# UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA MENTORING PROGRAM

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Mentoring can be a powerful means of enhancing the professional well-being of faculty members. Mentorship can aid in understanding and advancing organizational culture, provide access to formal and informal networks of communication, and offer professional engagement to both junior and senior faculty members.

The UVic Faculty Mentoring Program is designed to bring together new faculty with mentors at all career stages to share their experiences and expertise. The program’s guiding principles, structure, and program are all designed to create opportunities for faculty to connect, network, teach and learn from each other. The program is to encourage faculty to create knowledge interactively through a wide variety of dialogue-driven formats such as panels, roundtables and networking opportunities.

The UVic Faculty Mentoring Program provides a structure for mentoring relationships at UVic. The Unit’s Chair will assign new faculty members a mentor from among more senior faculty in the Unit. The program will then provide opportunities for the mentors and mentees to connect with each other. These opportunities include four or five scheduled events throughout the term at which mentors and mentees will have the opportunity to network, to discuss their experiences in the program, to hear the experiences of others and to enjoy a social event together. Notices of the dates for these events will be sent out well in advance to allow time for planning.

A mentor is an individual with expertise who can be a coach who provides advice to enhance the mentee’s professional performance and development. The mentor is a role model and support system for the mentee. The term “mentee” applies to person receiving advice and guidance from a mentor.

This resource guide provides information, ideas and resources on the mentoring relationship. It includes an overview of mentoring in academia, information on various mentoring models, guidelines for mentees and mentors, and suggestions for department chairs and directors.

Use of mentoring is often cited in the literature of higher education as one of the common characteristics of a successful faculty career. Demonstrated benefits to mentees include development of skills; entrée into career advancement opportunities; and access to advice, encouragement, and feedback. Mentees benefit from the mentoring relationship as do mentors. Mentors benefit from the development of new career networks, the satisfaction of helping other colleagues develop professionally, and the acquisition of ideas and feedback on their own work. Institutions benefit from mentoring through better retention, an inclusive and supportive working environment for faculty, and a stronger sense of campus community (Girves, Zepeda & Gwathmey, 2005).
BENEFITS OF MENTORING

A. For Mentees:

Mentoring can increase faculty members’ career satisfaction, increase scholarly productivity and recognition and build diverse networking opportunities. Its benefits include but are not limited to:

- Individual recognition and encouragement
- Access to constructive criticism and informal feedback
- Advice on balancing teaching, research, committee work and other responsibilities
- Providing practical knowledge about the department/school/university
- Providing a source of knowledge of the procedures of the university
- Access to advice on scholarship/teaching
- Expanding personal networks
- Supporting the mentee in the transition to the university and a new role
- Access to a sounding board for testing ideas and plans

B. For Mentors

A mentee’s success can bring recognition to the mentor, and mentors can take personal pride in the accomplishments of the mentee. Mentors know that their efforts shape future leaders in academe. The benefits they receive may include:

- Personal fulfillment from assisting in the development of a colleague
- Feedback about their own teaching/scholarship
- Providing mentors a way to share ideas, try new skills and take risks
- Renewed enthusiasm for their role as ‘an expert’

C. For the University

Results of studies suggest that intellectual, social, and resource support from senior colleagues, chairs, deans and campus administrators may be critical to attracting, developing, and retaining new faculty (Bensimon, Ward & Sanders, 2000, Rice, Sorcinelli & Austin, 2000). The benefits include:
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- Fostering a sense of commitment to both the profession and the university for new faculty
- Increased productivity and satisfaction of new faculty
- Enhancing retention of new faculty
- Encouragement of cooperation and cohesiveness for those involved in the program
- Developing future leaders
- Creating increased stability in the health of the institution

TYPES OF MENTORING

Traditionally, mentoring in academia has been defined by a one-on-one relationship in which an experienced or senior faculty member guides and supports the career development of a new or early-career faculty member. This is still the model that the UVic Faculty Mentoring Program engages.

In recent years the literature on professional development has suggested as supplementing the one-on-one model new, more flexible approaches to mentoring in which no single person is expected to possess the expertise of many. New and early-career faculty are encouraged to seek out “multiple mentors” (de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004), and “networks” of mentors (Higgins & Kram, 2001) who can address a variety of career competencies.

