

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE MENTORING POLICY

Adopted Oct 2, 2019

Rationale and Goals

In the fall of 2018, the University of Delaware's Faculty Senate voted to require each Department and/or College to develop a formal mentoring protocol. In accordance with this change to the faculty handbook, all instructors, assistant, and associate professors are entitled to receive formal mentoring to support an orderly and timely progression to promotion. The Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice also believes the formal mentoring of graduate students to be beneficial to the success of graduate scholars both during their time in the Department and post-graduation.

Principles of Mentoring

- Mentoring should take place throughout the academic life course.
- The primary role of a mentor should be guidance and support, not evaluation and gatekeeping.
- To meet all of their needs, faculty and graduate students will benefit from having multiple mentors, including mentors who are external to the department and the university. None of the following formal mentoring plans are intended to replace or preclude informal mentoring with any other faculty member, or ongoing mentoring from the Department Chair.
- Mentors should be cognizant that some individuals who are from underrepresented groups may be facing additional stressors; to that effect, following up is paramount. Ensuring that mentees are making adequate progress (towards degree, towards tenure, towards promotion to full professor, etc.) and feeling supported in the department without overstepping boundaries is essential. Especially but not exclusively for first-generation scholars and students, mentors must transfer the knowledge and social capital that is necessary to navigate and succeed in unfamiliar institutional, professional, and disciplinary environments.
- Mentoring is a valuable service that should be recognized and rewarded during annual appraisals and at promotion.

Goals of Mentoring

We wish to accomplish the following goals with a formal mentoring policy:

- Enhance equity in informal and formal supports given to students and faculty
- Improve morale across the department

- Enhance department members' scholarly productivity, with attention to factors affecting timely promotion/graduation
- Support mentees' career development (degree attainment; employment; promotion)
- Enhance mentees' career satisfaction
- Enhance mentees' physical and mental well-being
- Enhance faculty/student retention, particularly for scholars from under-represented groups
- Raise awareness about the issues that members of under-represented groups, including people of color and first-generation scholars, face during graduate training and early career, and about the role each member of the faculty plays in shaping experiences and addressing institutional and structural inequality
- Encourage and facilitate graduate students' and junior scholars' efforts to build mentorship outside of the department to aid in addressing these inequalities and disparities. Relevant networks may include groups like the Association of Black Sociologists, DuBoisian Scholar Network and the Black Doctoral Network.

Expectations for Mentors

To accomplish these goals, mentors should be prepared to:

- Communicate formal requirements to mentees (e.g., degree requirements for students, review procedures for faculty, etc.)
- Communicate informal norms of the department, college, university, and discipline
- Provide support, encouragement, and constructive feedback to mentees
- Actively listen to concerns about career progression
- Read/comment on manuscript/proposal drafts
- Advise about teaching, including syllabus and course preparation, presentation of material, pedagogy, student and classroom dynamics, and grading
- Advise on opportunities and professional obligations to pursue or accept
- Facilitate access to resources via knowledge of University/College/Department support systems
- Facilitate access to professional networking opportunities (especially at conferences)
- Have a formal end to the mentee relationship after the first year, when a new mentor will be appointed; but both can elect to informally continue the mentoring relationship after this annual reappointment and/or post-promotion.

Mentoring Assistant Professors

A. Assigning Mentors to Mentees

1. A pool of individuals who are willing to be mentors should be identified and renewed every year. This list should consist of individuals who are willing to make the time commitment necessary to be an effective mentor, and can consist of self-nominated and other-nominated individuals who agree to be sounding boards for individuals who are new and/or at lower ranks. Individuals who choose to participate will be able to count this toward

service in their annual appraisal documents.

2. All faculty, including those designated as mentors, will receive a written copy of the expectations for mentoring. The written policies should also include a non-exhaustive menu of topics/questions that pre-tenure faculty should feel comfortable asking about and a menu of options for senior faculty to engage in while mentoring pre-tenure individuals.
3. New faculty will have a meeting with the Chair in their first semester in the Department to establish a relationship with the Chair and to understand how the Chair views them fitting into the ongoing goals of the department. At this meeting, new faculty will receive a copy of the mentoring guidelines and resources. They will also have the opportunity to request a mentor or mentors if they so desire, and be matched with someone who fits well personally and professionally. Mentoring assignments will be made by the Chair, in consultation with the faculty mentee, for a year to allow for reassignments where relationships are not productive.
4. Before engaging in mentoring, mentors will engage in a mentoring workshop/training session. We encourage mentors to do so at least annually, and to draw on expertise from inside and outside the department. In particular, faculty are encouraged to participate in mentoring workshops offered by the college or university.

B. Ongoing Mentoring

1. Topics for mentoring should include but not be limited to (a) establishing an academic identity, (b) publication rate and outlets, (c) co-publishing with students and colleagues, (d) the appropriate balance of service involvements, (e) the role of presentations, (f) balancing family and career, (g) teaching responsibilities and effectiveness, (h) mentoring graduate students, and (i) other topics suggested by members of the department or other sources (e.g., central campus, professional publications). This list will be supplemented by suggestions and requests from faculty (mentors and mentees), and mentees will be encouraged to cross-validate the information received from mentors in their interactions with the Chair and the Promotion and Tenure Committee.
2. Mentors will be expected to keep confidential the information shared with them in interactions with their mentees, to the extent possible given policies regarding mandated reporting.
3. The Promotion and Tenure Committee will host at least one meeting of pre-tenure faculty, minimally once per academic year to answer questions about progress and other questions that may arise and provide support and guidance.

