MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

College of Social Science

Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences

College of Social Science Faculty Mentoring Policy

September 22, 2011

Formal Mentoring Defined

Formal mentoring is when one or more mentors are intentionally assigned to a mentee and assume responsibility for facilitating the professional development of the mentee through activities such as providing information, advice, encouragement, and connections to other mentors, colleagues and professional networks. It is voluntary and can result in a two-way, mutually beneficial relationship. No one mentor can fulfill all of a mentee's needs. Mentees have a responsibility to maximize and build on the mentor/mentee relationship with other mentors and career development activities.[1]

Introduction

The College of Social Science is committed to furthering faculty development as it relates to our continued strategic development in the areas of research, teaching, scholarship and service. An inclusive faculty development environment brings benefits for all individuals and groups in the College. As a part of an inclusive faculty development environment, the College recognizes and supports the need and value of a college-wide faculty mentoring policy and requests that all units develop a faculty mentoring program. These unit programs must illustrate consistency of practice that align with the over-arching university policy.

A mentoring program that is clear, concise and aligned with university policy will encourage consistency of practice and promote a unit and college culture where faculty are well supported throughout their academic careers. The College recognizes that the process of mentoring is a significant part of faculty development opportunities for both the mentor and the mentee. It also recognizes the value of mentoring to junior and senior faculty. Therefore, it is expected that the contribution of faculty within the mentor role will be recognized as an element of their leadership development.

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[1] From Michigan State University ADAPP frequently asked questions document. Check the ADAPP website for handouts on mentoring models, the role of mentors and a sample of typical mentoring behaviors; see
http://www.adapp-advance.msu.edu/system/files/content/FAQ_MSU_Mentor_Policy-Program_5-26-11.pdf.

Department and School Role/Responsibility

The College of Social Science values and supports the roles that academic units play in supporting faculty development while respecting the diverse disciplines/professions, missions and values across units in the College. From this perspective, academic units play an essential role in the development of a formal, inclusive and substantive mentoring program for pre-tenure and tenured faculty members. Programs that include aspects to support further career development of senior faculty also are encouraged.

While the goals and structure of department/school mentoring programs may vary across academic units, each program should at a minimum:

- Support faculty excellence across the mission and goals of the university, college and unit by assisting faculty with the establishment and sustainability of an innovative research and scholarship program; effective teaching, engagement and mentoring of undergraduate and graduate students; and service.
- Encourage and support faculty involvement in professional activities, both nationally and internationally, that reflect their scholarship as appropriate to their rank and stage in career.
- Assist faculty with building, increasing, strengthening and sustaining institutional and disciplinary/professional leadership skill development as appropriate to their rank and stage in career.

Although the approach to establishing and sustaining a mentoring program may vary across academic units, all programs must include the following elements:

1. There must be a written document that has been reviewed and approved by the department/school's faculty. The document should illustrate the key aspects of the program while highlighting the policies, goals, and expectations for the mentor(s) and the mentee(s).

    a. A section of the document must clearly describe the selection process for mentors and a mechanism for making changes to the assignment of mentors as appropriate for junior (and potentially senior) faculty. The structure: Each junior faculty member in the tenure system shall be assigned one or more senior faculty member(s) as mentor(s) in addition to the unit academic administrator. In an effort to respect professional/academic diversity, the selection of mentors should not necessarily be limited to a particular junior faculty member's academic home (i.e., the mentor may have a different tenure home, if acceptable to the mentor and mentee, and the mentor's home unit). This possibility should be discussed with an outline of clearly defined roles and expectations.

    b. In an effort to continue to be supportive of faculty members with joint appointments, the plan must include specific details about the management of mentoring junior faculty with joint appointments within and outside of the College. It is expected that there will be a single mentoring plan for jointly appointed faculty members to follow, with

leadership being guided by the lead unit administrator. The plan should include details regarding communication protocols across the two units in reference to the mentor/mentee expectations.

c. The unit document must include a clear and concise description of expected mentoring activities and roles, with elements addressing research, teaching, scholarship, service, and professional leadership development. The unit document also must describe how these expectations will be communicated to the faculty.

d. There must also be clarity regarding the roles of mentor(s) and the mentees expectations for confidentiality[2]. The program should highlight aspects of shared information that will not become a part of the mentee's reappointment, promotion and tenure process; the role of mentor(s), if any, in the annual evaluation and RPT process; and who (including the mentee) does/does not see written mentoring reports, if such reports are prepared (units may decide if they would like to have annual reports on mentoring activity).

e. The formal mentoring program must provide an environment in which the mentee and the mentor can address issues/concerns without fear of retribution within the unit structure.

f. Furthermore, it is suggested that actual or perceived conflicts of interest should also be highlighted in this section of the program.

g. A description of how mentoring activities will be reported and evaluated as a portion of an individual mentor's service to the unit and larger university should be included.

h. A description of how the overall unit faculty mentoring process is reported to the Dean's office as a part of the unit administrator's annual evaluation should be included.

i. The unit mentoring program must include a provision for mentors and mentees to opt out of the mentoring program. The unit document should clearly describe the opting out process, and also describe how a faculty member may reverse this decision if he or she chooses.

2. The chair/director will provide support and leadership for integrating mentoring activities into the unit culture. This cultural development process should highlight mentoring as a formal aspect of unit, college and university service and should be incorporated into the annual faculty evaluations for the faculty serving as mentors.

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[2] Privacy and confidentiality will be protected to the extent allowable by university policy and the law. If warranted, relevant information will be shared only as necessary to assist with the resolution of a given situation as deemed necessary by university policy and the law. This will occur in consultation with the unit leader and the Dean's office when appropriate.

3. Aspects of diversity as it is broadly defined are to be respected as it relates to the academic unit, mentors and mentees. Units may consult with the College's office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Affairs (OEDIA) for assistance with this aspect of their formal mentoring program.

College Role/Responsibility

The CSS Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Affairs (OEDIA) will provide support and guidance for the unit mentoring programs that will be connected to the MSU ADVANCE NSF program or its successor program. OEDIA will assist (as needed) with the development and implementation of the formal mentoring program and the regular review of each unit's mentoring program. This process will include ensuring that all faculty members are informed and have access to formal mentoring programs in the College and at MSU. Examples of support structures include:

1. Connections and updates on various information available through the university as a part of the ADVANCE initiative or its successor program;

2. Workshops and faculty development programs (either by the College or in conjunction with the university, through such units as the Office of Faculty and Organizational Development);

3. Assistance for units (through the respective chair's or director's office) to create and maintain a central repository of information about best practices, mentoring policies and programs;

4. Provision of information to prepare new faculty (e.g., resources, expectations) as part of an annual college orientation.

The Director for OEDIA or the Dean's designee will continue to serve as a confidential, reliable and supportive entity for faculty to obtain guidance within and outside of the realm of faculty mentoring (see OEDIA mission statement). The office will continue to serve as a resource hub where faculty can discuss sensitive issues in a supportive and confidential environment.

Assessment and Evaluation

The effectiveness of the unit formal mentoring program will be assessed at least every five years as specified in the university faculty mentoring policy. Furthermore, as an additional aspect of the chair/director annual evaluation, the Dean will require a section of this report to include an update/progress assessment of the unit's formal faculty mentor program. These annual updates will provide an opportunity for the Dean to discuss current trends/issues prior to the formal program evaluation that will occur at least every five years.