

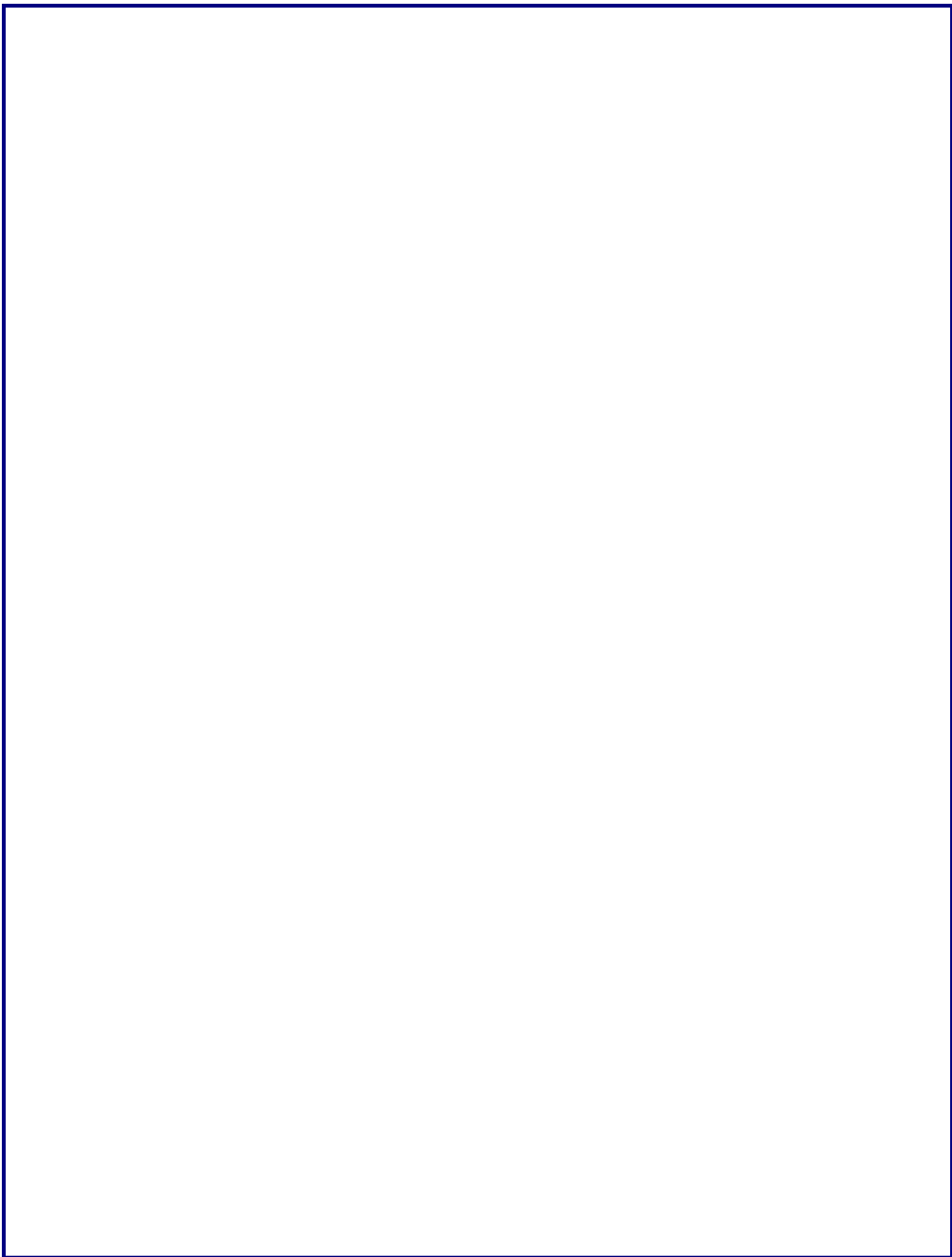


Faculty Mentoring Handbook

Best Practices Compiled by the NSF ADVANCE Program at
the University of Rhode Island