C. Evaluating Mentorship and the Mentoring Plan

1. Faculty members will receive credit in the merit point system for mentoring, as specified in the merit policy.
2. During the annual appraisal meeting with the Chair, junior faculty will have an opportunity to discuss the quality of their mentoring relationship and/or to request a change in mentors or no mentor for the following year.
3. The Chair is charged with evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of mentoring assignments.
 - a. At any time, if the mentee or mentor perceives that their mentorship needs are not being met, they can request a reassignment from the Chair.
 - b. The Chair will distribute an evaluation form to all mentors and mentees inquiring about the quality of their formal mentoring relationships, for use in annual evaluations and merit allocations.

Mentoring Associate Professors

A. Assigning Mentors to Mentees

1. When an Assistant Professor is promoted to Associate Professor, mentors and mentees should use the occasion of promotion to reassess the mentee's professional goals and plan a path forward.
2. New Associate Professors who join the Department will be assigned mentors at the rank of Professor from the pool of mentors described in the previous section.
3. Because associate professors frequently have broader professional, institutional and leadership goals, the Chair, mentor and mentee will collaborate to identify mentors for associate professors from outside the department.

B. Ongoing Mentoring

1. Topics for mentoring should include, but not be limited to: a) developing a long-term research agenda; b) building a professional network; c) identifying funding sources and publication outlets; d) providing feedback on grant proposals; e) course offerings and improving teaching effectiveness; f) mentoring graduate students and new faculty; g) work-life balance and well-being; h) appropriate goals for sabbatical leave; i) developing leadership roles; and j) reassessment of career goals post-tenure.
2. The Chair will endeavor, when possible, to recognize and address the concerns documented to impact faculty post-promotion, including but not limited to clarifying expectations for promotion, post-tenure research leave, alleviating service burdens and otherwise ensuring equal distribution of

- departmental service.
3. Mentors will be expected to keep confidential the information shared with them in interactions with their mentees, to the extent possible given policies regarding mandated reporting.

C. Evaluating Mentoring of Associate Professors

1. During the annual appraisal meeting with the Chair, Associate Professors will have an opportunity to discuss the quality of their mentoring relationship and/or to request a change in mentors or no mentor for the following year.
2. Faculty members will receive credit in the merit point system for mentoring, as specified in the merit policy.
3. The Chair will distribute an evaluation form to all mentors and mentees inquiring about the quality of their formal mentoring relationships, for use in annual evaluations and merit allocations.

Mentoring Graduate Students

A. Assigning Mentors to Mentees

1. All faculty will be incorporated into the mentoring pool. Mentees will be assigned to mentors on a rotational basis, so as to balance and alleviate high mentorship loads. For example, if a faculty member receives a graduate student to mentor in Fall 2019, they would typically not receive one in Fall 2020.
2. Assignments of mentors to graduate students will be made by the Director of Graduate Studies.
3. A Graduate Student Mentor is meant to act as a “general” mentor--related to progress in the program, acculturation, assisting in matching students to faculty who work in related research areas, to touch base broadly, etc. It is not necessarily expected that the assigned mentor will become the student’s thesis or dissertation advisor. The goal is to ensure that students don’t “fall through the cracks” during their graduate studies and that they have someone they are comfortable asking for advice.
4. The assigned mentor may continue in an informal capacity after a new mentor is assigned at the end of the first year.

B. Ongoing Mentoring

1. At all times mentors should be mindful of the importance of encouragement,

support for, and empowerment of graduate students. For many, graduate school is a time of mounting self-doubt; formal mentors need to remind students of their success and potential for continuing success.

2. All faculty and graduate students will receive a written copy of the expectations for mentoring. The written policies should also include a non-exhaustive menu of topics/questions that graduate students should feel comfortable in asking about and a menu of options for faculty to engage in while mentoring graduate students.
3. New graduate students will have a meeting with their assigned mentor in their first semester (even before the start of the semester would be acceptable) to establish a relationship with said mentor and to understand mentoring structure and expectations from each other.
4. Mentors will meet with their graduate student mentee to check-in on their academic progress and acculturation into the department 2-4 times post-initial meeting. These meeting times can be discussed at the first meeting or planned ad hoc. These meetings should be in-person. Additional check-ins via email or text are also appropriate.
5. Topics for mentoring should include but not be limited to: a) demystifying graduate school; b) time management; c) defining short-term and long-term goals; d) identifying venues for presentation and publication; e) developing professional networks; f) assisting with finding other mentors; g) discussing career/job market timeline and options; h) encouragement and support in applying to paper competitions and other various awards/funding opportunities; i) creating healthy work boundaries and navigating work-related stress/guilt; and j) strategies for effective collaboration with other students and faculty members.
6. Mentors will be expected to keep confidential the information shared with them in interactions with their mentees, to the extent possible given policies regarding mandated reporting.

C. Evaluating Graduate Student Mentoring

1. The Graduate Policy Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of Graduate Student mentoring.
 - a. The GPC will distribute an evaluation form to all mentors and mentees inquiring about the quality of their formal mentoring relationships. (Note that the Chair can use these responses for annual evaluations and merit allocations.)
 - b. If the GPC finds that faculty mentors or mentees are dissatisfied with their assignment, they can recommend a new assignment to the

Director of Graduate Studies.

- c. At any time, if the graduate student perceives that their mentorship needs are not being met, they can request a reassignment from the Director of Graduate Studies.