

**Mentoring Task Force Report
Presented to the Office of the Provost**

March 6, 2006

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Mentoring Task Force Report

Introduction

A Task Force was formed by the Office of the Provost under the direction of Dr. Susan Carlson, Professor, Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Associate Provost for Faculty Advancement and Diversity, to evaluate the Iowa State University (ISU) mentoring program for a number of reasons. The program is over ten years old, has not been reviewed previously, and more is known about the impacts of mentoring than when the program began, including literature regarding assessment of mentoring programs. The ISU program was among the first faculty mentoring programs in the county, but has not significantly changed during this time period. According to surveys conducted of mentors and mentored faculty involved in the ISU programs, mentors can be a positive influence or may be ineffective. Expectations and needs for mentoring also may have changed during this time period, possibly due to more complex faculty appointments, such as joint, multiple department, and center-based appointments. Also, the University's workforce is more diverse with respect to gender and ethnicity; a change that likely requires more flexibility than was provided by the earlier mentoring model. In addition, the availability of professional networks may differ, especially for women and faculty members from underrepresented minority groups, which may result in marginalization from the mainstream of information acquisition and networking. There also is a need to examine how mentoring may assist associate professor progress to the rank of full professor. There is a need to examine the best use of resources for this program, including funds and faculty time.

Charges

1. Examine the current ISU mentoring program and make recommendations for changes that make best use of the current funding, and provide options ranging from low cost to high cost.
2. Make recommendations for mentoring program feasibility for associate professor career advancement compared to the current program for non-tenured faculty. Similar or different model recommended?
3. Make recommendations for best practices in mentoring and for selection of mentors.
4. Identify specific needs and best practices for mentoring underrepresented faculty. This may require interviewing faculty.
5. Examine the feasibility and usefulness of mentoring beyond the university community, e.g., businesses, social structures, especially for women and faculty members from underrepresented groups. Also, examine feasibility of the interaction with ISU alumni. Therefore, examine mentoring that may extend beyond the university and related issues, e.g. networking for success.
6. Possible recommendations for learning communities for new faculty, with suggestions regarding group size (10?).
7. Recommendations for website and provision of resources related to mentoring.
8. Provide recommendations and report to the Provost by March 1, 2006.

Task Force Approach

For this report the committee has elected to focus on the target group of particular concern, tenure-track faculty. It is hoped that the recommendations also will facilitate improvements for underrepresented, women, and minority faculty members who are at risk for leaving Iowa State University; however, this needs to be further addressed beyond this report. The best practices that will be developed for mentoring also might be applicable for non-tenure track, P&S, and other university community members. The mentoring program is considered generally successful. The overarching goal of the task force was to make recommendations that will

improve the program and benefit all new faculty members. This report focuses on (a) significant issues that the task force identified, (b) areas in which additional data are needed to guide decisions, and (c) recommendations for immediate improvements.

Executive Summary Recommendations

1. Continue the existing mentor program and add peer-to-peer mentoring via New Faculty Communities of approximately 8 new faculty from the same college facilitated by one mentor.
2. Conduct training programs for mentors that highlight roles, expectations, results from surveys, and solicit suggested topics for presentations.
3. Expedite the collection and dissemination of information from mentored faculty/mentors and provide an option during the survey for the mentored faculty to request a conversation with their Department Chair or Dean.

Current Mentoring Structure at ISU

Two formal faculty mentoring programs exist at ISU; one through the Office of the Provost and the other through the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). The faculty mentoring program overseen by the Office of the Provost is the focus of this review. The CELT mentoring program was developed more recently in conjunction with the Office of the Provost. The focus of the CELT mentoring program is classroom teaching, and is utilized after a faculty member is more established. The Office of the Provost mentoring program is administered by the departments, under the direction of the Department Chair. A dedicated website explains this program (http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/advancement/development/mentor_1.html). Briefly, all assistant professors new to ISU begin the mentoring program in the fall of their arrival year. A mentor is chosen from the ranks of associate or full professors, according to procedures established at the level of the department or college. A \$500 fee is provided to mentors by the Office of the Provost. The commitment of mentors to the mentoring relationship with an assistant professor is formally one year, but two years is encouraged, and many relationships continue until the decision on promotion and tenure is received.

It is not widely appreciated that the current structure of mentoring varies between departments. Often, mentoring is defined as a one-to-one relationship. However, colleges and departments also have been successful in convening mentoring committees composed of two to three faculty members as mentors that support single or multiple new faculty mentored faculty. The literature also suggests that different, yet beneficial, processes occur during one-on-one mentoring versus peer-to-peer mentoring. There is some indication, although not definitive, that peer-to-peer mentoring succeeds by providing a venue in which greater personal and broader social support can be found than is possible with individual mentoring alone (UTEP in press publication from the UTEP ADVANCE program).

