

Mentoring Program for Assistant Professors
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

The University of Pennsylvania mandates that all new Assistant Professors be assigned an official academic mentor and that this person be specified in the Offer Letter. In Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, a more in-depth mentoring approach that involves the appropriate Division Chief and an independent mentoring committee has been developed. The rationale for this in-depth approach is that there are many paths to academic success, and so it is important for faculty to receive independent advice from a number of individuals, all of whom may have different points of view. The overall goal is to provide faculty with clear, objective feedback on how they are progressing towards promotion and advice for the future and to couple this to an Annual Review process and letter that results in an official document that covers accomplishments over the past year, goals for the future, areas for improvement, and progression in the appropriate academic track.

The mentoring committee. New faculty are assigned a mentoring committee approximately 4 to 6 months after their initial appointment. The rationale for this delay is that it provides the Asst. Professor time to meet colleagues on campus and to think about how their new environment may influence their academic work. The Asst. Professor and the Division Chief will meet to discuss the possible makeup of a mentoring committee, which will consist of 4 senior faculty who are Associate or Full Professors. Factors to consider in choosing a well-rounded mentoring committee (recognizing that most members of the committee will fulfill at least two of the following criteria) are as follows:

- Ideally, one member should have direct experience with the School of Medicine's Committee on Appointments and Promotions or at least the DCOAP.
- At least two members should be from Pathology (could be based at CHOP or at Penn). It is important for young faculty to become well known within our own department and this gives me a way for each Asst. Prof. to interact with at least two senior colleagues.
- Faculty track needs to be taken into account: tenure-track faculty should in general have tenure-track faculty on their mentoring committees; CE-track should have at least 2 CE track faculty on their committees, and AC-track faculty should have at least one AC track faculty on their committees.
- Ideally, 2 members should have expertise in the area of research to be pursued by Asst. Professors in the tenure and CE tracks.
- Gender should be taken into account
- The Asst. Professor may wish to have someone on their committee whom they simply feel comfortable with and whose advice they trust, even if that person does not fit into any of the above categories.
- The Division Chief is not a member of the committee and does not attend the meetings – it is important for the Assistant Professor to receive independent advice from their Mentoring Committee.

The selection of the committee is sometimes easy and obvious; other times it requires some discussion and thought. When the makeup of the committee is determined (and ultimately it is the Division Chief's responsibility to select the committee), the Division Chief has their assistant invite each prospective member, sending the e-mail that is included below with the signature of the Division Chief. In addition, the Chief asks one member of the Committee to serve as the Chair.

How the mentoring committees operate. The administrative assistants in each Division are responsible for scheduling meetings and preparing the needed documents.

Instructions for admin assistants and email templates are in a separate document. In brief:

- Meetings are scheduled every 9 months
- 2-3 weeks before each meeting the assistant contacts the Asst. Prof. and asks them to update their CV in FEDS and provide a 1-page list of accomplishments and goals.
- The assistant distributes the CV, 1-page write-up, any past mentoring committee reports, and the 'check-list' of questions to consider during the meeting (there are checklists specific for each track).
- After the meeting, the assistant obtains the report from the committee chair and distributes it to all committee members, the Asst. Prof. their Division Chief, with a copy sent to the Office of the Chair as well.
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The role of the Division Chief. The Division Chief will meet regularly with each Assistant Professor in their Division. The Chief will play a major role in helping guide our young faculty in their clinical duties, but will also discuss their teaching and research responsibilities as well.

Promotion Manager. Division Chiefs or Center Directors are responsible for presenting their faculty for all reappointments and promotion decisions at DCOAP, whether they are currently DCOAP members or not. They are also responsible for updating Academic Plans, writing first drafts of Chair Recommendation Letters,

Promotion Expectations. Each year, the DCOAP Chair discusses promotion expectations with the Assistant Professors in one or more groups. This is a slide presentation that uses text from the faculty handbook, but then places university/school expectations into the appropriate context for pathology, and then includes the expectations of the Pathologist-in-Chief (CHOP) and Department Chair (HUP). Examples are given of how faculty in our department have excelled in teaching, clinical service, test development and academic work. In addition, data from COAP's most recent annual report is included.

Annual Review Process. Each spring, all faculty in the department should have an official Annual Review meeting with their Division Chief. The process is as follows:

- April 1: all faculty in the department are asked to update their CVs in the Penn FEDS (Faculty Expertise Database) system. Assistant Professors should also update their current activities and plans – this should be a 1 to 2 page document highlighting accomplishments over the past year and personal goals for the coming year. This can be written in bullet-point format if desired.

