

Guidelines on the Evaluation of Graduate Student Mentoring in Faculty Performance Review

Purpose

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is to provide advice to individual faculty members, to review committees of the Academic Senate, and to faculty administrators about the evaluation of graduate student mentoring in faculty performance review. The relevant passages from the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) do not treat the rich variety of ways in which the faculty provides such mentoring.

These *Guidelines* contain a review of statements to be found in the APM, a description of the principal types of mentoring, and a discussion of the evidence that can be found in the record of a faculty member that his or her engagement with graduate student supervision is of high quality.

Background

Here is a brief review of those few statements in the APM that touch on the topic of graduate student supervision or mentoring.

From APM 210-1 Instructions to Review Committees Which Advise on Actions Concerning Appointees in the Professor and Corresponding Series:

“Clearly demonstrated evidence of high quality in teaching is an essential criterion for appointment, advancement, or promotion.”

“In judging the effectiveness of a candidate’s teaching, the committee should consider such points as the following: ... ability to arouse curiosity in beginning students, to encourage high standards, and to stimulate advanced students to creative work...; extent and skill of the candidate’s participation in the general guidance, mentoring, and advising of students; effectiveness in creating an academic environment that is open and encouraging to all students, including development of particularly effective strategies for the educational advancement of students in various underrepresented groups.”

“It is the responsibility of the department chair to submit meaningful statements, accompanied by evidence, of the candidate’s teaching effectiveness at lower-division, upper-division, and graduate levels of instruction. More than one kind of evidence shall accompany each review file. Among significant types of evidence of teaching effectiveness are the following: ... (b) opinions of students; (c) opinions of graduates who have achieved notable professional success since leaving the University; (d) number and caliber of students guided in research by the candidate ...”

“Teaching, research, professional and public service contributions that promote diversity and equal opportunity are to be encouraged and given recognition in the evaluation of the candidate’s qualifications.”

From APM 220-85 Procedure for Appointment or Promotion to the Rank of Associate Professor or Professor

“With a recommendation for promotion to tenure rank, the chair shall include the following information in the chair’s detailed statement: ... (2) the nature and extent of the faculty member’s responsibilities in guidance of students in research toward a graduate or professional degree ...”

The purpose of this document is to amplify these statements from the APM.

Types of Graduate Student Mentoring

The many ways faculty members might be involved in graduate student mentoring are too numerous to delineate. A suggestive (not exhaustive) list would include service (especially as chair) on thesis or dissertation committees; service (especially as chair) of qualifying examination committees; service as a graduate adviser, or head graduate adviser, or faculty adviser for graduate student instructor affairs; service as the instructor of a 300-level pedagogy course; organization or participation in workshops or institutes devoted to the provision of advice to graduate students, such as workshops about dissertation writing, postgraduate employment or addressing issues facing groups that are underrepresented in graduate education; advice during recruitment—especially when that advice addresses constructively the Regents’ policy on diversity¹; advising of students before candidacy; advice on preparation for the doctoral qualifying examination; advice on writing of the thesis or dissertation; advice on how to secure funding for doctoral study; advice on securing professional employment, and assistance with integration into a professional community. In many cases, the mentoring relationship includes interactions about personal issues with which the student may request help.

The mentoring relationship often does not cease with graduation. Mentoring about the early stages of a career can be particularly important to long-term success of the student.

Mentoring efforts that address the needs of students from groups underrepresented in the field are to be recognized and encouraged. Such efforts should be specifically described in the case for review; as noted, the APM specifically states that contributions that promote diversity and equal opportunity are to be given recognition in promotion and merit cases. Further insight into the many dimensions of faculty mentoring or supervision of graduate students may be found in the document Best Practices for Faculty Mentoring of Graduate Students, approved by the Graduate Council: March 6, 2006.

