## Guidelines for Mentoring Committees of Non-tenured Faculty Members in the WSU College of Education*

## Spring 2012

## Purpose

Two purposes guide this mentoring process: (1) to assist non-tenured faculty members in understanding and navigating the tenure and promotion process and (2) to aid the professional development of the candidate.

## Role of Mentor and Mentor Committee

The range of support provided by mentors and mentor committee members may vary. In addition to the roles noted in the Tenure and Promotion Handbook (e.g., consultation on the tenure and promotion process, clarification of tenure and promotion criteria, oral reports to the tenured faculty on tenure progress, advisement on professional development, and classroom observations), the following suggestions might apply: (1) introductions to colleagues who share their interests, (2) feedback on scholarly papers and research, and (3) suggestions for balancing the expectations toward promotion and tenure in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The mentor role is designed to support the non-tenured faculty member, address his or her concerns, and ensure the greatest possibility of success for mentee tenure and longevity. In essence, the mentor, mentee, and mentor committee are intended to comprise a professional, collegial network that shall help guide the mentee through the tenure process. However, the final responsibility for meeting tenure and promotion expectations resides with the non-tenured faculty.

## Mentoring Process

The following outline provides the step-by-step mentoring process to be followed in the College:

1. At the time of the initial appointment of a non-tenured faculty member, the department chair, in consultation with the non-tenured faculty member, shall appoint a mentor committee which typically consists of two or three tenured faculty members. Usually, the chair of the mentoring committee should be in the mentee's department and at least one of the committee members is in the non-tenured faculty member's program or specialty area. In departments with multiple program areas, there may be advantages of including representation from more than one area. Normally, the mentor committee shall remain the same during the entire pre-tenure period. However, a change of committee membership may be requested at any time by a member of a mentor committee or the non-tenured faculty member. The request may be presented orally or in written form to the department chair.

2. The mentor committee shall meet with the non-tenured faculty member during the first semester of his or her appointment. The mentor committee chair shall call the meeting. The first meeting shall focus on a discussion of the tenure and promotion criteria in the university and college. Members of the mentor committee shall discuss their possible roles in assisting the tenure-eligible faculty member and shall solicit suggestions about the types of assistance that the non-tenured faculty member deems most beneficial.

3. Throughout the full pre-tenure review period, the committee chair shall call meetings of the mentor committee and the non-tenured faculty member at least once each academic year to review the non-tenured faculty member's accomplishments in the areas of teaching, research and service and to assist in the setting of performance goals (as needed). In addition, the committee shall review the non-tenured faculty member's Annual Review and Yearly progress Toward Tenure and Promotion Review documents. The purpose of all reviews is to guide the mentee in selecting relevant information for each report and in presenting that information in an appropriate format (i.e., according to established expectations within the college and university).

4. At a meeting called by the department chair, a yearly review of progress toward tenure and promotion shall be conducted each spring. Based on a review of the non-tenured faculty member's materials, the chair of the mentor committee may provide an oral report to the tenured faculty of the department regarding the candidate's progress. The purpose of the meeting is to familiarize tenured faculty members with each non-tenured faculty member in the department, and to allow the mentoring committee to receive additional information, data and opinions regarding each non-tenured faculty member's progress. After this meeting, the department shall request a written assessment (i.e., ballot) from the tenured faculty members in the department regarding their perception of the progress the candidate is making toward tenure and promotion.

5. The chair of the mentoring committee may provide the department chair with the written summary of the oral presentation, which the department chair will consider in preparing the written letter or memo to the tenure-eligible faculty member.

The term of appointment of a mentor and members of a mentor committee shall end at the time of the final decision on tenure and/or promotion of the faculty member.

