TIPS FOR FACULTY MENTORING
College of Engineering and Applied Science
University of Colorado Boulder

The following tips to improve mentoring of junior faculty resulted from workshops on Faculty Mentoring, led by Dean Robert Davis, as part of the College’s New Faculty Orientation.

1. **What has worked well in past mentoring relationships?**
   1.1 Open, regular, direct communication on different subjects (not just academic and career, but also work/life balance, etc.).
   1.2 Advice by senior faculty on information that they feel is important for young faculty to have (grants, networking).
   1.3 Open door policy by the whole department. Others in the department need to be available and willing to help, not just the assigned mentor.
   1.4 Junior faculty group within the department getting to know each other, having meetings and socializing.
   1.5 Ask your mentor anything – there are no “stupid” questions.
   1.6 Pick an outstanding researcher as your mentor.

2. **What do you as a new faculty member hope to achieve through mentoring?**
   2.1 How to best allocate (distribute) time between teaching, research, and service.
   2.2 How to deal with students (teaching, research, grade complaints).
   2.3 Guidelines on service activities and leadership in department, college, profession.
   2.4 A mentor who considers the best interests of the mentee and is available to provide advice and support on a regular basis.
   2.5 Multiple mentors who might relate to different areas – some formal, some informal.
   2.6 Personal advice from the mentor (balancing priorities, supervision, how to deal with students’ personal problems, etc.).

3. **As an experienced faculty member, what advice do you have for new faculty?**
   3.1 Set the bar high, and be willing to let a group member go if s/he continues to perform below expectations.
   3.2 Take advantage of the strengths around you and the opportunities to collaborate.
   3.3 Talk to each faculty colleague about his or her work, and ask for a lab tour, to explore common interests.
   3.4 Get to know researchers around the U.S. and in other countries through conferences and journal publications.
   3.5 Visit granting agencies and speak to program directors about your ideas and grant opportunities.
   3.6 Reinforce concepts during a class meeting, as most learning is lost if not reinforced within 90 minutes.
   3.7 Create networks with other people, at all levels.
   3.8 Be yourself – develop your own research projects and teaching style, and tell your own stories.
   3.9 Work on things that you enjoy, and take a positive approach to pursue them.
   3.10 Start on new research problems from the beginning. Gather data so that you can publish papers and prepare proposals.
   3.11 Don’t lecture.
   3.12 Consider multi-year time horizons in your planning.
   3.13 Be selective in your commitments – it is okay to say “no”.
   3.14 If you get a good office, keep it!
   3.15 Get organized early on, and be consistent in teaching your courses and your expectations of students.
   3.16 Seek research projects that get students excited.
3.17 A faculty position is the best job in the world, with multiple facets: teaching, research, entrepreneurship, leadership.

3.18 Make use of the campus Faculty Teaching Excellence Program.

3.19 Start filling out your Faculty Report of Professional Activities early, adding new papers and grants, etc. as they are accepted and not waiting until the due date.

3.20 Sit in on the classes of other faculty members.

3.21 Organize research group activities, to build community.

3.22 Good annual reviews do not guarantee a positive tenure review, which has a broader basis.

3.23 Read the guidelines for the Faculty Report of Professional Activities (FRPA) when you first start, so you are prepared and keep track of input data.

3.24 Work hard but maintain a balanced life.

3.25 Enjoy your job.

3.26 Don’t forget about the students.

3.27 Don’t overprepare your lectures.