Faculty Mentoring in the Department of Population Health

**Introduction**
The School of Medicine requires mentoring of junior faculty, and the Department strongly affirms this value. The purpose of this document is to outline a structure that will facilitate the process. Although this document has been vetted and revised, it should be considered as a work-in-progress. Please use it as a guide, and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

All faculty members are strongly advised to review the NYU School of Medicine policies regarding promotion and tenure available at [http://faculty.med.nyu.edu/promotion-tenure](http://faculty.med.nyu.edu/promotion-tenure).

**Purpose of mentoring**
Relatively new faculty must contend with a variety of challenges for their careers to take root and prosper. Yet many of these issues are common and ones for which solutions have been found in the past. Mentoring is a forum of intergenerational transfer of experience in which seasoned individuals share their knowledge and insights with those who are following in their general tracks. Properly done, mentoring is a valuable and enjoyable process that benefits the mentee, mentors, department, and school. Most junior faculty will have research mentor(s) and collaborators with whom they work regularly on their projects. The Mentoring Committee provides a more formal and complimentary process to support and monitor the career development of our junior faculty.

**Structural considerations**

**A. Mentoring Committee:** The committee should be formed within 3 months of the faculty appointment and consist of at least three faculty members, with at least two at the Associate or Professor level. For tenure-eligible faculty, at least two Mentoring Committee members should be tenured faculty. At least one of the senior tenured faculty members should be from the same department, but other members may be chosen from the faculty at large. Committee members are selected and invited by the junior faculty member in consultation with the Division Director. The keys to the composition of the committee are an interest in the career of the mentee and a diversity of perspectives. Expertise in the faculty member’s field may be helpful but is not required. In general, the Division Director and Department Chair should not serve on the committee, to limit potential conflict in terms of commitments and career direction. The Department Chair and the Division Director should confirm the committee and any proposed changes in its composition.

One member should serve as the Committee Chair and take minutes, which should be shared among committee members and mentee, and will be included in the Department and the School of Medicine faculty file of the mentee. These minutes should succinctly summarize the key points, decisions, and recommendations for the faculty member, and not constrain the discussion during the meeting.

**B. Schedule of meetings:** Meetings should be held, in general, every 6-9 months, and always within a year of the previous meeting. It is the joint responsibility of the mentee and the chair to schedule the meeting. **The #1 failure of mentoring is the failure to hold regular meetings.** There will be
occasions in which more frequent meetings are useful, including early in the mentoring process or if significant challenges or forks in the road emerge.

C. Structure of the meeting: A good discussion should be highly substantive and end with all sides having learned something. The structure of the meeting should be as follows:

1. Career: a description of current career goals, success in meeting them, and impediments. This is one of the most important ways that senior faculty can aid junior faculty – by helping them keep their eyes on their goals, focus, and prioritize. A good committee can help extricate a mentee from conflicting commitments.

2. Current focus: The following areas should be reviewed (even briefly) at every committee meeting: the investigator’s strategic vision, current and future sources of salary support, extramural funding opportunities, general logistics (support personnel, etc.), plans for publications and presentations, and overall allocation of time and effort (including tensions between conflicting demands).

3. Projects: A review of one or more specific projects can often be valuable in mentorship meetings.
   - Background: Brief.
   - Hypothesis: Simple – is it testable as conceived?
   - Methods (already performed or contemplated): Is study design appropriate?
   - Results: Key findings only.
   - Conclusions/Interpretation: What has been learned, what might be learned, what are the impediments to proceeding?
   - Limitations: What are the problems? Here is where the mentors can often be of most help. Can the mentors help resolve challenges – perhaps by suggesting approaches, additional individuals to contact, or other resources?
   - Plans: What are the logical next steps?

D. Duration of the meeting. 60 minutes is ideal in almost all cases. One job of the committee chair is to move the meeting forward to make these time goals.

E. Preparation. One to two weeks before the meeting, the mentee should prepare a hand-out for the committee to study in advance that follows the above outline concerning career and projects. This is essential, and will get everyone on the same page and ready to proceed efficiently in the allotted time. The mentee should identify any particular issues for the committee to focus on. An updated CV in NYU format (http://webdoc.nyumc.org/nyumc_d6/files/faculty/CV_Format_32010.pdf) must be sent as well.

F. Problems. The goal of the Committee members is to be advocates of the mentee. Ideally, over time, the mentee will show progressive career enhancement. Problems that arise should be reflected in the shared minutes, and potential solutions considered. These are shared with Division Director and Department Chair, who have the ultimate responsibilities to guide the faculty. A good committee works in concert with the leadership to aid the mentee.

G. Other. Common sense and goodwill should guide the process. Good luck!

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