Faculty Mentoring Action Plan

School: School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)  Updated for: AY18

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Goals and Objectives

The overall goal is to ensure that all tenure-track faculty are provided with mentorship and support aimed towards career development and retention. The mentoring program should also help tenure-track faculty chart a roadmap to build a strong dossier in line with the established promotion and tenure criteria and to develop an independent academic trajectory.

With a recently established tenure-track process and a rapidly growing ladder faculty, the school’s new mentoring program (implemented in AY17) requires periodic review and fine-tuning. A measurable objective in AY18 is to reassess current mentoring needs and capacity, particularly in light of expanding coverage in areas of expertise in both the tenured and tenure-track faculty pools. Informational materials and faculty development opportunities will continue to be offered on a regular basis through the Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs.

Faculty Mentoring Program Implementation

Participation in the mentoring program is voluntary and flexible.

The Vice Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs is charged with reaching out to the senior faculty annually to solicit participation in the mentoring program, and to identify at least one senior faculty to act as a mentor for each participating non-tenured faculty member. Non-tenured faculty members are offered the opportunity to participate in the program and are provided with a list of potential mentors from which to select; mentors are then assigned based on availability. Either party can terminate the relationship at any time by submitting a written request and explanation to the Vice Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs.
Special attention is also given to Conflict of Interest (COI) considerations when pairing mentors and mentees. The COI guidelines followed are those stated in the Johns Hopkins SAIS “Appointment and Promotion Procedures for Tenure-Track Faculty”:

The integrity of the process by which appointments and promotions are made is of profound importance to SAIS and Johns Hopkins University. Therefore, it is imperative that any individual involved in this process disclose any relationship to the candidate, including being a co-author, which might be perceived by a reasonable observer to constitute a conflict of interest or source of bias with respect to the candidate. Any such relationship must be disclosed in writing to the Academic Board in sufficient detail as to allow an observer to judge whether an actual conflict of interest exists. In cases where a clear conflict of interest exists, the individual involved should recuse himself or herself from the process.¹

Confidentiality is also of utmost importance. The mentor should be a confidential sounding board and go-to person for all matters related to the mentee’s career development and advancement within the school. Exceptions to the confidentiality rule can only be made with the explicit permission of the mentee or in situations where there is actual or suspected professional misconduct, criminal activity, or any indication that the mentee might harm him/herself or others.

Mentoring is on a one-on-one basis and focuses on progress in the four main criteria for promotion and tenure²:

1) **Research and Scholarship**: This is the primary criterion for tenure. Candidates for tenure must have produced outstanding scholarship and have an active research agenda. This scholarship requires appropriate external validation, for example publication in peer reviewed journals or by academic presses, and recognition by other scholars in the field. Both the quality and quantity of scholarship are evaluated.

2) **Teaching**: Candidates for tenure must demonstrate excellence in teaching, reflecting the great teaching tradition of SAIS and the school’s commitment to instruction by all tenured faculty.

3) **Service**: Successful candidates for tenure will be active citizens in the SAIS community. This includes advising of students, participation on committees, faculty searches, the administrative work of managing programs or centers, and organizing school events. The service that SAIS has required of the individual will be explicitly considered in evaluating productivity.

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¹ “Appointment and Promotion Procedures for Tenure-Track Faculty,” Johns Hopkins SAIS, Revised September 10, 2015.
² Ibid.
4) **Policy Relevance:** SAIS is a professional school. Candidates for tenure are evaluated on their contribution to the public square, to include scholarship that illuminates policy problems, government or non-governmental service, and participation in policy discourse.

Progress in these areas is tracked through an annual self-assessment required of all tenure-track faculty members, to include an updated CV, copies of publications of the past year, and a letter outlining their progress during the year in research, teaching and service, and plans for the coming year. This self-assessment process also serves to gauge the success of the mentoring program and allows for any necessary adjustments.

Mentors are expected to set up a work plan with their mentees at the start of each academic year or when pairing takes place. Regular meetings should be scheduled (the frequency determined by mutual agreement) and annual goals should be set according to the needs of the mentee and the stage in his/her professional career. Mentors should provide timely feedback in order to reach set milestones. Additional group activities such as presentations of work-in-progress, book manuscript workshops, and occasional seminars may also provide outlets for the advancement of research and professional interactions.

**Outreach and Educational Efforts to Promote Faculty Mentoring**

All new tenured and tenure-track faculty are introduced to the mentoring program through the school’s onboarding process. At regular intervals, discussion of the mentoring process is an important theme in faculty meetings, including the Academic Board. In addition, mentoring workshops are arranged periodically to offer opportunities for formal faculty training.

**Evaluation Methods**

At the end of each academic year, the Vice Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs surveys participating faculty to obtain their input on the effectiveness of the mentoring program and considers any proposed changes. In addition, the school’s faculty affairs team regularly conducts research on best practices in other divisions and institutions and facilitates access to additional faculty resources as appropriate.

**Budget Allocation**

Related costs are limited to a modest travel and food budget for various meetings and workshops. This is included in the budget allocation for the Vice Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs.