

CEE Mentoring Policy

Purpose

Mentoring Plan for all tenure track faculty prior to 3rd year review

Introduction

Mentoring of untenured faculty in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at UTSA is a multi-faceted effort that includes the participation of faculty mentors, Department Chair, and the Departmental Faculty Review Advisory Committee (DFRAC).

Overall Goal

Mentoring and career guidance, are important aspects of successful career development of newly appointed faculty members. The goals of the mentoring program are to have senior, experienced faculty members assist incoming junior faculty in the development of a career plan to facilitate a successful transition to UTSA, and to provide the means to assess their progress towards achieving the goals of their career development plan.

Early Career Development Plan

The mentoring process will center on the development of an early career development plan for junior faculty, which will include goals and timelines tailored to meet the needs and areas of technical interest of the particular faculty member. The early career development plan will be created through a joint effort between the faculty mentor(s) and the faculty member (mentee). Setting specific goals and timelines will allow assessment of progress towards tenure by the junior faculty member on a continuous basis upon their arrival to UTSA.

Issues to be Included in the Career Development Plan

The early career development plan will serve as a roadmap for the new faculty member so they can focus their efforts on making adequate and timely progress towards promotion and tenure. This plan must address the three main areas of academic performance in which the candidate will be evaluated when seeking promotion and tenure: research, teaching, and service.

For each of the three areas, the career plan will include milestones and specific targets to be achieved during the entire period preceding promotion. The role of the faculty mentor is to provide advice in setting the goals of the career plan and to provide feedback on a periodic basis about the progress made towards those goals. Example areas to be considered when developing the career plan are included in the Table below.

Area	Research	Teaching	Service
Topics to be addressed	Identify research solicitations to be targeted	Teaching resources at UTSA	Identify professional organizations to be targeted
	Identify academic journals to be targeted	Identify teaching improvement workshops	Identify technical conferences to attend
Outcomes	Establish targets for proposals and agencies to submit to on a yearly basis	Develop a plan for course development	Set goals for committee memberships
	Establish targets for manuscript submittals	Develop a timeline for attending teaching improvement workshops	

Choice of Mentor(s)

Many of the mentoring activities will be accomplished informally through collegial interactions between the new and experienced faculty. Nevertheless it will be important for each new faculty member to identify a specific experienced individual (or two) who can serve as his/her faculty mentor(s). This individual(s) will meet regularly with the new faculty member, especially during those weeks immediately following the new faculty member's arrival, and help the new faculty member navigate the department and institution. It is recognized that not every faculty member will be a good mentor or be willing to serve in this role, and that certain individuals might prefer one type of mentor over another. For this reason new faculty will be given the opportunity to meet and get to know potential mentors and then be asked to make a choice regarding whom they would like to have as their primary mentor. This choice should be made by mutual agreement. Each faculty mentor can have no more than two mentees at a time.

Incoming Junior Faculty

Upon acceptance of their faculty appointment, newly hired faculty members at the assistant or associate levels will be provided with a copy of the mentoring program. The department chair will appoint a “transitional” mentor to assist the incoming faculty member until a formal mentor(s) is (are) chosen. The department chair will also provide the incoming faculty member with a list of senior faculty in the department who are willing to serve as mentors, along with a description of their academic interests and activities. Providing a list of potential mentors at this early stage is intended to give the incoming faculty member the opportunity to become familiar with possible mentors before arriving on campus.

Upon arrival, during the first month on campus, the incoming faculty member will have the opportunity to meet with potential mentors. At the end of the first month, the incoming faculty member will be asked to choose a formal mentor(s). This mentor(s) may be a senior faculty member or the department chair. Regular meetings will then be scheduled between mentor(s) and mentee at frequent intervals during the new faculty member's first months on campus and then less frequently through the pre-tenure years. Such meetings can be brief or more extensive

depending upon the needs of the new faculty member and time constraints. Once each year the new faculty member and his/her mentor(s) will meet jointly with the department chair to discuss the assessment of the career development plan.

Any time after their first year on campus junior faculty may request a change in formal mentor(s). The career mentoring plan is intended to be dynamic in nature and adapt to changes in the goals of junior faculty as new career opportunities arise.

Role of the Faculty Mentor(s)

Faculty mentors will work with junior faculty in the development of their career plans and provide feedback on the progress towards tenure on a periodic basis. Mentoring of a junior faculty should not be treated as a faculty evaluation. Faculty mentor(s) will discuss various aspects of early career with the junior faculty including:

1. Providing information about promotion and tenure processes
2. Describing and illustrating departmental, research center, college, and university culture
3. Providing constructive and supportive feedback on specific work or on career progress
4. Providing encouragement, support and listening to concerns of the new faculty member
5. Helping to foster important connections and visibility within and outside of the department and university
6. Research issues including
 - a. Assisting in locating external funding sources and opportunities
 - b. Identifying resources and opportunities within the department and institution
 - c. Navigating the proposal preparation and approval process
 - d. Internal review and advice regarding proposals
 - e. Publishing expectations
 - f. Expectations of external funding
 - g. Mentoring graduate students
7. Teaching issues including
 - a. Course assignment
 - b. Evaluation of teaching
 - c. Expectation of students
 - d. Grading policy
 - e. Resources for teaching improvement available at UTSA
 - f. Resources for teaching improvement outside of UTSA (i.e. ExCEED workshop and others offered by professional trade organizations)
8. Obtaining and supporting graduate students
9. Important individuals to know and relationships to cultivate
10. Understanding practical politics
11. Providing service to the department, college, university, and profession

Role of the DFRAC

The DFRAC will review each un-tenured faculty member every three years in accordance to the policies set forth in the Handbook of Operating Procedures of UTSA. Upon completion of the 3 year review, the DFRAC will list the strengths and suggested areas that need improvement in terms of scholarly achievement, teaching, and university/professional service. A copy of this form will be provided to the faculty member and to the department chair. The department chair will discuss this form with the un-tenured faculty member.

Role of the Department Chair

In addition to appointing the “transitional” mentor for all new faculty members, and when appropriate, serving as the official mentor for the un-tenured faculty, the chair will also assist in facilitating the transition to UTSA and review the professional development and performance of each un-tenured faculty member yearly. The chair will meet on a yearly basis with the untenured faculty to discuss the assessment of the career development plan. The department chair will provide further guidance on needed improvement, as well as pointing out particular strengths of the un-tenured faculty member. The activities of the career development plan for the up-coming year will be discussed at this meeting as well.

Assessment

The mentoring program of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering must be effective if it is to have any value to the new faculty and the department in general. For this reason, the chair will meet individually with each new faculty member at the end of their first month of employment and once a year to assess the mentoring program and to solicit suggestions to improve the process. The information gathered will be used to develop changes to the mentoring plan to be discussed with the entire faculty. If any corrective action is required for a specific case, the chair will make sure that this is accomplished.

Revisions

Mentoring plan will be reviewed as needed and requested by DFRAC but at least once every three years.

Posting

These guidelines are posted in our department website. Any comments, suggestions or/and corrections should be emailed to the department chair.