MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Deans and Department Chairs
FROM: John H. Frederick  
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
SUBJECT: Faculty Mentoring Program
DATE: September 15, 2014

After reviewing the Faculty Mentoring Advisory Group’s final report (attached) and reading the feedback from the Faculty Senate, I am supportive of UTSA implementing a faculty mentoring program in each department, and wish to implement this important program in the coming months. Many Tier One institutions offer their new faculty mentoring support, and this is an excellent way for us to solidify the investment we make in each faculty appointment, so I feel this is an appropriate step in our evolution as a research university.

In order to implement the suggestions of the report, each department will be required to have a mentoring program in place within the next year in time for the 2015 new faculty and offer all new faculty members to UTSA the opportunity to participate in it. Please note that the participation in the mentoring program by new faculty is completely voluntary. However, based on survey information from our recent new faculty, approximately 80% indicated a desire to participate in a mentoring program, and I believe that this number will likely increase once a program is made available.

The details of each department's mentoring program will be left up to the department to determine and design, but we will ask you to document the features of your program and provide a list of faculty within your department who are available to serve as faculty mentors with your college office so that we can ensure that all new faculty have access to a mentoring program. As part of this effort, Jesse Zapata and Alan Shoho along with the Faculty Mentoring Advisory Group will be developing a Mentoring Manual as a resource for all departments. If any department requests support, the Office of Academic and Faculty Support will be available to help any department create a “culture of support” through mentoring to their new and recent members of our faculty.

Thank you for your help in creating this program, and special thanks to the Faculty Mentoring Advisory Group and Alan Shoho for their work in formulating the recommendations.
Faculty Mentoring Advisory Group Report

Proposed Guidelines and Recommendations for Institution-wide Faculty Mentoring Program

Members of the Advisory Group
Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Chair, Biology, COS
Bruce Barnett, Chair, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, COEHD
Ephrem Fernandez, Psychology, COLFA
Heather Shipley, Civil and Environmental Engineering, COE
Pamela Smith, Accounting, COB
Martell Teasley, Chair, Social Work, COPP
Alan Shoho, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support

Overview
Mentoring has been demonstrated to be a key element in developing talent in higher education and other professions. Subsequently, the advisory group felt it was very important as The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) ascends toward Tier One status to develop a “culture of support” as a means towards enhancing the recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining of high quality faculty. UTSA invests significant resources to recruit and hire outstanding new faculty members and it behooves the institution to create a culture of support to enhance faculty productivity. UTSA is developing the infrastructure and support mechanisms to nurture faculty development through a new Faculty Center and assigning an Associate Vice Provost to foster a caring environment where all faculty have a point of contact to help them be successful and contribute to UTSA’s drive to be a Tier One institution. Thus, it is appropriate that mentoring serve as an important foundation for an institution-wide advisory group consisting of faculty members and department chairs.

Advisory Group Background
In Fall 2013, The University of Texas at San Antonio’s Provost charged the Associate Vice Provost with developing a proposal with recommendations and guidelines for a faculty-mentoring program. The Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support appointed six members, one member from six colleges with three of the members being department chairs and three members being recommended as people who were interested in mentoring programs. The advisory group started meeting in October 2013 and completed its meetings in December 2013. The Associate Vice Provost took all the information provided by the advisory group and wrote the following report. The advisory group prior to submission to the Vice Provost and Provost vetted the report for the Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support. The advisory group recommends further vetting and opportunities for input by the Department Chair Council, Dean’s Council, Provost Council, and possibly the Faculty Senate prior to approval and any planning for implementation.

The Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support charged the Faculty Mentoring Advisory Group (FMAG) to:

1. Recommend elements of best practice and a process for developing a faculty mentoring and support structure; and

2. Develop guidelines for implementing a faculty mentoring and support program across the institution.
Critical Areas for Consideration in developing a Mentoring Program

As the FMAG met, it became clear there were some critical areas that needed to be distilled in developing a mentoring program. These areas are listed below with an underlying brief description.

1. Selection of Mentors – The advisory group felt it was important to state that not all faculty, even highly productive ones in some cases, are meant to be mentors. As a result, the selection of mentors should be based on criteria deemed to be most appropriate in identifying good mentors. Here are some thoughts the advisory group had on mentor selection:
   a. Mentors must be tenured faculty and thus only Associate and Full Professors with tenure would be eligible to serve as mentors.
   b. Interested faculty must apply to be mentors and their application should address the following areas:
      i. Previous experience as a mentor
      ii. Reasons for wanting to be a mentor
      iii. Background information about mentor applicants
         1. Educational background
         2. Department/College
         3. Research area
         4. Teaching philosophy
         5. Involvement in recent and relevant mentoring service (Dept., College, University, National, International)
         6. Personality inventories (these will be completed at a later date)
         7. Discussion on how they achieve a balance of Teaching, Research, and Service

2. Matching of Mentors to Mentees (encourage multiple mentors)
   a. Mentee will pick mentors through review of mentor profiles (we would develop a website where eligible and qualified mentor profiles are posted for review).
   b. Mentee will choose 2 mentors, at least 1 of the mentors will be outside of their department.
   c. Create a mentoring manual for mentors and mentees (print and online).
   d. Mentors and Department Chairs must meet to insure alignment of goals and expectations.

