

Department of History

Mentoring Program currently in place:

1. Senior faculty mentorship:

Every junior hire is assigned a senior member of the faculty to serve as mentor. The senior faculty mentors do indeed provide mentorship in the areas indicated in the A&S document. These include:

- providing support and advice on how to succeed at Columbia and in academia
- serving as a sounding board and as an advocate (if necessary)
- helping orient the junior faculty member within Columbia

Issues: In some cases the senior faculty leave or retire, or the mentorship match doesn't work for various reasons. The Chair endeavors to replace the mentor, in consultation with both faculty members, junior and senior. There are occasional gaps in this system (people go on retirement, on leave and forget to work for the replacement mentorship.) We intend to be far more vigilant about this in the future.

2. Feedback on research:

The faculty mentor is separate from the formal review committee chair, although given the need to be in related fields, mentors are sometimes members of the committees.

We do not intend to install formal "mentoring committees" for each junior appointment. We already have too many committees. Every review report (first year, third year, fifth year and tenure) is also reviewed intensively by the standing Personnel Committee (composed of Chair, Vice Chair, and representatives of the fields). The PC often intervenes meaningfully in the guidance process, thus ensuring that a wide spectrum of faculty members have intensive knowledge of the standing and progress (and problems) of each junior faculty member. The chair meets with the candidate to convey the guidance and advice of the review committee and PC combined. These meetings are conversational and the feedback is given in oral form. In the event there are issues with teaching, these are very much part of our process.

3. Manuscript Development

Where it is determined that the manuscript in progress needs work and further development, our department has instituted a manuscript workshop process which has been extremely beneficial in many cases. With agreement and cooperation of the junior faculty person, we reach out to bring to campus one of the top senior people in the field, from anywhere in the world. We invite local faculty from the department and the campus, all of whom are committed to reading and responding to the manuscript, to point out areas of weakness and to suggest areas for revision. It has been a hugely successful program in the past, so much so that we are now offering to do the same for junior faculty who are working on their second book.

Professional development:

We have a number of ongoing programs and activities designed to facilitate the work of junior faculty and enable them to reach a broader audience. One of these is the History in Action initiative which has exposed junior faculty and graduate students alike to a variety of expertise related to their work, including editors, technology experts, and a large variety of others.