

Faculty Mentoring in the Department of Anthropology: Guiding Principles

October 2019

1/ The Department of Anthropology strives to offer a positive, collegial, and supportive work setting for all faculty, and recognizes it is the collective obligation of all of us to honor this commitment to one another's professional development and well-being.

2/ As part of fostering a general culture of support for one another as colleagues, the department formally provides mentors for all faculty new to the department (whether TT or NTT, and at whatever rank they arrive), and makes mentors available to all other faculty who might want them. We believe all faculty benefit from continuing, career-long mentoring, including senior tenured or other long-term faculty (such as senior lecturers), and that we should think of mentoring as, essentially, a collective responsibility we all share for promoting one another's professional well-being over the long term.

3/ Mentors should be formally assigned, and records of the assignments kept by the chair and the administrative assistant. The chair may delegate coordination of mentoring to another faculty member.

4/ Faculty who have been newly hired to join the department, whether TT or NTT, need mentors immediately, before they arrive at the university, or are even in Boston. In order to begin offering useful advice necessary for a smooth entry, the department chair should assign a mentor to new faculty immediately after they accept a hiring offer. The mentor and mentee can communicate by telephone and email, if needed.

5/ Faculty who are more mid- or even late-career also benefit from mentoring, in relation to many issues, such as promotion to Professor, overall career/agenda mapping, managing increasing demands for service, work-life balance, and the challenge of taking on administrative roles. These faculty, as well, should also be provided for through mentoring relationships within the department.

6/ Regular meetings should be scheduled to take place at least twice a semester, and preferably monthly, including as needed, more impromptu meetings or phone consultations.

7/ Mentoring activities should be (and now are already) creditable under the merit review system.

8/ The chair should appoint two departmental mentors per person for each relevant colleague, and check in with colleagues each year, at the time committee assignments are made, to assess whether mentoring networks are working effectively, or should be modified.

9/ The chair should encourage faculty members to have a mentor network of several people beyond their formal departmental mentors which should include persons outside the department

and outside the university. Departmental mentors should encourage individuals to identify and reach out to these mentors outside our department, as part of extending their professional support networks.

10/ The need for mentors may shift over the course of an individual's time at the university. Changing professional commitments, or where the relationship is not as effective as desired, may suggest changing mentors or adding new ones. The chair and the department should support this flexibility in assignments.

11/ Be sensitive to the need of NTTs for NTT mentors, but make sure that NTT mentors are also adequately rewarded for their efforts. NTT faculty can and should also act as mentors for tenure stream faculty in areas where they are able to provide relevant support and expertise.

12/ It should be a duty of the chair to carefully mediate the service demands that the institution often places on individual faculty relatively new to the university. Normally new tenure-track faculty should have minimal service involvements both inside and outside the department in the first year or two, and the chair should be available as a buffer, a first line of defense, to support faculty in vetting and deflecting demands that might feel burdensome, including those from the administration. In deciding what is excessive, of course, chairs should be sensitive to and respectful of the variability among faculty as to their passions, commitments and desires for service involvement.

13/ Mentors should support faculty of color and women in resisting as much as possible an overabundance of service and advising assignments, including administrative appointments such as chairing of the department or of onerous committees.

14/ Where these activities are nonetheless assigned to faculty of color and women, formally or by circumstance, the department should be sure to adequately acknowledge and reward these activities within the merit review system, and during major personnel reviews (e.g., 4th year review, tenure and promotion).

Statement of Rationale and Assumptions That Inform Anthropology Mentoring Practices

Mentoring is an integral part of our departmental and institutional culture

We never stop learning our culture, including the culture of the university and department. All faculty have to learn new understandings as part of their job - if their job is new, or if it is changing, or they are shifting status within the same organization. That covers about everyone.

Professional development as collaborative culture learning. In Anthropology, we already are committed to sharing information about our practices and official culture, and we have sought to build a culture that is friendly and mutually supportive, where people share their information

with one another, and where the collegial environment encourages everyone to ask questions. We are all committed to one another's well-being and professional success within this system.