Mentoring partnership can include a wide variety of individuals – peers, experienced faculty, chairs/directors, senior administrators, librarians etc. Different mentoring approaches accommodate the partners' personal, cultural, and professional preferences for contact (e.g., one-on-one, group, shared training events or online training). Partnerships can focus on specific areas of experience and expertise, a more generalized support or take the form of a buddy who helps the mentee get to know campus and off-campus resources.

It is no doubt true that no one person can be the ideal mentor for all things and all time. It helps to have mentors at different career stages. Each mentor offers his or her individual perspective and can provide guidance about various aspects of personal and professional development. Recent studies report that having a network of mentoring relationships may better enhance career success and personal well-being. (Bower, 2007; van Emmerik, (2004); Wasburn & LaLopa (2003). Mentors and mentees are encouraged to see their relationship as part of a developing support network for the new faculty member at UVic.
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTOR AND MENTEE

ROLE OF THE MENTOR

ACT AS A ROLE MODEL – Mentors should demonstrate the behaviours that have made them successful.

LISTEN ACTIVELY – Mentors should allow their mentees to lead the process, giving time and space to ask their questions and convey their desired outcomes. But a mentor may also, of course, ask questions to find out information.

BE A SOUNDING BOARD – Mentees should be encouraged to make their own decisions. Mentors provide a place where mentees can bounce off ideas and try out solutions. Advice is not always needed or desired.

PROVIDE COACHING AND GUIDANCE – When a mentee seeks advice, mentors are there to provide it. To advise effectively, mentors must understand the qualities, skills and experience of their mentee.

ASSIST WITH SKILL DEVELOPMENT – Mentors may suggest that mentees attend their class or meeting or mentors may assist mentees to practice for important meetings using simulations or rehearsals with them.

CREATE A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT – Mentors assure their mentees of confidentiality in all communications.

UNDERSTAND THE MENTEE’S OBJECTIVES – Mentors usually need to ask a lot of questions to ensure they understand what mentees hope to achieve.

ENCOURAGE AND INSPIRE – Mentors are selected because they are successful and admired. They encourage and support their mentees to achieve.

ROLE OF THE MENTEE

MANAGE THE RELATIONSHIP – Mentees take equal responsibility for working to build a rapport with their mentors and ensuring that times and locations are booked for meetings.

BE CLEAR ABOUT OBJECTIVES – Mentees need to consider what they want from their mentors: advice about a particular career path; advice about a particular skill set; some other objective? Mentees communicate these objectives to their mentors, recognizing that they may change over time.
TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY THE MENTOR – Mentors may be able to introduce their mentee to others in related fields of study or provide opportunities for social and professional engagement in the community.

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR OWN DEVELOPMENT – Mentees must make their own decisions; mentors can, if requested, provide advice and feedback, but mentees are responsible for their careers.

SEEK INFORMATION – Mentees should come to meetings prepared with questions so that meeting times are focused and efficient.

BE OPEN TO FEEDBACK – Mentees must be willing to consider what their mentors have to say with an open mind.

TO SUMMARIZE:

MENTEE
- Lead the process
- Manage the relationship
- Be clear about objectives
- Take advantage of opportunities provided by mentor
- Seek information
- Be open to feedback
- Accept responsibility for own development

BOTH
- Keep Commitments
- Be prepared
- Be curious
- Address issues as they arise

MENTOR
- Be a role model
- Listen actively
- Be a sounding board
- Provide coaching and guidance
- Assist with skill development
- Create a safe learning environment
- Understand the protégés’ objectives
- Encourage and inspire

GETTING STARTED

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES/ STRUCTURE OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP:

The structure of mentoring relationships is determined by the goals of mentees. Mentoring pairs who establish clear objectives and meet regularly report the most successful and satisfying relationships. Understanding the goals and objectives of the mentoring relationship is an integral piece of defining the relationship. Establishing the goals and objectives primarily falls to the mentees as they are the ones with the most to gain from the relationship. Given the broad range of possible mentoring activities, it is essential that mentees articulate their career development needs in order ensure an effective mentoring relationship. Clear objectives allow the mentee, in consultation with the mentor, to organize the mentoring plan around specific activities which will be part of the mentee’s academic responsibilities (i.e. course design, grant proposals). The focus on specific
activities provides opportunities for mentees to solicit advice and mentors to offer support on well-defined career development goals.

