

CJC FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM

Background

The University of Florida has asked each college to establish a mentoring program for both tenure and non-tenure track faculty. The College of Journalism and Communications (CJC) is committed to this effort. A successful mentoring program can be a critical resource in the recruitment and retention of faculty.

Mentoring at its core is a supportive effort that can provide value for both the mentee and mentor. For new faculty, mentoring helps introduce them to the culture, resources, and knowledge available at CJC. For experienced faculty, mentoring offers an opportunity to share valuable acquired knowledge. It's a chance to provide support, encouragement, and guidance to newly hired colleagues in their efforts to meet the expectations for successful tenure and promotion.

Mentoring is not an evaluation, nor is it supervisory in nature. It should not replace or replicate the kinds of evaluative measures and feedback that are provided as part of the annual evaluation process. Mentoring is a less formal and more flexible relationship. It's a collaborative process that involves ongoing conversations about professional goals and the best strategies for achieving those goals. As such, mentoring should be structured in a way that works best for both the mentor and mentee.

Matching Mentors to Mentees

Potential mentor/mentee relationships will be identified based on mutual interests. The Department Chair can help facilitate this process by identifying experienced faculty who share interests with the mentee. In turn, experienced faculty can help facilitate this process by volunteering to mentor a newly hired faculty member with shared interests.

Mentoring as a Component of Service

It is important that all new faculty have a mentor who can provide support, encouragement, and guidance. Experienced faculty members who choose to enter a mentoring relationship should have their mentoring contributions considered part of their overall service assignment by their Department Chair.

Recommendations for Structuring the Mentor/Mentee Relationship

- New faculty serving in both tenure-track and non-tenure track positions should have the opportunity to have a mentor.
- The formation of mentoring relationships should be considered part of the new faculty onboarding process. Ideally, a mentoring relationship can be identified and established within the first six months after hiring.
- Potential mentors and mentees should be encouraged to take an active role in choosing a mentoring relationship.
- The faculty rank or seniority of the mentor is less important than having relevant experience and a genuine interest in supporting the mentee.
- Once the mentor/mentee relationship is formed, it is important to have frequent interactions to help establish the most productive relationship moving forward. Ideally, communication between the mentor and mentee will continue to be frequent beyond this initial time.
- Experienced faculty members who agree to mentor a colleague should attempt to initiate at least one meeting per semester with their mentee. This communication structure helps remove the potential burden faced by newly hired faculty members who may be unsure how to best reach out for help when they have questions.
- Mentors and mentees may wish to formalize their relationship through the discussion of expectations and responsibilities and the length of the mentor/mentee relationship.
- Mentors and mentees are encouraged to periodically meet with their Department Chair to discuss the effectiveness of their relationship.

CJC MENTOR/MENTEE WORKSHEET

This worksheet is a starting point for structuring a relationship that can be mutually beneficial for everyone involved. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to complete this worksheet together and to revisit it periodically throughout their professional relationship. Feel free to adapt from these suggested topics based on your areas of interest and/or needs.

1. Professional Goals (Completed by Mentee)

Identifying both short-term and long-term professional goals can be helpful in determining the best resources, training, and guidance needed to accomplish those goals. What are your current short-term and long-term goals?

2. Mentoring Areas of Focus

A mentoring relationship often focuses on one or more of the following areas: getting to know UF and CJC; teaching and/or research; tenure, promotion, and evaluations; work/life balance; and professional networks. Which of these areas, or others, will we work on together?

3. Supporting Mentoring Areas of Focus

What are some potential activities and/or resources that could be helpful as we begin working together on both your goals and the mentoring areas of focus identified above?

4. Upcoming Meetings & Future Communication

How often should we try to meet over the next semester/year? What is the best location or format for these meetings? For example: in-person, virtual, phone, text, chat, etc.?

5. Other Areas of Agreement

What other areas of agreement have we discussed as part of our mentor/mentee relationship?