

RIT | Innovative Learning Institute Faculty Career Development

FACULTY MENTORING @ RIT GUIDEBOOK



Faculty Career Development

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WHAT IS MENTORING?

The word “mentor” comes to us from Homer’s *Odyssey*. Before leaving for the Trojan War, Odysseus asks his friend Mentor to watch over his household and to counsel and protect his son, Telemachus. Although it is actually the goddess Athena disguised as Mentor who advises the young man, whose father is away for 20 years, it is the mortal whose name has come to stand for a trusted counselor and tutor.

Today, we think of mentors less as teachers than confidants, encouragers, supporters—in a word, friends. Mentors and mentees are partners in an extended project of growth, development, and self-discovery. To this collaboration, mentors bring wisdom and experience to guide mentees as they navigate unfamiliar territory. Mentees contribute youthful energy, ambition, and new ideas. The result is a mutually gratifying give and take.

In the best of these partnerships the **mentee** gains a role model, while the **mentor** experiences rejuvenation and the deep satisfaction, as well as vicarious thrill of watching a career take off.¹

OVERVIEW OF FACULTY MENTORING

Mentoring has long been recognized as an effective method for new faculty to learn the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors for teaching in general and especially institution-specific norms². But as the demands made on new faculty and the need to integrate more quickly have increased, the idea of a mentoring network has emerged as an efficient and valuable way for new faculty to come up---to---speed.

A **mentoring network** is based on the premise that no single individual possesses all of the experience and expertise that a new faculty member needs to plan and develop a successful career. New faculty at RIT are encouraged to also develop a “constellation of mentoring partners” who assist each other in nonhierarchical, collaborative partnerships — each contributing according to their own knowledge and experience. This mentoring model can be both broader and more flexible than the traditional model and is able to provide “just-in-time” advice and guidance.³

In addition to finding success at RIT, faculty may also want to augment their reputation and marketability within their discipline.⁴ A mentoring network that includes external partners can provide insights from a wider perspective to support this goal.

There is a wide range of support resources for faculty at RIT, but faculty must also realize that they must often act as “self-agents” in taking advantage of networking opportunities, such as participating in various development programs. The self-agency that you show in finding and connecting with mentors—as well as acting in a mentoring role with peers—can accelerate your integration into the RIT community.

While mentoring alone cannot provide you with all of the support, community-building, and competency development required for success, it is a vital component of your development. By developing a mentoring network, you can obtain information and guidance, and benefit from the experiences of others.

¹ Faculty Mentoring @ RIT – A Guide for New Faculty (July 2014)

² Ensher, Ellen A., Thomas, Craig, and Murphy, Susan E. “Comparison of Traditional, Step-Ahead, and Peer Mentoring on Protégé’s Support, Satisfaction, and Perceptions of Career Success: A Social Exchange.

³ Sorcinelli, Mary Deane and Yun, Jung. “From Mentor to Mentoring Networks: Mentoring in the New Academy.” *Change*, November/December 2007

⁴ de Janasza, Suzanne C. and Sullivan, Sherry E. “Multiple Mentoring in Academe: Development the professorial network. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 64 (2004). 263-283.

MENTORING THROUGHOUT THE CAREER CONTINUUM

Mid-career faculty, post-tenure faculty, and faculty in leadership positions also benefit from mentoring. Research shows, “University faculty choose to stay in their positions longer than in the past, and thus the time they serve after tenure has increased. This introduces new challenges for their further professional development, presenting yet another arena where we need more intentional and strategic thinking. Departments should openly discuss how to design and provide mentoring for senior faculty, and a centrally located mentoring program office should help facilitate such discussions and processes.”⁵

MENTORING MODELS

The traditional image of academic mentoring is of a long-term relationship between an experienced faculty member and a less experienced one in the same discipline — a relationship that may last for several years. While those relationships still exist, mentoring has expanded to include peer mentoring, mutual mentoring, and ad hoc mentoring. The types of mentoring relationships are described in the chart below.

Type of Mentoring Relationships	Description
Traditional Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one relationships between new and more experienced colleagues. • Typically of a formal structured nature where senior faculty members are assigned to less experienced faculty with established guidelines and expectations. • Department heads can help faculty identify a mentor for a traditional mentoring relationship.
Mutual mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguishes itself from the traditional model by encouraging the development of a broader, more flexible network of support that mirrors the diversity of real-life mentoring in which <i>no single person is required or expected to possess the expertise of many</i>. • Within this model, early-career faculty build robust networks by engaging multiple “mentoring partners” in non-hierarchical, collaborative partnerships to address specific areas of knowledge and experience, such as research, teaching, tenure, and work-life balance. • These partnerships should be designed to benefit not only the mentee, but also the mentor, thus building on the idea that all members of an academic community have something to teach and learn from each other.⁶
Peer mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance from peers or “near peers,” colleagues who are close in career level who have been through similar experiences.⁷ • Groups brought together by similar needs; faculty groups network with peers within and across colleges often working on specific objectives such as teaching strategies or increased dissemination of scholarly work.
Group mentoring	Mentoring group led by one or two experienced faculty members.
Ad-hoc mentoring	Short-term or project-based relationships with individuals who have specialized knowledge needed “in the moment,” such as an academic technology expert, library liaison, or grant writing expert.
External mentors	Relationships with former professors, employers, or other colleagues or outreach to experts in the field or discipline.