November 2005



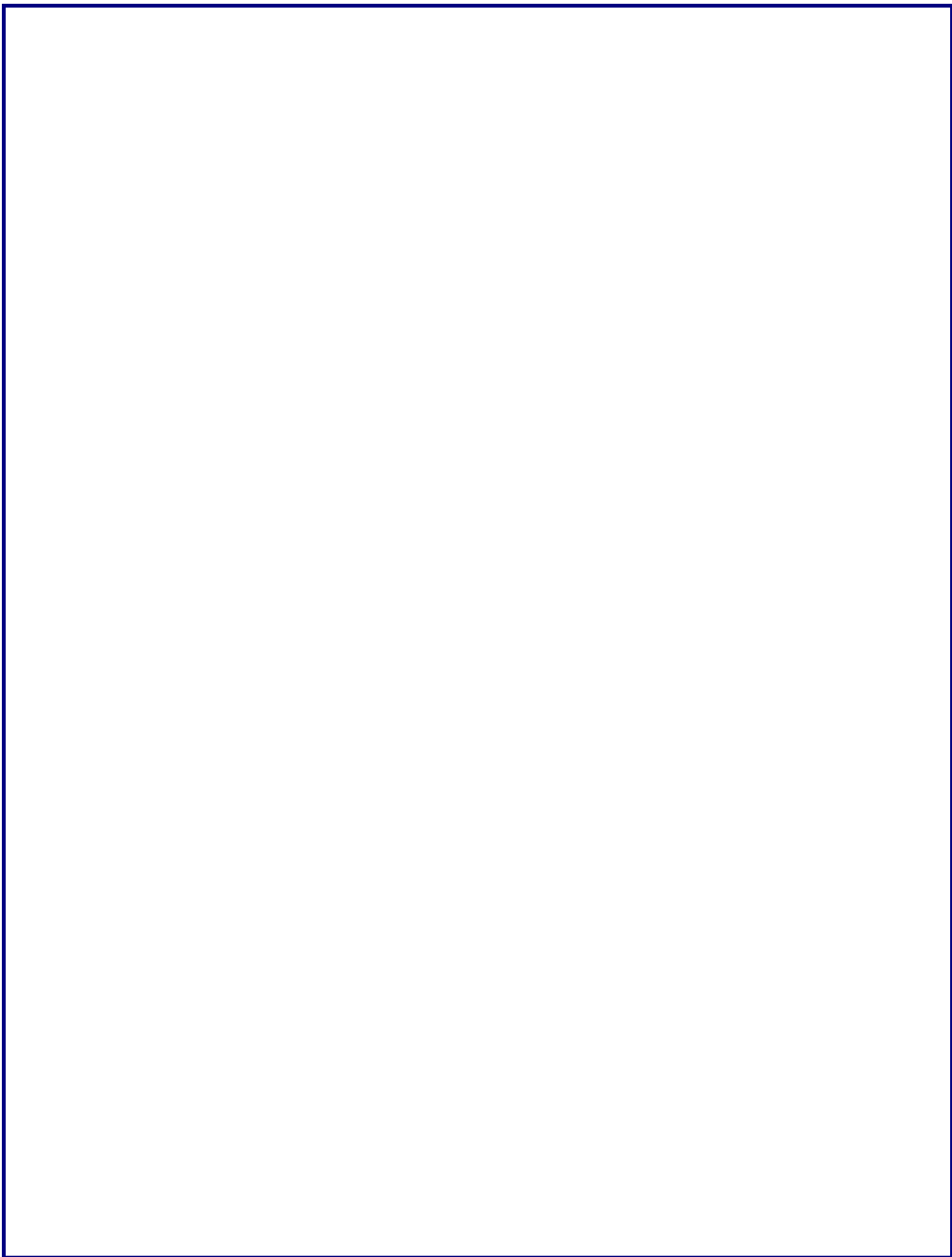




Faculty Mentoring Handbook

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I. Introduction

About ADVANCE

The ADVANCE program at the University of Rhode Island is a 5-year, NSF-funded project, designed to increase the representation and advancement of women faculty in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. It is well documented that females in academic settings face many challenges both personally and professionally. ADVANCE aims to support climate change at URI through awareness and assessment, faculty recruitment, faculty development, networks of support, and administrative collaboration in order to address these personal and professional challenges.

Providing role models for female faculty through mentoring programs is one way of meeting the overall goals of ADVANCE. The ADVANCE Resource Center is available to assist in mentoring endeavors and is currently sponsoring mentoring workshops, panel discussions and further guidelines based on consultations with successful mentors.

Please contact us at 874-9422 or advance1@etal.uri.edu with any questions and/or suggestions.

About Mentoring

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of mentoring and much wishful thinking about what mentoring relationships are supposed to be like. Much of what is assumed to be good mentoring is not mentoring at all, and mentors are not necessarily naturally endowed with effective mentoring skills. Mentoring involves not only career guidance and support, but also personal, psychological and social aspects. The need for formal mentor training and effective mentoring is increasingly recognized as a critical component in the success of new faculty, and even mid-career faculty. With women and minorities still underrepresented in many science and engineering fields, conscientious mentoring and role modeling is especially crucial.

We offer this compilation of best practice recommendations as an effort to provide some resources to faculty who are engaged in mentoring relationships at the University of Rhode Island. Its purpose is to make mentoring an integral part of departmental procedures and practices. It is the result of an extensive literature review of mentoring practices across other campuses in the nation as well as several guidelines suggested by academic articles. It aims to incorporate the existing literature into the unique wants and needs of the URI population. Although there is some specific focus on mentoring new female faculty, the principles outlined in this document are applicable to all mentoring relationships, including student-faculty mentoring relationships, and regardless of the gender or ethnicity of specific mentors and mentees.

With special thanks to Molly Hedrick, PhD,ABD, for compiling this document.

II. Models of Mentoring

- **Traditional Models:** more experienced person provides technical and psychosocial support to less experienced person.
 - 1) “Heroic Journey” This approach, seen often in science and engineering focuses on instrumental knowledge aimed and personal achievement through successive challenges aimed at fostering independence on the “heroic journey.” Relationships and psychosocial issues are undermined.
 - 2) Cross-gender and cross-race mentoring: There are often very few senior female or minority faculty available to act as mentors and models. Even when they are available, they are often perceived as being outside the departmental norm, and they seem less appealing in that they may wield less power and influence. Young women and faculty of color are thus often paired with older white males and reinforce traditional stereotypes and power dynamics.
- **Alternative Models:** Emphasize non-traditional fields (e.g. STEM) and non-traditional faculty (e.g. “older” women, “minority” women, and “disabled” women). Dispels the notion that mentoring can be provided by a single, all-inclusive mentor.
 - 1) **Multiple Mentoring:** Encourages building a strong network of team mentors designed to meet a variety of needs. This is consistent with a less hierarchical and reciprocal relationship philosophy which may be more comfortable for women. The team of mentors includes senior, junior colleagues, people inside as well as outside the academy, electronic media and personal connections. Mentors would include males, females and allow accessibility to many diverse images of success and provide valuable networking for future career goals. This prevents mentees from trying to find the perfect mentor and encourages mentees to look at advice from several different perspectives, both male and female of the same and different race. It also makes it more likely that mentors will participate as they recognize that they are not expected to meet the mentee’s every need. Different persons would fulfill different functions such as an advisor to departmental matters, information about career opportunities outside institutions, serve as a role model for work/family issues, etc. Different roles can be specified:
 - a) **Mentors** that help shape and promote the mentors career and intervene on the mentees behalf.
 - b) **Sponsors** that are similar to mentors, but exert less power.

- c) **Guides** that help explain the system and provide general information.
- d) **Peer pals** that offer collaboration.
- e) **Paper mentors** or publications that offer practical “how-to” information geared toward a particular department, institution or discipline.

