FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM

Department of Physics & Astronomy
University of Utah

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Contents

Overview

The goal of the Department of Physics & Astronomy's Faculty Mentoring Program is to support the professional development and success of our faculty, especially those in the early stages of their career. The program pairs faculty with more senior mentors who provide guidance in areas including research, teaching, and the Review, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) process. The mentee-mentor partnership can assist a faculty member with career development in a variety of ways, including highlighting strengths and challenges and identifying resources to avoid or resolve problems. Mentors also welcome new faculty members and help them get acquainted with how things work in our department, from the RPT process to where to find whiteboard markers.

This document provides information about who participates in the program and how it operates. Much of the structure and content is based on the University of California, San Francisco *Faculty Mentoring Toolkit*. See the list of Resources for more information on the UCSF implementation.

Our mentoring plan is only a part of the support faculty in their early career can receive here on campus. Working with — and supporting — peers, both in the department and in the College of Science, is an integral part of a rewarding career. The university also provides support through wellness and counseling resources, and development opportunities like leadership training. Mentees are encouraged to use all available Resources!

Mentorship Roles

Mentee. Assistant or Associate rank faculty member in P&A, including both tenure-track or career line. Participation in the Faculty Mentoring Program is recommended for all tenure-track faculty during their pre-tenure or probationary period.

Mentor. Senior faculty member (tenured Associate rank or higher) who agrees to serve as a mentor, following the guidelines established here. Any tenured Associate Professor (tenure-track or career-line) may serve as a faculty mentor. A mentee may have more than one concurrent mentorship relationship but must respect the confidentiality of each relationship. A mentor may work with no more than two mentees at a time.

Faculty Mentoring Committee (FMC). Department committee tasked with overseeing the operation of the Faculty Mentoring Program. Specific duties include: recruiting senior faculty to serve as mentors, setting up mentee-mentor pairs, and tracking mentoring agreements and meeting outcomes. Mentees and mentors

Benefits and Responsibilities

Engaging in a mentoring relationship as either a mentee or a mentor is a serious endeavor. Along with this commitment are substantial benefits to the mentee, the mentor, and their home department[1], which include:

- facilitating the recruitment, retention, and advancement of faculty;

- socializing mentees into an academic unit's culture;

- increasing collegiality and the building of relationships and networks among mentees and mentors;

- increasing productivity among both mentees and mentors; and

- promoting professional growth and career development for mentees and mentors, as well as increased productivity and organizational stability.

Clearly defined responsibilities will help both parties get the most out of the mentee-mentor partnership.

Mentor Responsibilities[2]:

- to listen, provide constructive feedback, and help your mentee consider options (you may share your own experiences or refer them to other resources);

- to help identify areas for the mentee's development, coach the mentee, and allow them opportunities to practice new skills;

- to provide guidance, not directions, and act as a collaborator in the problem solving process (not to solve problems for a mentee);

- to act as a sounding board, keeping mentee focused on positive steps toward professional success, and to alert to missteps;

- to respect the mentee's privacy and the confidentiality of the relationship.

Mentee Responsibilities[3]:

- to acknowledge that the development of your career can be enhanced through a series of planned experiences;

- to decide upon the amount of help and guidance you need;

- to identify the skills and competencies you wish to gain;

- to take the initiative to ask for the help or guidance to achieve your goals;

- to initiate meetings, and take responsibility for structuring a list of what you'd like to discuss;

- to report to the mentor how their input was used and demonstrate what you have learned;

- to honor commitments to the mentor;

- to respect the mentor's privacy and the confidentiality of the relationship.

In addition to these general benefits and responsibilities, the mentoring partnership must provide guidance in areas that are specific to a mentee's success in the department, including how to serve as an effective and fair advisor to students and postdoctoral scholars, and strategies for managing start-up resources to set up a strong and *independent* research program.

