

Chemistry Department Mentoring Plan

Fall 2017

All new faculty in the department will be mentored according to this plan; this includes not only tenure-track assistant professors, but also visiting faculty who are appointed for 1 year or more and new lab instructors. Colleagues in all these categories are referred to below generally as “new faculty.” While mentoring in a department such as ours is often an ongoing, informal activity—and we want to encourage these informal interactions among all department members—the following are the minimum official mentoring activities that will be carried out for all new faculty.

- Each year a new faculty member will meet with each of his/her two department mentors each semester, for a total of four meetings. These meetings should be informal (probably over lunch or coffee), and they are completely separate from the annual meeting process that is coupled to evaluation. These meetings serve as a chance for the new faculty member to ask questions and for the mentors to better understand ways they and/or other members of the department might help the new faculty member in his/her role in the department and at the College.
- One mentor will be the current Chair of the department. The second mentor should be another senior faculty member; if there are no other senior members of the department, the second mentor can be chosen from a different department. For lab instructors, the second mentor may be a lab instructor with at least 3 years' experience at Smith.
- For the first year, the Chair will select the second mentor, normally based on shared interests in teaching/research. At the end of the first year, the new faculty member can select a new mentor if s/he wishes. In fact, it might be advisable to vary mentors during the probationary period, to make sure the new faculty member has the opportunity to get to know multiple members of the department.
- For tenure-track faculty, this formal mentoring will continue throughout the probationary period, i.e. until the tenure decision. For visiting faculty, this mentoring will continue throughout the appointment or for 5 years, whichever comes first. For new lab instructors, this mentoring will continue for 3 years.
- We wish to emphasize that the Chemistry Department fully expects mentoring to occur outside these formal guidelines. Faculty beyond the probationary period may (and should) seek out mentoring from colleagues, and new faculty should feel welcome to ask for advice and guidance from faculty other than their two assigned mentors. We also encourage new faculty to engage in peer mentoring of each other when possible, since cohorts of new faculty can provide each other with critical support and a unique perspective.