We can be resources to one another. Some mentors can be equals, involved in common things. Others can share institutional memory and knowledge, and understanding of procedure, that come from longer experience that are all good for newer people to access.

Typically mentoring is thought to be most needed by junior faculty on the tenure track, but the department believes that *all faculty* – TT and NTT, junior and senior – need mentoring support in handling professional challenges and opportunities connected with our work.

We have resolved to formalize mentoring practices more

The biggest issue for us in Anthropology has been how much to formalize the informal mentoring system we already have. In recent years we have begun a process of formalization by assigning mentors for new faculty, but this policy, and even the assignments, are not written down anywhere, and mentoring until recently has not been formally rewarded or even recognized anywhere, including the departmental merit evaluation system. We should be proud that so many in the department report in our surveys that they are actually receiving mentoring, and we have begun taking steps towards formalization. Mentoring was added as a creditable item for a merit award in our newly revised merit manual for 2017.

In addition to recognition and reward for individual mentoring efforts, there are advantages for mentees, too. Especially desirable would be a system that provides for regularly scheduled meetings with an identified mentor which would take place, even if these are open-ended meetings with no particular agenda. Such a system builds regularized mentoring into our institutional practices.

We recommend everyone to have multiple mentors

This doesn't mean that these formally assigned mentors will take care of all issues for everyone. People will still need to have multiple mentors they can consult for advice. We benefit from having multiple people to ask for advice and guidance. Mentors can be approached for advice in areas where they are especially knowledgeable. Recently even our department's formal mentorships have involved assigning two mentors for each mentee.

It should not be defined as a duty of the chairs to be everyone's mentor, in a chain of command kind of situation. However, it **does** seem like the duty of the chairs to help nurture or foster a culture of mutual support and consultation among colleagues, and to coordinate, or see to the coordination, of the mentoring program overall.

Having mentors outside the department is a good thing, too. Where possible, in fact, departmental mentors should do their best to introduce new faculty to relevant colleagues outside of Anthropology who might share their research, teaching or community interests. Center for Innovative Teaching (CIT) seminar groups, or other professional development groups convened

under the Office of Faculty Development (OFD), provide strong networks of trust and mentorship among colleagues university-wide, and so do various service involvements (i.e., committees) we might be part of, and also informal peer mentoring or writing groups that faculty establish among themselves. The department should encourage everyone, especially non-tenured and NTT faculty, to seek out such collegial relationships outside the department, if they are not already doing so.

CIT has long thought that often the best mentors regarding teaching are those who do not even teach in our field, but who have many of the same pedagogical challenges as we do – for example, in engaging learners, or handling diverse levels of preparation in the classroom, or teaching very large classes. Sharing insights in those areas does not require people to be teaching the same content, and in fact pedagogical challenges are more sharply thrown into relief when you are NOT teaching the same content.

Subjects for mentoring where faculty say they need guidance

As a review of issues that have been identified by the faculty in past discussions, what are some of the things that faculty have said they are concerned to be mentored about?

Research, grants, and publication. Not surprisingly, research, grants and publication have been a key concern for tenure stream faculty. This is something that many if not most of our new tenure stream faculty have already been doing, of course, so it's a matter of increasing the scale of these involvements. Keeping a balance between scholarship, on the one hand, and teaching and service, however, is an issue for everyone – and we know this is a perennial issue for everyone for their whole careers.

Administrative and bureaucratic processes. The bureaucracy we have around academic program and curricular planning and approvals, especially, is mysterious for new faculty. We hire new faculty usually to bring their passions, their specialties, and their more current training to our campus, and they regularly need to create new courses, or revise old ones, and develop new programs, including summer and study abroad programs, and field schools. Faculty need a lot of help with all that, and they say so. They also need a lot of help in understanding the architecture and politics of faculty governance, and how to play reasonable service roles that will help them become integrated as faculty here, as well as measure up to performance standards in service.

Progress toward tenure or promotion. Mentoring sessions offer a perfect opportunity periodically to review the mentee's progress in research, teaching and service toward tenure, and to identify areas of strength and those that need improvement. Reviewing of Annual Faculty Report evaluations together might also be a relevant activity.

