University Faculty Mentoring Task Force Report

Academic Year 2019-2020

(September 2019-August 2020)

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Clemson University
Office of the Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs and Provost

Overview

Over the 2019-2020 academic year a task force was charged and formalized through Clemson University's shared governance with the focus of documenting and supporting faculty mentorship across all disciplines in all colleges. The task force met regularly throughout the fall 2019 semester and interacted electronically in spring 2020 during the university's virtual COVID-19 operations. The report that follows puts the results of the COACHE survey findings into the context of the focus on faculty mentoring and illustrates the recent efforts undertaken by each college to support faculty mentorship. It also summarizes recommendations for further university mentorship structure and organization linking units across the University starting at the college-level.

Contents

Task Force Membership

The original members were appointed due to activity and engagement in mentoring within their College and/or as NSF ADVANCE Trailblazers during the mentoring focus year.

Name	Seat Type	College and Position
Amy Lawton-Rauh	Co-chair, non-voting	Provost's Office, APFA
Denise Anderson	Co-chair, voting	CBSHS, Associate Dean for Undergrad Studies & Faculty Affairs and PRTM
Chelsea Waugaman	Staff, non-voting	Provost's Office, Faculty Affairs Project Director
Linda Li-Bleuel	Voting	CAAH, Dept. Performing Arts-Music
Renna Redd	Voting	Libraries
Corrine Sackett	Voting	College of Education, Dept. Education and Human Development
Stephen Creager	Non-voting	College of Science, Dept. Chemistry
Sean Sather-Wagstaff	Voting	College of Science, Dept. Mathematical and Statistical Sciences
Carl Hollingsworth	Voting	College of Business, Associate Dean
Karen High	Voting	CECAS, Dept. Engineering & Science Education
Kay Cooksey	Voting	CAFLS, Dept. Food, Nutrition, and Packaging Sciences

COACHE Survey Findings

The results from the 2018 Clemson University COACHE survey indicated that faculty felt the most challenging aspects of working at Clemson were the following:

    compensation
    lack of diversity
    too much service/too many assignments
    quality of leadership

In identifying the best ways to improve the workplace for faculty the following were listed most often:

    appreciation and recognition
    nature of work in general
    compensation and benefits
    facilities and resources at work
    culture

The best aspects of working at Clemson included:

    cost of living
    quality of undergraduate students
    geographic location
    quality of colleagues

In a comparison with the entire COACHE cohort, Clemson faculty responses fell in the middle 40% of scores in the areas of governance (adaptability, productivity, and collaboration) and nature of work (research, faculty leadership). Faculty responses fell into the lowest 30% of scores in the areas of health and retirement benefits, mentoring, departmental collegiality and engagement, appreciation and recognition, personal and family policies and clarity of tenure expectations. Of particular note on this list is that the lowest 30% included the following, which in combination indicate a clear imperative need to prioritize mentoring and professional engagement of faculty at Clemson:

    mentoring
    departmental collegiality and engagement
    appreciation and recognition
    clarity of tenure expectations

College Progress on Mentoring

All the college representatives on this task force worked with their colleges and dean's offices to prepare statements summarizing the ongoing and prospective faculty mentorship/onboarding efforts of faculty.

Libraries:

Within the University Libraries, faculty in their division receive no official college orientation since hires are made throughout the year. Their onboarding process consists of logistical issues such as ordering business cards. Libraries are planning a three-phase, mentoring program that will consist of onboarding, mentoring circles, and one-on-one hierarchical pairings. The first phase takes place over four weeks and combines mentoring and onboarding. A faculty member is paired with a member of their search committee, for continuity purposes, and the pair focuses on the new faculty member navigating orientation and becoming acclimated to the workings of the unit and the Libraries (e.g. communication methods, procurement). There is no specific training provided for the mentor in this relationship. The second phase consists of mentoring circles that cover areas including research, publishing, teaching, and service expectations as well as work-life balance, communication, leadership development, and conflict resolution. The third phase is still being planned and will pair faculty for a peer-to-peer mentoring experience, the length of which is to be determined. Mentor faculty members can originate from a new faculty member's home department/unit, another department/unit within the University Libraries, or another librarian working at an academic library comparable to the size and scope of Clemson University Libraries. In addition to this program, the Libraries provides other programming support, including a journal club that hosts discussions of scholarship in the field of information science, writing circles, a research discussion group, and informal lunches for junior faculty. Under discussion now is how faculty can receive credit for this service through institutional activity reporting and examining standardization of the process for merit review and TPR review.

