



Teaching-Mentoring Experiences of Faculty in a College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

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CALS Council for Teaching Enhancement and Innovation (2013-present)

- ***Broad charge to the Council:*** Support College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALs) educational activities by identifying needs and providing input to the CALs dean and appropriate Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) entities.
- More specifically, we envision the Council to be a body of faculty empowered to provide input and suggestions to the dean regarding specific projects or needs associated with teaching and learning in CALs/IFAS.



CALS Council for Teaching Enhancement and Innovation

- Support and **mentoring** of teaching faculty
 - Provide input and recommendations for clarifying and assessment of teaching load.
 - Propose – and work with the dean to help implement – new clearer guidelines for peer evaluation.
 - Provide input and feedback on revised guidelines for teaching section of tenure and promotion packets.
 - **Work with the dean to develop a mentoring system for faculty with substantive teaching appointments.**



Project 1

Aim: To describe the departmental policies for mentoring new faculty

Methods: Contact was made with all department chairs

Findings: Departments vary from formal policies to no policy.

Gap?: Unclear as to the role of mentoring committees in regards to teaching.

(Diane Roland & others)



Project 2

Aim → to explore the teaching-mentoring experiences of faculty in CALS.

- Questionnaire based on tool developed by B.C. Greiman, (2002) dissertation.
- August 2015, pre-tenured, non-tenured (≤ 8 years employed), and recently tenured faculty (2014-2015) invited to participate through Qualtrics.[®]



In regards to the interactions with my teaching mentor, my mentor has:

- Thought highly of me.
- Served as a role model.
- Conveyed feelings of respect.
- Provided support and encouragement.
- Been willing to discuss my questions and concerns.
- Served as a sounding board for me to develop and understand myself.
- Been someone I could confide in.
- Been someone I could trust.
- Accepted me as a competent colleague etc.

**rated from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”*



In regards to the interactions with my teaching mentor:

- The relationship has been a positive experience.
- I am glad I had the opportunity to interact with my mentor.
- The relationship has been successful.
- If I had it to do over again, I would want to have the same mentor.
- I was satisfied with the interaction.

**rated from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”*



To what extent did you **need assistance** during your first year of teaching?

Professional roles/responsibilities

To what extent were you **satisfied** with the assistance provided by your teaching mentor?

**rated from "Very satisfied" to "Very Dissatisfied"*



My teaching mentor and I:

- Have similar values and attitudes.
- Are alike in a number of areas.
- Have similar working styles.
- See things in much the same way.
- Have similar teaching philosophies.



**rated from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”*



Results

On average, respondents' appointments were:

- 44.2% Teaching
- 21.7% Research
- 19.1% Extension



Results

Mentoring Committee (45 responses)

- 23 do or did have a mentoring committee.
- 22 did not.
- Of the 23 with a committee:
 - 52% assigned a committee by the unit leader
 - 33% self-selected the committee
- Most committees were made up of three members.
- Most met with the committee 1-2 times a year.



Results

Mentors

- Of 46 respondents, 34 did NOT have a specific mentor appointed/selected to advise them on their teaching.
- 22 (of 48 responses) did NOT have a mentor who advised them in their teaching.
- Of those who had a mentoring committee, just 12 (of 23) said this “teaching mentor” was part of the mentoring committee.



In regards to the interactions with my teaching mentor,
my mentor has:
(highest ranked responses)

Been someone I could trust.	3.76
Been willing to discuss my questions and concerns.	3.76
Served as a role model.	3.71
Accepted me as a competent colleague etc.	3.67
Conveyed feelings of respect.	3.67

**rated from 1="Strongly Disagree" to 4="Strongly Agree"*

To what extent did you need assistance during your first year of teaching?

#	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Considerable	Response	Average Value
1	Advising undergraduate students	5	4	9	1	1	20	2.45
2	Mentoring graduate students	4	5	6	5	-	20	2.60
3	Assigning grades	6	6	8	-	-	20	2.10
4	Developing rapport with students	8	7	5	-	-	20	1.85
5	Evaluating student assignments	6	11	3	-	-	20	1.85
6	Managing daily tasks	7	9	2	2	-	20	1.95
7	Managing personal stress	4	4	9	3	-	20	2.55
8	Managing the classroom	10	4	5	1	-	20	1.85
9	Managing time	5	5	7	2	1	20	2.45
10	Motivating students	6	5	7	2	-	20	2.25
11	Planning teaching activities	5	6	8	-	1	20	2.30
12	Practicing self-analysis (reflection)	4	8	6	2	-	20	2.30
13	Teaching effectively	3	5	9	3	-	20	2.60
14	Using educational technology	5	3	8	3	1	20	2.60

To what extent were you satisfied with the assistance provided by your teaching mentor?

#	Question	Did Not Receive	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Response	Average Value
1	Advising undergraduate students	5	-	-	3	11	19	3.79
2	Mentoring graduate students	6	-	1	4	8	19	3.42
3	Assigning grades	7	-	1	3	8	19	3.26
4	Developing rapport with students	7	-	1	3	7	18	3.17
5	Evaluating student assignments	6	-	1	2	10	19	3.53
6	Managing daily tasks	7	-	1	2	9	19	3.32
7	Managing personal stress	5	-	1	3	10	19	3.68
8	Managing the classroom	6	-	1	3	7	17	3.29
9	Managing time	5	-	1	4	9	19	3.63
10	Motivating students	6	-	1	2	9	18	3.44
11	Planning teaching activities	4	-	1	2	12	19	3.95
12	Practicing self-analysis (reflection)	4	-	1	3	11	19	3.89
13	Teaching effectively	4	-	1	3	11	19	3.89
14	Using educational technology	3	-	1	5	10	19	4.00



Conclusions

- Experiences with teaching mentors were positive, even with perceived differences in working styles, attitudes, and philosophies.
- New faculty have varied needs that can be successfully met through teaching-mentoring, but many new faculty did not have a formal or informal teaching mentor.
- Teaching, particularly in the first year, is often challenging but may be enhanced through increased teaching mentorship



Where do we go from here?

- New peer teaching assessment procedures:
 - **Formation and Composition of the Peer Teaching Assessment Committee:** ...The committee should consist of at least three members. It is recommended that ***at least one member of the instructor's mentoring committee who has an interest in teaching*** serve on the peer teaching assessment committee.



Questions?