

**Department of Pharmacy Practice and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPPS)  
College of Pharmacy, Duluth  
University of Minnesota**

**Mentoring Program for New Faculty**

**What is a mentor?**

Mentoring is an informal and supportive relationship whereby a more experienced person helps a new colleague to learn how to carry out her/his job within the context of the University's systems and culture by providing guidance, counseling and advice. Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship outside the normal hierarchical structure. The establishment of a formal mentoring system seeks to ensure that all new faculty can benefit from the help of an experienced and trusted advisor. The mentoring relationship should continue throughout the probationary period in the case of new tenure-track faculty, and at least the first two years for non-tenure-track faculty.

Mentoring a colleague is much akin to advising a graduate student, pharmacy resident or undergraduate student with whom you work closely. Many of the same principles used to facilitate a student's or resident's learning are applicable to mentoring a colleague.

Successful mentoring programs are composed of senior faculty members with productive academic programs who give their time willingly to foster the professional development of their junior colleagues. Mentors must have strong communication skills, excellent listening skills, a positive attitude toward their colleagues, and a sensitivity to human feelings. Research has shown that new faculty members who develop professional and social networks early in their careers are more likely to succeed in their academic appointments.

Successful mentoring relationships depend on a spirit of openness, understanding, and trust that overcomes the barriers of discipline and age. Structured mentoring programs offer benefits to all of the participants. For the entry-level faculty member, the program provides a well-defined opportunity to make the difficult transition into an academic appointment more smoothly. Long-term career planning is facilitated, stress levels are reduced, and there is an improved camaraderie between senior and junior faculty members.

**How are PPPS mentors assigned?**

The Department Chair will advise the new faculty member during their orientation that a mentoring program for new faculty exists and they will be invited to participate in it. If they choose to engage in the mentoring process, they will be expected to have a preliminary open conversation with their proposed mentor to discuss the desires and expectations each has for the relationship.

The Department Chair, in consultation with other department faculty as needed, will identify one faculty member who will be invited to formally serve as mentor for the new faculty member. As a successful mentoring relationship cannot be forced, the invited faculty

member may decline this invitation. Likewise, the new faculty member may decline the Chair's appointee. Should this arise, the Chair will start the search for another mentor. Mentors may formally mentor one mentee at a time.

### **What is expected of PPPS mentors?**

During the course of the first year, many issues arise, such as advising questions, tenure concerns, and teaching challenges that are not specifically covered in the new faculty orientation session. The faculty mentor's role would be that of a guide: to offer initial helpful information and then to direct the new faculty member to a person who could provide more specific and detailed information depending on the needs of the new faculty member.

#### *Goals of the Mentor*

##### *Short-term goals*

- Familiarize mentee with the campus and its environment, including the UM system of governance between the Administration and the Faculty Senate.
- Mentee Networking—introduction to colleagues, identification of other possible mentors.
- Developing mentee awareness—help new faculty understand policies and procedures that are relevant to the new faculty member's work.
- Provide constructive criticism and encouragement, compliments on achievements.
- Help mentee to sort out priorities—budgeting time, balancing research, teaching, and service.

##### *Long-term goals*

- Developing mentee's visibility and prominence within the profession
- Help mentee achieve career advancement.

### **Phases of the mentoring process**

#### *1. Prepare*

- Make a list.

Prepare for your first meeting: make a list of things that you would have wanted to know when you were in the position of the person you will be meeting with. The list might include information about you (as the mentor), about the organization or position, about what it was like to be starting out, about what it was like to be new in this organization, or about expectations concerning the relationship between you and

the mentee. Write these details down in note form and then send them to the person you will be mentoring.

## 2. *Take the initiative*

Make the first call, although it is OK if the mentee calls to arrange a meeting. Contact with the new faculty member should occur prior to the start of the semester to first welcome this individual to the UM community and to determine what type of assistance the new hire requires regarding administrative needs: photocopying information, mailroom procedures, office supplies, email concerns, class schedules, syllabi recommendations, etc. Many of these items are discussed during the orientation session with the Department Chair. However, if the new faculty member wants to get a jump start on taking care of some of these pragmatic details, the mentor would be the contact person to offer guidance.

- o Create an agenda.

A. Before you and your mentee meet, ask the other person if it is okay if you identify some items for an agenda. List two or three and then ask the other person if they have any items they would like to add. Some typical items are (1) getting to know each other, (2) logistics, (3) goals and expectations, (4) concerns that might interfere with your meeting together, (5) the degree (extent) of mentoring they would like to have and expectations each has for the process, (6) what special issues or sorts of orientation and mentoring interest the new faculty member, and (7) questions you have about the mentee.

B. In addition to task-related details, the mentor would offer emotional support: a friendly face who could help to make the new faculty member's transition into the UM community more pleasant and enjoyable. This contact should not be limited to the time period prior to the beginning of the semester, but hopefully, extended throughout the year and subsequent years to follow.

## 3. *Negotiate*

Be clear about the purpose of the mentoring relationship and boundaries in that relationship. Create a shared understanding about assumptions, expectations, goals and needs. For example, acting as an advocate for career advancement, or becoming involved in dispute resolution may be out-of-bounds in your mentoring relationships. Sometimes a formal, comprehensive mentoring agreement document may be written and other times none will be used.