Potential disadvantage: Some argue that multiple mentors can not have the same influence as a single powerful senior person.

- 2) **Peer Mentoring Networks:** Encourages friendship circles across disciplines as a means of exchanging ideas and information and potentially collaborating on projects. These are informal groups that enable faculty to “drop in and drop out” and consist of students and junior and senior faculty members. Senior women, for example, can pass on what they do know about the system and offer advice to junior women. They can serve as important problem solving and social support networks. These groups must have the support of senior faculty and departmental leaders in order to provide necessary resources and affirmation.
- 3) **Collective Mentoring:** Senior colleagues and the department take responsibility for constructing and maintaining mentoring teams. These teams become part of the organizational structure; not just an orientation activity. Senior faculty, both male and female, help create a community of support for graduate students and young professionals.

These are obviously not mutually exclusive categories of mentoring. Successful mentoring programs will incorporate the best elements of each theoretical model. Again, organizational change and climate change is key as we must change not only in how view mentoring, but how view faculty roles and institutional structures (e.g. devaluing supportive relationships; overvaluing competitive relationships, gender privilege). We do not want to simply assimilate women and other under-represented faculty into existing systems, but to engage people with different skills, styles, and values in an effort to improve the overall work environment and level of excellence. Encouraging relationships that foster cooperation, safety, and creative and innovative work through collaboration will benefit everyone.

Adapted from: Chesler, N. C., & Chesler, M. A. (2002). Gender-Informed Mentoring Strategies for Women Engineering Scholars: On Establishing a Caring Community. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 91(9), 49-55.

III. Benefits of Mentoring

For the new faculty member:

- individual recognition and encouragement
- constructive criticism and informal feedback
- advice on balancing teaching, research, committee work and other responsibilities
- training and inside information on the Department/University
- knowledge of the informal and formal rules for advancement
- knowledge of the procedures of the University
- advice on scholarship/teaching
- reduction of stress (psychosocial support)

For the mentor:

- satisfaction in assisting in the development of a colleague
- satisfaction of contributing to overall climate change
- ideas for and feedback and collaboration about the mentor's own teaching/scholarship
- a network of colleagues who have passed through the program

For the institution:

- increased commitment, productivity and satisfaction of new faculty
- *retention* - prevention of attrition of new faculty
- encouragement of cooperation and cohesiveness for those involved in the program

Taken from Mentoring Programme For New Faculty Members, University of Toronto: www.artsandscience.utoronto.ca/info4faculty/mentoring.html.

IV. Potential Barriers to Mentoring

- Unclear understanding of the role of mentor, lack of commitment to the relationship, a mismatched relationship, or a misperception of the particular or multiple needs of the mentee.
- Hesitation by mentees to express needs for fear of professional repercussions.
- New faculty may exclude themselves from mentoring as they are unaware of the limits and boundaries of such a relationship or may have been trained in an individual achievement model.
- Dynamics of overdependence, “paternalistic regard,” competition and desire for a mentee to fail may lead to unbalanced mentoring relationships.
- Some mentors may misperceive their mentee’s potential and set goals that are too high or low.
- As mentees grow and develop professional status, the mentor or mentee may have difficulty switching to a more collegial relationship, thus increasing the likelihood that the mentor’s development will be stifled or boundaries will be crossed.
- Mentors may use the mentoring relationship to help with their own needs, recognition and projects at the expense of the mentee’s success.
- Mentors may give well-intentioned advice on how to get ahead, but at the expense of the mentee’s own research interests (e.g., advising the mentee to pursue less controversial and well-established research interests rather than research that challenges the status quo.)

PARTICULAR BARRIERS TO MENTORING WOMEN

- High percentage of women in temporary or “off-ladder positions makes these individuals seem “invisible” as potential mentors or mentees.
- Lack of female faculty in several fields (e.g. STEM) make those who do exist the subject of scrutiny and mistakes are often broadcast. Female mentees may be held to higher standards than male mentees as a result.
- Senior men may fear rumors of sexual involvement with female mentees if mentoring of women is not supported by institutional policies that would **make mentoring of all junior faculty a part of job responsibilities for senior faculty.**
- The view of women as sexual objects and inherent power differentials in the mentee/mentor relationship may place mentees at risk for harassment. Sexual relationships may make women question why they were chosen as a mentee and may lead to the loss of support of peers. Sexual indiscretions are usually tolerated in men, but held against women. If a sexual relationship ends, the mentee usually loses both her personal

relationship and her closest advisor, resulting in loss of emotional and job-related power.

- Lack of senior women faculty to serve as mentors. Those senior women faculty who do exist are often overburdened by requests to serve on committees and sought out by students and junior faculty. They are often assigned heavier course loads than men. This impedes their own career development and makes it difficult to mentor juniors. Furthermore, many senior women faculty members do not have status and power necessary to promote new careers.
- Some senior female faculty were trained by traditional mentoring approaches and are entrenched in patriarchal norms and may deny the existence of institutional sexism and thus overlook promising women students.
- Women professors spend more time with students, but are less likely to initiate one-on-one mentoring relationships. If they do, they tend to be less directive and more willing to focus on the mentee's interests rather than their own.

These issues need to be addressed at institutional and departmental levels and/or within specific mentee/mentor relationships. An existing structure to discuss and confront these issues in a direct manner both within relationships and within departments and institutions is key.

Adapted from Hall, R. M. & Sandler, B. R. (1983). *Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty: A New Look at an Old Way to Get Ahead*. AAC&U Publications: Washington, D. C.

V. Guidelines for Mentees

What to look for in mentors

Look for potential mentors' own achievement in key areas such as grants, fellowships, publications, panels and committee, organization membership and departmental influence. Make sure the mentor knows the standards for excellence in your particular area. Test whether or not this is a person who believes whole-heartedly in your ability. Research what has happened to this person's past mentees in terms of positions, grants, publications, etc. See if there are differences in achievement between this person's male and female protégés. What relationship to various groups and networks does this person foster in the department, institution and discipline? Can the mentor give advice and direction that is tailored to fit your specific needs? Will she or he be able to give you the specific information, skills, and knowledge you need or help you find someone that can?

