



**Center for Advancement
of Faculty Excellence**

**Departmental Faculty Mentoring
Program Guidelines**

Revised August 2025

Departmental Mentoring Program Guidelines for New Faculty

INTRODUCTION TO THE MENTORING PROGRAM

Intent

The Departmental Mentoring Program at Austin Peay State University is designed to provide guidance to new faculty in their first year for their success as valued members of the APSU community through the utilization of a departmental mentor/resource. In this program, experienced faculty members, selected from the department by the department chairperson, assist new faculty in adjusting to the myriad roles of professor, including teaching, advising, scholarship, service, and campus culture.

The roles of mentor and mentee are intended to be dynamic and interactive, thereby making the success of the relationship dependent upon constructing meaningful dialogues and designing tangible actions. In higher education, new faculty mentoring programs provide the opportunity to share pertinent and valuable information, including resources, support, and cross-disciplinary collaboration and discussion.

Duration of the Mentoring Commitment

The length of the mentorship set forth in the letter of intent will be one academic year. Mentors will serve for a maximum of two consecutive years. Longer terms of service will be at the discretion of the Director of CAFE in concert with the Provost.

EXPECTED BENEFITS OF THE APSU NEW FACULTY MENTORING PROGRAM TO THE UNIVERSITY AND TO THE MENTORS

- satisfaction in assisting in the professional development of a colleague
- ideas and feedback to improve teaching, scholarship, and service for mentor and mentee
- a network of colleagues who have previously participated in the program
- retention of excellent faculty colleagues
- enhancement of department quality

SUGGESTED QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE ROLE OF MENTOR

- a successful track record of working with students
- a working knowledge of the culture of Austin Peay State University, including ideas about APSU's mission and vision
- familiarity with APSU's policies on retention, tenure, and promotion
- a sense of supportiveness coupled with good networking skills
- a knowledge of effective instructional methods and activities, along with the ability to organize and plan effectively
- a sincere desire to build constructive, positive relationships between the mentor and mentee, as well as between the mentee and the institution
- the ability to listen and be compassionate

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS

The mentor shall:

- maintain regular contact with the mentee, preferably through face-to-face meetings, (for example, at least once a month)
- help the mentee make the transition to the university community; including introducing the mentee to the larger academic community
- suggest strategies for effective teaching; possibly observing one course meeting and provide informal feedback (if not already serving as a formal peer reviewer)
- introduce the mentee to avenues and pathways to future publications, presentations and creative activities
- assist with the organization and content of the first dossier
- advise on departmental retention, tenure, and promotion requirements and processes
- provide guidance on university and college policies
- refer the mentee to other mentoring resources when needed
- inform the mentee and the chair/director when the relationship needs to be modified

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTEE

The mentee shall:

- maintain regular contact with the mentor, preferably through face-to-face meeting
- attend the regularly scheduled meetings (refer to contract) for first year faculty
- request their mentor observe at least one of their classes during the academic year of the mentoring period and discuss the class
- request through their chair an opportunity to observe a class by a more experienced faculty within the academic unit
- inform the mentor and the chair/director when the relationship needs to be modified

MENTOR/MENTEE ASSIGNMENT

Mentors and mentees will be determined by the recommendation of the Department Chair/Director. The Office of Academic Affairs in partnership with the Director of the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE) will review for final approval.

Faculty mentors and mentees, along with the department chairperson, must review and sign the Department Faculty Mentoring Agreement and return, via email, to the CAFE Director. This agreement summarizes the goals of the mentoring program and roles and responsibilities of the department chairperson, mentor, and mentee.

SUPPORTING AND ASSESSING THE MENTOR/MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

- Both the Mentors and mentees will be asked to complete brief check-in surveys at mid-semester in both the fall and spring terms (October 15 and March 15).

- Mentors and Mentees will be asked to provide specific feedback on the mentoring relationship and the mentoring program in general, at the end of each term (December 1 and May 1).
- Mentors and mentees can request mediation at any time by contacting the CAFE Director (for mentors) or the FYF Facilitators (for mentees). The purpose of mediation is to provide the opportunity for the mentor or mentee to address any issues or conflicts that may have arisen prior to dissolving the relationship.
- Mentors and mentees can request dissolution of the relationship at any time, but at least one attempt at mediation is recommended.