3. Preparation and Training of Mentors and Mentees
   a. Mentor-mentee orientation
      i. Attend training together
   b. Training Sessions will address both content and processes
      i. Content: P&T guidelines, university policies, developing a research agenda
      ii. Processes: Developing a relationship; setting goals, ground rules, and expectations; monitoring and adjusting activities; reviewing strategies for success in teaching, research, and service
      iii. Breakout Q&A session
         1. Mentors and mentees attend separate Q&A sessions
   c. Follow-up Training
      i. Offered each semester as a workshop or seminar on mentoring at the Faculty Center
         1. Invite guest speakers (internal and external) to discuss aspects of mentoring from the mentor and mentee perspective

4. Mentoring Program Evaluation
   a. Completion of the evaluation form will take place twice prior to the mentees’ third year review:
i. The first completion will take place during the second November of the mentees’ appointment and the second completion will take place during the third November of the mentees’ appointment.

b. Both mentors and mentees will evaluate their experience using a short online survey. A draft of the survey is provided below.

c. The evaluation tool should be designed, distributed, collected electronically (e.g., Survey Monkey), and reported by the Provost Office to the Faculty Senate and Department Chair Council in the aggregate.

d. The program will be initially evaluated after the first year and then after every two years. The Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support (VPAFS) will develop a report containing evaluation results and present it to the Faculty Senate, Department Chair Council and post on their website.

5. Assessing the Mentoring Process Annually between Mentor(s) and Mentee

a. Purpose: to have an open discussion on the evidence of the mentees’ past year’s performance, and suggestions for planning the upcoming academic year.

b. The mentee is responsible for providing materials for the mentor(s) to review (i.e. annual evaluation, course evaluation, updated curriculum vita).

c. The mentee is responsible for arranging the annual meeting. This meeting should take place after the completion of the annual review period.

d. Among other derived agenda items, this meeting will include a conversation on the material provided by the mentee and a review of checklist items that were covered during the academic year.

e. The last Annual Mentoring Group Review should take place after the mentee has received results for his or her third year review. The last meeting should include a discussion of the third year review process and future directions towards the accomplishment of tenure.

Sample Evaluation Mentoring Survey

Questions to be completed by mentee

1. Did the mentor and I agree on goals of mentoring?
2. Was the mentor available for meetings?
3. Was the mentor approachable?
4. Was the mentor understanding of my needs?
5. Was the mentor knowledgeable?
6. Did the mentor offer constructive feedback?
7. Did the mentor help facilitate my stated goals?
8. Did the mentor promote problem solving when needed?
9. Overall, was the mentor effective?

Your Comments:
10. In what ways might mentoring be improved or enhanced?
Questions to be completed by mentor

1. Did the mentee and I agree on stated goals?
2. Was the mentee available for meetings?
3. Was the mentee approachable?
4. Was the mentee understanding of my role?
5. Was the mentee knowledgeable?
6. Was the mentee receptive to feedback?
7. Did the mentee implement suggestions?
8. Did the mentee collaborate in problem solving where needed?
9. Overall, was the mentee a responsive protégé?

Your Comments:
10. In what ways might mentoring be improved or enhanced?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>Initial Review by Provost and Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support</td>
<td>John Frederick and Jesse Zapata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>Solicit Feedback from Dept. Chair Council and Faculty Senate</td>
<td>Alan Shoho</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2014</td>
<td>Review and Approval by Provost</td>
<td>John Frederick</td>
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<td>June - August 2014</td>
<td>Mentor Pool Creation</td>
<td>Alan Shoho and Dept. Chairs</td>
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<td>New Faculty Orientation (1 week prior to Fall classes)</td>
<td>Announce Mentoring Program (Faculty Center, Alan Shoho)</td>
<td>John Frederick</td>
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<td>By October 1st</td>
<td>Mentor Selection</td>
<td>Mentee and Dept. Chairs</td>
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<td>Mid-Fall 2014</td>
<td>Mentor-mentee Training</td>
<td>Alan Shoho and Advisory Group</td>
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<td>Fall &amp; Spring</td>
<td>Follow-up activities: Seminar/Workshops on mentoring</td>
<td>Alan Shoho working with Faculty Center</td>
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**Recommendations**

While the details of this mentoring program are amenable to change, the FMAG felt there were two important issues to be addressed: 1) Requiring mandatory participation on the part of departments; and 2) Getting more input and buy-in from the parties most immediately impacted by the mentoring program (Department Chairs and Faculty Senate). First, we strongly believe a mentoring program must be required in every department. However, prior to implementing such a requirement, the FMAG felt it was critical to get this report further vetted by the Department Chair Council, Dean’s Council, Provost Council, and Faculty Senate for feedback and input. By gathering further input, the advisory group felt stakeholder buy-in would be stronger and not perceived as a top-down initiative.

