

Formal Mentoring for Faculty

Introduction

All faculty benefit from a network of mentors. These mentors may be research mentors, teaching mentors, peer mentors, advocates, coaches, etc. The formal mentor is just one of these. The role of the formal mentor is to help the mentee navigate through the professional processes that lead to the mentee's success and advancement as a faculty member at UD. Because workload, merit, teaching, and evaluations (appraisals, peer review, P&T) are all performed according to departmental (as well as the university) procedures, the formal mentor should be a senior faculty member within the mentee's department. The department chair is an evaluative mentor and should not also serve as formal mentor.

Mentor-mentee pairs are expected to hold scheduled meetings each semester. UD ADVANCE provides training for mentors, mentees, and chairs and written guidelines that support the mentor-mentee pairs in planning their meeting topics. Departments have their own characteristics and cultures and thus should modify materials provided by ADVANCE to fit their needs.

General Process for Procedural Mentoring

This process may be used as a starter template for departmental mentoring policies—modify as appropriate for your department.

- The department chair assigns—with mutual agreement—a formal mentor to each junior faculty member. Some departments may wish to assign more than one mentor, but in this case one mentor should be designated as “lead” mentor to ensure accountability.
- The chair informs each member of the mentor-mentee pair of the assignment and provides each a copy of the department's mentoring guidelines and resources.
- The chair communicates the expectations, particularly that the mentor-mentee pair meets regularly each semester.
- The mentor and mentee attend training provided by ADVANCE.
- The chair checks in regularly with the mentors and mentees to make sure that the mentoring relationship is productive.
- If the pairing is not working (meetings are not occurring or not productive), the chair will assign the mentee a new mentor, who should also be trained.
- The chair will value and reward the mentor's time, for example during appraisals.
- The chair may wish to evaluate mentor-mentee pairings at the end of each academic year and consider whether to reappoint a mentor or assign a new one.