

Mentoring Policy for Research Support Faculty
Department of Forest Science, Oregon State University (December 27, 2007)

This policy establishes a voluntary mentoring program in the Department of Forest Science for Research Support Faculty (RSF), which includes the ranks of Faculty Research Assistant, Senior Faculty Research Assistant, Research Associate and Professional Faculty. A mentoring policy for Professorial Faculty was adopted by the Department in October 2002.

Mentoring is an opportunity for RSF to get guidance and support for career enhancement and professional advancement. RSF can benefit from mentoring in several ways: gaining insight into the structure and culture of the Department and University; assistance in developing a professional network; individual recognition and encouragement, honest criticism and feedback; advice on responsibilities and professional priorities; support for long-range career planning and advancement; and support and advocacy from colleagues.

RSF who serve as mentors get the satisfaction of helping colleagues with their professional growth and development while fostering opportunities for collaboration, feedback and interaction.

The Department and University benefit from a mentoring program because it creates a work environment that promotes collegiality and can increase the focus, commitment and satisfaction of mentored employees.

Objectives of the mentoring program for RSF in Forest Science

1. Facilitate orientation and professional development of new and existing RSF.
2. Assist employees in identifying and developing skills needed to excel in their profession.
3. Improve communication and networking among employees.

Program Guidelines

1. The Department of Forest Science...
 - Recognizes mentoring as a valuable and valued element of employee development.
 - Encourages RSF to take advantage of mentoring opportunities but does not require it.
 - Promotes participation in mentoring training.
 - Views mentoring as a confidential and non-reporting relationship.
 - Accepts workload implications when planning the contributions of individuals as mentors or as mentoring program coordinators, under the condition that such participation has been approved by the employees' supervisors.
 - Acknowledges significant individual contributions of mentors as a component of service in performance reviews.
2. Participation in the mentoring program is voluntary.
3. Mentoring does not substitute for responsibilities of an employee's supervisor, particularly in regard to guidance on professional development and career advancement.
4. The mentor has no supervisory responsibility or authority over the mentee.

5. Mentoring is a confidential, supportive and non-directive dialogue for discussing work-related goals and challenges.
6. The mentee is expected to make progress toward their stated goals.
7. Mentor and mentee agree on what will be discussed.
8. Mentor and mentee share responsibility for and commitment to the relationship.
9. Mentors and mentees must keep all information discussed in the sessions confidential and in accordance with University and Department policies on equal opportunity, diversity, inclusiveness, code of conduct and privacy.
10. Mentors and mentees are urged to frequently “check in” with each other via informal phone calls or e-mails.
11. The overall developmental needs of the mentee are the main focus within the mentoring relationship.
12. Mutual learning is an integral aspect of the mentoring relationship.

Program Oversight

The RSF mentoring program will be administered by the RSF Committee.

Program Implementation

1. Mentoring is made available to both new and existing RSF.
2. Employees should get approval from their supervisor before participating in the mentoring program. Concerns about time commitments for employee involvement in the mentoring program should be discussed with the Department Head.
3. Each employee requesting mentoring should be assigned an initial mentoring committee of three RSF.
4. Pairing of mentee and mentor (or mentoring committee) will be outside the mentee’s supervisory chain of command.
5. An employee’s mentoring committee should be assigned with consideration to gender and racial diversity.
6. The mentoring committee should meet with the mentee within two months of the mentee’s request for mentoring.
7. The mentee can choose one member (or more) of the mentoring committee as an individual mentor.
8. Mentees should arrange to meet with their mentor(s) at least quarterly for a period of one year. At the discretion of the mentee and mentor, other sessions may be scheduled according to needs and interests.
9. Mentee and mentor have the option of disengaging from the mentoring relationship if it is unworkable. In that event, the mentee can choose another mentor.
10. Mentee and mentor should provide evaluations of the mentoring process to the RSF Committee.
11. The RSF Committee should seek training opportunities for mentors.