

CEE FACULTY MENTORING POLICY

Adopted April 10, 2012

Amended October 08, 2013

1. A mentor committee shall be appointed for each assistant and associate professor. If a faculty member wishes to decline the opportunity to have such a committee, s/he shall so indicate in writing to the department chair. The faculty member will have the option to request that a committee be appointed in the future, if desired.
2. The composition of the mentor committee should typically consist of three or four individuals. The following suggestions are made for the committee composition.
 - a) Two members from outside the mentee's area of specialization
 - b) One member from within the mentee's area of specialization
 - c) For assistant professors, if possible, one mentor committee member should have served on the College of Engineering Council on Promotion and Tenure. (See recommendation #6.)
 - d) If applicable, the committee should include a member with some first-hand experience with any special challenges that the mentee is likely to encounter. For example, a mentee who is a female faculty member with small children would have a mentor committee member who is or had been in the same circumstance.
 - e) The mentor committee for a Research Assistant and Research Associate Professor should include a committee member who is a Research faculty member.
3. All mentor committee meetings should be initiated by the Chair of the mentor committee. The committee should meet at least annually. A full review of the mentee's updated CV should be conducted at one meeting each year. The need for and agenda of the other meeting(s) should be determined jointly by the committee and mentee. The committee should meet shortly after the first re-appointment (Assistant and Research Assistant Professors) of the mentee and provide feedback on the discussion that occurred when the re-appointment was considered.
4. The committee's role is to be collegial and supportive. Such support should include acknowledgment of the mentee's successes; encouragement and assistance, when appropriate, in any professional endeavors the mentee undertakes; help in resolving any issues or overcoming impediments to the mentee's success; a frank assessment of the mentee's record and progress toward the next career stage; and expressions of any concerns that the committee has about the mentee's activities and/or progress. Any such concerns should be discussed with the mentee, and the mentee's perspective should be sought and considered. Ultimately, decisions about positive actions that can be taken to deal with the issue(s) should be agreed upon. It should be stressed that, particularly in cases where it appears that the mentee is having difficulty meeting expectations for progress, it is the responsibility of the committee to address this with the mentee during the meeting. Not doing so is a disservice to the mentee in the long term.
5. A report summarizing each mentor committee meeting should be prepared by the committee and provided to the mentee for comment. This report should include the key discussion items, conclusions, and any specific goals that were established for achievements or changes in the upcoming period(s). If the committee and the mentee disagree on the contents of the document, an effort should be made to resolve those conflicts, after which the summary should be signed by all parties. If no agreement is reached, each party will prepare a document describing their perception of the meeting content and results. A copy of the summary document(s) will be sent to the Department Chair.

6. Approximately one year before an assistant professor anticipates being considered for promotion and tenure, the candidate should prepare a first draft of the key parts of his/her promotion dossier (the CV, self-advocacy statement, and teaching evaluations, at the least, and perhaps a tentative list of possible writers of recommendation letters). The mentor committee should provide critical feedback on this document, with the former member of the College P&T Council being particularly active in the discussion. If no former member of the College P&T Council is on the mentor committee, the candidate and mentor committee chair are encouraged to invite such a person to participate in the dossier review. The candidate is also encouraged to seek input from the current CEE representative on the College P&T Council.
7. Although the mentors are committed to offer impartial assessments to help the mentee, the mentee must decide what is best for his or her career. That is, all parties in the mentor-mentee relationship must understand that the committee acts in an advisory role. While the committee members are committed to offering their best advice, they cannot confidently predict all of the issues that might be raised when the mentee is considered for promotion. In addition, the committee members may not agree among themselves on the best advice to offer. Thus, with the best of intentions, a mentor might offer advice that is not applicable to the mentee. Recognizing that all the mentors have been successful in their careers, the mentee should view the various recommendations as evidence that success can be achieved via different routes; the path that the mentee takes will be unique, but we hope that the advice s/he receives will help him/her make choices that promote that success.
8. The mentor committee is responsible for conducting the peer evaluation of teaching of a tenure line mentee. Such an evaluation is to be carried out as per the University Handbook and CEE departmental policies.
9. The Department Chair will meet annually with all the mentor committee chairs to discuss approaches to mentoring that seem to be particularly useful or problematic.
10. The Department Chair will specifically discuss the mentor committee report with the mentee during the annual meeting with the mentee.
11. In the case that the mentee has a conflict with any of the committee members, the mentee shall have the privilege of requesting the replacement of that member without consequence.
12. Use of Mentor Committee Reports in P&T Evaluation. The mentor-mentee relationship requires a certain level of confidentiality to be effective. Therefore, although the mentor committee is expected to prepare a summary report after each committee meeting, and the Chair is expected to discuss the committee's report at the mentee's annual review meeting, the mentor committee reports are to be treated as confidential in other respects. In particular, the reports should not be provided to the departmental P&T committee unless the mentee authorizes such disclosure in writing. Such an authorization, if made, must apply to all the reports since the previous promotion. That is, a mentee may authorize the departmental P&T committee to review the mentor committee reports either in totality (from the last promotion) or not at all, and to use that information in their departmental P&T report; the mentee may not authorize partial disclosure or use.