Department of Anthropology
Faculty Mentoring

Excellent faculty are central to meeting the university’s mission of education, research, and engagement with societal challenges, and the Department of Anthropology is committed to the success of its entire faculty. The Department of Anthropology seeks to provide mentoring opportunities for its faculty to assist them in their professional growth. We see this as particularly important during faculty members’ first several years at Purdue University as they develop their roles as teachers, undertake their research agendas, and prepare for tenure and promotions.

The Department provides annual feedback through the Primary Committee review of curriculum vitae in the fall and the department head’s review of Annual Activity Reports each spring. In addition, each assistant professor is given a mentoring committee, selected by the assistant professor and the department head, that consists of two or more senior faculty members.

Goal of mentoring. The goal of this mentoring team and the individual mentoring relationships is to ensure that each faculty member has information and advice that may assist with their development and success in the areas of research, teaching and learning, engagement, and university and community service. The mentoring relationship is intended to help the assistant professors better understand Purdue’s policies and expectations so that they can succeed in achieving tenure and promotion at Purdue. The mentoring team should help the faculty member set goals, share knowledge about external funding agencies and processes, and as appropriate, facilitate collaboration and/or interdisciplinary research.

Associate professors who wish to have mentoring as they prepare for promotion consideration to the rank of full professor are also welcome to request that mentoring relationships be arranged by the department head.

Procedures. Upon joining the department, newly appointed assistant professors will be invited to a meeting with the department head. The head will do the following:

1. Explain the procedures for tenure and promotion at Purdue and give information on the location of all policy documents governing promotion and tenure at Purdue.
2. Provide a copy of the Department of Anthropology’s mentoring statement and guidelines for promotion and tenure.
3. Discuss possible members of the mentoring team. (The head will later ask specific individuals to serve in this role and will appoint one of them to arrange for the first meeting.)
4. Discuss the curriculum of the department, the courses already offered by the department, which of those courses the faculty member is likely to teach in their first several years, and ideas for any new courses the faculty member is considering developing.
5. Encourage the faculty member to participate in orientations and special programs the university provides for new faculty members and other professional development activities.
6. Be sure the faculty member knows how to get information on the governance structure of the university, grant resources, sexual harassment policies, opportunities for collaborative projects, and other relevant information.

**Activities of the mentoring team.** The faculty member and mentoring team will decide for themselves how to conduct their mentoring relationship. The mentoring committee may want to help the assistant professor become familiar with the academic community and culture at Purdue, and mentors may want to take the initiative to introduce the new faculty member to faculty and research groups from other departments who may share similar interests. Mentors can be asked to share advice about professional development resources available at Purdue that would help the assistant professor with research and teaching performance.

In some cases, the faculty member and the mentoring team may wish to create one-year or five-year activity time-lines, and the mentors can provide feedback on its appropriateness or help the faculty member decide how to meet the goals. Members of a mentoring team can be asked to give initial reviews of manuscripts or grant proposals. Mentors may offer constructive criticism and provide advice about managing common difficulties. Mentors also may help the faculty member identify their professional strengths and weaknesses.

After the initial meeting, the assistant professor should initiate subsequent meetings with the committee, at least once a semester initially, and annually after that. The assistant professor is welcome to call upon the senior faculty members for individual consultation about professional development.

**Supplemental mentoring and networking.** All faculty members are encouraged to seek out supplemental informal mentoring from their colleagues, including other department members, other faculty at Purdue, and other scholars in a broad network beyond the university. Networking is important for developing research and publishing collaborations, learning from the experiences of others, establishing one’s reputation among potential external reviewers, and keeping abreast of new developments in one’s areas of expertise, so that we can pursue excellence in our department.

Each faculty member is encouraged to develop contacts with scholars in the field (presenting papers at conferences, etc.). This networking helps faculty members establish: a) potential research collaborations, and b) potential external reviewers for the tenure and promotion or promotion process.

**Changing the arrangements.** The department head monitors the mentoring relationship, and the faculty member is expected to seek assistance or advice if for whatever reason a change might be beneficial or if the existing mentoring relationship is not working well. It is not unusual to shift responsibilities for mentoring from time to time.

July 27, 2009