## 4. *Enable the mentee*

- A. Broker relationships for the mentee (help mentee to network)
- B. Work at maintaining the relationship
- C. Coach (help mentee learn how to do things more effectively)
- D. Encourage mentee

- E. Facilitate mentee's involvement in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating their learning
- F. Help mentee set goals
- G. Guide (help mentee maintain focus)
- H. Problem-solve (mentor serves more as a sounding board than as Grand Keeper of The Answer)
- I. Provide/receive feedback
- J. Reflect on mentoring activities (provides model for mentee to follow)

#### 5. *Plan for subsequent meetings*

How frequently you hold mentoring meetings is pretty much up to you and your mentee, but "regularly" and "formally" should be guiding concepts. Maybe weekly meetings would be appropriate during the first semester, then every-other-week meetings the second semester, and then monthly meetings after that.

At the end of each meeting, you and your mentee should review your mutually developed agenda to determine your progress. Solicit ideas about what you might want to discuss at your next meeting. Ask for an impression of how this meeting went and what you both might be able to do (or stop doing) next time to make the next meeting as good or better.

The sorts of activities and issues which a mentor might engage in include: review of printed materials to be submitted to the Education Policy Committee (EPC), review of syllabi (if desired), quick informational contact to answer procedural questions, consideration of assignments or tests to offer a "local" perspective, consultation on how to handle specific situations with students, other faculty, or administrators, etc. Not all new faculty will want to discuss these issues with a mentor but the point of the mentoring program is to help provide the kind of information and interaction the new faculty member desires.

#### 6. *Closing the mentoring relationship*

Revisit the highlights of your experiences with your mentee.

#### **Reflect on learning**

- A. Throughout each phase of the process.
- B. Schedule regular reflection
- C. Keep progress notes

#### **Experiment with the mentoring process**

Over a period of several meetings, use coaching, role plays, simulations, experiential learning

activities, brainstorming, or other techniques with which you are comfortable. Maybe go for a walk together; sit on a bench sharing lunch, or in some cases attend a special event together.

### **Focus on wisdom**

See yourself as a resource, catalyst, facilitator, idea generator, networker, and problem-solver, but not as a person with answers. You have experience and have learned from those experiences, but a mentor should not "tell" another person what to do or how to do it. Freely share what you have done (or have learned), not as a prescription, but more as an example of something from which you gained some wisdom. Contribute ideas or suggestions, not as a sage, but as a collaborator.

### **Maintain and respect privacy, honesty, and integrity**

A mentor cannot offer confidentiality in the legal sense, but do your best to ensure that "what is said in this room stays in this room."

### **What is expected of PPPS Mentees?**

All new faculty members are responsible for managing their own learning, growth, development and performance. The new faculty member should meet regularly with the mentor in accord with their mutually developed agreement. They should identify needs, set goals, and, if desired, formulate a development plan. The new faculty member should participate in new faculty orientation sessions and other professional development activities, as appropriate and needed. Each new faculty member should document professional accomplishments in preparation for performance evaluations and probationary reviews. Finally, each new faculty member should assess the effectiveness of the mentor relationship and the mentor program itself.

- A. Prior to your first meeting with your mentor, write down at least three things you would like to achieve through mentoring. Rank the three items in order of importance to you. Also write down three things that concern you most about meeting with your mentor. Rank these three things in order of importance.
- B. If not included in either of the lists created above, write down at least three attitudes or perspectives you will be able to provide during the mentoring sessions. If possible, write down three things about yourself that might get in the way of you being able to make the most of the mentoring opportunity.
- C. If not included in your lists, write down at least three things you would like your mentor to provide.
- D. Prepare a brief autobiography based on the above lists that you can share with your mentor when you first meet. Be sure to also include your own vision, mission or life goals.
- E. It is likely that you selected your mentor or were matched with your mentor because of the mentor's resources. This typically means that you mentor has both

considerable gifts and a tight time schedule. Dealing with time is a key aspect of the success of mentoring. Make sure you are clear about your needs.

- F. Many, but not all, mentoring partnerships rely on formal, written agreements. The ingredients of such a contract are typically negotiated, but usually include answers to the "who is going to do what and when" logistical questions. In many cases such agreements spell out the purpose of the mentoring and may even include a list of career goals and work activities expected to achieve those goals. Learn about your mentor's perspective about such agreements and discuss what ought to be included, if such an agreement is valued.
- G. Be prepared to do some homework in order to demonstrate initiative, leadership and self-reliance. Explore alternative options for asking questions or gaining information other than just relying on your mentor. For example, if there is a policy manual, make sure you have read through it before asking your mentor about it. On the other hand, keep your mentor in the picture by letting the mentor know why you are asking a particular question after having explored other options.
- H. The focus of most successful mentoring is mutual learning. Feel free to explore what you have to offer the mentor. A sense of humor and a sense of enjoyment of your time together are essential as well. If your needs are not being met, discuss this with your mentor. Terminating a mentoring relationship or switching to a different mentor are not signs of failure. Recognizing your changing needs and finding a respectful way to meet your learning goals are one of the keys to successful executive mentoring.
- I. Formulate your career goals clearly, define sharply any problems you perceive and bring specific problems to meetings for discussion.
- J. You and your mentor should agree to a no-fault conclusion of the relationship if either party feels that the intended goal is not being achieved, without either blaming the other.

### **Monitoring the Mentoring Process PPPS**

The Department Chair will periodically check-in with both the mentee and mentor.

### **References**

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