



Building a Departmental-Level Mentoring Program A Guide for Chairs and Directors Version 2.0

**Created by the NSF-funded IDEAL-N Kent State Team in 2016
Mandy Munro-Stasiuk, Jenny Marcinkiewicz, and Carla Goar**

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Led by Lique Coolen**

BACKGROUND

Quality mentoring in academic environments is highly correlated with research productivity and career advancement (e.g., Ragins et al., 2000; Bland et al., 2005; Eby et al., 2006; Sorcinelli and Yun, 2007; Lumpkin, 2011). However, mentoring programs and relationships can quickly fall apart if there is no faculty buy-in, poor planning and implementation, or no evaluation (e.g. Hansman, 2002; Johnson and Huwe, 2002). This can lead to poor climate and ultimately issues with faculty retention. According to COACHE (Collaborative On Academic Careers in Higher Education)¹, quality mentoring can have the following positive effects:

- Faculty members who receive quality mentoring are professionally more successful and report higher job satisfaction. Both outcomes positively affect the institution as a whole;
- Faculty mentoring helps develop leadership abilities, both for faculty being mentored, as well as for those providing mentorship;
- Faculty mentoring is critical for under-represented groups who more easily become isolated; and
- Mentoring programs can improve the culture and environment of both the unit in which faculty are appointed as well as in the institution.

This document provides guidance to departments and departmental Chairs to help deliver a more consistent mentoring experience to faculty. It also offers advice for more intentional mentoring of mid-career and underrepresented faculty. Presented are checklists and additional background information in the form of appendices. It is highly recommended that departments examine any existing mentoring plans that they have, or conversely if they have no plan, build one using this document as guidance. Plans should be appropriate for the discipline.

Note: Throughout this document the term “Chair” is used, and is intended to refer to a faculty member’s immediate supervisor (i.e., the head of one’s academic unit), although in some cases this person might have a different title (e.g. “Director” or “Dean”). Similarly, for simplicity the term “department” is used to refer to a faculty member’s academic unit, even though different terms are applicable for some faculty members (e.g., where the academic unit is a school or college).

¹ <http://coache.gse.harvard.edu/>

MENTORING BASICS

A network of mentors is key.

Mentoring comes in many forms and may be formal or informal. The traditional old mentoring model has typically consisted of a one-on-one intense interpersonal exchange between an experienced senior individual (the mentor) who provides advice, support, and feedback to a less experienced individual (the protégé or mentee) (Turban and Lee, 2008). Some have referred to this as the “Guru Mentor” model of mentoring, that is, one mentor addresses all aspects of a mentee’s needs. This, however, has been demonstrated to be ineffective and inefficient for a number of reasons, especially because it, by default, creates a substantial power differential at the onset of the relationship. Instead, a network-based mentoring model is recommended for all faculty, especially early career faculty, consisting of multiple mentors who can assist in both an individual’s professional and/or personal life. Hardwick and Shelley (2007) note that any positive mentoring relationship must be mutual - that those who mentor and those being mentored must make a commitment to the relationship and all should perceive the relationship as beneficial. Mentors should be proactive, yet non-intrusive, and typically try to learn from their mentees; mentees should recognize that a mentor’s suggestions may be influenced by very different life experiences, especially if they are older or from a different cultural and ethnic background.

Chairs are thus recommended to form mentoring teams for Faculty, consisting of senior, mid-career, and junior faculty. If there is a lack of available mentors inside a department, then it is more than appropriate to look outside the mentee’s department, or even outside the institution (Hardwick and Shelley, 2007).

What if mentoring relationships do not work?

While most literature praises the success of mentoring programs, typically only those relationships that succeed are reported. In fact, more than one half of traditional one-on-one relationships fail within the first month. There is also a significantly higher failure rate when the mentees are women and historically under-represented faculty (Eby et al., 2000). In some cases, mentors and mentees push on, trying to force the relationship to work. However, this can often cause more harm than good and it is recommended that in such cases, the mentor(s) and mentee declare “no fault” and break the relationship, freeing the mentee to seek other mentors.

In summary, the most effective mentoring occurs when there is a team for a mentee to consult with, and if any relationship does not work, it is appropriate to break that relationship.

