

BEST PRACTICES FOR FACULTY RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT^{† 1,2}

† Adapted from: A Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Retention, Columbia University¹ and Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches, Part 6 – Retention, University of Washington, Seattle.²

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1. INTRODUCTION

This manual is a companion guide to the UD ADVANCE Recruitment Manual – *Faculty Hiring: Best Practices for Search Committees* and is intended to assist deans, department chairs and all faculty in their retention efforts. Recruiting an excellent and diverse faculty is important for the institution. Retaining these faculty members is an imperative not only for maintaining a level of stability and structure within a department, college and the university, but also for economic reasons. Recruitment of new faculty takes faculty and administrative time and money – loss of faculty means a major hiccup in faculty productivity overall. Retention is closely tied to an inclusive environment and a supportive atmosphere for professional development. Every member of the department has a responsibility in this critical area.

Research shows that faculty who have developed a positive sense of community at their institution through meaningful ties with individuals and who feel supported by their colleagues, are less likely to seek out, and to accept, outside offers.^{3,4} An inclusive environment for all faculty will enhance productivity, climate and collegiality as well as increase faculty retention at our institution.

Below are some successful retention and development strategies which have been adopted by various research institutions. UD colleges/departments are already practicing some of these and all are worth consideration. Please note that faculty retention can pose particular challenges for various groups under-represented in their discipline, in which case these recommendations are particularly germane.

NOTE: *The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 brought about drastic changes in the way faculty work, and caused many concerns. The impacts of this pandemic will have repercussions on the careers of faculty for many years. See Section 4, page 8, for **Faculty Support as a Result of COVID-19.***

2. INFLUENCE OF FACULTY ON DEPARTMENTAL CLIMATE

Whereas chairs are the leaders of the department and so bear the major responsibility for the health and welfare of the department, positive interactions among faculty play a large role in the way faculty perceive their department, and whether people stay or leave. Retention, then, is everyone's business.

Collegiality is central to inclusion and can be accomplished through a departmental culture where everyone is openly valued. Collegial, respectful and civil encounters among members of a department make a vast positive contribution to workplace climate.

Senior members of the faculty, who are "long term" ambassadors of the department, play a major role in setting the tone, and being inclusive of others, and especially of newer members of faculty. With a strong, positive tone set, these behaviors become guides for interactions among all colleagues.

Every member of a department, then, can support its health and welfare in various ways. A few suggestions:

- Be intentional about being welcoming. When a candidate accepts an offer, welcome your new colleague to UD. This may fall, early on, to the search committee and search committee chair who are sometimes aware of the negotiations and acceptances before the general faculty, and who can/should move in to welcome, mentor, support the candidate before arrival on campus.
- Once your new colleague arrives on campus, help your colleague acclimate to the environment and understand university and department norms. Consider checking with the department chair to ensure that a formal mentor is assigned, especially to junior faculty.
- Look for commonalities with your colleagues even as you recognize any differences. This can help to lessen feelings of isolation.
- Ensure that your interactions among colleagues contribute to an inclusive department culture in which individuals, their perspectives and experiences are respected and openly valued, and people feel as though they belong. This takes time and thought on your part. Suggestion – stopping by a colleague's office (especially those not in your direct area) for the occasional brief friendly chat/check-up helps to make him/her feel included and may lead to your helping with any questions which he/she might have.
- Do your part to encourage positive behaviors among members of your department and to recognize and call out undesirable norms and actions when you see them.

3. THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR & DEPARTMENTAL CLIMATE - Best Practices for Faculty Retention

A. Monitor the Health and Welfare of School/Department

Chairs should monitor the health and welfare of their departments regularly and check for faculty satisfaction and for systemic biases and inequities. Chairs need to work to correct disparities promptly so as to ensure that all faculty are afforded access to the benefits and resources that are needed for their professional success. Communicating clearly on all matters, and recognizing your mistakes and apologizing as necessary, go a long way to enhancing good climate.