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[1]From *Developing and Sustaining Effective Faculty Mentoring Programs*, J. Fountain & K.E. Newcomer, JPAE, 22(4), 483.
[2]Adapted from *Building Effective Mentoring Partnerships: How to be a Effective Mentor*, PCaddick (2009).
[3]Adapted from *Building Effective Mentoring Partnerships: How to be a Successful Mentee*, PCaddick (2009).

Choosing a mentor

New faculty select a mentor shorty after arrival at the University, or may request someone to be assigned by the FMC. There are many factors to consider in the choice of a mentor: field of expertise, research style (experiment/theory, research group composition and size), instruction style, communication style, and experience with the challenges unique to members of underrepresented groups in physics and astronomy.

To help new faculty members meet potential mentors who they are only just getting to know, the FMC may provide recommendations. Also, the department will support efforts for mentees to meet potential mentors in informal settings, and/or at social events designed to bring together potential mentee-mentor pairs.

Mentoring partnership agreements are effective for one year. Partnerships may be renewed, or new ones established. Mentees are encouraged to change their mentors over time, and there is no negative stigma associated with doing so. Instead, there is a recognized benefit of seeking different perspectives among senior mentors, and we encourage mentees to seek and maintain additional mentoring relationships of various types in addition to the mentee-mentor pairings established under this program.

Mentoring process

Mentoring Sessions. An initial meeting of a new mentee-mentor pair at the beginning of an academic year establishes the nature of the subsequent mentoring sessions, communication between meetings, and how to gauge the success of the partnership. Each mentee-mentor pair meets *twice per academic year* for semesterly check-point meetings. One week prior to each semesterly check-point meeting, the mentee should send a CV and a completed Development Plan to the mentor. *Additional meetings throughout each semester are strongly encouraged*, as these are critical to helping mentees feel supported and aware of resources (especially during the first years in our department and/or as a faculty member).

Each session may include an informal, personal component along with a discussion of mentee goals. Mentors can use the Evaluation of Mentee's Goals form, a checklist to help guide the sessions. Other suggestions for effective mentoring partnerships are listed in the Effective Mentoring Strategies section. A timeline for a one-year mentoring partnership, including relevant documentation, is given in the table below.

Month	Meetings/Benchmarks	Documentation
July/August	Mentee chooses a mentor for the academic year	Confirmation email (sent to FMC chair)
Aug.	Initial meeting	Mentoring Agreement Form (to FMC chair) Initial Mentoring Session Checklist*
Aug.-Dec.	Periodic meetings, agreed upon by mentee and mentor	Mentoring Session Journal*
Dec.	Mid-year check-point meeting	CV and Development Plan (sent to mentor) Mentoring Session Journal*
Jan.-May	Periodic meetings, agreed upon by mentee and mentor	Mentoring Session Journal*
May	End-of-year check-point meeting	CV and Development Plan (sent to mentor) Mentoring Session Journal*
May/June	Mentees meet with FMC chair about mentoring experience	[none; confidential meeting]
June	Mentors meet with FMC to assess overall program effectiveness	[none; no confidential information discussed]

*Retain copies for mentee and mentor records.

Mentoring Partnerships over Time. The timeline reflects the year-long duration of mentoring partnerships. While a longer-term partnership (3-5 years) may be effective, the year-to-year format also leaves opportunity to work with mentors who can offer guidance from different perspectives and ways in which they are

compatible with a mentee. In the event that a partnership is not effective for any reason, the FMC will help a mentee find a replacement mentor.

Confidentiality and Relation to RPT

Trust is a critical quality of a mentee-mentor partnership. The mentee and mentor must be able to have open and honest conversations about work-related issues. Both the mentee and mentor should fully respect the confidentiality of mentee-mentor communications. Trust can be built through active listening, sharing concerns, honoring confidentiality, and demonstrating trustworthiness in how one behaves.

The mentor's objective is to support the mentee's professional development. Guidance from the mentor should focus on how to establish a strong, *independent* research program, and how to become an effective educator and advisor to students and postdoctoral scholars. In all instances, the mentor must act in the mentee's best interest. A mentor may not take advantage of a mentee for the mentor's gain. Receiving any personal benefit by the mentor through the mentee-mentor relationship is presumptively unethical, and even appearance of such benefit must be avoided.