BEST PRACTICES IN DEPARTMENTAL MENTORING

The remainder of this document captures the principles above while outlining the best practices for departmental mentoring. These practices are partially framed around the COACHE (Collaborative On Academic Careers in Higher Education) 7 benchmark best practices (<http://coache.gse.harvard.edu/>). Additional resources are at the back of the document.

1. Have a named and articulated mentoring program

Mentoring must exist for both Assistant and Associate Professors (COACHE)

Articulate your program in your handbook or as separate guidelines

No matter how formal, or informal, articulate your mentoring program in your departmental handbook, or in a separate guideline document.

Chairs, in collaboration with their FAC, or faculty-as-a-whole, should set expectations and goals for mentoring, discuss the benefits, and articulate in writing what mentoring should look like within the department. In general, mentoring should include the provision of guidance, and even collaboration, on teaching, graduate supervision, research, service, general development of a research career, as well as other non-academic areas such as work-life balance.

Identify someone to facilitate mentoring in the department

At least one person in the department should be identified to oversee the mentoring relationships. This may be the Chair or a faculty member particularly dedicated to mentoring. Note that the Chair, by default, must be committed to providing quality mentoring for faculty, and by default, will engage in faculty mentorship by ensuring all faculty have accurate information on academic personnel processes and that new faculty have a copy of the departmental handbook, guidelines for reappointment, tenure and promotion, and a copy of the AAUP handbook. Similarly, Chairs will also ensure that all mentors have up-to-date information so they may provide accurate advice.

The Chair and/or facilitator should have discussions with all faculty to ensure all are dedicated to, and accept, collaborative responsibility to mentor junior and mid-career faculty in ways that help them reach their full potential to be successful.

Goal

- ☐ *To have a formalized named mentoring program in the department*

Checklist (all should be checked)

- ☐ *All faculty have committed to quality mentoring*
- ☐ *Your department has a structured mentoring program with clear goals*
- ☐ *You have identified at least one person to facilitate mentoring in the department*

2. Provide Multiple Pathways to Mentoring

Mentoring should meet individuals' needs, so make no "silver bullet" assumptions about what type of mentoring faculty will want (or even if they will want it at all). Instead, provide multiple paths to mentors on a faculty members own terms (COACHE)

No single mentor will be able to address all a faculty member's mentoring needs. Also, research shows that one-on-one mentoring often fails and is inefficient. It is therefore critical, through dialog, to identify what will best benefit each faculty member. Also, expect mentoring needs to change at different stages of a faculty member's career. Thus, instead of assigning a single mentor to a faculty member, provide access to multiple mentors.

We suggest using one of the following models:

Model 1

At a minimum, Grant (2006) proposed that all faculty members should have three types of mentors.

1. A Peer Mentor is someone typically in the home department, or a similar department, who may have only been in the system only a few years longer than the mentee. Their duties are typically similar to the mentee's duties and thus the mentee can benefit directly by becoming familiar with the department and university quickly;
2. A Career Development Mentor is typically someone who has intimate knowledge of the system including the expectations of the position the mentee occupies, as well as positions that mentee is likely to move into. A career development mentor is typically more senior and may be inside or outside the institution. Typical activities may include curriculum vitae review and how to position yourself for tenure or promotion, or the next career move; and
3. A personal mentor offers support and input on issues not directly related to doing research and teaching but rather on dealing with issues such as work-life balance. This could be anyone internal or external to the institution, including a friend or family mentor.

While it is possible that one person could fulfill these roles, it is highly unlikely.

Model 2

The chair or mentor facilitator should work with the faculty mentee to create a mentoring map (see Figure 1). This ultimately will help create a network, or community, of mentors. Faculty members should be given a great deal of autonomy in creating their own map.

Kerry Anne Rockquomore, founder and CEO of The National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity developed the concept of a mentoring map. She professes that conceptually, this can appear complex, but procedurally it should be quite simple. She asserts that there is no such thing as a "guru-mentor"; that no one mentor can ever address a single faculty member's mentoring needs as their disciplinary foci, skill sets, work habits or attitudes can differ.

