intended to guide the EHS chair and tenured faculty in implementing a plan for junior faculty that will help them navigate the tenure process. This plan will have **structure, forms of accountability and service recognition for mentors**. These three elements are commonly noted in the literature as comprising best practices for mentoring plans.

**The EHS plan has a four-part structure with a brief description of how accountability and recognition will be ensured.**

1. EHS Chair's role
2. EHS Faculty mentor's role
3. EHS Group mentoring role
4. EHS Mentoring network role

**EHS DEPARTMENT CHAIR'S ROLE**

The EHS Chair should meet individually with each junior faculty member once in the Fall and once in the Spring semester. The Fall meeting should be scheduled after the faculty member has received comments on their Annual Faculty Review (AFR) from the Department Personnel Committee (DPC), the Chair, and the Dean. The purpose of the Fall meeting is to discuss feedback the junior faculty member has received and to clarify their research, teaching and service goals for the academic year.

The primary goal of the Spring meeting is to review the junior faculty member's progress toward their goals for the academic year and to provide input and mid-year adjustments to the faculty member's workplan in terms of research, teaching, and service.

Both the Fall and Spring meeting also gives the EHS Chair an opportunity to direct the faculty member to relevant resources inside and outside of UMass Boston and discuss specific strategies to advance their research and other interests. In addition, both meetings provide an opportunity for the Chair to discuss teaching assignments and courses the junior faculty member may want to develop and service opportunities that align with the faculty member's interests, skills, or research/teaching areas. Meetings

with the Chair should also focus on expectations for junior faculty regarding research, teaching, and service as they relate to fourth year and tenure reviews.

During the junior faculty member's first year in EHS, the Chair meetings can also be used to identify potential faculty mentors inside or outside of the department.

### **Means of Accountability and Recognition**

- The EHS Chair will log the dates and times of meetings with junior faculty members. The log is a public document. The log will allow the Chair to concretely report mentoring service on AFRs and promotion statements, while preserving confidentiality of the meetings.
- The Chair keeps meeting notes which include plans and action items that can be updated. These notes are not a public document, but are for accountability documentation for the Chair's AFR.

### **EHS FACULTY MENTOR ROLE**

The Chair's initial meetings with the junior faculty member (i.e., during Year 1) include identifying a primary EHS mentor to support the faculty member's overall goals for research, teaching and service. Ideally the primary faculty mentor within EHS will have content expertise that matches the expertise and focus of the junior faculty member. The junior faculty member should take an active role with the Chair in identifying a potential mentor. If a mentoring match in terms of research expertise in EHS is not feasible, the Chair and junior faculty member should explore finding a mentor outside of EHS who can provide advice on research plans for the pre-tenure period.

If an appropriate primary EHS mentor cannot be identified during the junior faculty member's first semester at UMass Boston, the EHS Chair can assign an "orientation mentor" for the first year. This person can welcome the junior faculty member and support her/him regarding teaching and service, campus logistics and questions.

In some cases, the Chair and junior faculty member may decide that two mentors may be preferable to one. In cases where there will be two faculty mentors, the areas of focus for each mentor will be clearly defined (e.g., one mentor for teaching and one for research).

The primary mentor(s) and the junior faculty member should discuss tenure expectations and plans based on available documents (e.g., UMass Boston Redbook) early in the pre-tenure process. They should collaboratively develop plans for research, teaching and service up to the 4<sup>th</sup> year review and then again up to the tenure review.

It is recommended that the primary faculty mentor(s) meet with the junior faculty member every 1 to 2 months during the academic year to assess progress, address problems, prepare for major reviews and generally serve as a trusted resource. If this frequency of meeting is not feasible, the mentor should meet with the faculty member at least two times per semester.

The mentor(s) should be available to discuss some or all of the following:

- Research trajectory, which may include plans for seeking internal and external funding, and dissemination of research through peer-reviewed journals and conference presentations

- Research collaborations
- Teaching strategies and possible modifications in teaching style or syllabi based on course evaluations and reflection on teaching experiences
- A sequence of course assignments that balances new and repeated courses with range (e.g., programs - undergraduate and graduate; levels of undergraduate courses – 100 and 400) and meets departmental needs
- Possible service opportunities in department, college, university and professional venues beyond the university
- Development of personal statement, CV, and other supporting materials for 4<sup>th</sup> year and tenure reviews

### **Means of Accountability and Recognition**

- EHS faculty mentors should keep a log with dates and times of meetings with mentees. The log is a public document. The log will allow mentors to concretely report mentoring service on AFRs and promotion statements while preserving confidentiality.
- The mentor(s) should also keep meeting notes, including plans and action items for future mentoring meetings that can be updated. These notes are not a public document, but are for accountability documentation for the EHS mentor's AFR.
- EHS may choose to design a standard mentoring checklist for the Department. This is a simple way to make basic mentoring expectations clear.

### **EHS GROUP MENTORING**

In cases where EHS has two or more new junior faculty members, the EHS Chair and individual faculty mentors within EHS may constitute an EHS Mentoring Committee. This Committee could organize meetings that would take place twice per year in the Fall and Spring semesters.

The meeting agendas can be developed collaboratively based on what mentors perceive as needs and what junior faculty mentees request. Alternatively, a topical program can be organized in advance to prevent duplication with the individual meetings that mentors have with junior faculty. Group meetings of the EHS junior faculty cohort may also provide opportunities for peer support and mentoring.

An alternative to the above scenario for group mentoring is that EHS can collaborate with the Nursing Department to conduct group mentoring with pre-tenure faculty in both departments. This type of group mentoring was conducted during the academic years from 2017 to 2019. The group met monthly during the academic year, was co-facilitated by two tenured faculty in EHS and Nursing and had a planned set of topics for each meeting.

#### Examples of possible topics for group mentoring meetings are:

- Teaching strategies, including teaching large classes effectively
- Advising and mentoring graduate students, including theses and dissertations
- Balancing and building one's research while teaching
- Expectations for service at various levels, including department, college, university, and profession
- Developing effective personal statements and CVs for major reviews

## Means of Accountability and Recognition

- With the formation of an EHS Mentoring Committee, accountability can be provided via end of the academic year reports to the Chair. If a joint mentoring group with the Department of Nursing is initiated again, the same type of report could be provided to each department's Chair.
- A committee could aggregate all the logs as well as the group mentoring activities to provide a picture of department support for junior faculty. Faculty on the committee would have data for reporting on AFRs and promotional reviews.

## EHS JUNIOR FACULTY MENTORING NETWORK

The EHS mentoring plan alone may not be an adequate form of support. The junior faculty member is the primary agent of her or his development. The chart below enables the junior faculty member to reflect on their goals in the context of their entire mentoring network. By completing an inventory of their mentoring network, the junior faculty member can identify resources that may not have been considered and identify gaps in their mentoring. It is suggested that junior faculty members complete this exercise at various time-points throughout their pre-tenure period and share/discuss with their mentor(s) and the EHS Chair.