Various areas need to be assessed and addressed:

- Salary levels. Don't wait for faculty to take outside offers. Be proactive. This includes working alongside your dean for clear and transparent merit raises and, if indicated, proactive salary adjustments.
- Re-visit start-up packages and recruitment offers. Assure equitable base packages. Any additions to those should be clearly justified (large equipment needs etc.). Ensure that promises made at recruitment regarding lab space and other such resources are honored.
- Be vigilant in ensuring fair allocation and reallocation of lab and office space.
- Be aware of personality differences among your faculty. A quiet, humble employee may be doing as well, or better than a more aggressive colleague who is able to quickly convince you of his/her worth. Verify claims even when presented as facts.
- Monitor Faculty Workload. Keep a spreadsheet/database with teaching and service loads and research contributions etc., of all faculty which will provide you with ready and relevant information in this area. As you review this with faculty, are any adjustments necessary? See suggested example of spreadsheet in Appendix 1. See also an in-depth resource from the American Council on Education that addresses many questions related to workload equity and has detailed examples of workload audits.⁵

Faculty members who feel supported, who understand the department goals, and who believe that decision making is clear and transparent, are more highly engaged as members of the department and of the institution.

The annual faculty appraisal meetings provide an opportunity for assessment of many of the above areas. Regular focus groups, and/or short (anonymous) surveys administered by the department will provide data for some of the areas mentioned above. These short surveys could be administered by an entity external to your department who would aggregate and anonymize responses and communicate them to the chair. The COACHE Faculty Climate Survey may prove useful here, but this is expected to be done only every three years and may not have department level granularity.

Chairs should also: a) practice self-reflection to ensure that you are aware of your own preferences and biases, b) check for behaviors and norms which may create an unwelcoming environment for faculty and c) recognize your role as administrative allies to all, but especially to underrepresented faculty. Female and URM faculty often carry the burden of being the token member of an underrepresented group. Watch for this.

Self-reflection accompanied by an action plan to address issues will help to ensure that your department works in an inclusive and welcoming way. The following are some suggested areas for your self-reflection⁶:

- *Have I asked faculty members if they have what they need to succeed?*
- *Is a structure in place to support newly recruited faculty members?*
- *Am I actually being proactive as an administrative ally in my department?*

B. Establish a Supportive and Welcoming Environment/Culture & Climate.

Chairs (and senior leaders) bear much of the responsibility for creating a good sense of community within a department. A unit with good climate is more likely to have faculty members who feel less isolated, are more involved in productive research collaboration and who are more willing to support the departmental decision-making process. Chairs can set a climate of collegiality in various ways.

Areas to consider are:

- Encourage positivity and micro-affirmations for interactions among faculty. Set some standards/guidelines for collegial interpersonal behaviors among members of the department (e.g. one department has a set of Department Operating Principles which were developed out of a retreat on Department Climate Issues. These are posted in a prominent position within the department and members of the department seek to uphold them.)
- Seek to create informal social networks among faculty. Good informal relationships lead to better understanding when it comes to formal decision-making interactions.
 - Take groups of faculty to lunch, and vary the groups you take to allow for more interactions.
 - Provide opportunities and a focus for regular (perhaps every 1 or 2 months) informal department social events hosted by the chair or a senior faculty member, designed to foster interaction among groups of colleagues.
- Actively appreciate all faculty. Share and celebrate everyone's achievements and good news – grants, publications, etc., and important family events too.
 - Recognize departmental and institutional contributions not only in annual reviews, but also in public forums, one-on-one conversations and/or a personal note.
 - Practice Management by Walking About (MBWA):⁷ Check in with faculty in their workspace on occasion. As you interact with them there, ask for ideas on how things could be improved. Be prepared to act on these suggestions as appropriate.
- Be transparent in your decision-making:
 - Ensure that P&T guidelines, HR policies, work-life policies, and administrative procedures are readily available and accessible to everyone. Guide faculty to the relevant offices where their questions may be addressed and, to the extent possible, ensure that decisions in these areas are transparent.