Teaching issues. So many curricular and pedagogical questions arise for faculty teaching new and continuing courses, and each term new groups of students who individually and collectively can present new and surprising problems for the professor to solve.

Achieving "Work-Life Balance." As with all other kinds of professionals in demanding occupations, this is a perennial challenge that takes continual tending throughout one's career.

Local knowledge. For those moving to Boston for the first time, an orientation and advice regarding neighborhoods and towns, schools, weather patterns, and commuting issues are often very useful in newcomers' choices about places to live.

Special groups of faculty with particular mentoring needs: NTTs, women, and faculty of color

Non-tenure-track faculty. NTTs teach the majority of our students at UMass Boston, deliver the majority of our curriculum offerings, and interact with more students than the usual TT professor. In addition, many NTTs engage in significant service to the university and community as well as making scholarly contributions to the discipline. Nevertheless, they are shut out from various opportunities and sources of information on campus where they can learn institutional culture and receive support. Their rights to change the curriculum or initiate new program developments are not always clear. The scope of their service involvements is under chronic dispute, as a matter of labor-management relations at the university. NTT Faculty also need mentoring to understand their rights under Article 21 of The Faculty Staff Union Collective Bargaining Agreement, particularly in light of some of the newly negotiated contract language concerning access to benefits, promotions, and continuing employment. Despite the hard-won victories NTT have won on our campus, many, particularly Associate Lecturers, continue to lack job security, access to benefits and are underpaid for the work that they do. Supporting and mentoring NTTs thoughtfully so that they can negotiate these complex realities without burning out takes special sensitivity to the contradictions their work carries.

While in many respects senior NTTs are the best mentors to support their colleagues in these areas, chairs and other departmental TT colleagues obviously also have an important role to play here. In addition, more senior NTTs may have considerable experience on our campus, with work-life balance and in the demands of the academic discipline which makes them appropriate mentors even for tenure stream faculty.

Faculty of color and women faculty. We need more attention to mentoring and support for faculty of color and for women faculty. There are special pressures on women, sometimes arising from the gender role expectations that students and colleagues have about them, to do more service, and to be more available to students for advising than other faculty. Their male colleagues often put pressures on them in these directions, by not stepping up themselves to do a fair share of these kinds of work. And this is not even to talk about the similarly gendered expectations on women faculty as regards their roles in private and family life!

Also, faculty of color always have to fight tokenism -- that is, requests to be on all kinds of committees, so that they can have "diversity." It's even required now by the ODEI. Another issue is pressure they get from students for counseling and advice. Because they are fewer in number, and also overall more junior in rank, faculty of color have inordinate pressure on them that white faculty are less likely to face, to mentor and be available as supporters of our students. Our students overall are themselves increasingly students of color and thus they gravitate toward faculty of color as scarce but highly-valued role models. For both faculty of color, and for

women, their pressures to devote time to service are greater, and this can crowd out attention to scholarship for those on the tenure track especially.

The recent April 2017 Report of the Promotion, Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Service Subcommittee, or PROGRESS report, verified that all these disparities in expectations and pressures for faculty of color and for women are a reality at UMass Boston. They are asked to do more service and student advising than white male faculty, and rewarded less professionally for it. Our colleagues who are women and people of color should be protected by the department and their mentors against this unfair set of expectations. A key ingredient of mentoring and support should be to help them resist succumbing to these institutional pressures.

We also recognize and acknowledge that faculty of color, and women, experience instances of both implicit and explicit bias and even hostility from some members of the community here at UMass Boston, as they do in higher education in general as well as in our wider society. For these faculty, negotiating academia even at a relatively progressive institution like UMass Boston can still be fraught with unwelcome instances of bias or disrespectful treatment from colleagues and from students. Our department as a whole – not just faculty who are female and people of color – must take on this responsibility of helping one another negotiate and combat whatever elements of racism and sexism exist in our institution, our academic profession, and the community more widely. Consciousness of these responsibilities should inform our departmental mentoring practices.