

**Barnard College Mentoring Handbook**  
Prepared by the FDD and the Dean of Diversity & Development  
*Revised Fall 2015*

**I. Suggestions for Mentors**

Exchange CVs with your new colleague, to learn more about your colleague's background, experience, and interests and to open up a conversation about the possible career trajectories.

Ask your new colleague about past accomplishments, current projects, and short- and long-term plans for their teaching, scholarship, and creative work. Offer constructive criticism and feedback.

Early on in the mentoring relationship, have a conversation with your colleague about each of your expectations concerning the mentoring program: What does your colleague want from the program, and what are you willing/able to provide? Agree to a provisional schedule of contact, whether in person, by e-mail, or by phone. To the extent that it is both feasible and desirable by both parties, schedule these contacts so that you both have made a commitment to the mentoring process.

Talk with your colleague about disciplinary and institutional culture(s) at the departmental, college, and university levels, and beyond into the field as a whole. What are the unspoken expectations and implicit (or explicit) values of the department, of related programs, of Barnard, and of Columbia that can impinge upon or shape the junior colleague's work life and chances for success?

Find out what types of commitments your colleague has to any interdisciplinary programs or departments. Are the commitments contractual or voluntary? What are the expectations of the interdisciplinary program? How can your colleague negotiate these expectations?

Given the complexity and idiosyncrasy of the Morningside Heights community, where new faculty members often have a difficult time understanding the relationships between Barnard and Columbia and learning about the many resources (libraries, research centers and institutes, seminars and colloquia and so on), spend some time orienting your colleague to what is available. You can do this directly, if your knowledge aligns with your colleague's field of expertise, or you can help your colleague gain access to the networks of faculty members who are knowledgeable of the relevant connections that would benefit your colleague.

Discuss the annual Faculty Personnel Report with your colleague, perhaps offering to review the report before submission to the department chair and Provost. Remember that your colleague may not have a clear sense of what activities merit inclusion on the Personnel Form and might benefit from brainstorming on this topic. Discuss how teaching and service in affiliated programs are documented and evaluated in the review. After your colleague meets

with the department/program chair at the end of the academic year to review the performance report, have a meeting to discuss any feedback received, including strategies for addressing areas where the department chair has recommended changes or improvements.

Support your colleague by attending talks given on campus and recommending university seminars and working groups that might be of interest. Use your knowledge of the Morningside Heights community to suggest people, programs, or resources that might be beneficial for research and professional development.

For more suggestions about what makes a good academic mentor, consult this article: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/08/12/essay-how-be-good-faculty-mentor-junior-professors>

## **II. Suggestions for New Faculty Mentorees**

Take full advantage of the mentoring program as a resource for learning more about the institution, its culture, and expectations, as well as the resources available within and around the College and the University for building an intellectual community for your scholarship and teaching.

Exchange CVs with your senior colleague (mentor/liaison) and discuss your past accomplishments, current projects, and future plans.

Take initiative in learning about what is going on in your department at Barnard, its cognate department at Columbia, and around the College and the University. Take the opportunity to meet colleagues in other departments and build networks of intellectual affiliation across the institution. If you are doing interdisciplinary work, build affiliations with faculty in related departments and programs. Your mentor can introduce you to colleagues and help you navigate the sometimes byzantine elements of the Morningside Heights community.

Make your mentoring partnership a priority. Discuss at the outset what your expectations are for your participation in the mentoring program, and set up a provisional schedule of commitments with your senior colleague—meetings, e-mail exchanges, phone calls—to keep in regular and sustained contact with your mentor.

Attend the mentoring program events, and take advantage of these occasions—a combination of social events and workshops—to get to know other new faculty and senior faculty and staff who are invested in helping new faculty succeed at Barnard.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. The Barnard/Columbia scene is notoriously difficult to navigate, and there are many people—both within your department and beyond—who can help you understand the institutional and personal dynamics at work, and to get a good sense of the ethos of the place including its unspoken and often implicit expectations and values.

Cultivate a network of colleagues, both at Barnard and at Columbia, who can act as your supporters and advisors as you develop your teaching and research. Your senior colleague/mentor can probably offer advice about appropriate and important people with whom you should build intentional collegial relationships.

Make sure that you have regular conversations with your chair to talk about your teaching and research. After submitting your annual Faculty Personnel Report to your chair and the Provost, your chair should schedule a meeting to discuss the report and your plans for the next year. If you receive criticism, suggestions for improvement, or signals about areas of weakness, make sure that you understand exactly what the contours of that critique are and map out a concrete plan for responding to the critique. Your mentor can also be helpful in this process.

For some more ideas about how to cultivate a good mentor, see this article: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/09/09/essay-finding-good-mentoring-advice-academic-careers>

### **III. Topics for Discussion between Mentorship Partners**

The following broad set of questions may be more relevant for some new faculty and their mentors than others. The goal is to illustrate the kinds of discussion topics that might be productive ones for mentorship pairs.

