



*The Handbook of the  
West Chester University  
Faculty Mentoring Program*

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## Letter from the Provost

Dear Colleagues,

As we embark on another academic year at West Chester University, I wanted to take a moment to reaffirm our commitment to faculty success and highlight the invaluable benefits of mentoring for faculty at all stages of their careers. At West Chester University, we recognize that our faculty members are at the heart of our institution's success. Your dedication to teaching, research, and service not only shapes the academic experience of our students but also contributes to our university's reputation for excellence.

One of the most effective tools we have in facilitating faculty success is mentoring. Mentorship can be a transformative experience, offering guidance, support, and encouragement as you navigate the complexities of academia. WCU's [Faculty Mentoring Program](#) is designed specifically to support and nurture your professional growth and development. We are fortunate to have an amazing cohort of experienced and gifted faculty at West Chester University, many who have perfected their craft at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Mentoring is not limited to early-career faculty; it is a resource that can benefit faculty members at all stages of their careers. For junior faculty, mentors provide essential guidance in establishing a solid foundation for their academic journey. They can offer insights into teaching strategies, research methodologies, and the tenure and promotion process. Our mentoring programs for junior faculty are designed to ensure a smooth transition into the academic community and provide opportunities for professional growth. Mid-career faculty members can also benefit from mentoring relationships. As you advance in your careers, mentors can help you identify new research directions, collaborate on interdisciplinary projects, and navigate the leadership opportunities that may arise within the university. Even senior faculty, with their wealth of experience, can find mentoring relationships to be enriching. Mentorship can provide fresh perspectives, ignite new research ideas, and offer valuable insights into adapting to the changing landscape of higher education.

Throughout your career, you will ideally have more than one mentor. There have been many people I have encountered along the way who have helped me. At each stage of my career, I have found great value in finding mentors with a specific set of experiences that helped me navigate the challenges and opportunities of those moments.

Creating a culture of mentorship is critical to developing leaders, advancing the teacher-scholar model, and delivering more high-impact practices in the classroom. At WCU, teaching, research, and service are not three separate legs of a stool. They are inextricably interrelated, part of a holistic approach to teaching that we embrace as an institution. Those who understand that will be the most successful.

In closing, I want to emphasize that your success is our success. We are dedicated to fostering an environment where every faculty member can thrive, contribute meaningfully to our academic community, and make a lasting impact on our students' lives. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have questions or suggestions on how we can enhance our commitment to your success.

I am excited about the year ahead and the incredible work we will accomplish together. Thank you for your dedication to West Chester University, and I look forward to witnessing your continued growth and achievements.

Sincerely,



Jeffery L. Osgood, Jr. PhD, MPA  
Executive Vice President & Provost (Interim)  
Professor of Public Policy & Administration

## *Welcome and Introduction*

### **Welcome to WCU's Faculty Mentoring Program!**

This handbook has been prepared for you, the participants in the FMP, to help you maximize the benefits of participation in the program. Whether you are a mentor or a mentee, whether you are just out of graduate school or have been teaching for decades, participating in an effective, inclusive mentoring relationship can reap for you rich benefits; we hope this handbook will help you do so. Research has shown that benefits include strengthened teaching, increased scholarly productivity, and increased job satisfaction. Building and sustaining a mentoring culture on campus also leads to institutional benefits, like faculty retention and success, support for historically underrepresented groups like women and BIPOC communities, as well as stronger educational experiences for the students for whom we are all here at WCU.

After the introductory material, the Handbook is organized into four sections: (1) Why Mentoring Matters; (2) A description of the FMP and the roles of mentors and mentees; (3) Mentoring strategies and resources; and (4) Additional resources.

We hope that you will explore the handbook as needed and that you find some ideas herein that will strengthen your mentoring relationship this year. If you have suggestions for how to improve the handbook, we welcome those. And we thank you for participating in the program!

### **Program Overview**

The Faculty Mentoring Program (FMP), established in 2008, is open to all part-time and full-time academic and administrative faculty. The FMP offers three targeted programs to support faculty at every career stage: new full-time tenure-track faculty, faculty seeking promotion, and adjunct faculty.