Goal

To ensure that faculty have appropriate mentoring for their needs, and that mentoring may look different for different faculty

Checklist

- ☐ *Mentoring needs of individual faculty are determined through discussion with those faculty members*
- ☐ *Faculty have access to more than one mentor and at least three types of mentors*
- ☐ *The department has connected to structures outside the department for mentoring*

She strongly advocates that mentees need to control their own mentorship by simply asking multiple individuals for what they need rather than being assigned a single mentor. This gives faculty the freedom to reach out to many individuals that may even include friends and family. However, new faculty members especially, often aim to please, do not want to come across as needy, or they are too shy or intimidated to reach out. Thus, it is critical that the Chair or mentor facilitator at least partially facilitates this process for new faculty. Note that this map will look different for each faculty member and is likely to change over time as faculty pass through different stages in their career. A blank version of this map is included as Appendix 1.

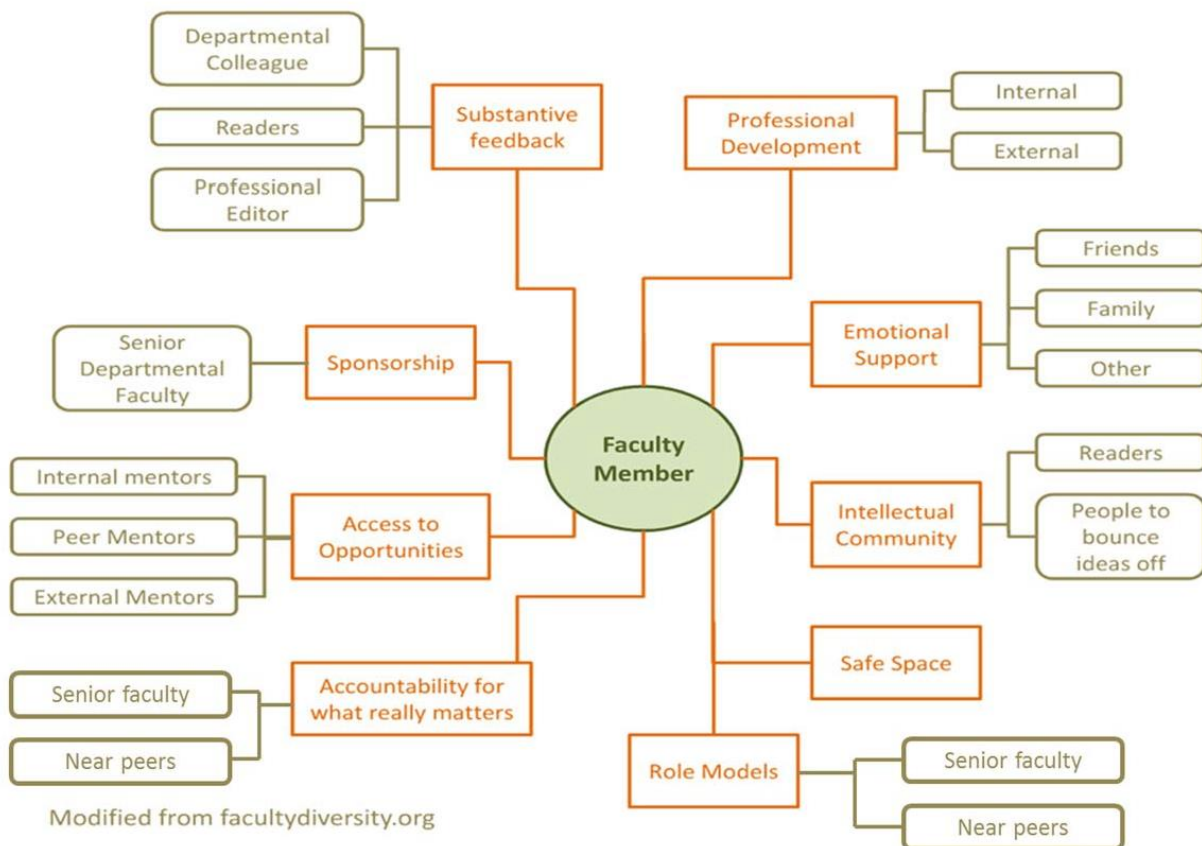


Figure 1. Overview of a potential mentoring map for a faculty member. Each of the orange boxes signifies areas that may be of need to a faculty member. Each of the green boxes reflects the type of individuals that may be important to address this need. A template of this map is provided at the end of this document and may be used to identify potential mentors.

