EMS Faculty Mentoring
Statement of Best Practices

*This document was developed by the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) over a number of years, with the most recent effort in 2013-2015 led by Kate Freeman and Lee Kump. Their work was further refined by adopting specific ideas and details from Faculty Mentor Programs used as models: Georgetown University Medical Center; Palomar College; Penn State University; University of Maryland; University of Washington School of Medicine; Western Illinois University; University of Albany. In addition, we used information in "*Faculty mentoring faculty in a public university*" (Sands et al., Journal of Higher Education, 62, 174-193, 1991)..*

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY:

An effective Faculty Mentoring Program can help faculty members share (mentors) and acquire (mentees) the professional skills and attitudes for personal, institutional, and career success. It can promote the development of self-confidence and professional achievement, and ultimately enhance institutional stability and continuity. Ideally, participation in a mentoring program helps improve instruction and enhance communication between new faculty and experienced faculty. Mentoring should be a voluntary, mutually agreed upon arrangement that should be driven by what type of mentor the mentee is seeking. Ideally, senior faculty members should volunteer to serve as mentors and allow mentees to select them based upon their own, internal needs and criteria. Mentors can have multiple mentees, if their time and effort can be applied equally to their mentees. Additionally, mentees are encouraged to seek out multiple mentors, based upon the unique skills certain mentors may possess that meet their needs. Mentors and mentees do not have to belong to the same academic field or administrative unit.

GOALS:

The goals of the EMS Faculty Mentor Program are as follows:
- To provide instructional support for new faculty,
- To promote a cohesive and supportive faculty,
- To create collegiality among the established and junior faculty members,
- To strengthen professional relationships, and
- To provide experienced faculty the opportunity to develop their instructional support skills.

In no way is the mentor program intended to be supervisory or evaluative. The mentor relationship should be collegial, informative, and flexible.

CHARACTERISTICS:

A mentoring program is devoted to the individual mentee's career and individual development, providing personal guidance and support that complements professional development and activities that lead to tenure and/or promotion. Mentors should not be in the mentee's "chain of command": that is, contributors to the mentee's performance appraisal. The mentor/mentee relationship is very different from one of supervisory duties. The mentor should be available to

coach, guide, and champion the mentee, which has potential to conflict with the role of a supervisor, sometimes requiring discipline and the need to evaluate all subordinates.

Frequent communication between mentor and mentee should occur. Effective mentoring involves regular interaction between the mentor and mentee, but the relationship should not consume so much time as to become burdensome. While there is no rule dictating the frequency of meeting, the mentor and mentee should talk, check-in, or meet as often as necessary to meet the needs of both parties. Each mentor/mentee relationship might require a different amount of time and should be agreed upon at the outset of the process. The possibilities and combinations for interaction are endless, and the process doesn't need to be complicated.

Mentoring goes beyond subject matter expertise to new skills the organization needs (tied to competencies). Mentoring should be recognized as an aspect of departmental service and included in faculty activity reports.

EXPECTATIONS:

The Department Head

- Ensure whole department accepts its responsibility to mentor junior faculty in ways that help them to reach their full potential, be successful in the tenure process, and be overall thriving members of the departmental faculty
- Recognize that in some contexts that some candidates (e.g., members of underrepresented populations, individuals with disabilities, or faculty working in specialized areas) face special challenges
- Ensure that mentorship is recognized as both a formal and informal activity in the department and the time spent mentoring should be rewarded
- Ensure all junior faculty members have established mentoring relationships within the first year on campus
- Initiate the assignment of mentors and guide/facilitate junior faculty members in their search for a mentor (this task could be delegated to a Mentoring Committee as MatSE does).
- Establish best practices for type and frequency of mentoring
- Should not serve as a mentor within their own department, but could mentor fellow junior/new Department Heads
    - o The department head or chair plays a central role in a variety of human resource decisions, including promotion, tenure, remuneration and space allocation. Thus mentoring by the department head sets up the potential for real or perceived conflicts of interest, and this should be considered carefully. The department head can be an invaluable source of guidance, but he or she should never serve as a mentor
    - o If a department head elects to engage in mentoring activities, this should be with the understanding and caution that their advice carries far more impact, for better or worse, on junior faculty than by any other faculty member
- Ensure mentoring continues beyond tenure for associate professors

