

THE DEPARTMENT OF IMMUNOBIOLOGY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MENTORING PROGRAM

Rationale and Goals

Given the size of financial, spatial and equipment investment into any type of faculty recruitment, it is incumbent upon units and departments to maximize success and prosperity of newly recruited faculty. To that effect, the Department of Immunobiology is instituting mentoring program to promote and improve success in research, teaching and service, and to retain faculty members within the department and the University. This program is in particular geared towards junior, tenure-track faculty, but also has its place in select cases for all other tenure-track and tenured faculty, and may be instituted/employed for non-tenure track faculty if exceptionally warranted.

Structure of Mentoring Program

The model for mentoring in the Department of Immunobiology is based upon the broad involvement of senior faculty from the department, as well as senior faculty from other departments with relevant expertise, skills and wisdom to assess, help and advise junior faculty. Since the appointment and arrival of Dr Janko Nikolich-Zugich as Department Head, tenure-track junior faculty members have been assigned a “mentoring committee”. The assignment of the mentoring committee is made by the Department Head, with significant input from the junior faculty member. Mentoring committees consist of a Chair and of at least two and no more than four additional team members. Ideally, one of the faculty members is outside of the department. Committee members participate in regularly scheduled meetings, held at least annually and with strongly recommended frequency of 6 months. At the first meeting, formal goals and milestones are established by the mentee for the period until tenure review, with the input and suggestions of the Committee.

At subsequent meetings, the mentee presents current progress and future plans along the established developmental pathway, with regard to research, teaching and service categories. That includes presentation of preliminary data and grant outlines, publication schedules and goals for submission of peer-reviewed papers, as well as plans for participation at national and international conferences and at career-development workshops and courses. Exposure of the mentee with regard to scientific meetings and seminars is also evaluated, along with teaching and service categories. Specific attention is devoted to grant proposal submission; the mentee is expected to provide an outline of specific aims to the committee no less than two months prior to the proposal submission date, for constructive critiques. One month later they are expected to provide the committee members with a fleshed-out proposal draft for additional critiques and feedback, in which case additional faculty, with relevant expertise, may be asked by the committee Chair to advise the mentee.

The entire mentoring process is monitored by the Department Head. Moreover, as all faculty members are required to meet with the Department Head annually in a formal manner to review their annual reports, career goals, funding, teaching assignments and

evaluations, service commitments, accomplishments and concerns, the Department Head has a direct and intimate insight into the progress of the mentoring process from both the mentee and the Head of the Mentoring Committee. Since the Department Head has an open-door policy, mentored faculty members can discuss issues with him several times a year.

The Department of Immunobiology is in the process of establishing a “Strategic Planning Committee” that will meet informally on a monthly to quarterly basis. We envision that at least half of these meetings will be open to all faculty members. This will provide an additional forum for interactive conversations about goals, objectives and opportunities within the department, as well as a forum for the junior (and senior) faculty to have frequent opportunities for obtaining guidance/mentorship.

Mentoring Tenured Faculty is a relatively new concept that nonetheless could be employed in cases where the tenured faculty member requests it or where a tenured faculty member has exhibited repeated deficiencies in performance in any of the three categories of annual evaluation (two consecutive “needs improvement” classifications). Mentoring of tenured faculty will proceed exactly as outlined for tenure-eligible junior faculty, except that the rank of the Committee members will in general not be lower than the rank of the mentee. This mentoring is envisioned to be of particular help to those faculty members that have lost their research funding and have not been able to regain it over several consecutive granting cycles.

Matching Mentors and Mentees

Mentoring will be provided for all tenure-track junior faculty members, as well as faculty from all ranks and tracks, if appropriate. The Department Head selects the Chair of the Mentoring committee based on who will serve as the “best” role model, and who has extensive research experience in the same (or if not possible, at least closely related) field as the mentee. Mentors are selected from within the department, and from other departments including College of Medicine Phoenix. If necessary, mentors are chosen from outside of the University of Arizona. Depending on the situation or concerns, separate mentors will be assigned for specific goals (e.g., assistance with AZ-Med teaching).

An exception from the guidelines described above, mentoring for non-tenure track research-track faculty is often provided by the faculty member who works most frequently with the mentee (usually provides laboratory space and resources to the mentee). The Department Head again provides oversight.

Faculty members are encouraged to identify additional mentors for any aspect of their career advancement.

Assignment of Mentors

The assignment of the mentoring committee (1 Chair plus 2-3 members) is made by the Department Head, with significant input from the mentee.