In terms of the time commitment expected for the mentoring experience, the Office of the Provost website indicates that mentors should be paired with mentored faculty until they have gone through promotion and tenure. However, the language is unclear regarding the expectation of formal mentoring beyond year two. Practices likely vary with departments, and expectations should be clearly stated at the start of the mentor/mentored faculty partnership regarding timeline and length of the mentoring relationship. The committee feels that variation in departmental mentoring structures should continue to be permitted to provide flexibility and autonomy at the level of unit or department.

There currently is no official structure for mentoring associate professors. There is less information about needs in this area. Missing are basic data, such as the length of time (mean, mode, range of years) from associate professor until promotion to full professor. The percentage of associate professors that apply for full professor, or the proportion of applicants who are successful at obtaining full professor status is currently unknown.

Program Analysis via Surveys (also please see Appendices)

Currently mentors and mentored faculty complete a survey after the first year. Data from this survey indicate that the introduction to the departmental culture, personal support and encouragement, and research networking are key outcomes of the current ISU program (please see appendix graph). Therefore, one-to-one mentoring should be retained as a means for continuing to reap these benefits.

There does not appear to be a mechanism for timely feedback of survey information to Chairs or Deans, since the data is present in the Office of the Provost. There is a need for all administrators that are accountable for mentoring to have accessible data, including the Office of the Provost. A survey that is accessible, timely, and that can identify problems within the mentor/mentored faculty system is needed. Prompt analysis of surveys and a mechanism for alerting administrators and mentors can facilitate timely intervention for new faculty who appear to be unsettled or not thriving. A chain of command, such as being contacted by the Dean's office to explore possible options for assistance, can be established.

When filling out the survey, a mentored faculty is reflecting on his/her first year at ISU. Some of these surveys indicate dissatisfaction with their experience at ISU, and the survey might be a means to encourage the new faculty to contact their Department Chair, or, if appropriate, the Dean of their college. One option is have an end question with options for mentored faculty to rapidly resolve mentoring situations that are not working, e.g., would you like to speak to the Department Chair or Dean about issues in your first year at ISU, the mentoring system, or any other issue that concerns you?

Other Related ISU Reports

It was noted that the mentoring responses did not align with responses gathered by the Taskforce on the Recruitment and Retention of Women and Minority Faculty Report. The responses generated in the general mentoring survey seemed encouraging overall, but the responses in the survey of the latter group were much less positive. The discordance of these results is important. It is possible that the underrepresented and minority view was diluted in the process utilized by the more general survey. *A more thorough and thoughtful comparison of the two data sets should be undertaken.*

Committee Recommendation of Mentor and Mentored Faculty Roles

Functions/Goals of a Mentor

- Provide new faculty with a person from whom they can learn about departmental norms and expectations.
- Provide ongoing feedback to new faculty about scholarly activity and scholarship, such as where to publish or where to direct funding proposals.
- To provide a resource for teaching issues.
- Provide new faculty with support and encouragement for succeeding as new professionals, university citizens, and as persons.
- Provide new faculty with an experienced listener and an environment in which they can reflect, problem solve, and share experiences.
- Provide new faculty members with positive role models.

Goals of a Mentored Faculty

- Successfully navigate the transition to university life responsibilities.
- Successfully negotiate the path to promotion.

- Learn their departmental and university systems, including formal policies and informal procedures.
- Identify faculty members who are positive professional role models and good mentors
- Seek opportunities to be an active partner in the mentoring experience.
- Be willing to report difficulties with the effectiveness of the mentoring program to administrators.

Analysis of Faculty One-to-One Mentoring and Peer-to-Peer Mentoring

Peer-to-peer mentoring. After examination of mentoring information, websites, and mentoring model programs, the peer-to-peer mentoring that occurs with the formation of groups with 6-8 new faculty across disciplines appears to have a significant impact in improving the support and community for a new faculty member. This resonates with general retention; namely finding ways of creating small communities of people who are facing common situations, gaining opportunities to discuss issues and solutions, and having positive, fun social interactions.

One-to-one mentoring. The current one-to-one mentoring provides a supportive environment for a new faculty member's research guidance, introduction to the departmental culture (ISU survey; highly ranked category). These impacts probably would be lost if ISU only used the peer-to-peer mentoring approach.