3. The Mentee / Mentor Relationship

The mentor-mentee relationship should promote the mutual benefits for mentee and mentor alike. Mentees learn the ropes, collect champions and confidants, and enjoy a greater sense of “fit” within their departments. Mentors feel a greater sense of purpose, even vitality, through these relationships (COACHE)

Any formal relationships between mentors and mentees, should provide support to faculty members on an ongoing and regular basis. Having set-aside formal meeting times can be beneficial.

Importantly, if it seems that any formal relationship is not working, there should be a “no fault” arrangement to end that relationship.

Having more than one mentor means that the mentee still has mentoring support if a relationship is ended.

Specific roles for mentors and mentees are included at the back of this document. However, the following list² contains behaviors that can strengthen the mentor/mentee relationship significantly.

For Mentors:

- Engage mentees in ongoing conversations
- Set and respect boundaries (e.g. topics of discussion, time ascribed to mentoring; location of meetings etc.)
- Provide constructive and supportive feedback
- Provide encouragement and support
- Treat your mentees with respect
- Individualize and personalize your interactions
- Help foster networks for your mentees
- Advocate for those you mentor
- Assess your interactions with your mentees

For Mentees:

- Be efficient in interactions with your mentor
- Set and respect boundaries (e.g. topics of discussion, time ascribed to mentoring; location of meetings etc.)
- Accept critiques in a professional manner
- Take yourself seriously
- Demonstrate your commitment to the profession
- Follow your mentor’s advice
- Assess your interactions with your mentors

Goal

To ensure that the Mentor / Mentee Relationships are successful

Checklist

- ☐ New faculty have at least three types of mentors or multiple mentors
- ☐ There is a no-fault arrangement to “break” an unsuccessful mentoring relationship
- ☐ Expectations for mentors and mentees are established
- ☐ Mentors and mentees meet on a regular mutually-decided schedule
- ☐ Mentors and mentees participate in self-reflection

² Modified from: <http://ssli.ee.washington.edu/courses/grdsch630/ARLmentornotes.pdf>

4. Provide written guidelines for mentors and mentees

Written, department-sensitive guidelines will help both mentors and mentees. Transparency of process is paramount to success, especially for underrepresented populations (COACHE)

The details of mentoring may vary from department to department, and thus it is important that each department explicitly lays out their own guidelines for expectations for mentoring. This may be codified in the faculty handbook, or in a separate standalone document approved by the FAC and the department. Written guidelines should contain goals of the program, expectations of mentors and mentees, options for multiple pathways to mentoring, additional expectations for mentoring of underrepresented populations (see section 5), an evaluation plan, details of any reward structures, and a “no-fault” exit strategy. All are outlined in this document.

Goal

To ensure that mentors and mentees know what is expected of them

Checklist

- ☐ Expectations for mentoring and mentoring relationships are articulated in writing

5. Be intentional when considering underrepresented faculty groups

Special attention should be paid to underrepresented faculty groups. Underrepresented faculty experience a much higher incidence of isolation than majority faculty (COACHE)

Pay greater attention to ensuring underrepresented faculty are mentored as they tend to experience higher rates of marginalization and isolation which can lead to a lack of sense of belonging and poor retention (Xu, 2008; Misra et al., 2011; Ong et al., 2011). In particular, women and faculty of color additionally face gender-and race-related obstacles to advancement.

Importantly mentors can buffer women, faculty of color, and other potentially marginalized groups from discrimination and significantly help them advance in their careers. Through mentoring it is possible to minimize isolation and marginalization.

Important features of mentoring which will help under-represented faculty include:

1. Specifically ask the faculty member if they desire any mentors of the same gender or from a similar ethnic/racial background. Do not assume that this is what they are most comfortable with. A simple conversation can address this;
2. If no appropriate mentor exists within the department, then go outside the department or even outside the university to find an appropriate match. Mentors and mentees can easily meet electronically but ensure there are options for mentor and mentee to meet face to face (e.g. provide travel reimbursement to the mentee, or invite the mentor to

Goal

To ensure that all underrepresented faculty have strong mentoring

Checklist

- ☐ Potentially marginalized faculty have at least three mentors
- ☐ Mentors are chosen in collaboration with the faculty member
- ☐ The faculty member has the ability to express what is important to them in their mentors (e.g. is gender, race, or ethnicity important)
- ☐ The faculty member is not overburdened with service
- ☐ The faculty member is only participating in service that has value for advancement

campus to give a colloquium);

