Women Faculty Peer-Mentoring Groups:
Getting Started Guidelines
Spring 2010

Introductions
Questions that can serve as an icebreaker in the first meeting may include:
1. Where do you hope to be in five years? What do you need to get there?
2. Describe someone who has been a good mentor to you in any area of your life.
3. What does good mentoring look like? How can you find it if it doesn't occur naturally?
4. "Good mentoring rests on having an understanding of climate issues at your institution." Do you agree with this statement? How would you describe the climate for women in your department?
5. When has your gender, marital/partner or family status, race/ethnicity, or nationality mattered in your academic career?

Meeting Guidelines
1. Decide how often you will meet and how long an initial commitment do group members want to make (e.g. one semester or full academic year)?
2. Designate a facilitator to keep track of time and steer conversations in a productive direction. The facilitator role can rotate at each gathering or one person can be designated for the group.
3. Discuss how members want to use the group time (e.g. problem solving, professional development topics, presentations by guest speakers). What would be a productive outcome from each group meeting?
4. Set ground rules for confidentiality to which the group will adhere. Discuss what it means to each person and how confidentiality will work for your group:
   - Is it OK to discuss group topics with others outside of group?
   - Is it OK to share names of those who are in your group with others outside of group (family members, colleagues, students)?
5. Decide on the general structure for meetings. You might begin each meeting by checking in with each group member. Group members may need to decide who goes first based on urgency of issues.
   - Be sure to include some element of positive reinforcement for members at each meeting so members don't leave feeling overwhelmed.
   - What is active participation for members? Does every one talk at each meeting?
6. End each meeting with a tentative schedule for the next session. Decide when you will next meet and what topics/issues you will discuss.

Suggested Discussion Topics
- Do you know what you need for tenure review in your department?
- What publishing hurdles are you facing and/or have you overcome?
- How does tenure-clock relief for parenting play out in your department?
- Do people get excluded in your department? On what are the exclusions based? What works to overcome those exclusions?

- Have you approached your department chair with a difficult issue? What strategies worked well? What would you do differently?
- What do graduate students expect and/or need of you in your department?
- How do you achieve a balance between your work, research, and personal demands?
- What resources do you find helpful in identifying grant programs and developing your grant proposal writing skills?
- Have you been the only woman in the room among your colleagues or students? How do you manage those dynamics?
- Have you felt "stuck" at any point in your academic career? What strategies did you find worked or did not work?
- Are there guest speakers the group would like to invite for a session?

Suggested Readings

1. *Gender-Informed Mentoring Strategies for Women Engineering Scholars: On Establishing a Caring Community* by Naomi Chesler and Mark Chesler, 2002. http://vtb.bme.wisc.edu/Chesler_JEE_2002.pdf. Accessed Sep 5, 2008.

2. "Mentoring Across Cultures" by Betty Neal Crutcher. In *Academe*, July/August 2007. http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2007/JA/Feat/crut.htm. Accessed Sep 5, 2008.

3. *Superservicable Feminism* by Katie Hogan, 2005. http://www.theminnesotareview.org/journal/ns6364/iae_ns6364_superserviceablefeminism.shtml. Accessed Sep 5, 2008. Examines the silent economy of gendered service in the Academy

4. "The X-Gals Alliance" by Lucille Louis, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 2006. http://chronicle.com/jobs/news/2006/10/2006100201c.htm. Accessed Sep 5, 2008. Chronicles the adventures of a peer support group for female biologists.

5. *Gender Equality in Academia: Bad News from the Trenches, and Some Possible Solutions* by Kristen Monroe, Saba Ozyurt, Ted Wrigley, and Amy Alexander, 2008. http://advance.uci.edu/media/GenderEquality.June08.pdf. Accessed Sep 5, 2008.

6. *The Campus Climate Revisited: Chilly for Women Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students* by Bernice Sandler and Roberta Hall, 1986. http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1c/e2/a6.pdf. Accessed Sep 5, 2008.

7. *"Opt Out" or Pushed Out?: The Untold Story of Why Women Leave the Workforce* by Joan C. Williams, Jessica Manvell, and Stephanie Bornstein, 2006. http://www.worklifelaw.org/pubs/OptOutPushedOut.pdf Accessed Sept. 5, 2008.

8. "Beyond Gender Schemas: Improving the Advancement of Women in Academia" by Virginia Valian. In *Hypatia* vol. 20, no. 3 (Summer 2005). http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/psych/faculty/valian/docs/2005BeyoundGender.pdf. Accessed Sep 5, 2008.