



## **Faculty Mentoring Program Guide**

January 29, 2025

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School of Public Health's Faculty Mentoring Program is designed to foster growth, development, and career success of its faculty members by building and sustaining an effective mentor-mentee relationship. Our goal is to empower faculty through career guidance, sharing of expertise, and the provision of structured support tailored to their career stage and professional goals.

### Program objectives

- **Professional development:** Provide tailored guidance to help faculty achieve milestones in research, teaching, and service.
- **Career advancement:** Support faculty in navigating promotions, pursuing and undertaking leadership opportunities, and developing their academic career path.
- **Collaboration and networking:** Foster a collaborative environment where mentors and mentees connect meaningfully, share their knowledge, and expand their professional networks.
- **Wellness:** Promote sustainable career paths that support a healthy balance and integration between professional responsibilities and personal well-being.

### How the program works

The mentoring program pairs faculty with experienced mentors who serve as **primary mentors**. This pairing is based on shared goals, expertise, and academic discipline. An **advisory mentoring committee** is formed for some faculty by including a diverse range of expertise within the relevant discipline, experience across junior to senior faculty ranks, knowledge of the institutional landscape, commitment to mentoring, effective communication skills, and willingness to provide comprehensive support. While the primary mentor provides guidance and support to a faculty member, the advisory mentoring committee provides structure and process to help a faculty member develop their career.

### Outcome and benefits

Through sustained and effective mentorship, we aim to strengthen faculty performance, enhance job satisfaction and retention, and build a dynamic and resilient academic public health community. The mentoring program is a strategic part of our commitment to excellence in public health research, education, community engagement, and service supporting each faculty member to access and secure the resources they need to thrive.

## INTRODUCTION

Mentoring at the Rutgers School of Public Health (SPH) is a highly valued endeavor in support of our faculty. This mentoring document outlines the SPH Faculty Mentoring Program and the roles of the Mentor and the Advisory Mentoring Committee.

The goal of our Faculty Mentoring Program is to help our faculty members develop their careers and succeed in their academic roles. Through our mentoring program, we aim to support our faculty in a variety of ways, including:

- Clarify expectations of promotion and tenure;
- Enhance and sustain productivity;
- Promote vitality and wellbeing;
- Build community, collegiality, and a positive climate;
- Provide a safe space for our faculty to discuss any concerns;
- Increase retention.

All faculty are advised to review Rutgers Health policies regarding promotion and tenure.

Formal mentoring is required of all faculty across appointment type (i.e., Tenure track, Research, Clinical, and Practice) up to the Associate Professor level (excluding those with tenure) or at the request of the Department Chair.

The SPH mentoring program consists of two components – a Primary Mentor, and an Advisory Mentoring Committee. These are described below.

## THE PRIMARY MENTOR

### PURPOSE

The Primary Mentor is an experienced faculty member who guides, advises, and supports the career development of a new or inexperienced faculty scholar.

### REQUIREMENTS

The Primary Mentor will typically possess the following attributes:

- Have familiarity with the mentee's research program or discipline.
- Hold the rank of Associate Professor or above.
- Be a good communicator.
- Have professional stature and successful professional relationships within and outside Rutgers.
- Champion the core values of SPH.
- Have good knowledge of current institutional policies and procedures.
- Model personal integrity and other positive professional traits.
- Maintain confidentiality.

**NOTE:** Confidentiality cannot be assured in circumstances where disclosure is required by institutional policy, laws, or regulations. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to: breach of university regulations, legal obligations to report certain information, and situations that pose a risk to the health and safety of individuals.

- Demonstrate empathy.
- Model a strong commitment to graduate student mentoring (to mentor faculty who are responsible for teaching, advising, or supervising graduate students).

Qualified Rutgers University faculty or those from other institutions may serve as Primary Mentor. The Primary Mentor is not required to have a formal affiliation with Rutgers.

Rutgers Health advises that individuals in supervisory roles, such as Department Chairs and Directors of Institutes or Centers, should generally avoid serving as Primary Mentors for faculty. However, due to the diverse range of scholarly works and community-engaged work undertaken by School of Public Health faculty, there are instances where the supervisor may be uniquely qualified to serve as the Primary Mentor. We recommend that supervisors serve as Primary Mentors only when no other suitable mentor is available, ensuring this approach is used sparingly.

### TIMELINE

The Department Chair will appoint a Primary Mentor for a faculty member within six months of the mentee's start date. The Chair will consider any input provided by the mentee and the proposed Primary Mentor before finalizing the latter's role.

