Chapter 10

A Campus-Wide Faculty Mentoring Program: Putting Research Into Practice

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In the beginning years of offering faculty mentoring programs, I often found myself fielding questions along the lines of: "Why do we need a faculty mentoring program?" What was behind this question is that faculty members should enter their first academic jobs ready to "sink or swim." Since those early days, things have changed. At a recent Mentoring Advisory Committee meeting, one of the members shared that she was using the University of Vermont (UVM) Faculty Mentoring Program as a "selling" point for tenure-track candidates her department was interviewing. These two situations show that attitudes have changed toward faculty mentoring programs. Once the prevailing attitude eschewed faculty support programs and proscribed that faculty members had to arrive fully equipped for success. Now, attitudes have turned more favorable toward providing faculty development.

The UVM Faculty Mentoring Program is one example of a university being willing to support a campus-wide faculty support program. From an organizational perspective, universities support mentoring programs because they are one of the most cost-effective forms of professional development. Through faculty-mentoring-faculty arrangements, protégés receive customized professional development and expedited socialization, and they form new networks more readily.
If universities attempted to offer this kind of customized professional development in other ways, like providing coaches or small training sessions for all their new faculty members, the costs would be prohibitive. Along with customized professional development, a campus-wide mentoring program can increase affiliation with the organization. In universities, where departments can be siloed and faculty members may have few opportunities to interact or collaborate with faculty members in other departments, a campus-wide faculty mentoring program can increase connections across departments and affiliation with the university (Boyle & Boice, 1998).

From my experience recruiting senior faculty members to serve as mentors, they do not expect nor want financial remuneration (although I am sure they would not turn it down, if offered). Senior faculty members at UVM mentor for two main reasons. The first is to “give back.” In this instance, the senior faculty mentor can identify a mentor or two who had a major long-term influence on his or her career. The second reason is to “give what they didn’t get.” These senior faculty members say that they did not receive mentoring at crucial junctures in their careers and want to spare new faculty members from having the same experience. The intrinsic reasons motivate their volunteerism, not extrinsic rewards.

In this chapter, I present the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program. This is meant to be a practical presentation. Whenever possible, I will illustrate a program feature with an example of how it is implemented at UVM. Based on the purpose for this chapter, I have chosen to write in a scholarly personal narrative style (Nash, 2004) and focus on program description. I start by presenting a brief history of the faculty mentoring movement, followed by an explanation of the guidelines and programmatic features of the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program. The guidelines and programmatic features were developed by relying on research-based best practices and will be discussed in greater depth later. As a researcher-practitioner, my own research influences many aspects of the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program, in kind, issues that emerged while implementing various mentoring programs have influenced my program of research.

Although I will present some ideal features of a faculty mentoring program, anyone involved in faculty development or support programs knows that these programs are often constrained by resources. Based on this limitation, I offer up these research-based best practices as ideas and suggestions. Please do not read this chapter and consider that you must be doing much more. Rather, read this chapter while keeping in mind the goals of your program and the resources available to you. Then, identify the elements presented that you believe would serve as “active ingredients”; that is, if implemented, the elements would improve the quality and reach of your program.
History of and Reasons for Faculty Mentoring Programs

When institutions of higher education began hiring white women and scholars of color, this situation provided a context to reveal that the informal structures of the university advantaged traditional white male heterosexual faculty members and disadvantaged others. Scholars noticed that minority and women faculty members were less likely to find naturally occurring or informal mentoring relationships (Banks, 1984; Johnsrud & Des Jarlais, 1994; Redmond, 1990). Rather, the informal mentoring opportunities were enjoyed by white men (Boyle & Boice, 1998). These faculty members who readily found informal mentoring relationships were in strong field-specific cross-institutional networks, and they were introduced into these networks by their faculty advisors (Boice, 1992). Many of the informal mentoring relationships were established prior to entrée on campus and often developed around collaborations on research or grants.

Although in those earlier years, informal mentoring advantaged white men, many white men did not find themselves in such mentoring relationships; up to 90% did not find informal mentoring opportunities upon arrival on campus (Boyle & Boice, 1998). Even with a highly motivated group, like new faculty members, only a select few are able to connect with mentors on their own. The high percentage of those new faculty members who did not establish informal mentoring relationships was not uncommon. Studies of new faculty, medical students, graduate students, and new professionals found that most did not have an identified mentor, either through informal or formal means (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992; Johnson, 2002; Sands, Parson, & Duane, 1991).

Leaders of institutions of higher education looked to the management field for a remedy—formal mentoring programs. Scholars encouraged the use of formal mentoring programs as a strategy for retaining minority faculty members (Blackwell, 1989), and universities began sponsoring such programs. Yet hindrances to supporting those least likely to find spontaneous supports prevailed; women and underrepresented minority faculty members “avoid mentoring programs because they view development program as remedial and therefore potentially harmful to their advancement” (Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2005, p. 455).

