

Environmental Studies Program

Mentoring Plan

Fall 2006

Overview

The primary goal of our mentoring program is to facilitate effective teaching among the Environmental Studies core faculty and more broadly within the ENVS Program. Effective teaching involves engaging students with the course material (theory, content, practice) and providing a role model for rational thinking and problem solving. We acknowledge that there are many different effective teaching models and that it is paramount that each person teaches within her/his own personality. Thus we support a variety of teaching styles. The mentoring process should be a positive one where reinforcement and encouragement are stressed. We also recognize the benefits of mutual mentoring and we encourage cross visitation of classes and two-way exchange of teaching ideas. We strive to set up the mentoring process as discussions among equals.

Mentoring Schedule/Plan

Meeting of the Syllabi:

Prior to the beginning of each semester, the ENVS staff (i.e., those with appointments in ENVS and other interested ENVS associated faculty) will meet to review each other's syllabi for proposed content, structure and pedagogical methods. In this forum, new ideas and tried-and-true old ones concerning teaching strategies can be discussed. These exchanges should also provide ENVS faculty with a clearer understanding of the content of each course and help us to ensure greater continuity and linkage throughout the

Program's curricula. At this meeting, plans for course visitations during the upcoming semester will be established.

Class Visitation Schedule:

For junior faculty, our plan involves repeated classroom visits over a four-semester period (i.e., years one and two before the third-year review and years four and five before the tenure review). Faculty mentors will visit each selected course multiple times. The visitations will be organized to cover at least two different courses and to be fairly evenly distributed over the period (we envision participation of at least two mentors and six to eight visits total). There should be some overlap between the mentoring group and the individual's Faculty Review Committee. The composition of each junior faculty member's mentoring group and Faculty Review Committee will be established through discussions among the ENVS core staff and in the ENVS Program Committee.

Mentoring Format:

1. Pre Visit Meeting – The instructor will provide information that will allow the visitor to understand the context of the class session as related to course content and goals. The instructor should attempt to outline specific areas of teaching for which they desire feedback.
2. Classroom Observation – The mentor will observe the class and take note of various aspects of the instructor's teaching and classroom interactions including clarity, content level, pace, balance of methods, apparent intellectual engagement of students, student participation and interactions.

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3. Post Visit Meeting – The instructor and mentor will meet as soon as possible to discuss the mentor’s observations about teaching strengths, areas for development and improvement, and possible new strategies or techniques.