

School of Plant and Environmental Sciences
Mentoring Policy
2019-05-01

Ensuring the success of faculty members in the promotion and tenure processes is one of the most important functions of an academic unit. Toward this end, SPES has developed a mentoring policy for assisting pre-tenure faculty, tenured Associate Professors, and non-tenure-track faculty eligible for continued appointment and/or promotion. Mentoring is designed to be proactive support for mentees that goes beyond the annual evaluations provided by the director. Mentoring provides valuable service not only for mentees, but benefits tenured or promoted faculty within SPES, and will be considered in decisions for those seeking promotion to a higher rank.

Responsibilities of a Designated Mentor

A designated mentor agrees to provide advice to the candidate on matters related to P&T and career development. Suggested activities include:

- reviewing and advising mentees preparing dossiers for two-year, four-year, and mandatory P&T reviews.
- assisting in building networks within the University, the U.S., and/or internationally.
- assisting in developing or reviewing proposals for courses or revisions, and extension plans, as appropriate, to ensure alignment with goals of the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences.
- communicating grant opportunities and fostering potential collaborations of which the mentee may be unaware.
- responding to meeting requests by the mentee and seeking to schedule regular meetings if the mentee does not do so.
- working with the mentee in visioning and developing a research, teaching and/or extension program.
- serving as a confidential advisor on various matters related to developing a program, advising of graduate students, conflict resolution, and other matters that may occur.
- providing written feedback annually (by January 15) to the Director regarding the mentoring activities of the previous year.

Responsibilities of the Director

The Director shall:

- ensure that all eligible faculty in tenure-track, tenured and continued-appointment ranks have designated at least one assigned mentor within one month of beginning employment. The Director, mentee and mentor should mutually agree on the appointment and determine if more than one mentor is needed. The mentor shall have previously achieved the rank (or higher) than that being sought by the mentee and

should have scientific interests and responsibilities relevant to those of the mentee, and, if possible, should be a faculty member in SPES.

- periodically meet with the mentee to ensure that the mentor and mentee have a positive and productive relationship.
- conduct annual evaluations, 2-year reviews and 4-year reviews as dictated by CALS and VT policies. The Director will provide effective feedback to the mentee during their evaluations and, with permission, discuss the evaluations of the mentee with the mentor.

Responsibilities of Mentees

Mentees shall:

- work with the Director in identifying and assigning at least one suitable mentor.
- seek appropriate and timely meetings with the mentor.
- seek advice from the mentor on program development, effective teaching, advising of graduate students, conflict resolution, and other issues that may arise.
- seek advance review and advice from the mentor when developing annual reviews and 2- and 4-year review dossiers.
- keep a record of yearly mentoring activities.
- provide written feedback annually (by January 15) to the Director regarding the mentoring activities of the previous year.