College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences:

Effective in fall 2020, there is a requirement in the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences for mentoring committees for all junior faculty. Junior faculty are assistant professors, lecturers and special faculty at the assistant professor level. Junior faculty will be mentored by three senior faculty members who are tenured faculty representing the areas of reappointment of the mentee. For lecturers, at least one of the members must be a senior or principal lecturer. Mentoring committees should be established within six months of a mentee's hire. Mentors can be chosen from across departments in the college and are selected in agreement between the department chair and the faculty member. The mentoring committee will meet at least once a year but could also meet more frequently as necessary. Mentoring committees should consider developing clear career goals and plans to achieve them: objectives, strategies and timeline, agreeing on roles for each of the three mentors, setting rules for meetings and communication

such as frequency, style, agenda and deliverables and maintaining confidentiality when requested and appropriate.

Examples of potential components of mentoring in CAFLS:

Content & Technical	Career Development	Psychosocial Behavior
• identify gaps in knowledge and skills • identify training opportunities and resources • help formulate goals and develop plans to accomplish goals • monitor progress and step aside to allow independence	• facilitate opportunities and connections • promote mentee outside the institution • provide help navigating the system • model ethical behavior	• discuss work-life issues • effective time management • sensitivity to cultural diversity • encourage peer-mentoring

This new committee structure has not yet been announced and the implementation has not been confirmed. Everything is under discussion.

Currently, mentoring takes place at the department level and is year-specific. No onboarding exists at the college level.

College of Arts, Architecture and Humanities:

Within the College of Arts, Architecture and Humanities, the Dean's office helps onboard new faculty. They provide a meeting where they share syllabus template information and university policies. Two associate deans also meet early every year with the new cohort of tenure-stream faculty. In year two and beyond, faculty meet as individuals each year with those associate deans and their department chair to discuss their progress toward tenure. Nothing else is widely communicated via a college-wide meeting or onboarding.

The structure and balance of specific positions within departments varies tremendously. Since there are many types and titles for lectures and instructors, and since adjuncts are so rarely on campus, peer-to-peer mentorship is often used.

Regarding promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer, the mentoring process is not typically formalized; mentorship is more reactive than proactive. Faculty need more professional feedback and mentorship from senior colleagues. For promotion from assistant to associate professor, nothing has been established other than review or feedback on Annual Reviews (formerly referred to as eForm3) and input from the Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment (TPR) committee. For promotion from associate to full professor there are limited numbers of full professors who can mentor faculty at this stage to promotion. It is recommended that this mentorship take place at the college level facilitated possibly by associate chairs or associate deans.

College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences:
Within the College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences, new faculty participate in the university's New Faculty Orientation, and the college provides its own full-day college-specific orientation, which includes all new faculty over the last two years. The college orientation is focused more on training, including topics such as implicit bias training (scheduled with university level trainers), a transparency in teaching workshop facilitated by faculty versed in the topic, work-life balance policies, and information about the college research support center. There is less focus on logistics and more on actions to function. Mentors are assigned to new faculty most often within departments, and new faculty can also be assigned a mentor at the college level. At the college level potential mentors complete a survey and are matched with any faculty requesting a college-level mentor by the college associate dean. Mentorship is mostly accomplished through peer mentoring circles and one-on-one pairings (one-on-one pairing are typically interdepartmental). Interest in mentorship has spread and mentoring is currently being facilitated for lecturers as well as assistant, associate and full professors, of note is that the full professors want mentors from outside of the college.

