

Faculty Mentoring: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Strawser, C., Wotring, A., Nesser, W., & Hutchins, M.
Indiana State University

Mentoring

- A dynamic, mutual relationship in a work environment between the mentor and mentee aimed at promoting the career development of both individuals involved.
- Potential benefits for the mentee: improved teaching and scholarship skills, better informed choices regarding service activities, and increased productivity.
- Potential benefits for mentors: satisfaction from contributing to the development of a colleague and exposure to new scholarship techniques and teaching styles.
- Mentors can help mentees navigate the Promotion and Tenure process.

Teaching

- Teaching at the Assistant Professor level can be intimidating and overwhelming.
- University-specific resources include: identification of policies pertaining to syllabi development, classroom management and student discipline, and examples of course content.
- Mentors are an obvious source for university-specific knowledge.
- Associate Professors and Professors may be less intimidated asking their mentees for assistance in helping them implement best practices for teaching with technology.
- This is an example of the synergistic component of the mentoring relationship.

Scholarship

- Associate Professors and Professors can provide support with presentations, publications, and identification of funding.
- Associate Professors and Professors have established research agendas and therefore, the mentoring relationship will less likely emphasize the navigation of conferences and journals and is more likely to emphasize the expansion of scholarship to a national and/or international level of recognition.
- Academic leaders, particularly deans, help foster a climate that promotes mentorship – particularly in the areas of teaching and scholarship that emphasize undergraduate student involvement and community engagement.

Work-Life Balance

- A synergistic mentoring relationship is beneficial in balancing professional/personal quality of life.
- Based on trust, respect, & support.
- Faculty can benefit from the advice/support/encouragement as they strive to balance personal and professional demands.

Service

- Mentorship with service expectations is extremely helpful for faculty members.
- Associate Professors and Professors can offer guidance best provided through conversation and dialogue.
- Mentorship in the area of service is particularly valuable for faculty with similar scholarship interests.

Conclusions

- Effective mentoring is a difficult task.
- Address teaching, scholarship, & service.
- Positive outcomes occur when there is trust, experiences are mutually beneficial, and when the goals of all involved are well established and agreed upon.
- Mentoring works best when it is supported rather than forced.