Blended model. One option is to combine the two approaches, i.e. have a one-to-one mentoring component and add a peer-to-peer mentoring component (New Faculty Community= NFC). The NFC would be approximately 6-8 new faculty members with one senior faculty (paid a stipend) who would meet once a month for 1 year. Other models may include additional senior faculty that could join an NFC depending on the group interests. The advantages of such a combined approach are:

- Maintains the benefits of the one-to-one mentoring centered within the departments which maintains the introduction to the departmental culture, provides research mentoring, and has the benefit of easier recruitment of one-to-one mentors.
- Provides a community of peers for discussion and support in the NFC.
- Provides a backup of mentoring if the one-on-one mentoring does not work for an individual (see comments on the surveys of mentors not following through).
- Uses the NFCs to link with the lunches where the entire new faculty cohort hears a presentation, e.g. the NFCs could meet during or after presentations to discuss issues.

Outputs and Outcomes

The task force considered a range of desirable results that should be expected from the ISU mentoring program. There are two levels of results: *outputs* and *outcomes*. "Outputs" speak to successful development and use of the program. In other words, did the program function the way it was supposed to? "Outcomes" focus more on results, such as the way in which mentored faculty felt more supported or surmounted challenges as a result of the mentoring experience. Outcomes answer the question, Did mentoring actually help? The program should be accountable for both outputs and outcomes, and examples of outputs and outcomes are provided below.

Outputs

Level 1 (compulsory, basic)

- a. New faculty entering in fall or spring of previous year are involved in the mentor selection process by October 1.
- b. A mentoring relationship deemed unsatisfactory by either mentor or mentored faculty is brought to Chair or administrators attention by March 1 or after the annual performance review. A new mentoring relationship would be established within 60 days.
- c. Minimum of six mentor-mentored faculty meetings or other communications by May 15.
- d. New faculty placed in a peer-to-peer (New Faculty Community) by October 1.
- e. Minimum of three meetings of each New Faculty Community by May 15.
- f. Reestablishment of year 2 mentoring relationship through meetings or other conversations by October 1.
- g. Minimum of six mentor-mentored faculty meetings or other communications by May 15 of year two.
- h. 80% of mentors have completed mentor training workshops by October 1.

Level 2 (satisfactory)

- a. 85% of new faculty have completed an introductory meeting with mentor or mentoring committee and with the New Faculty Community by November 1.
- b. Highest priority issue(s) identified and partly addressed by January 1.
- c. Need for a secondary mentoring relationship or committee mentoring established by March 1. Secondary mentoring may be especially important for women and underrepresented faculty, but may address any need not met by primary mentoring relationship.
- d. Mentor-mentored faculty pairing or committee has addressed basic elements of faculty functioning through approximately 6-8 meetings by May 15.
- e. Completion of anonymous or confidential survey of mentor and mentored faculty experience.
- f. Identification of new issues and opportunities in year 2, with greater independence in focusing issues of concern and interest by the mentored faculty.

Outcomes

Level 1 (compulsory, basic)

- a. Mentored faculty become aware of major departmental norms by March 1 or at the time of annual review.
- b. Mentored faculty and mentor work together to set the agenda for professional development needs of the mentored faculty over the course of 4 to 6 months.
- c. Key behaviors related to successful promotion to tenured associate professor are stimulated and/or reinforced (scholarship), such as writing for publications, creating and performing key works, managing service and outreach responsibilities, securing external funding, etc.
- d. 75% of mentored faculty express that they typically feel supported and personally encouraged by their mentor/s at the level of "moderate" and "very high" in year one.
- e. 75% of new faculty express they receive support and encouragement from their New Faculty Community

Level 2 (satisfactory)

- a. Problem solving related to one to two high priority issues, such as immediate teaching needs, lab or studio configuration and ordering materials, immediate local resource needs for spouse/partner or family, or supervision of graduate students.

- b. New ideas are shared regarding successful promotion to tenured associate professor. Key behaviors are stimulated and/or reinforced, such as writing for publication or creating and performing key works, managing service and outreach responsibilities, or securing external funding.
- c. Needs for professional or personal support not met by the mentoring relationship are identified and additional resources and/or secondary mentors are contacted.

Level 3 (long term, less common, highly desirable, or multiply influenced)

- a. In 80% of the occurrences, highly sought new faculty members that receive and consider offers from other employers are retained at ISU rather than resigning. (Currently for 2005-2006 an estimate is a 78% retention rate, which needs to be maintained)
- b. Needs or problematic issues at ISU are resolved in ways that lessen the likelihood that new faculty aggressively seek outside opportunities for employment.
- c. Year three annual review produces a balanced and high quality portfolio that closely matches the Professional Responsibility Statement (PRS) in 80% of cases.
- d. Women and underrepresented faculty have not resigned from the university at a greater rate at year three than mainstream faculty.
- e. 95% of mentored faculty express that they typically feel supported and personally encouraged by their mentor/s at the level of "moderate" and "very high" for both year 1 and year 2.
- f. 95% of new faculty express they receive support and encouragement from their New Faculty Community

Serving Diverse Underrepresented Groups

- Connect underrepresented faculty with faculty on campus who share their issues and concerns. This can be done via social interactions as well, such as lunch, dinner, etc.
- Design a progressive intervention program that seeks to work with faculty beyond year 1 through the promotion and tenure process.
- In the amount of time that the task force had for the mentoring program review, we have not adequately addressed this issue.