The FMP is administered by the Faculty Mentoring Committee (FMC), an organization of fifteen elected faculty members representing all colleges and non-teaching faculty, as well as three ad-hoc members. The FMC's mission is to foster mentoring partnerships among faculty that enhance lifelong professional learning in teaching, scholarship, and service. Along with CELT (the Committee for Excellence in Learning and Teaching) and ODLI (the Office of Distance Learning and Innovation), the FMC is overseen by the **University's Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)**. Together, these organizations provide programming and services to help faculty achieve success in their work and demonstrate the University's commitment to its faculty.

## *Why Mentoring Matters*

Faculty mentoring programs are recognized as an important resource for supporting the professional development and well-being of a diverse faculty body in the higher educational context. Faculty mentors facilitate a structured relationship with their mentees, aimed at fostering the mentees' professional growth and success within the academic realm. Faculty mentors can provide support and guidance on teaching, research, service, grant writing, student advising, campus cultural adaptation, and work-life balance. Faculty mentoring also contributes to the overall vitality of our academic institution by building collegial relationships across our campus.

### **Benefits for Mentees**

The most important benefit of mentoring for mentees is for their career development. Faculty with mentors had been found to have higher levels of career achievement than those without mentors in terms of publication, grants, leadership, rank, and job performance. Those who are mentored “learn the ropes” more quickly, accelerating career advancement and personal development while experiencing reduced stress. Mentored faculty members not only report higher job satisfaction but also feel a stronger connection to their work environments. They better understand the tenure and promotion processes, as well as research, teaching, and service expectations. Mentoring relationships can alleviate role strain and contribute to an overall sense of happiness and fulfillment.

### **Benefits for Mentors**

There are many ways that Faculty Mentors themselves can benefit in a culture where mentoring is valued. Serving as a mentor can be energizing, personally satisfying, and bring a sense of empowerment through nurturing the career development of a trusting colleague. Likewise, engaging actively in building collegial connections and exchanging knowledge and insights can be highly fulfilling, with mentors often gaining valuable work-related information from their mentees. Mentors may also benefit from becoming familiar with faculty across disciplines and in newer cohorts. Connecting faculty across the campus community benefits the university, the mentee, and the mentor.

## *WCU's Faculty Mentoring Program*

### **History of the FMP**

The WCU Faculty Mentoring program was established as a campus-wide, faculty-driven initiative at WCU in 2007. With program participants now numbering in the hundreds, WCU's Faculty Mentoring program has grown into a vibrant community. The FMP is housed within WCU's Teaching and Learning Center, coordinated by the Faculty Mentoring Committee (FMC), a body of fifteen elected teaching and non-teaching faculty members that represent all the University's colleges, several ad-hoc members, and dozens of volunteer faculty mentors.

After years of providing mentoring programming for tenure track assistant professors, the FMP responded to demand from other faculty ranks, expanding to include associate professors and adjunct faculty as well. After participating in the FMP, many faculty who were mentees go on to become volunteer mentors in the FMP later in their academic careers. Several interdisciplinary publications and research presentations have originated in the FMP highlighting the importance of the structured faculty mentoring provided by WCU's successful Faculty Mentoring Program.

### **The FMP Today**

The FMP provides WCU's faculty with two kinds of activities related to mentoring: 1) the organization and implementation of Fall and Spring University-wide workshops/events that focus on professional development and building a mentoring culture at WCU, and 2) the support of the participants in the FMP who are involved in faculty mentoring pairs and/or cohorts.

- **Fall and Spring FMP Workshops.** For a long time, the Fall workshop functioned as a kind of onboarding for participants in the program, to give them ideas of what mentoring means and what kinds of activities they could do in their year together. The topic of the Spring workshop varied, but it has included issues like networking, promotion, and work-life balance and its audience was the larger campus community; often, the event was held in January in conjunction

with National Mentoring Month. Going forward, the FMC is considering having both the Fall and Spring workshops address topics that will be of interest to all faculty, not just those participating in a mentor relationship in the FMP, with the goals of encouraging broader faculty success and satisfaction at WCU, as well as of growing the mentoring culture here at WCU.

- **Mentoring Relationships.** The second kind of FMP activity is what many think of as more traditional mentoring, where experienced faculty are matched (in pairs or cohorts) with newer faculty to share their expertise and knowledge in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and work-life balance. This more traditional mentoring is divided into three categories:

- **New Faculty Mentoring:** In this group, faculty who are new to the tenure track (newly hired faculty or adjunct faculty who have gotten onto the tenure track through the 11G clause of our APSCUF contract) are matched with a faculty person who has volunteered to be a mentor in a traditional 1:1 mentoring relationship.

