Charting Your Path at Mid-Career: Choosing Your Future

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Mid-Career Needs Assessment

- Focus Groups for Women in STEM
  - Identified barriers to promotion
    - Barriers: Lack of clarity and transparency in promotion criteria; lack of performance feedback and mentoring from chairs; disproportionate service demands; gender bias; bias related to rank
  - Identified needs of mid-career faculty
    - Support for research; information/guidance on promotion criteria; regular performance feedback; informal networking with peers; and access to formal mentoring

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Mid-Career Needs Assessment

- Survey of all Associate Professor Faculty (N=283)
- Survey Findings
  - Widespread perception that the criteria for promotion are not clear- for both genders but more pronounced for women
  - Fewer than one third of men and women reported receiving guidance on promotion from their chairs
  - A majority indicated they were not "intentional" about their career planning toward full- for both genders but more pronounced for women
  - A large majority of men and women indicated that having a mentor would be helpful in preparing for promotion

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Mid-Career Mentoring Program

- Goal-
  - to provide information, development, and support that will facilitate the advancement of faculty from the rank of Associate to the rank of Full professor

- Target-
  - all Associate professor faculty, with some initiatives limited to female STEM faculty

- Approach-
  - a range of initiatives all focused on intentional career planning and support

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Mid-Career Planning Process

- Step 1   Articulate your Career Goals
- Step 2   Seek understanding of the Promotion Criteria in your Department/unit and College
    - » Faculty Forum
- Step 3   Conduct a Self-Assessment
- Step 4   Write a Mid-Career Development Plan
- Step 5   Discuss Plan with Mentor and Chair
- Step 6   Implement the Plan
- Planning Process has become cornerstone for three Mid-Career Mentoring Initiatives

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Mid-Career Mentoring Initiatives

- Vertical-dyad Mentoring

- Informal Horizontal Group Mentoring

- Formal Horizontal Group Mentoring

Formal Horizontal Group Mentoring

- Peer mentoring of Associates to Associates in small groups

- Groups can be within a department, unit, or interdisciplinary

- Initial training with Mid-Career Planning Process provided by ADVANCE; Subsequent monthly meetings facilitated by faculty volunteer "convener"

- Commitment to ongoing participation for a minimum of 1 semester and completion of Mid-Career Plan required

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Ron: My Experience Thus Far

Step 1: Articulate Career Goal

- Full Professor (and stay there as long as possible)
- (for me) this is the "sweet spot"

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Step 2: Seek Promotion Criteria

- Attending Faculty Forum

- Meeting with Chair

- Convocation provided some insight

- Eager to see how current candidates up for promotion fare

- Insight: institutional memory is not very helpful

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Step 2 : Seek Promotion Criteria

Short-Term Goals:

- Graduate 1 − 3 PhD students
- Apply for federal grants at the "next level"
- Build my professional reputation
- Increase level of service

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Step 3: Self-Assessment

- I have been consciously thinking about this because I joined the faculty as an Associate Professor

- Had these discussions with the Dean during interview

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Step 3: Self-Assessment (cont'd)

Actions I was already doing...

- Serve as general chair for my main annual meeting

- Support peer-mentoring by being "convener"

Actions I need to change...

- Put senior students on a schedule
- Grant work – more team approach
- Increased travel (working groups, international)
- Submission strategy: perhaps fewer but "more important" papers
- Offer to teach more undergraduate classes

Step 4: Career Development Plan

- Challenge: psychologically it seems like busy-work

- As a convener, I felt I had to do it...

- CDP is currently in progress

- (one person suggested that this is my CDP)

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Steps 5 & 6: Discuss & Implement

- Discussions with Department Chair

- Discussion with Dean

- Grant Proposals

- Had to resist the urge to submit!

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Future Plans

For myself...

- I knew what I wanted, the CDP tool helped me quantify

- Progress – on track so far

- I am eager to help others

Anita: My Experience Thus Far

Step 1: Articulate Career Goal

• Career trajectory less traditional

Tenure →Family Leaves → Administration →

Full time Faculty

Step 2: Seek Promotion Criteria

- Faculty Forums

- Department Annual Reviews

- Discussions with Full Professors and Chair

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Step 3: Self Assessment

- Decision to Leave Administrative Position

- Recharging Research Agenda
  - ➢ Strategic in terms of substantive areas
  - ➢ Multidisciplinary teams
  - ➢ Pursuing ADVANCE Mid-Career Grant
  - ➢ Balancing quality with quantity

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Step 4: Career Development Plan

- Participated in various ADVANCE activities

- Sought Opportunities for Peer Mentoring

- Volunteered to start Peer Coaching program for Social and Behavioral Sciences

- Beginning to fully articulate my CDP

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Changes I made in my strategy...

- Balance between teaching, research, and service

- More strategic linkages

- Learn to say "No"

- Be more assertive about seeking opportunities for professional recognition

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Benefits of Career Coaching

- Peer mentoring → enhanced collaborations

- Increase accountability

- Informal discussions → reassessing departmental procedures

Lessons Learned

- Peer-mentoring does not work for everyone

- Challenges in participation

  ➢ Convincing colleagues this is not additional service work

  ➢ Finding mutual times to meet

  ➢ Getting right fit between faculty at different positions in career path

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Questions?

- Thank you!

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