*Revised by CEFAC fall 2011 and approved by faculty spring 2012.*

*Revised by CEFAC in spring 2009 and presented to the departments for further consideration.*

*Adopted by the COE faculty in spring 2006, this document supplements existing procedures outlined in the Washington State University Faculty Manual and the promotion/tenure instructions issued annually by the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President.*

This department has a goal of supporting the retention and mentorship of underrepresented faculty and staff (People of Color, LGBTQ+ persons, and persons with disabilities among others). Thus, the department focuses on mentoring and creating affinity spaces of support (e.g. writing groups with faculty of color, regular meetings with the faculty and staff of color) working closely with the College Leadership Team meeting to address the needs and creating supports for underrepresented faculty and staff. Two major initiatives include:

- **Early Career Scholars of Color Writing Group**: this is a group to support tenure-line early career scholars of color (i.e. career and tenure track assistant professors of color; postdocs of color). During the academic year, we meet for 3 hours each week for community-building, mentoring, and writing over Zoom with faculty across our campuses. Part of our work was identifying ways the COE can further invest and support faculty of color especially towards tenure and promotion. We were able to secure funding for one of the Pullman-based faculty members to engage in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity's Faculty Success Program (an intensive 12-week mentoring support program) in 2021.
- In 2022-2023, the college created an **Associate Deans' LGBTQIA+ Advisory Council**, which is comprised of LGBTQ+ identifying faculty to advise the two Associate Deans of Equity and Inclusion (Katherine and Amir) in creating more visibility and support for LGBTQ+ inclusion and topics in the COE. In 2022-2023, we plan to expand the group to include staff and graduate students in the COE. While this is not technically a formal "mentoring" space, I see this as supporting an LGBTQIA+ inclusive college culture and do think over time we will identify ways we can build more intentional mentoring relationships and supportive programming to make LGBTQ+ topics and issues more central to how we talk about equity issues and address these topics in our programs in the college.

We have been focused on mentoring all faculty, especially newer and pre-tenure (pre-promoted) Assistant Professors in the COE for many years, and the COE has a few well-established mentoring practices in place:

- **New Faculty Writing Retreat:** This is an initiative hosted by our Associate Dean for Research and External Funding in collaboration with Professor AG Rud. Traditionally, it has been an in-person retreat held in the fall for new faculty at our Tri-Cities campus.
- **Mentor Committees for Non-Tenured Faculty:** All pre-tenured and pre-promoted faculty (Assistant Professors) are assigned to a mentor committee, composed of tenured and/or Associate Professors. The department chairs help facilitate this process in consultation with the mentee, who usually requests a specific faculty member (in their department or in the college) to be the Mentor Committee Chair. Then usually 2-3 other faculty in the department, college, or even sometimes another college (e.g. English department for someone focused on secondary English language arts) who serve on the committee. The goal of this committee is to provide regular support, advice, and guidance for pre-promoted faculty as they navigate tenure track or promotion. The Mentor Committee

Chair presents a report on the faculty member's (mentee) progress at the annual department tenured faculty review as part of our Annual Review Process. There is more official guidelines that provides clarity and expectations for these mentor committees (see the document attached). This document was created by our College of Education Faculty Affairs Committee (CEFAC) and outlines both the role of the mentor committee and mentoring processes.

A few more recent initiatives have also begun out of the College of Education focused on mentoring:

- **CEFAC:** I believe over the last year CEFAC had been working on ways to advocate for more equity within the mentoring processes. Mainly they were concerned about vast differences across mentoring experiences through the Mentor Committees (e.g. some faculty have strong mentorship experiences and write/collaborate with their mentor chair or meet regularly with them; others only have 2 meetings a year and are not as connected). CEFAC started hosting bi-weekly Friday Lunch Hour Meetings in Spring 2022 targeted towards early career faculty to help build community and support mentorship across programs and departments. I can find out more about plans for this moving forward into the 2022-2023 academic year.
- The **COE Associate Dean for Research and External Funding Sola Adesope** has been doing a lot of targeted work with faculty members to support them in pursuing grant funding. I believe he worked with 2-3 faculty in looking at the NSF Career Grant Program and hosted several workshops for them.

Those are the main mentoring initiatives I am aware of at the college level. I know there are likely smaller initiatives within programs. Also, Sola Adesope has done more extensive work around mentoring so I can also ask him if he has any additional information to share.