GOOD PRACTICES IN MENTORING

Good Practices for Senior Mentors

- **Recognize the hesitation for some mentees and try to move beyond it.**
  - Some minority and women faculty may not feel entitled to the attention and protection of senior mentors, so mentors should take the lead.

- **Disclose some of your own failures and confusions.**
  - As a mentor, you can disclose to your mentee some failures and confusion that you yourself have experienced; if you do not disclose some of these low points, junior faculty will probably put you on a pedestal.

- **Address critical incidents experienced by mentees—and assist with damage control.**
  - Mentors should make sure that mentees feel secure discussing critical incidents they may be experiencing as they execute their various duties as a new professor and interact with students and colleagues.

- **Understand the typical cumulative disadvantages for those viewed as “outsiders” and “tokens.”**
  - The mentor should be alert to and empathetic with any undervaluing and chilliness that may be experienced by the mentee.

- **Understand the extra disadvantages for members of minority groups.**
  - Minorities in this country include Puerto Rican Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Native Alaskans. In STEM fields, women are also a historically under-represented group. Having been reared in the United States, members of these groups probably have had to deal with a steady barrage of belittling comments and attitudes about their intellectual abilities and capabilities.

- **Help mentees learn how to self-promote.**
  - For introverts, a mentor can suggest behind-the-scenes ways to ensure that one’s work gets its due.

- **Undertake instrumental, proactive mentoring.**
  - Mentees should receive inside information about the real workings of academic departments; what the unspoken rules are; how one methodically builds a track record of achievement by leveraging a new success from a previous one; and how one methodically expands a professional support network.

- **Rise above gender and racial/ethnic stereotypes.**
  - Be mindful of gender and racial schemas and stereotypes you may have internalized from having lived in this society.

- **Avoid the temptation to clone.**
  - Be careful not to impose your own career path on the mentee.

- **Realize that you are providing invaluable guidance and collegial support.**
  - Mentors can make a tremendous difference in showing junior colleagues the ropes, reducing their loneliness and bewilderment, applauding their strengths, and shoring up their weaknesses.

Pointers and Strategies for Pre-Tenure Faculty Members  
(Typical Stressors—and What to do About Them)

- **Lack of collegiality**
  - New faculty who thrive and succeed typically spend about five hours per week networking and building collegiality through face-to-face visits, letters, phone calls and email with colleagues near and far.

- **Negativity**
  - Successful new faculty take an optimistic approach to their students, their colleagues, and their campus. For example, avoiding people who gossip.

- **Unrealistic expectations**
  - Listen to “self talk” first of all to see how you are treating yourself and whether or not you are giving yourself credit for what you’ve already accomplished.

- **Not enough time**
  - Talk in concrete ways to other junior faculty and to senior faculty inside and outside your department, both about how to teach more efficiently and effectively and about the organization of your scholarly projects.

- **Lack of experience in teaching: Lessons from quick starters**
  - Become student friendly, regard your teaching as somewhat public and continuously improving, take your time in the classroom, experiment with a range of discussion techniques.

- **Obstacles to writing and networking**
  - Make time to do scholarship; write in brief, non-fatiguing, daily sessions; learn the tricks of the trade regarding publishing; network; get something down on paper; set milestones; and don’t be terribly hard on yourself.

- **Inadequate feedback**
  - Cultivate mentors inside and outside your department who you can take the initiative to seek feedback from; develop a five-year plan for you career; request formal feedback about your job performance; keep careful records; and also file documents that indicate your competency as a teacher.

- **Balancing work and life outside work**
  - Ask admirable people how they are managing to balance their public and private worlds; pay close attention to how you organize your workweek; divide your day into segments; and complete important tasks, not just urgent ones.

From “Best Practices in Recruitment, Retention and Mentoring”, UTEP,  
Be Aware of Special Stressors Faced by Non-Majority Faculty

- The extra “taxes” borne by faculty from minority groups
- Internalizing feelings of inadequacy
- Being seen as an “affirmative action hire”
- Finding a chilly climate within the department
- Being given too little or too much attention
- Having your scholarship undervalued
- Experiencing the acute sting of negative incidents
- Managing excessive committee assignments
- Managing excessive student demands
- Handling inappropriate behavior
- Overcoming isolation
- Not feeling entitled to be in academia
- Dealing with implicit bias and micro-inequities in all aspects of one’s career