Summary: [Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Mentoring](#)

Columbia University, 2016

All referenced studies are provided in the guide

I. Overview

- Effective mentoring: **formal and informal** relationships with a broad **variety** of colleagues who each **actively engage and commit** to a 'reciprocal, supportive, and creative partnership of **equals'**

- Mentees should seek mentors who can fulfill different roles across **two categories of functions**:

    ⇒ **Technical or instrumental**: give professional advice, identify opportunities, facilitate networking

    ⇒ **Psychosocial or expressive**: advocacy, support, role modelling, intellectual development

- Certain **social dimensions** affect the career growth of women and underrepresented minority faculty: cultural taxation, isolation, exclusion from informal networks, unintended bias, scholarship devaluation

- **Sponsorship,** in which a mentor can influence senior leaders' decisions and advocate for the mentee for key opportunities, is vital for women and minority faculty's 'social capital' development. Work to ensure sponsorship relationships **are not solely driven by identity-based similarities**.

- Consider studies that show the ways the "leaking pipeline" of women and minority faculty are attributed to **subtle cumulative barriers:** unconscious bias, lack of institutional support, feelings of isolation, poorer -quality mentoring relationships, absence of sponsorship, work/life imbalance, and wider cultural, societal, and institutional norms.

II. Organizing a Mentoring Program

- Include junior and senior faculty **input** in mentor program design and identify program **structure** based on needs (groups, seminars, individual mentoring) Ensure adequate **resources**.

- **Incentivize** mentors and ensure senior faculty share mentoring responsibilities equally. Integrate mentorship into **annual reviews and promotion guidelines**. Use recognition and awards to build a **culture of mentorship**.

- Self-selection can be effective in mentorship pairings but departments should also consider **scholarly bases for assignment.** Mentors and mentees must **work jointly** to create specific annual goals, meeting schedules, deliverables, and measures of progress

- Consider **group mentoring** to connect peer groups and improve **knowledge and transparency** of policies, processes, expectations, resources and opportunities*.* Interdisciplinary mentoring teams should **clearly define roles and team structure** and practice **open and effective communication.**

- Establish **oversight, evaluation, and sustainability**: Designate an individual to provide oversight. Utilize surveys and tools for mentor/mentee competencies and satisfaction. Ensure appropriate neutrality and confidentiality measures to support an 'unpairing' mechanism for problematic relationships

III. Tools for Mentors

- Commit adequate time. Maintain a collaborative mindset. Establish scope of guidance. Co-create plans and define roles. If uncomfortable or inexperienced with concerns unique to women and underrepresented minority mentees, facilitate relationships with other faculty who can better address. Keep written records. Encourage and facilitate broadening of professional network to expand mentees' access to perspectives.

IV. Strategies for Mentees

- Formulate goals and professional vision or mission statements. Identify required competencies and acquire them according to a plan. Visions may change, but an initial framework provides a working document for reference. Define guidance needs and appropriate individuals to meet needs. Think and network broadly. Measure progress in the context of advancement timelines. Seek multiple mentors.

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