

## Information for Mentors

### What is the purpose of mentoring?

- ❖ The Mentoring Program for Women matches you with a more junior person (mentee) within the University to whom you can provide support, information and advice, and share professional and personal skills and experiences. The match is based on needs and criteria identified by the mentee.

### What will I get out of it?

- ❖ This will vary from person to person, but previous mentors have identified the following benefits:
  - Greater understanding of issues at UTAS and increased sensitivity to women's concerns
  - Increased networks and communication with different staff
  - Satisfaction from sharing knowledge and watching someone develop
  - Opportunity to review own career progress, goals, achievements and skills
  - Professional and peer recognition
  - Increased job satisfaction and renewed interest in and enthusiasm for work

### What will my mentee get out of it?

- ❖ This will also vary from person to person, but previous mentees have identified the following benefits:
  - Increased skills and knowledge
  - Access to formal and informal networks
  - Improved understanding of how the University works
  - Rekindled enthusiasm for work
  - Assistance with career planning, promotion and identifying other job opportunities
  - Increased self-confidence
  - Improved leadership skills

### How will the University benefit?

- ❖ Demonstrated benefits of the programme to the University include:
  - Retention of talent and reinvestment of knowledge
  - Improved morale
  - Greater understanding between staff groups at different levels
  - Culture change that is more supportive of women

### **How does the mentor matching happen?**

- ❖ Participants are asked to identify their developmental goals for the year and to consider what sorts of issues they would like to discuss with a mentor and what kind of background and experiences they would like their mentor to have. They also have the opportunity to suggest names of people they would like to have as a mentor.
- ❖ The Program Coordinator approaches suitable mentors for each participant based on the requirements they have identified.

### **Who takes the initiative?**

- ❖ The mentoring partnership focuses primarily on the needs of the mentee. For this reason the mentee is encouraged to take responsibility for driving the mentoring relationship, for arranging meetings, and for negotiating with you what kinds of things they would like to achieve and how they would like you to assist them.
- ❖ However, you may need to provide encouragement to your mentee, particularly in the early stages of the partnership, if they are unsure of what they want to achieve or are reluctant to take up your valuable time. Just a quick email or phone call to see how they are getting on can help in this regard.

### **How long does the mentoring last?**

- ❖ The formal mentoring partnership is expected to last for approximately nine months.
- ❖ Some mentoring partners meet for less than this time, and some continue for longer, depending on the needs of both parties.

### **How often should we meet?**

- ❖ You and your mentee are encouraged to meet regularly so that you have a chance to get to know each other and to explore ways in which you can work together. How often you meet and for how long will be up to you and your mentee to agree.
- ❖ Experience of previous participants has shown that face-to-face meetings on a regular basis (e.g. every 3 - 4 weeks for about one hour) are an important factor in the success of the mentoring partnership.
- ❖ If possible, meeting more frequently in the early stages (e.g. every 2 - 3 weeks) is recommended to help get the relationship established.

### **What do we do at the first meeting?**

- ❖ The first meeting is an introductory one, where you and your mentee are encouraged to share background information and to explore ideas for the relationship to determine if it is likely to be rewarding and productive for both of you.
- ❖ To keep the meeting relaxed you may like to meet over coffee or lunch, preferably somewhere where you will both be free of interruptions.
- ❖ It is a good idea for you and your mentee to exchange information about yourselves: what you do, how long you have been at the University, and any other information about your professional or personal lives that you think may be relevant and are willing to share. This could be achieved by exchanging and talking about your CVs.

## **What are the important things to clarify?**

- ❖ In the first couple of meetings it is important to explore what you might like to achieve through the partnership and how you might like to operate as a pair. Things to discuss may include:
  - When, where, how often, and for how long you will meet
  - How formal/informal and how flexible you would like the relationship to be
  - What goals your mentee has for the mentoring relationship
  - What kinds of issues, tasks or projects your mentee would like to work on with you
  - Whether you will prepare items for discussion beforehand or decide at the meeting
  - What kind/how much contact you will have in between meetings, eg by phone or email
  - What level of confidentiality you would like to work within
  - Whether you want others to know about your mentoring partnership, eg the mentee's supervisor/head of department
  - How you will keep the relationship going if either party is away or if meetings have to be cancelled/rescheduled
  
- ❖ Some mentoring partnerships decide to formalise the above in the form of written mentoring agreements.

## **What can I do with my mentee?**

- ❖ There are many issues your mentee may wish to discuss with you, including:
  - Goals they have identified through performance management, staff development reviews, etc.
  - Topics such as workplace relationships, communicating effectively, culture change, work/life balance or team work.
  - Career-related issues such as career directions, applying for promotion/progression
  - Generic skills such as time management, supervision, team building, public speaking, report writing, applying for grants, etc.
  - How things are done in your or your mentee's work area or other parts of the University.
  
- ❖ In addition to meeting and talking, there are other things your mentee may find beneficial, including:
  - Observing you in action (e.g. chairing a meeting, lecturing, speaking in public)
  - Shadowing you to see what you do in your job on a typical day or half-day
  - Asking you to review their work (e.g. a research proposal, report, conference paper, resumé or job application)
  - Asking you to observe them in action and give them feedback (e.g. giving a presentation, in a meeting)
  - Working on a joint project or task with you.

## **What support is provided?**

- ❖ Separate workshops are conducted for new mentors and for mentees about one to two months after you have been matched. The workshops are designed to explore the mentoring process and to establish expectations, needs and preferences.
- ❖ A workshop for experienced mentors to continue developing their mentoring skills is also held.

- ❖ You and your mentee will be contacted part way through the partnership to review how things are going.
- ❖ After nine months you and your mentee will be asked to review and complete the formal part of the mentoring process.
- ❖ Ongoing support and advice is also available to you and your mentee from the Mentoring Program Coordinator.

### **How can I be a good mentor?**

- ❖ Be committed - make time for your mentee and ensure you are not interrupted.
- ❖ Finish each meeting by making a time for the next one.
- ❖ Be a good listener and respect confidentiality.
- ❖ Find out about your mentee's background and what they have to offer.
- ❖ Treat your mentee as a colleague.
- ❖ Tease out an issue or problem with your mentee and empower them to find their own solutions. Don't feel responsible for solving their problems for them.
- ❖ View the mentoring as an opportunity to share experiences and ideas and to see things from another person's perspective.
- ❖ Encourage your mentee to meet with you even if they don't think they have key issues or problems to discuss. Simply meeting and talking may spark off ideas for you to work on together.

### **How do we end the mentoring relationship?**

- ❖ Once you have met with your mentee for approximately nine months, you will be encouraged to reassess the relationship to ensure its continuing relevance. There is no requirement to continue the relationship beyond this time unless you and your mentee wish to do so on an informal basis.

### **What if the relationship isn't working?**

- ❖ While every attempt is made to find a good match between mentor and mentee, occasionally mentoring relationships are not successful. Please be assured that it is possible for you or your mentee to decide not to proceed with the mentoring relationship. If for any reason you feel that the mentoring partnership is not working for you, please contact the Mentoring Program Coordinator as soon as possible.

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