- Make yourself knowledgeable about policies concerning leave and other accommodations and connect faculty with the offices which handle these matters.⁸
- Be accountable – follow through on faculty concerns. This supports the building of a trusting environment within your department/school/college.
- Ensure mentoring for all levels – Assign and monitor the effectiveness of formal mentors.
 - Mentors can be very useful in helping mentees navigate department and university culture, providing advice regarding professional development, and in guiding with time management and work-life balance as needed.
 - Faculty benefit from having different types of mentors at different stages of their careers. The UD ADVANCE site on Faculty Mentoring⁹ is a rich source of information on this area and includes suggested STEM- and Humanities-focused mentoring topics.
 - Continually assess the efficacy of your department formal mentoring policy. Check in with mentors/mentees periodically and ask how things are going.
- Value the diverse backgrounds, values and ideas of your faculty members. Faculty members have different strengths and contribute in different ways. Some choose non-traditional paths toward excellence and are hired with full awareness of that. These non-traditional paths should be appreciated and valued. Lead open discussions in your department on how alternative models will be evaluated consistent with the P&T criteria for the unit.

The way you conduct your meetings is also very important. See UD ADVANCE paper on Fostering Inclusive Departmental Climates¹⁰ for some recommendations.

C. Support Professional Development at All Levels

Provide faculty with opportunities for career development early, often, and at every stage. As much as possible seek or save some department support for faculty travel to professional meetings. This enhances the work and visibility of your faculty and promotes your department.

For Junior faculty – be careful not to overwhelm new/junior faculty with too much information given all at once. Perhaps information can be prioritized and given over a few months.

- Orientation to UD - done by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, usually mid-August.
- Orientation to department – Junior/New faculty may need guidance in various areas – establishing research, identifying resources, mentoring students, navigating UD. They may also need help with situating family – dual career matters and other family life policies. Ensure that this information is known to the formal mentors and is being shared with the faculty member. Ensure that they know how to access information on relevant resources and University policies.⁷
- Mentorship – see section above (page 5).
- Workload balance is critical to the success of junior faculty. Monitor Faculty Workload (See relevant section above - page 4, and Appendix 1).
- Help promote faculty (and hence department) external visibility. Some suggestions:

- As you are able, connect new/junior faculty with PIs in cases where there may be mutual benefit from linkages.
- Nominate junior faculty for university and national awards as may be appropriate. *See Appendices 2a and 2b.*
[To help in preparing the nomination, you will no doubt need to request from the nominee, information about their work which is relevant to the award. This can sometimes be difficult/uncomfortable for junior faculty. Help them to see the usefulness of the request.]
- Help junior faculty to establish research relationships external to UD.

For Midcareer Faculty – Studies show that disillusionment with the job usually sets in after promotion to associate professor.¹¹ The situation is no different at UD, where the 2018 ADVANCE Faculty Climate Survey showed that associate professors are significantly less satisfied with their professional life than assistant or full professors.¹² Midcareer faculty need support through the transition. Some suggestions:

- Address the faculty member's particular area of growth and provide tools for success.
- Recognize achievements - nominate for awards and recognition as appropriate.
- Encourage creativity.
- Mentorship - see section above (page 5).
- Monitor teaching, research and service commitments. *See Appendix 1.*

For Senior Faculty – Like colleagues at other stages of their career, senior faculty can benefit from continued professional development, leadership opportunities, nominations for awards, and opportunities to voice concerns and receive feedback.

Strive to ensure that professors feel valued. Provide appropriate support for, and recognition of these members of your department.