3. The chair or primary point of contact should review the mentee's committee assignments at least once a year (preferably more for pre-tenure faculty) to ensure they are not being over-burdened with assignments for representation purposes;
4. If, as a mentor, you learn that a faculty member appears to be experiencing any unwelcome bias from other faculty, be an advocate for your mentee, step up and say something. First, address this with the mentee and assure them that their work is only evaluated in the context of established academic criteria by the university, college and departments. Second, step up and say something. It is easiest to address these issues directly with the Chair, and the Chair should approach those faculty participating in the inappropriate behavior and tell them that it is inappropriate. Often, simple awareness-raising will stop the behavior.

Why is it important to be more intentional when considering underrepresented faculty?

Research shows that the slower advancement of women and faculty of color often stems from obstacles at several levels within the university system including gendered patterns of service assignments, biased evaluation of scholarship, insufficient or inequitable support, the absence of family-life policies, and perceived marginalization and isolation (Mason and Goulden, 2002; Nelson, 2007; Xu, 2008; Misra et al., 2011). These issues are exacerbated for female faculty of color who, in addition to navigating the gendered academic climate, may also need to manage racialized situations such as tokenism, invisibility, and micro-aggressions (Ong et al., 2011).

Specific observations around gender

Nationally, women do not advance as fast as men through the ranks (Hill et al., 2010). Many researchers contend that women face more gender-related interpersonal and organizational barriers to obtaining a mentor than men (Kram, 1985; Hunt and Michael, 1983; Noe, 1988; Ragins, 1989). In addition, there is a shortage of women occupying high organizational ranks resulting in a shortage of potential female mentors. This is especially true in the STEM disciplines where the number of women at higher ranks is much lower in comparison to men (Hill et al., 2010). While mentoring relationships across genders can be very successful, sometimes women are reluctant to initiate a mentoring relationship with a man for fear that the mentor or others in the organization will misconstrue such an approach as a sexual advance, and men are often reluctant to initiate a relationship with a woman as they perceive it as complicated and associated with gossip. While these perceptions may not be an accurate portrayal of reality, the perceptions are strong enough to create gender differences in perceived barriers to mentorship (e.g., Fitt and Newton, 1981; Clawson and Kram, 1984). Women may fear that assertive attempts to initiate relationships will threaten potential mentors and may therefore wait for the potential mentors to initiate the relationships. Finally, women typically have fewer formal and informal opportunities than men for developing mentoring relationships. Women are less likely to frequent the many informal settings potential male mentors frequent, such as sporting events. It is therefore critical that the Chair inquire often to determine if mentoring needs are being met.

Specific observations around faculty of color

Like women, faculty of color do not advance as quickly in academia as their white peers. Specifically, there is lower representation of African Americans and Hispanics attending college at all levels, and the overall graduation rate is lower (Landefeld, 2009). This means that the potential pool of faculty is smaller which leads to fewer faculty of color to serve in mentorship roles. This has major detrimental effects on the retention of individuals in all stages of the pipeline (Bass et al., 2008). In the case of new faculty, there is likely to be few faculty-of-color role models or mentors.

Thompson and Dey (1998) importantly pointed out that African American faculty in particular can become highly marginalized in the dominantly white colleges and universities in which they work as well as within the larger African American community which perceives academic work as benefitting few in the community. Thus, in terms of mentoring, it is important to be cognizant that external pressures may play a larger role in faculty satisfaction with faculty of color. In the Academy, faculty of color may experience marginality in their disciplines and departments based on their scholarly, teaching, and service agenda, especially when they focus on under-represented groups or issues. They are also subjected to tokenism to increase diversity on committees. This raises workloads for those faculty. It also results in raised stress levels as these faculty struggle to balance research and teaching with service load. Of note, faculty of color often report that their opinion is not valued when they serve on committees for representation purposes. Thus, these faculty become overworked in “service”, but undervalued in terms of their contributions to those committees. This is demoralizing at best. Mentorship is especially helpful for these faculty as the mentor can be an advocate

6. Ensure that mentors are valued

Good mentors should be valued and recognized for their work (COACHE)

If we do not value faculty for their contributions to mentoring, it may be difficult to get buy-in from faculty to be mentors (beyond informal). Faculty should be recognized in some form. The nature of recognition must be agreed upon by the FAC and the faculty as a whole. This can easily be considered as service to both the department and university. Additionally, nominate faculty who are good at mentoring for college and university level awards. Ensure that any departmental rewards are recognized through existing criteria in handbooks.