⁵ Fountain, Joselynn, and Newcomer, Kathryn E. (2016) Developing and Sustaining Effective Faculty Mentoring Programs. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 483-506 Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44113751>

⁶ Mutual Mentoring Model. UMass Amherst. <https://www.umass.edu/tefd/mutual-mentoring-model>

⁷ Sorcinelli, Mary Deane and Yun, Jung, Mutual Mentoring Guide, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2009.

FACULTY MENTORING ROLES

The success of all faculty is a shared responsibility, with different members of the RIT community supporting the mentoring process in important and distinct ways. At RIT, we are asking new faculty to take the initiative in building their own mentoring networks —although a more traditional one-on-one relationship with an experienced faculty member remains a critical part of this network. Roles in faculty mentoring are illustrated on the following page.

Provost and Dean

- Through the shared governance model, administer and interpret guidelines for tenure and promotion.
- Set guidelines for scholarly productivity, teaching and service.
- Establish a set of rewards, expectations and accountability measures to ensure that mentoring remains a priority.

Department Head

- Provide a comprehensive orientation for new faculty.
- Identify individuals to serve as mentors.
- Help match mentees to mentors.
- Manage Plans of Work to reflect mentoring-related activities and responsibilities.
- Provide performance feedback and guidance to all faculty.

Mentors

- Help less experienced faculty members develop in specified capacities (teaching, research, scholarship, service, leadership, etc.).
- Provide career advancement advice.
- Offer support.

Mentees

- Openly seek advice from mentors.
- Ensure you understand the expectations from dean, department chair, and your mentor(s).
- Obtain current tenure and promotion guidelines from the dean's office in your college.
- Willingly participate in professional development activities.
- Form your "constellation of mentoring partners."

DEPARTMENT HEADS

A mentor usually does not have positional power over a mentee, so as department head you may not serve as a confidante to faculty, but you do play an important part in faculty success by:

- Orienting/onboarding new faculty to RIT
- Guiding new faculty to develop their own mentoring network
- Managing their Plans of Work
- Informing new faculty of the expectations, policies and procedures of the department, college, and RIT
- Providing guidance throughout the continuum of their career at RIT
- Partnering experienced faculty with new faculty

Like many universities, RIT believes that partnering new faculty with an experienced faculty mentor can accelerate the process of integrating new faculty. There are a number of well documented benefits of faculty mentoring, including:

- Increased retention
- Improved time-to-productivity
- Increased faculty engagement for both mentor and mentee
- Positive effect on university climate
- Positive contribution to effective recruitment and onboarding of faculty

Orienting/Onboarding New Faculty

Research suggests that a comprehensive orientation program is a vital element of new faculty development and is valuable in helping new faculty learn the social and intellectual nuances of the university. One growing trend is approaching new faculty orientation as a shared process. This “onboarding” approach focuses on providing new faculty with information, resources, and support throughout the first year and closely links orientation to mentoring. As a department head, you should encourage your faculty to build their “constellation of mentors” by participating in activities outside their college throughout the campus community. You can find out the various opportunities by visiting:

- RIT Events: <http://events.rit.edu/>
- Innovative Learning Institute and Wallace Library Events: <https://wallacecenter.rit.edu/events/>
- Campus News & Events email: <https://www.rit.edu/news/nandedaily.php>
- RIT’s Twitter and Facebook pages

Identifying Faculty to Serve as Mentors

While “mentor” is not an official role, it does entail a commitment of time and effort so department heads are encouraged to include mentoring as part of a faculty’s service commitment. It can be difficult to ask faculty to add yet another task to a full schedule, but can be easier if you:

- Point out that mentoring can count toward one’s service commitment.
- Emphasize that mentoring is not an open-ended obligation, and it is appropriate to set reasonable limits with a mentee.
- Remind potential mentors that they will be only one element in a mentee’s mentoring network—a network that they can also encourage the mentee to expand.
- Recruit “near peer” faculty to act as mentors, not just highly experienced faculty

Helping Match Mentees to Mentors

Each new faculty member should develop a network of multiple mentors. This will ensure that they can receive support in each of the areas of competence required of faculty and obtain guidance to navigate the cultural, social, and policy landscape.

While it is rare for any one individual to have expertise or time to counsel a mentee in all of these areas, a “traditional” mentor in the form of an experienced faculty member can be a central “star” in this constellation of mentors, especially during the first year.

While you should make these matches thoughtfully, don’t feel that you are setting people up for a career-long relationship. Introducing these pairings as one of several mentoring relationships that the new faculty will develop, can take some of the pressure off both the mentor and mentee.

Matching Mentors to Mentees

Start by aligning a mentor’s expertise in one area (teaching, research/scholarship, service) with a mentee’s area of greatest need. Consider other areas of compatibility such as content expertise, scholarship or research agenda, and personal interests and circumstances.

Faculty at different ranks often have different needs; the mentor should be sensitive to the demands that are specific to lecturers vs. tenure-track faculty.