D. Support Leadership Development at all Levels

- Provide faculty with opportunities to participate in department/campus governance, national conferences, and leadership programs. There are various workshops and programs in these areas offered by universities and national professional groups. With some exploration of this, and with input from the faculty member, find a development program that is best for the faculty member and the department. *See Appendices 3 and 4.*
- Provide information about training opportunities on cultural sensitivity, diversity, being an ally, creating and sustaining an inclusive environment. All faculty members have a responsibility for a positive climate therefore it is especially important to help them develop in this way.

Note: The Table in Appendix 5 provides a summary of the strategies discussed above. You may consider printing this table and having it as a quick reference.

4. FACULTY SUPPORT AS A RESULT OF COVID-19

Support for faculty will be even more critical as a result of COVID-19, and impacts of this pandemic will have repercussions on the careers of faculty for many years. (In the case of new assistant professors, the probationary period may extend as long as 9 years[†]). The pandemic presents significant concerns for everyone, but different faculty members will experience unique challenges depending on their personal situation, their discipline, etc. The articles referenced below^{13, 14} provide a guide as to some concerns and useful responses. See also UD ADVANCE resources related to COVID policy changes, writing impact statements, etc.¹⁵

The challenges of being engaged with teaching and research while caring for and home-schooling children or caring for elderly family members – perhaps with a disability – are obvious. Traditionally, women bear the brunt of this responsibility. There are other areas which impact research productivity that must also be kept in sharp focus. Faculty members would have lost access to research labs, to studios or other places of creative work, to human subjects for their research, and to their research samples and students. This interruption, harmful in itself, will also impact the ability to write grant proposals, and report to granting agencies. While all faculty are likely to be impacted by COVID-19, junior /probationary faculty may be particularly vulnerable, isolated and anxious. For some faculty members, their plans and expectations for fulfilling tenure requirements will have been seriously affected.

Structures to support faculty are now more important than ever. Mentorship for all, and especially for junior/probationary faculty is critical and should be strongly supported. Since UD has allowed an extra probationary year for all faculty due to COVID, chairs should ensure that all faculty (probationary and P&T reviewers) are aware of the changes, and that external reviewers are advised of UD's policy as related to COVID, when faculty are being considered for promotion.

[†] *The usual 6 years + COVID extra year + potentially 2 family leave years.*

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APPENDIX 2A.

Some Possibilities for Awards External to UD.

Several of the awards/honors in these appendices are discipline focused. This does not represent a comprehensive list of all awards/honors for all disciplines. These lists are intended to give some ideas. We anticipate that you will look further within your own discipline for relevant workshops.

- Young Investigator and Established Investigator Awards of the faculty member's professional organizations.
- Cottrell Scholar Award – honors and *helps to develop outstanding teacher-scholars who are recognized by their scientific communities for the quality and innovation of their research programs and their academic leadership skills.* <https://rescorp.org/cottrell-scholars/cottrell-scholar-award> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- Sloan Research Fellowships. <https://sloan.org/fellowships> (accessed May 3, 2023). *TT but untenured members of faculty in chemistry, computer science, economics, mathematics, molecular biology, neuroscience, ocean sciences, physics or a related field.*
- Fulbright Fellowships/Awards: <https://eca.state.gov/fulbright> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- Faculty should be encouraged to join and be proactive in their national professional association. Nominations can be made for:
 - Committee of their professional society
 - Speaker at an annual meeting of their professional society
 - Speaker at a sectional meeting of their professional society
 - Fellow of their professional society
 - Editorial board of a journal
 - Panelist at a national meeting

APPENDIX 2B

University of Delaware Awards

Nominations internally might be, for example:

- Faculty Excellence Awards
http://www1.udel.edu/teachingawards/awards/exc_teach/index.html (accessed May 3, 2023).
 - Francis Allison Faculty Award
 - Excellence in Teaching Award
 - Excellence in Advising and Mentoring Award
 - Mid-Career Faculty Excellence in Scholarship Award
 - Scholarly Community Engagement Award
- Your college Excellence Awards – in teaching, scholarship, service, advocacy, mentoring, as applicable.
- Women’s Studies Faculty Research Award – to support research on women.
- Louis L. Redding Diversity Award - recognizes individuals or units whose efforts have promoted, enhanced and implemented diversity programs or activities resulting in a significant change in the campus climate and composition within the UD community.
<https://sites.udel.edu/diversity/awards/> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- Women’s Caucus Torch Award recognizes an individual who has “*carried the torch for women’s equality*”. Nomination form available at
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfSnTEoarEWnN9Lmlk7UTaTZu2RavuYX1M51kSQB5rHDbakLw/viewform> (accessed May 3, 2023).