FUNDING FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Mentors and mentees can each request up to \$300 in funding for professional development (PD) activities and resources. Examples of PD related activities/resources are (see Appendix C for more details regarding what mentoring funds can/cannot be used for):

- Travel related to research, teaching and learning, or advising
- Professional conference registration fees
- Books, classroom materials, devices to enhance teaching and learning
- Webinars related to discipline professional development
- Discipline-related materials for the Woodward Library
- Technology for the purpose of professional development (may need IT preapproval)*

Faculty participating in the program request funds by submitting the “Departmental Mentoring Program Fund Request Form” which is provided via email to all mentors and mentees and on the CAFE website. Note: only designated forms for the current year will be accepted.

The priority deadline for submitting fund request forms is **December 1**. Final deadline for submitting fund request forms is **April 1**. All funds must be spent by **June 1**.

Funds will also be used for mentoring specific events and programs offered by CAFE.

KEY TOPICS

Subsequent pages include key topics for discussion between the mentor and mentee. Particularly focused on:

- Retention, Tenure and Promotion (RTP)
- Teaching and Advising
- University Culture

Mentors are encouraged to share their perspectives beyond these key topic areas but are asked to cover most of the topics suggested. Mentors are also asked to consider the timing of the semester and when various topics might be most relevant to mentees. For example, discussing how to handle an accommodation request made by a student, via the Student Disability Resource Center, would be most relevant earlier in the term. On the other hand, it might not be as useful to show your mentee how to enter final grades early in the term and should wait until that action is required. We have attempted to indicate best time for topic discussion (if relevant) with each topic.

KEY TOPICS FOR RETENTION, TENURE, AND PROMOTION (RTP)

An important outcome of the departmental mentor/mentee relationship is to help ensure the mentee is aware of retention, tenure and promotion (RTP) requirements, feels supported in that process, and knows where to go for additional information. NOTE: Beginning with 2023-2024 First Year Faculty cohort, the 1st dossier is not due until September of the 2nd year, when all other faculty dossiers are due. There is no longer a dossier due in January of the 1st year.

Below are suggested topics to help facilitate this outcome:

- ✓ The mentor should discuss the *Calendar for Faculty Personnel Actions* – with the mentee, including an explanation of the deadlines and where to find the calendar on Academic Affairs [webpage](#). The mentor should also remind the mentee that the time toward tenure is shortened if the mentee has received credit toward tenure as designated in the APSU contract.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: November or January and again April/May.
- ✓ The mentor should explain where to find the department's RTP criteria and how each area can be met. Additionally, if a department is engaging in revisions to the RTP criteria, the mentor should be a resource for the new faculty member and encourage them to participate fully in any and all discussions.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: October/November and again March/April
- ✓ The mentor should assist the mentee with writing narratives that are intended for a wider audience and also remind the mentee to keep all documentation (for example: emails, student course evaluations, conference proceedings) of supporting materials as evidence the departmental criteria have been met.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: November or January and again April/May

- ✓ The mentors should acquaint the mentee with all relevant personnel policies as well as acquaint the mentee with the Faculty Handbook and where it can be located on the [APSU website](#)
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: September/October
- ✓ The mentor should provide suggestions for ways to meet Area 3 criteria and assist the mentee with securing service opportunities when appropriate and available.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: January/February
- ✓ The mentor will also want to share the peer review process and departmental expectations, explain the RTP voting process and the levels of the e-dossier review.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: January/February
- ✓ Faculty with active dossiers also have the technical support of the Academic Affairs Technical Support Coordinator; the mentor should provide the contact information of this resource with the new faculty member.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: January/February

KEY TOPICS FOR TEACHING AND ADVISING

While knowing and understanding RTP requirements are very important to the success, retention and tenure of a faculty member, APSU is a teaching forward institution. We are committed to the success of our students which means we have faculty who are committed to continuous quality improvement in their teaching. The mentor serves as critical resource for new faculty in the area of teaching and advising. Listed below are examples of key topics and professional development resources in the area of teaching and advising.

- ✓ The mentee should, with direction from the mentor, identify any available resources for teaching (for example: templates for accessible syllabi, other top teachers in the department or college, textbook selection and adoption, national organizations associated with pedagogy and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning SoTL).
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: September/October
- ✓ Desire 2 Learn (D2L) is the university's identified and supported learning management system (LMS). The mentee, with the support of the mentor, should become well acquainted with this system, learn how to build their own D2L course shells and utilize university-wide resources when available and appropriate.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: September/October & again in December/January before spring term.
- ✓ The mentor should remind the mentee of the expectations regarding the D2L course support for all courses, regardless of modality; including the requirement of utilizing the gradebook and providing the syllabus to students, via D2L, 2 business days prior to the start of classes.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: Ongoing

