

# Turning Prospects Into Superstars: The Department Chair's Role in Mentoring Junior Faculty

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# Disclaimer

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- This is NOT a research-based presentation.  
(after all how many of us went to college to study how to a department chair?)
- Some further reading and resources will be provided near the end
- Case studies (unless otherwise indicated) are inspired by real world experiences and intended as conversation starters

They are not:

- Documentaries
- “Reality Academia”
- Pure Fiction

(maybe somewhere in between)



# Setting the Stage for this Workshop

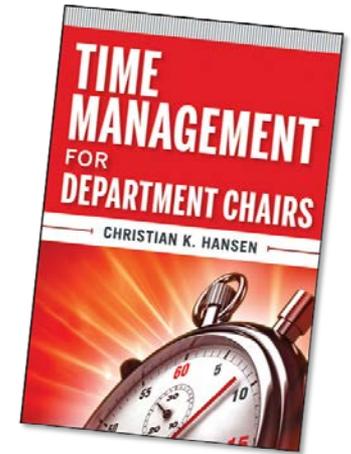
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“We know a thing or two because we’ve seen a thing or two”

My personal “thing or two”:

- 24 years in Higher Education.
- Assistant/Associate/Full Professor
- Department Chair (8 years)
- Associate Dean (5+ years)
- Search Committee Chair, DPC Chair, Faculty Mentor ...



# Workshop Overview

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- What Makes a Good Prospect?
- The Mentoring Process: Who Does What?  
Who is Responsible?
- Mentoring vs Evaluation
- Things To Consider in Mentoring
  - Teaching
  - Scholarship
  - Service
  - Obstacles



# Shared Goals in Hiring Faculty?

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## Faculty Candidate:

Get a Job  
Get Tenure  
Get Promoted  
Enjoy Life/Job

## Faculty Colleague:

Have Productive/Contributing  
Colleagues  
Maintain High Teaching  
Standards  
Develop Research  
Collaborations

The Sweet  
Spot  
A Good Fit

Promote Department/College  
Foster Student Success  
Return on Investment



# Hiring Right – The Million Dollar Question

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Poor Hiring Decision => Loss of Investment

Good Hiring Decision  $\nrightarrow$  Return on Investment

There is no best practice for turning poor prospects into superstars!

A good hiring decision is a necessary but not sufficient condition for success



# The Hiring Decision

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## Good Hiring Decision

- Strong Candidate/Excellent Fit
- Strong Candidate/Good Fit
- Acceptable Candidate/Excellent Fit

## Challenges

- Timing is Everything
- HR Policies are designed for hiring “best candidates” not necessarily “best fit”
- Criteria for “acceptable fit” must be decided in advance

## Bad Hiring Decision

- Weak Candidate/Poor Fit
- Strong Candidate/Poor Fit
- Weak Candidate/Good Fit

## Poor Excuses for a Bad Decision

- This was the least worst candidate!
- We don't want to lose our position
- The best we could do with low salaries. We do not want to create inequity
- We are not a competitive institution



# How Are We Doing?

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- 18 years of longitudinal data
- 18 T/T faculty hired (average 1/year)
- 10 still actively employed (56%)
- 6 resigned (33%)
- 1 not retained for tenure (6%)
- 1 died prematurely
- Poor fit or weak candidate(s)??



Reference: Hansen (2011)



# Common Reasons for Not Earning Tenure

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- Poor Teaching
- Insufficient Scholarship
- Lack of Contributions to Department
- Unclear Expectations
- Lack of Adequate and Meaningful Feedback
- Poor Time Management



Effective  
Mentoring?



# Common Reasons for Resignations

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- High Teaching Loads –  
Lack of Opportunity for Scholarship
- Pressure to Publish and Write Grants –  
Lack of Appreciation of Teaching
- Lack of Belonging
- Conflict with Chair or Colleagues
- Low Pay – Better Offer Available
- Lack of Spousal Accommodation
- Other Family Related Issues



Effective  
Mentoring?