Successful fulfillment of the University and departmental retention, promotion, and tenure (RPT) requirements by the mentee is an important measure of academic success and is therefore a central objective of the mentor-mentee relationship. The mentor should help the mentee with the understanding of both the formal rules of the RPT process and the weight given by the faculty and the administration to various RPT metrics, such as publications, the amount of funding, teaching effectiveness, external reference letters, etc. Among other things, the mentee and mentor should discuss development of inside and outside recognition of the mentee's research program, as well as progress with securing the extramural funding necessary to achieving the mentee's research goals.

Since the mentor will necessarily take part in discussions of the mentee's RPT case, the mentor must ensure that no part of confidential communications is used or relied upon during RPT proceedings, unless explicitly authorized by the mentee. Importantly, a mentor is not necessarily the same person as the mentee's RPT advocate, a person who serves on the RPT subcommittee charged with drafting a review report for presentation to the faculty. If the mentor is also serving as an advocate, or is on the mentee's RPT subcommittee in any capacity, it is especially important that the mentee be aware of the mentor's RPT obligations versus their role as mentor. Both parties should be very clear about what part of their communications is confidential and what part is non-confidential information communicated with the purpose of drafting the RPT report.

Effective mentoring strategies

The UCSF *Faculty Mentoring Toolkit* has suggestions for making the mentoring partnership successful. Here is a summary of some key points:

- Mentees take an active role, beginning with selection of their mentor. Mentees are proactive in contacting mentors, and scheduling meetings, keeping CV's and development plans up-to-date.

- Mentors provide timely feedback that acknowledges circumstances and otherwise focuses on actions, behaviors, solutions, and strategies.

- Mentors listen actively/empathetically, provide collegial support and positivity, and promote independence. Mentors avoid heavy-handed oversight, and are facilitators of solutions, not "fixers".

- Mentors receive and accept feedback from their mentees on how effective they are in helping their mentees.

- Participation is rewarded! Mentors will have fewer other departmental service assignments and will have their roles considered in RPT reviews and advancement.

Building Effective Mentoring Partnerships (www.pcaddick.com) is an excellent resource for further strategies and information.

Mentoring Forms

The forms in this section are intended to support and guide the mentoring process. The following list summarizes each form and how it is used.

Mentoring Agreement Form. Completed and signed by both parties at the initial mentee-mentor meeting. Please return a copy of the signed agreement to the FMC.

Development Plan. Filled out by the mentee, and provided to the mentor prior to each meeting after the initial mentoring session. The mentor review this form before the meeting, and its items serve as a basis for discussion. (Confidential, not turned in to the FMC))

Initial Mentoring Session Checklist. Completed by mentee and mentor during the pair's first formal mentoring meeting. Retain for records; nothing to submit.

Mentoring Session Journal. Completed by the both parties during mentoring sessions following the initial meeting. Retain for records by mentee; nothing to submit.

Evaluation of Mentee's Goals. For mentors, a list of items geared toward evaluating a mentee's goals and keeping mentoring sessions on a track that is helpful to the mentee.

Mentoring Agreement

Source: UCSF Faculty Mentoring Toolkit

As a mentee and mentor in the Faculty Mentoring Program, we agree to abide by the following set of guidelines:

1. Commit to making the time to meet on a regular basis, no less than 2 times per year.

2. Keep the content of our conversations confidential.

3. Practice active listening.

4. Provide each other with honest, direct and respectful feedback.

5. Other: _____

   _____

   _____

_____   _____
Mentor   Mentee

_____   _____
Academic Year   Date

Initial Mentoring Session Checklist

Source: UCSF Faculty Mentoring Toolkit

Get to know each other

☐ Share information about your professional and personal life

☐ Learn something new about your mentee/mentor

Establish guidelines

☐ When and where will we meet?

☐ How do we schedule meetings?