In order to address this situation, faculty mentoring programs were opened to all new faculty members (Moody, 2004). As a result, the new faculty members who were less likely to fall into informal mentoring relationships and networks had these opportunities available to them through the faculty mentoring program. The faculty members who were more likely to find these mentoring opportunities on their own were provided with an additional voice to which they could turn for advice and information. The faculty mentoring programs developed a broader array of allies who could advocate for the programs when the allies moved into administrative positions on campus.
As mentoring programs have become more popular and accepted, new faculty members increasingly expect institutions to provide these types of programs. Not only are faculty members at UVM offering the Faculty Mentoring Program as a selling point to potential new hires; also, potential new hires have inquired about the availability of such a program at UVM (J. Okesh, personal communication, May 15, 2006), at least that is what my colleagues have told me. Previously, we may have thought of faculty mentoring programs as retention tools. Now, they are also being used as recruitment tools.

Although I espouse a faculty mentoring program as a format for a campus-wide support program, I encourage the reader not to think of mentoring as a panacea. Many different variables go into the development of a supportive and intellectually exciting workplace. Although faculty mentoring programs have focused on "leveling the playing field" for white women who are underrepresented in certain fields and scholars of color, we still have a ways to go. The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (2007) recently distributed the results of a survey on the work conditions of faculty members. Female faculty members were less satisfied with the work conditions, compared with male faculty members. Minority faculty members were less satisfied than their majority counterparts. Formal faculty mentoring programs are only one intervention in an array of interventions to bring greater satisfaction to the faculty ranks.

The UVM Faculty Mentoring Program

The UVM Faculty Mentoring Program sprang out of activism on the part of the Faculty Women’s Caucus (Single & Davis, forthcoming). The low numbers of women and scholars of color on campus caused the caucus to propose the idea of a faculty mentoring program to the Faculty Senate. Originally, the idea was put forth to focus on mentoring women and scholars of color. Although in committee in the Senate, the committee members decided that an inclusive program would better meet the needs of the university, and so the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program was founded in 1995.

Before moving into the implementation of the program, I want to briefly discuss governance. Where the faculty mentoring program is placed within the organizational chart of the university can have a big influence on the program’s credibility and resources. Being housed within a marginalized center is not ideal. Rather, garnering positional support from both the administration and faculty is advantageous. I was fortunate enough to become director of the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program following its founding director, Phyllis Bronstein, Emerita Faculty of Psychology, and to inherit its governance structure. The program is co-sponsored by the Provost’s Office and the Faculty Senate, and I emphasize this co-sponsorship on all of the program materials.
Recruitment. The academic year for the faculty mentoring program begins during the summer. Typically, sponsors of the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program begin recruiting new hires before they arrive on campus. I work with the Provost's office to get a list of new hires and then send e-mail messages to all the eligible new hires. The eligibility criteria for the Faculty Mentoring Program have mirrored the changes in the higher education community. Previously, the program focused on supporting incoming tenure-track and research faculty members. Now, it is opened up not only to those on the tenure-track and research-track, but also to lecturers, continuing education assistant professors, clinical assistant professors, extension professors, and new library professors. Admittedly, some of these groups, most notably the new hires to the library, have not signed up in proportionally representative numbers. My e-mail exchanges with a few of them have focused on their concerns that their needs are so different from the other new faculty members that they are unlikely to benefit from the program. Although a possibility exists that their concerns are correct, I nevertheless encourage them to try out the program to see what it might offer.

In the e-mail message, I welcome them to the university and invite them to apply to participate in the faculty mentoring program. If they are interested, they are encouraged to click on the hyperlink to access an online application. The application directs the new hires to provide general demographic information. In addition, the application includes three questions that solicit information to be used while matching the new hires with mentors. These questions are broad enough to address research and personal considerations that may be of import to the new hires. The new hires are requested to provide feedback on (1) what they expect from a mentor, (2) their preferences for a mentor, and (3) their scholarship or creative activities. Regarding the question that solicits responses on preferences, the question prompts them to address issues of race/ethnicity, parental status, gender, religion/world view, sexual orientations, and so on, that they may want in a mentor. Per the University of Vermont's Collective Bargaining Agreement for the full-time faculty and in the state of Vermont, gender identity or expression is provided with protected status. Based on the practices and laws of your campus and/or state, you may or may not want to solicit information about sexual orientation.

Matching. After the recruitment stage, I convene the Mentoring Advisory Committee, and it assists greatly with the matching process. The Mentoring Advisory Committee is made up of senior and junior faculty members from various colleges and departments across the university. Many of the members hold or hold the roles of chairpersons for their departments, vice provost, or acting dean of their colleges. This group of people provides invaluable service in terms of identifying mentors for new hires. Among them, they know just about every faculty member on campus and his or her particular research focus.
Early in the academic year, we meet around a large circular table and review the protégé applications. The members of the Mentoring Advisory Committee make their best suggestions for mentors. I often get a back-up mentor just in case the original mentor is not available. The members, with rare exceptions, are the only people to see the applications; they all know that this information is confidential, and they do not share it outside of our meetings.

Matching follows some simple rules. For the vast majority of matches, new hires are matched with senior faculty members within their college but outside of their departments. Next, the preferences, the research methodology, and the research interests of the new hires are considered. Finally, research assistant professors are matched with research associate or full professors, tenure-track faculty members are matched with tenured faculty members, and lecturers with senior lecturers, and so forth.