Managing Plans of Work

The Plan of Work is an effective vehicle to reinforce your expectations of the new faculty member, define a balanced set of goals, and uncover areas of needed support. These sample Plan of Work goals may provide ideas for you and the new faculty member:

<p style="text-align: center;">Research goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a research agenda with a focused line of inquiry. ▪ Make connections to fellow faculty with similar interests to develop the potential for collaboration. ▪ Submit one conference paper abstract. ▪ Submit one journal article for publication. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare for fall and spring semester ▪ Seek mid-term feedback from students ▪ Seek feedback from colleagues on syllabus, grading rubric, and other course materials. ▪ Arrange for one informal class observation. ▪ Attend faculty development workshops on use of academic technologies, teaching excellence best practices, or other areas of interest.
<p style="text-align: center;">Writing goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work on dissertation to prepare for publication. ▪ Send drafts of article to three colleagues for feedback (one local, one dissertation advisor, one national). ▪ Attend faculty development workshops on writing and research. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Publication goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate comments from colleagues and submit article for publication. ▪ Submit conference paper abstract.
<p style="text-align: center;">Grant goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collect information about internal grant opportunities campus-wide. ▪ Submit “mini grant” application for summer research projects. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Service goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify one service commitment that would support research agenda, teaching goals, or other responsibilities. ▪ Provide advising support for [number] students. ▪ Identify one committee that would be beneficial to apply/volunteer for. ▪ Determine external service expectations.

Mentors vs. Supervisors

The roles of mentors and supervisors (in this case, department heads) in the career—and life— of a new faculty member or a mid-career faculty member are very different. While both may be actively guiding and helping develop new faculty, mentors are focused on individuals, while department heads should always be acting toward the larger interests of the department, college, and university. Also, a mentor’s activities can be “off the record,” which is why most mentoring guidelines and processes specify that mentors should not have positional authority over the mentee. It can be more difficult for new faculty to speak freely to the department head.

You may want to review some of the primary differences in the two roles with potential mentors:

Department Heads...	Mentors...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide performance feedback ▪ Enforce standard policies and practices ▪ Evaluate performance ▪ Set expectations and provide resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide developmental feedback ▪ Give insight to informal practices and cultural norms ▪ Give advice ▪ Help clarify expectations and identify resources

Providing Guidance

In your role, you may want to keep track of the mentoring relationships in the department, to make sure they are effective for both mentor and mentee.

New Faculty Mentees

- Are they expanding their mentoring networks?
- Do they feel integrated into RIT and the department?
- Are they tapping into the various resources available to them?
- Are they increasingly clear on expectations?

Faculty Mentors

- Is their mentoring work reflected on the Plan of Work?
- Are they meeting with mentees on a regular basis?
- Are they aware of the various resources available to their mentees?

FACULTY MENTORS AT RIT

Is Mentoring for You?

You may not remember your earliest days at RIT, but the situation that new faculty walk into has only become more complex over the years, with many more things to learn in addition to teaching. Like many universities, RIT believes that partnering new faculty with an experienced faculty mentor can accelerate this learning process. There are a number of well documented benefits of faculty mentoring, including:

- Increased retention
- Improved time-to-productivity
- Increased faculty engagement (for both mentor and mentee)
- Positive effect on university climate
- Positive contribution to effective recruitment and onboarding of faculty

In addition to these benefits to new faculty and the university, only you can determine the amount of personal satisfaction you'll gain from being a mentor. This guide will help you decide if you want to be directly involved in new faculty mentoring, and help get you started on your way.

RIT is committed to providing mentoring for all full-time faculty members by helping them build a network of mentors. This section is designed to assist faculty who are interested in serving as mentors better understand how to be an effective part of a mentee's mentoring network.

Mentoring has long been recognized as an effective method for new faculty to learn the basic knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors for teaching and especially for learning about institution-specific norms. We do not prescribe an approach to mentoring that individuals are required to use; rather the ideas provided here may be used, as appropriate, to support the mentoring efforts in each College.

As you read, envision the level of commitment it would take for you to be a mentor. These questions can help you discover your own motivations and expectations for being a mentor.

1. What is the value mentors bring to RIT?
2. What can you offer new faculty as a mentor?
3. Who would be a fitting mentee for you?
4. What do you personally hope to gain from being a mentor?

As a mentor, you will have a potentially significant impact on another individual's career, so you should enter into the role only after careful consideration and an honest evaluation of your "fit" for this role.

Being a Mentor

The mentor/mentee relationship is a unique one. While it has elements of both personal and professional interactions, it is not wholly one or the other. A mentor usually does not have positional power over a mentee, but is in the role because of experience and contacts.

A mentor is an advisor and guide, but not necessarily a friend. It's important that both the mentor and mentee recognize and respect these limits. With that understanding, the relationship can be long-lasting and mutually beneficial.

Some of the unique value that a mentor brings to the mentee includes:

- Helping the mentee clarify and articulate her/his own goals.
- Introducing the mentee to others who can help her or him achieve these goals
- Sharing an outside perspective so the mentee can develop a realistic sense of the image s/he presents
- Offering organizational context so the mentee learns the history, relationships or other influencers of decisions in the department, college or university

Characteristics of Successful Mentors

While “mentor” is not an official role, it does entail a commitment of time and effort. So before making the commitment, you should determine whether you have the characteristics of a successful mentor.

A successful mentor...

- Demonstrates excellence in teaching, scholarship, and/or service.
- Remains accessible to the mentee, meeting on a regular basis.
- Skillfully provides constructive feedback.
- Actively engages in research and/or related scholarly activities.
- Possesses a publication record that meets college standards.
- Receives consistently satisfactory/acceptable teaching evaluations.
- Knows the resources available to support faculty development.
- Understands department and institute policies and procedures regarding faculty tracks, reappointment, promotion and tenure.
- Actively connects to networks inside and outside the university, and is willing to share those connections with the mentee.
- Consistently maintains confidentiality.
- Preserves the mentee’s intellectual independence.
- Does not have supervisory authority over the mentee.

