**Purpose:** All faculty benefit from mentoring, whether this is through formal or informal channels. As described in the appended article from the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, no single mentor can meet all of a faculty member’s needs, and faculty are encouraged to develop a network of supportive relationships. Nevertheless, because of the importance of mentoring, BB will appoint formal mentors to junior faculty (tenure track, instructor track and research track) to help ensure that effective mentoring is present; specifically, guided by consultation with the faculty member, two mentors with staggered two-year terms will be assigned by the P&T chair or department head. If the faculty member holds a joint appointment with another academic unit, formal mentoring arrangements should be coordinated. Mid-career and senior faculty seeking advancement also can request to have formal mentor(s) appointed.

**Expectations:** We recommend that mentors and mentees have many casual interactions, and expect that the mentor initiate purposeful “mentoring” conversations with the mentee either monthly, quarterly, or at minimum semi-annually. Also, in the Spring term, the mentor(s) should prepare a brief report describing their mentoring interactions with the faculty member. The report should be shared it with the mentee as well as the P & T committee Chair. The P & T committee reviews and comments on these reports before providing them to the department head. Ideas of topics for mentor-mentee discussions is as follows:

1. Reviewing position descriptions and annual evaluations (from department heads) and developing strategies for success.
2. Finding various supportive colleagues to be resources/mentors in specific aspects of the job.
3. Time management challenges
   1. with respect to balancing research productivity and teaching.
   2. Identifying optimal service commitments which include departmental, and university committees, and other professional service for career development.
   3. Life-work balance issues, especially related to members with young families.
4. Teaching performance and identifying mechanisms to improve course quality and assess student evaluations.
5. Discussing research related activities
   1. Optimal times for major grant submission, and interpreting summary statements.
   2. Developing mechanisms for reviewing grants in a timely manner when mentoring would be productive during the writing process, and using a “team” for grant reviewing.
   3. Identifying productive conferences for career development and invitations to present their research on the national stage.
   4. Creating a lab environment conducive for success and challenges with mentoring lab researchers.
   5. Disseminating scientific results with the greatest impact in a timely fashion. Journals to target, patent timelines, and addressing reviewers’ comments, etc.
   6. Advantages for networking with people at OSU and in their particular field.

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Monday, April 5, 2021 There is No Guru**  We've all heard repeatedly how important "mentoring" is to our professional success, but if you scratch the surface and ask people what exactly they mean by "mentoring," you will find a wide range of responses. Too many new faculty members I know imagine that they will have a single guru-like "mentor" who will sense their needs, generously dispense wisdom, care deeply about their success, and gently guide them along the path to tenure and promotion. Since that rarely happens, I want to focus this week on Common New Faculty Mistake #14: **Looking For A Single Guru-Mentor.**  The problem with the idea that you will find one guru-mentor is that new faculty members have a wide variety of needs, and it is not only impossible but also problematic for all of those needs to be met by one (and only one) person. For example, if you are a typical new faculty member, you have some combination of the following needs:  **Professional Development**  You are looking for help in learning how to manage time, resolve conflicts, administer projects, organize your office space, teach efficiently and well, supervise graduate students, and make strategic decisions about service commitments.  **Emotional Support**  As a new faculty member, you are in the midst of a significant identity and role transition: from graduate student (or postdoc) to professor. As a result, you may need support in dealing with the common stress and pressures of transitioning to life on the tenure track.  **A Sense Of Community**  Given that most new tenure-track faculty have uprooted their lives to move to a new area, you may find yourself seeking both an intellectual and/or social community where you feel a true sense of belonging.  **Accountability**  The structure of your job likely provides the least accountability for the activity that is most valued (research, writing, and publication). In order to avoid getting caught up in the daily chaos, the vast majority of new faculty members need some form of an accountability system for writing.  **Institutional Sponsorship**  You also need to cultivate relationships with people who are invested in your success at your institution. By that, I mean senior faculty who are willing to use their power to advocate for your best interests behind closed doors.  **Access To Networks**  Because knowledge isn't produced in isolation, it's critical for you to connect with others to discuss potential research collaborations, navigate external funding, and access opportunity structures that might not be immediately apparent to you as a new faculty member.  **Project-Specific Feedback**  You will also need to regularly communicate with people who can provide substantive comments on your proposals, manuscript drafts, and new ideas.  I'm listing these common needs to illustrate the point that no one person could (or should) fulfill all of them in your life! Expecting a single mentor to transition you from graduate student to faculty member will inevitably lead to disappointment, over-dependence on the advice of one person, and feelings of loneliness. For example, I once spoke with a tenure-track faculty member who had relied exclusively on her departmentally-assigned guru-mentor to guide her through the transition from graduate student to professor. The guru advised her when she arrived to "hold off working on her book for a few years to mature intellectually." In response to this *very bad advice*, she spent her first few years "intellectually maturing" instead of writing and then was shocked to receive a negative third-year review that focused almost entirely on her lack of published work and minimal progress on her book. My point is that gurus are human; they make mistakes. Therefore, relying exclusively on one person can put you at unnecessary risk and leave you with many unmet needs.  This week, I want to encourage you to fundamentally rethink the idea of "mentoring" by asking yourself: ***What do I need, and what is the most strategic and efficient way to get it?***Then, instead of looking for one all-knowing guru-mentor, you will start to realize that there are many different ways to get information, support, feedback, and advice. We can meet our professional development, emotional support, community, and accountability needs by connecting with professionals, peers, friends, books, and online communities. For example, it's probably more effective to hire a professional editor than to expect your departmental mentor to copyedit your work. It's probably more satisfying to meet with friends for emotional support than to expect it from your department chair. And, it's far more meaningful to join a writing group for accountability than asking your mentor to call you every week and make sure you're making progress on your writing. Let me be  perfectly clear. There are some needs (e.g., sponsorship, access to opportunities, project-specific feedback) that only senior people in your field and/or department can meet. The trick is to know the difference so that you focus the limited time you have with senior mentors on the things only they can provide for you while finding alternative ways to meet your other needs.  **If There's No Guru, Then What's A New Faculty Member To Do?**  Instead of focusing on any one particular person, I’m suggesting that you imagine an extensive web of support that you create by**identifying your needs and proactively getting them met**. If I could construct an ideal mentoring network to support new faculty members, it would include all of the following:   * A broad array of mentors and sponsors that are located within and beyond your current institution. * An [**excellent coach**](https://FacultyDiversity.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2f3b48fce8d6584678db66b60&id=f6544aebdc&e=23c7f69281) (or therapist) to help you transition through your first year. * A local and extended network of friends who you can rely on for social support and stress relief. * A group of scholars in your field with whom you can share drafts and ideas. * A supportive community that meets your unique accountability needs and celebrates your successes. * On- and off-campus professional development activities. * A professional development fund that you can access to get whatever needs you have met in the most effective and efficient way.   In a perfect world, your department would be organized in such a way as to welcome and support you during your transition from graduate student to professor. In reality, it will most likely be your responsibility to identify your needs and find ways to meet them. Along with that responsibility comes the realization that you have tremendous power (even if it doesn't always feel like it). In other words, you don't have to be dependent on a single guru-mentor because YOU have the power to create a network of support that is populated by people who are invested in your success. This collective approach will enable you to feel supported before, during, and after problems arise in your department. It will provide you with opportunities, connections, and reference groups that extend far beyond your college or university. And most importantly, it will serve as a buffer to decrease any alienation, loneliness, and stress that you may feel at your current institution. | | |