



The University of Georgia

Teaching Academy

Date: April 11, 2014

To: Professor Pamela Whitten
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

From: Faculty Mentoring Break-out Group:, Gary Green (facilitator), Tessa Andrews, Mary Bedell, Ron Cervero, Dan Coenen, Joseph Dahlen, Chris Franklin, Chase Hagood, Diann Moorman, Peter O'Neill, Andrew Owsiak and David Spooner

Re: Recommendations for Faculty Mentoring

Dear Provost Whitten,

We write on behalf of the working group charged with addressing issues of Faculty Mentoring at the 2014 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium. What follows are the recommendations of our group, which were designed to address the issues identified by the group in this area.

First and foremost, for the university to underscore its commitment to faculty mentoring, mentoring needs to be featured prominently within the university community. This, in turn, requires that the university commit itself to raising the value of mentoring for faculty and creating a culture of appreciating and crediting the mentoring activities of faculty - both within their home departments and the university at large. The achievement of this broad mission might occur in a number of interrelated ways, which vary with respect to cost.

Recommendation 1: The simplest way for the university to demonstrate it values mentoring would be to initiate awards for mentoring, both for individuals and departments. Some units on campus already have mentoring awards for individual faculty that work with undergraduate and graduate students (e.g., Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities mentoring awards, Graduate School's Outstanding Mentoring Award). We propose a similar set of awards be created to recognize the efforts of faculty who mentor other faculty members. Award recipients might fall into three categories: outstanding mentorship provided by an i) associate professor, ii) a full professor, or iii) a non-traditional faculty member. In addition, we strongly recommend the university offer a departmental mentoring award each year to a department on campus that has a comprehensive or innovative mentoring program at the unit level. These formal mentoring awards would serve to acknowledge and reward individuals and departments for the work they put into mentoring and would therefore signal the university values such contributions.

Recommendation 2: Mentoring often involves providing other faculty with information about relevant programs on campus of which they might take advantage (e.g., the Center for Teaching and Learning's Lilly Fellowship). Furthermore, some of these programs specifically provide mentoring opportunities to those that would like them. However, to ensure that faculty are aware of these opportunities means that the efficient dissemination of information concerning mentoring initiatives is critical. Unfortunately, information about campus programs, awards, and resources for faculty are currently dispersed across numerous unit-level websites, making it very difficult for (especially new) faculty to find them.

The Provost's office has already begun collecting faculty-relevant information under their Faculty Resources webpage, and we commend this effort. We would, however, offer two suggestions for further growth.

First, some important programs are absent from the website. As an illustration, the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) offers Faculty Research Grants (FSG), but there is not a link to this program on the Provost's webpage. We raise this fact as one example to support our recommendation that the Provost's Office's efforts should be continued and expanded. For instance, the existing website could serve as the foundation for a faculty resource that continues centralizing information on faculty-relevant programs.

Second, we recommend the site host a single, master calendar for the academic year that lists all faculty enrichment programs, workshops, awards, initiatives, etc and their related deadlines. Currently, the Faculty Resources page includes links to many faculty resources, but the information itself remains de-centralized on unit-level websites. For program descriptions and details, this may be fine. For deadlines, however, a central list would be valuable for all faculty members, particularly new ones. Additionally, this calendar would make it easier for department heads and other mentors to help faculty take advantage of the many opportunities UGA already offers.

Recommendation 3: It is also very important to foster mentoring within departments (or other units). Admittedly, this is difficult. Departments are autonomous, and mentoring does not come in a one-size-fits-all formula. Three common characteristics, however, might define a department-driven initiative:

First. Explicitly provide training to department heads (or another department-designated representative) to mentor faculty. Department heads not only mentor faculty as part of their job, but they also have the power to influence the mentoring practice more broadly in their department. This makes them a critical focus of a departmental initiative.

Second. Create school or department-level mentoring awards, and;

Third. Encourage departments that excel at mentoring, such as the award-winning departments, to hold a symposium to share their mentoring policies and practices with other faculty.

Recommendation 4: At the university level, we recommend the creation of a Mentoring Institute (or Academy). Although we deliberately leave the details of such an institute to those that would create it, we offer a few guiding suggestions.

First, an Institute of this type need not require extensive resources; rather, it could simply involve connecting faculty across campus that have a commitment to mentoring or a wish to be mentored. Building a loose structure - like the Teaching Academy - might be a manageable way to launch such an initiative.

Second, for this Institute to maximize its effectiveness, it would ideally focus on under-served and un-served populations. On the one hand, some faculty receive mentoring, but at insufficient levels. The university, for example, offers mentoring opportunities to assistant professors (primarily) through the Lilly Fellows and Teaching Academy Fellows Programs. These programs, however, only reach a small percentage of assistant professors. We believe that such programs should be expanded so that more assistant professors may receive access to additional resources within the university that can help them navigate the pre-tenure process. It is important that these resources remain outside the department - to give assistant professors a source of assistance free of any departmental politics.

On the other hand, numerous groups of faculty remain un-served by existing programs. In particular, our working group felt that mid-career faculty (e.g., associate professors) and non-traditional faculty were particularly in need of mentoring programs. We also noted that department heads and those desiring other departmental and university leadership positions remain untrained as well. The lack of resources for these faculty groups not only leaves faculty feeling disconnected from the university (a potential morale issue), but also creates enormous inefficiencies. A campus-wide initiative might rectify these problems. We envision a program for newly elected (and aspiring) department heads, in which they shadow current department heads before a leadership transition, participate in leadership training, and meet with a cohort of department heads from across campus before and during their leadership position. We believe such a program could minimize much of the "trial-and-error" of departmental operations that new leaders employ because current and future leaders would learn from one another's experiences.

Finally, an Institute need not be created immediately. Rather, the university might launch individual programs to test their demand and effectiveness (e.g., the department-head training initiative noted above). After a few such programs begin, the university might then tie them together under a Mentoring Institute. This process would allow the university to address mentoring in the short-term (and in a way that permits it to control costs), while also remaining flexible about expanding the program and its organizational structure in the future.

We believe the implementation of these recommendations will build and strengthen the culture of mentoring at UGA, which will allow the university to maximize the effectiveness, efficiency, and job satisfaction of its faculty.

