

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM



University
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction3

Benefits of Mentoring4

 For Mentees4

 For Mentors.....4

 For the Chair/Director5

Roles and Responsibilities6

 Role of the Mentor.....6

 Role of the Mentee.....6

 Role of Department Chairs and Directors.....7

Meeting with Your Mentor/Mentee.....8

 Creating an Agreement.....8

 Potential Discussion Topics.....9

 Dealing with Problems.....10

References10

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

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. 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, greater career advancement opportunities, and increased access to advice, encouragement, and feedback. Mentors will also 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).

The UVic Faculty & Librarian 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 and structure are designed to create opportunities for faculty to connect, network, teach, and learn from each other. The program will provide opportunities for the mentors and mentees to connect with each other and to create knowledge interactively through a wide variety of dialogue-driven formats such as panels, roundtables and networking opportunities. These opportunities include four or five scheduled events throughout the year. Notices of the dates for these events will be sent out well in advance to allow time for planning.

The structure of mentoring relationships is determined by the goals of mentees. The most successful and satisfying relationships for both parties involved are those who establish clear objectives and meet regularly. Given the broad range of possible mentoring activities, it is essential that mentees articulate their career development needs in order to ensure an effective mentoring relationship.

This resource guide provides information, ideas and resources to encourage 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.

If you have any questions regarding the mentoring process or events please email vpacapal@uvic.ca.

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM

BENEFITS OF MENTORING

FOR THE MENTEE:

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, other responsibilities and well-being
- 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 service
- 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

FOR THE MENTOR:

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'

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM

FOR THE CHAIR/DIRECTOR:

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:

- 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



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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. A mentor may also 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 can provide suggestions. To advise effectively, mentors need to understand the qualities, skills and experience of their mentee.

ASSIST WITH SKILL DEVELOPMENT – Mentors may suggest that mentees attend their class. Mentors may assist mentees with practice for important meetings and/or invite them to some of theirs to share good practices.

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. Their role is to 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 such as: advice about a particular career path, advice about a particular skill set, or some other objective. Mentees communicate these objectives to their mentors, recognizing that these may change over time.

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM

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 a variety of communities.

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 useful.

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

ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR & DIRECTOR:

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, departmental activities and events. They also provide information related to their career development on tenure, promotion and the merit review process. 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.

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FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM

MEETING WITH YOUR MENTOR/MENTEE

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. such as 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 relationship
- Necessary contributions that both make so the relationship will work
- Tentative schedule for meetings
- The procedure for handling informal contacts between formal sessions
- Agreement on confidentiality

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:

RESEARCH

- Advice on the kind of publications that are considered first-tier in the department.
- Feedback on the writing of research articles and conference papers.

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- Provide 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.
- Provide 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.
- Identify 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 creating a learning dossier.
- Discussing key student issues such as advising, directed studies and working with and supervising graduate students.
- Discussing how to deal with student issues, services and resources available in Student Affairs such as counseling, health, disability, multi-faith chapel, and many others.
- 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.
- Discussion on work-life balance.

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FACULTY & LIBRARIAN MENTORING PROGRAM

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, and 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 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.

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