

NJMS Faculty Mentoring Program (Phase 1: for the Basic Sciences and Clinician Researchers)

Purpose:

The purpose of the UMDNJ-NJMS Faculty Mentoring Program is to assist junior faculty in basic and clinical science departments in the planning of their professional careers with the guidance of more experienced faculty. Mentoring Programs have been implemented at many universities for the purpose of fostering faculty development. The UMDNJ-NJMS Junior Faculty Mentoring Program will be designed to address specific aspects of faculty development, such as acquisition of teaching skills, publishing senior-authored papers and preparation of extramural funding applications. It is expected that the mentor will advise and guide the junior faculty member in areas of professional development necessary for establishing an independent academic career. The mentor in collaboration with the department chair will take an active role in this process.

Eligibility:

All Assistant Professors in basic or clinical science departments, tenure track, non-tenure track, or co-terminus, are expected to enroll in this program. The program is also available to Associate Professors and Instructors, as appropriate.

Choice of Mentors:

Within three weeks of their hire, new Assistant Professors should meet with their Department Chair and the Senior Associate Dean for Research. For current faculty, this meeting should take place within 8 weeks of the initiation of this Program. At the first meeting, junior faculty will receive documentation describing the Program and a list of possible faculty mentors at NJMS with a description of their respective research and/or teaching expertise. The mentor will generally be a senior faculty member who is willing to set aside time to advise and guide a junior faculty member. In consultation with the Department Chair the proposed Mentee will meet with the Senior Associate Dean for Research and suggest two or three possible mentors. Most senior faculty will be expected to participate as mentors. Eligible candidates can then take up to three months to identify an appropriate mentor. Mentees should base their selection of a mentor on factors including: area of research expertise, scientific achievement, success in procuring research grants, teaching experience and past record as a mentor. However, it is not necessary that the mentor's area of research expertise completely overlaps with the mentee's proposed research project. In fact, it would be more appropriate if the research fields did not overlap as the mentee progresses to independence. It is possible that more than one mentor may be selected for different activities within the career development program.

Responsibilities of the Mentor:

The mentor should:

Meet with the mentee on a regular basis

Provide advice on issues relating to academic career development, such as research and teaching activities, importance of serving on internal/external grant review committees, time management, particularly in the case of junior faculty with clinical responsibilities, etc.

Assist the mentee in establishing short-term and long-term career goals.

Assist the mentee in identifying developmental areas where improvement is needed.

Provide guidance in identifying extramural funding opportunities, preparing grant applications and publishing senior author papers.

In cases where the mentor's area of research may not overlap with that of the mentee, encourage the mentee to have future grant proposals reviewed by experts in the field within and/or outside the university.

Be willing to discuss ongoing research efforts including research focus, experimental design, methodology and interpretation of results.

Provide guidance in fine tuning teaching skills, such as preparation of formal lecture and laboratory exercises, as well as in conducting small interactive group discussions.

Responsibilities of the Mentee

The mentee should:

Assume primary responsibility for their professional development, including being familiar with faculty career tracks, teaching, publishing papers in professional journals, presenting at professional society meetings, searching for funding opportunities and initiating funding applications.

Be actively engaged in establishing and maintaining the mentor/mentee arrangement.

Develop specific career goals and objectives in conjunction with the mentor and department chair

Will be expected to complete a faculty development plan

Monitoring, Oversight and Incentives:

Department chairs will provide routine oversight of the mentoring program. Grounds for dissolution of the arrangement can include dissatisfaction on the part of either the mentor or mentee, as well as concerns by the chair that the interaction is not productive.

A regular system of progress evaluation will be implemented. Areas to be considered should include progress on the research project, clinical skills, teaching, publications and grant submissions. Formal meetings should occur on a regular basis at least twice a year and more frequently, as necessary.

Once a year, in conjunction with the annual performance evaluation, mentees will discuss with the mentor progress on the research/teaching goals in detail. Written reports of this meeting will be prepared by the mentor and submitted to the Department Chairperson and the Senior Associate Dean for Research prior to the annual faculty performance review.

The overall success of the program will be assessed on a biyearly basis by the Faculty Mentoring Committee. As the program gets underway, it is recognized that additional modifications may be required and the committee will regularly query participants for potential improvements. Data useful in evaluation will be collected including: number of mentors and mentees enrolled in the program; mentee and mentor satisfaction with the process. More long-term assessments would focus more on mentees' productivity and their success in achieving promotion and/or tenure.

Mentors participating in the program will be recognized through the service component of the Mission-based funding program and their participation in this program will be credited to their department.

A dinner will be held on a yearly basis for all participating mentors and mentees.

As the program becomes established, awards will be given to outstanding mentors on an annual basis.

This mentoring program was developed in 2007 by the Faculty Mentoring Committee, composed of junior and senior faculty including: Drs. Edwin Deitch, William Gause (chair), David Lukac, Michael Mathews, Carol Newlon, Nick Ponzio, and Stephan Schwander. Dr. Martin Schwarz, director ORSP, Theresa Policastro (Research Dean's office), and Stefanie Napolitano (HCOE) also attended the meetings.