¹ <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/policies/4400.html>

Disciplinary differences in mentoring

Mentoring may take different forms in different disciplines. For instance, some faculty members mentor students who are part of their own research teams, while other faculty members mentor students who do not contribute to their own research program. Similarly, some faculty members earn points toward course relief for mentoring, while others do not. It is important, therefore, that chairs and deans make clear the specific working conditions for mentoring in their units, so as to help campus reviewers effectively compare the mentoring achievements of colleagues across departments and divisions.

Evidence of High Quality Mentoring

Evidence of high quality mentoring is important to include in the case for merit or promotion of a faculty member. It is crucial to an effective review that engagement in graduate education not merely be given as a list of activities, but rather that effort be expended to assess the quality of this engagement. Faculty and reviewers may derive evidence of high quality mentoring from the accomplishments of the candidate's advisees as described in the following; in these cases it is important to identify and assess carefully the contributions of the faculty member.

Research awards to students

While a student is engaged in research and scholarship under the supervision of a faculty member, there often are opportunities for the conferring of special distinctions, such as best paper awards, dissertation fellowships or other fellowships for continuing students. These may be cited as evidence that the mentoring relationship is highly functional when faculty advice is highlighted.

Student completion

Particularly among doctoral programs, there is a special responsibility for mentors to provide responsive and sound advice to enable *completion* of the stated degree goal of the student. Over the long term, a reasonable proportion of completing students among those advanced to candidacy may be taken as evidence of effective mentoring—especially when those completing do so in a way that compares favorably with normative time for the discipline. It may be possible to assess student completion when considering multiple periods of review of the faculty member, such as at promotion to Professor, advancement to Professor, Step VI, and advancement to Special Salary. Department chairs should ground their assessments in norms for the discipline. In fields where there is a gap in completion rates or time to degree of students from groups underrepresented in the field, demonstrated success with these students is to be noted. Students may face challenges associated with financial, health or family matters; effective mentors work with students to meet their academic goals as they overcome these obstacles. Occasionally, successful mentors do need to counsel students to withdraw from a program of study for which it turns out they are not well matched.

Publications

Student publications — or, equivalently, presentations at research conferences — are desirable additions to the record of accomplishments of the student and may be cited as evidence of effective mentoring. In some cases, the student may acknowledge oversight, advice, or collaboration on such publications or presentations, which may be cited as further evidence of high quality mentoring.

Quality placements of graduates

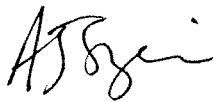
Different programs enable students to realize ambitions for different kinds of career trajectories. However there should be an emphasis on the *quality* of placements of advisees of a faculty member, no matter what the sector or type of employment. Naturally, some fields require high quality post-doctoral work before a student has a reasonable chance of a superior faculty position; in others, a research post attached to an influential think-tank may be evidence of a quality placement; in still other programs, entrepreneurship that derives from the student's training may be cited as evidence of successful mentorship. High quality placements of students from groups underrepresented in the field should be noted.

Quality careers of alumni

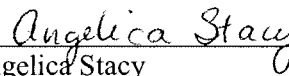
Alumni advisees who excel in their chosen careers may be cited as evidence of a strong foundation provided by quality mentoring. Concrete examples might be awards or honors conferred to previous advisees, or later appointments of special distinction. Achievement of career milestones provides excellent evidence, such as when previous advisees achieve partnership or tenure.

Mentoring awards

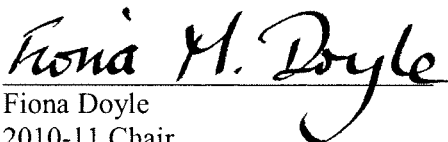
There are now a number of mentoring awards, at department and campus-wide level. The latter include the *Sarlo Distinguished Faculty Mentoring Awards* awarded by the Graduate Council, and the *Faculty Mentoring Awards* awarded by the Graduate Assembly. Others include the *Award for Outstanding Faculty Mentoring of Graduate Student Instructors*, etc. These awards may be cited as evidence of high quality mentoring or supervision of graduate students.



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