WORKING DOCUMENT – IDEAS FOR MENTORING STRATEGIES FROM UCI CHAIRS

Mentoring is good for retention and morale of faculty, for increasing departmental capacity/expertise, and is a priority of the UCI Strategic Plan. To assist you in creating, refining, or evaluating your current mentoring program, we have assembled a few ideas UCI chairs are currently using. There is no one-size-fits-all program or style, and chairs decide what works best for their faculty, department, and culture.

Current Mentoring Best Practice Examples
- **Assign mentor pairs**
    - Consider emeriti faculty as mentors (also engages emeriti who would like to stay involved) – they are knowledgeable and junior faculty may have lower anxiety speaking to them, can even be from other departments – junior faculty may feel less vulnerable disclosing problems to mentors who will not be their future evaluators
    - Obtain consent of mentor and mentee before assigning pair
    - Assign mentor pairs with advice from the faculty member. Often, faculty choose someone more senior to them in their same field ("content experts") – a cautionary note that this can lead to issues when a mentor is also a supervisor and may not always allow for novel ideas.
    - Work with other departments, or departments from others schools, to cross-mentor - provide more diversity and perspective
    - Consider peer-to-peer cohort mentoring (ability to ask questions in a safe environment)
    - Assign pairs that can ideally continue throughout the whole career
    - Can be fluid – no mentor assignment needed to talk to someone for advice, and mentors can change as mentee needs change, or if mentor pair is not a good fit
    - Assign early – assign mentors (or a primary mentor) before new faculty arrive at UCI and as part of the on-boarding process
    - Sample Offer Letter Language:
        - Mentor: Our goal is to support your development as an academic. To that end, Dr. (Name) in our department will serve as your official mentor.
- **Format**
    - Meet over a meal if pressed for time: coffee, lunch, walk around Aldrich Park
    - Can host mixers or Friday happy hours where families/kids are welcome
    - Host abbreviated seminars on mentoring topics focused on junior to mid-level faculty
    - Create informal "hallway" conversation feeling in the age of working from home – can be difficult
- **Frequency**
    - Consider requiring one meeting per quarter
    - Consider requiring more frequent (weekly?) contact in the beginning and decreasing frequency over time
- **Track mentoring**

- Keep track of all mentor pairs
- Create a written annual report about mentoring progress or include in "state of the department" reports
- Keep track of accomplishments of mentees to utilize this information for promotions and awards (PubMed, Faculty Profile System, AP-10) – celebrate achievements of junior faculty
- **Finance and incentivize mentorship**
  - Support and encourage regular meetings of mentor pair (monthly or annual for at least an hour)
  - Consider department funding for initial lunch for mentor pair
  - Consider protecting at least one day (8 hours) per month for administrative, protected time or time when meetings are not scheduled.
  - Train willing mentors to be great mentors
- **Utilize resources**
  - From school (any dean initiatives?) and campus level (Sponsored Projects)
  - From other organizations
    - Faculty Individual Development Plan: example from UCSF
    - University of Wisconsin-Madison mentoring committee
    - Duke faculty mentoring system
  - from disciplinary group or association (some have programs with training "badges" to reward mentees)
- **Other Ideas**
  - Supporting the reluctant mentee
    - junior professors – may be a more private person, might feel vulnerable
      - use Equity Advisors
      - use peer mentoring
      - formal mentoring/IDP process creates a structure to ensure these faculty participate
      - achieving safety in mentoring – build trust over time
    - mid-career professors
      - may have struggles with time management – collectively develop departmental guidelines so expectations are transparent/not arbitrary
    - full professors – maybe came to UC Irvine from outside institution (including non-university setting)
      - pair with someone who was similarly situated
      - use Equity Advisors
  - Not every faculty member will be an ideal mentor
  - Chairs also need mentoring
    - attend chair meetings
  - Emphasize mentor's role to provide unbiased support; safe place for junior faculty
  - Specific to grant funding

- Consider creating grant mentoring committees (of 3 mentors) to review faculty grant submissions
- Utilize campus-level resources like grant writing boot camp, Sponsored Projects Administration, and other grant funding support resources
- If funding available, create a position to help find grants for faculty
- Collaborate with departments in other schools when possible

Current Mentoring Challenges
- Lack of time
- Lack of incentives
- Difficulty finding resources for different mentoring needs (research, grants, etc.)
- Lack of consistency in building mentoring in to the merit & promotion process (UCSF has changed the language at CAP to include mentoring; Vice Provost O'Dowd noted that mentoring can be and often is included in files, but it is up to the faculty to include)
- Lack of appropriate support for underrepresented minorities
- Lack of confidence among senior faculty (knowing how to mentor, feeling older than technology and new resources)

Resources Available
NIH Boot Camp
Academic Personnel
AP Chair Meeting Resources
School of Medicine:
      SOM Academic Affairs
      SOM Academic Senate Mentoring Committee