

Junior-Faculty Mentoring Plan in the Mathematics Department

The mathematics department has worked in implementing a mentoring plan. We followed guidelines established by other universities, sources publicly available, the AMS and MAA websites, as well as discussions with colleagues and members of other departments. This plan formalises the relationship between mentors and mentees, provides a structure for mentoring relationships. The plan delineates the responsibilities of all stakeholders: Department chair, faculty mentors, faculty mentees and the department as a whole, as well as the frequency of individual or group meetings. The plan was written in a way that it will promote the greater-good for the department by investing in its human resources so that they can better serve our department, college, students and our community in general. The plan also includes a mechanism for accountability for mentorship. We design the mentoring plan that includes individual or group mentoring opportunities and mechanisms for their long-term implementation.

We followed the following goal while working on this process.

Goal: To improve junior faculty career success and retention by establishing clear expectations, and providing guidance towards achieving them; to enhance departmental climate, transparency, and consensus; to build community and encourage intra- and inter-departmental networking; and to promote excellent research, teaching, and service across the College and University.

Plan:

1. Each newly hired, tenure-track faculty member will have at least one mentor that will cover research, teaching and service. Full-time non-tenure track faculty and when appropriate new TT faculty., will receive teaching mentorship from the Committee of the Lower Division (CLD), which will consist of the Director of the Lower division and the coordinators of the lower division classes.
2. The Department Chair is responsible for assigning mentors and should keep in mind equitable assignment loads. The Department Chair will inform the new faculty members and faculty mentors of their mentoring assignment. The Chair shall do this, if possible, at least two months prior to the start date. Mentors should begin interacting with mentees a month prior to the start date if possible.
3. The TT mentor should discuss with the mentee the expectations in the department regarding tenure, and the three main categories of research, teaching and service. The mentor should guide the mentee on how to accomplish his career goals. This includes research activities, publication expectations, grant opportunities, service to the profession, service outside the university, and how to prepare for the four year review and tenure review. The TT mentor should discuss thoroughly how to balance and excel in the three main categories of research, teaching and service. The mentor should discuss paths to resolve issues that arise during the mentee's pre-tenure career.

4. The CLD shall assist with the necessary steps to help a new faculty start and succeed in their classes. This includes providing information regarding course syllabi, common practices in classes, as well as to inform the new faculty about all university resources available for teaching. With the mentee's consent, class observations will be used to provide feedback, and all information and discussions related to the class visits will be kept confidential between the junior faculty and mentor. The teaching mentor should provide general orientation to teaching, teaching policies, expected types of assignments/level of course, and grading systems. At the end of each semester, the teaching mentors should meet with the mentee to discuss teaching evaluations and strategies for improvement when needed.
5. Other mentors can be assigned regarding other responsibilities for TT or NTT faculty as deemed appropriate.
6. Mentors are expected to formally meet with mentees at least two times a semester during the first year, and then a minimum of one meeting a semester thereafter.
7. Mentors are responsible for making meeting arrangements. Mentees are responsible for keeping records of the discussions as well as to follow up on recommendations from the mentor.
8. For accountability, the Chair will have meetings with mentors and mentees to discuss the progress and success of the relationship and to discuss and/or resolve issues as needed. The mentee should contact the Chair immediately, if there are concerns about the health of the mentor/mentee relationship.
9. The department as a whole should welcome and encourage new faculty to integrate in the daily life of the department. Remember that their success is our success!