Guidelines for Faculty Mentoring at SUNY Oswego

What is faculty mentoring in higher education?
Mentoring is a way that experienced faculty support the growth and development of new faculty in the key areas of teaching, scholarly and creative activity, and professional service.

What is a mentor?
A mentor serves as a guide to the institution and to the discipline. He/she has the responsibility to serve as a:
- *Support person for professional growth*, offering collegiality, positive encouragement, trust, and the opportunity for confidential professional conversations and advice as the new faculty member acclimates to his or her new role.
- *Knowledgeable source of professional information* about such issues as:
  - Teaching expectations in the department, such as issues of workload, observations of the teaching of new faculty with feedback, and identifying excellent teachers who could be observed by new faculty.
  - Expectations for scholarly and creative activities and identifying opportunities for collaborative work with other new or experienced faculty.
  - Opportunities for appropriate committee work that will allow the new faculty member to get to know his or her colleagues and contribute to the professional community.
  - The reappointment process and preparing a personnel folder, in consultation with the department chair and personnel committee.
  - Resources available for travel, research, and teaching.
  - The political structure of the department and the institution, so that new faculty understand the context of major issues and decisions of interest to their colleagues.
  - People, services and opportunities outside the department that will support the professional development of the new faculty member.
- *Advocate for new faculty* by representing his or her needs and interests to experienced colleagues to ensure fair treatment at a stressful, and thus vulnerable, time in academic life.

The responsibilities of mentors are professional, not personal, in nature. For example, mentors are not expected to help new faculty members find a place to live, help them move, or advise them on family issues.

How are mentors assigned?
Mentors are faculty members who are appointed by the chairs of departments to assist new faculty in their development. All mentors should be willing to serve in this capacity and be knowledgeable about departmental and institutional procedures and expectations, especially those affecting personnel decisions. Chairs are encouraged to identify possible mentors and make the necessary arrangements for a suitable mentor as soon as the new faculty member is hired.

Mentors should not ordinarily be department chairs, as the chair's institutional role as supervisor of personnel presents a potential conflict of interest with the role of mentor as described above. Mentors may be members of the departmental faculty personnel committee. No faculty member should mentor more than one new faculty member each year.

How long do mentors serve?
Mentors are ordinarily appointed for one year terms. Over time, mentoring usually becomes more centered on the growth and development of the new faculty member than with her or his acclimation to the institution. Mentoring is not a process that must end after one year if a mutually satisfying professional and personal relationship has developed. However, new faculty should be open to developing relationships for future mentoring and collaboration with other faculty who share their interests. The director of CELT will work with chairs and new faculty to identify a suitable mentor in another department if desirable.

When should mentors meet with new faculty members?
Mentors should include new faculty in informal professional activities whenever possible – discussions following meetings, brown bag lunches to discuss teaching or scholarship, car pooling to regional conferences, etc. In addition, we recommend that mentors meet more formally at least three times during the new faculty member's first year:

Early in the Fall Semester (see resource list on back of sheet)
1. Discuss how to get feedback on teaching and how to document teaching effectiveness:
   - Go over institutional expectations for teaching (e.g., final examination policy, canceling classes due to snow, how to deal with student with disabilities, plagiarism policy, etc).
   - Review department's specific expectations for teaching and course materials (e.g., syllabi format, exams, student evaluations)
   - Arrange a classroom observation. Provide early feedback, attending to teaching and evaluation of teaching.
   - Describe the services of CELT/COLT (celt@oswego.edu) and encourage attendance at New Faculty Workshops
   - Discuss student advisement issues, as appropriate
2. Explore opportunities for developing a scholarly agenda that can be sustained over time:
   - Describe Faculty Enhancement Grant opportunities for supporting scholarly and creative activities and new course development.
   - Describe how Quest and UUP's Individual Development Awards Grant program can support scholarly and creative activity.

Later in the Fall Semester (prior to first year review):
1. Discuss annual performance plan (made with chair and/or personnel committee as specified in departmental procedures)
2. Explain the personnel review process and review folder prior to submission

Spring Semester:
1. Review first year personnel process and discuss year two retention process
2. Explain Quest and Honors Convocation
3. Discuss teaching strengths, insights, and areas for improvements based on the new faculty member's experiences with her or his fall courses. Offer to go over first semester teaching evaluations with an eye toward enhancing performance.
4. Review the opportunities for developing a scholarly agenda that can be supported over time.

Resource List for New Faculty and Mentors

Academic Affairs/Provost Office:
http://www.oswego.edu/administration/provost/

Official College Calendar:
http://www.oswego.edu/administration/registrar/academiccalendar.html

Faculty & Professional Staff Handbook:
http://www.oswego.edu/administration/registrar/Handbook.pdf

The Faculty & Professional Staff Handbook includes many policies that mentors can help new faculty understand and implement, including:

- College Closing Due to Weather
- General academic policies on workload, class meetings, faculty office hours, faculty attendance at college functions.
- Grades and registration information, including grade changes, distribution and posting of grades, final grades and registration for courses
- College policy on intellectual integrity (e.g., cheating and plagiarism)
- Faculty grading rights and responsibilities
- Student attendance policies
- Advisement of students including policies for faculty, first year advisement, academic advisement, declaration of major
- Daily class schedule
- Syllabi including information about students with disabilities
- Emergency evacuation including information about students with disabilities
- List of student services offices and their functions, including those serving the immediate needs of students such as Career Services, Counseling Center, Services for Students with Disabilities, Financial Aid, Health Center, Judicial Affairs, Student Advisement Center, and the Office of Learning Services (OLS).
- Faculty governance information, including Faculty Bylaws and policies on personnel reviews.

Academic Policies:
http://www.oswego.edu/administration/registrar/acad_policies.html

Additional information for Arts & Sciences faculty:
http://www.oswego.edu/academics/colleges_and_departments/arts_and_sciences/faculty_resources/index.html

Additional information for School of Education faculty:
http://www.oswego.edu/academics/colleges_and_departments/education/faculty/index.html

Additional information for School of Business faculty:
http://www.oswego.edu/academics/colleges_and_departments/business/faculty_pages/index.html

Center for Learning & Teaching (CELT & Quest):
http://www.oswego.edu/~ctrteach/

UUP's Individual Development Awards Grant Program:
http://www.uup.lmc.state.ny.us./development/individual.html

Faculty Enhancement Grants and Recognition Opportunities:
http://www.oswego.edu/administration/provost/grants_and_awards.html

Penfield Library:
http://www.oswego.edu/academics/library/index.html