If you don’t feel that you have all of these characteristics, you may want to look into other ways that you can contribute to the development of RIT’s faculty. Your department head can provide you with additional ideas for supporting faculty.

Mentoring Across Differences

Many prospective mentors wonder if they can provide effective support to individuals of a different gender or race. It is true that the greater the affinity the mentor and mentee feel for one another, the greater the likelihood of a deep and productive working relationship.

All mentors will benefit from developing an understanding of the unique issues the mentee may face relative to race or gender. The mentoring relationship will also benefit if the mentor is willing to share information about their own cultural background. However, mentors should not feel that they can only be effective working with mentees of the same gender, culture or background.

As a mentor, you have the opportunity to help a mentee build a mentoring network that provides support for potential diversity-related challenges by encouraging her or him to connect with a Faculty Associate, peers, and other on- or off-campus affinity groups. One of the values of mentoring networks is that they provide opportunities for new faculty to receive counsel and support from individuals who do share their demographic characteristics, so this unique and important type of support is not the sole responsibility of the mentor.

Based on their own experience with cross-race mentoring, Stanley and Lincoln (2005) observe that a successful mentoring relationship is characterized by trust, honesty, willingness to learn about one’s self and others, and the readiness to share power and privilege, rather than being characterized by shared demographics.

In a mentoring relationship, the best match is one based on the mentee’s academic goals and your own experience. The personal and professional qualities of the mentor, rather than her/his demographic

characteristics, are what matter most. The degree to which the mentor possesses the competencies described in this guide, coupled with her or his awareness and openness to the issues and impacts of differences, are the keys to a successful mentoring relationship.

Mentoring Competencies

Successfully fulfilling the role requirements of a mentor requires certain competencies; these are the knowledge, skills and personal attributes that are demonstrated in the mentor's interactions with his or her mentee.

Competency	Mentoring behaviors	
<i>Unbiased acceptance</i>	Acts non-judgmentally Conveys empathy Readily provides support and caring Appropriately questions the mentee's assumptions	Seeks to understand the mentee's background and unique issues Fosters self-confidence Presents an approachable demeanor
<i>Coaching and counseling</i>	Conveys information clearly Role-models appropriate behaviors/practices Effectively encourages, motivates and challenges mentee Encourages and facilitates self-discovery Creates and connects mentee with individuals and learning experiences	Gives recognition and feedback Shares advice and experiences constructively Recognizes and articulates cultural norms and informal practices at the university Promotes and encourages the mentee's advancement
<i>Interpersonal communication</i>	Listens actively Uses open-ended questions to elicit thoughtful responses	Flexes communication style to meet the mentee's needs Encourages self-reflection
<i>Integrity</i>	Maintains confidentiality and trust Speaks knowledgeably about policies and practices Communicates authentically Constructively reflects personal impressions of the mentee Maintains professional boundaries with the mentee	Does not take credit for a mentee's work or successes Actively networks on behalf of a mentee Advocates for the mentee when necessary
<i>Analytical skills</i>	Successfully recognizes connections between events Identifies obstacles in the mentee's career development plan	Engages the mentee in interpreting cause and effect relationships Recognizes differences in mentee's personality, preferences, and goals, and takes these into account when providing advice
<i>Process management</i>	Adapts process to a mentee's needs and personal style Uses a variety of techniques to help the mentee achieve goals Maintains a store of generic questions to elicit discussion Sets development goals for the mentee	Demonstrates awareness of how relationships evolve Interacts appropriately with mentee according to the situation Understands current, relevant promotion and tenure policies and procedures
<i>Professional achievement</i>	Exemplifies teaching excellence, funded research, scholarly dissemination and/or effective service Displays a high degree of self-awareness Maintains a robust network of colleagues inside and outside the university	Receives satisfactory teaching evaluations Has a research and publication record that meets college requirements Has served on college and university committees

Working With Your Mentee

Setting Expectations

One key to success in mentoring relationships is that both the mentor and the mentee have a clear idea of what to expect from each other. Just as it was suggested that you reflect on your reasons for becoming a mentor, mentees should go through a similar process to determine what they are looking for from each mentor in their network, both in terms of goals and the working relationship.

You should explore a potential mentee's expectations before making a commitment. In this way, you will know that you can provide what the mentee needs. Focus on setting expectations in your first meeting.

To facilitate "getting on the same page," use phrases such as:

- "What I'd like to do for you is..."
- "Where I can best help is..."
- "The way I see us working together is..."
- "I can help you accomplish your goals in this specific area..."
- "I will need you to..."
- "For this relationship to meet your needs, I will ask you to..."

Remind the mentee that s/he should build a mentoring network to better address all of her/his needs.

Communication

Much of the "work" in a mentoring relationship comes about through communication. It's important that you understand your mentee's concerns and that s/he truly comprehends the guidance that you are offering.

If neither of you are prepared or able to dig deeply into the issues and challenges the mentee is facing, the mentoring dialogue can often seem shallow. "Dissecting" or debriefing your mentee's experiences to find patterns, themes and connections between events is critical to his or her learning and development. By performing this analysis together, you strengthen mutual understanding and build rapport. Often, the dialogue can deepen simply by being more specific or action-oriented in your questions.

