

## **CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY FOR JUNIOR FACULTY IN DEPARTMENTS AND SCHOOLS OF THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING**

### **I. Introduction**

New faculty members are excited by the opportunities for professional and personal development associated with their tenure-track appointments. However, junior faculty members typically have had little or no exposure to the new and varied aspects of their profession. Moreover, they can be confronted with a confusing array of requirements and options. As such, junior faculty members may benefit from career guidance, information on university resources, and advice provided by more experienced faculty members to help them plan the initial stages of a successful career. It is therefore critical to provide opportunities for career guidance, and one core aspect is a *voluntary* mentee/mentor relationship. In this context, a Career Guidance and Mentoring Program has been established in an effort to create a supporting environment within all of the schools and departments of the Faculty of Engineering at McGill University.

### **II. The Career Guidance and Mentoring Program**

The Career Guidance and Mentoring Program is based on establishing a suitable mentoring process which is *informal and voluntary*. Moreover, it is understood that career guidance will be readily accessible to anyone who needs or requests mentoring.

#### ***Goals of Career Guidance and Mentoring***

- Promote understanding of the University context and help junior faculty adjust to their new roles
- Improve the *success* of junior faculty in securing superior evaluations for reappointment and tenure, and in building a high impact research program
- Ensure *high morale* and *productivity*, and therefore *retention*, of junior faculty
- Help junior faculty members communicate with senior faculty members and the department at large on various matters (e.g., academic or administrative)
- Improve the *quality* of the departments and schools by nurturing the quality of individual faculty members and the quality of life in Engineering
- Foster *collegiality* between faculty members

#### ***Benefits of Mentoring***

For the mentee:

- Facilitates the transition into the role of a faculty member, as well as into a new job and culture
- Helps to understand the formal and informal structures within the organization
- Helps to develop skills in teaching, research, and administration in a structured manner based on individual needs
- Improves personal and professional networks
- Provides an opportunity to reflect upon his/her progress and resolve problems

For the mentor:

- Broadens his/her skills and knowledge
- Enables him/her to demonstrate additional skills in developing other individuals
- Consolidates and extends his/her professional and personal network

### ***Benefits of a Mentoring Structure***

- Ensures mentoring support happens at an appropriate time
- Mentees know that they will be introduced properly to the University and that there will be continuing support as they progress in their professional careers

In general, with the assistance of the Chair or Director of the academic unit, *each junior faculty member will be matched with a mentor*. A list of potential mentors should be provided by the department chair or school director, containing the names of faculty members who have *volunteered* to be mentors and who would serve appropriately.

It is recommended that the mentor be an *experienced* member (e.g., tenured Associate or Full Professor) of the same academic unit who is familiar with academic affairs within that unit and preferably knowledgeable about the mentee's research community. A mentor should be a source of information about identifying internal and external research resources and how to exploit them. The mentor should also assist in understanding the mechanics of administration and teaching responsibilities, in understanding the campus and local communities, in interpreting announcements from governmental and other administrative sources, and in preparing documents, reports, and proposals. In general, *the job of the mentor is to provide the mentee with his/her best advice*, in order to aid the junior faculty member along his/her career path.

### ***Expectations and Responsibilities of the Dean's Office***

- Ensure that junior faculty receive proper guidance from their academic unit. This will be achieved by yearly meetings of junior faculty members with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.
- Review junior faculty issues in an effort to maximize the success of all junior faculty members.
- Oversee mentoring at a Faculty-wide level.

### ***Expectations and Responsibilities of the Chairs and Directors***

- Inform junior faculty members of the reappointment and tenure processes, including departmental, faculty, and university expectations and criteria. Reappointment information should be provided within 60 days of the initial appointment of the junior faculty member.
- Meet with the junior faculty member on a yearly basis to provide feedback on performance (this meeting can take place around the time of the merit review process). Assemble a list of potential mentors. This list should be comprised of experienced faculty members who have *volunteered* to be mentors, and who would serve as appropriate mentors.
- Assign mentors, and oversee and monitor the mentee/mentor relationship through yearly discussions with both parties involved. The Chair or Director should change this pairing if necessary.
- Complete and submit an Annual Report on the mentoring process to the Dean's Office.

### ***Expectations and Responsibilities of the Mentor***

- Meet with the mentee at regular intervals.
- Discuss candidly and provide feedback on any issues of concern to the mentee.
- Provide advice to the mentee on the paths to professional development and success.
- Learn about different mentoring methods and models in order to become an effective mentor (see references).
- Report to the Chair or Director on progress.

### ***Expectations and Responsibilities of the Mentee***

- Meet with the mentor at regular intervals (the number and timing of the meetings should be determined by the mentee's needs).
- Discuss candidly any issues of concern with the mentor, as well as the Chair or Director.

### ***Process***

The following processes are part of the mentoring program.

- **Mentor Assignment:** Each Chair or Director must assign mentors to the new junior faculty members in their unit, in writing, with a copy to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, within 60 days of the initial appointment of the junior professor.
- **Timing:** The first mentee/mentor meeting should be held within the first 30 days of the pairing.
- **Framework:** The mentee and mentor should agree upon the areas and issues that will be discussed, e.g., will the mentoring relationship extend to personal issues in addition to those related to work? Trust and mutual respect should also be the foundation for the relationship between the mentee and the mentor.
- **Changing Mentors:** Following the first few meetings, the Chair or Director should review the operation and progress of the mentoring scheme. If at this stage the mentee wishes to change mentors, he or she may request this without being required to give a reason. The Chair or Director should make an effort to accommodate this request.
- **Reporting:** Chairs and Directors must report to the Dean's Office, by May 31, their mentoring assignments for all Assistant and untenured Associate Professors (including those who turned down the opportunity to have a mentor) and their views as to the success of each mentoring relationship. This information will be used to evaluate periodically the career guidance and mentoring process and to modify it as necessary.

### **References**

The academy as community: A manual of best practices for meeting the needs of new scholars, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2004. [www.fedcan.ca](http://www.fedcan.ca).

Mentoring and diversity: A handbook for faculty monitoring. LSAMP Indiana Students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Fields, 2004.

Career guidance guidelines for junior faculty in the College of Engineering, Purdue University, 2004.

<http://www.city.ac.uk/sd/mentoringacademic.html>

<http://academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/faculty/programs/fmp/default.htm#Responsibility%20of%20the%20Mentor>

[https://hrapps.fsu.edu/mentor/mentoring\\_guidelines.pdf](https://hrapps.fsu.edu/mentor/mentoring_guidelines.pdf)