How to find and approach potential mentors

- If one isn't already provided, ask the department chair for a list of potential mentors and details about existing mentoring practices/programs.
- Introduce yourself and request senior persons whom you respect to read some of your work.
- Ask for strengths and weaknesses in your work.
- Ask a colleague to mention you or your work to a potential mentor.
- Seek out mentors at other institutions by researching experts in your field. Send them papers requesting feedback if appropriate.
- Volunteer to serve on task-forces, committees, or projects with potential mentors and offer to take on a major piece of work that will require collaboration with others.
- Invite potential mentors to be a guest lecturer in your class.
- Consider hiring a mentor to provide specific, specialized forms of advice and information.

Examples of questions to ask mentors

- Who are the powerful and important people in the department, the institution, the discipline?
- Which subfields are expanding or contracting in your field?
- How do people in the field find out about, get nominated for and win grants, awards, and prizes?

- What are the leading journals in the field? Have any colleagues published there? How should co-authorship be handled? Who can bring a submission to the attention of the editors?
- What organizations are the most important to join, what conferences are the ones to attend? Who can help a person get on the program?
- What is the best way of getting feedback on a paper-to circulate pre-publication drafts widely, or to show drafts to a few colleagues?
- How do student assistantships get assigned? How do I apply for a research/teaching assistant?
- What aspects of a contract are negotiable? Which professor or administrators have contacts at places with appropriate openings for spouses/partners?
- What are the appropriate and accepted ways to raise different kinds of concerns, issues and problems (e.g., verbally or by memo) and with whom?
- What are the department's formal and informal criteria for promotion and tenure? Who can clarify these criteria? How does one build a tenure-file? Who sits on the relevant committees? Who can effectively support a nomination?
- What departmental and institutional decisions are pending that might affect positions in the department? Who can influence these decisions?
- How does one establish an appropriate balance between teaching, research, and committee work? How does one say "no"?
- What funds are available from the department / University? Start-up funds, graduate scholarships, travel / conference, small equipment funds, etc.
- How is the department organized? How are decisions made? What infrastructure is available to the new faculty member?
- What are the policies concerning maternity, family or personal leaves? How genuinely supportive is the department regarding work-life balance issues?
- What should the professional profile be after 3 years?
- What criteria are used for teaching excellence, how is teaching evaluated, and what is a teaching dossier?
- What are the grading guidelines for courses?
- How does one obtain feedback concerning teaching?
- What resources are available for teaching enhancement?
- How does one become a member of the graduate faculty?
- What should graduate students expect from their supervisor?
- What teaching assistantships are available? What should be done about TA training?
- What are the Health and Safety implications to running a laboratory?

- What committees should one be on and how much committee work should one expect?
- How is tenure achieved? What is the review process like?
- What should be included in the annual activity report?
- Will there be feedback about performance from the Chair? If so, how often?
- What social events occur in the department, what seminars / workshops?

As can be seen, these typical issues extend over a broad range of expertise, and advice may need to be sought from a broader population of the University

- Visit www.uoregon.edu/~lbiggs/menque.html for further questions related to research and resources, student supervision, teaching, administration, review procedures and personal issues.

Adapted from: Hall, R. M. & Sandler, B. R. (1983). Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty: A New Look at an Old Way to Get Ahead. AAC&U Publications: Washington, D. C.

Tips to Enhance the Mentoring Experience

- Prior to your first meeting with your mentor, write down at least three things you would like to achieve through your mentoring relationship. Rank the items in order of importance to you. You might want to share these goals with your mentor.
- Many mentees have feelings of anxiety about meeting with their mentor because of the power difference that exists between student and professor. You might want to write down three things that concern you most about meeting with your mentor. If these issues continue to distress you after meeting your mentor, you may want to share these thoughts with her or him. The important thing is not to let shyness or uncertainty interfere with getting what you need.
- If not included in your lists, write down at least three things you would like your mentor to provide.
- Prepare a brief autobiography based on the above lists that you can share with your mentor when you meet. Be sure to include your own vision, mission, or life goals.
- As you share your autobiography, your vision, mission and life goals with your mentor, be sure to inquire about her/his own educational and career choices and life goals. Ask about the things that are important to your mentor, her/his research interests, family, hobbies, etc.
- Try to be focused about your needs for each meeting. While your mentor has considerable resources to share with you, s/he also has a tight time schedule.

- Many mentoring partnerships rely on formal, written agreements. The ingredients of such a contract are typically negotiated, but usually include answers to the "who is going to do what and when" logistical questions. In many cases such agreements spell out the purpose of the mentoring and may even include a list of career and educational goals and the activities expected to achieve those goals. Learn about your mentor's perspective about such agreements and discuss what ought to be included, if such an agreement is valued.
- Be prepared to do some homework in order to demonstrate initiative, leadership and self-reliance. Explore alternative options for asking questions or gaining information other than just relying on your mentor.
- Set up regularly scheduled meetings with you mentor. Do not let too much time go by without seeing your mentor. Although you may not always feel that you need to see your mentor for practical, be sure to **keep the relationship active** (e.g., by inviting your mentor to a social event, lunch, etc.).

Taken from University of Toronto's Women Mentoring Program (http://status-women.utoronto.ca/02_Mentoring_Program/mentee_tips_success.htm) and Information Brochure for Incoming Women Faculty , MIT, Women Faculty Network (1992).

VI. Guidelines for Mentors

Qualities of a Good Mentor

- Availability - The mentor must be available to the new faculty member, must keep in contact, and be prepared to spend time discussing University affairs, reading proposals and papers, and reviewing the new faculty member's progress.
- Networking - The mentor should be in a position to help establish a professional network for the new faculty member.
- Advocacy & Support - The mentor should be prepared to argue in support of the new faculty member (e.g. space, students, funds etc.)

