**Mentoring Best Practices and Recommendations**

**Mentoring Academy Council, April 2021**

1. **Introduction:**

Mentorship is a strategic priority at Weill Cornell[[1]](#endnote-1) and vital for success in academic medicine. Effective mentoring can be challenging, especially when definitions vary and roles are imprecise. This set of recommendations, created by the Mentoring Academy Council (MAC), provides common language, core principles and best practices to assist our academic departments in strengthening their existing mentoring efforts.

1. **Definition of Mentoring:**

Mentorship is a professional, working alliance in which individuals work together over time to support the personal and professional growth, development, and success of the mentee through the provision of career and psychosocial support.

-Modified from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2019. The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

The above definition encompasses several core principles, namely that mentorship:

1. Is defined by the relationship
2. Is expected to be longitudinal
3. Is comprised of regular meetings or contacts (both scheduled and informal)
4. Is for the purpose of advancing the mentee, although the mentor may also benefit
5. May include additional developmental processes such as teaching, advising, coaching, role modeling, and sponsorship[[2]](#endnote-2)
6. **Established Benefits of Mentoring**

The ultimate goal of any medical school-based mentoring program is to enhance workforce performance and engagement, encourage multidisciplinary collaboration and to promote a culture of lifelong learning and discovery. With proper program design, mentoring can be available to all, and can impact and improve workplace diversity goals. Mentoring is essential to optimizing both professional and personal development. Mentees benefit from advice on issues of promotion and tenure, research output, teaching and clinical skills, networking and career management, as well as involvement in the cultural and social aspects of their profession[[3]](#endnote-3), [[4]](#endnote-4), [[5]](#endnote-5). The following are well documented mentoring outcomes that can serve as directed goals and metrics for departmental programs:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mentee | Mentor | Organization |
| Increased job satisfaction and improved retention | Increased job satisfaction and development of leadership skills | Increased work performance |
| Increased research grants | Development of coaching skills | Enhanced research activity |
| Increased scholarly activities | Increased recognition | Professional development of employees |
| Increased publications | Increased publications | Increased reputation |
| Increased productivity | Career advancement | Improved communication and organizational culture |
| Improved empowerment and academic self efficacy | Increased engagement and citizenship “giving back” | Improved workforce engagement |
| Enhanced networking and recruitment | Increased sphere of influence | Increased retention |
| Career advancement including academic promotions and leadership roles | National engagement through sponsoring mentees | Diversify workforce |
| Career flexibility, including optimization of career guidance and choice |  | Development of knowledge and skills important to the organization |
| Less burnout and greater wellness | Less burnout and greater wellness | Fostering understanding of contextual barriers within the institution and academia |

1. **Recommendations to Departments**

Mentoring activities must be rigorously undertaken to be successful. The following recommendations are intended to be adaptable to the local environments, as specific mentoring needs vary across diverse departments.

1. Mentoring is considered a core teaching activity and expected of all faculty members. This expectation should be articulated in offer letters (samples available from the Office of Faculty Affairs) and mentoring activities should be documented on the updated WCM CV (<https://faculty.weill.cornell.edu/academic-appointments/appointment-forms-templates>, section N).
2. Mentoring is a valued and recognized academic activity and is one of the institutional criteria for promotion.
3. Mentoring should be offered and provided to all faculty members, trainees and/or students by all departments at WCM and its affiliated institutions.
4. Departments should recruit, train, recognize and monitor the activities of their mentors. Training materials and resources will be centrally collated and offered by the Office of Faculty Development[[6]](#endnote-6).
5. Time for mentoring should be factored into a faculty member’s composite of academic activities.
6. Feedback for mentoring should be solicited and delivered to faculty engaged in mentoring.
7. New faculty members (particularly at the Instructor and Assistant level) should be:
   1. Assigned an “Initial or Interim Mentor” who serves for one year at which point both parties may choose to formalize the relationship or dissolve it for alternate mentor(s) chosen by the mentee.
   2. Encouraged to establish a Mentoring Committee, within a timeline consistent with the policies of the department and with adjustments in committee membership to accommodate shifts in the mentee’s academic focus. The faculty member should meet regularly with his/her mentoring committee to discuss scholary activities, specific training needs, projected milestones and goals. At each meeting, the mentee may wish to present a summary of recent progress and trajectory toward stated career goals.
8. Expectations of mentors and mentees, including specific processes such as meeting frequency and/or mentorship outcomes should be communicated by the Division Chief or Department Chair at the time of assignment and updated during the annual review where applicable.

1. Choi A, Moon J, Steinecke J, Prescott J. Developing a Culture of Mentorship to Strengthen Academic Medical Centers. Acad Med. May 2019; 94 (5):630-3 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Tang A, Bostwick S: Introduction to mentoring. WCM OFD E-learning portal 2021. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Geraci S, Thigpen SC. A Review of Mentoring in Academic Medicine. Am J Med Sci Feb 2017: 353 (2): 151-7 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.brandman.edu/news-and-events/blog/benefits-of-mentoring-in-the-workplace> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Burgess A et al. Mentorship in the health professions: a review. The Clinical Teacher 2018; 15: 197-202. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Tang A, Bostwick S, Lamb D, Jirasevijinda T, Anandasabapathy N, Hecht E, Deitsch K. Series on Mentoring. WCM OFD E-learning portal 2021 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)