This matching protocol serves multiple purposes. One purpose is to help introduce new hires to senior members whom they may not otherwise meet. The cross-departmental pairings provide new hires with an outsider’s perspective. Cross-departmental mentors can share the mores and expectations of the college, relay the quirks or fissures in the protégés’ departments, and yet would not be assessing the new hires for retention, promotion, or tenure (RPT).1 As a result, these mentors can serve as impartial advisors.

When pairing tenure-track faculty members, the value of impartiality has been widely embraced and was first quantified using a Mentoring Index. The index included 10 items, and examples included: the frequency with which the mentoring pairs met, their compatibility, whether they discussed scholarship and teaching, and whether the protégés rated the interactions with the mentors as helpful and supportive. New hires who were matched across departments or who were matched with administrators reported higher ratings on the Mentoring Index. The ratings for the cross-departmental pairs were higher than the others based on the impartiality offered by this match. Having the freedom to discuss risky issues influenced the higher rating for cross-departmental pairings, as protégés were not concerned that the mentors would be assessing them. The ratings for the administrator–protégé pairs were higher because of the administrators’ greater knowledge of the formal and informal workings of the institution (Boyle & Boice, 1998).

When matching the lecturers, we are more lenient in matching across departments. In many cases and where possible, we seek out senior lecturers to serve as mentors within the same departments as the lecturers who requested mentors. We do so because the immediate decision process for reappointment for lecturers is mostly influenced by departmental decisions. Additionally, understanding the departmental workings, as opposed to college workings, has a greater influence on navigating the process from lecturer to senior lecturer.
Although matching, questions always arise over same-gender as compared to cross-gender matches and same-race as compared to cross-race matches. Consideration of cross-race or cross-gender pairings is moot in many instances; not enough senior female or minority faculty members are employed to mentor the new hires of the same gender or race/ethnicity. I have found that in the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program, we match same-sex dyads more often than cross-sex dyads. This could be due to the concentration of men and women in different fields, the requests of women, especially those with small children, to be matched with women who also have children, or even unwitting cognitive biases (Moody, 2004) on the part of myself and the members of the Mentoring Advisory Committee. I have also found that the greatest number of our pairings is majority-majority pairs, followed by majority-ALANA² pairs, then ALANA-majority pairs and ALANA-ALANA pairs. The rank ordering of the same-race and cross-race pairing is influenced by the demographics of our university. Like most public research universities, UVM has a larger number of white faculty members, compared with faculty members who self-identify as being part of an underrepresented group.

As much as possible, we take into account the preferences of the protégés. More often than not, we cannot meet all the criteria listed. We (the Mentoring Advisory Committee and I) do what we can, and we do our best. Also, I do not worry about making perfect matches. Research has examined matching based on various personal and attitudinal traits, and no clear consensus has emerged.

Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004), in their review paper, identified personal expertise and/or professional mismatch as problems hindering the mentoring; however, this mismatch was often or always identified retrospectively. No evidence exists on the “must match” variables for mentors and protégés except for the importance of both the mentors and the protégés sharing the same expectations for the relationships (O’Neill & Harris, 2004–2005).

Nonetheless, one finding has consistently been supported in the mentoring literature: the frequency of meetings influences satisfaction, benefits, and longevity of the relationship (Boice, 1990; Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Single, Muller, Cunningham, Single, & Carlsen, 2005). Thus, as a program developer, I see my role as facilitating the best matches possible based on our mentor and protégé pools. Then, I spend the remainder of the year implementing a program structure that supports ongoing connections and meetings between mentors and protégés. Of course, not all pairs who are matched in a formal mentoring program work, whether same-race or cross-race, same-sex or cross-sex. Consequently, the UVM Faculty Program ascribes to a “no-fault” mentoring policy, which I discuss later in this chapter.

After we have matched the applicants, it is my job to contact the senior faculty members and see if they are available to mentor. One year, I tried to solicit senior
faculty members early, just like I did with the new hires. I sent them an e-mail with a link to an online application. This works for protégés, why not mentors? Well, this idea was a huge flop. No prospective mentors signed up, save for two who were members from the Mentoring Advisory Committee and who I know filled out the applications to support me. Although I appreciated this greatly (their support, that is), I now pick up the phone or send individualized e-mails to senior faculty members asking them to mentor specific new hires. In the vast majority of the cases, the senior faculty members respond in the affirmative and willingly. Occasionally, potential mentors defer for a year or two. It is usually because they are going on sabbatical, have an unusually high service load, are already actively mentoring new faculty members in their own departments, or are experiencing health or family situations that are limiting their availability.

Once I have recruited mentors for the protégés, I send out introductory e-mail messages. I also send the introductory messages in hard copy to the mentors and protégés. The new hires to our campus are often bombarded with e-mail from various “uvm.edu” addresses, and I do not want this introductory message to be overlooked. As part of the introductions, I provide all contact information, and I identify their shared scholarly interests, interests upon which we relied to match them with one another. I also send a short overview of the program, letting them know that they will be receiving regular “coaching” messages from me, and that “discussion groups” will also be offered.