Goals for the Mentor

Short term goals

- Familiarization with the University and its environment
- Sorting out priorities - budgeting time, setting up a lab, publications, teaching, committees
- Networking - introduction to colleagues, identification of other possible mentors
- Sources of research funds and support in application writing
- Dealing with difficulties - lab space, access to students
- Advise on dealing with academic offenses
- Constructive criticism and encouragement, ready praise for achievements

Long term goals

- Advise on criteria for promotion and tenure, and make aware of the expectations in various categories (scholarship, teaching, graduate supervision).
- Discuss where the professional profile should be after 3 years.
- Discuss what progress might be expected during the first 3 years.

Other guidelines

- The mentor should treat all dealings and discussions in confidence, providing supportive guidance and constructive criticism.
- Recognize and evaluate what you can offer to mentee. Acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses. Set a clear structure for the relationship at the

beginning. Discuss expectations. Discuss time commitments. Renegotiate these time commitments as needed. Do not expect yourself to fulfill every mentoring function.

- Clarify expectations about the extent to which you will offer personal as well as professional guidance.
- Be sure to give constructive criticism as well as praise. Give suggestions for improvement privately.
- “Talk-up” your mentee’s accomplishments when appropriate to other colleagues.
- Include mentees in informal activities whenever possible.
- Help mentees learn what kinds of institutional support they should seek in order to further their own career such as funds to attend conferences, workshops and/or release time for special projects.
- Anticipate potential problematic situations beforehand.
- Advise the new faculty member in aspects of teaching, research and committee work or be able to direct the new faculty member to the appropriate individuals.
- Be cognizant of the tasks of the mentor in terms of short term and long term goals.
- Confidentiality - The mentor should treat all dealings and discussions in confidence. There is no requirement to report to the administration. There is no formal evaluation or assessment of the new faculty member, only supportive guidance and constructive criticism for the efforts. There can be a written contract between the mentor and mentee, however, and development plans outlining goals, feedback and time tables. There should be care exercised in using the mentor on evaluation/review panels for the new faculty, however, and the new faculty member must approve (or otherwise) the mentor as a reviewer.

Obligations and Responsibilities

- Take the initiative to make the call to arrange for your first and subsequent meetings with your mentee. Schedule at least one meeting a month with your mentee. Review potential questions that a new faculty member may have ahead of time (see examples of questions to ask mentors above). Know campus resources and where to direct your mentee for questions you can not answer.
- Make a list of the things that you would have wanted to know when you were in the position of the person you will be mentoring.
- Create an agenda for each meeting with your mentee. Agenda items might include: getting to know each other, logistics, goals and expectations, concerns that might interfere your meeting together, initial impressions, questions for/about the mentee, and why you agreed to be a mentor.

- Listen and ask questions; these are two essential skills for successful mentoring. In-depth listening includes: suspending judgment, listening for understanding and providing an accepting and supportive atmosphere. Ask powerful questions, questions that are challenging in a friendly way and questions that help your mentee talk about what is important to her/him.
- Freely share your experiences and what you have learned with your mentee. Allow her/him to determine what decisions and actions are most appropriate.
- Maintain and respect privacy, honesty and integrity. Approach your relationship with the attitude, "what is said in this room stays in this room." Violating these values can negatively impact on the mentoring relationship. Make these boundaries very clear at the beginning of the mentoring relationship
- Experiment with the process. Meetings with your mentee can include alternatives to meeting in your office. Consider going for a walk together, sharing lunch, meeting at a coffee shop, or attending a special event together.
- Plan for the next meeting before you depart from each meeting. Review your progress based on your agenda and solicit ideas about what might be discussed in your next meeting. Ask your mentee about her/his impression of your meeting and what you might be able to do (or stop doing) next time to make the next meeting as good or better.

Adapted from: Rey Carr, Peer Resources - Navigation Tools for the Heart, Mind and Soul <http://www.mentors.ca/mentorpartnerships.html>

VII. Guidelines for the Department Chair

- The Chair will assist in advertising the Mentoring Program and recruiting potential mentors.
- The Chair identifies potential mentors. Once a faculty agrees to become a mentor, the Department Chair collects information about the mentor (e.g. research interests, teaching interests, personal interests).
- The Chair makes information regarding mentoring programs available to all potential hires at the time of the interview.
- When a new appointment is made, the Chair matches the new faculty with a mentor based on complementary characteristics (e.g. personality, interests, etc.)
- The Chair should select as a mentor a person whose views toward teaching and research are aligned with those generally accepted by the department.
- The Chair assigns a mentor to a new faculty member as soon as the offer of appointment is accepted.
- The Chair ensures that appropriate contact information regarding the assigned mentor is sent before the new faculty arrives.
- This means the mentor can contact the new faculty member in advance and address critical questions and issues before their arrival.
- The mentor should be appointed for approximately 3 years.
- The Chair should discuss the mentoring program with both the mentor and new faculty member and should continue to check in with both parties periodically throughout the mentoring relationship.
- The Chair should be amenable to funding a couple of lunches per year for the mentor and new faculty member (this is an important symbolic gesture).
- Support research about mentoring women and other newcomers in your discipline.
- Organize formal programs and informal social events where women ready to move up the ladder can meet with people already at the top.
- Encourage and assist a set of academic mentors for each entering junior faculty person which includes persons within and outside the department and institution who are familiar with some aspect of each individual's field.
- Establish a two-stage mentoring program in which newcomers are initially paired with a senior person of the same sex and race and then helped by that person to find mentor(s) with different strengths throughout the organization.
- Use faculty growth contracts developed by each faculty member in consultation with the department head and mentor to help junior faculty

- clarify goals, strengths and weaknesses, and resources needed for development.
- Bring together small groups of faculty, including both senior and junior men and women for informal discussion of campus issues.
 - Encourage the formation of broad networks of women and underrepresented groups for social and professional development.
 - Do your part to be a mentor to new faculty. Organize a reception for new faculty and university staff. Make sure new faculty get put on appropriate distribution lists. Nominate new faculty for awards (e.g., Sloan, Young Investigator Awards, Packard, Goepper-Mayer, Luce, etc.) Nominate new faculty for committees and invite them to conferences and colloquia.
 - Arrange meetings/lunches with new faculty to describe the tenure process, any deadlines and how faculty will be evaluated.
 - Make sure new faculty have lists people to contact for different needs (e.g., grants and contracts office, research office, who to call to unlock a classroom, media assistance, local community numbers, child care resources, current committee and teaching assignments and a listing of responsibilities of department staff, etc.).