- Encourage larger group sessions for mentoring, to include peer group functions, activities at the College-level, seminars and workshops

The Mentor

- Be proactive…seek out the mentee and build a rapport with them
- Be understanding…some mentees may not feel comfortable asking certain questions/seeking guidance. Be prepared to solicit them for more information
- Be available….schedule opportunities to meet, communicate and collaborate
- Listen…be a sounding board; empathize; zero in on specific interests and concerns
- Facilitate…tap in to your experience; lead the way; help locate a resource or solution
- Be accountable…provide an acknowledgement that they have been meeting/mentoring
- In practice, the Mentor's role will vary depending upon the unique needs and concerns of the new faculty member and could include any of the following:
  - Sounding Board…listen to and supporting creative ideas and suggestions
  - Resource…lead the new faculty member to information or the person with the answer
  - Advisor…offer your opinion or advice on a real or hypothetical problem; aid in addressing work/life balance issues and techniques for effective time management
  - Guide…help navigate the maze of buildings, offices, and resources
  - Interpreter…decipher policies, contracts, campus acronyms and "codes"
  - Reviewer…provide feedback on a proposal, paper, or handout
  - Role Model…share your teaching and research practices, tips and techniques
  - Advocate…facilitate the new faculty's social and professional network, identify professional opportunities for advancement, including funding and speaking opportunities

The Mentee

- Engage…ask the mentor questions, share comments, voice concerns, and identify issues
- Seek…look for and utilize opportunities for professional growth and excellence in teaching, research, and service
- Take personal responsibility…for your academic career; be an active agent and judge of the appropriate course of action for career advancement
- Take responsibility to develop a portfolio of mentors, both within their home unit/department, across the college, and beyond (to include their disciplinary community outside of Penn State).
- **An example of how this could work for a new faculty member:**

  Year 1
- The Department Head and the new faculty member develop a list of potential mentors from within the academic unit. The faculty member talks to potential mentors in order to find two individuals who are both willing and available. The mentors are formally charged by the Department Head, preferably in writing (by email, for example)

- In addition, during the first year, the faculty member seeks other mentors, including individuals with common experience or interests. The faculty member should seek to develop professional networks with peers and more senior colleagues in the department, at Penn State, and at other academic institutions
- Mentors and the faculty member should meet informally several times throughout the first year

Subsequent Years
- The mentors and faculty member should continue to meet at least three times a semester
- The mentor should report the occurrence of mentoring activities to the Department Head
- The mentoring relationship should continue through and beyond the tenure process. If the mentor is no longer available or willing, the Department Head and the faculty member should find a mutually agreed upon replacement

BEST PRACTICES:

- A diversity of mentoring activities beyond the one-on-one are encouraged, including peer groups, mentoring activities organized at the College level, including seminars and workshops
- Mentorship should continue beyond tenure for associate professors
- Mentoring tasks should include: *discussion of professional goals, scientific leadership, access to professional opportunities for advancement, including funding and speaking opportunities, and ways to balance priorities and expectations in the academic environment.* Mentoring can also aid the junior faculty member's understanding of governance and finances within the university, professional relationships, and management skills to better guide students. Many junior faculty might benefit from mentoring that addresses work-life balance issues and techniques for effective time management

REFERENCES:

- Sands, R.G., Parson, L.A., and Duane, J., 1991. Faculty mentoring faculty in a public university. *J. Higher Ed.* 62: 174-193. http://web.utk.edu/~dfmp/pdf/fac_mentoring.pdf

- University of Albany website, accessed Feb. 3, 2014. Mentoring best practices. http://www.albany.edu/academics/mentoring.best.practices.chapter2.shtml