Questions that receive a shallow response	Questions that receive a deeper response
"How did your semester go?"	"What did you find out from your teaching evaluations?"
"Have you heard back from any journal editors yet?"	"Which journal editors have you contacted? What did you find out?"
"Did you get funding for your latest grant?"	"What did the grant review panel see as the greatest strengths in your proposal?"

Remember that your mentee does not have your long history at RIT or in teaching, and may not be seeing a situation as you would. For example, they may be facing student challenges for the first time that you deal with almost by instinct—so there needs to be a process of listening, understanding, and providing feedback and guidance.

Active Listening

A mentor should be an active listener. Active listening encourages your mentee to increasingly share more about her/himself, and through this self-disclosure, s/he may develop deeper understanding before you even say anything. These behaviors can convey that you are listening actively:

- Maintain eye contact - Eye contact with the speaker focuses attention, reduces the chance of distraction and encourages the speaker by signaling interest.
- Use affirming expressions and gestures - Nonverbal, affirmative signs, such as nods and appropriate facial expressions convey that you are listening, encouraging the speaker.
- Avoid distractions - Don't look "past" the mentee at other people, play with pens or pencils, shuffle papers or otherwise act as if your attention is on something besides what the mentee is saying.
- Don't interrupt - Save your questions for an appropriate break so the mentee doesn't lose his or her train of thought.
- Paraphrase - Restate what you heard from the mentee before providing guidance or advice. This allows your mentee to verify that you understand the issue and to clarify if needed.
- Using Questions - At appropriate breaks, ask clarifying questions to ensure that you understand what the speaker is saying. Asking relevant questions also signals that you are engaged.
- Ask questions in a positive way: "What would have happened if you..." instead of "Why didn't you..."

Managing Reactivity

There may be occasions when you have a strongly negative reaction to something that your mentee says or a decision that they makes. At these times, it's important that you don't risk your relationship or undermine your mentee's confidence by reacting negatively. Try to remain neutral and maintain your role as a guide and advisor.

- Clarify what you believe you heard.
- Explain the issue as you see it—what are you reacting to?
- Reframe the incident or decision as a learning experience.
- Come to a common understanding.

If a mentee's actions or decisions go against common principles, such as RIT's values or accepted practice in academia or the discipline, point this out directly, along with the potential consequences of continuing to act in this way.

Giving Feedback

Mentoring is a developmental relationship. One way that this development occurs is by debriefing or giving feedback to your mentee about how s/he handled a situation. This process can help you give effective feedback:

- Make sure you understand the situation
- Paraphrase what you heard from your mentee and ask questions to clarify your perception.
- State your message clearly and specifically
- State the problem as you see it and confirm that your mentee also recognizes it.
- Propose a positive strategy or tactics that the mentee can apply
- Focus on actions that your mentee can take now and in the future that don't rely on outside factors or conditions.
- Check for understanding and buy-in from the mentee

Make sure that your mentee understands what you are proposing and that s/he feels confident in taking the proposed action. If not, discuss why not. You may have an incomplete understanding of the situation or your strategy may not fit the mentee's personal style.

Gain agreement

Even if it takes some back-and-forth, don't let the mentee leave without a plan and make sure you follow up and discuss progress at your next meeting. For example...

Make sure you understand the situation	"It sounds as if you were ready to really let that student have it..."
State your message clearly and specifically	"What you want to make sure is that you don't let her challenging tone trigger a negative reaction from you..."
Propose a positive strategy or tactics that the mentee can apply	"What I've done in situations like that is acknowledge the student's viewpoint and then shift the focus away from the student. Try to follow-up with the student privately, as soon as possible."
Check for understanding and buy-in from the mentee	"How would you respond if she does the same thing again?"
Gain agreement	"Will you try that next time?"
Follow-up	"...and let me know how it goes."

Neutral Facilitation

One of the challenges of mentoring is guiding and advising your mentee without overly influencing her/him. Because you are in an "expert" position, you can—inadvertently or otherwise—influence a mentee in a particular direction. So, it's important to remain neutral. Facilitate a discussion that enables the mentee to come to her/his own conclusions as opposed to "coming around to your way of thinking." If necessary, use tools like lists of pros and cons, or connect the mentee with someone who can speak from experience.

While you want to help your mentee avoid making a bad decision, just be conscious that your own wishes for the mentee need to take a back seat to her/his own.

Advocacy

There can be occasions when a mentor must become an active and vocal advocate for her or his mentee e.g. if the mentee is not receiving appropriate recognition, is involved in an internal "political" conflict, or does not feel comfortable speaking up.

As a mentor, you possess the authority and respect among peers to assist your mentee and ensure that she or he is treated fairly. If the situation is related to gender or diversity, you can call on the Faculty Associates for additional support.

Accountability and Responsibility

While most mentors are, by definition, invested in the success of their mentees, they are neither accountable nor responsible for that success—that rests with the mentee. A mentor can give advice and even open doors, but, ultimately, the mentee must produce the work that will help her or him progress professionally – and personally.

Planning Meetings

Meetings with your mentee are a key part of building and maintaining your relationship and ensuring it is a productive one. You and your mentee should come to meetings with a clear idea of what you want to accomplish.