☐ How will we communicate between meetings?

☐ What agenda format will we use?

☐ Will there be any fixed agenda items to be discussed at every meeting?

☐ How will we exchange feedback?

☐ How will we measure success?

Partnership agreement

☐ Review partnership agreement, modify if desired, sign and exchange

☐ Review goals for the mentoring relationship

Confirm next steps

☐ Schedule date, time and place of future meetings

Recommended initial meeting structure

- Engage in personal/professional "check-in" (5 minutes)
- Focus on 'front burner' issues (upcoming presentations, manuscript revision, etc.; 15 minutes)
- Discuss current and long term goals and priorities (40 minutes)
- Summarize discussion, clarify tasks, schedule follow-up meeting (10 minutes)

New mentee-mentor partnerships

For new partnerships, be sure to establish a plan for going over the general RPT process and specific RPT issues related to the mentee's current situation.

Development Plan

Source: UCSF Faculty Mentoring Toolkit

Instructions for Mentee: Please fill out this form and provide it and your CV to your mentor prior to your mentoring sessions.

Instructions for Mentor: Please review this material and the mentee's CV before each mentoring session.

Date: _____

Mentee:

Mentor:

Estimated Effort (as a percentage of your time):

____% Research

____% Advising students

____% Teaching / Course work preparation

____% Outreach

____% Department service

____% University service

How would you like to change this time allocation?

1. things you want to quit

2. things that you have been asked to do that you want to refuse to do

3. things that you want to continue

4. things that you are not doing that you want

5. strategies for improving the time allocation of your efforts

Current Professional Responsibilities
List your major professional responsibilities and if you anticipate significant changes in the coming year:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Professional Goals
Short-term goals: List your professional goals for the coming year. Be as specific as possible, and indicate how you will assess if the goal was accomplished (expected outcome).

1. Goal:

   Expected outcome:

2. Goal:

   Expected outcome:

3. Goal:

   Expected outcome:

Long-term goals: List your professional goals for the next 3–5 years. As above, provide specific information and indicate how you will assess if the goal was accomplished.

1. Goal:

   Expected outcome:

2. Goal:

   Expected outcome:

3. Goal:

   Expected outcome:

Mentoring Session Journal

Source: UCSF Faculty Mentoring Toolkit

Date: _____

Mentee:

Mentor:

☐ Check-In (overall situation, work-life balance, personal issues, etc):

☐ Urgent Issues or Concerns:

☐ Goal Discussion:

☐ Action items:

Date of next meeting: _____

Evaluation of Mentee's Goals
Source: UCSF Faculty Mentoring Toolkit

This form is for mentors to help direct mentoring sessions and to help assess mentoring effectiveness.

- ☐ Has your mentee identified specific short and long term goals?
- ☐ Are the goals definite and precise?
- ☐ Are your mentee's goals quantifiable in nature?
- ☐ Has your mentee determined how to measure success?
- ☐ Does your mentee have an action plan to achieve their goals?
- ☐ Has your mentee considered the outcome of achieving these goals?
- ☐ Are your mentee's goals realistic given the circumstances?
- ☐ Has your mentee determined a completion date?
- ☐ Can success be achieved within the time allocated?
- ☐ Will additional resources or tools be needed to achieve success?
- ☐ Is your role to advise, suggest and/or listen?
- ☐ Will your mentee's goals require you to provide something other than guidance?
- ☐ How can you be most helpful to your mentee?

Resources

- P&A Review, Tenure, and Promotion criteria:
  www.physics.utah.edu/pdf/department_rpt_criteria.pdf

- University Regulations Library:
  regulations.utah.edu
  regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-303.php (RPT Criteria)

- University Employee Wellness:
  healthcare.utah.edu/wellness/staff-employees/

- UCSF Faculty Mentoring Program:
  academicaffairs.ucsf.edu/ccfl/faculty_mentoring_program.php

- PCaddick, *Building Effective Mentoring Partnerships*
  www.pcaddick.com