

Biology Departmental Mentoring Plan
September, 2002
Modified 5/03, 5/04, 6/05

Mechanics

Mentoring of Teaching

1. Every semester all full-time biology faculty will be assigned to a “mentoring pod”. Each mentoring pod will consist of three biology department faculty members, and if at all possible each pod will include at least one senior/tenured faculty. Each pod will be responsible internally for its members’ formative evaluation of teaching.
2. Every semester each member of the pod will hold a minimum of three “mentoring sessions” with the other members of the pod. A mentoring session will be a class or lab visitation, or a substantive discussion about teaching methods, test writing or any other pedagogical issue. To encourage the non-judgmental give-and-take we are striving for in formative evaluation, discussions regarding teaching methods should take place as a pod rather than on-on-one, and should occur after the appropriate reciprocal class visits.
3. If mentoring visits are not occurring, it is the responsibility of each person to remind the appropriate pod members of those duties.

Mentoring of Research Activities

1. Regular, casual discussions between departmental members regarding research trajectories are expected.
2. In each tenure track faculty member’s third, fifth, and eleventh semester at Denison, as well as in the semester immediately following a junior faculty leave, a research presentation will be given to the entire department. A reasonable goal is for the 3rd semester talk to be a DSA talk (followed by a more detailed departmental discussion). For the 5th and 11th a departmental seminar (not a DSA talk) is preferable. It is expected that these presentations will precipitate formative feedback regarding the faculty member research trajectory. To facilitate such feedback, seminars and feedback sessions are to be scheduled on consecutive days. For example, if a 40-50 minute research presentation is given on Wednesday afternoon, then on Thursday the department will meet again and discuss the research and the trajectory.

Assessment

1. At the annual departmental retreat following the spring semester, an open discussion will be held regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the plan. If appropriate, annual modification will be made.