- ✓ The mentor and mentee should discuss the importance of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and what to do if/when a faculty member suspects a student of plagiarism and/or cheating. The mentee should be made aware of the policies for reporting any suspected violations of the student code of conduct and how to refer students to the appropriate offices.
 - Suggested timing of topic discussion: October/November
- ✓ There are numerous support systems for students on campus, as well as federal reporting requirements. The mentee should be aware of when it is appropriate to issue a grade of FA/FN, reporting of mid-term grades for all 1000 & 2000 level courses, the departmental process for posting an incomplete grade as well as how and when to use the Academic Notify system.
 - Suggested timing: September/early October
- ✓ Along with learning support services, the mentee should become aware of the purpose and scope of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) and how to access and utilize the BIT form. The mentee can also be proactive and learn about the various university support systems available to students.
 - Suggested timing: as need arises
- ✓ The mentor and mentee can also discuss the availability of alternate campus terms (such as winter term, maymester and summer terms) and how enrollment in alternate terms can impact a student, both positively and negatively.
- ✓ Along with student support resources, there are many resources for faculty, for example:
 - Course-development and tech-support resources for online, hybrid, or enhanced courses: <https://www.apsu.edu/online/index.php>
 - Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence workshops, individual consultations, and other resources: <https://www.apsu.edu/academic-affairs/faculty/cafe/index.php>
 - Resources for teaching, from websites to organizations or conferences that address teaching in the discipline
 - High Impact Practices offered through the Office of Study Abroad and International Exchange, Office of Research and Student Innovation, Center for Sustainability and Community Engagement, and more
 - Procedures for assisting students who are registered with the Student Disability Resource Center. <https://www.apsu.edu/disability/index.php>

KEY TOPICS RELATED TO UNIVERSITY CULTURE

We are not what we do. Meaning, beyond following RTP criteria, and teaching and advising, committee and service work, we are individuals and each of us contributes to the culture and environment of this university. Following are suggested topics to help introduce new faculty to our culture, our history and our future (we do not have specific timing suggestions for these topics):

- ✓ APSU is a Locally Governed Institution (LGI) which means we have our own Board of Directors. Faculty should have some basic and general knowledge of the structure and purpose of this board.

- <https://www.apsu.edu/board-of-trustees/index.php>
- ✓ APSU has its own organizational structure, faculty should become familiar major divisions of the university, the role of each division, and how they work together to support students, faculty and staff.
 - <https://www.apsu.edu/governance/organizational-chart.php>
- ✓ APSU has a faculty senate. New faculty should become familiar with the process of shared governance, standing committees and the importance of participating in those processes.
 - <https://www.apsu.edu/faculty-senate/index.php>
- ✓ APSU has unique students, faculty should become familiar with who they are teaching: demographics, academic strengths and challenges, enrollments in majors, the selection of majors and career support services.
 - <https://www.apsu.edu/dsir/index.php>
- ✓ APSU has numerous campus amenities available to faculty, staff and students: Foy Fitness and Recreation Center, arts, athletics, cafeteria (meal plan availability), food court, parking, Child Learning Center, camps and classes, community outreach.
- ✓ Faculty can have a positive impact on students both in and out of the classroom. Faculty should be aware of student life on campus (organizations, ways to get involved, non-traditional, military, cultural centers).
 - <https://www.apsu.edu/student-affairs/index.php>
- ✓ Faculty can engage in professional development opportunities, apply for grants and other award programs.
 - <https://www.apsu.edu/academic-affairs/faculty/cafe/index.php>
- ✓ APSU is a regionally accredited institution. Our accrediting body is SACSCOC.
- ✓ Faculty and departments annually engage in Institutional Effectiveness processes, including a regular and robust process of identifying Student Learning Outcomes, measuring those outcomes and reporting on the results and improvement plans.
 - <https://www.apsu.edu/institutional-effectiveness/index.php>

This concludes the content portion of the Departmental Faculty Mentoring Program guidelines.

Appendices follow:

Appendix A: Sample communication and meeting plan

Appendix B: Sample mentor assessment form

Appendix C: Examples of appropriate PD fund requests

Appendix A1

Sample Communication/Meeting Plan First Semester for Mentors

August:

- Mentor/Mentee Luncheon: get to know each other, see Appendix B for common questions/discussion topics.
- Faculty Conference and Annual Meeting – perhaps attend sessions together, mentors make sure mentees know college level meeting days/times and department level meeting days/times.

