

Columbia Business School Junior Faculty Mentoring Proposal

5-6-2015

Columbia Business School is a world-class academic institution that seeks to hire and promote only the most talented business scholars. As such, entering junior faculty come excited to—and, of course, are expected to—engage in creative intellectual work of their own choosing and are ultimately responsible for their own choice of research direction and the originality, creativity, quality, productivity, and integrity of their scholarly work. The goal of mentorship at Columbia Business School is not to usurp these highly individual scholarly choices, but rather to provide junior faculty with as supportive an academic environment as possible in which their scholarship can flourish. The School also seeks to provide information and guidance on the norms and process of scholarship generally and the tenure process in particular.

Proposal History

In December 2014, an advisory committee comprised of Ann Bartel, Adam Galinsky, Don Lehmann, Doron Nissim, Katherine Phillips, Garrett van Ryzin, and Steve Zeldes, met to discuss mentoring and to brainstorm about how the School could enhance our mentoring programs and culture. In the spring of 2015, a smaller committee, comprised of Emi Nakamura, Katherine Phillips, and Garrett van Ryzin met to discuss how to structure mentoring and to develop a proposal for review and consideration by the faculty. Several drafts of the proposal were circulated and discussed with both the junior and senior faculty of the School. What follows is the result of those meetings and discussions.

The Ultimate Goal: Culture of Mentoring

Our ultimate goal is to have a robust informal culture of collegiality and mentorship, with official mechanisms playing supporting, scaffolding roles. Everyone can participate in helping to shape this culture.

Research Mentoring and Developing a Culture of Mentorship

- The division chair will appoint at least one tenured faculty member in the division to serve as “Junior Faculty Research Liaison(s).” In some cases, the chair could decide to serve in this capacity.
- The School will create a one-page best practices document of activities for “Junior Faculty Research Liaisons” and FAQs that they can share with the new faculty members.
- The senior faculty in each Division, working with their “Junior Faculty Research Liaison,” will develop and execute a mentorship strategy that is appropriate for the unique culture, needs, and resources in the Division.
 - In some Divisions, a formal research mentor could be assigned to each junior person.
 - In others Divisions, that would not be feasible or appropriate.
 - Each Division will submit their plan to the Dean’s office.
- The “Junior Faculty Research Liaison” **IS NOT** meant to be a research mentor for junior faculty members.
- The “Junior Faculty Research Liaison” **IS** meant to make sure that the Division has a plan so that junior faculty members are mentored.
- The “Junior Faculty Research Liaison” would have the following responsibilities:
 - Develop and execute, along with the tenured faculty in their Division, an appropriate mentorship strategy for their Division.
 - Make strategic introductions for the newly arriving junior faculty to members of the division (and outside the division as appropriate) who might have synergies with the incoming faculty members’ research, and encourage the junior faculty to seek advice when needed. This responsibility may be delegated more broadly as part of the Division’s mentorship strategy if appropriate, but each new junior faculty member can expect to have some introductions made for them.

- Encourage senior and mid-career faculty to engage with the incoming faculty members in informal mentoring activities. Such activities could include organizing “early-stage research” presentations as described below.
- Model an ‘open door policy’ so that new recruits feel they can come to ask questions and other faculty on the floor may be encouraged to be open as well.
- Share best practices with other Junior Faculty Research Liaisons.
- Serve as a point of contact for all members of the division to make suggestions for improving the mentoring culture at the School.

Junior Faculty Resources and Meetings

- The School will provide an FAQ page/handout for junior faculty members listing the main resources and contacts at the School in an easy-to-access format.
- The Senior Vice Dean or designee(s) will plan and host two meetings per year that include a curriculum of research development topics.
- Topics should change each year, with one meeting each year normally focusing on the promotion and tenure process. (Promotion and Tenure Committee members and/or Tenure Review Advisory Committee members come to explain how the process works.)
- Other topics could include the following:
 - Developing a long-range research plan (career grant recipients, recently tenured faculty, and more senior established researchers, speak on how to make strategic choices about your research.)
 - Defining your field and making a case for tenure (Divisional chairs, Promotion and Tenure Committee members, recently tenured faculty members, faculty members with bridging fields present)
 - Making the most of your time as a junior faculty member (People who have taken leaves, received fellowships, etc. share experiences)
 - Accessing research resources (Libraries, ITG, Behavioral Lab, External Relations, Sponsored Projects Administration, etc.)
 - Guiding faculty on how to increase impact of their ideas (Marketing and Communications, External Relations, Faculty who serve as editors of key disciplinary journals, or are leaders in professional organizations and conference program chairs)

Opportunities for Informal Research Exchange

- Often, the best way to facilitate dialogue with junior faculty is to provide informal opportunities for groups of junior and senior faculty to exchange research ideas. Open forums for exchange also provide valuable feedback to junior faculty on their research in a friendly setting. They also help junior faculty “learn by example” by engaging with and observing senior faculty. The School seeks to encourage more such opportunities for research exchanges.
- Toward that end, each division should organize an “early-stage research” lunch seminar in which junior and senior faculty can present research and exchange ideas.
- A variety of formats is possible, and it is up to the division (or sub-group) to determine a format most suitable to them.
- These informal seminars should ideally be regular events during the fall and spring semesters.

Teaching Mentoring

- The division chair (in consultation with the core course coordinator when applicable) will assign a formal teaching mentor to all new faculty members.
- The School will create a one-page document outlining mentoring ideas, questions, and best practices for both mentors and mentees.
- A roadmap of resources available through the Samberg Institute (and perhaps a list of suggested activities to prepare for teaching) should be provided to all new faculty members.