The First Meeting

- Use your first meeting with your mentee to get acquainted. When you first meet, your mentee may have a large number of questions ready to go, but your answers will be more insightful if you have a better idea of the person asking them. Set clear expectations so that before you and your mentee dive into the “real work,” you have a common understanding of your working relationship.
- Start the conversation around the mentee’s long-term goals in a general sense. Work together over the first couple of meetings to get a sense of what she or he would like to accomplish through the mentoring relationship.
- Because self-disclosure is a critical way to build trust in a relationship, share some of your own experiences at RIT, especially as a new faculty member. Make sure you leave time for your mentee to ask about you, and invite her or him to do so.
- When you are comfortable enough to begin working, one way to start could be to identify areas in which the mentee requires additional clarity on expectations from the department head or college.

Regular Meetings

Mentoring is an ongoing process of learning and development, but the topic at each meeting may change depending on what is going on in your mentee’s career (and life). However, you shouldn’t lose focus on the goals for the mentoring relationship.

- One strategy for making the most of your time with your mentee is to have two basic agenda items for each meeting: one with a short-term focus and one with a long-term focus.
 - The long-term focus is related to your mentee’s overarching goal for the mentoring relationship, such as identifying a research agenda and creating a plan to make it a reality.
 - The short-term focus may be a recent event or problem where the mentee needs help, such as dealing with a student situation, or identifying grant opportunities.

This double-edged strategy helps you give the mentee some perspective on immediate issues so the two of you can work through them while maintaining momentum toward the mentee’s larger goal. This larger goal will often include advising your mentee in compiling her or his portfolio or dossier, obtaining references for tenure if applicable, and making effective decisions about service-related activities—especially during the first and second year.

Maintaining Your Balance

Being a mentor requires additional effort and commitment on top of your current professional and personal commitments. One of the drivers of mentoring networks at RIT was to take some of the time pressure off a single mentor.

These strategies can also help you avoid being overtaken with your mentoring commitments:

- Keep track of your mentoring activities each month so you can report on this activity to your department head at year end.
- Focus on connecting the mentee with others on campus—the more extensive your mentee’s network, the less dependent s/he will be on you.
- Encourage your mentee to build his or her mentoring network.

- Don't fall into the trap of doing things for the mentee—instead, point the mentee in the right direction, or connect her or him with resources.
- Block out time on your calendar for mentoring activity during the entire semester; do not let mentoring activities “creep” outside of the allotted time.
- Combine activities by inviting your mentee to attend and observe an event that you are already attending, such as a workshop or presentation.
- Talk to your department head to make sure that your efforts as a mentor are reflected in your Plan of Work.

Continuous reflection on your “position” in the mentee’s overall mentoring network will help you realize whether you are taking on too much in the relationship. It will also help you determine if the value that you provide is in proportion to the satisfaction that you derive from being a mentor.

Evaluating the Relationship

After you have been working with your mentee for one or two semesters, you may want to evaluate the situation to determine if you are helping the mentee clarify and make progress toward his or her goals.

Questions to consider are:

- Do you meet regularly?
- Do you look forward to your meetings? Does your mentee?
- Do you feel your mentee is accepting and applying your advice?
- Can you identify two or three instances when your advice helped your mentee?
- Is your mentee becoming integrated into the RIT community and his or her college and department?
- Has s/he built important or valuable relationships through your contacts?
- Are you dedicated to each other’s success?
- Do you feel a mutually beneficial partnership?

If the answer to most of these questions is no, you should speak with your mentee about establishing new mutual commitments or transitioning the mentee to a different mentor.

In a situation like this, have an honest discussion explaining why you feel the two of you are not a good fit and why another mentor could better serve the mentee. These steps can make the transition easier:

- Plan enough time for the meeting and ensure that it takes place in an appropriate location.
- State your reasons for wanting to end the relationship directly, but sensitively, citing specific examples.
- Reviewing and recognizing progress that has occurred and the positive aspects of your time together.
- Make sure that any immediate items are covered, and possibly help the mentee set a direction for his or her next actions.
- Emphasize that you will continue to maintain confidentiality.

FACULTY AS MENTEE

New Faculty

Starting out as a new faculty member can feel overwhelming, especially the idea of not knowing what you don't know—about teaching, about scholarship and publishing, about achieving tenure and promotion, about your role and responsibilities at RIT. You may wish you had a personal guide.

In many colleges and universities, as in many other professions, that guide is a mentor—an experienced individual who knows the profession, the organization and is invested in your success.

The approach described here of a **mentoring network** will enable you to develop a valuable and wide-ranging support system for many of your professional activities, during your first year and throughout your career at RIT. As you progress, you may find yourself making the transformation from mentee to mentor sooner than you think.

Why You Should Build a Mentoring Network

In many ways, faculty work independently. However, especially when they are new to a university or the teaching profession, faculty require **collaboration** to be successful. Along with learning basic information about RIT and their teaching role, they also need guidance on how to approach their new career.

There is a wide range of support for faculty at RIT, but faculty must also realize that they must often be proactive in finding and taking advantage of networking opportunities, such as participating in various professional development programs. This can accelerate your integration into the RIT community.

While mentoring alone cannot provide you with all of the support, community-building, and competency development required for success, it is a vital component of your development. By developing a mentoring network you can obtain information and guidance, and benefit from the experiences of others. And, as with many of your new and evolving duties at RIT, you must take the initiative to build your own mentoring network.

Although this guide focuses on developing a mentor network, it's likely that you'll want to include a traditional mentoring relationship with an experienced faculty member. Although your college may assign an experienced faculty advisor to help you during your first year, this person may or may not become a long-term mentor.