Suggested awards for nomination include:

- Mothers, Mentors and Muses (annual awards for women provided by the Women’s Center)
- The Provost’s Award for Mentoring. This award was launched in AY17 and is given out once a year
- Establish a departmental award for faculty mentoring faculty

Goal

To ensure that mentors are valued for their contribution

Checklist

- ☐ Mentoring is recognized and valued in departmental recognitions
- ☐ Nominate faculty for college and university-level awards

7. Develop an Evaluation Plan

Evaluation of the quality of the experience is paramount. Both mentors and mentees should be part of the evaluative process (COACHE).

Evaluate the effectiveness of your mentoring program based on the program goals. This will allow for readjustment of approach as well as determining the effectiveness of mentoring on faculty. Outcomes should be measurable and should focus on program process, participant experiences and perceptions, and for organizational effect (e.g. work performance of a faculty member is high).

Evaluation could be a simple discussion each semester by the chair soliciting feedback from the faculty being mentored. Though a simple likert-scale survey administered once a year would be useful. Simple statements that could be ranked include:

- I feel more informed about departmental structures
- I feel I have access to all the campus resources I need to undertake my scholarship
- I have feedback on my work
- I feel I am on an appropriate path to reappointment/ tenure / promotion
- I feel valued in this department

Evaluation around mentors' perceptions could be gathered the same way. Simple appropriate statements that could be ranked include:

- I feel like I am contributing to faculty success
- I provide appropriate feedback to those I mentor
- I feel valued through my mentoring
- I witness professional growth in my mentees

The following link to The National Center for Women and Information Technology, provides excellent resources for determining metrics for evaluation as well as providing some sample templates for evaluation: https://stemmentor.epscorspo.nevada.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/evaluatingmentoringprogramguide_web1.pdf

Goal

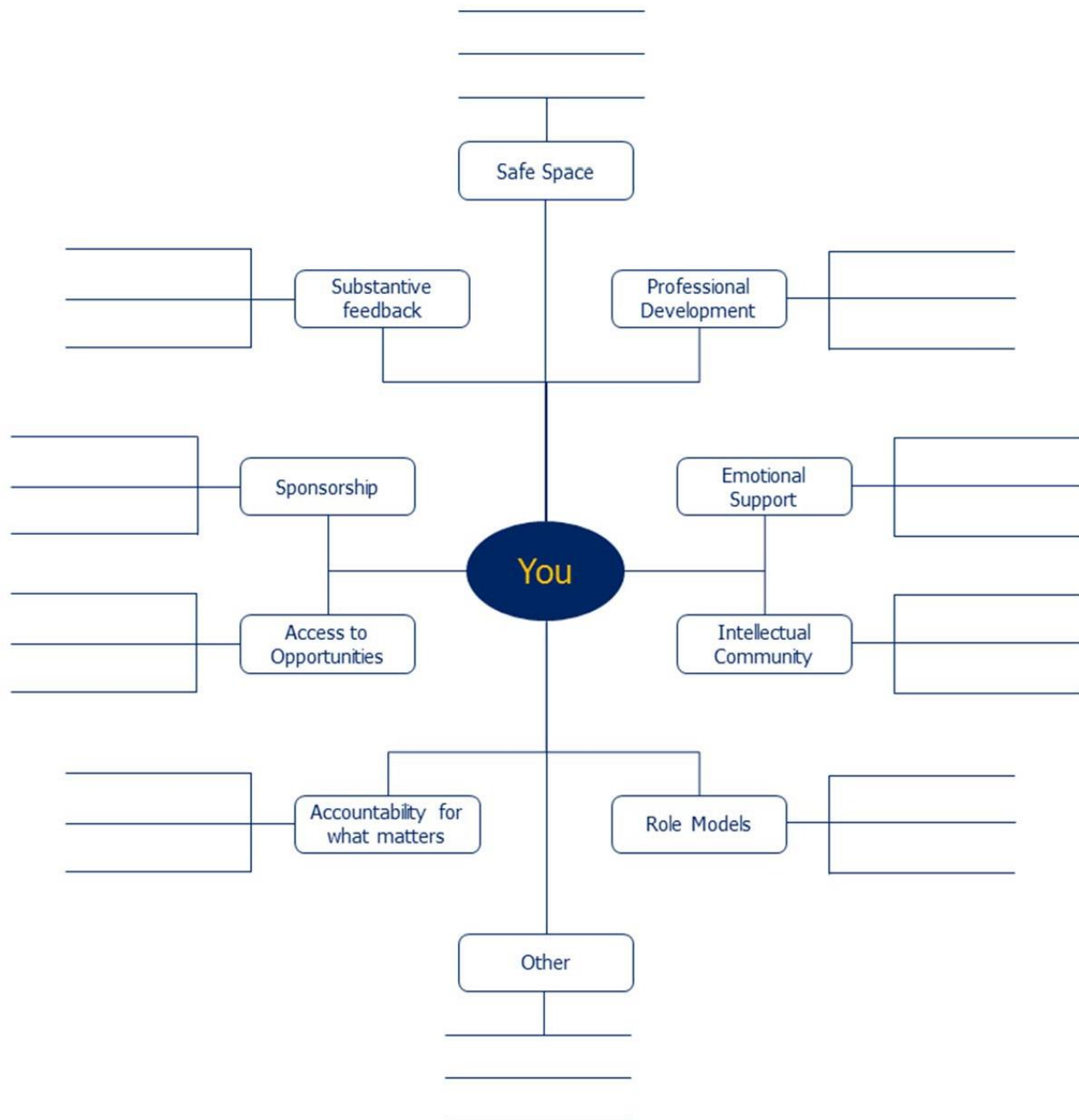
To ensure you are meeting the objectives of the mentoring program