# Table Discussion

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- Take a moment to introduce yourself:  
*Name, Position, Institution*
- Share with your table:  
*Who is responsible for new faculty mentoring in your department/college?*  
*(e.g. Chair, Personnel Committee, Senior Faculty)*
- *Who assigns mentors?*
- *Do you have a formal mentoring program or formal department policies/procedures or is it informal?*  
*Strengths/weaknesses of your mentoring program/practice?*



# Mentoring/Evaluation at EWU (Mathematics)

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- Mentors are assigned by the Departmental Personnel Committee (DPC) made up of all tenured faculty except the department chair (currently 7)
- Mentors assist with writing the Faculty Activity Plan (FAP)
- Mentors may rotate over the probationary period
- Department Chair and DPC do independent evaluations
- DPC Evaluations are mostly done by the mentors (recommendations voted on by the DPC)
- Frequent classroom observations are required by P&P Manual.
- Generally feedback is communicated effectively to the candidate in a timely manner
- Sometimes things fall through the cracks

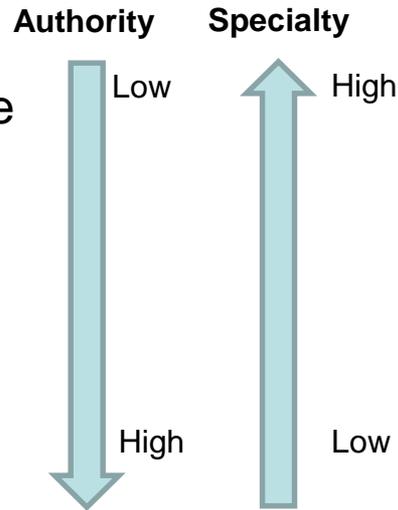


# The Who is Who in Evaluation and Mentoring

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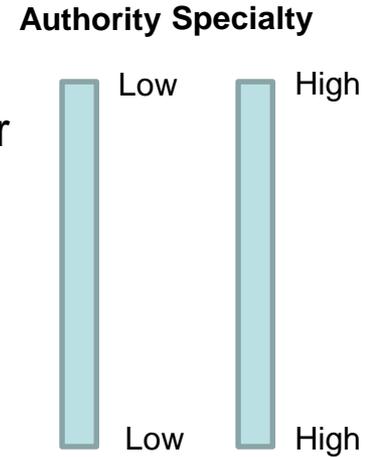
## Evaluators

- Personnel Committee
- Department Chair
- Dean
- Provost
- President



## Mentors

- Department Chair
- Colleagues
- Other



Successful mentoring requires Evaluators and Mentors to Be on the “Same Page”



# Mentoring versus Evaluation

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## Mentoring

- Coach
- Proactive (before the fact)
- Stimulate Progress
- Failure Prevention
- Continuous
- Colleague
- Experience
- Calling



## Evaluation

- Referee
- Reactive (after the fact)
- Assess Progress
- Failure Detection
- Discrete
- Boss
- Authority
- Chore



# Objectives of Evaluation

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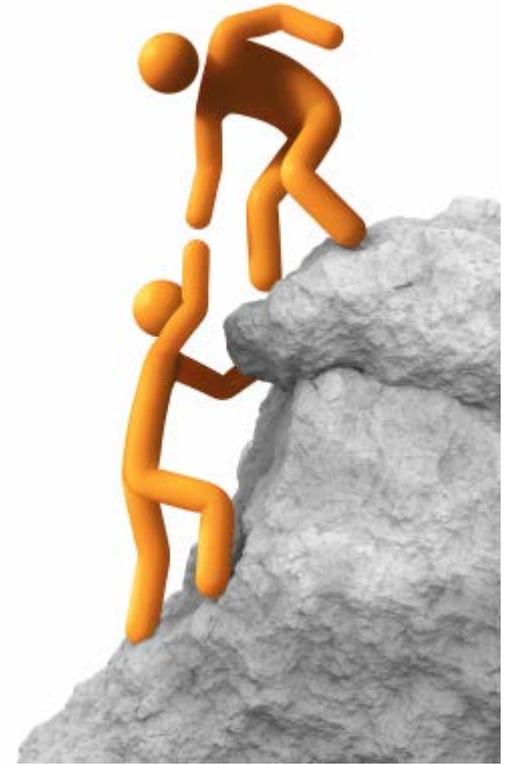
- Tenure/Promotion Decision
- Faculty Retention
- Document Achievements
- Document Productivity
- Maintain Program Excellence