How we get there: Workshops, Rewards, Costs

There are several areas that should be addressed to facilitate the mentoring process. Mentor Training Workshops are strongly recommended for the discussion of best practices for mentoring and networking among mentors. Depending on the needs, some of these workshops also may include the mentored faculty. The model appears to have worked for department chair workshops; therefore, a similar model could be used for the mentoring program.

The current Office of the Provost website for mentoring can be used to clarify program policies and criteria. Among the areas needing clarification are the length (years) of commitment to the mentored faculty from the mentors, and the monetary awards (current and possible) to mentors. The website also could provide recommended best practices for mentoring and web links. Some of these best practices can be derived from this report, prior surveys of the program, and literature and published handbooks.

As previously alluded to, the reward system should be examined, both monetary and non-monetary. Currently there is a one-time award of \$500 for mentors. This may need modification in view of the recommendation for a blended model of mentoring that includes New Faculty Communities. In addition, there is a need for a more formal and externally recognized reward system. This could come in the form of departmental, college, or university awards for

mentoring, although a concern was expressed about having too many overall university awards that may dilute the impact. A reward program may have more significant impact at a departmental level versus the university level. Other rewards may link to accountability, such as positive outcomes of mentoring that are documented from the annual reviews of mentors and mentored faculty. Rewards in a department may be monetary or non-monetary, e.g., salary raises, recognition, resources, etc.

How to best leverage funds of approximately \$50,000 is a consideration. Currently, there is a mentor and new mentored faculty event at the beginning of the semester. Additional expenses are the newly formed new faculty socials, a lunch or dinner event at \$1000 each, which have been viewed positively by new faculty and is a possible start on community building. Funding for each New Faculty Community should be considered.

Overall Recommendations

Role of the Departments and Colleges

Although the following paragraph discusses new actions, the committee felt that some aspects of mentoring should probably stay department-centered, due to the positive feedback regarding the useful introduction to departmental culture. Different models were discussed that are ongoing at ISU. In some departments, one mentor is selected from within the department and another is chosen who is external to the department, (i.e., a small committee). If a small committee is used, mentors are selected for various areas of the mentored faculty's PRS (research, teaching, professional practice). Flexibility is viewed as a positive regarding these mentoring options.

Short-term actions

- Establish New Faculty Community (peer-to-peer mentoring) in addition to one-on-one mentoring
- Conduct training sessions/workshops for mentors
- Establish a computer-based survey, perhaps via Web CT for: faster response, timely feedback to those needing the information (Chairs, Deans, etc.), rapid identification of problems, and easier tabulation
- In surveys to the mentored faculty, have an end question with options for mentored faculty to rapidly resolve mentoring situations that are not working or to address other concerns, e.g., would you like to speak to the Department Chair? Dean?
- Survey mentors to identify the adequacy of the \$500 allocation. Is this adequate? How do you leverage funds? Could this be better used? Does this assist your professional development or the mentored faculty's professional development? Does this money have a meaningful impact?
- Be sure that statements on the Office of the Provost website for mentoring are in alignment with current and future policies
- Examine factors that limit advancement of associate professors to full professor in a timely manner. Possibilities to examine include: What is the impact of mentoring? What is the impact of possible bias against women or underrepresented groups due to old paradigms of what it takes to meet criteria? Is there a lack of opportunity for professional growth? What role is played by faculty choice or decision to forego the promotion? Data collection on time from associate to full professor, % of associate professors not advancing to full professor is needed
- Recommend a periodic review of the mentoring system; every other year. This needs to be a mentoring system that can meet changing needs and be responsive to new knowledge in the area. It is recommended that this task force complete the next review to

retain continuity and historical knowledge of the issues, with the addition of 2 newly tenured members on the committee

- Design a brochure that will indicate the importance of the mentoring program and have a significant impact
- Redesign the new faculty mentoring questionnaire

Long-term actions

- Structured exit interviews by Department Chairs and Deans for all departing faculty to document why faculty leave
- Staff to assist in the continuity of oversight of the mentoring program

Appendix

Survey data graph

Graph of surveys answered by mentored faculty. These question areas have a scale from 0 to 5 with 0 = not significant to 5 = very significant regarding assistance and help by the mentors and the mentoring program.

