

Memorandum

Date: April 6, 2020

To: Interested CU Boulder Faculty

From: Michele Moses, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs,
Karen Tracy, Associate Director of Faculty Relations

Re: UCB Faculty Mentoring Program

Overview

An interdepartmental mentoring program, created and overseen by Faculty Relations in the Office of Faculty Affairs, will be providing pre-tenure faculty with senior faculty mentors from other units. The program is designed to give mentees a different perspective and a sense of safety that may not be possible when a person's mentor is someone who will be assessing their performance. This pilot mentoring program will begin in August 2020. Any tenure-track faculty member prior to the year they go up for tenure could apply to be a mentee. Any tenured associate or full professor may self-nominate to be a mentor. Should the demand for the program be above the pilot projection size of 25 pairs, historically unrepresented faculty will be given priority. Faculty members not assigned in the first year would be encouraged to reapply the next year and would be given priority in the following year.

Mentoring pairs are expected to meet at least once monthly from September 2020 till August 2021. An orientation, which will include an introduction to the partner and a session to help both parties develop reasonable expectations, will occur in August 2020 [date to be announced later].

Mentoring pair assignments will be based on information supplied in the applications, as well as with the help of the CUB Faculty Mentoring Advisory Committee (a group composed of representatives of each college).

Rationale

CU Boulder is committed to being an exemplary 21st-century public university that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable. In the service of achieving and sustaining that goal, the 2019 *Inclusion, Diversity, and Excellence in Academics Plan* (IDEA Plan) identified career mentoring and professional development as a way for CU-Boulder to move forward its commitment. The IDEA Plan specifically recommended the creation of "a program to connect junior faculty with more senior Boulder faculty outside their department" (p. 19).

Discipline/department-specific mentoring programs, although varying in their elaborateness, exist in virtually all CU units. These programs are a necessary and vital part of the university supporting faculty growth and development, but they are insufficient if they are the sole means of mentoring faculty. As the IDEA Plan recognized, there is a need for a mentoring program that crosses departmental boundaries. A mentee in a cross-departmental program can more easily bring their real self to exchanges, rather than worrying that negative assessments of their competence will be made if they reveal too much. Also, a mentor outside the department brings a different perspective to difficulties a mentee may be facing, including having no investment in conflicts that might be lively in a department.

The Pilot Program

The pilot program would include 15-25 pairs of faculty, with partners coming from different units, who commit to meeting once a month from September to August. During the two pilot years (2020-21 and 2021-22), the mentees would be pre-tenure faculty, and the mentors would be tenured faculty. After the pilot concludes, and if resources are available, the program would expand to include instructors, and clinical and research faculty, as well as creating co-mentoring possibilities for tenured faculty at the Associate Professor level. Options for group mentoring would also be considered.

Faculty for mentee and mentor roles should apply to the program, supplying information in their applications that will enable the Faculty Relations Office, with input from a cross-college faculty advisory committee, to assign pairs, and to recruit any additional needed faculty members as mentors. Any tenure-track faculty member prior to the year they go up for tenure could apply to be a mentee. Faculty members not assigned in any year would be encouraged to reapply the next year and would be given priority the following year. The reason to have the program open to all faculty and *not* restrict the mentoring program to only faculty of color or women in certain disciplines is threefold. First, faculty of all backgrounds need support and will benefit from a mentoring program. Second, a program that includes only faculty from historically unrepresented groups is more easily framed or understood by its participants to be remedial in character. Finally, combatting subtle forms of bias that white and/or male individuals may hold is likely to be facilitated by whites and/or men having friendly, extended professional relationships with individual people of color and/or women. That is, the mentoring program expects there to be satisfactions to be gained by serving as a mentor, and the program aims to foster personal growth among mentors as well as with mentees.

Support by the Faculty Relations Office would be provided to the pairs across the year including, (a) a 4-6 hour opening training session, (b) a phone call check-in with mentees and mentors in the first semester to spot problems and offer help in solving them, and (c) an end-of-year gathering, which would include some kind of program assessment. In addition, we are in the process of developing training sessions for faculty desiring to improve their mentoring skills, whether they are participants in this program, are mentors in their department or college program, or want to better work with graduate and undergraduate students. The aim is to roll out training sessions starting in 2021.

Faculty Mentoring Advisory Committee

Senior faculty members from each college have agreed to serve on the UCB Faculty Mentoring Advisory Committee. Committee members would help recruit strong mentors from their units and would offer advice about mentor-mentee pairings. Advisory committee members include:

- Kirk Ambrose, A&S, Humanities
- Karen Ashcraft, CMCI
- Juliann Coutre, Libraries
- Erin Furtak, Education
- John Lynch, Business
- Shelly Miller, Engineering
- Patricia Rankin, A&S, Physics
- Daniel Sher, Music
- Mark Squillace, Law

Content of Fall semester Mentee-Mentor Training

At the half-day Fall semester training, an overview of the CU-mentoring program would be provided, and participants would fill out a brief pre-mentoring program survey. Part of the training session would involve mentoring partners meeting with each other to discuss the following kinds of questions:

- Who is responsible for scheduling meetings?
- What type of in-between follow-up would be helpful?
- Where and how will we meet (in-person/virtual)?
- How we will handle meeting cancellation?
- Mentee's top 3 expectations of a mentor:
- Mentor's top 3 expectations of the mentee:
- How will we provide feedback to each other?

Deadline for Mentee and Mentor Applications is Friday, May 1, 2020