

Barriers to Effective Mentoring at UTK

Deans and Department Head Concerns	Faculty Concerns
Time You risk overloading the most competent faculty.	Time
Need better separation of the mentoring role from evaluative role of senior faculty. Need clarification of the role of the department head in the mentoring process.	Lack of role clarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the mentor also advocate for the mentee, e.g., in P&T decisions? • How do mentoring and co-authorship work together?
What if there is insufficient expertise inside the department for what the junior faculty members need? What if senior faculty members are out of touch with new P&T criteria?	Insufficient numbers of senior faculty in any one department OR senior faculty may lack the expertise that junior faculty need, e.g., technical skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One solution is to look outside of departments for mentors, especially for issues unrelated to discipline (such as work-life, UT socialization, minority or underrepresented mentoring, etc. • Interdisciplinary mentoring may also be fruitful. Can actually expand the mentee's vision of their research and skills.
Clarify the goals, e.g., instrumental (skills, P&T) versus relational (engagement and belongingness in the unit) Mentees should help clarify what their needs are. Expectations for outcomes of mentoring relationships need to be clarified and can be different across disciplines, between junior and senior faculty members, etc.	Lack of clarity on the purpose/goals of mentoring, e.g., is it for P&T guidance, socialization, introduction to UTK, work-life, etc.? This needs to be determined in advance. Each mentee may need somewhat different types of mentoring – it should be determined at the front end of the process.
How do you motivate senior faculty participation, especially early in the process? Both financial and non-financial rewards should be considered.	Incentives and rewards are needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and private recognition • Inclusion in annual performance reviews • Mentoring awards
Need effective structure and oversight to the program to make sure it happens and there is somewhere to go if there are problems.	Support from department, college, and campus administration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need better training on detrimental situations and how to avoid them . • Need “exit strategies” in the event the relationship doesn’t work out. How to transfer out gracefully, e.g., “trial periods.” • How to intervene when there is a “crisis”? 	Lack of training on how to be a good mentor.
Junior faculty will be hesitant to ask for help.	