Mission

Mentoring is designed to provide support for faculty making their initial approach to the academy. The VPAA New Faculty Mentoring Circle Program (MCP) focuses on providing opportunities for new faculty members to engage in professional development experiences through the resources and support of the Office of Academic Affairs and 1:1 mentoring with an accomplished university professor.

The Program

- Why should the Vice President of Academic Affairs support and lead this program?
  - Supportive of faculty having a strong initial approach to a life of academic inquiry, research, and advanced instruction
  - Investment of the university through its many resources (human, financial, and physical) in the search process of attracting, hiring, and retaining individuals as excellent additions to the academic enterprise
  - Commitment to effectively synthesizing new faculty into the university community

- What are the benefits of the VPAA New Faculty Mentoring Program?
  
  ➢ For the Mentee
    - 1:1 encouragement, collegiality, and shared laughs, sighs, lows, and highs!
    - Advice on balancing teaching, research, service/committee work, grant-writing, and beyond
    - Inside information on the culture, day-to-day workings, and “who’s who” of your new academic home
    - Information on best teaching practices for UPB students
Information on academic and student affairs support units for faculty and students
Details of advancement at the university – reappointment, promotion, tenure, awards, and beyond
Knowledge on how to get things done at the university – parking, IT, dining services, housing, mailroom, IDs, library services, travel, and beyond
Constructive feedback and – yes! – constructive criticism
Retention of excellent faculty colleagues
Tips on reducing stress and living your best academic life
Support, support, support!

For the Mentor
Assisting in the development of a new and valued colleague
Contributing to the professional growth and recognition of the university
Increasing visibility as a leader in your discipline
Increasing the reputation of your division and its programs
Retaining excellent faculty colleagues
Increasing commitment, productivity, and satisfaction of new faculty
Preventing attrition of new faculty
Promoting comradery, cooperation, and collaboration for those involved in the program

Mentoring Makes Sense!
**Mentor Identification and Selection**

Mentors should be:

- Experienced with an equivalent of ten years (or more) of university teaching; this can be a combination of teaching and industry/related experience
- Successful in teaching, research, and service
- Tenured faculty (preferred) and appointment stream faculty with 10+ years university teaching experience

**Expectations of Mentors**

- Initiate and maintain regular contact with mentee
- Meet with mentee at least three times per semester
- In-person contact is preferred, but telephone and/or electronic contact methods are acceptable
- At least one meeting each semester should be in person (pending Covid-19 restrictions)
- Be open to making time for meeting with mentee, offering feedback and advice
- Keep the specifics of conversations with mentee confidential from other faculty
- Keep the relationship with the mentee open and professional
- Attend group meetings of the Mentoring Program
- Commit to being a mentor for at least two semesters and be willing to extend the commitment as agreed upon with the mentee (and approved by the VPAA)
- Evaluate the program at the end of the year
- Inform the VPAA of any challenges in the relationship with the mentee
Expectations of Mentees

- Maintain regular contact with the mentor
- Meet with the mentor at least three times each semester. In-person contact is preferred, but telephone and/or electronic contact methods are acceptable. At least one meeting each semester should be in person (pending Covid-19 restrictions)
- Share concerns, questions and plans with mentor
- Keep relationship with mentor open and professional
- Keep the specifics of conversations with the mentor confidential from other faculty and other mentees
- Attend group meetings of the mentoring program
- Commit to being a mentee for at least two consecutive years and be willing to extend the commitment as agreed upon with the mentor
- Evaluate program at the end of the year
- Inform the VPAA of any challenges in the relationship with the mentor

Possible Topics for Mentors to Cover with Mentees

- Instruction
- Syllabi development
- Instructional deliveries (e.g., Flex@Pitt)
- Course development and revision
- Difficult conversations with division chair, faculty, and students
- Student motivation
- Grading/testing/assessment
• Teaching approaches/techniques/strategies
• Garnering positive and meaningful teaching evaluations
• Best practices in advising
• Balancing teaching, research, and service
• Balancing university and personal life
• Short and long-term career goals
• Promotion and tenure process
• Dossier development (reappointment, promotion, and tenure)
• Dealing with peers and the administration
• Discussing funding opportunities
• Attending UPB and community fine arts, social, or athletic events
• Understanding the UPitt organizational structure

We will engage in semester and year-end social activities to provide time for sharing the semester and year in review!

Excited for the path ahead with Mentees and Mentors!

Emily Williams

Vice President and Dean of Academic Affairs