**The goals of that relationship** include familiarizing the new faculty with the tenure and promotion (TeP) process and TeP criteria of teaching, scholarly growth, and service; supporting the goal-setting and success of the new faculty in those areas; helping the new faculty to connect to resources and people on campus that will support their success and job satisfaction; and developing a trusting relationship so the new faculty person has someone to turn to with questions and concerns.

**The nature of the relationship** between mentor and mentee varies greatly depending on the people involved, their levels of experience and interests in academia, and a host of other factors. **The duration of the relationship** is expected to be one year, though individuals can certainly remain connected beyond that if they wish. **The topics of discussion within that relationship** will depend in large part on the participants.

It is important to note that at this level, **mentees are intentionally matched with mentors** who are in a different college than their own. Research has shown that this kind of mentoring provides greater opportunity for the mentees to be open and honest about their concerns, without fear of potentially offending someone in their department with whom they might be working closely.

If, for any reason, you find that the match that you were given is not working, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Co-Chairs of the Faculty Mentoring Committee for help with the situation or, if needed, to get a different mentor.

- **Mentoring for Promotion:** When the FMC reached its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016, they recognized the need for mentoring for faculty at all career stages, not just the new faculty. At that point, the second group of mentoring activities was added for tenured faculty seeking promotion, most of whom have been Associate Professors going for Full Professorship. At this level, faculty seeking promotion can request a mentor for a traditional 1:1 mentor relationship, as exists with new faculty. In addition, the FMC has provided some panel presentations of senior faculty who discuss the issues around promotion with interested junior faculty.
- **Adjunct Faculty Mentoring:** In Fall 2016, mentoring for adjunct faculty was added to the FMC's charge. Given the fact that many adjunct faculty are here temporarily, have part-

time positions at multiple institutions, and are generally very busy with non-traditional teaching schedules, the FMC offered mentoring in the form of Fall and Spring workshops from 2016 to 2021, with topics including classroom management, university resources, use of classroom technology, and work-life balance. Though the workshops were well-received, the FMC felt that they were more of information-sharing than mentoring, the latter of which has an experienced faculty mentor encouraging the growth and success of the newer faculty mentees.

They decided to pilot a cohort mentoring program where long-time, experienced adjunct faculty volunteers to mentor small cohorts of 4-6 adjunct colleagues. Each cohort leader picks a different day and time that they will meet each month with their cohort (e.g., the first Monday of the month at 1 pm); this gives busy adjunct faculty a variety of times to pick from. Ideally, they will stay with the same mentor each month, thereby developing a relationship with that person, though if their schedule does not allow it, they can hop from one time to another.

*The Faculty Mentoring Program’s Priorities and Key Outcomes*

To help guide the activities of the mentoring relationships you participate in, please see this chart of priorities and outcomes of the mentoring program. This chart has been adapted from [Georgia College’s College of Health Sciences “Faculty Mentoring Handbook: A Guide for Success.”](#)

Mentoring priority	Key Outcomes
Getting to know WCU	Understanding the public mission of the University and the academic culture of the University/colleges/departments; Identifying WCU resources to support excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service; Creating networks in these areas.
Excellence in teaching	Finding support for growth as a teacher, including learning/developing innovative teaching strategies; implementing high-impact teaching practices like service learning, internships, etc. in one’s work; and developing new courses and programs.
Excellence in research, scholarship, and creative pursuits	Finding research support--both in terms of capital and human resources; Developing a writing plan; Identifying internal and external funding; Getting feedback on manuscripts and grant proposals; Engaging in presentations, lectures, and publications.
Excellence in service at the department, college, and/or university levels	Finding support for identifying and engaging in service activities that benefit various constituencies, including the institution, the profession, the community, as well as the mentee. Mentors can assist mentees in navigating the numerous service opportunities and help guide to the most beneficial and rank-appropriate activities within the institution, to the profession, as a professional.

Developing professional networks	Establishing career-enhancing relationships with other faculty who share similar interests in teaching, research, and/or service at WCU.
Striving for work-life balance/job satisfaction	Prioritizing teaching, scholarship, and service in ways that are consistent with expectations for promotion and tenure; Exploring opportunities where one interest might overlap with another, e.g., where your scholarship and teaching overlap, or where service and scholarship overlap. Finding support for goal setting; Developing time-management skills; Attending to quality of life issues such as wellness, care-giving, and families.
Understanding the criteria for promotion	Understanding the WCU and college guidelines for promotion and tenure. Developing a personal plan for TeP success.

