

Mentoring for Research

Part II:

- A. Helping Basic Science Faculty Become Successful Independent Investigators and Eventually, Leaders in Their Field.

Rich Cross

Recruitment

Faculty development begins with an effective search

- a) Be Selective: Narrow the field from those interviewed before making any offers. Don't just go down the list until someone accepts.
- b) Once an offer is made, invite the candidate and spouse or significant other back for a second visit. Address the concerns and needs of the spouse.

Recruitment

- c) Make sure candidates see all the people they are likely to interact with. I personally call every one we want on the meeting schedule.

- d) The department chair or search committee chair should personally do all airport and hotel pick ups and drop offs. Make sure candidates understand that we help each other

Start Up Package for New Recruits

Basic science departments need to provide generous support to enable new faculty to get off to a fast start. This includes:

- a) Funds for the purchase of all major equipment items, supplies, and materials for the first three years.
- b) A paid technician for the first two years.
- c) Adequate office and research space ready for occupancy on the day of arrival.

Start Up Package for New Recruits

- d) Coverage of stipends for graduate students who join the new faculty member's laboratory (usually for the first 6 years).
- e) No teaching or committee responsibilities in the first year, and then a stepwise increase in responsibilities during the second, third, and fourth years.
- f) In those cases where extramural funding is not obtained by the end of the third year, the department extends research support until such funding is obtained.

Research Mentors

- a) We encourage new faculty to have several senior faculty, some with study section experience, read preliminary drafts of their grant applications and offer advice.
- b) We also encourage new faculty to have drafts of their manuscripts read by senior faculty, some with editorial-board experience, prior to submission.

Research Mentors

- c) New faculty are encouraged to join scientific societies that could prove helpful to their careers. Senior faculty are often able to act as nominators for membership.

- d) When the appropriate expertise is not available within the department, senior faculty attempt to identify and recruit a mentor from another department or the SU campus.

Make Your Expectations Clear and Give Frequent Feedback

a) Agreement of Academic Expectations

Research: Carry out high-quality original research and maintain a good publication record in peer-reviewed journals. Endeavor on a continuing basis to fund that research by generating support from extramural granting agencies. Establish a reputation as a successful independent investigator.

Make Your Expectations Clear and Give Frequent Feedback

- b) Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure
- c) Annual Performance Reviews
- d) Frequent Informal Feedback

Career Advancement Beyond Tenure

- a) Nominate faculty: (1) for membership on editorial boards and study sections, (2) for scientific program committees for national and international meetings, (3) for campus, national, and international research awards, and (4) for membership in the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the National Academy of Sciences.

Career Advancement Beyond Tenure

- b) Encourage faculty to take sabbatical leaves, especially if their momentum is slowing or their field is changing rapidly.
- c) Periodically ask faculty if there is anything the department can do for them that it's not currently doing. Be proactive in considering how to help a faculty member reach their full potential.

Retention

When your faculty succeed, make sure they know how much they're appreciated and how much the department wants to continue to have them as a colleague.

Thanking a faculty member for outstanding performance is very important, but there are other ways to document your gratitude: Promotion in rank, merit money, a better parking space, more office or lab space, help in solving daily frustrations, etc.

The best way to retain faculty is to never give them a reason to leave.