

Department of Plant Biology

Policy on Mentoring Tenure System Faculty

Effective mentoring at the department level is important to the success of new tenure system faculty members. The goals of the Department of Plant Biology mentoring program are to provide guidance in:

- 1) establishing and sustaining a leading research program
- 2) developing effective teaching
- 3) promoting engagement of undergraduate and graduate students
- 4) building institutional and disciplinary leadership skills and contributions

Role of the Junior Faculty Member in the Mentoring Process:

The Chair of the Department, in consultation with the junior faculty member (hereafter called the “mentee”) and the Departmental Advisory Committee, will appoint at least two and no more than three faculty mentors (hereafter called the “mentoring committee”) for each new tenure system faculty member upon arrival. If the mentee has a split appointment with another Department, the selection of a mentor from the Department holding the split is encouraged. The mentee, the mentoring committee and the chair will meet once every semester for the first year to discuss aspects of faculty life and ensure that the new faculty member is provided with the proper guidance and feedback as they establish their independent careers. At the first annual faculty review the Chair will discuss the progress of the mentoring process with the faculty member to determine the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship and address the following: a) is the mentoring relationship productive? b) should the composition of the mentoring committee be altered? c) what changes would improve the mentoring process for the faculty member?

A faculty member is expected to have a mentoring committee up until the time a tenure decision has been reached. A faculty member may choose not to have a mentoring committee by providing a written statement to the Chair indicating they do not wish to have a mentoring committee. However, all faculty are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the mentoring program.

Role of the Faculty Mentoring Committee:

The faculty mentoring committee will monitor the progress of the mentee and provide critical help and support towards attainment of reappointment and tenure. This should include, but is not limited to progress towards establishing a nationally recognized, externally funded research program, in developing effective teaching, and in providing service to the academic and scientific community. The mentoring committee is expected to meet with the faculty member on a regular basis, but must meet at least twice per semester.

The role of the mentoring committee in evaluating the mentee for reappointment, promotion and/or tenure will be that of any regular tenured faculty member. Confidential information

exchanged between the mentoring committee and mentee during the pre-tenure period will not be brought into the discussion during the evaluation process.

Mentoring will be considered as a service to the Department and College and will be incorporated into the annual review of the faculty mentor. A college level award for outstanding mentoring of junior faculty will be given annually.

Resources for Mentors and Mentees:

The College of Natural Science provides leadership and support for departmental mentoring programs through its faculty development program. This support includes the organization of programs and workshops (either directly by the College, or in collaboration with other University units such as the Academic Advancement Network), facilitation of the departmental mentoring programs, and the coordination of mentoring activities with College policies on faculty workload, development, and reappointment, tenure, and promotion. This support may include sponsoring workshops on mentoring, and providing both written and web based resource materials.