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- May 1: CVs, activities statement and previous year's annual review letter (if available) are provided to the appropriate Division Chief for Review.
- May and June: Division Chiefs meet with their faculty for their annual review, and should follow this up with an annual review letter that is provided to the faculty member as well as the Department Chair's office.

Managing Mentoring Committees

Activating the committee:

- Send invitation to proposed committee members, signing the name of the Division Chief and copying the Division Chief on the message.
- Send the invitation a second time one-week later to anyone whom you have not heard from. Once again, sign the name of the Division Chief and copy them on the email. Also copy me.
- If someone does not respond to the second invitation, notify the Division Chief who should either contact the person directly or select another committee member.
- Once all 4 have agreed, send the thank-you note – you need to ask the Division Chief who on the committee should be responsible for providing feedback on the meeting – this should be a committee member who is in our own department. The thank you note goes to the committee members, and the Division Chief and Assistant Professor are copied on the email.
- Finally, you should know the 'track' for each of your assistant professors. Are they tenure, CE, AC or research track?

Scheduling the meeting:

- Start scheduling the first meeting. Try to find a time that works for all 4 committee members, but if this is not possible schedule a meeting for 3 committee members. Let the assistant professor know who from the committee can't make the meeting, and indicate that they should try to meet with that person individually. This then becomes their responsibility to schedule, not yours.
- Think about the best place to actually hold the meeting – the location may depend on where everyone is based. You can always ask the Asst. Professor for advice on this if you would like.
- Three to four weeks before the meeting, ask the Assistant Professor to make sure that their CV is updated in FEDS as you will use this to distribute to the committee. Ask them to prepare a one to two-page description of recent accomplishments and goals for the coming year.
- One to two weeks before the meeting, send the reminder email to the committee members, copying the assistant professor, and include the CV, the recently completed activities write-up and also the previous activities write-up and committee report, if available. This enables the committee members to review what was discussed at the previous meeting and to assess progress. Also include the 'checklist' of questions for the committee to consider at the meeting – there is a checklist for the AC, CE and tenure tracks.

Admin Assistant's role in the mentoring program

- The day before the meeting, send a brief reminder of time and location to the committee and to the assistant professor (not the division chief).

Follow-up after the meeting:

- The day after the meeting, send the 'report' email to the committee chair, signing the name of the Division Chief and copying the Division Chief on the email.
- If after one week you do not receive the report, send a reminder. If another week goes by, notify the Division Chief, and it will be their responsibility to speak to the committee chair.
- The committee report should be kept by you, the Division Chief, and a copy sent to Lexi and the assistant professor.
- **Mark your calendar to repeat this entire process every 9 months.**

E-mail templates

Send to committee members a week or two before each meeting.

For tenure track:

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the mentoring committee for **XX**, an Assistant Professor in the **XX** track in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Attached is **his/her** CV, a brief summary of recent accomplishments and goals, and all earlier mentoring committee reports. I also attach a checklist of questions for you to consider asking at the meeting that are appropriate for the academic track.

Thanks again for doing this!

Best
Division Chief

Follow-up email sent to committee chair the day after the meeting:

Dear **XX**,

Thank you for participating in yesterday's mentoring committee for **XX**. If you could,

Admin Assistant's role in the mentoring program

please send me a brief report on the meeting, noting in particular any concerns that the committee may have. You can write a brief report and/or send an email. The committee reports are used by our Department Committee on Appointments and Promotions whenever we consider faculty for reappointment, and I use information from the reports in my annual review letter for Dr. XX. Thank you very much,

Sincerely,

Division Chief

Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Mentoring AC-track Assistant Professors

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the mentoring committee for **XX**, an Assistant Professor in the **AC** track in the Division of **XX**. Attached is **his/her** CV, a brief summary of recent accomplishments, and past mentoring committee reports. Here are some things you can discuss at the meeting:

To be promoted to Associate professor, there must be:

- Excellence in clinical care
- Excellence in teaching
- Excellence in the candidate's selected area of concentration (AOC)
- Sustained professionalism

1. Review time as an assistant professor. The earliest promotion can occur is after year 6, but this can also occur later. We start long-range promotion planning in Year 4: the candidate should write their personal statement and share this with the committee. In addition, they will need 15 faculty colleagues to complete a Clinical Performance Evaluation form at the time of promotion. Can they easily name 15 people? They will also need 7 letters of recommendation; up to two of these individuals can also be asked to complete the Clinical Performance Evaluation form. If they can't easily name enough people, this is a sign that they need to network to a greater extent during the next two years.