VIII. Guidelines for the Institution

- Issue a formal policy statement reiterated formally and informally in by-laws, speeches, discussion with dean and department chairs, that senior persons are expected to provide helping resources to all junior persons, especially women and minorities. Designate responsibility for implementation, monitoring and evaluating this policy.
- Raise campus awareness about the importance of mentoring for women and underrepresented groups by such strategies as publishing articles in the campus newspaper and faculty bulletin, and discussing the issue at faculty meetings.
- Include development of junior faculty and/or mentoring/advising as criteria in overall evaluation of faculty performance.
- Make mentoring and providing information an established part of annual meetings and other events. At these events consider providing special “mentor” name tag stickers to senior persons who are willing to share experiences and offer advice, offer formal panel sessions that focus on mentoring and development issues, schedule brown bag lunches for junior persons and mentors, and include sessions on specific skills for advancement.
- Establish helping relationships across campus lines. For example, create consortia in which senior persons from several different regional colleges are available to assist junior faculty. This can help alleviate the “shortage” of women mentors on a given campus.
- Hold workshops for institutional decision makers responsible for implementing mentoring programs and provide consulting services.
- Establish a clearinghouse to match potential mentors and mentees based on areas of specialization, research interests, geographical location or concern for special population groups (e.g., join mentor net. www.mentornet.net, a nationwide e-mentoring network for women in engineering and science).
- Publish materials that can serve as “paper mentors” by offering women “insider info” on how to advance in a given discipline.
- Include articles about mentoring (especially those concerning women and minorities) in journals, newsletters, or other publications.
- Engage retired women from academia in mentoring programs for women (e.g. The Office of Women in Higher Education of the American Council on Education through Senior Associates of the National Identification Program.)
- Recognize persons who have been outstanding mentors at special awards ceremonies, in publications, and at plenary sessions.

- Establish training programs to help faculty learn how to be effective mentors for specific types of mentees: women, minorities, and students. Include sessions on items such as grant-writing, vita preparation, and article submission.
- Seek out senior people who are interested in helping to devise mentoring/advising programs and provide them with release time, or support staff, as necessary.
- Advertise and support the membership of women and minority faculty in women and minority caucuses, committees, and special interest groups of national disciplinary associations by providing funding, release time, and recognition for their participation in campus media.

Taken from Hall, R. M. & Sandler, B. R. (1983). *Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty: A New Look at an Old Way to Get Ahead*. AAC&U Publications: Washington, D. C.

IX. Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs for Women & Underrepresented Groups

- Goal is **NOT** assimilation to existing structures, but CHANGE in structures that serve to keep women marginalized.
- Acknowledge the values of women that have traditionally been undervalued. For example, women tend to place greater emphasis on interpersonal satisfaction, integration, and collective, team-based approaches to learning and achievement.
- Acknowledge influences of female socialization without perpetuating negative and potentially harmful stereotypes. For example, women are socialized as caretakers and cooperation is emphasized above personal success. This is in direct contrast to many university atmospheres that emphasize individual competition. Nonetheless, there is often just as much variability within groups as between. Successful mentoring programs must value traditionally undervalued characteristics in our society **AND** appreciate and respect individual differences.
- Acknowledge both real and perceived lack of power. This means valuing the subjective experiences of women and more subtle forms of discrimination. For example, although women may or may not have to deal with overt forms of discrimination, several studies have indicated that all women in academia are subject to institutional discrimination inflicted by out-dated maternity leave policies, hiring practices, salary gaps, tenure policies, child care issues, and dual career concerns. University policies will differentially affect male and female faculty (e.g. tenure clock and the decision to have a child). This must be openly discussed and validated for all women.
- Give special concern for the complexity that arises when categories such as gender, race, and or sexual orientation intersect. For instance, women faculty of color most likely experience discrimination due to their gender and their race. Mentoring programs must be adjusted accordingly to account for these intersections.
- A psychological climate of trust must be developed between the mentor and mentee and other supportive networks. This involves active listening and questioning that extends beyond professional achievements and includes interpersonally focused dialogue on issues such as work-family balance.
- Overall climate change and advocacy can be encouraged in mentoring programs as a means of changing existing male dominated norms; institutional change and social involvement can result. We must encourage everyone to change how we think about mentoring and how we think about faculty roles and institutional structures.

Adapted from: Chesler, N. C., & Chesler, M. A. (2002). Gender-Informed Mentoring Strategies for Women Engineering Scholars: On Establishing a Caring Community. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 91(9), 49-55.

X. Unique Considerations in Mentoring Relationships with Women

A. Women in Nontraditional Fields (e.g., science technology, engineering and math)

Things to consider:

- Senior faculty in STEM departments (most of whom are male) will need mentoring training if collective, individual, or peer mentoring hopes to be successful.
- Acknowledge the history of male dominated fields and the possibility that women in these fields have experienced overt sexism and hostility.
- Career choices for these women run counter to social norms.
- Women in these fields need expert guidance to navigate institutional structures that have traditionally ignored or undermined female involvement.
- Mentors should be prepared to help their mentees secure necessary resources such as access to labs, equipment or funding for special research.
- Be aware of departmental specializations and ensure that women are not excluded from these often elite “invisible colleges.” Encourage mentees to form their own areas of specialization and recruit undergrads and grads.

