

MENTORING PROGRAM FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY, MICROBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY

The Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology Department and the School of Medicine are committed to effective mentoring. Thorndyke *et al.* point out that mentoring is “a central component of professional development”, encompassing “a supportive relationship and a teaching-learning process”, and involving “coaching, role modeling, assessing, and sponsoring”. They also point out that effective mentoring “enhances professional socialization, career development, and faculty advancement”.

Dr. Larry Swift, Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs, oversees the mentoring programs for all junior faculty. He works closely with the Department Chair and the Department Appointments and Promotions (A&P) Committee, which is charged with monitoring the mentoring plans for junior faculty (Assistant Professor and below) on Investigator, Educator, and Clinical Practice tracks. The information below provides guidance for the formation of the mentoring committee and defines the role and responsibilities of the committee in faculty development. It also provides information with regard to preparation for mentoring committee meetings.

I. The Mentoring Committee

- A. Selection – Within the first 2-3 months after joining the Department, each junior faculty member should schedule a meeting with Dr. Swift to review the Departmental Mentoring Program and to discuss possible members for their Mentoring Committee. In general, mentoring committees consist of three faculty with similar or allied interests or expertise in appropriate areas. At least one of the three members must hold a primary appointment in the Department of PMI. The Committee should consist of the following:

- Senior Faculty Member (Professor)
- Mid-career person (Associate Professor)
- 3rd person that fits your interests
- At least one faculty member from within your division and one member outside your division or department

A member may fulfill more than one of these criteria. For example, you might have an Associate Professor or Professor who is outside your division. The Chair of the committee must hold a primary appointment in PMI. Dr. Swift will contact the committee members to ensure that they are willing and able to make the appropriate time commitment for this responsibility. Alternatively, if the junior faculty prefers, they may contact members to ask them to serve.

- B. Role: The role of the Mentoring Committee is to provide advice on career development and advancement, balancing professional responsibilities, teaching commitments, and service both within and outside the medical center. In sum, the committee is charged with helping the junior faculty member reach their goals and ensuring that they are making progress toward promotion to Associate Professor.
- C. Mentoring Committee Meetings: **It is the responsibility of the junior faculty member to schedule all mentoring committee meetings.** The first meeting of the committee should occur within the first 6-8 months of the faculty member’s appointment. Subsequently, the junior faculty member should meet with their committee at least one time/year. If necessary or desired, additional meetings can be scheduled.

In preparation for a committee meeting the Junior Faculty member should complete the Individual Development Plan (IDP)/Mentoring Plan form (website link here). [**NOTE: The form for faculty on the Educator or Clinical Practice tracks is different from the form for faculty on the Investigator track.**] It is of particular importance that the faculty member answer the question on the first page – “What are the major points (issues, areas) you want to address in this meeting?” The completed form, along with an updated Curriculum Vitae and a recent Faculty Activity Report, should be sent to mentoring committee members one week prior to the meeting.

At the meeting the faculty member should review the IDP/Mentoring Plan with the committee. *It is essential that the committee address the questions/issues/areas that the junior faculty has listed as a focus for the meeting.* In addition, they should discuss the faculty member’s activities and goals (short and long term) as they relate to career development and promotion and make specific recommendations with regard to professional activities and the proposed mentoring plan. After the meeting, the junior faculty member may make changes to the IDP/Mentoring plan arising from the committee discussion. **The final IDP/Mentoring Plan should be signed by both the junior faculty member and the chair of the committee.**

The Chair of the committee should write a 1-2 page Summary of the meeting, outlining the committee’s comments and suggestions. A copy of this Summary will be sent to the junior faculty member. The signed IDP/Mentoring Plan and Summary should be sent to Dr. Swift along with an updated Curriculum Vitae and the Faculty Activity Report.

II. Evaluation of Faculty Progress and Needs

Dr. Swift will review the committee reports and the IDP/Mentoring Plans. Of critical importance will be the faculty member’s accomplishments and progress over the previous year. It is also important that the IDP/Mentoring Plan clearly defines the goals for the coming year and the steps to be taken to reach those goals.

The IDP/Mentoring Plan, Meeting Summary, CV, and Faculty Activity Report will then be forwarded to the Departmental A&P committee for review and recommendations with regard to the progress of the junior faculty member and any additional steps to implement and/or to facilitate successful faculty development. These comments should be forwarded to Dr. Swift, who will then communicate them to the junior faculty member as well as to their Division Chief.

Reference

Thorndyke LE, Gusic ME, Milner RJ, *et al.* Functional mentoring: a practical approach with multilevel outcomes. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions* 2008; 28 (3): 157-164.