

TRANSFORMATIONS

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UPCOMING EVENTS: FALL 2009

Fall Reception for Women Colleagues

September 17, 2009
4:00 pm—6:00 pm
University Club

Join women faculty, staff, and graduate students to meet new colleagues, network, and learn about the history of women at Virginia Tech.

This annual welcome event is co-sponsored by the Graduate School, the Organization of Women Faculty, the Women's Studies Program, the Women's Center, VT Women Connect, and AdvanceVT. Child care will be available.

Faculty Mentoring Workshops

September 23-24, 2009
Inn at Virginia Tech

On September 23-24, Dr. Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Associate Provost for Faculty Development at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, will present three workshops on mentoring for VT faculty.

Workshops for assistant and associate professors are full. Thursday morning's workshop is open to all faculty interested in starting or improving mentoring programs in their departments. Department heads are especially encouraged to attend.

Graduate Student Lunch Seminar

September 11, 2009
1:00 pm—2:30 pm
GLC F

Join Dr. Esther Takeuchi, professor at SUNY Buffalo and inventor of small batteries for implantable electronic devices, as she discusses "Research Careers in Industry and Academe." Lunch will be provided.

Registration for all upcoming events is available at www.advance.vt.edu.

For additional program details, visit www.advance.vt.edu.

SAVE THE DATE! JANUARY 11, 2010

The 7th annual *Advancing Diversity at Virginia Tech* workshop will be held Monday, January 11, 2010 at the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center. All members of the University community interested in issues of academic diversity are invited to attend.

The keynote speaker for the 2010 workshop is Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, III, President of The University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Dr. Hrabowski currently chairs the National Academies' Committee on Underrepresented Groups and the Science & Engineering Workforce Pipeline.



TRANSFORMATIONS

FACULTY MENTORING FINDINGS FROM THE 2008 FACULTY WORK-LIFE SURVEY

Results from *AdvanceVT's* 2008 Faculty Work-Life Survey indicate that almost half of Virginia Tech faculty feel they do not receive effective mentoring. Nearly 47% of pre-tenure faculty and 45% of tenured faculty disagreed with the survey statement that “*I have received effective mentoring in my department.*”

More specifically, 24.2% of pre-tenure faculty selected “somewhat disagree” and 22.6% selected “strongly disagree” when responding to this question. For tenured faculty, 21.9% selected “somewhat disagree” and 22.9% selected “strongly disagree.” Pre-tenure faculty would like more interaction with senior colleagues both within and outside their home departments, and associate professors desire more guidance on professional development post-tenure.

To address these concerns, *AdvanceVT* and the Provost's Office are launching a mentoring initiative to support and improve departmental mentoring programs and assist faculty members in building mentoring networks. In addition to a series of Faculty Mentoring Workshops scheduled for September 23-24 (see page 1), a session on mentoring is being planned for the 7th annual *Advancing Diversity at Virginia Tech* workshop to be held January 11, 2010 (see page 1).

Seven hundred tenured and tenure-track faculty at Virginia Tech participated in the 2008 Faculty Work-Life Survey for a response rate of 53%. The purpose of the survey was to assess faculty perceptions of overall job satisfaction and various attributes of the work environment at Virginia Tech.



“A strong mentoring program is needed. Some departments pay lip service to this, and others have a formal program.”

- 2008 survey respondent

“Mentoring in [my] department is not organized enough to understand the need for different types of mentoring and mentoring teams for women and minorities.”

- 2008 survey respondent

“The dominant failings in my department are lack of timely feedback regarding tenure and promotion reviews and lack of effective mentoring.”

- 2008 survey respondent

Selected resources on mentoring:

de Janasz, S. C. & Sullivan, S. E. (2004). Multiple mentoring in academe: Developing the professorial network. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 64(2), 263-283.

Girves, J. E., Zepeda, Y., & Gwathmey, J. K. (2005). Mentoring in a post-affirmative action world. *Journal of Social Issues*, 61(3), 449-479.

Haring, M. J. (1997). Networking mentoring as a preferred model for guiding programs for underrepresented students. In H. T. Frier-son, Jr. (Ed.), *Diversity in higher education: Vol. 1. Mentoring and diversity in higher education* (pp. 63-76). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Haring, M. J. (1999). Foreword from the field. In C. A. Mullen & D. W. Lick (Eds.), *New directions in mentoring: Creating a culture of synergy* (pp. xi-xij). New York: Falmer Press.

Wasburn, M. H. (2007). Mentoring women faculty: An instrumental case study of strategic collaboration. *Mentoring & Tutoring*, 15(1), 57-72.

RESEARCH ON FACULTY MENTORING NETWORKS

Effective faculty mentoring can take place in a variety of formats, but researchers agree that mentoring is a key contributor to faculty success. This is particularly true for female faculty and faculty of color, groups that are typically underrepresented in academia. A review of the literature on faculty development shows that mentoring relationships not only benefit mentees (i.e., protégés), but mentors and the educational institutions they are affiliated with (Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2005).

Benefits for mentees include:

- the development of teaching and research skills;
- help with transitioning to their chosen profession and institution; and
- introduction to key players in the field.

Mentor benefits include:

- the satisfaction of helping others develop professionally;
- the expansion of colleague networks; and
- feedback on their own teaching and research.