Along with the introductory messages, I attach an informal mentoring agreement. Although researchers have not found the personal or attitudinal characteristics that predict successful mentoring relationships, they have found that shared expectations do (O’Neill & Harris, 2004–2005). The role of this informal mentoring agreement is to match the expectations of the mentor and the protégé regarding the topics to discuss and the frequency of meetings. See Table 10.1 for a worksheet that is sent to both mentors and protégés for them to fill out. This worksheet helps the mentoring participants identify their own goals for the mentoring relationship and to share these goals with their mentoring partners. On this worksheet are the guiding statements and questions that assist in identifying the matching expectations for each of the mentoring partners. I suggest that the mentoring partners discuss their answers to this worksheet at their first meeting.
Table 10.1 Mentor and Protégé Worksheet to Identify Goals for the Mentoring Relationship

I put together a quick list for you to think about in terms of what you want to get out of the mentoring-partnership. This can serve as a template for thinking about your goals and as a document to share with your mentoring partner to discuss your mutual expectations. Each pair does this differently. Some meet regularly (usually monthly) and others, as needed. I’ve found that an important consideration is to keep the lines of communication open so that when a need arises for some quick advice, it is comfortable to contact your mentor. Both the mentors and the protégés may benefit by filling this out.

Goals: Please identify three goals for your mentoring relationship, which you would share with your mentor or protégé:

1.

2.

3.

Having thought about some broad goals, what are some areas of discussion or assistance you would like to discuss with your mentor or in which you can assist your protégé?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of your workload (for new hires)</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Research/Scholarship/ Creative Activities</th>
<th>Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas for discussion or assistance:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Is there anything else you’d want to discuss with your mentor or protégé? Please list them below as a reminder for your first meeting.

You also may want to discuss when the best times are to meet and the best way to get in contact with you (phone versus e-mail).

Program Guidelines

The UVM Faculty Mentoring Programmer developed a list of guidelines that direct the program. These guidelines include programmatic and strategic principles. By advertising these guidelines to the new participants, we can manage expectations and encourage best practices on their part. The list of guidelines is below.

Multiple-mentor model. The days when a professional got a job at a company and spent his or her entire career there are long over. In those early instances, the stereotypical one-mentor per person for each career was a viable model. More experienced managers would mentor newer managers throughout the protégés' careers and pull them along as they moved up the organizational ladder. Indeed, back then, the workforce was much more homogenous.

As our institutions have diversified in such areas as sex, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, parental/single status, socio-economic level of family of origin, disability status, and religious/world view affiliation, the idea of a single mentor is unfeasible. The UVM Faculty Mentoring Program advocates that new hires engage with multiple mentors. Multiple mentors address different areas, such as general understanding of the RPT process at UVM, tips on time management, and how to obtain supplies in the department.

The reliance on a multiple mentor model influences the matching protocol, in that the Faculty Mentoring Programmer assumes and hopes that new hires receive mentoring within their own departments. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, matching occurs across departments. In addition, certain features of the program focus specifically on community building and networking activities in order to extend the new hires' networks. In these instances, informal topic-based group discussions aid in getting new faculty members out of their offices and departments in order to meet other new hires, whom they may not meet otherwise.

Confidentiality by the program and within pairs. In the past year, a faculty developer at a small liberal arts college in the Midwest called me to talk about the faculty mentoring program she was developing. As we talked, she asked me what I would do if the mentor realized that the new hire needed help; could or should the mentor tell the chairperson or someone in the administration? My response was: “Absolutely not.” The mentor could, however, help the new hire obtain the information and support that he or she needed from other sources. The mentor also could encourage the protégé to approach his or her chairperson for help and assistance. The point is that the mentors should not be put in positions to evaluate or assess the new faculty members and certainly should not report their informal assessments to the chairpersons or other administrators. The mentoring relationship has to be “a safe harbor” (Johnson, 2007, p. 22).

For it to be seen as a viable support program by all of our new faculty members, the Faculty Mentoring Program has to be completely divorced from any
assessment or evaluation function. As a result, even one's participation in the faculty mentoring program is confidential. If a chair or any administration member came up to me and asked me if one of his or her new faculty members was in the faculty mentoring program, I would redirect the administrator to ask the new faculty member. This guideline was motivated by the early experiences of faculty mentoring programs, where participation in a faculty mentor program could be viewed as a sign of weakness or as a need for remedial help.

The commitment to confidentiality extends to any reports or written works on the program. For instance, in the program's annual report, I present the aggregated numbers of the participants in such a way that individual participants can not be identified.

**Protégé-driven model.** Either intentionally or inadvertently, many mentoring programs adhere to a mentor-driven model. They illustrate this by offering mentor training, thereby putting the onus of responsibility for the relationship on the mentor. A mentor-driven model is appropriate for community mentoring programs, where adult-aged mentors support school-aged protégés, such as in the Big Brother/Big Sister program. A protégé-driven model with the emphasis on protégé training is much more appropriate for programs with adult-aged protégés (Kasprisin, Single, Single, Muller, & Ferrier, forthcoming).