2. Review service activities - committees and the like. Is the person a good citizen and seen as such?

3. Review educational activities – number of contact hours, types of students and courses, what are the evaluations like? Assess teaching quantity and quality. If the evaluations are not good, has the faculty member availed themselves of the services offered by Faculty Affairs to improve teaching skills? This is important for all faculty, especially AC track - this needs to be a strength, not a weakness. Is the Educational Database being kept up to date? Are they easily meeting the 100 credit hour minimum? Two years before promotion, Asst. Profs. should meet with their Educational Officer to make sure that they are on-track with regards to teaching. If the EO feels improvement or additional teaching is called for, then there is time to address this prior to promotion.

4. Clinical activities - time on service, how things are going. For some faculty the primary practice site might need to be defined. Who are they interacting with? They need to be seen as outstanding clinicians - are they going to conferences on campus, such as interesting case conferences? Are they developing an acknowledged area of specialization? Down the line, they will need letters from colleagues from outside the department to comment on their clinical skills, so they need to be making a clinical name for themselves. Is this happening? Are they getting networked?

5. Area of concentration. By the end of year 2, we want our AC track assistant professors to select their AOC. The AOC represents a depth and focus chosen by the individual, and may be clinical (expertise or specialization and leadership) or non-clinical (education, community service, advocacy, quality and safety, health policy, test development, global health, etc.). The AOC needs to be recognized by others – is the person becoming well known for their AOC? Is the person's division chief in alignment with the AOC?

6. If there are any concerns about professionalism, these must be discussed and also brought to the attention of the Division Chief and Department Chair.

7. Identify any challenges the faculty member is having in any area, brainstorm about solutions. Bring this to the attention of the Division Chief if you feel this is needed. Discuss plans for the next 9 months (which is when the next committee meeting will be).

Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Mentoring CE-track Assistant Professors

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the mentoring committee for **XX**, an Assistant Professor in the CE track in the Division of **XX**. Attached is **his/her** CV, a brief summary of recent accomplishments, and past mentoring committee reports. Here are some things you can discuss at the meeting:

To be promoted to Associate professor, there must be:

- Have a scholarly focus with publications in peer-reviewed journals. A national reputation for work in the area of scholarly focus is required, and is typically linked to some degree of grant funding, outside talks, some first and last-author papers and other signs of national recognition.
- Excellence in teaching. Like the AC track, 100 credits/year are needed.
- Be recognized as an excellent clinician/diagnostician
- Sustained professionalism

1. Review time as an assistant professor. How many years are they on the tenure clock? Be sure to take into account any extensions. The mandatory review year at the SOM level is in year 9, which means DCOAP must vote in the winter or early spring of year 8. We start long-range promotion planning at the start of Year 6: the candidate should write their personal statement and share this with the committee. In addition, they will need 14 extramural consultants. Can they easily name 14 people? If not, then they need to find ways to address this over the next 2-3 years. We also like to have 3 internal letters of recommendation that speak to the importance of the individual to our academic community. Is it obvious at this stage who these letter writers should be? If not that is OK, but the Asst. Prof. and mentoring committee need to sort this out over the next two years.

2. Review service activities - committees and the like. Is the person a good citizen and seen as such? Are they over-committed?

3. Review educational activities – number of contact hours, types of students and courses, what are the evaluations like? Assess teaching quantity and quality. If the evaluations are not good, has the faculty member availed themselves of the services offered by Faculty Affairs to improve teaching skills? Is the Educational Database being kept up to date – this is particularly important after year 5, as at the time of promotion there is a 3 year look-back. Two years before promotion, Asst. Profs. should meet with their Educational Officer to make sure that they are on-track with regards to teaching.

4. Clinical activities - time on service, how things are going. For some faculty the primary practice site might need to be defined. Who are they interacting with? They need to be seen as outstanding clinicians - are they going to conferences on campus, such as interesting case conferences?

5. Area of scholarly focus. By the end of year 3, we want our CE track assistant professors to select their area of scholarly focus, and during the next 5 years most of their academic efforts should be on this area of focus. With time, how are publications coming along – are they first or last on a subset of papers? Publishing any reviews in their area of focus? How about grant funding? While not an absolute requirement, it is unusual in our department for CE track assistant professors to be promoted without funding. Something on the order of 20% effort is a good target.

6. If there are any concerns about professionalism, these must be discussed and also brought to the attention of the Division Chief and Department Chair.

7. Identify any challenges the faculty member is having in any area, brainstorm about solutions. Bring this to the attention of the Division Chief if you feel this is needed. Discuss plans for the next 9 months (which is when the next committee meeting will be).