

Mentoring of Junior Faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the University of New Mexico

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The department chair assigns a mentor when the junior faculty member arrives. The mentor should be a tenured professor who is familiar with the mentee's area of research. Through supportive guidance and constructive criticism the mentor helps the faculty member develop a portfolio of scholarship, teaching and service that can ultimately lead to tenure and promotion.

The mentor should meet with the junior faculty regularly and provide informal advice and information on

- academic life in the department and the university (a good first source of information are the faculty handbook and the departmental long-range plan),
- developing priorities; balancing research, teaching and service,
- working with funding agencies and grant proposal writing,
- developing a professional network and visibility within the profession,
- becoming an effective teacher and student advisor,
- contributing to the department's and university's mission through service.

To enable guidance on classroom teaching, the mentor should attend the mentee's course at least once a semester to provide constructive feedback. A brief written account will be shared with the mentee and given to the Chair, and becomes part of the peer review of teaching. The Chair should also send a second peer reviewer to the classroom who does not have the mentor-mentee relationship with the junior faculty member. The mentor should not become the chair of the tenure and promotion committee but may join as a member.

The mentor should establish a supportive and non-competitive relationship with the junior faculty that preserves the mentee's intellectual independence. Either mentor or mentee may ask the department chair to change the mentoring arrangement without prejudice and fault.