APPENDIX 3

EXTERNAL WORKSHOPS FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Several of the leadership workshops in these appendices are discipline focused. This does not represent a comprehensive list of all workshops for all disciplines. These lists are intended to give you some ideas. We anticipate that you will look further within your own discipline for relevant workshops.

- Cottrell Scholars Collaborative Academic Leadership Training Workshop: *provides academic leaders with tools, connections and skills to be successful.* (Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy). <https://cen.acs.org/acs-news/Faculty-gather-academic-leadership-workshop/97/i10> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- This Department Leadership Workshop *is for geographers interested in improving their programs – chairs, deans, academic advisors, provosts and other administrators, as well as faculty interested in leadership issues.* <http://www.aag.org/gfda> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- MLA Academic Program Services (MAPS) offers *professional development events for current, new or aspiring leaders and administrators of academic programs, departments and centers in languages and literatures.* <https://www.maps.mla.org> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- HERS Leadership Institute: Higher Education Leadership Development Program – *a transformational development program for women in higher education.* <https://www.hersnetwork.org/programs/hers-institute/> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- ELATES – *a national leadership development program designed to advance senior women faculty in academic engineering, computer science, and other STEM fields into effective institutional leadership roles within their schools and universities.* <https://drexel.edu/provost/initiatives/elates/> (accessed May 3, 2023).

Some Possibilities for Workshops for Chairs

AAUA Professional Development Fellows Program “*Open to persons with current administrative appointments. Personnel representing a wide range of admin roles (unit director/dept chair through vice president.*” <https://aaua.org/professional-development/> (accessed May 3, 2023).

- CCAS Seminars for Department Chairs
<https://www.ccas.net/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4042> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- CCAS Leadership Development Workshops for Chairs.
<https://www.ccas.net/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3668> (accessed May 3, 2023).

APPENDIX 4

Other Programs /Workshops for Professional Development

External

- Lilly Conference on College and University Teaching “provides opportunities for the presentation of the Scholarship of teaching and Learning.” <https://www.lillyconferences.com> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- NCFDD Faculty Success Program “designed to teach tenure-track and tenured faculty the skills they need to increase both their research and writing productivity while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.” <https://www.facultydiversity.org/fsp-bootcamp> (accessed May 3, 2023).

At UD

- UD Research Office – provides training on many aspects of research and research administration (e.g. grant writing mentorship programs such as NIH Proposal Academy, NSF Career Proposal Academy, etc.) <https://research.udel.edu/training/> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- UD Faculty Accountability Program “will create supportive communities where faculty members will be challenged and celebrated in their respective journeys to become more productive scholars.” <https://sites.udel.edu/diversity/accountability-program/> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- Summer Institute on Teaching “brings together educators from across the UD to build and strengthen a community around teaching and learning.” <https://sites.udel.edu/sit/> (accessed May 3, 2023).
- UD ADVANCE Institute – focused on faculty development and success. The ADVANCE Institute offers workshops and resources in the following areas:
 - Best practices for faculty recruitment
 - Faculty Mentoring
 - Promotion & Tenure panels for T/TT faculty (Asst to Assoc & Assoc to Full)
 - Diversity in Higher Education
 - and hosts Networking Events for Faculty.
- Lerner Women’s Leadership Initiative – brings together students, faculty, alumni and the executive community to address gender and leadership issues in our society. Women are empowered to have more confidence and competence in achieving their goals and men have greater understanding of how and why to support women. <https://lerner.udel.edu/centers/womens-leadership-initiative/> (accessed May 3, 2023).

