

MENTORING PROGRAMS

Annette Nellen, Professor, College of Business, San Jose State University

- There was a formal mentoring program at SJSU in the past that only lasted one year. They are starting the mentor program again.
- Mentors were assigned from different colleges, so that faculty could be assured of confidentiality.
- Relationships with mentors should be continuous, lasting longer than one year.
- Mentors should help junior faculty articulate their goals.
- SJSU learned:
 - to start the matching process before the start of the academic year
 - to match up mentors better
 - to have a semester end event for participants
 - to select mentors who are compatible with current and future university goals and direction
- They also tried assigning three mentors, for teaching, scholarship, and service, with limited success.

Bonnie Zimmerman, Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs, San Diego State University

- At SDSU, mentors are assigned for three years and paid \$150 per semester in the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts. The Associate Dean oversees the mentoring program.
- The College of Health and Human Services has a much less structured mentoring program with no faculty pay incentives.
- The College of Education revived its mentor program in 2002, and the Associate Dean mentors all faculty and oversees professional development. There is an emphasis on research. College of Education outcomes are based on publications and grants.
- They are looking for ways to assess the success of a mentorship program.

Roberta Ambrosino, Acting Director, Center for Teaching and Learning, CSU Dominguez Hills

- Here are three case examples of where mentoring is needed and is cost effective:
 - 1) Junior faculty member missed faculty orientation, is lost on campus, and has no knowledge of syllabus construction, resulting in bad student evaluations.
 - 2) Junior faculty member was disrespected by students and couldn't control classes because there was nobody to talk to for advice.
 - 3) Junior faculty member was a natural born teacher, but had no scholarly activity and no publishing. Therefore this person's contract was not renewed.
- CSU Dominguez Hills faculty members mentor for intrinsic rewards, and they also get service credit for their own RTP files.
- Hard costs of the mentoring program include lunches at program startup, one course release time for the administrator, and honorarium for the startup consultant.

The floor was opened to questions.

Q Are mentor programs addressing the needs of disadvantaged (female, minority, etc.) faculty?

Ambrosino: This is addressed on a questionnaire prior to the mentor matchup.

Q What non-mentor support is provided? How are departments instructed to support faculty?

Zimmerman: Departments don't want to lose people who could be saved. However, mentoring is not a panacea and sometimes nothing can be done to help.

Q Mixed messages are a problem. Can we train mentors to provide consistent information campus-wide?

Nellen: Assessing the mentor role is an ongoing process. For example, they are not responsible for overseeing the RTP file.

Q The speaker was mentored by many faculty in many areas, and is now a mentor who gets fresh perspective and revitalization from their mentee. What about the data on how we really mentor (i.e., many supporters).

Ambrosino: This is the best case in action. For people who don't seek out wide assistance, there needs to be a structured program.

Annette Nellen asked two questions of the assembled group.

Q What are the institutional reasons for starting a mentoring program?

A

- faculty retention and increased job satisfaction
- return on campus investment
- enhance the process of socialization into the university community
- alleviate the sense of disconnect between faculty and build a sense of community
- mentors make you visible in your discipline

Q What are the optimal characteristics of a mentor?

A

- a true and generous teacher with a lack of or ability to suppress cynicism
- someone willing to give the time and who won't give up on a mentee
- a listener and provider of constructive feedback
- knowledge of how things work in the university
- proficient or outstanding at teaching, scholarship, and service
- knowledge of what they are mentoring for (career, social support, etc.)
- a good match who will act as an agent and advocate for the mentee
- a mentor who cuts across a range of roles and perspectives – even “tormentors” can be mentors