Checklist

- ☐ *Check in on a regular basis with mentees and possibly mentors*
- ☐ *Mentors and mentees perceptions and experiences are part of the evaluation plan*
- ☐ *The program objectives are being met*

Appendix 1: Template for developing mentoring needs for faculty

Personal Mentoring Map



Appendix 2: Additional resources for mentors and mentees

Examples of expectations of mentors and mentees³. Remember, depending on the mentor/mentee relationship, not all of the examples below may be relevant to every relationship.

For Mentors:

- If a faculty member is new, contact them in advance of their arrival and arrange to meet with them on a regular basis (at least once a month);
- If the mentor is not in the same department as the mentee, make sure they have been in contact with the mentee's chairperson, prior to the first meeting with the mentee, to discuss the expectations within the department;
- The mentor should treat all discussions with the mentee in confidence. The mentor's role is not to evaluate the new faculty member, but rather to provide supportive guidance and constructive criticism. If you deem it necessary to share information with a Chair or other Administrator, ensure the mentee agrees to sharing this information;
- The mentor should provide informal advice on aspects of teaching, research, scholarship, and service within the university community. This includes directing the mentee to appropriate individuals (additional support) within the university that can assist with various tasks. The mentor should also assist the new faculty member in identifying what institutional support is available to the faculty to further their career goals (e.g., funds to attend conferences, workshops, etc.);
- Exchange CVs with the mentee to stimulate discussion about how to achieve academic success;
- Assist the new faculty member in time management: budgeting time, publications, grant writing, teaching, obtaining appropriate resources, setting up and managing a laboratory, and expectations in terms of service;
- Assist the new faculty member in networking within the university community, and provide introductions between the mentee and other faculty.
- Discuss annual reappointment reviews with the mentee: how to prepare, what to expect, how to deal with different outcomes. Preview the RPT file prior to submission.
- Review grant proposals or manuscripts for the mentee.
- Have the mentee read some of your successful grant proposals and papers.

For Mentees:

- Keep your mentor informed of progress, problems, and concerns;
- Be familiar with your department's handbook and the RPT guidelines (Reappointment, tenure, and promotion: a guide for administrators, faculty, and staff; available through flashline under the Faculty and Advisors Tools). Ensure that all advice is appropriate to these guidelines;
- When asking for input, provide sufficient time for your mentor to review materials before deadlines;
- Never be afraid to ask any questions, regardless of how minor they may seem.

³ From: <http://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.chapter4.shtml>