# Objectives of Mentoring

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- Inspire Professional Growth
- Understanding the Rules of Evaluation
- Showing Where the Mines are Buried
- Sharing Best Practices
- Avoiding Surprises
- Making Evaluation Trivial



# Mentoring and Evaluation is a Two-way Street

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- **Classroom observations:**  
I will visit your class  
Please come visit mine too
- **Scholarly Collaboration**  
I will help you with your grant writing  
Would you like to join me in my project?
- **Service Load**  
I want to protect you from service “overload”  
We got this!
- **Feedback**  
Here is how you are doing  
What can I/we do to better support you?



# Table Discussion

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- Case: It's all good. Or is it?
- Questions to discuss:  
*What could a chairperson have done differently to avoid this situation?*

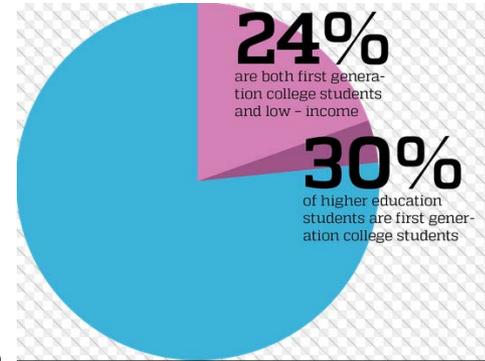
*How can effective faculty mentoring help avoid issues like this one?*



# Mentoring Teaching: Things to Consider

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- What student population are you serving?  
Most institutions are not like the one your new faculty member came from
- Student evaluations: What do they mean?
- Student success: What does it mean?
- Are students your customers? Or your product?
- Expectations to student performance?  
Dealing with low exam scores.
- Dealing with plagiarism, cheating and class disruptions.
- Assessment of student learning



**Student Evaluation**

Evaluator  
Evaluator email\*  How long have you known this student?  
(1 year or less)   
Evaluator phone number  Evaluator email address

Student  
Student email\*  Years in school  
(Rank)  OR (Grade)  OR (Years)

Student's performance  
Academic progress  Class participation  Creativity  Dependability   
Initiative  Teamwork  Organizational skills  Problem solving

What distinguishes this student from others?

How would you describe this student to others?

Other relevant comments:

\* required fields  [cancel form](#)



# What a Department Chair Might Hear from Students

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- Professor X does not know how to teach
- Professor Y does not speak English/  
I cannot understand his/her accent
- I am teaching myself
- Exams are nothing like the homework
- I am paying for this class so I should ...
- I work really hard so I should ...



# How to Talk to Students

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- Tell me more. I am listening.
- What have you tried so far?
- Here are some of our resources: ...
- I am here to help you. It is my job
- Your success is my success  
(we are on the same team)
- Why exams are different from homework
- We don't score points during practice. Only on game day.
- On practice days I am your coach.  
On game day I am only the score keeper.
- Let's try this ... and then let's meet again on ...



# Mentoring Scholarship: Things to Consider

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- What kind of institution are you at?  
Most institutions are not R-1 institutions
- What is a realistic level of scholarship?  
What is required?  
An FAP (or faculty handbook/P&P) is an important document  
This conversation should take place ASAP after hiring.
- Don't reinvent the wheel  
Build on something you know.
- Establish collaborations  
A mentor can be of great help.
- Pursue Funding  
A small summer grant can make a world of difference.
- Involve your students



# Scholarship: What Can a Chair Do to Help?

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- Provide Start-up Funds  
This is part of your \$M investment.
- Travel Funds  
Prioritize junior faculty. Support accepted presentations
- Share Funding Opportunities  
Facilitate grant-writing training.
- Recognize Achievements  
Never miss an opportunity to brag.
- Be an Advocate for Your Faculty