***Roles and Expectations of Mentors and Mentees***

During the monthly mentoring meetings, we hope that mentors and mentees work to make the relationship a good one. *This is more easily accomplished when expectations are clear and interactions are structured. Below please find some lists that may be helpful in these regards.*

**Participation Expectations for All Participants**

- Establish a regular meeting schedule of at least once a month
- Maintain your mentoring partnership for one academic year
- Attend Faculty Mentoring Program sponsored events, with your mentoring partner when possible
- Complete faculty mentoring program feedback forms when requested, to help us continue to improve
- Attend the end-of-year celebration, if possible

**Program Etiquette Expectations for All Participants**

- Promptly respond to communications from your mentoring partner
- Attend all scheduled mentoring meetings
- Come to meetings prepared with an agenda or plan that is mutually agreed upon
- Maintain confidentiality of information shared in your mentoring relationship

**Additional Expectations for Mentors**

- Become familiar with your mentee’s professional responsibilities and goals
- Find ways to support your mentee as they work to fulfill their goals and responsibilities
- Be a role model for your mentee, sharing your own professional development history
- Advocate for them and help to introduce the mentee to professional opportunities
- Offer encouragement and constructive criticism



- Engage with your mentee in a manner that is empathic using active listening

#### **Additional Expectations for Mentees**

- Share your professional development responsibilities and goals with your mentor
- Become familiar with the professional development trajectory of your mentor
- Take an active role in developing your professional goals with your mentor
- Be open to constructive feedback and suggestions from your mentor
- Feel comfortable to reach out to your mentor with questions and issues as they arise
- Dedicate adequate time to the mentoring partnership

#### **Qualities of Good Mentors and Mentees**

Research suggests that mentoring relationships are enhanced if the partners are intentional in working on a good mentoring relationship. Both partners in a mentoring relationship can work on developing these qualities.

A good mentoring relationship is one in which both parties are:

- Committed to maintaining regular contact
- Respectful of each other's time
- Good at following through on commitments
- Expressive of appreciation
- Genuinely interested in each other's professional careers
- Committed to developing their mentoring relationship

A good mentor is:

- Thoughtful and organized
- Attentive to their mentee's professional development goals
- Encouraging and supportive
- Willing to share their own experiences
- Responsive and timely in their interpersonal communications

A good mentee is:

- Proactive at reaching out to mentor
- Interested in receiving feedback
- Enthusiastic about their own professional growth and success
- Willing to share their concerns and challenges
- An active listener
- Eager to act on opportunities

#### **Ground Rules for Structuring Effective Mentoring Meetings**

- Agree upon a mutual understanding of confidentiality with regard to your mentoring communications
- Agree upon frequency and mode of meetings (what is needed, what is workable).
- Respond promptly to each other's emails, even if it's to say, "I'm swamped at the moment, but I will get back to you this week."
- Communicate questions and concerns about topics of discussion related to mentoring

- Communicate questions and concerns about the relationship, as well

### **Mentoring in a Diverse Academy**

Research on faculty-to-faculty mentoring has revealed the critical role mentoring relationships play in promoting diversity. In academia, where unconscious biases have been shown to hinder professional development, university sanctioned mentoring programming can mitigate that bias by enhancing collegial connections, transcending traditional demographic and disciplinary boundaries, and fostering inclusivity. Faculty mentoring also provides an opportunity to tailor each professor's faculty development efforts toward their unique goals and responsibilities.

By providing individualized guidance, support, and opportunities for all faculty at our institution, the FMP at WCU contributes to a more inclusive and equitable academic environment. If you would like to learn more about promoting diversity and faculty excellence through mentoring, consider becoming a member of the [National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity \(NCFDD\)](#). WCU is an institutional member of NCFDD, which offers numerous resources, webinars, and programs aimed at faculty development at various career stages, and includes topics related to diversity and mentoring.