CBSHS also sponsors monthly professional development programs as part of the mentoring program, which are open to all faculty. The topics for these programs are based on a TIGERS Advance Trailblazers survey and a mentoring program evaluation survey. To incentivize engagement, faculty who attend the programs are eligible for a professional development raffle prize at each session ($150) and a $1000 professional development grant for mentor-mentee activity.

College of Business:
The College of Business has a three-hour long new faculty orientation for new faculty. Mentoring and professional development is under discussion but not formalized at the college/dean level.

College of Education:
The College of Education hosts a New Faculty Orientation every August. This is a half day event for first year faculty (both tenure-track and special faculty) with lunch and an introduction to the college and its resources. This introduction includes resources related to Clemson's IRB, grants, research, teaching, clinical and field partnerships, assessment and accreditation, CCIT and the media center. There is also a departmental breakout Q&A time to discuss TPR and other department specific information with respective department chairs.

Further, during this orientation, there is time for assigned mentors and mentees to discuss individualized mentoring plans. Department chairs and the college leadership team assign faculty mentors one or more new faculty mentees over the summer before the orientation. The mentoring plans utilized come from a TIGERS Advance template.

The Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs asks mentors and mentees during the orientation event to give feedback on what they think would be helpful to plan for the mentoring sessions during the fall semester. The planned sessions that follow come from this discussion and are implemented by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

Example sessions from fall 2019 were:
      TPR by department
            led by TPR chairs
      Research Impact
            led by associate dean for research, director of research development
      Early Career Research (strategic planning, federal requirements, resources)
            led by the director of research development
      Teaching Impact
            led by a panel of faculty from the college
      Check-in with mentors and mentees (the final session in the fall)

The check-in session was a time to discuss how helpful or unhelpful the sessions in the fall were, and to discuss what sessions would be helpful in the spring and was led by faculty member and mentoring lead and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

Sessions for later semesters were planned based on the check-in discussion and will include a half hour time prior to each session for socializing and/or informal conversations around handling politics in academia led by faculty member and mentoring lead. This mentoring system is focused on first year faculty, but all faculty are invited and welcome to attend the sessions.

College of Engineering, Computing and Applied Sciences:
In the College of Engineering, Computing, and Applied Sciences, new faculty participate in a one-day faculty orientation, primarily focused on funding sources for research and how faculty can submit internal and external grant proposals. New faculty desire an orientation that contains information on teaching and a training program for mentors and mentees.

Mentoring initiatives are heavily driven by each individual department chair, but currently the Department of Bioengineering is the only department with a formalized faculty mentoring plan. Industrial Engineering is developing a mentoring program. Within Bioengineering, each new faculty member is assigned a mentor who is either the chair or a volunteer from the College's TPR Committee. Bioengineering also pairs faculty with a teaching and research mentor, and faculty are encouraged to put that service into their annual activity reporting.

A structure at the dean/college level for coordinating mentors is desirable, and it would be helpful to include a timeline of assigning and training mentors.

College of Science:

During the 2019-2020 year, the college launched an inaugural year-long program for new faculty onboarding, which was run by the associate dean leadership of the college. Typically, college-level onboarding involves faculty processing an intense amount of information alongside faculty orientation, where faculty connect briefly at the beginning of the academic year. The college then hosts a series of monthly meetings with new faculty mostly focused on logistics. Each month is a different topic.

Mentoring is organized at the college-level. The Associate Dean of Discovery, Graduate Education, Space Optimization and Faculty Affairs, serves in an organizing role. A faculty survey conducted in mid-spring 2019 on faculty mentoring was a helpful guide in planning the college program. All untenured assistant professors were invited to participate and a select group of associate or full professors were invited to serve as mentors. A kick-off meeting was held in September 2019 where approximately 40 people attended. Participating faculty were divided into six subgroups. Each subgroup has one mentoring administrative leader, four to six mentees, and two to four mentors. Topics for discussion were provided by the Associate Dean with input from mentees in the groups. Groups had the option to change topics. Groups met almost monthly throughout the 2019-2020 academic year, sometimes face to face and sometimes virtually. A similar program for Assistant Professors launched in fall 2020, along with programs for special faculty and a program for associate professors.