Benefits to the institution include:

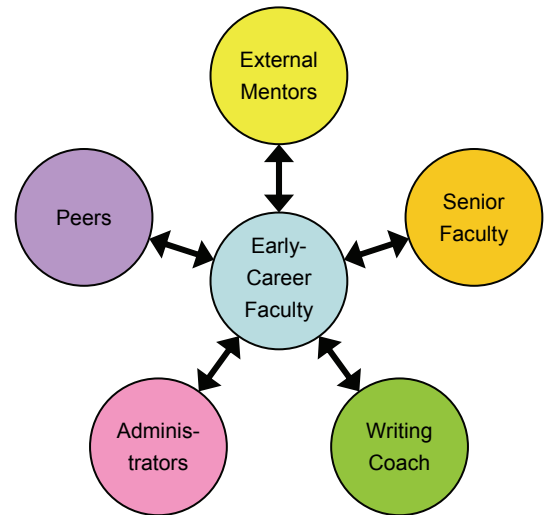
- increased productivity; retention; and collegiality.

While people typically think of faculty mentoring in terms of a top-down, one-on-one relationship between a junior faculty member (the mentee) and a more experienced professional (the mentor), this type of relationship is not always possible or preferable. For example, the person best suited to helping a new faculty member get his or her research agenda off the ground may not be the best person to field questions on navigating university politics. Rather than gaining input on the many different components of a faculty career (e.g., teaching, research, and service) from one individual, new faculty can benefit from engaging multiple mentors in their specific areas of expertise (Haring, 1997, 1999; de Janasz & Sullivan, 2004).

This “mentoring network” approach encourages mentees to form relationships with individuals both inside and outside their academic departments. Although it is often helpful for early-career female faculty and faculty of color to form mentoring relationships with others from similar gender and ethnic backgrounds, this may not be possible within a specific academic department.

Recent studies on mentoring also advocate a more collaborative, structured approach in which multiple mentees and mentors come together in formal mentoring groups (Haring, 1997, 1999; Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2005; Wasburn, 2007). In this model, everyone benefits from the diverse contributions made by individual group members and mentees feel empowered by taking an active role in their professional development. While this approach requires resources in terms of planning and facilitation, it can be a particularly effective approach for female faculty and faculty of color, groups that may be less likely to be taken “under the wing” of a more experienced faculty member as in a traditional one-on-one mentoring relationship.

For more information on mentoring networks and effective mentoring strategies, visit the Office of Faculty Development at the University of Massachusetts Amherst’s website at: <http://www.umass.edu/ofd/mentoring/resources.html>. To join Virginia Tech’s Faculty Mentoring site on Scholar, use the Membership tool to access the list of “Joinable Sites” and search for “Faculty Mentoring.”



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

VISITING SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Virginia Tech's Office for Equity and Inclusion and *AdvanceVT* are pleased to invite proposals for the Virginia Tech Visiting Scholars Program.

The Visiting Scholars Program is designed to support faculty recruitment efforts through building or expanding connections between Virginia Tech and outstanding scholars from other institutions. Financial and administrative support is available to invite early- to mid-career professionals to campus for short visits outside the usual recruitment process.

Participation in the Visiting Scholars Program offers high visibility and broad exposure across campus to both visitor and host. The program is especially interested in supporting visits by individuals who are:

- **potential candidates for current or future faculty hires; and**
- **contribute to increasing excellence, equity, and diversity at Virginia Tech.**

Visiting Scholars may be invited to present an overview of their research to a broad audience of the university community, followed by an open reception, or to an informal networking meeting with faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and/or graduate students.

Academic units or faculty at Virginia Tech who wish to invite an individual to Blacksburg under the Visiting Scholars Program should visit www.advance.vt.edu for information on how to apply.

Proposals are accepted *at any time* during the academic year. Approximately ten awards will be made in 2009-10. Cost sharing is encouraged. Flexible arrangements are welcome. For more information or to submit a proposal, please contact Peggy Layne at playne@vt.edu.

DEPARTMENT CLIMATE MINI-GRANTS

Virginia Tech is committed to improving the work environment, often referred to as department climate, for faculty, staff, and students. *AdvanceVT*, through the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost, invites proposals for mini-grants to implement initiatives designed to improve department climate. A department (or school) may request up to \$2500; up to five proposals will be funded. Department heads and/or faculty members may apply for a mini-grant on behalf of a department. Proposals may be based on the department's Work-Life Survey results, or may be based on a topic of special interest to faculty members in the department.

Examples of areas of focus for mini-grant proposals include: **improving departmental communication, increasing engagement of department members in decision-making; developing transparent policies (e.g., promotion expectations, committee assignments, and resource distribution); developing a greater sense of intellectual community; developing a mentoring program for faculty; implementing practices to promote better work-life balance; and developing core values.**

Funds must be expended during the current fiscal year and in a manner consistent with university policies and procedures. Proposals will be reviewed by a faculty panel with selections announced by mid to late October. Proposals will be selected based on their relevance to improving department climate, quality of the proposal, evidence of departmental commitment to undertake the change initiative, and reasonableness of proposed budget. Mini-grant recipients will be expected to provide a written report at the end of the year and attend a meeting of the *AdvanceVT* Advisory Council to discuss the project and outcomes.

Mini-grant proposals are due October 1, 2009. Additional details, including how to apply for a department climate mini-grant, are available at www.advance.vt.edu.

AdvanceVT is a comprehensive program to promote and enhance the careers of women in academic science and engineering at Virginia Tech through institutional transformation.

Elements of *AdvanceVT* include:

Pipeline: Advancing Women into Faculty Careers

Recruitment: Increasing the Representation of Women

Leadership: Empowering Women as Leaders and Scholars

Institutional Change: Updating Policies and Changing Culture

Go to www.advance.vt.edu to learn more about the initiative.