

Psychology Department

Junior Faculty Mentoring Program

As part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the success of junior faculty members, the Psychology Department has a Director of Junior Faculty Mentoring and a Mentoring Committee for each tenure-track junior faculty member.

Appointment of Director of Junior Faculty Mentoring

The Chair of Psychology asks a tenured faculty member to serve in this position. The current Director is Carl Hart. The Director, in consultation with the junior faculty member, will establish the Mentoring Committee and monitor the progress of each Mentoring Committee. At the end of each academic year, the Director of Junior Faculty Mentoring meets with the Department Chair to discuss individual junior faculty members, focusing on their progress and determining strategies for helping them meet their goals. The Department Chair also meets independently with each junior faculty member at least once a year.

Composition of the Mentoring Committee

The committee will be established during the mentee's first semester at Columbia; it will consist of two tenured faculty members, normally one from within the junior faculty member's department and one from outside the department. The faculty member from within the mentee's department will serve as the chair of the committee and will assume primary responsibility to report progress to Director of Junior Faculty Mentoring.

Ideally, both mentoring committee members should share research interests with the mentee. The outside member might, for example, be someone who served on the search committee that hired the junior faculty member. The composition of the committee can, but does not have to, change year-to-year. The Director of Junior Faculty Mentoring will consult with junior faculty members on these issues to ensure the mentee's interests are best being served.

The Mentoring Committee is intended to:

- provide support and advice on how to succeed at Columbia and in academia
- serve as a sounding board
- provide feedback on research
- serve as an advocate (if necessary) for the junior faculty member
- help orient the junior faculty member within Columbia (e.g., on finding available resources for research and teaching)

Topics mentors might discuss with mentees include:

- General research agenda and how to prioritize among research projects
- Obtaining funding and/or opportunities for research leaves
- Suitability of publication outlets and formats
- Gaining visibility in the field

- Balance of research, teaching, and service, strategies for teaching, and for advising graduate students
- Work/life balance issues (including “infrastructure” issues such as dealing with the Columbia housing office, schools, etc.).

Current Junior Faculty Mentoring Committee:

James Curley – Sarah Woolley (Dept) OUTSIDE MEMBER TBA

Dean Mobbs – Kevin Ochsner (Dept) OUTSIDE MEMBER TBA

Valerie Purdie-Vaughns – Geraldine Downey (Dept) OUTSIDE MEMBER TBA

Meetings

Mentors will meet at least once annually with the junior faculty member (all together, or individually, as the junior faculty member prefers). Mentors should meet with an incoming faculty member during her or his first semester.

Mentors will inform the Director of Junior Faculty Mentoring that this meeting has taken place, but **will not report on the substance of the meeting, nor provide an evaluation of the junior faculty member**. The junior faculty member should feel free to ask mentors for feedback and advice at other times when needed.

Mentoring meetings should be informal and collegial conversations; junior faculty should feel free to request that conversations, or sensitive aspects thereof be kept confidential.

Appendix: Sample list of questions to guide meetings between mentors and junior faculty members.

Research:

- What books/papers are under review? Where?
- What specific plans do you have to submit work for review in the future? Where?
- Are there co-authors on your work? Who, for what papers/books? Are your co-authors senior to you, junior to you, or peers?
- What do you see as the overarching theme or contribution of your research?
- Are there infrastructural problems (e.g., IRB approvals, need for RAs or travel money, need to identify research assistants) that are making progress on research difficult?
- If you are writing a book, what are your plans to organize a mini-conference around the book? Note the department has funds to support this.
- Do you have questions about whether it’s better to write a book or a series of articles?
- What efforts have you made (and do you plan to make) to seek outside support for your research? Do you have questions about the process of seeking outside support or have you faced issues in doing so?
- What opportunities have you had or will you have to present your work outside Columbia (in department seminars, major conferences, small-scale conferences, etc.)
- Who do you think is the main audience for your work, and based on this who do you think are likely external evaluators should you come up for tenure at Columbia?
- What do you hope to have achieved vis-à-vis concrete research outputs by the time (a) of your next A&S review, and (b) you are scheduled to come up for tenure
- Are there particular parts of your work that you would like more substantive feedback on from your mentor and/or from other faculty?

Teaching:

- What courses have you taught?
- What has been the feedback from the students? (Consult course evaluations where available)?
- How many graduate students are you advising formally? How many informally?
- How much of your time do you spend talking with students (graduate or undergraduate) about their research and about issues other than their research (e.g. personal problems)?
- What proportion of your work time do you estimate was devoted to any aspect of teaching?
- Are there aspects of your teaching that you feel are unduly burdensome? If so, why?
- Have you had any difficulties or problems in working with TAs (or knowing how to work with them)?
- Have you had any issues or problems in assigning grades to students?

Service

- What service have you provided in the Department?
- What service have you provided at Columbia that is outside the Department?
- What service have provided outside the University?
- Are there any specific requests for service that you would like to say no to or that you worry are placing undue burden on your time?
- More generally, do you feel you can say no to service requests when you need to?
- Approximately how many articles do you review for journals a year? Do you feel like you know when to say yes and when to say no to such requests?

Other

- What are your leave plans in the coming year?
- Are there issues not covered above that affect your ability to achieve your goals?
- Are you facing any work-life issues (housing, schooling, day care, etc.) that make it difficult for you to do your job well?