Mentoring Booklet

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The information in this booklet was excerpted from an earlier brochure on mentoring prepared by a group of women faculty (Mary Boyce, Peggy Cebe, Lorna Gibson, Simone Hochgreb, Vera Kistiakowsky, Heather Lechtman, Ruth Perry, Karen Polenske, Mary Rowe, Lynn Stein, Lisa Steiner, Judith Thomson, Lena Valavani and Caroline Whitbeck) during the 1991-92 academic year.

- ## **The Mentor Profile**

The mentor profile that follows outlines the mentor's role for the mentor and the department head and acts as a guide for the new faculty member in selecting mentors. The most important tasks of a good mentor are to help the mentee achieve excellence and to act as an active, assertive *advocate or sponsor* for the junior faculty member to the department, the dean and colleagues within and outside MIT.

1. *Qualities of a good mentor*

Examples of good mentoring have included the following:

- *Advocacy* - the mentor should be willing to argue in support of the junior faculty member for space, funds, students.
- *Accessibility* - the mentor must make time to be available to the mentee. The mentor might keep in contact by dropping by, calling, sending e-mail, or inviting the mentee to lunch. The mentor should make time to ask questions and read proposals and papers, and for periodic reviews of progress.
- *Networking* - the mentor should have enough experience and contacts to be able to help establish a professional network for the mentee
- *Independence* - the mentor must not be in competition with the mentee; the mentee's intellectual independence from the mentor must be carefully preserved

2. *Tasks for the mentor*

Long term goals

- every mentor should ask:
     what should the professional profile of the mentee be?
     where should the mentee be in her career during the first 3 years?
     how can the mentor facilitate this?
- explain department's typical or general criteria for promotion and tenure; impart any flexibility that exists in the promotion/tenure schedule; the mentor should be aware that there is no one rigid set of requirements for junior faculty, but that there are acceptable ranges of performance in various categories (e.g.. scholarship, publications, supervision of graduate students, presentations at conferences, funding, changing the field, teaching, administrative duties, consulting, collaborations with colleagues)
- mentor should inform other senior faculty of mentee's progress
- help the mentee develop many options for the future; from the beginning, the mentor and mentee should plan for multiple job opportunities

Shorter term goals

- help sort out priorities: budgeting time, publications, teaching, setting up a lab for experimental work, committees

- advice on how to deal with difficulties, e.g. lab space, secretarial support, access to students
- networking, introductions to colleagues, identification of other possible mentors for the mentee
- help get research support: contacts, access to agencies
- compliment mentee's achievements, inform colleagues of mentee's achievements
- how to say no to certain demands on your time

3. *Changing mentors*

- a mentee should consider changing mentors if the mentor is clearly and consistently uninterested in her, if the mentor consistently depresses the mentee by undervaluing her abilities, if the mentor displays any other signs of undermining the relationship (e.g. racial, sexual, ethnic or other prejudice), or if there is simply incompatibility
- a mentee should consider adding a mentor if the current mentor consistently cannot answer questions or offer advice

Questions for Thought:

A Guide for New Faculty and Their Mentors

1. *Before Coming to MIT*

1.1 General

How should your time be divided among teaching, advising, fundraising, administration, committee work and other service (departmental, institute and outside), research and consulting? What else?

How do you get consulting? How much should you do?

What resources are there at MIT to help you get settled (housing, HALP/CIM loans, child care office. What details do you need to find out about benefits, moving, ...)? What MIT publications should you get (Policies and Procedures, Bulletin, Faculty/Staff Directory)? What offices should you contact? What mailing lists do you need/want to be on?

Who are good resource people to ask these and other questions of? Your Administrative Officer (AO)?

1.2 Research and Resources

Are you responsible for finding your own money? What expenses are you expected to cover? How much will this cost?

How do you go about getting startup funds? How (if at all) will your summer be funded? How do you buy equipment? What travel support can you expect from your department?

Do you need to write a proposal before coming to MIT? How soon afterwards?

How is lab space allocated? How is equipment maintenance paid for? How much support staff time is covered by the department?

What other labs are available for cross-disciplinary research efforts at MIT? Elsewhere?

1.3 Teaching

What is the normal teaching load in your department?

2. *On Arrival*

2.1 General

Who is your AO (administrative officer)? What is his/her responsibility? How do the mechanics
    of your department/lab work (e.g., purchase orders)?
How is your department organized? (Divisions, committees?) How are decisions made?
What should you expect from your support staff? What fraction of a support staff member's time
    is typical? What kind of work can you expect from him/her?

2.2 Research and Resources

How important are grants? How do you get hooked into the grant-writing process? Where
    should you look? Who can help you to find out where to meet people, to write the best
    possible proposal, to draw up a budget? How much effort should you be investing in
    fundraising? What are the tradeoffs?
Who, if anyone, will "introduce you around" to government funding agencies and others?
How does ILP (Industrial Liaison Program) work? What can it do for you?

