

## **Junior Faculty Mentoring Plan: Department of Classics**

Because of the relatively small size of the Department of Classics, mentoring of junior faculty has traditionally been conducted in an informal way, with senior members regularly reading their junior colleagues' work, conversing about research in progress, and offering guidance about career-strategy. We believe that this informal approach remains valid, but we also recognize the need to create a more stable set of procedures and guidelines that offers junior colleagues a reliable and transparent mentoring plan. To this end, we propose the following measures:

1. At the start of the first year of employment, one senior member of the department is to be formally assigned as an academic mentor for an incoming junior colleague. The role of that mentor will be to advise on setting realistic and timely academic goals, e.g. in seeking a book-contract, in choosing journals to which articles may best be submitted, and in considering how many and which conferences to attend. At the same time, the mentor will be expected to advise on practical matters such as, e.g., (i) how best to organize time, (ii) the avoidance of excessive and undue administrative service, (iii) how to navigate the different parts of Columbia's complex bureaucratic structure.
2. As of now, the Department of Classics has little or no formal procedure for assessing, at the end of the first year of employment, the quality of scholarly research/publication and of teaching performance in the first year. We propose to strengthen this assessment process by appointing a three-person subcommittee (one member of which will be the mentor mentioned in 1 above) which will meet with the junior colleague before the end of the first year of employment. The charge of that subcommittee will be partly to review the first-year performance, but also to advise on the colleague's trajectory for research and teaching (especially in the area of course development) in the summer months leading up to the second year of employment.
3. While the colleague's mentor will continue to play an overseeing role in the second year, we propose that the review process as conducted at the end of the first year of employment (as set out in 2 above) be repeated at the end of the second year. Again, the trajectory of research and teaching will be paramount, with progress towards publication a key topic for discussion.
4. At the start of the third year, we propose that junior colleagues automatically meet with the department chair so as to clarify what the timeline is towards submission of all

materials for the third-year review; the precise nature of those materials; how the department plans to organize and conduct the review; and when the colleague can expect to receive news of the outcome of the review after the materials have been submitted to the central administration in Arts and Sciences.

5. If the third-year review is successfully completed, we propose that before the junior developmental leave is taken in the fourth year, the junior colleague again meets with the departmental subcommittee to discuss the trajectory of research to be conducted during the leave.
6. After the leave-year, the junior colleague will be expected to meet with her departmental mentor and/or the given subcommittee to review the research-progress made during the leave, to assess the range of publications already in print or under press- or journal-review, and to clarify goals and expectations for work completed by the time of the fifth-year review. At the end of the fourth year, the subcommittee will convene once more, but not just to review progress in the usual way. Before the summer preceding the fifth year review, the colleague will be given specific advice about the nature and expectations of that impending review process.
7. At the beginning of the fifth year, the colleague will meet with the departmental chair to clarify (as in the case of the third year review) the timeline of the fifth-year review, the timetable for the preparation of all materials for that review, and what is at stake in that review. As and when that review has been completed and the central administration has sanctioned continuing employment down to and through the tenure-process in the sixth year and beyond, the junior colleague will meet with her mentoring subcommittee before the end of the fifth year so as to establish goals and priorities in preparing material for the tenure-process that lies ahead.

Such are the seven procedural steps that we propose to formalize in our mentoring scheme for junior faculty down to and immediately beyond the critical fifth-year review. The key point to stress in each of these steps, however, is that the department requires formalized meetings between junior and senior faculty at each stage so as to prioritize clear and unambiguous communication between the two parties. Whatever strategies of mentoring we deploy, we see strong and structured communication as by far the greatest desideratum; hence the importance attached to that need in the above scheme.