

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. (see reference) 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. Joyce Johnson, Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs, oversees the mentoring programs for all junior faculty, assisted by Dr. Sebastian Joyce (Associate Vice Chair for Faculty Affairs) for faculty on the Investigator track. She works closely with the Department Chair and with the departmental Appointments and Promotions (A&P) Committee; the Committee is charged with monitoring the mentoring plans for junior faculty (up through Assistant Professor) on Investigator, Educator, and Clinical Practice tracks. The information below provides guidance for the formation of a mentoring committee and defines the roles and responsibilities of the committee in the process of faculty development.

Also below is information regarding preparation of committee members and Chair for mentoring committee meetings.

I. The Mentoring Committee

A. Selection of members – 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 his/her Mentoring Committee. In general, mentoring committees consist of three faculty members (Associate Professor or above) 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 pertinent to the mentee’s 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. Johnson or Dr. Joyce will contact the committee members to ensure that they are willing and able to make the appropriate time commitment for this important responsibility. Alternatively, if the junior faculty prefers, they may contact potential members to ask them to serve. The Chair is determined by general agreement of the mentee, Office of Faculty Affairs, and the proposed designated Chair.

- B. Role: The role of the Mentoring Committee is to provide advice on career development and advancement, the balancing of professional responsibilities, management of teaching commitments, and various types of service, both within and outside the Medical Center. In sum, the committee is charged with helping the junior faculty member reach their goals (specified by the mentee in the Individual Development Plan document prior to each meeting) and ensuring that the mentee is making progress toward a 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. Dr. Johnson should be included in the scheduling of meetings; she will attend if she is able.

In **preparation** for a committee meeting, **the junior faculty member** should complete the Individual Development Plan (IDP)/Mentoring Plan form (<https://www.vumc.org/pmi/faculty-affairs>). [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 answers 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 (if there is one), should be sent to mentoring committee members one week prior to the meeting.

In **preparation** for a committee meeting, **the committee members** should carefully review the CV, recent Faculty Activity report (if there is one), and the IDP provided by the mentee. Each member should also refresh their knowledge of the detailed criteria for promotion on the pertinent track:

<https://www.vumc.org/faculty/educator-track-basic-scienceclinician>

<https://www.vumc.org/faculty/investigator-track-basic-sciencephysician-scientist>

<https://www.vumc.org/faculty/clinical-practice-track>.

At the meeting, the faculty member should review in detail the IDP/Mentoring Plan with the committee, beginning with the question, "What are the major points (issues, areas) you want to address in this meeting?" 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, the Committee should discuss the faculty member's current activities in the context of the specific goals (short and long term) as they relate to career development and promotion, and make specific recommendations and suggestions with regard to professional activities and the proposed mentoring plan.

After the meeting, the **junior faculty member** will make any needed 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 final signed IDP/Mentoring Plan should then be forwarded to Dr. Johnson, along with an updated Curriculum Vitae and the Faculty Activity Report.

The **Chair** of the committee should write a 1-2 page summary/minutes of the meeting, outlining important issues discussed, and the committee's comments and suggestions. A copy of this Summary is sent to the junior faculty member and to Dr. Johnson by the committee's Chair.

II. After the meeting: Final evaluation of faculty progress and needs by the Vice Chair and the departmental A & P Committee

Dr. Johnson will review the meeting minutes and the final IDP/Mentoring Plan. 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 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 any additional recommendations or comments to support and/or facilitate successful faculty development. Dr. Johnson will then communicate the Committee's feedback to the junior faculty member, the Committee's Chair, and the pertinent 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.

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