

# DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING: DEVELOPING THE FACULTY SCHOLAR MODEL PROJECT

## MENTORING GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

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### ***What is mentoring?***

Mentoring is primarily a relationship between two or more people. It is concerned with the growth and development of the mentee (herein referred to as the individual), in regard to their career and personal maturity. Mentoring is not an instructional exercise rather it is the private informal dialogue between the individual and the mentor that focuses on supporting the development of the individual. The mentoring relationship is non-judgmental and there are no formal reporting requirements associated. Mentoring is a valued staff development method. In a survey of over 350 companies involved in leadership development, those initiatives reported as most successful were ones that included mentoring programs (Giber, Carter, Goldsmith, 1999).

### ***What is the role of the mentor?***

Mentoring relationships are power free and should be based on trust, acknowledgment of mutual benefit, confidentiality, and sound, responsible and respectful communication. Mentors need to be positive, and provide constructive and honest feedback in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Mentors are facilitators and teachers, they are like a sounding board enabling the individual to discover and determine their development requirements and then work towards developing these requirements. To do this the Mentor will typically:

- establish a non-threatening relationship in which individuals feel safe and secure raising and talking about issues;
- assist the individual to reflect on their actions, thoughts, beliefs and feelings;
- listen, clarify, reflect on and, when called for, challenge the individual's actions, thoughts and beliefs;

- assist the individual to develop strategies for analysing and solving problems and becoming effective decision makers,
- share insights of their own expertise and experience to help the individual's development,
- provide guidance to the individual on the topics for discussions within the relationship, and
- provide information on further professional contacts as appropriate. (Adapted from University of Queensland Mentoring at UQ Website)

As a mentor it is important to establish the parameters and conditions of the mentoring relationship. You are not expected, as a mentor to engage in counseling that should be addressed by an appropriately trained professional. As such it is important to be honest and only address issues within the realm of your expertise and experience.

### ***How can mentoring be done well?***

The success of the mentoring relationship in the context of the Distributive Leadership Project, relies on:

- a considered and effective mechanism for the selection of an appropriate mentor based on the development needs and personal choice of the individual; and the mentor having an understanding of the organisational environment within which the individual operates;
- the voluntary participation of both the mentor and the individual,
- clearly negotiated roles, expectations and responsibilities for the mentor, the individual and the relationship; and
- a fault-free arrangement that enables the organisation of a new mentor in the case of the original mentor being a mismatch.
- regular meetings between the mentor and mentee (Note: responsibility for scheduling and organising these meetings rests with the mentee) .

### ***How should the mentoring process operate?***

Following are some suggestions for establishing and maintaining an effective mentoring relationship.

1. The mentee will negotiate the initial meeting, at this meeting:

- a. the mentee will share their understanding of the purpose and outcomes for the mentoring relationship; you can share your perspective and make suggestions for establishing and maintaining an effective mentoring relationship.
  - b. negotiate the protocols and practices for the mentoring relationship (e.g. the pre-meeting preparation that is required by the mentee, possible discussion starters or triggers, a meeting agenda format etc.); and
  - c. determine the frequency and anticipated length of the mentoring meetings (e.g. monthly for an hour) and schedule the meetings.
2. Attend all scheduled meetings.
  3. It is useful to document brief notes on what was discussed and/or decided in each meeting, and establish any areas for follow-up in subsequent meetings.

**Note:** Mentoring is being facilitated, in the context of the Distributive Leadership Project, in various ways including: peer mentoring, strategic leadership coaching by a senior leader, mentoring with the institutional facilitator and individual mentoring with a chosen mentor. It is important to note that the mentoring relationship has been included in the Distributive Leadership Project as a proven evidence-based strategy conducive to leadership capacity development. However, it is not a compulsory activity and as such individuals may decide not to engage in this personal mentoring relationship.

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