The UVM Faculty Mentoring Program adheres to a protégé-driven model. The protégé-driven model encourages the new hires to direct their own mentoring relationships and to seek the additional support they need outside of the program. Based on the protégé-driven model, training is offered to all participants, but directed toward the protégés. Similarly, the community building opportunities are geared toward the protégés, but of course, mentors are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**No-fault mentoring policy.** The UVM Faculty Mentoring Program has a no-fault mentoring policy. Some mentoring pairs simply do not meet the needs of both mentoring partners. This could be due to scheduling conflicts, to personality differences, or to a variety of other reasons. If that is the case, then the no-fault mentoring policy applies. If faculty members perceive that their mentoring partnerships are not useful, then they just have to contact me, and I will rematch them. I do not need to know the reason, nor do I ask.

For me to obtain this information, I need to be in regular contact with the participants. An important reason for the use of coaching, which I will discuss later in this chapter, is to keep the lines of communication open between the participants and myself. By keeping the lines of communication open and making it easy for participants to contact me with concerns or questions, then I am more likely to be able to change their situations to meet their needs.

**Structure within mentoring pairs.** The Faculty Mentoring Program offers structure, or facilitation, through various means. This structure is implemented
through three primary programmatic features: training, coaching, and community building. These programmatic features support the development of the mentoring relationships by providing participants in the program with reinforcement to meet regularly with their mentoring partners. The training sessions prepare the protégés to have realistic expectations for their mentoring relationships and to identify the primary focus or professional mission they have for their own careers. The coaching messages encourage mentoring pairs to be in contact; several protégés have told me that when they received the regular e-mail messages, it reminded them to contact and set up meetings with their mentors. A third medium for providing program structure is through community building, implemented as informal discussion groups, which provide opportunities for networking to occur outside of the one-to-one mentoring matches.

Just as the program offers structure, so the faculty mentoring program suggests that the mentoring pairs add structure to their own mentoring relationships. Early on, we suggest that mentoring pairs schedule a few meetings, whether they meet monthly, twice a semester, or twice a year. The reason behind this suggestion is that if busy academics do not schedule important but not urgent events early on, too often, these important but not urgent meetings will not occur as frequently as would be beneficial (Covey, 1989). Of course, the mentoring pairs use this advice as they see fit; some do schedule regular meetings, and others decide to meet ad hoc when the protégés have questions, need advice, or would like feedback on their reappointment, promotion, or tenure (RPT) dossier.

**Program Structure**

It is not enough anymore to offer a faculty mentoring program and put an invisible checkmark in the air. Rather, faculty members are getting increasingly savvy about participating in an effective program. Mullen and Forbes (2000) conducted a needs assessment for new faculty members and found they were supportive of having faculty mentoring programs available to them, but the faculty members also suggested that “ineffective” mentoring programs either be enhanced or discarded. No longer can we accommodate a laissez-faire approach to mentoring, where mentors and protégés are introduced and then sent off to develop effective relationships on their own. Boice (1990) and Wunsch (1994) were two of the early researchers who identified the need for structure, or facilitation, as part of the program to encourage involvement and longevity. As the faculty mentoring field has focused on developing effectively run and managed programs, three programmatic features have been identified and supported as being advantageous for structured mentoring programs.
Mentor Training

Training typically occurs at the beginning of the mentoring program and focuses on mentor training. Based on utilizing a protégé-driven model, the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program focuses on protégé training while opening up these sessions to mentors.

Because I view the training as only the first step in information that they will receive from the program over the course of the year, the training session is not scheduled as a 1-day affair, not even a half-day affair. It is usually a one and a half hour meeting, with a few different sessions scheduled at various times over 2 weeks to accommodate the teaching schedules of the faculty members and instructional staff.

The focus of the training session is to manage expectations about mentoring and about the mentoring program by assisting the faculty members in developing their professional mission statements, which then translate into mentoring goals. Although these training sessions have a focus, the implicit and primary reason for sponsoring these sessions is to get new faculty members meeting and interacting with one another. As a result, the format is informal and interactive.

After we introduce ourselves, we talk about how the new hires want to conduct their academic lives. Quickly after opening up this line of communication, a few question whether and how they can get everything done. This is a valid concern, as new faculty members and instructional staff often find that they have more to do than is humanly possible. During this discussion, I pose some of these questions: how does one make decisions about which opportunities to accept and which to deny? When approached about a service opportunity, collaborating on a grant, co-teaching a course, or serving on a dissertation committee, when does one know to say yes, and when does one say no?

After these questions are posed, I always tell them about the "24-hour rule." I explain that the 24-hour rule means that when you are invited to take on any new responsibility, you thank the person for the opportunity and tell him or her that you will provide an answer after 24 hours, in order to think about it and to avoid making a hasty decision. We (the participants in the training session and I) discuss that this is a good rule to apply to all parts of our lives, with a few exceptions, such as marriage or civil union proposals.