# Mentoring Service: Things to Consider

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- What is a realistic level of service?  
What is required?  
An FAP (or faculty handbook/P&P) is an important document
- Learn when to say no  
Don't volunteer for everything.
- Be a Team Player  
Not a workaholic.
- Engage in Meaningful Service
- Find a way to combine service and scholarship  
Serve on a professional board  
Serve on a conference organizing committee



# Service: What Can a Chair Do to Help?

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- Limit University Service for the First Few Years
- Ask Senior Faculty to Chair Committees
- Help Identify Meaningful Service Activities
- Recognize Achievements



# Table Discussion

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- Case: Scheduling Challenges
- Questions to discuss:  
*Did the chairperson provide adequate accommodations for this faculty member?*



*How can effective faculty mentoring help avoid issues like this one?*



# Table Discussion

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- Case: Keeping the Family Together
- Questions to discuss:  
*Did the chairperson provide adequate accommodations for this faculty member?*



*Does faculty mentoring play a role in family issues like this one?*



# Time Management Matters

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Stephen Covey: Put the BIG rocks in first, then the smaller rocks, then the sand ...

- Learn the art of prioritizing
- Scholarship procrastination is a common obstacle
- Help faculty create balance.



# Closing Remarks and Recommendations

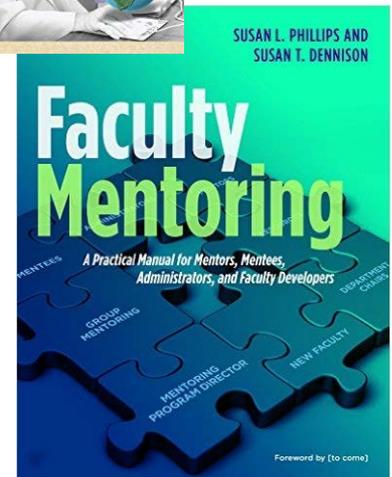
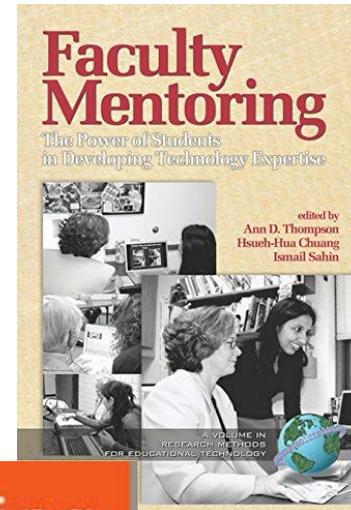
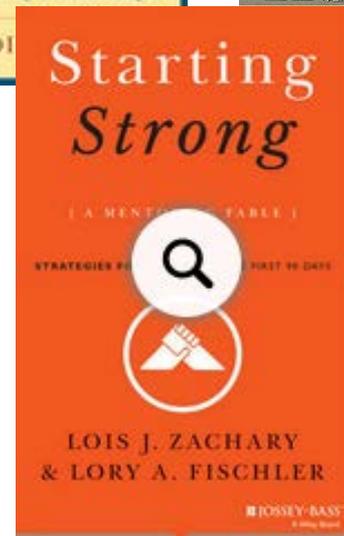
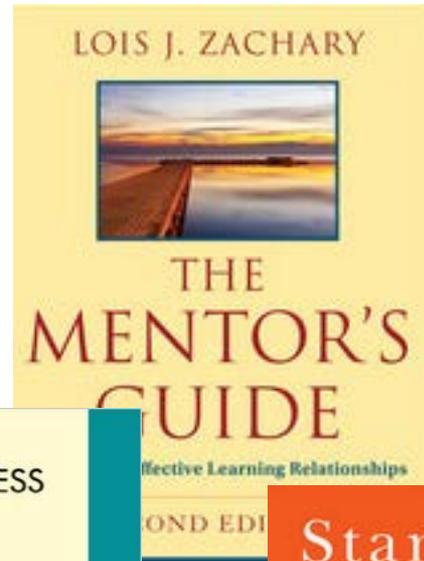
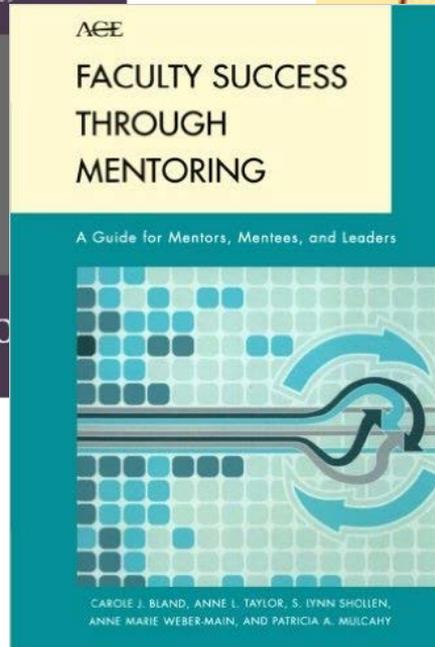
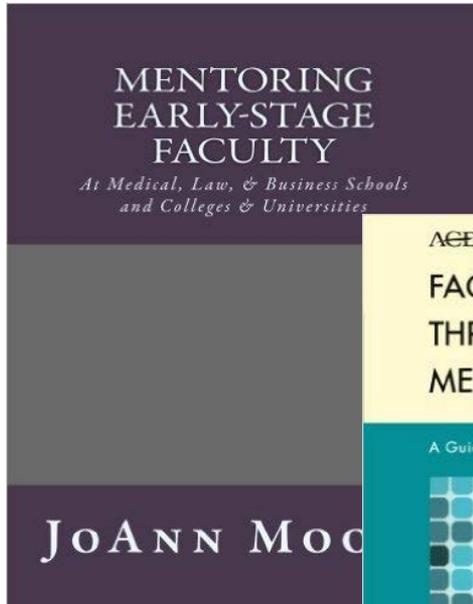
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- Faculty Mentoring and Evaluation Processes are equally important and must be aligned
- Hiring faculty is a Million Dollar investment. Treat your investment with care.
- There are no best practices for turning bad prospects into superstars
- Mentoring and evaluation are two-way streets.
- Time Management Matters



