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Faculty Mentoring

Sponsors:

Arlene Carney, Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs

Karen Zentner Bacig, Assistant to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Overview

As the University of Minnesota seeks to become one of the top three public universities in the world, we need to be attentive to issues concerning the life-course of faculty to support faculty success at all points of their careers. The Strategic Positioning Task Force on Faculty Culture, in their final report released in May, pointed to faculty mentoring as a key strategy to move us in the direction of excellence. In addition, the Provost's recent memo to department chairs regarding the revision of departmental standards for tenure and promotion (7.12 statements) requires a statement about how senior faculty will mentor junior assistant and associate faculty.

Objective of the Project

This project would focus on faculty mentoring – both junior, probationary faculty on the tenure track and those associate professors who need to move to full professor.

Specific PEL project tasks may include:

1. Needs assessment
Focus groups targeting junior faculty and associate professors exploring at least the following questions:
 - o What has their experience been relative to mentoring?
 - o What would they like their experience to be?
 These questions will be explored within stratified faculty groups, including tenured women, tenure-track women, tenured men, tenure-track men, tenured faculty of color, and tenure-track faculty of color.
2. Benchmarking
Best practices benchmarking concerning faculty mentoring at those peer institutions identified by the Project Sponsors.
3. Consultation
Consultation with a number of faculty groups identified by the project sponsors, (including Anne Taylor and Carole Bland, AHC) to explore best practice models and implementation strategies regarding faculty mentoring at the University.
4. Interviews with successful junior faculty
Individual interviews with junior faculty who have been recognized as successful to explore what, if any, role mentoring might have played in their success. The targets for these interviews would include those granted McKnight Land Grant professorships, McKnight Presidential fellowships, and junior faculty who successfully went up early for tenure.
5. Recommendations
Among the many recommendations that might come out of this project, specific recommendations are sought regarding:
 - o The best form for mentoring. (e.g. Is mentoring best done within a department by committee, one-on-one, or does the form depend on the culture and resources of a

department? Is there not any one best form, but rather there are best practices irrespective of form that we should consider implementing?)

- o What resources and programmatic efforts would be necessary to support a strong, successful mentoring program for faculty at all stages of their careers.

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