Then, I begin talking about professional mission statements. I ask the participants to write down why they wanted to be an academic. I ask them to write down what they want to accomplish at UVM and what contributions they would like to make to the university, as well as to their field. I suggest that they keep this piece of paper as a reference, for there will be many times when they will question their decision to pursue an academic career. In the training session, I ask the participants to share their professional mission statements with the group, but
only if they are comfortable. Some professional mission statements I have heard are along the lines of:

- Through my teaching and my scholarship, I want to be a role model for gay students and roll back any homophobic beliefs that some of our students may hold;
- I want to elevate my [small] department so that it has a national reputation;
- Through my teaching and scholarship, I want to communicate that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior; and
- I want to develop a lab where I can do high quality research.

Through the process of writing their own professional mission statements, I want to change the mindset of these new faculty members from "I can't do it all" to "I can do what is important." Through the process of listening to the mission statements of the other participants, they realize the simplicity of a mission statement. They also realize a great variability in the sensibilities and objectives of their colleagues.

Next, I point out that their mission statements will change over time, and so I allay any persuasions toward perfectionism that may afflict this over-achieving group. As examples, I ask the mentors who are participating to share their mission statements and share with us how their mission statements have changed. Protégés have told me that they particularly appreciated hearing the mission statements of their more experienced colleague and how the statements evolved.

The professional mission statement is an important focusing tool for members of any profession in a highly unstructured workplace in which they have constant and increasing demands on their time. The statement can serve as a sieve to help new faculty members decide (when they are able to choose) whether to accept or decline the many additional scholarship, teaching, and service opportunities that will come their way. In addition, their mission statements can drive the goals and expectations that the protégés hold for their mentoring relationships. I encourage them to share their professional mission statements with their mentors.

**Coaching**

Coaching is the second feature included in structured mentoring programs. Coaching, also called facilitation, provides ongoing ideas for discussion and allows the program coordinator to stay in contact with the participants. The importance of this feature came out of early work on faculty mentoring. I was conducting a research project with my dissertation advisor on a small face-to-face mentoring program for graduate teaching assistants. We stopped by or called the mentors' offices one week, followed by the protégés' offices the next week; as a
result, each mentoring pair heard from us weekly. Unbeknownst to us at the time, this evaluation was serving as an intervention, as evaluations so often do. Toward the end of this research project, we heard feedback along the lines of: “When I’m tempted to not meet or fill out my things [i.e., mentoring journals], I realize it would be easier to do them than to have to explain to you why I didn’t when you call” (Boyle & Boice, 1998, p. 166). They were right.

Although meeting or calling each pair regularly is a luxury I do not now have, the program still utilizes the principles behind coaching. These principles are to serve as a reminder or reinforcement for the mentoring pairs to be in contact, to deliver timely and targeted content to the mentors and protégés, and to keep the lines of communication open between myself and the participants.

Sending e-mail messages would have been infeasible in the program mentioned earlier, as this research was conducted at a time when e-mail was accessed only through logging onto a mainframe computer. Now, however, I rely on the Internet to deliver regular coaching messages. These messages are e-mailed about monthly and at UVM are named “Faculty Development Topics and UVM Trivia.” The trivia was added on as a fun and unobtrusive way to introduce the newcomers to the various objects of interest or events on campus. The same messages are sent to the protégés and the mentors and are delivered using an e-mail merge program, to avoid the problem of having someone inadvertently respond to the whole group (and thereby unintentionally break their own confidentiality). Below is a sample Faculty Development Topics and UVM Trivia:

Dear [first names of the participants are merged into the e-mail],

Greetings—this may be the first Faculty Development Topic and UVM Trivia for many of the new participants in the Faculty Mentoring Program and another one for those who have been participating longer. I try to keep these messages short and sweet, with a link for additional information, if you are so inclined to read further.

Now is a good time to review your syllabus, and perhaps go over it with your mentor or your protégé. One of the things you’ll want to reference in your syllabus is UVM’s ACCESS office. Here is a short paragraph that you may want to consider adding to your syllabus:

UVM, through its ACCESS office, provides accommodation, consultation, collaboration, and education support services to students with disabilities. To contact the ACCESS office, go to: http://www.uvm.edu/access; e-mail them at access@uvm.edu; or call at 656-7753. If you need specific accommodations in this class, please bring a letter from ACCESS as early as possible.
so that we can make appropriate arrangements (at least 2 weeks before any exam or project).

While reviewing your syllabus, planning for next semester, and reviewing your program of research or scholarship, I've found "everything in moderation" to be good advice, although not always easy to implement. Here's an article about the value of moderation in writing and teaching preparation: http://ctl.stanford.edu/Tomprof/postings/194.html

*UVM Trivia*

Have you ever wondered why we have a bronze status of the Marquis de Lafayette on UVM campus? To find out, visit http://www.uvm.edu/~wlipke/artuvmarquis.php.

The structure of the coaching messages is pretty straightforward. I try to offer a concrete, specific example of a policy or procedure that is recommended at UVM. I also try to have a link in each message, so that if recipients want to read more about a faculty development topic, they can. The messages end with UVM Trivia. The trivia have included information about the free concerts offered by UVM’s music department (we have a great music department!), a description of a new Native American exhibit in the university museum, and the fact that John Dewey (a UVM alumnus) is buried on campus.