There is much variation across departments regarding whether a mentoring program exists or what the structure should be. The College program started with mentoring circles at the college level and was not focused on department mentoring. The college noted that it needs to very clearly distinguish messaging of onboarding from mentoring roles and purposes.

Recommendations

The Provost's University Faculty Mentoring Task Force proposes a standing committee from the Provost's Office to network college-level mentoring efforts and to provide opportunities for university-level activities and programs effectively engaging faculty across colleges. Such a network will help provide ideas and cross-connections of resources. It will also lead to larger networks as well as professional and social communities for faculty to build a more inclusive climate. The recommendations below are for this standing University Faculty Mentoring Committee.

For a Future Standing Committee

The Task Force recommends that this standing committee be formally organized and structured through Clemson's Shared Governance as follows:

Membership:
Chair: Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, non-voting (by position)
Per College: each voting
      1 associate dean with faculty success role (by position)
      1 tenured regular faculty member with experience in mentoring (nominated slate, 1 or
      more candidates, by dean, approved by Provost or designee)
Faculty senate: voting
      most recent past Faculty senate President or designee from current Faculty Senate
      President (by position)

Having two members from each College ensures continuity of participation and representation within committee initiatives. Including a tenured regular faculty member as one of these two representatives from each College also provides the opportunity for a regular faculty member to contribute and participate in a University-level committee towards their own professional development. Having the most recent faculty senate president, or designee from the current faculty senate president will provide fresh knowledge of the impact of policies and practices on the faculty experience related to professional success and mentoring opportunities.

Actions proposed for the standing committee:
This task force proposes a standing committee as described above, charged with addressing the needs of and appropriate mentorship models for faculty on and off campus (across statewide locations). As a starting point, the primary focus should be full time tenure track and lecturer track faculty with later development of activities supporting special faculty ranks and long term part time faculty unique to preparing interested individuals for tenure track or full time lecturer track careers. Additionally, the task force requests this standing committee review the models and notes provided in the Appendix where the task force has provided a literature survey of mentoring model structures and concepts.

This committee would facilitate discussions specifically on resource and idea sharing for mentoring and orientation and longer-term professional development activities. Additionally, this committee would regularly discuss the impact of department demographics (such as the number of faculty at assistant, associate and full-professor levels; the number of lecturers and senior lecturers, principal lecturers) on mentoring systems and activities with the goal of seeking opportunities for university-level mentoring resources and organization. This group may consider matching up colleges and departments across colleges if it would facilitate sustainable mentoring approaches.

The committee would develop the instruments and structures for institutionalization of mentoring programs, to include clearly defined expectations, tracking, training, and incentivizing efforts. Additionally, this committee would incorporate the communication of these resources and activities into the hiring and retention of career-long professional development of new faculty. The committee will work towards a clearly messaged evaluation system for departments, colleges and the university to track accountability and operationalization of mentorship through evaluations and assessment recommendations for revision and improvements.

Ultimate Goal for the University Faculty Mentorship Standing Committee

A culture of faculty mentorship will become the norm for departmental and college operations from a faculty member's initial onboarding throughout career-long promotions and progressive academic appointments. Mentorship, resources and career development topics will be key agenda items in university-level faculty orientations as well as orientations/onboarding efforts at the college and departmental levels. Models will incorporate best practices and operational definitions from the literature of mentoring, sponsoring and coaching.

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Appendix: Operational Definitions of Mentorship

To facilitate discussions and develop recommendations, the task force assembled the following information describing different forms and structures of mentorship. The research discourse on mentorship in private industry and nonprofit/academic environments is broad with varied operational definitions for mentoring itself and its forms and models in practice. That variety will serve Clemson University well as we are fortunate to welcome a variety of faculty, including tenured and tenure-track faculty and special rank faculty, all of whom have different appointment types, academic career needs and disciplinary socializations to the professoriate. As a result, they each need tailored, discipline/department/college specific mentoring programs to address their needs. What follows below is a summary of key academic definitions for the concepts of mentorship present at Clemson University.