## **POTENTIAL ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES**

### **For Mentee:**

- Have an initial meeting with your Primary Mentor to discuss your career goals, mentor's expectations, and how often they would like to meet.
- For your first meeting, come prepared with specific objectives you hope to achieve through mentorship. These may include goals related to scholarship, teaching, career development, leadership development, and wellness.
- Actively engage in discussions with your Primary Mentor, ask questions, and seek feedback.
- Ask for feedback on your performance, scholarship, teaching methods, and other professional activities.
- Be open to constructive criticism. This is an opportunity for growth, not an exercise in judgement of you by your Primary Mentor.
- Discuss your long-term career goals with your mentor. Seek advice on how to achieve them in a sustained manner.
- Seek guidance from your Primary Mentor on the promotion process and, where relevant, the tenure process.
- Seek guidance on how to build a strong dossier for promotion/tenure as appropriate.
- Even though you are seeking guidance from your Primary Mentor, you are encouraged to be proactive in finding solutions to challenges and bring well-thought-out ideas for discussions with your Primary Mentor.
- Express appreciation for your mentor's time, effort, and guidance. Be mindful of your mentor's other commitments.
- Maintain boundaries by ensuring that all interactions are respectful and professionally appropriate.
- Maintain a journal of your mentoring experiences. Document key takeaways, advice received, and your progress over time.

### **For Primary Mentor:**

- Reach out to your mentee to introduce yourself and welcome them to Rutgers and SPH.
- Encourage your mentee to have a first meeting with you to discuss goals, and their career expectations.
- Advise your mentee to establish a regular pattern of meetings with you – for example, bi-monthly or quarterly. Be aware that more (or less) frequent meeting may be needed when the mentee is preparing manuscripts or grants or getting ready for conferences.
- Help your mentee expand their professional network. Introduce them to colleagues, researchers, and professionals in the field, as appropriate.

- Encourage mentees to attend conferences, workshops, and other professional events, and also encourage them to present at these events.
- If you and your mentee are in the same discipline and attend the same conferences, encourage them to attend the conference with you.
- Guide and support your mentee but do not do their work for them.
- Maintain boundaries by ensuring that all interactions are respectful and professionally appropriate.
- Provide constructive feedback to the mentee.
- Periodically reassess your role to ensure it is meeting both your and the mentee's needs. Be open to making changes such as adjusting the frequency of meetings, or guiding mentee to seek additional mentors for specific needs.

## **EVALUATION**

Department Chairs should assess the effectiveness of their faculty members' mentoring and mentoring plans during annual reviews.

- Periodically emphasize the value and significance of faculty mentoring during department meetings.
- During your meeting with junior faculty, ask them about their mentoring experiences.
- Similarly, check in with the Primary Mentors from time to time (say, twice each year) to ask them about their mentoring experiences.
- Use the discussions with mentees and mentors to assess the effectiveness of mentoring and whether any revisions might be needed to strengthen the mentoring experiences.
- Especially, assess the effectiveness of mentoring during annual reviews.
- Create enthusiasm about mentoring. Make it part of your department's culture. For example, on annual basis, read out the names of Primary Mentors of junior faculty to recognize them during department meetings or holiday celebrations. Include testimonials, if available, from junior faculty.
- Nominate outstanding Primary Mentors for awards to recognize and value their service.

## ADVISORY MENTORING COMMITTEE

### PURPOSE

The Advisory Mentoring Committee consists of no less than three experienced faculty who will meet with the mentee and review the mentee's: (1) career and promotion goals, success in meeting these, and any impediments to the goals, (2) strategic vision for their scholarship, and (3) scholarly portfolio. In addition to exploring progress and providing guidance in these areas, the committee will also consider the success of the Primary Mentor-Mentee relationship in advancing the mentee's goals.

### COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

- The Advisory Mentoring Committee will consist of at least three members.
- The attributes of the committee members will be the same as those listed above for the Primary Mentor.
- We encourage one member of the Advisory Mentoring Committee to be a junior faculty member i.e., the mentee's peer, who would be able to share their experiences in navigating university resources and career progression.
- One committee member will serve as the Chair of the Advisory Mentoring Committee. The Committee Chair must hold a primary faculty appointment in SPH.
- At least one committee member must be from the mentee's promotion track. Thus, for mentees on the tenure track, at least one committee member must be a tenured faculty. For mentees on clinical or professional practice track, at least one committee member must be from the mentee's track.
- While not a requirement, it is generally useful to have at least one committee member from outside Rutgers so that the mentee can secure additional perspectives about career advancement.

### TIMELINE

- The department chair and Primary Mentor will guide the mentee in forming an Advisory Mentoring Committee within 6 months of the mentee's faculty appointment at SPH.
- The Advisory Mentoring Committee will meet with the mentee **AT LEAST 2 TIMES EACH YEAR**. There may be occasions where more frequent meetings are useful.

