

Dennis and colleagues: This note will summarize the mentoring processes in place in the Communication Department, with some tentative assessments on whether and how they are succeeding.

The department tries to have a mentoring plan in writing shortly after an incoming faculty member signs a contract. This plan assigns an official mentor while encouraging the sorts of informal interactions that continue to prove successful. It specifies ways in which the department can address teaching and service loads while building a regular check-in schedule for the new faculty member's research agenda and setting out a plausible timetable for entrance into graduate advising and teaching. The department is sensitive to the challenges of doctoral advising, and those concerns are now part of the discussion during the doctoral admission process. Several of our new faculty have begun joining appropriate committees.

This plan deliberately leaves the new faculty members with room to develop their own programs of scholarship. We are aware that the department can no longer hold to a policy in which new hires are expected to earn tenure on their own, but our intent is to provide support for a growing agenda, rather than expecting that agenda to bend toward department interests.

The chair has also instituted a monthly roundtable for tenure-track faculty that provides a place to address specific steps in the tenure process as well as more general concerns about adjusting to faculty life. The roundtable is well received and appears to be contributing to the department's research culture as well as bringing up specific matters of concern to new faculty.

A number of informal processes also take place; our new faculty seem to enjoy an open-door culture that encourages wandering around and talking about things. We also hold irregular meetings off campus under the heading of "faculty research beer" that help in the socialization process; this semester's first meeting is expected to talk about teaching evaluations and the review process.

Fred Vultee