**Areas of Concern**

The biggest areas of concern expressed by the advisory group were whether the mentoring program should be made voluntary or mandatory for the department. As noted above, the advisory group felt any proposed mentoring program by the department should be made mandatory, but some of the details could be left up to the departments to customize using their best judgments. Without mandatory participation, the advisory group felt many departments would not participate and continue to provide the same level or no support to
their new faculty. With regards to the mentees, we believe participation in a mentoring program should be highly encouraged, but made voluntary.

Another area of concern was attracting enough eligible mentors without any incentive. Creating a strong culture of support and professional collegiality may mitigate this issue, but it was unclear to the FMAG whether this type of culture exists across all colleges and departments at UTSA currently.

**Recommended Implementation Guidelines**

The mentoring program would be introduced at the New Faculty Orientation every August. Guidelines outlining the basic elements of the mentoring program would be posted on the VPAFS website. Each department would provide links from their department website to the VPAFS website. In consultation with the Department Chair and during the first semester of appointment, the new faculty member will identify two mentors from an approved list of mentors (ideally, one mentor being inside the department and another mentor being outside the department).

General criteria for mentoring group selection will consist of:
- Being socialized to University policies and procedures
- Developing a research agenda
- Enhancing research productivity
- Learning to be an effective teacher
- Being a good colleague and serving the institution

Selected mentors do not have to be UTSA faculty and can be faculty at other academic institutions

- Either members of the Department DFRAC or the Department Chair will orientate the new faculty member to the mentoring program and assist in the identification of potential mentors.
- The role of mentors will be delineated in an orientation and training session.
- The new faculty member will inform their department chair and the VPAFS who their two mentors are.

**Participation in the Mentoring Program**

- All faculty members serving as mentors must be tenured.
- Faculty members serving as mentors must participate in a developed training program for the purpose of understanding program goals and guidelines.
- At least one of these meetings must occur during the first semester of the mentees’ appointment.
- During subsequent years and until the mentee completes the third year review process, the mentors selected by the Mentee in consultation with the Department Chair should meet at least once per semester.
- Formal mentor and mentee meetings should continue until the mentee has completed the third year review process.

**Mentoring Roles and Responsibilities**

- Selected mentors will have no academic obligations (although they can certainly offer any of the following) to the mentee such as the review of manuscripts and proposals, grant development, or other forms of research generation. However, providing advice and engaging in dialogue in each of these areas and others is highly encouraged and should be viewed as germane to the mentor and mentee relationship.
- The Mentors should cover five areas:
  - Institutional Socialization
  - Academic Productivity and Development
  - Building a Research Agenda
  - Teaching Effectiveness
Being a good colleague

- Mentors should be selected on their collective ability to cover the above areas.
- Mentoring groups should also assure that the above areas are covered during the mentoring process.

Mentor and Mentee Meeting Arrangements

- Mentees and mentors should come to agreement on goals, communication methods and meeting places early in the process.
- Mentors should ensure that meetings are productive and that mentoring takes place in an environment where the exchange of information can occur without distractions or personal compromise/discomfort.
- If either the mentor or mentee has concerns about scheduling meetings or if there are challenges with mentoring group members, she or he should consult with her or his Department Chair and/or the Office of the VPAFS.
- Other than electronic exchanges of information, we encourage face-to-face meetings between mentees and mentors (e.g., at the Faculty Center or for coffee or lunch).

Mentoring Manual

- The Office of the VPAFS along with the FMAG will be responsible for the development and updating of a Mentoring Manual.
- This manual should contain:
  - A description of the roles and responsibilities for an assigned mentoring group;
  - A checklist of items that should be covered by individual mentoring groups;
  - A display of evaluation criteria; and
  - Three to four selected articles on faculty mentoring—the selected articles should be those that will facilitate understanding of the mentoring process.

Compensation for Participation in the Mentoring Program

- Tenured faculty members who participate in the mentoring program should be able to list their participation as a form of service when applying for annual merit considerations. Deans and Department Chairs must insure that faculty review committees recognize the merit of mentoring and value its importance in the evaluation process.
- The Provost office should consider providing an annual award for a selected mentor. Mentees can nominate their respective mentors for the award.