# Further Reading

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# Internet Resources

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- Maryellen Weimer: Faculty Mentoring Faculty: Relationships that Work  
<http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-professor-blog/faculty-mentoring-faculty-relationships-that-work/>
- Marjorie A. Olmstead: Mentoring New Faculty: Advice to Department Chairs  
<http://faculty.washington.edu/olmstd/research/Mentoring.html>
- University of Michigan-Dearborn: Faculty Mentoring  
<http://umdearborn.edu/107701/>



# Comments, Questions, Final Thoughts?

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# Thank You For Your Time

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Don't forget to fill out your evaluation!

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Information

Employee Name	Phone	E-Mail address
_____	_____	_____
Job Title	Department	Supervisor
_____	_____	_____

Please rank your responses to the following questions  
1 - strongly disagree, 2 - somewhat disagree, 3 - agree, 4 - strongly agree, 5 - very strongly agree

Job Satisfaction Review

1: I feel that I am making a meaningful contribution to critical company goals:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
2: I feel that I have adequate equipment and training:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
3: I feel that my work environment is positive and helpful:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
4: I feel that I know what my goals and responsibilities are on a daily/weekly basis:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
5: I feel comfortable with the amount of work which is required of me:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
6: I am generally satisfied with my job:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Job Performance Review

1: I feel that I am producing high quality work:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
2: I complete my work in a timely manner:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
3: I keep accurate calendar records of deadlines, meetings, etc.:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
4: I collaborate on a regular basis with team members and my superior to accomplish my goals:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
5: I am focused throughout the day on successfully reaching my goals:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
6: I attend job-relevant meetings and discussions:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
7: My overall job performance is excellent:	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Please enter any additional comments, suggestions, or requests here:

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Presentation available at:

[www.ChristianKHansen.com/mentoring\\_workshop.pdf](http://www.ChristianKHansen.com/mentoring_workshop.pdf)

