

# Department of Mathematical Sciences

## Guidelines for Faculty Mentoring

### Teaching

August 6, 2009

**General** Faculty teaching mentors will be provided for all tenure-track assistant professors, visiting assistant professors, and lecturers. Mentors are expected to have a formal relationship with their mentees during the first year, and the department chair may suggest that this be continued beyond the first year. At all times, the mentor/mentee relationship is voluntary on the part of both parties; if one or both feel that mentoring is not succeeding, this should be brought to the attention of the department chair. The chair will either help the mentor and mentee to improve matters, or find a different mentor.

Some general expectations for mentoring in the area of teaching are given below. These can be modified by mutual consent of the mentor and mentee; new faculty come to Michigan Tech with a variety of backgrounds in teaching, and some will need more assistance than others.

#### **Expectations of Mentors**

1. If possible, attend the orientation meeting held by the chair for new faculty, which occurs during the week before classes begin in the fall.
2. Meet with your mentee before classes start to get acquainted and to discuss the mentee's upcoming courses.
3. Review your mentee's syllabi before they are distributed to ensure that the expectations for students are reasonable and clearly communicated. There is a university policy on course syllabi that should be followed: [www.admin.mtu.edu/ctlfd/syllabus\\_requirements](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/ctlfd/syllabus_requirements)
  - One of the most important roles of a teaching mentor is to help the new faculty member to have a realistic idea of appropriate standards in departmental courses. Mentors should encourage a high but reasonable standard; one of the worst outcomes for a new faculty is to get a reputation for being unreasonably harsh.
4. Review your mentee's exams before they are given.
5. Discuss grading of the exams and assignment of a grading curve (if applicable).
6. Be available to give advice on the assignment of final grades.
7. Be sure to have some informal discussions with your mentee about how the semester is going, from his or her point of view. This might happen naturally in the course of the activities described above, but if it does not, please take the initiative to meet before midterm.

## **Expectations of Mentees**

1. Attend the orientation meeting held by the chair for new faculty, which occurs during the week before classes begin in the fall.
2. Get your mentor's feedback on your syllabi, exams, and grading scales. Many new faculty have difficulties adjusting to expectations at a new institution; your mentor can help you avoid these problems.
3. Be open with your mentor about any difficulties or uncertainties you may be facing in the classroom. Your mentor is *not* responsible for evaluating your teaching; instead, he or she wants to help you do the best possible job in the classroom.
4. Make time to meet with your mentor. It is common to feel pressed for time as a new faculty member, but time spent with a seasoned teacher will pay off in the long run.