One thing to keep in mind as you seek, find, and ultimately build your relationship with a mentor, is the unique nature of the relationship. While a mentor/mentee relationship has elements of both personal and professional interactions, it is not wholly one or the other. A mentor usually does not have positional power over the mentee, but does have organizational position, experience and contacts. A mentor is an advisor and guide. It's important, as a mentee, to understand and respect limits.

To begin working on finding mentors, you may find the worksheet, **Finding Mentors** on the following page, helpful as you decide on your main mentoring priorities. The **Developing a Mentor Network** form will help you to identify those people who will be a part of your "constellation."

FINDING MENTORS

A first step in building a mentor network is figuring out what you want and need from your mentors.

Your Mentoring Goals

Check the two areas that are your main priorities now, and write a goal statement for those two areas.

I need a mentor to help me:	
<input type="checkbox"/> understand the RIT culture	
<input type="checkbox"/> understand tenure requirements	
<input type="checkbox"/> understand promotion policies	
<input type="checkbox"/> with teaching effectiveness	
<input type="checkbox"/> with research	
<input type="checkbox"/> with scholarship	
<input type="checkbox"/> develop and maintain work/life balance	
How do you see these needs changing over the next year or two?	
What type of mentor relationship would you be comfortable with?	

Although this guide focuses on developing a mentor network, it's likely that you'll want to include a traditional mentoring relationship with an experienced faculty member. Although your college may assign an experienced faculty advisor to help you during your first year, this person may or may not become a long-term mentor.

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⁸ Waugh, J. (2002). *Faculty Mentoring Guide*, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine.

BUILDING YOUR MENTORING NETWORK

Suggestions to develop and maintain your network of peer mentors:

- Maintain contact with colleagues you met at New Faculty Orientation; visit the online roster to make connections
- Approach newer faculty in the department who are facing or have faced similar challenges.
- Attend workshops and events hosted by Faculty Career Development, the Innovative Learning Institute, Sponsored Research Services, and others.
- Reach out to the Faculty Development team for advice on how to build your network.
- Contact one of the Provost’s Faculty Associates (FAs) for Women, AALANA, or Non-Tenure Track faculty. This web page lists the FAs: <http://bit.ly/FacultyAssociates>

Ad hoc mentors may be found within the following RIT departments such as:

Department/Resource	URL	How they can provide you with ad hoc mentoring
Educational Effectiveness	https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/outcomes/	Centralized support for assessment processes focused on fostering academic quality and advancing institutional effectiveness.
Faculty Career Development,	http://rit.edu/facultydevelopment	Facilitate networks and collaboration; opportunities for networking and partnering on faculty development activities.
Teaching and Learning Services	https://www.rit.edu/ili/about-ili/tls	Teaching support, course design, pedagogical resources, course observations, course materials, academic technologies
Sponsored Research Services	https://www.rit.edu/research/srs/	Grant writing and research compliance.
RIT Libraries	http://library.rit.edu/research/meet-your-librarian	College reference librarian, research, etc.
RIT Press	https://www.rit.edu/press/	Publishing books; author information
Open Access Publishing	http://library.rit.edu/open-access-publishing	Comprehensive open-access publishing service

Individuals from outside RIT who may act as ad hoc mentors include:

- Your dissertation advisor
- Former professors, colleagues
- Professional associations, inside and outside of higher education

As you build your mentoring network, be sure to seek out support from multiple sources and devote energy to those relationships that prove to be valuable for your personal and professional development.

As you encounter different situations during your first years at RIT, you may draw on several resources for guidance and advice. While not all of these resource “advisors” may be true mentors, they are important elements of your “constellation of mentoring partners”— your support structure. Just as important, they can also give you essential information and perspectives that you can share with your own peer mentors.

Developing a Mentor Network – Your Constellation

By connecting with multiple mentors, you can gain a variety of perspectives. Your mentoring network may include peers, administrators, experienced faculty and even external individuals like journal editors, members of a professional association, or your thesis advisor.

Complete the chart below to create a snapshot of your current network. It's a snapshot because your network won't be static—individuals will be added and removed as your needs change.

Developing a Mentor Network		
Topic	Mentoring Source	Notes (expertise, connections, etc.)
RIT Culture		
Tenure Guidelines		
Teaching Excellence		
Research		
Scholarship		
Other: Service, Career Planning, etc.		

Identifying a Traditional Mentor

Identifying a traditional mentor for a one-on-one relationship may come from meeting an individual and intuition that s/he has the experience, knowledge and temperament that you need in a mentor. You can always see your department head about matching you with a mentor.

- Considering the goals you've identified for your mentor relationship, what kind of traits would you want your mentor to have?
 - Position in the department/college?
 - Length of time at RIT?

- Also, consider which commonalities are important to you:
 - Do you both have to work in the same areas of research/scholarship?
 - Is it important that your mentor is interested and connected to the research/scholarship you want to pursue?
- Is it important that you share similar backgrounds?
- Is it important that you share similar values?
- Does your mentor's image or reputation on campus and in the department matter to you? In what ways?

While your mentor provides advice and guidance, being a mentee is an active role as well. Your efforts to clarify your needs, along with your willingness to accept suggestions or criticism are vital to a successful mentoring relationship.

Guidelines for Successful Mentoring Relationships

Set Expectations

- It will be easier for your mentor if you make your needs and goals explicit:
- What kind of guidance do you want?
- What are your priority goals?
- What kind of working relationship do you envision?
- What are your expectations for introductions and connections to others who can assist you?

