

Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty Mentoring Guidelines

(Revised Spring 2019 to reflect new Provost's guidelines and feedback from the Faculty Mentoring Guidelines Quality Committee report)

I. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to describe the faculty mentoring process in the Department of Educational Psychology. Faculty mentors and mentees should refer to these guidelines, in consultation with the department chair, for guidance regarding eligibility to participate in faculty mentoring, expectations of all parties, mentoring activities, and timelines and benchmarks.

Faculty mentoring as described in these guidelines is primarily intended to facilitate and promote the professional development of faculty in our department, and to create an environment where faculty are supported in the pursuit of their goals. As stated in the report of the Faculty Mentoring Guidelines Quality Committee (2018), "Peer mentoring helps new faculty members navigate the institution, excel in teaching and research, effectively address challenges inherent in their new roles, understand the tenure and evaluation process, create work-life balance, and develop productive professional networks" (p. 4). Thus, faculty mentoring activities are separate from faculty performance evaluation processes (i.e., annual review process, tenure and promotion review). Information/observations gathered by a mentor about a mentee *exclusively within the context of the mentoring relationship* should not be used as data during these faculty performance evaluation processes.

II. Participant Eligibility and Expectations

In accord with the Provost's recommendations, participation in mentoring is mandatory for all new faculty members (defined as "new to UTSA, regardless of rank"). More specifically, for faculty hired at the rank of assistant professor, participation in the faculty mentoring program is mandatory during their pre-tenure period at UTSA. For faculty hired above the rank of assistant professor (i.e., hired with tenure), participation in the faculty mentoring program is mandatory during their first year at UTSA, and is optional after that.

Faculty members who are not new to UTSA may choose to participate if they would like to receive mentoring in a specific area of their professional development (e.g., teaching a hybrid course, writing a grant proposal), and/or if they are an associate professor who desires mentoring related to seeking promotion to the rank of full professor. Specific mentoring activities are individualized to meet the specific needs of the faculty member. Mentoring may be available to non-tenure-track faculty depending on the faculty

member's goals and department's resources; this mentorship will be negotiated with the department chair.

The faculty member and department chair will work together to select an appropriate mentor (or multiple mentors) based on similar research interests, courses taught, department needs and availability, and/or professional backgrounds. Multiple mentors may be assigned in cases where the faculty member requests a distinct mentor for teaching, research, and/or service activities. The faculty member will have input into the selection of appropriate mentors, and can request a change of mentor if applicable.

Any faculty member who expresses the willingness and interest to serve as a mentor will be considered for participation as a mentor in the faculty mentoring program. Prospective mentors may request training in mentoring through the UTSA Faculty Center. Faculty who serve as mentors receive consideration for this service during the department's annual review and merit evaluation process. Faculty mentors should describe the nature of their mentorship in the annual report narrative in Digital Measures.

Mentee-mentor assignments will be based on factors such as: academic and professional backgrounds, teaching interests/courses taught, research goals and interests, and compatibility. The "Guidelines for Mentors" document from the *UTSA Faculty Mentoring Program Resource Manual* will be shared with mentors, and the "Guidelines for Mentees" document will be shared with mentees.

Contact is expected to occur two times during the Fall semester and two times during the Spring semester. A majority of face-to-face contact is preferred, but other forms of contact (e.g., phone, Skype, email) are acceptable as appropriate. Aside from these parameters, frequency and location of mentoring meetings are determined by the faculty member and the mentor, based on the individual needs of the faculty member. The content of these meetings is negotiated by the mentor and mentee, and may include discussion of tenure and promotion expectations, sharing teaching ideas and strategies, reviewing research projects, managing service commitments, discussing resources available at UTSA, and other topics as appropriate.

Mentees should develop 3-5 goals that they can work towards through the mentoring program. These goals should drive the content of the mentoring sessions. Goals should be specific and measurable, with a time frame where possible. This will help the mentor and mentee keep track of progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

III. Mentoring Activities

Specific mentoring activities are individualized and negotiated between the mentor, mentee, and department chair. These activities will look different depending on whether the mentee is a new or existing faculty member, holds assistant vs. associate rank, or requests mentoring related to a specific area or activity. For example, for new assistant professors, mentoring may focus on new course development, developing a research

agenda, and understanding UTSA procedures related to third-year review and tenure. For faculty who are at the associate professor level seeking mentoring related to promotion to full professor, the department chair might start by convening a meeting of the department's associate professors to review the promotion criteria and guidelines and assess the needs of each prospective mentee. From there, a mentor may be assigned based on the unique needs of the mentee.

Mentoring activities may include the following (not exhaustive):

Teaching

- Helping mentees develop a teaching philosophy
- Conducting teaching observations
- Reviewing and providing feedback on syllabi, assignments, instructional materials
- Interpreting semester course evaluations
- Helping to develop project-based assessments
- Helping with student management/advising issues/concerns

Research

- Helping mentees to think about their research interests and developing a cohesive line of inquiry
- Providing guidance on grant writing, journal selection, manuscript reviews
- Collaborating on research projects

Service

- Helping mentees to be strategic in selecting committee assignments
- Identifying appropriate college- and university-level service
- Moving from institutional to professional service and leadership

General

- Socialization to UTSA systems and procedures
- Sharing resources from various UTSA departments
- Nominating for awards or prestigious committees
- Advocating for junior faculty members
- Helping with realistic goal-setting

IV. Timelines and Benchmarks

The department chair holds primary responsibility for assessing the faculty mentoring program and determining whether changes should be made to the mentoring relationship. This assessment occurs on an annual basis. The department chair meets with the faculty member and the mentor towards the end of the academic year to evaluate the status of the mentor-mentee relationship and to review the mentee's progress on their 3-5 goals. The mentee will document their goals, describe their progress on these goals, and prepare a summary to provide a record of what occurred during the mentoring year. The specific contents of the mentee's summary will be confidential.

The mentor will provide the department chair with a separate summary describing their perceptions of the mentor-mentee relationship. Based on these multiple sources of information, the department chair may choose to continue the existing mentor-mentee relationship, recommend a different mentor, or discontinue the mentee's participation in the mentoring program (if applicable).

The faculty member may meet with the department chair at any time if they would like to discuss the progress of the mentor-mentee relationship before the end-of-year meeting.

These mentoring guidelines will be reviewed by faculty in the department every 3-5 years during a regularly scheduled monthly faculty meeting. During this review, faculty will determine whether these guidelines need to be revised in response to changing faculty needs, challenges with implementation of these guidelines, or other issues that may arise.