Setting Mentoring Goals

All of the research shows that the tighter the goal, the better the outcome

"If you don't know where you are going all roads will take you there."

In situations where mentee satisfaction is lower:

- Goal uncertain or unspecified
- Mentor didn't get to know mentee
- No ability for mentor to change situation, intervene, or advocate
- Mentee felt the problem too big for mentoring

Lessons learned about best practices:

- Goal clear
- Less philosophizing and more focus on specific goal
- Specificity in goal: (e.g. complete book prospectus. Revise article. Improve classroom assignments.)
- Clear expectations between mentor and mentee
- Work w/ mentor’s strengths (expertise, experience, networks, etc.) to set your goals

Tips for Identifying Goals

Two kinds of goals:

**Developmental**: broad and deal with long term career advancement

**Learning**: narrower, and deal with increasing knowledge, developing skills, or improving performance over a shorter term.

Possible goals:

- Balance competing time demands for teaching, research, service
- Clarity about promotion process
- Work/life integration
- Assembling a promotion dossier
- Choosing external reviewers
- Strategies to document teaching and research effectiveness
- Determine publication outlets
- Improve teaching
- Help finding resources, grants
- Guidance about publications (review of rejection letters, book prospectus)
- Help establishing new professional relationships
- Advice about service work
- Advice on hostile work climate
- Advice on conflict resolution
- Advice on dealing with chair
- Dealing with burnout
What sources of input can you use to help you identify goals and potential obstacles to achievement them?

- Observations about yourself: where are your stress points, your strengths? What excites you about your work? What motivates you? What undermines your productivity? What are your priorities?
- Comments made to you in performance evaluations (pubs, grant reviews, annual reviews, etc.)
- Oklahoma State University's performance standards: benchmarks
- Professional association/audience's benchmarks

**Articulate goals to mentors:**

- Write a research statement
- Write a teaching statement
- Identify your preliminary goals: be ready to explain them and reasons you selected them.
- Most successful goals are **Concrete, Achievable, Measurable**
- Agree upon and discuss a few specific goals (development and learning goals).
- Discuss w/ your mentors how your goals will be achieved.
- Discuss what kind of support your mentors will provide for THE YEAR.
- Develop a Plan: (first semester, second semester) and put a timetable in writing

**Stay on Track:**

- Don't let much time go by without seeing your mentors. Keep the relationship active.
- Try to be focused about your needs/goals each time you meet.

**Good Practices for Mentors**


- Recognize the hesitation of some mentees
  - Be proactive in meeting with your mentee.
- Disclose your own failures and letdowns
  - Share situations in which you have demonstrated persistence in overcoming challenges and disappointments.
- Discuss "critical incidents"
  - Discuss hurtful or confusing work situations while offering support and guidance.
- Understand gender schemas
  - Become educated on gender schemas and help to develop strategies to overcome them.
- Teach mentees how to self-promote
  - Brainstorm ways to self-promote that are comfortable to the mentee.
- Provide career-advancement guidance
  - Discuss formal policies and procedures as well as the unwritten rules. Introduce mentees to others leaders who might provide access to new opportunities. Give honest feedback.
- Recognize different career paths
  - Recognize and appreciate unconventional career paths and decisions.
Good Practices for Mentees


Be proactive
   Actively seek meetings with your mentor. Ask a lot of questions

Demonstrate openness to feedback and coaching
   Listen carefully and non-defensively to advice. Incorporate insights that make sense.
   When you act on advice, share that information with your mentor.

Communicate openly and directly
   Be clear about what you need and how your mentor can help.

Keep your expectations reasonable
   Recognize that one mentor cannot meet all of your needs or know everything there is to know.

Build a mentoring network
   Seek out people who can provide a range of advice and support: your own board of directors, if you will. These people may include others at OSU, within your profession, in the community, and more.