Further Suggestions:

- Ensure that women have access to the kinds of information about advancement often provided by mentors. Adapt “paper mentors” to address specific problems faced by women in nontraditional fields (e.g. newsletter of the Caucus for Women in Statistics publishes readers’ suggestions for how to best deal with the problem of being a “woman in a man’s world.”)
- Initiate special internship programs for undergrads or grads in the sciences with professional working in specific areas.
- Support the development of panels and networks for women in nontraditional areas (e.g., WIST lunches at URI).
- Conduct mentoring training workshops with potential faculty mentors.
- Mentoring should be considered in yearly evaluations of faculty and in tenure decisions. Include mentoring responsibilities as criterion for special awards and fellowships.

B. Older Women

Things to consider:

- Be aware of trends that indicate large numbers of older women are returning to colleges and universities as undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty or administrators.
- These women may need a new “map” of departmental and institutional systems which may be different from the one returning women recall.
- Family and work balance may be an even greater concern.
- Constructive criticism and evaluation especially concerning the possibility for “refresher” courses (e.g. in new technology).
- Encourage the adaptation of previously acquired skills into the current context.
- Be aware of toxic stereotypes of older women returning to the field (e.g. “they have nothing better to do”) and doubts over commitment to full-time teaching.
- Be aware and process age related issues that come up in the mentoring relationship (e.g., tension of a younger woman mentoring an older woman).
- Address concern that future accomplishments will be limited by the person’s age and the attitude that mentoring an older woman is not “a good investment”.

Further Suggestions:

- Establish a mentoring program for older women who plan to enter or re-enter academia.
- Encourage participation in networks and peer mentoring programs for returning women faculty and students.

C. Minority Women

Things to consider:

- Be aware of research indicating discrimination leading to lower achievement of minority faculty. Be aware of research suggesting that a major reason for these problems may be a lack of informal interaction and mentoring for these persons.
- Address the difficulty of women from minority backgrounds in finding an appropriate mentor. This may be due to the overabundance of white and/or male mentors and lack of mentors from a minority background.
- If there are few minority women in a department, this high visibility may deter potential mentors.
- Research interests of minority women may fall outside the mainstream interests of the department and may be considered risky by senior faculty.

- Minority faculty may be assigned to fringe departments and/or moved into administrative positions before they have built a substantial research base.
- Minority women who do hold senior positions may be overburdened with committee responsibilities and/or other mentees, and may not have the necessary time to commit.
- Encourage networking with other departments as research suggests that minority women tend to benefit greatly from relationships with other minority women who may fill different mentoring needs.

Further Suggestions:

- Even if a mentor is not immediately assigned, designate a counselor/representative immediately upon hire to help guide women and men from minority backgrounds through the system and provide information on how to manage common problems.
- Support the development of an alumnae network for minority women that could provide one on one advice and community support.
- Pair minority faculty who need to build research credentials with recognized senior scholars.
- Support membership of minority women faculty in newly formed national networks for minority women in higher education (e.g., Hispanic Women in Higher Education, the Black Women’s Educational Policy and Research Network).

D. Women with Disabilities

Things to consider:

- Acknowledge that women with disabilities may be at the greatest risk for being excluded from informal interactions and thus miss out on interchanges that lead to mentoring relationships.
- Potential mentors may be uncomfortable in dealing with women with disabilities as a result of fearing their own inadequacy to mentor someone who may require special assistance or accommodations with which they are unfamiliar.
- Acknowledge that this population may be physically isolated from professors and peers as a result of physical disability or may need added assistance in the case of hearing, vision or speech problems.

Further Suggestions:

- Ensure that all departmental activities are held in places accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Help faculty overcome concerns about how to mentor faculty with disabilities by establishing contact with others who are disabled or who have worked with disabled students. Human Resources and/or Disability Services may be able to provide additional information for departmental

training purposes and/or provide names of individuals who are trained and sensitive to these issues.

E. Sexual Issues:

Mentees:

- Meet with your mentor in non-intimate settings such as departmental offices, labs, and other work-related settings.
- Talk with your mentor in a professional manner, whether discussing personal or professional concerns.
- Get to know your mentor's spouse and/or family and talk about or introduce your mentor to your own spouse or significant other.
- If your mentor suggests a sexual or romantic relationship, confront the issue in a straightforward and firm manner (e.g. "I am not interested in ruining our professional relationship.") If you feel uncomfortable addressing the issue in person, consider writing a letter.
- If you feel harassed or if unwanted advances continue, contact URI Affirmative Action. The following website contains information on URI's Sexual Harassment Policy and compliant procedures:
http://www.uri.edu/affirmative_action/

Mentors:

- Avoid sexual joking or innuendo, comments about personal appearance, and intimate confidences.
- Mention your spouse or significant other and introduce him/her to your protégé.
- Call your protégé by name rather than by a nickname or term of endearment.
- Leave the door open when you meet with your mentee.
- Invite a third person along if you are meeting for lunch drinks or dinner, especially in the initial phases of a mentoring relationship when mentees may be uncertain about parameters.
- Where necessary, make a clear statement that you enjoy working with the mentee and do not wish to jeopardize the relationship or violate conflict of interests guidelines.

Departments/Institutions:

- Develop a conflict of interest policy which clarifies appropriate relationships between mentors and mentees.
- Publicize sexual harassment guidelines
(http://www.uri.edu/affirmative_action/univ_policies.html#sexharras).

- Set up formal and informal grievance procedures for students, faculty, and staff that encompass conflict of interest and sexual harassment complaints. Distribute these procedures/guidelines to all mentors and mentees to be discussed early in the mentoring relationship.