### POTENTIAL ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

#### **For Mentee:**

- Meet with your Advisory Mentoring Committee **AT LEAST 2 TIMES EACH YEAR**.
- Late spring (April) and mid-Fall (October) are suggested as ideal times for these mentoring meetings.
- Meet with your Advisory Mentoring Committee even though you are meeting regularly with your Primary Mentor. They each serve a different purpose.



- About 2 to 3 months before the meeting (i.e., during January or February for April meeting and during July or August for October meeting), reach out to the committee members to schedule a day and time (45 minutes to 1 hour) for your meeting.
- About 1 week before your meeting, prepare an agenda. An ideal agenda will be organized around goals, vision, and scholarship. For example, the agenda may include:
  - names of committee members.
  - your career goals.
  - two or three sentences summarizing discussions from the previous Advisory Mentoring Committee meeting.
  - completed scholarship since the previous meeting, e.g., a list of peer-reviewed publications as first or senior author, publications as co-author, funded grants as PI and funded grants as co-investigator since last meeting, conferences you attended since last meeting, invited presentations and contributed presentations you gave since last meeting.
  - If teaching is an expectation in your faculty role, include teaching in your agenda by including the course(s) you taught or are currently teaching since last meeting, any course or course materials that you prepared or are helping prepare since last meeting, any guest lectures you gave since last meeting.
  - Service or leadership roles you have assumed since last meeting – for example, membership of a conference program committee, editorial board of journal etc.
- It is often useful to share your current CV along with the agenda.
- Engage the committee in substantive discussions around each agenda item. Ask questions to clarify any doubts you may have.
- Take notes during the meeting.
- Immediately after the meeting, prepare a summary of the discussions.
- Distribute the summary to the committee for their review and solicit their input within three business days.
- Edit the summary by incorporating feedback, as needed, from all committee members.
- Upload the summary to the SPH Qualtrics page [here](#) within 2 business days of the meeting.

**For Committee Members:**

- Meet with the mentee along with rest of the Advisory Mentoring Committee **AT LEAST 2 TIMES EACH YEAR.**
- If you are the committee chair, advise the mentee to schedule Advisory Mentoring Committee meetings in April and May by reminding them about 2 to 3 months in advance of the meeting. Guide your mentee to do this. Do not do the work for them.

- One week before the meeting, review the agenda and assess whether the mentee is on track for career advancement.
- Prepare any questions you may have for the mentee.
- If there are areas of concerns, exchange those with other committee members so that everyone is better prepared to guide the mentee during the meeting.
- During the meeting, engage in substantive discussions around each agenda item.
- Provide constructive and actionable feedback to the mentee.
- Assess whether the mentee is spending too much time doing work that are not essential for promotion and, where relevant, tenure. Provide advice for the mentee to align their focus with promotion and, where relevant, tenure requirements.
- It is not within the purview of the committee to prescribe or recommend the faculty member's workload distribution (i.e., scholarship, teaching, advising). This responsibility rests with the Department Chair and is aligned with the SPH Workload Distribution Guide.
- After the meeting, review the meeting summary the mentee sends you and provide feedback within 1 business day.
- Periodically reassess your role to ensure it is meeting both your and the mentee's needs. Be open to making changes such as guiding mentee to seek additional mentors for specific needs.

## **EVALUATION**

Department Chairs should assess the effectiveness of their faculty members' Advisory Mentoring Committee during annual reviews.

- During your meeting with your junior faculty, ask them about the quality of interactions with their committee, usefulness of advice, support in achieving goals, and overall satisfaction.
- Assess the professional development of mentees during their annual review, including their involvement in conferences, workshops, and other professional activities facilitated by recommendations provided to the mentee by their Advisory Mentoring Committee.
- Use the discussions with mentees to assess the effectiveness of the Committee and whether any changes might be needed to strengthen the usefulness of the Committee's advice for the mentee.
- Ask committee members to provide you with input reflecting on their contributions, challenges faced, and any suggestions for improving the mentoring process.
- Create enthusiasm around Advisory Mentoring Committees. Develop case studies of individual committees to highlight successful practice and share with your department during monthly department meetings or during end-of-year department meetings or department retreats or holiday celebrations.
- Nominate outstanding Advisory Mentoring Committee members for awards to recognize and value their service.

The SPH Office of Faculty Affairs will review the summaries that mentees upload to the Qualtrics page to:

- Track the frequency of committee meetings and attendance rates to ensure regular and consistent engagement, accountability, and transparency.
- Benchmark SPH mentoring program against similar programs at peer institutions to identify best practices and areas for improvement.
- Gather feedback from department chairs and other senior leadership at Rutgers Health regarding institutional vision for mentoring and alignment of SPH mentoring program with institutional vision.