3. *Later*

3.1 Research and Resources

What conferences should you go to? Do you need to have papers accepted? How much travel is
    allowed/expected/demanded? Is it better to go to large conferences or smaller workshops?
    Should you give the papers or should your students? If the latter, how else can you gain the
    type of exposure necessary for good tenure letters?
Authorship etiquette: Should you put your graduate students' names on your papers? Should
    you put them ahead of your own? How important is first authorship? How is alphabetical
    listing of authors viewed?
Where should you published? What should you publish? How much / often? Are there
    quantity/quality standards for promotion? How do journal / chapters in edited collections /
    (refereed or unrefereed) conferences compare? Should you write/edit a book? Special issue?
May material published in one place (workshop, conference) be submitted to another (journal)?
    How much new work is necessary to make it a "new" publication? What is the etiquette for
    reporting prior publication or submission?
Is it worthwhile to prepare technical reports and send them to colleagues elsewhere?
Should you give talks within your department? How often? How should you publicize your
    work within your department? What about your graduate students? How are the colloquia in
    your department organized?

Should you give talks at other universities/industrial sites? How often? Where? How important is this? How do you get invited to give such talks?

Is collaborative work encouraged or discouraged in your department/field? With other members of your department? With international colleagues? With colleagues who are more senior/better known? With junior colleagues/graduate students? Long-standing collaborations, or single efforts? How important is it to have some singly authored papers?

Should you form a research group? What sorts of activities should the group do, as opposed to you and an individual student?

3.2 Student Supervision

How important are graduate students? How many should you expect to have? How many graduate students is too many? How much time/effort should you be investing in your graduate students? How much advising should you expect to do?

How do you identify good graduate students? What qualities should you look for? How aggressive should you be in recruiting them? Do you need to find money/equipment/office space for them? What should you expect from your graduate students? How do you identify a problem graduate student?

How do you promote your graduate students to the rest of the community (at MIT and nationally/internationally)?

Similar questions for UROPs: Should you have them? How many? What kind of commitment in time, effort, and resources should you expect to make? What kind of return should you expect?

What should you keep in files on your students? Remember that you will have to write reviews and recommendations for them.

3.3 Teaching

What are you expected to teach? Graduate, undergraduate, seminar, lecture, recitation, special topic, service subject?

Which are the good subjects to teach? Is it good to teach service subjects, or bad, or indifferent? Is it good to teach the same course, or stay within a single area, or teach around?

Is it a good thing to develop a new course? An undergraduate course? A specialized course in your research area?

How can you use a special topics course to get a new research project off the ground?

How much time should you spend on your subjects?

Will you have a teaching assistant for your subject? Who will select him/her? What can you expect a teaching assistant to do?

Are there guidelines for grading?

3.4 Administrivia

How much time should you spend advising academic counselees?

How much committee work should you expect? Which committees should your turn down if asked to serve? How much time should you expect to spend on committee work? Department vs. Institute vs. outside?

What types of outside service should you do while untenured? Paper and proposal reviewing? Review boards? Journal assistant editorships?

3.5 Review Procedures

For how long is your appointment? When will you come up for review? What sort of review? What is the process (who, what do they look for, how will you hear about it, etc.)? How will this repeat during the pre-tenure years?

How should you go about finding people to write references for you? How many will you need? From where? International/domestic?

What is your department/school's official form for your faculty record? Where can you get one? What does it include? What other vita information should you keep?

What should go in your dossier? Should you send copies of congratulatory letters to your department head? Others?

What types of raises are typical? When will you find out about your raise? How?

How can you get feedback on your performance?

3.6 Personal issues

What special resources do your department and the institute have for women? For family issues?

What policies does MIT have for family and personal leave? Since most of these policies are administered at the departmental level, how are such things handled in your department?

How visible must one be in the department? Is it OK or detrimental if most work is done at home?

Who is the ombudsperson and what matters does she deal with?

How should you record any controversial matters? To whom do you go about disputes?

List of General Institute Publications

Bulletin http://student.mit.edu/@3545227.14328/catalog/index.cgi
Policies and Procedures http://web.mit.edu/policies/
ILP(Industrial Liaison Program)
    http://ilp-www.mit.edu/display_page.a4d?key=H1
Faculty Newsletter http://web.mit.edu/fnl/
Benefits information http://web.mit.edu/hr/benefits/

List of Resource Persons and Offices at MIT

Department Administrative Officer (AO)
Faculty mentors
Ombuds Office http://web.mit.edu/ombud/
Center for Work, Family and Personal Life
    http://hrweb.mit.edu/worklife/index.html