APPENDIX 5.

The table below¹⁶ shows properties of a conventional department vs those of a very professional, on-the-move department. We should be aiming at performance as shown on the righthand column – **HEALTHY / DIVERSE Departments**, seeking to ensure “the recognition and appreciation of the different backgrounds, values, and ideas of those who comprise our campus, as well as a commitment to ensuring that all people on our campus are treated according to principles of fairness, civility, dignity, and equity.”¹⁷

You may consider printing this table and having it as a quick reference.

TYPICAL / CONVENTIONAL Departments	HEALTHY / DIVERSE Departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on progress toward P&T is limited to annual evaluations by the department head and is often brief and lacking in meaningful detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department head provides meaningful feedback annually as well as frequent informal feedback throughout the year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior faculty feedback rarely if ever occurs except at reappointment, depriving newer faculty members of constructive suggestions from the people who will ultimately vote on their tenure and/or promotion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior faculty provide periodic feedback in addition to that given at reappointment. Frequent informal feedback is also provided regularly by mentors or coaches and occasionally by other senior faculty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New faculty members are mostly left on their own to ask for help as they start their teaching and research. Many departments say that senior faculty regularly provide informal mentoring, but often such mentoring is almost nonexistent and may not come from the best sources. Faculty from underrepresented groups are often left out of informal mentoring arrangements that do occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new faculty are routinely provided with structured mentoring. It may take the form of a single mentor for the first year, a teaching mentor and a research mentor, or a mentor coach who works with the faculty member throughout the tenure period.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty from underrepresented groups are frequently assigned to more committees than their departmental colleagues serve on, and they are also sought out for more student mentoring. The result is an excessive service burden relative to the average departmental service load. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department head and mentor help keep faculty from underrepresented groups from being overburdened with service responsibilities.

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TYPICAL / CONVENTIONAL Departments	HEALTHY / DIVERSE Departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate professors find themselves on their own as they prepare to progress toward promotion, and frequently stall out at the associate level or take many years to become full professors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate professors are routinely provided guidance by the department head and senior colleagues as they progress toward promotion. Attention is paid to leadership development, goal clarification and facilitation of award nominations and other forms of recognition.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work/life events (e.g. welcoming a new baby, elder care and medical problems) are addressed by university policies, which are frequently inadequate to cover faculty members' needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department heads make explicit commitments to flexibility in accommodating work/life events, such as by adjusting teaching schedules, allowing work from home and limiting early morning or late afternoon faculty meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once a faculty member is hired, the department does not get involved with partner hiring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a faculty member is hired and a partner is also looking for a professional position the department head and colleagues continue to assist the partner in finding a satisfactory position.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate (working environment for faculty and staff) is seldom or never discussed in the department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining a positive climate is an explicit part of the department's mission and is addressed by a standing task force or committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department head does not pay particular attention to climate and may do things that work against a positive one (e.g. making decisions without input or with the input of a select small group, not communicating regularly and effectively with faculty and allowing conflicts to fester). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The department head pays attention to climate by maintaining transparency in decision making, keeping strong lines of communication open with faculty and staff and helping to resolve conflicts as soon as they develop.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty members interact primarily in formal faculty meetings. Little opportunity is provided for informal social gatherings, and when social events are planned (e.g. holiday parties), few faculty members attend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departments consciously seek to provide regular opportunities for faculty to interact both formally and informally (e.g. brown-bag lunches, social events that include families, weekly breakfasts with doughnuts, daily or weekly afternoon tea/coffee sessions and monthly birthday celebrations). Most faculty attend these events.

From NC State University Guide for Department Heads – Retaining Diverse Department Faculties– 2014¹⁶