September:

- Mentor email mentee regarding any accommodation notices from Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), possible FN grade submissions, Academic Notify system, student academic support resources such as writing center and learning resource center (with websites), important dates and any pertinent department information.
- Mentor/mentee use the free cafeteria lunch mid-semester to check in on how classes are going and schedule a class observation for mentor and mentor invite mentee to observe their class

October:

- Mentor email mentee regarding mid-term grade reporting (if required), requesting mid-semester student feedback on learning from CAFE, and any pertinent department information
- Mentor conducts informal (or formal if preferred) class observation
- Mentor/mentee use free lunch to meet to discuss how classes are going, if mentee is feeling overwhelmed, general check-in

November:

- Mentor email mentee regarding any student attendance issues, if mentee is concerned about a student, encourage to submit a BIT form, when/how to report an FA, along with departmental process regarding Annual Faculty Evaluation (AFE) process and expectations
- Mentor/mentee use free lunch to discuss longer term topics, such as research agenda, online teaching tools and certifications, Departmental RTP requirements

December

- Mentor email mentee regarding reporting of final grades, departmental process for reporting an Incomplete, answer questions regarding deadlines to award a W or F, graduation attendance expectations
- Mentor/mentee use free lunch to discuss semester wrap-up, possible discussion about Student Course Evaluations – where to find them, what to do with them

Other possible topics: how to locate grant opportunities, possible research/publication outlets, possible collaboration opportunities, study abroad, plugging into the university and Clarksville community

Note: this communication plan suggests mentors initiate much of the communication, however, mentees are still responsible for responding, reaching out if necessary, and contributing to the discussions.

Appendix A2
Sample Communication/Meeting Plan Second Semester for Mentors

January

- Mentor email mentee “welcome back” email along with pertinent department information/meetings including fielding questions about AFE process

February

- Mentor email mentee links to personnel calendar, departmental RTP requirements, assist mentee in meeting enhanced peer review of teaching requirements if needed
- Mentor/mentee use free lunch to catch up, discuss mentee’s plan for dossier preparation, watermark entries – also reminders about FN/FA reporting, Academic Notify, etc.

March

- Mentor email mentee mid-term grade reporting reminder, general check-in and departmental advising information
- Mentor/mentee use free lunch to discuss departmental advising processes. Mentor invites mentee to sit in on advising sessions (as available and as they arise)

April

- Continue conversations regarding departmental advising, status of dossier/watermark entries, research projects

May

- Have final meeting/lunch

Appendix B

Sample Mentor Assessment form

Mentor Evaluation Form (Completed by the Mentee)

Please provide information and insight regarding the departmental mentoring program you have participated in by indicating a rating value for the following questions related to the year's activities and the nature of the mentoring process.

Mentee's Name:

Mentor's Name:
(Optional)

Year:

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My mentor was accessible and available				
My mentor communicated regularly with me.				
My mentor was able to lead me to the correct campus resource to resolve a particular matter.				
My mentor demonstrated a reasonable interest/concern towards me.				
Overall, my mentor was an asset and a benefit to me.				
I feel more certain of my career path at APSU as a result of having a mentor.				

Qualitative Questions:

What did you gain from your involvement in the program?

What activities/ goals did your mentor assist you with?

How often did you meet with your mentor?

What (if anything) are you doing differently as a result of your mentoring experience?

How could the program be improved?

Appendix C
Allowed expenses for Department Faculty Mentoring Program

These professional development funds can be for the mentor and/or mentee and are targeted toward professional development – the incentive cannot be paid as cash.

Mentors and mentees have some flexibility regarding when the mentoring professional development funds can be spent in the academic year within the guidelines and restrictions described below (prior to the established deadline).

It is not recommended that mentors transfer their funds to mentees. However, if a compelling reason is presented to the CAFE Director, in consultation with the Senior Vice Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, some requests may be honored, however, no one mentor or mentee will receive more than \$500.

Please note that all purchases/expense reports must be filed before the end-of-fiscal year deadlines distributed by the Business Office annually.

Allowed expenses include

- Travel related to research, teaching and learning, or advising
- Professional conference registration fees
- Webinars related to discipline
- Discipline-related materials for the Woodward Library
- Technology for the purpose of professional development (may need IT preapproval)*
- Books or other physical materials

Priority deadline to submit fund request form: December 1

Final deadline to submit fund request form: April 1

All funds must be spent by June 1

Mentoring funds cannot be used as a substitute for departmental budgets; for example:

- The funds cannot be used for office supplies.
- The funds cannot be used for classroom materials.
- The funds cannot be used for meals.
- Funds also cannot be used (directly or indirectly) for contributions to non-profit entities or political organizations.

If you have questions about expenses or other items mentioned in this document, please contact Academic Affairs, extension 7676.

* All physical goods purchased using mentorship funds are the property of the university currently in the possession of a particular faculty member. Any property that is purchased with these funds must be returned to the university upon separation/retirement.