



Mathematics Department Mentoring Plan for Tenure-Track Faculty

Updated: February 2020

1. Eligibility for service as a mentor

Any tenure-track faculty member in the Mathematics Department may serve as a mentor with the exception of the Unit Head.

2. Method for selecting mentors

1. The Unit Head will contact the new faculty member to ask if they have any requests regarding mentoring.
2. The Unit Head will identify two colleagues who are broadly representative of the diversity of the department and consult with them to determine their availability and willingness to serve as mentors.
3. Once the Unit Head appoints mentors, the Unit Head will put the new faculty member in touch with both mentors so that they can connect with each other during the period between the new faculty member's hiring and the start of work.
4. This process is ideally completed before the end of the semester in which the new faculty member is hired. The new faculty member must be informed of their mentors by August 1.
5. Mentors are appointed for a period of one academic year.

3. Confidentiality and conflicts of interest

Discussions between the faculty member and their mentors are considered to be held in confidence. The contents of such discussions may not be divulged to any other person or committee without the prior consent of the new faculty member.

Beyond standard participation in unit discussions and voting on personnel matters at the unit level, a mentor may not participate in any process that involves a personnel decision, including salary adjustments, concerning the new faculty member. Mentors who subsequently serve on committees that make personnel or salary recommendations must recuse themselves when their mentees are being considered.

4. Roles of the mentors and new faculty member

The main roles of the mentor are:

- Help the new faculty member be aware of and navigate the procedures and policies in the Mathematics Department and GVSU, especially personnel policies relevant for annual review and third-year contract renewal.
- Offer advice and support related to the new faculty member's questions and issues as they arise during the first year, and help encourage the new faculty member to become a more reflective practitioner.
- Assist the new faculty member in building a network for professional support and development.

Likewise, the main roles of the new faculty member are:

- Engage with the faculty mentors to discuss and understand departmental policies, procedures, and expectations.
- Rely on mentors in whatever ways the new faculty member finds helpful for support in teaching, scholarship, service, and acclimating to the department.
- Strive to begin building a network of professional support and development.

By the end of the first year, the new faculty member should, with the help of their mentors:

- Have a reasonable level of understanding of the operations and policies of the department, college, and university, including the process of personnel evaluation, promotion and tenure, and merit review.
- Further develop the ability to reflect critically on feedback on their teaching and make improvements.
- Begin to build a network of support which the faculty member can use moving forward into the second year. This network can include departmental faculty, GVSU faculty outside the department, and colleagues outside GVSU.
- Have a plan for further professional development in teaching, scholarship, and service moving into the second year.

The Mathematics Department particularly values **multi-point mentoring** whereby the new faculty member develops a diverse support network whose members contribute to the faculty member's growth in different ways and areas, rather than a hierarchical relationship between the faculty and a single mentor.

5. Topics to be addressed by the mentor and new faculty member

The primary purpose of meetings between the new faculty member and their mentors is to discuss items of importance to the new faculty member. These items may be specific concrete items to discuss; or the meeting may focus on the new faculty member's questions, concerns, or experiences. The new faculty member contributes to the focus of each meeting for the purpose of supporting the new faculty member's ongoing professional development in teaching, scholarship, and service and their personal acclimation to life and work in the Mathematics Department.

Specific topics that are included in mentoring meetings should be planned in order to familiarize new faculty with fundamental issues involved in life and work at GVSU and should be introduced in a timely way. Those topics should include, but are not limited to:

- Building quality, productive, professional relationships with students
- Discussion of effective course design/pedagogy
- Seeking opportunities for growth in and reflection on teaching, scholarship, and service
- Annual merit reviews and the personnel process for tenure and promotion, including the process for successful contract renewal and associated resources for preparing the portfolio
- Significant focus, reassigned time, and Faculty Activity Plans, as well as Faculty Activity Reports and their roles in merit review and salary adjustment
- Interpreting feedback from both students (including LIFT data from Fall semester teaching) and colleagues
- Summer plans (including summer teaching)

6. Scheduling of meetings between mentor and new faculty member

Meetings between the faculty member and their mentors should take place on a weekly basis at a standing mutually agreed time, if only briefly.

7. Workshops, orientations, and meetings to be attended by the new faculty member

All new faculty are expected to attend the New Faculty Orientation conducted by the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center (FTLC) before the beginning of their first semester of work. For a schedule of orientation sessions and a description of topics covered, please see <http://gvsu.edu/s/1dx>. Other workshops, orientations, and meetings to attend will be decided upon by the faculty member and their mentors.

All new faculty are expected to attend the CLAS New Faculty Seminar Series during the fall and winter. This series provides new faculty with a college-level perspective and orientation and complements the university-wide programs on faculty mentoring. The New Faculty Seminar Series is designed for the new faculty in CLAS and provides an opportunity for them to get to know their colleagues and to engage in discussions that focus on important topics such as institutional and college ethos, teaching effectiveness, advising, scholarship, service, and personnel policies and procedures. Seminars in the second, third, and fifth years provide advising support and insights into the personnel and sabbatical processes.

All new faculty should also schedule meetings with representatives from key faculty support services on campus, for example representatives from the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence, the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center, and the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship.

8. Class observations of the new faculty member, and observations by the new faculty member

All new faculty members undergo a classroom visit as part of the regular procedure for faculty evaluations. As stated in the Mathematics Department's "Procedure for the Evaluation of Tenure-Track Faculty" document, step 4: "Each academic year (typically in the fall semester), the [Department Personnel Committee] will conduct one classroom visitation for each untenured faculty member using the attached Class Visit Record."

Beyond this one required classroom visit, each mentor will conduct one additional classroom observation of the new faculty member. Peer observations of the new faculty member's teaching are also strongly encouraged, and mentors should encourage new faculty to spend time visiting colleagues' classes and also to have their own classes visited. Such visits in the first year (other than the one required for annual evaluation) are intended to be formative and must not be used in personnel deliberations. New faculty are encouraged to discuss the results of these visits with their mentors.

9. If there are problems

If the new faculty member or mentor is facing challenges in the mentoring relationship, they should have a conversation with the unit head to discuss the situation. If the issue cannot be resolved to the faculty member's satisfaction at the unit head level, the faculty member should then bring the matter to the Dean's Office for resolution.

10. Measuring satisfaction with the mentoring program

At the end of each semester of a new faculty member's first year, the Unit Head will meet with the faculty member to discuss the faculty member's overall experiences during the semester and how their professional support network is developing. This discussion will include explicit discussion of the faculty member's experiences in, and satisfaction with, the mentoring program. The Unit Head will also solicit feedback from the mentors on their experiences and satisfaction with the mentoring program each semester.

11. Opting out of the mentoring program

Shared Governance Policy 3.01.E strongly encourages participation in university, college, and unit mentoring programs. Faculty who choose not to participate in these programs will notify their unit head and the dean in writing of their intent not to participate.

Approved by Dean


Frederick J. Antczak


Date