

School of Communication and Journalism

Mentoring Policy

Approved by the CMJN Executive Committee on 3/17/14

Approved by the CMJN Faculty on 3/19/14

Introduction

This mentoring policy starts from the assumption that every member of the faculty, from new to senior, instructor to full professor, is a citizen of the School of Communication & Journalism and, as such, is expected to positively contribute to the mentoring process. As mentors and protégés, we are expected to both seek and provide support as a component of our School citizenship. Collegiality should be a shared value among School members. New members of the School and/or rank should actively seek a mentor, and established members of the School and/or rank should respond positively to those seeking guidance. We hope that all members of the School will be good collegial role models.

Everyone, at every level, may benefit from a mentoring relationship. The mentoring relationship occurs over time through communication and interaction. Ideally, it is an interpersonal relationship built on trust, mutual respect, and a commitment to helping the protégé succeed in making steady progress toward the next level of teaching, research and outreach (as appropriate for each level). As Lumpkin (2011) explained, the mentoring process enhances faculty recruiting and retention, contributes to socializing protégés in the culture and expectations of the School, facilitates collegiality and productivity, and encourages professional growth for both the protégé and mentor.

Truly effective mentoring relationships are found in group environments in which the group's goals are defined clearly and everyone works toward successful accomplishment of those ambitions. The following criteria are important for successful mentoring:

- 1) cooperation among individuals in a working relationship;
- 2) equality in power and authority;
- 3) sharing responsibility in a group effort;
- 4) participating in the effort toward achieving group goals;
- 5) respect for the contributions of others in achieving group goals.

Thus, it is important for protégés to remember that a successful mentoring relationship requires the protégé to participate as a member of the School group. S/he should not be, and should not expect to be, relieved of committee assignments simply because s/he also has research expectations. Working toward tenure does not mitigate the expectation to be a contributing School citizen. Neither does successful acquisition of tenure and/or promotion diminish expectations to be a contributing School citizen.

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The Executive Committee favors a prescriptive/descriptive hybrid. A prescriptive program is a highly structured process through which the protégé is assigned to a mentor upon arrival in the School. The School establishes a schedule for the mentor/ protégé to meet regularly to help the protégé navigate her/his responsibilities. Research indicates that the prescriptive program works particularly well for new members of the School. However, it is difficult to "legislate" relationships. Thus, a descriptive mentoring program is more informal and less regimented. Mentors and protégés self-select and meet when issues arise. Research indicates that descriptive relationships may be more beneficial because it is based on mutual interests and is more informal. However, given its informality, protégés may "fall through the cracks" and fail to receive needed guidance.

Upon hiring and/or arrival, all new faculty will be assigned a mentor for the his/her first year. The executive committee will determine and assign the mentor, who is expected to help the protégé navigate the first year of employment. Establishment of this mentor/protégé by the School in no way precludes the protégé from seeking information from other faculty members at any time, nor are the two required to maintain the relationship beyond the first year. This policy communicates the School’s understanding of the difficulties faced by new faculty during the first year and its commitment to helping protégés through that period. As stated earlier, both the mentor and the protégé are responsible for nurturing the relationship. However, first-year mentors should be proactive in meeting and communicating with the new School member.

A truly effective mentor is someone who can reduce surprises and increase “sense-making” for the protégé. The mentor is particularly helpful for protégés who don’t know what questions to ask, or is uncomfortable asking them in public. Faculty members are not required to mentor, in the sense that it becomes an aspect of annual review, but are encouraged strongly to demonstrate School citizenship by responding positively to protégés’ requests for guidance.

Protégé:	Should be mentored by:
Instructor	Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor
Lecturer	Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor
Assistant Professor	Associate Professor or Professor
Associate Professor	Professor
Professor	Professor with longer tenure or Administrator