F. Changing Mentors

- In cases of changing commitments, incompatibility or where the relationship is not mutually fulfilling, then either the new faculty member or mentor should seek advice from informal advisors, Associate Dean or Dean. It is important to realize that changes can and should be made without prejudice or fault. Discuss the possibility of changes mentors during the first meeting.
- Changing of mentors should be considered if the mentor is clearly and consistently uninterested in the program, discourages or undervalues the new faculty member's abilities, indicates conflict of interest or form of prejudice, or simply appears to be incompatible.
- The new faculty member, in any case, should be encouraged to seek out additional mentors as the need arises.

Taken from Hall, R. M. & Sandler, B. R. (1983). *Academic Mentoring for Women Students and Faculty: A New Look at an Old Way to Get Ahead*. AAC&U Publications: Washington, D. C.

XI. References and Resources

URI Resources:

- AAUP <http://www.ele.uri.edu/aaup/index.html>
- ADVANCE Resource Center: www.uri.edu/advance
- Human Resources (for information re: faculty with disabilities): http://www.uri.edu/human_resources/
- Multicultural Center: <http://www.uri.edu/mcc/http://www.peer.ca/Docs.html>
- Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity: http://www.uri.edu/affirmative_action/
- Women's Center: http://www.uri.edu/women_center/

References:

Brainard, S. C., Harkus, D. A., & St. George, M. R. (1998) *Mentors & Mentees: A Curriculum for Training*. Women in Engineering Initiative, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Chesler, N. C., & Chesler, M. A. (2002). Gender-Informed Mentoring Strategies for Women Engineering Scholars: On Establishing a Caring Community. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 91(9), 49-55.

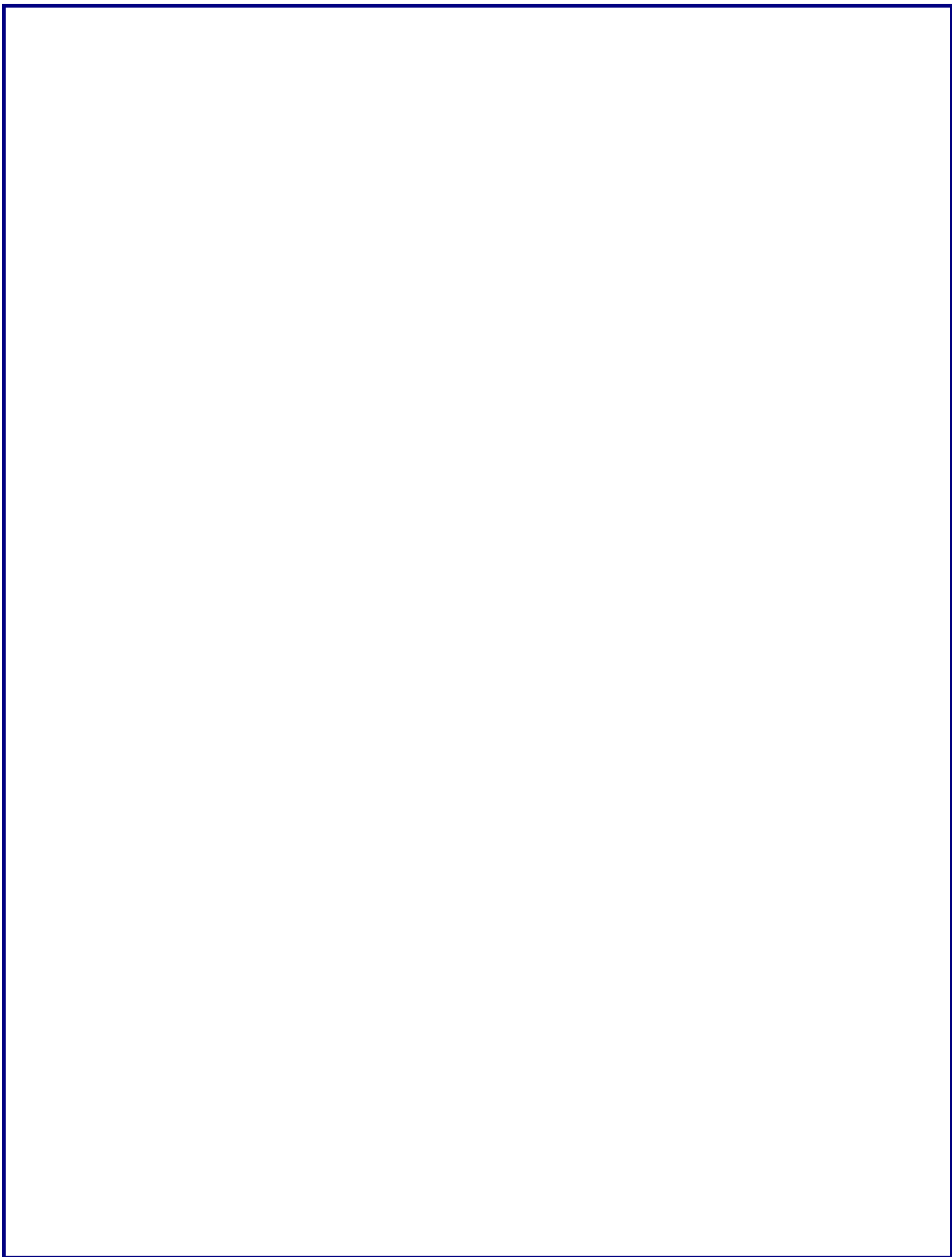
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Information Brochure for Incoming Women Faculty (1992). Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Olmstead, M. A. (1993). Mentoring new faculty: Advice to department chairs. *CSWP Gazette*, 13 (1).

Peer Resources – Papers and Articles Available Online About Mentoring: <http://www.mentors.ca/mentorpapers.html>

University of Toronto's Women Mentoring Program, http://status-women.utoronto.ca/02_Mentoring_Program/mentee_tips_success.htm





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