This will help your potential mentor decide whether the two of you are a good fit before working on your ongoing learning and development.

You should also be prepared to disclose information about yourself, including your challenges and strengths, so your mentor has an idea of what might be required to help you achieve your goals.

Prepare for Meetings

Your meetings with your mentor are a key part of building and maintaining your relationship and making professional progress. You should plan for each meeting so it is time well-spent for both of you.

The First Meeting

Consider your first meeting with your mentor as a “get acquainted” session. You may have dozens of questions and concerns, but instead, focus on addressing broad questions and gaining agreement on how you and your mentor can best work together.

Some initial questions include:

- What surprised you the most as a new faculty member?
- What do you wish you had known when you first started out as a new faculty member?
- What is the most important lesson you learned during your first year at RIT?
- What did you do during your first years that enabled you to become a more capable faculty member?
- What experiences were most valuable in shaping how you view your role?
- What department or university events should I be sure to attend? Why?
- Work on getting to know one another better, and make sure you leave time for your mentor to ask about you.

What your mentor should not do:

Remember that your supervisor should be your main information source for basic process or policy matters such as:

- ✓ Department grading policies
- ✓ Process for reporting grades
- ✓ Obtaining a teaching assistant
- ✓ Expected office hours
- ✓ Services available from department support staff

Regular Meetings

- Mentoring is an ongoing process of learning and development, so what you want to talk about at each meeting can change depending on what is going on with you professionally and personally.
- A strategy for making the most of your time with your mentor is to have two basic agenda items for each meeting: one with a short-term focus and one with a long-term focus.
 - Long-term focus - related to your overarching goal for the mentoring relationship, such as identifying your research agenda and creating a plan to make it a reality.
 - Short-term focus - a recent event or problem where you need help, such as dealing with a problem student, or identifying grant opportunities.
- This double-edged strategy allows you to gain some perspective on immediate issues so you can work through (and past) them, while maintaining momentum toward your larger goal.
- You should have an early discussion about the Statement of Expectations from your department head. If you have not received one, your mentor can still go a long way in helping clarify expectations in the college and at RIT.
- Another topic of continued guidance will be around building your tenure portfolio or promotional dossier and developing contacts who will be effective supporting references.

Actions and Behaviors for Mentees

As stated before, being a mentee is an active role. By using the strategies below, you can build a stronger, more productive relationship with all of your mentors.

- Set a regular meeting time and stick to it. If one of you cannot make the regular time, reschedule rather than waiting for the next one; this will enable you to maintain your momentum.
- Prepare for each meeting. Know what you want to discuss, find out, or explore.
- Be clear and direct about your needs and goals. Your mentor can best help when s/he can address specific issues.
- Be honest about your shortcomings. Sharing mistakes or competency gaps can help your mentor provide guidance that may directly improve your skills.
- Explicitly ask for feedback. It will be much easier for your mentor to give you honest opinions if you provide her or him with an opening.
- Accept feedback with an open mind. A mentor can often provide valuable insight and objective opinions based on his/her extensive experience, but it only has value when you act on it.
- Ask for guidance that enables you to help yourself. The mentor's role isn't to "fix" your problems or provide you with all the answers, so focus on identifying additional resources and connections.
- Try the things your mentor suggests. Don't dismiss advice because it is unfamiliar or pushes you out of your comfort zone.
- Maintain professional boundaries. Don't expect or try to develop a "personal friendship."
- Show eagerness and enthusiasm for what the mentor can provide. Let your mentor know that you appreciate his or her effort and insight.
- Share credit for your successes. Acknowledge the value your mentor has provided.

Your **long-term goals** will probably be around one of these areas:

- ✓ Research
- ✓ Scholarship
- ✓ Teaching excellence
- ✓ Service
- ✓ Gaining tenure
- ✓ Promotion

Evaluate the Relationship

After you have been working with your mentor for one or two semesters, you may want to evaluate the relationship to determine if you are getting what you need from your mentor.

Questions to consider are:

- Do you meet regularly?

- Do you look forward to your meetings? Does your mentor?
- Are you getting valuable, actionable insight and advice from your mentor?
- Can you identify two or three instances when advice or information you received from your mentor helped you?
- Is your mentor facilitating your integration to RIT?
- Have you made any important or valuable contacts through your mentor?
- Are you dedicated to each other's success?
- Do you feel a mutually-beneficial partnership?

If your relationship with your mentor is not turning out to be mutually productive, it might be better to end it so you can both find partners that are more suitable.⁹ You should not end the relationship abruptly, however—work together to bring the relationship to a positive, if not entirely successful, conclusion.

- Directly but honestly express how the relationship is not working; cite specific examples.
- Recognize what you have accomplished from the relationship and express appreciation for the help you have received.
- Communicate respectfully, and make sure you have enough time to discuss the situation.
- Review and develop a plan for any open issues.
- Continue to maintain confidentiality.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON MENTORING

Visit the Faculty Career Development website for a collection of faculty mentoring resources and materials that you will find helpful in your role – whether it be a department chair, mentor, or mentee at any stage of your career, at any rank: <http://rit.edu/facultydevelopment>

Suggestions are always welcome. Send to FCDS@rit.edu.

⁹ Dartmouth Mentor Exchange, based on Ensher and Murphy (2005) and adapted from material developed by Duke University.

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