

## **Florida Atlantic University CREATING A MENTOR PROGRAM**

Developing a mentor program is one way of formalizing the relationship between new faculty/staff and existing faculty/staff in a professional University environment. Mentor programs offer an avenue in which to develop beneficial one-on-one relationships between new employees and existing employees. Acting as a friend, a coach, and a guide to the 'University' world, mentors have the opportunity to encourage and advise new faculty/staff by sharing their own experiences and knowledge of the profession. This reference sheet provides a model of how to organize a program to assist new employees with their career development and transitions.

### **BENEFITS OF A MENTOR PROGRAM**

A successful mentor program provides opportunities for new employees to...

- Explore the world of work through interaction with professionals in field of their choice.
- Gain an experienced practitioner's perspective on applying concepts to real-life situations.
- Familiarize themselves with collegiate protocol.
- Identify long-term professional development needs.
- Realize the value of networking.
- Develop a meaningful professional relationship over a period of time.

A mentor program benefits faculty/professionals by allowing them to....

- Contribute to the professional development of the University workforce.
- Assist new faculty/staff in beginning successful careers.
- Give something back to the profession/University.

### **HOW TO ORGANIZE A MENTOR PROGRAM IN YOUR DEPARTMENT/COLLEGE**

As mentor programs are organized, it is important to develop some basic guidelines. Who will be eligible to participate? How long will the mentor relationship last? How will the new employee and existing FAU faculty/professionals be matched?

A college/department may wish to form a committee or identify a designated coordinator to implement the program. Enrollment forms should be developed for those interested in participating in order to maintain oversight as well as measure effectiveness of program. Mentors will usually be assigned for a specified amount of time such as one semester or one academic year. The time period should be decided in advance and communicated to potential mentors so they understand what their time commitment will be.

Once established, the Mentor Committee or Coordinator will do the following:

**1. Establish requirements for participation in the program and create enrollment forms. These may vary from one department/college to another. *Some sample requirements for consideration:***

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| Faculty/Staff: | Must be a new FAU employee.<br>Must actively participate and support University/college events.<br>Must complete a mentor application.   |
| Mentors:       | Must be a faculty or staff member of FAU.<br>Must actively participate and support college/departmental events.<br>Must be willing to commit to the mentor program for a specified period of time. |

**2. Establish specific mentor activities and guidelines. Sample guidelines:**

- Mentor should make initial contact with protégé within one week of assignment.
- Mentors should communicate with protégés at least once every two weeks.
- Mentors and protégés must complete at least one activity per month. (a list of Suggested Activities is provided at the end of this document.)
- Protégés should keep a mentor program journal.

### **3. Acquire faculty and staff mentors for the program.**

- Publicize the mentor program through New Hire Orientation, HR Weekly, Newsletters, University Announcements and departmental meetings as well as through personal contacts.
- Provide an enrollment form that faculty/professionals can complete and return to indicate their interest in being a mentor.

### **4. Match mentors with protégés.**

- Design a system to match faculty/staff with new faculty/staff based on factors such as mutual areas of professional interest, schedules, geographic proximity, etc.
- Conduct interviews and/or an orientation meeting to clarify areas of interest and commitment level of participants.
- Make assignments and provide participants with a brief biography of their new mentor or protégé.
- Establish an initial date by which mentors and protégés should make contact.

### **5. Monitor and evaluate the results of the program.**

In order to ensure that the mentor program is meeting its objectives, it is important to maintain open communication with all participants and to actively solicit feedback on the results.

- Follow-up with participants to ensure that mentors and protégés have made initial contact by suggested deadline date.
- Request a written summary of their mentor experience from all participants at the mid-point and end of the mentoring period.
- Conduct periodic group meetings or socials and discuss ways to improve the program.
- Conduct year-end interviews or group meetings to ask for program feedback.
- Have all participants complete a program evaluation form at the end of the program.

Use the information obtained through these meetings and evaluations to assist current participants in achieving their goals for the program and to improve the mentor program for future mentors and protégés.

#### **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:**

- ◇ Utilization of Campus Announcements for Listing Academic, Social and/or Cultural Activities
- ◇ Chamber of Commerce listing of events for local cities
- ◇ Campus Lunches
- ◇ Joint Research Projects
- ◇ Joint Personal Development Programs

If you are interested in initiating a Mentoring Program in your college/department, contact the Diversity Committee to express interest. The Office of Training & Diversity is available to assist you!