### **Potential Challenges in Mentoring Relationships**

As helpful as a mentoring can be, *participants may experience* issues that could arise in any mentoring relationship. We encourage you to attend to these issues:

- *Time Demands*: Dedicated mentoring relationships can be time-consuming for the mentor and mentee alike. To ensure a successful mentoring partnership, honor each other's time demands as you strategize to find time for meetings, attending events, reviewing materials, and/or informal social time.
- *Differing Values*: Even the best matched mentors/mentees partners will have some differing values or ethical beliefs. Recognize places of common ground and engage in open and respectful communication toward the goal of mutual understanding.
- *Conflicts of Interest*: In rare situations, professional conflict of interests might interfere with a mentoring partnership. If establishing clear boundaries and transparency are insufficient to address a conflict of interest, reassignment may be necessary.
- *Confidentiality*: Discussions of career aspirations, work matters, and personal details reveal confidential information that can make both parties feel vulnerable. Information shared during mentoring sessions should remain confidential unless both parties agree otherwise.
- *Unconscious Bias*: Unconscious bias can manifest in various ways within a mentoring relationship and can originate from both mentors and mentees. Both parties should actively work to recognize and mitigate unconscious bias to ensure a fair and equitable mentoring partnership.

Mentors and mentees are encouraged to reach out to the FMP co-chairs for guidance and support on any of these issues. The FMP chairs can provide resources, facilitate discussions, and offer solutions, including reassigning mentoring partners, if necessary. Our goal is to provide an enriching mentoring program experience for all involved.

## *Mentoring Activities, Strategies, and Resources*

We hope you find some ideas below that enhance your relationship; adjust them as needed, e.g., if the activity is geared toward new faculty but you are in a mentoring relationship focused on promotion.

### **Suggested Activities for the Mentor Relationship**

- Plan goals for teaching, scholarly growth, and service; Check progress on those goals over the course of the year
- Attend together the WCU President's Welcome Back Address in September
- Determine what your mentee most needs near the beginning of the relationship
- Establish a writing routine, possibly together
- Read each other's manuscripts, chapters, grant proposals
- Write a teaching philosophy and/or research narrative
- Make connections to helpful faculty and resources on campus
- Help with time management (prioritize writing)
- Develop work habits that reflect goals
- Explore together the free subscription all WCU faculty have to the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](#), an excellent resource for how to succeed in academia. The NCFDD focuses on four areas: (1) Strategic Planning, (2) Explosive Productivity, (3) Healthy Relationships, and (4) Work-Life Balance.

### **Suggested Topics of Discussion for Mentoring Meetings**

The Faculty Mentoring Committee will email suggested topics of discussion each month. In addition to those, consider these topics:

- Work-life balance
- Coursework issues
- Campus culture
- Working with colleagues, staff, and students
- Classroom management issues
- Understanding the TeP evaluation criteria
- Strategically picking scholarship and service tasks (perhaps ones that overlap with each other and/or with teaching)

### **Goal-Setting Activity**

We recommend that mentors help their mentees establish a plan for their teaching, scholarship, and service each year. Make the goals SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attractive, Realistic, Time-Framed). Once the goals are set, determine the steps needed to reach those goals, and add those steps to your calendar. Finally, check your progress on your goals regularly and readjust/set new goals if needed.

### **WCU's Teaching and Learning Center Website**

The Faculty Mentoring Program is housed under the [Teaching and Learning Center \(TLC\)](#), an organization dedicated to faculty development. On this website, you can find out about other faculty development resources, including:

- The Online Faculty Development Program (OFD), a self-paced, online program that certifies instructors to be able to teach online courses at WCU
- CELT Book Clubs
- Teaching Resources like those on High-Impact Practices and Academic Freedom
- Teaching Technologies available to all faculty
- University Resources like the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- The Office of Educational Accessibility
- WCU Libraries

### *Additional Resources*

#### **2024-25 FMC Members and Co-Chairs**

- Mahrukh Azam
- Dan Baer
- Michelle Blake (Co-Chair)
- Yanan Chen
- Patricia Davidson
- Laura Fiorenza
- Alison Gardiner-Shires
- Thomas Haughey
- Megan Heckert
- Lauri Hyers
- Michelle Kensey
- Anne Larrivee
- Vipanchi Mishra
- Innhwa Park
- John Pisciotta
- Tina Selvaggi
- Brittany Severino
- Ralph Sorrentino (Co-Chair)
- Linda Stevenson

### *Additional Reading*

#### **Scholarship Generated by Members of WCU's Faculty Mentoring Committee**

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### *Acknowledgements*

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