Mentoring

A dynamic, mutually-beneficial relationship between a senior and an early career colleague with the objective of identity transformation and self-directed independence for the junior professional and regenerative selfless care about the profession's future for the mentor (Healy & Welchert, 1990).

Mentoring Sponsor

Given that a mentor is a peer or a more established professional who is instrumental in helping a mentee to develop a skillset, a sponsor is an active advocate, helping others to advance into specific career opportunities. Sponsors have strategic placement and influence within an organization and can shape the decisions for hiring, leadership appointment placements or organizational awards (Sharma, Narula, Ansari-Ramandi, & Mouyis, 2019).

Mentoring Coach

Coaching is defined as a helping relationship between a less experienced academic who acts as a client and a more experienced academic who acts as a consultant to help the client engage, learn, or commit to a course of action. Through sometimes deep cognitive, psychosocial analysis, the coach uses various techniques to help a mentee achieve a set of goals to which all parties formally or informally agree. The coaching can center on specific actions to achieve that goal, which may help the mentee deal with ambiguity or role conflict within one's position or in an uncertain professional environment (Roofe & Paul, 2015).

Forms of Mentoring

One-on-one mentoring and mentoring circles/peer mentoring are most common structures; colleges may want to consider the value of adopting both.

One-on-One Mentoring Structure

Key Pieces: (a) relationship is what matters, (b) mentors helped in planning and prioritizing career goals, (c) mentors helped in acquiring new skill sets, (d) time constraints and scheduling conflicts were the biggest challenges in the mentoring relationship.

Challenges: not everyone is a competent mentor, arranged relationships are not always ideal, limits to one person's point of view, can be paternalistic and seen as a power dynamic – today's faculty are taking more control over their own career development and thus the door for group or peer mentoring may be opening wider.

Mentoring Circles

Important consideration for mentoring circles/peer mentoring is that today's higher ed is different, faculty often rely on a network of individuals for help not just one mentor. Circles provide mentees availability and access because they will have more peers than supervisors/managers.

Considerations:

a. Same discipline versus cross-discipline – benefits to both approaches.
b. Use of facilitator can really contribute to the success of the circles – often outside discipline, someone who has skills to keep group moving forward, organize the meetings, etc. Themes for discussion often arise from group, especially after the first few meetings but facilitators might want to provide themes at the start as well as take on the task of making sure someone does not dominate the conversation, so that it does not go too off course.
c. Scheduling can be difficult but monthly schedule seems to work well.
d. Size should be at least 8 and no more than 13.
e. Motivation by participants is key, they cannot feel coerced; Everyone is a mentor and mentee at some point within a peer mentoring circle which provides more holistic experience than one-on-one mentoring can often offer. In addition, the structure combines energies and experiences beyond what individual members know or contribute, diversity of opinions, support from peers as well as senior organizational members. Learning takes place in relationships with peers through relationship-building.
f. Not everyone will be comfortable sharing in this type of structure so pairing this model with one-on-one mentoring may help with these concerns.

Additional Advantages: access to networks, reduction in feelings of isolation (huge concern, especially for under-represented minorities throughout academia), greater connectivity, increased confidence and commitment, career progression, knowledge acquisition, better understanding of culture and academic demystification, sharing of experiences.

Facilitating Success: members must make a commitment to attend; confidentiality; rapport between circle members; voluntary attendance, supporting participants in taking focused and purposeful action in response to the challenges they faced.

There must be senior support and this support must be intentional and identifiable. Ways to include success may include active participation, monetary support, career advancement opportunities for those who participate, and a showcase and display of visible support of the process

Sources: Bean, Lucas & Hyers, 2014; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Thomas, Bystydzienski, & Desai, 2015.

Who is mentored?
Colleges and departments need to consider if they will offer mentoring to all faculty ranks and what that means for needs, structure, pairing, circles and support.

Ranks to keep in mind: tenure/tenure track assistant, associate, full; lecturers, senior lecturers, principle lecturers, clinical faculty, research faculty, professors of practice, adjuncts.