

EAD Mentoring Program – April 22, 2011; amended January 9, 2012

1. The new faculty and department chair meet for an “orientation to EAD” session in August (2-3 hours, a morning or afternoon session) to discuss plans for the year and to address immediate questions of the new faculty; consult on questions related to getting courses ready to teach; share accumulated wisdom, advice, and MSU-specific useful information (e.g., how to get stuff done, which university-sponsored workshops are useful, reading unit, department, and college cultures, links to university/College information, etc.). Future group and individual meeting preferences and schedule will be discussed, in addition to introducing the department’s mentoring program.
2. The Department Committee on Faculty Affairs meets with the new faculty for an “orientation to faculty evaluation” in proximity to the University Survive and Thrive program. The committee will explain the EAD processes for annual evaluation, provide local context for institutional messages, and answer early questions.

DCFA meets with new faculty in a follow-up session in early spring term after annual evaluation guidelines have been established in a working meeting to help new faculty understand how to situate their work in the department context, especially for the first term of employment.

(Guiding ideas: Having a conceptual and working knowledge of the annual evaluation processes contextualizes the university information at a local level. Seeing how to prepare materials, being able to ask specific questions, talk through examples of each area of work should help make the evaluation process more transparent and provide opportunity for individuals to see the variation in work, variation in ways of presenting work, and understand from the committee of colleagues how different forms of work are perceived and evaluated.)

3. Each new faculty is asked to identify one or two established faculty members with whom they would like to work in a mentoring relationship for a term. The department chair matches requests with available established faculty. The focus of the mentoring can take many forms (e.g., general conversations, support and ideas for teaching, discussing research agendas or help with conceptualizing grant proposals, student advising issues) based on the expressed needs of the new faculty member. The mentor serves as a conduit of information and resources, including facilitating introductions to other faculty and institutional resources that will help address new faculty needs. There is an expectation the mentoring dyads will meet at least twice during the term, and can meet as frequently as both deem necessary. At the end of the term, each provides a short commentary to the department chair of activities.

This formal identification of mentoring relationships will continue through the second year of employment for new faculty, with opportunity to identify a new faculty mentor each term of the academic year based on the assumption that specific needs

and established faculty availability change. Informal mentoring can and does occur at any time and is not pre-empted by formal mentoring relationships.

(Guiding idea: Rotating assigned mentors provides diversity of perspective and a greater likelihood that new faculty will find a resource for different questions and needs they may have over their transition years. Individual matches provide a more focused, private context for the new faculty members to receive mentoring and advice, but knowing the relationship is only stipulated for one term at a time allows more flexibility to accommodate needs, schedules, and evolving interactions on topics of interest.)

4. Following each academic year of implementation, the department chair will convene new faculty and convene mentors to discuss the formal mentoring program, identifying ways in which the program can be strengthened or adjusted.
5. EAD continues to have various brown bag lunch and discussion sessions on topics of interest to faculty, generated by the Department Committee on Academic Affairs that supplement the formal mentoring program. These have included chairing dissertations, teaching online, and managing difficult classroom situations and incivility. DCAP solicits topics at the start of each academic year, including periodically through the use of a department-wide faculty needs assessment, and determines a set of opportunities based on interest, scheduling, and offerings provided elsewhere in the College or on campus.

(Guiding idea: Some topics of importance to new faculty can be addressed through ongoing dialogue, problem solving, and strategy development and may be best dealt with in group settings. Given that many of these topics are recurring over faculty careers and that experience and perspective come from all faculty, it is important to maintain sufficient opportunities for all EAD faculty to engage together in creating a healthy and productive environment.)