CREATING AN AGREEMENT:

One of the most important features of mentoring may be accessibility. One of the best things the mentor can offer is time on a predictable schedule.

It may be useful for a mentor and mentee to consider making a mentoring agreement that defines the broad parameters of the relationship. Such agreements will vary. Without an agreement in place around the minimum schedule of meetings (i.e. is attending the UVic Faculty Mentoring Program events) mentoring relationships tend to wane over time.

Whether an agreement is oral or written, the following things should be considered:

- Short term and long term objectives for the relationship
- Preliminary development goals for the mentee
- Expectations that both parties have for the relationships
- Necessary contributions that both must make so the relationship will work
- Tentative schedule for meetings
- The procedure for handling informal contacts between formal sessions
- Agreement on confidentiality

Mentors can provide wisdom gained from previous experience. As Oscar Wilde once said, “Experience is a name we give to our past mistakes.”

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION TOPICS:

Meeting regularly is an important part of maintaining a successful mentoring relationship. Mentors and mentees may have informal meetings, but might also consider creating a more formal list of agenda topics. Here are a few suggestions:
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RESEARCH

- Advice on the kind of publications that are considered first-tier in the department/school.
- Feedback on the writing of research articles and conference papers.
- Opportunities for participation in departmental and/or interdisciplinary research activities, such as informal discussions about writing projects, colloquia for ideas in progress, and visiting scholar presentations.
- Opportunities to be introduced to departmental and/or interdisciplinary research groups to provide an avenue for co-authored papers and co-authored/collaborative grant-writing or research projects.
- Identifying on-campus and external resources for research, such as grant proposal writing workshops, and information sources for research grants.

TEACHING

- Visiting each other's classrooms and providing constructive feedback.
- Connecting with the Learning and Teaching Centre for workshops, teaching strategies and grants.
- Discussing key student issues such as advising, directed studies and working with and supervising graduate students.
- Discussing how to deal with student problems and the resources available in Student Affairs.
- Fostering opportunities to talk about teaching and learning among the early-career and senior colleagues in your department.

SERVICE

- Advice on what kinds and amount of service and/or community engagement are expected.
- Advice on selecting committees that will support the mentee's research and teaching agenda and/or with more opportunities to network.
SOME IDEAS FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS:

- Whether or not a formal mentoring agreement has been made, the mentoring partners should schedule regular meetings and make sure they are in their calendars at the beginning of the term.

- Meetings do not need to be all of the same kind or at the same location: a walk across campus, coffee, lunch or breakfast can be scheduled.

- Meetings do not need to be long or always of the same length.

- Meetings may be of different types. For example meetings may be used: primarily conveying information in answer to questions; exploring a particular problem; providing an opportunity for constructive feedback; addressing a particular topic; or providing support and encouragement.

- A successful mentoring relationship cannot exist unless both parties are prepared to take the time to meet. Meetings build the relationship.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS:

Some mentoring relationships fail because of:

- Poor communication
- Lack of commitment
- Personality differences
- Perceived competition
- Conflicts of interest

Many of these difficulties can be avoided with a clearer understanding of the roles of the mentor and mentee and an agreement about what the goals and parameters are for the mentoring relationship. However, there may be any number of reasons as to why a mentoring relationship may not work out. These do not necessarily imply blame or inefficiency on either part. While the mentoring relationship is not one that necessarily requires personal friendship, it is important that both the mentor and the mentee are able to communicate openly and effectively and ideally have some degree of mutual interests.

In cases of changing commitments, incompatibility or where the relationship is not mutually fulfilling, either the new faculty member or mentor should seek advice from the Chair, Director or Dean about making a change.
THE ROLE OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS

Department chairs and directors play a significant role in helping new faculty succeed in their new environment. Chairs can help them acquire information and resources that they need to know through department/school orientation, staff meetings, individual meetings with them, departmental activities, and events. Chairs support the mentoring relationship by:

- Assigning mentors to new faculty as required by the Program and after giving thoughtful consideration of who has the interests and talents to effectively mentor a particular individual.

- Encouraging participation in events held by the UVic Faculty Mentoring Program.

- Staying in touch with mentoring pairs and reviewing the success of the relationship when opportunities arise.

- Re-assigning mentoring pairs, as required.
REFERENCES


