Faculty Protégé Paper Summary
Mellon Academic Mentoring Support Project

THE PROTÉGÉ ROLE

USC has strong interest in seeing that each new faculty member realizes his/her full potential. We want to do whatever it takes to retain and advance all new faculty members. Each college and department/team has its own culture, a system with distinct structural features, role relations, informal system dynamics and environmental stress and strains. New faculty members are not left to discover this culture and navigate it alone.

Research suggests that new faculty who have the help of a mentor perform better both as teachers and as researchers. The department/team and University are also enriched and strengthened. After all, mentoring is the socialization of faculty members learning he rules of academe, involving colleagues who are role models, consultants, advisors and sponsors for their peers.

Although all new faculty have responsibility for their own growth and success, having a mentor offers an avenue to become acclimated quickly to the USC culture. The effectiveness of having a mentoring relationship depends on the active participation of the protégé as well as the mentor.

The importance of a personal “fit” should be considered. Differences in values can seriously undermine a mentoring relationship. A person’s professional success will seem less luminous if it is perceived to have been obtained in ways contrary to your own values. For example, if you want to protect limited family time, the senior faculty member you choose as a mentor should probably not be the person known to work a 90-hour week and sleep in the department lounge – even if that person’s career success is your goal. Congruence in values does not mean, however, simply selecting a mentor who is just like you. You can learn a great deal from differences. Senior male faculty can make excellent mentors for junior female faculty and vice versa. Senior minority faculty can set wonderful examples for junior minority faculty, but can also expand horizons for and be excellent mentors to non-minority junior faculty.

BENEFITS OF MENTORING FOR THE PROTÉGÉ

- Expand your view of the University
- Receive honest and informal feedback
• Receive advice on how to balance teaching, research, and other responsibilities and set professional priorities
• Obtain knowledge of informal rules for advancement (as well as political and substantive pitfalls to be avoided)
• Obtain knowledge of skills for showcasing one’s own work
• Understand how to build a circle of friends and contacts both within and outside one’s department or team
• Provide a perspective on long-term career planning
• Connect you closer to the University and to other employees
• Increase communication about what is happening in other areas of the University
• Expand growth in your sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness as a professional
• Provide an outlet to discuss concerns
• Increase your value to the University
• Learn to cope with the formal and informal structures of the University
• Provide a successful and productive integration to the University
• Increased communication and prevention of isolation of new faculty members

PROTÉGÉ-RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Meet regularly with the mentor.
3. Keep informed in regard to the requirements for tenure and promotion and your progress toward meeting those requirements.
4. Ask for and give feedback.
5. Take responsibility for your own growth and success.
6. Follow through on referrals from mentor appropriate for specific information.
7. Listen actively.
8. Ask your mentor for guidance and assistance whenever it is needed.
9. Present needs in an articulate way.
10. Meet with and listen with an open mind to advice given by the mentor.
11. Be willing to voice and explain concerns.
12. Avail oneself of opportunities for professional growth and excellence in teaching, research, and service.
13. Talk to college and university faculty who have distinguished teaching awards.

U. W. Oshkosh - http://www.uwosh.edu/mentoring/faculty/benefits2.html
Washington State University – http://provost.wsu.edu/faculty_mentoring/guidelines.html
Virginia Commonwealth University – http://www.medschool.vcu.edu/intranet/facdev/facultymentoringguide/pastpresfuture.htm

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