Start by asking each other what you think might be the most useful outcomes from the mentoring relationship. What kinds of information and feedback does the new faculty member want most from a mentor? Try to generate as inclusive a list as possible. At this time, the mentor can also share what experiences have been most valuable to advancement at the College.

#### *The Department/Program and the College*

How is the new faculty member's primary department organized? How are decisions made? What are the opportunities to participate in departmental governance? What is the relationship of the Barnard department to its cognate at Columbia? How can new faculty members best navigate that relationship?

What sort of staff support can a new faculty member expect?

How do faculty balance their responsibilities to the department with demands or responsibilities/expectations from other departments or programs with which they are affiliated?

What roles do interdisciplinary programs play in one's annual and reappointment or promotion reviews? How does one negotiate conflicting expectations?

How does one negotiate the dynamics of self-promotion? How is it best to let colleagues know about one's activities and accomplishments—faculty newsletters? Circulating publications and conference papers to colleagues in the department?

What information should be included on the annual Personnel Form submitted to the Provost?

If one finds oneself in a serious conflict with one's department or chair, what are the procedures for addressing such conflicts? What recourse does a new faculty member have under such circumstances?

### *Teaching and Advising*

What are the teaching expectations of new faculty, and what supports (e.g., TAs) are available? Has the new faculty member experienced supervising TAs, and what kinds of support/guidance might be helpful?

What other types of teaching and advising responsibilities are part of the new faculty's teaching load? Advising students? Advising senior theses? Advising Master's and Ph.D. students? How negotiable are these responsibilities? Are there things to which new faculty can (should?) say "no"?

How should you document your accomplishments as a teacher? How are teaching evaluations used in departmental and college reviews? What other forms of documentation are relevant? Should a new faculty member invite senior members of the department to sit in on classes and observe teaching?

### *Scholarly and Creative Work*

What conferences should the new faculty member attend? How much travel is allowed/expected/supported? How do you choose between large conferences and smaller events? What are the best strategies in the new faculty member's field for gaining exposure at the national and international levels, building networks of professional contacts, and so on?

How are different sorts of scholarly and creative activities weighted in the new colleague's field of specialization/practice, within the department, and at Barnard and Columbia? In terms of publications, what kinds of publications (or other forms of scholarly production) are most important and most highly valued: scholarly monographs published by university presses? Articles in refereed journals? Collaborative projects? etc. If the new colleague's work doesn't immediately fit the standard profile, how can that colleague educate the department and the College about the substance and significance of the work when it is articulated in a different

format? How should the new colleague balance different kinds of scholarly production? When and how should one say “no” to some opportunities because they might detract from a more fruitful path prior to promotion?

What are the standard practices for submitting work for publication? How does one approach submitting a book proposal? What are the most prestigious or most significant venues or publishing houses for work in the new colleague’s field? What strategies are necessary to be successful in publishing one’s work in these venues? Should one submit an article or book proposal “cold” or ask for help from one’s dissertation advisor or some other senior colleague to lay some groundwork for the submission? Is it appropriate in one’s field to have the first contact be via a face-to-face conversation with an acquisitions editor at an annual meeting or conference? What are the protocols appropriate to the new colleague’s field?

How important are grants? What are the practices and procedures appropriate to the field, department, or program for acquiring the necessary institutional support to get one’s scholarship or creative work underway?

How does one make interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and artistic or creative work legible to faculty in one’s department as well as to scholars or practitioners in one’s area of expertise?

What information should be included in the CV? How should it be formatted?

### *Service*

How can one best balance the demands of research, teaching, and service to the institution? What are the expectations of faculty members vis-à-vis advising and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students? How important is committee service and which committees are the better ones on which to serve in order to get to know the institution and other colleagues as well as to fulfill one’s commitment to service?

What are the new colleague’s responsibilities to interdisciplinary programs at the College, and how are these responsibilities factored into the overall workload and evaluation of one’s contributions to teaching, research, and service?

### *Work-Life*

What are the relevant policies concerning leaves—unpaid leaves when one receives an outside grant? Family and medical leave? How does one negotiate these kinds of leaves?

What strategies does the new faculty member have in place for maintaining a sense of balance in the face of the many pressures of this professional environment? What choices has the senior faculty member made to enable being a high achiever over the long term without burning

out or losing a sense of self? If either party has a family that makes demands on time, discuss how to carve out time for oneself as well as meeting the responsibilities of and reaping the rewards of being a family member. If the senior faculty member does not have experience juggling these demands or has a different set of circumstances than the new faculty member, discuss ways in which support for the kind of juggling that the new faculty member will be doing might be met.

For more ideas about what to do in a “mentoring conversation,” see this article:

[https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/mentoring/debut\\_of\\_new\\_column\\_on\\_mentoring\\_in\\_higher\\_education\\_careers](https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/mentoring/debut_of_new_column_on_mentoring_in_higher_education_careers)