

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Physiology - Program for Mentoring of Tenure System Faculty

Tenure System Assistant Professors and Associate Professors initially appointed without tenure go through a probationary period to allow the assessment of the new professor's contributions and their potential and suitability for confirmation as a member of the faculty. The Physiology Department has developed a mentoring program to support the professional development of tenure system faculty to achieve high-quality faculty who fulfill the Department's mission and are successful in the promotion and tenure process at MSU.

The goal of the mentoring program during this probationary period is to support junior faculty to achieve short- and long-term goals.

Short-term Goals

- Familiarization with campus.
- Networking and introduction to colleagues.
- Developing awareness and understanding of relevant policies and procedures.
- Developing priorities, including budgeting time and balancing research, teaching, and leadership/service.
- Identifying and meeting training and development needs to enable achievement of the position requirements.
- Setting clear objectives and obtaining feedback on performance.

Long-term Goals

- Building and sustaining a leading research program.
- Developing effective classroom teaching skills, including classroom and online teaching, and individual engagement of undergraduate and graduate students.
- Building institutional and disciplinary leadership skills and contributions.
- Achieving career advancement.

Typical Issues Addressed

- How does one establish an appropriate balance between teaching, research, and committee work?
- What does teaching excellence involve, and how is it evaluated? What resources are available for teaching enhancement?
- How does one identify and recruit good graduate students? How are graduate students supported? What should one expect from graduate students?
- What are the criteria for research excellence? How is research evaluated?
- How does one prepare competitive manuscripts and grant proposals?
- How do the merit salary and promotion processes work? Who is involved?
- What committees should one be on, and how much committee work should one expect?
- What is the department, college, and university structure? What responsibilities come with appointments to a particular college?

The success of the mentoring program will depend on all of the participants (department chair, mentors, mentee) taking an active role in the process. The responsibilities of these parties are outlined below.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Responsibilities of the Department Chair

Selection of the mentoring committee: The department chair, in consultation with the associate chair(s) and/or the Faculty Advisory Committee and the mentee, will appoint 3 mentors for each junior faculty member. The criteria for the selection of mentors may include scientific discipline, research expertise, teaching expertise, and other factors. One of the mentors must be outside of the department but in the college of the junior faculty member. One of the mentors will serve as the Chair of the mentoring committee.

Advising new faculty on matters pertaining to department/college/university policies and procedures, including those for academic review and advancement. A structured 'Probationary Plan', stating clear and specific objectives to be achieved during the probationary period and the plans to help the junior faculty achieve these objectives, will be agreed on by the Department Chair and the junior faculty member at the time of appointment. The Department Chair may forward a copy of this plan to the Dean of the College. It is the Department Chair's responsibility to ensure that the mentors are undertaking their responsibilities effectively and have access to current information on the MSU academic personnel policies.

Discussing the success of the mentoring program with the mentee: During the annual review of the mentee faculty member, the Department Chair will discuss the number and nature of the interactions with the mentors, such as informal meetings, grant/manuscript reviews, and/or visits to classrooms. At this time or at other meetings with the Department Chair, the mentee can request to change a mentor.

2. The Responsibilities of the Mentee

Initiating interactions with the mentors on a regular basis (at least once per semester): The Mentee should keep his/her mentors informed of problems and concerns as they arise. The mentee should seek advice and assistance on all relevant issues, including those outlined above.

The mentee may request changes in mentors; these requests may be made to the chair at the annual meeting, or at any other time during the year. The mentee can choose not to have a department mentor.

3. The Responsibilities of the Mentors

A good relationship with a supportive, active mentor has been shown to contribute significantly to a new faculty member's career development and satisfaction. The mentoring committee serves to support the mentee to achieve success in their career and at MSU.

The Chair of the mentoring committee will be responsible for:

- 1) *Scheduling meetings with the mentee on a regular basis (at least once per semester).*
- 2) *Providing mid-year feedback on the efficacy of the mentoring committee (for the first two years after the mentee is appointed).*
- 3) *Preparing annual reports of mentoring activities to the Department Chair, including the number of mentor-mentee meetings, grants/manuscripts reviewed, etc...*

Mentors provide advice on aspects of teaching, research, and committee work and/or direct mentees to appropriate individuals for advice or assistance. Other ways to assist junior faculty include reading/reviewing manuscripts, grant proposals and grant reviews; observing classroom teaching and providing feedback; discussing annual review evaluations and student evaluations; and providing guidance on class

preparation (lectures, writing exam questions and giving grades). Information discussed at the mentor-mentee conversations is privileged between mentors and mentees. The mentee's progress and important issues that arise during mentor and mentee committee meetings throughout the year can be noted in the mentor's annual review of the mentee, which must be approved by the mentee (signature) before submission to the Department Chair for consideration during the department annual review of the mentee.

Mentors on the Physiology Department Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) will serve in their normal role during annual faculty evaluations, including the mentee's. However, the mentor(s) will recuse themselves from evaluating the mentee for reappointment and promotion. Another department faculty member(s) (not on the mentoring committee) will serve on FAC for the sole purpose of the mentee evaluation for reappointment and promotion at MSU. This approach will keep the mentee's support committee (mentor committee) separate from the mentee's evaluation committee (FAC).

A mentor may request replacement due to changing time commitments or other reasons. Such requests should be made to the Department Chair.

Mentor recognition: The department recognizes that mentors are important for junior faculty development and department success. For this reason, mentoring is included in the department annual review forms and acknowledged in the annual review.

Mentoring tools: To aid in the development of the mentoring/mentee practice, web- and college-based information and workshop dates will be given to the mentor and mentee. It is recommended that the mentee attend MSU's [Thriving Series](#). In addition, the Department Chair and/or mentoring committee will work to familiarize the mentee with various faculty/staff/administrators at MSU.