Mentoring Faculty and Students

Led by Willie Rockward (wrockwar@morehouse.edu)

Factors influencing mentoring of faculty

1. University Policies
   a. Mentees need help understanding written and the interpretation (the importance of knowing about policies)
   b. Larger universities may have written policies, smaller universities may not
   c. Mentees need to understand directives from admin

2. Mentoring must consider career stages:
   a. Develop departmental community so that many are involved in mentoring.
   b. Develop into two-way process between mentors and mentees.
   c. Junior/Mid-career
   d. Mentees need more than one mentor, to address different needs
   e. Some mentors can be outside of department
   f. Should last at least as long as the tenure process
   g. The mid-career/ later career mentoring is rarely discussed

3. Expectations regarding Promotion and Tenure
   a. Consider rewards for both mentors and mentees
   b. Consider motivations for both (mentors and mentees)

4. Characteristics for Mentoring
   a. Consider not assigning mentors, because trust between mentors and mentees is paramount.
   b. Consider how to develop the faculty attitude that many should be involved in mentoring.
   c. Trust and confidentiality are paramount, because mentees need to know that they can confide in their mentor.
   d. There should be an appreciation for power dynamics, since mentors are usually chairs or faculty voting on tenure.

5. Difficulties or uncharted areas:
   a. Little mid-career and end-career mentoring.
   b. Admission and discussion of problems that affect academic/research performance.
   c. Crucial Conversations: (Patterson, et al.) is a recommended book for mentors or chairs needing to have difficult conversations.
   d. Mediation training can be useful for mentors.
   e. Mentors and chair should know about mental health resources for faculty, staff, and students.
Issues to consider when mentoring graduate student and post-docs

- Good mentoring will:
  - Offer time management advice so that they set include time for career growth and progress.
  - Offer conflict resolution with advisors and students or advisors.
  - Encouraging social interactions between faculty, post-docs, and graduate students.

- There are power dynamics, which can influence whether grad students and post-docs seek help or mentoring.

- Techniques and policies for increasing mentoring and its quality:
  - Department chair approval for TA/RA reappointment (depending on evidence of yearly meetings or progress).
  - Orientation and periodic review of department policies.
  - Involve graduate students / post-docs in mentoring processes and department policies.
  - Consider TA training as a place where mentoring starts.