Community Building/Group Mentoring

The final programmatic feature suggested for a formal faculty mentoring program is community building, group mentoring, or group meetings, whichever term you prefer to use. The purpose of these group meetings is to provide an informal place where new faculty members, along with senior faculty members, can make connections. Specifically, the purpose is to facilitate networking across the departmental silos that, along with heavy workloads, too often keep faculty members from meeting colleagues with similar interests who may be housed in different departments.

Group meetings, as a feature of formal mentoring programs, can serve multiple purposes. In one study, the participants identified the group meetings as “the best part” of the mentoring program, and the meetings resulted in increased affiliation with the university (Boyle & Boice, 1998, p. 176). In another study with student-aged protégés, the group meetings served as a “safety net” for when the mentoring pairs were not meeting the needs of the participants (O’Neill, 2004). Although group meetings are always ranked highly when attended, a core issue is how to get those who could benefit from attending to attend. The answer
seems to be by offering topic-based group meetings. Groups that were based on characteristics of the protégés or the mentors would not be well utilized. In contrast, groups that have a purpose would draw the largest number of participants and would have the most activity and longevity (Single, Muller, Cunningham, & Single, 2000).

The group meetings offered through the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program are offered in response to newcomers’ needs. In the final question on the application, I ask the new hires to state their interest in attending group discussions focused on various topics relevant to new faculty members and instructional staff. A group discussion on the RPT process at UVM is always ranked the highest, followed by time management. To address this need and to build on a tradition started by the Faculty Women’s Caucus, last year, we offered four panel presentations addressing the RPT process. The panels were composed of senior faculty members who were involved in the process as administrators or as members of college- or campus-wide RPT review committees. To accommodate schedules and the changing population of our faculty members and instructional staff, we offered two sessions for tenure-track faculty members and two sessions for lecturers and research, clinical, library, continuing education, and extension assistant professors.

In addition to the RPT panels, the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program has recently offered additional group discussions. Not surprisingly, the majority of them focus on some aspect of time management. For these group discussions, which were offered for the first time during the spring semester of 2007, I liberally called on the skills and expertise of the members of the Mentoring Advisory Committee. What are being called “group discussions” are being offered from every week to every other week throughout the semester. The discussion groups are offered at different days and times each week in order to accommodate differing schedules. Below are examples of the discussion groups being offered by the Faculty Mentoring Program:

**Time Management and Scholarly Productivity:** Former University Scholars talk about establishing and maintaining a regular writing routine while engaging in teaching, service, and administration.

**Faculty Governance at UVM: The Role of the Faculty Senate.** The President and Vice President of the Faculty Senate discuss the role of the faculty senate and how it influences the working of UVM and the lives of faculty members and students; and,

**Teaching Effectiveness/Teaching Diversity: LGBT Issues in the UVM Classroom.** Although the focus will be on Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and
transsexual issues, this presentation will address diversity more broadly in the classroom, whether it is directly or indirectly included in the syllabus. The discussion will be led by faculty members associated with the Sexuality and Gender Identities Studies minor.

We (the Mentoring Advisory Committee and I) are purposefully keeping the group meetings informal, and display this fact prominently on the flyers. We did not want these group discussions to be another “to do” on new faculty members’ already long lists. In addition, we advertised that the group discussions are “family-friendly,” as many of our faculty members are the primary caregivers for their children. Therefore, children are welcome, and cell phones can be left on. The flyers were distributed to all faculty members, not only to the faculty members participating in the Faculty Mentoring Program.

Conclusions and Advantages of Sponsoring Faculty Mentoring Programs

I am going to assume that anyone who got this far in reading this chapter does not need to be convinced of the usefulness or efficacy of structured faculty mentoring programs, so I will skip the traditional summary of this chapter. Instead, I will present you with ideas that you can use while advocating for your program to your administration for additional resources or support.

As mentioned earlier, faculty-mentoring-faculty is the most cost-effective medium for providing customized professional development for the new hires. What happens to these protégés after they have obtained the goal of tenure? Research fairly consistently shows that protégés who have a beneficial mentoring relationship while graduate students or as new faculty members are more likely to become mentors in the future (Busch, 1985; Clark, Harden, & Johnson, 2000). This means that down the road, mentor recruitment becomes easier. In addition, it means that a campus-wide faculty mentoring program can have a long-term influence on developing a “mentoring culture” at your university.

A second reason that administrators would want to support an effective faculty mentoring program is that it is a dimension on which their schools are being measured. In early 2007, the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE, 2007), administered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, sent out a press release identifying the “Top Academic Workplaces for 2005–06.” Of course, The Chronicle of Higher Education picked up this story. When I began reading it, I quickly began scanning for UVM. It turns out that UVM does not participate, but that did not stop me from mentally assessing my campus on the items influencing academic workplace culture. One of the categories assessed by COACHE is “effectiveness of key policies.” Items in this category are
the availability and effectiveness of formal mentoring programs, and policies regarding informal mentoring. Researchers and faculty members are aware of the influence that mentoring, whether formal or informal, can have on workplace culture.