Expectations of the relationship

In addition to the above considerations related to the meetings of the mentoring committee, the following will apply:

Mentees are the key drivers of the mentoring process and are expected to take a lead role in it. To that effect, they should :

- Clearly define their career goals and milestones and take initiative in implementing, updating and revising them, and informing the Committee of progress, obstacles and alternatives.
- Organize biannual committee meetings.
- Update the mentoring committee and Department Head on any changes in career goals, accomplishments, problems or concerns – as soon as possible.
- Evaluate the mentoring relationship annually.

The Chair of the mentoring committee should meet 3-4 times a year with the mentee.

Mentors will be encouraged to evaluate their mentoring skills using materials provided through the Office of Faculty Affairs, and obtain additional training, as appropriate.

Mentors are encouraged to do the following:

- Review/critique the mentee's research. This includes reading and editing manuscripts and grant proposals, in a timely manner. Help with identifying appropriate granting agencies, relevant study sections and appropriate journals to submit work to should also be provided.
- Provide guidance on quality and load of teaching assignments.
- Provide advice about activities that will advance development of their international reputation.
- Review mentee's plan for achieving his/her career goals, and advise about what needs to be done to be promoted.
- Provide connections for the mentee to others in their field, and pass on opportunities such as talks to give, and conferences to attend.
- Provide institutional knowledge about where resources may be found, and who has the power/influence to get things done.
- Advocate for the mentee within the department, for example by assisting in assuring protected time for the mentee to achieve particular research goals.
- Work together with the Department Head to nominate the mentee for appropriate academic awards.
- Evaluate the mentoring relationship annually.

Evaluation

Minutes from the mentoring committee meetings are taken and distributed to the Department Head who will review the minutes and store for future reference.

Both mentors and mentees are expected to complete the Mentoring Evaluation Form annually and provide a copy to the Department Head.

TABLE 1
Mentee Self
Assessment Form
Activity/Strategy

| Question/Task | Example | What could be done better? |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Focus on performance | Give an example of the strategy you use to ensure that you stay on top of your milestones and tasks? | |
| Initiative /Availability | Describe how you seek interaction with your mentors? | |
| Self-direction | Describe how you promote self direction in interacting with mentors. . | |
| Questioning | Describe how you actively question and reexamine your goals as set by you and the committee? | |
| Celebration | How do you celebrate your achievements? Do your mentors participate? | |
| Building a scientific community | Describe a deliberate strategy you use to build a scientific community in your group. | |
| Building a social Community | Describe a deliberate strategy you use to build your group as a social community. | |
| Skill development | Describe steps you took to develop any critical, writing and presentation skills. | |
| Mentor for life | How many of your mentors do you stay in contact with? | |
| Other | Comments: | |

TABLE 2

Mentee Assessment Form of the Mentors

Activity/Strategy

Appreciating individual differences

Availability

Self-direction

Questioning

Celebration

Building a scientific community

Building a social

Community

Skill development

Networking

Mentor for life

Other

Question/Task

Example

What could be done better?

Give an example of an incident that illustrates how your mentors acknowledged individual differences?

Give an example of the strategy you use to be available to your mentoring committee?

Describe how your mentors have encouraged self direction.

Describe how your mentors used active questioning to lead you towards a solution.

When did your mentors last celebrate your achievements? How did you celebrate?

Describe a deliberate strategy your mentors used to build a scientific community in your group.

Describe a deliberate strategy your mentors used to build your group as a social community.

Describe steps your mentors took to develop any critical, writing and presentation skills.

Describe one example of how your mentors introduced you into the scientific network of your research area

How many of your mentors do you stay in contact with?

Comments:

TABLE 3

Mentor Assessment Question/Task
Form Activity/Strategy

Appreciating individual differences

Availability

Self-direction

Questioning

Celebration

Building a scientific
community

Building a social
Community

Skill development

Networking

Mentor for life

Other

Example

**What could be done
better?**

Do you, as a mentor, acknowledge individual differences with your mentee?

Give an example of the strategy you use to be available to your mentee?

Describe how you have encouraged self direction by the mentee.

Describe how you use active questioning to lead you mentee towards a solution.

When and how did you last celebrate your mentee achievements?

Describe a deliberate strategy you use to build a scientific community for your mentee.

Describe a deliberate strategy you use to build a social community for your mentee.

Describe steps you took to develop any critical, writing and presentation skills in your mentee.

Describe one example of how you introduced the mentee into the scientific network of your research area

How many of your mentees do you stay in contact with?

Comments: