

# Mentoring Program Plan for Junior Faculty

Department of Physics & Astronomy

Denison University

Last Updated: 02 October 2003

## *Position / Mission Statement:*

The Department of Physics and Astronomy supports the University view that faculty colleagues are amongst our greatest resources. As a result, the Department maintains open communication and strong interactions amongst faculty at all stages of their careers through collegial discussions, classroom visits, research collaborations, joint service projects, etc. Beyond this level of normal daily interaction, the Department is also strongly committed to the guided growth of junior faculty through the pre-tenure phase of their careers. In particular, we especially value regularized interaction between junior and more senior faculty to help provide insight and experience in the first formative faculty years.

## *Mentor:*

The Department and Chair will collectively select a tenured faculty member to serve as a mentor for each junior faculty member. This individual may remain the official mentor throughout the pre-tenure portion of the junior-faculty member's career, or the official mentor may be "rotated" amongst tenured faculty members.

## *Formative vs. Summative Evaluation:*

It is expected that the most significant role in the mentor/mentee relationship will be formative in nature. That is, the mentor will help act as a coach, guide, and sounding board for the mentee to help them form their own academic identity in the classroom, in professional work, and within the Denison community in general. The mentor (along with the chair) will help to outline the expectations and best-practices within the community, as well as help the mentee identify areas of excellence and areas in which further work is needed. Where improvement can be made, the mentor will help the mentee evaluate the situation, identify strategies to improve the situation, and to assess the outcomes.

Naturally, this process will provide the mentor (and the chair) with an important, on-going insight into growth of the mentee in the classroom, in professional work, and in the community. As a result, it is inescapable that over time the mentor will gain some knowledge for the purpose of summative evaluation. The content of these summative evaluations will be shared with the mentee by the mentor and the chair in the context of regular (yearly) evaluation, but at least 1 month prior to any university-level summative evaluation.

## *Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms:*

The mentor will provide continuous feedback to the mentee through oral discussions and sharing of notes. The mentor will also provide a concise written evaluation of the mentee and their progress, including examples, to the department at the end of each semester. An overview of the summary will be provided to the mentee by the chair and mentor in a meeting at the end of the first semester of the first year, and at the end of each academic year in the first three years.

## *Beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Review:*

Following a successful 3<sup>rd</sup> year review, it is expected that collegial mentoring will continue, at least within the context of our normal departmental interactions. However, as the first three years are viewed as central to the formative nature of mentoring, the official/formal nature of the mentoring program will be discontinued after the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, except as requested by the department and/or the mentee.

# Mentoring Program Plan for Junior Faculty

## Mentoring Activities

Physics & Astronomy, Denison University

Last Updated: 02 October 2003

### Mentoring Activities:

In order to help provide the mentee with sufficient feedback during their pre-tenure years, the mentor and mentee will engage in a number of activities listed below. It should be noted that while this provides a formalized list, one of the main overarching goals is to establish and enhance the collegial interaction between junior and more senior faculty colleagues in the hopes that we can and will learn from each other.

### Teaching

#### Resources:

Mentor will apprise the mentee of a cross-section of various professional, university, and departmental resources.

#### Classroom visits: should be pre-arranged

Mentor visits mentee classroom: at least three times per semester in first two semesters (2<sup>nd</sup> week of classes strongly suggested for first visit); twice per semester thereafter.

Feedback: meeting and hand-written notes after each visit

Mentee visits mentor classroom: at least once per semester each semester

Feedback: discussion after each visit

Upper level majors visit classroom: the department will attempt to make available the opportunity for upper level students to visit the mentee's classroom during the year.

Feedback: provided to mentee directly by students

#### Advising of students:

Mentor will discuss advising with mentee, including the contexts of the liberal-arts mission of the university, the degree program, and other special programs in the university. The mentee will observe occasional advising meetings in the first year. The mentor will observe occasional advising meetings between the mentee and students in the second year.

Feedback: meeting between mentee and mentor after each observing session

#### Student Research

Mentor and mentee will discuss students and their involvement in student research projects prior to involving students. This discussion will include level and timing of student work, expectations of students in research, the role of student research as a teaching/learning experience, etc. A discussion will also follow the completion of the project.

Feedback: oral feedback given at times of discussion

#### Discussions

Mentor and mentee discuss classes before and after each term, including goals, learning objectives, approaches & methods, syllabi, course evaluation, course outcomes, and plans for future classes.

## Research

### Resources:

Mentor will apprise the mentee of a cross-section of various professional, university, and departmental resources.

### Papers / posters

Mentee is encouraged to share papers and posters with mentor in advance of / in concert with submission or presentation to generate discussion and feedback as necessary

Feedback: oral feedback given at time of discussion

### Local Presentations

Mentee will make a departmental (or DSA) presentation at least once per year in the first three years, and at least once more prior to submission of tenure materials

Feedback: meeting and hand-written notes after each talk

### Student Research

Mentor and mentee will discuss students and their involvement in research prior to involving students. This discussion will include level and timing of student work, expectations of students in research, student contributions to professional research agenda, identifying promising students, etc. A discussion will also follow at the completion of the project.

Feedback: oral feedback given at times of discussion

### Proposals

Mentor and mentee will discuss proposals in context of research at a liberal-arts college, funding needs, funding sources, and grantsmanship. The mentor will share examples of proposals with mentee, and will provide feedback on early draft.

Feedback: oral feedback given at times of discussion

## Service to the Other Purposes of the College

### Resources:

Mentor will apprise the mentee of a cross-section of various professional, university, and departmental resources.

### Local / Departmental

The mentor and mentee will discuss the role of service in a liberal-arts college, and work to identify areas of potential interest for service. The Department will work to provide a mentee with local / departmental service roles beginning in their first semester.

### Extra-departmental

The mentor and mentee will meet at the end of the first year to work to identify areas in which to expand the service role outside of the department in the second year. It is expected that this will include service on 1-2 committees or in other capacities within the university.

## Overall

### Monthly Meetings

Once per month, all mentees in the department and at least one senior member of the department will have a meeting time to discuss how things are going, and any areas of concern or positive output