Another category that COACHE (2007) used to assess academic workplace culture is “tenure clarity.” Survey items in the tenure clarity category addressed “clarity of the tenure process” and “clarity of the tenure expectations” (p. 4). A faculty mentoring program, through its community building features, can provide information on and transparency to the tenure process at a campus. Through the four RPT panels sponsored at the end of the last academic year, the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program provided an opportunity where any uncertainties around tenure clarity could be addressed. This was especially the case by allowing plenty of time for the new faculty members to ask questions of the chairs, associate deans, and members of the college-wide and campus-wide RPT committees who served on the panels.

Although this third thought may not be a selling point for administrators, it is increasingly becoming a topic of discussion on my campus, and perhaps on yours, as well. Recently, I received an e-mail from a faculty member—not a new faculty member, but one who had been here for awhile. He talked about being under review for tenure and expecting that it was likely that he would be awarded tenure. Then, he asked about being paired with a mentor. He had heard about the “post-tenure” let-down. I have since paired him with a full professor who has sustained a program of research and community involvement well beyond tenure. I brought up this situation at the recent Mentoring Advisory Committee meeting, and it generated a lot of discussion. Providing support to faculty members in the post-tenure phases of their careers is an increasing need. They may be addressing problems in this middle stage of their career that they had not faced before, and mentoring could be a mechanism for addressing these problems (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1994).

Although considering this expansion of the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program, I will solicit and listen closely to the advice and suggestions of the members of the Mentoring Advisory Committee. Also, I will take to heart the thought that I provided to the reader at the beginning of this chapter—that faculty mentoring programs are often constrained by available resources. Consequently, when any expansion is considered, I will keep in mind the primary goal of the UVM Faculty Mentoring Program, that is, to support new hires through to promotion.
List of Steps to Take

Various steps can be taken to include programmatic features of UVM’s structured mentoring program into a new faculty mentoring program or an established program. These steps emphasize the importance of implementing programmatic features that facilitate program involvement and longevity. The faculty mentoring program is not only about facilitating one-on-one mentoring partnerships but also about creating a campus-wide community and developing a welcoming and supportive climate.

- Develop training events that can are geared to both mentors and protégés.
- Identify the needs of the faculty members through a needs assessment and use this information to develop a coaching curriculum. Then, deliver this curriculum in small but frequent e-mail messages over the course of the mentoring program.
- Based on the needs assessment, offer campus-wide events that deliver information of import about RPT and other topics at your university and structure these events to facilitate interaction among new faculty members.
- Sponsor events where senior members of the university community can share their expertise with new faculty members and where interaction among the new and senior faculty members can occur.
- Recruit a mentoring advisory committee, consisting of senior and highly respected faculty members, to provide advice and to support and champion the program.
- Develop a governance structure by which both the faculty and the administrators have a stake in, and get credit for, the faculty mentoring program.
- Create mechanisms for soliciting feedback from the participants, and then use these data and information to inform program expansion and modifications.
- “Brand” the faculty mentoring program so that key administrators see the program as an asset that can be used to recruit, and then retain, new faculty members. Solicit communications personnel to write articles about the program for university newsletters and other outlets.
Key Definitions

Structured mentoring program. A formal mentoring program that includes programmatic features in order to keep the mentoring participants engaged within their mentoring dyads, with other participants, and with the program staff.

Programmatic features. Training, coaching, and group mentoring/community building activities that support the establishment of mentoring partnerships and facilitate campus-wide interactions and involvement.

Training. Group presentations where protégés and mentors can identify their academic goals, identify goals for their mentoring relationships, and learn about techniques and tips for maximizing their mentoring experiences.

Coaching. Short but regularly delivered messages sent from the program staff to all mentoring participants (both mentors and protégés) to deliver information about academic success, to send suggestions for maximizing the benefits of their mentoring relationships, and to keep the lines of communication open between the program participants and the program staff.

Group mentoring/community building. Group meetings focused on topics of import to the university community, which also promote interaction among faculty members in order to develop group mentoring opportunities and create community across campus.

Advisory board. A committee of mostly senior faculty members who provide advice to the mentoring program in terms of identifying potential mentors for new protégés, providing feedback and suggestions on the efficacy of programmatic features and recommending new features and events. The committee members possess a range of skills and expertise that can be drawn on when offering workshops and group events.

End Note

1An exception to this would be if the mentor is serving on the college-wide or campus-wide RPT committee. In those cases, I have known mentors to excuse themselves from the deliberations, voting, or both.

2UVM uses the term ALANA to represent Asian, Latino/a, African American, Native American.

3The UVM University Scholar award is conferred on full professors who have outstanding records of scholarship and publication.
Special thanks go to the members of the Mentoring Advisory Committee: Dan Archdeacon, Judy Cohen, Kathy Manning, Wolfgang Meider, Jane Okesh, Gail Rose, Deane Wang, Robyn Warhol, Denise Youngblood, and ex officio members, Justin Joffe, President of the Faculty Senate, and Jill Tarule, Associate Provost.
Chapter 10 References


