

# Conversations

Jim Wangberg, Associate Dean and Director Office of Academic and Student Programs

Fall 2009

## Faculty Mentoring

Welcome new faculty. Here are your keys, this is your office and laboratory, the restroom is down the hall and here are your course assignments and classrooms. Good luck.

We do better than this.

The UW new faculty orientation program was recently conducted, as it is at the start of every fall semester, and serves as a reminder that one of the most important components of faculty orientation is not just this intensive two day event, but rather the long term commitment by academic departments and colleagues to mentor new faculty members/academic professionals. Some departments in our college or across campus have formal and highly structured mentoring programs, some may be a little more informal and ad hoc, and perhaps some have no faculty mentoring system in place at all.

Without a faculty mentoring program faculty/a.p's. may feel like they are on their own after being hired. Left to fend for themselves some individuals build relationships with more senior faculty because they happen to personally click or because their professional interests match. These relationships can become useful mentoring relationships. Others, left to their own devices may never connect with a strong faculty mentor but succeed in spite of a lack of mentorship. Or fail.

Faculty mentors can contribute to a junior faculty member's professional growth and success in a variety of ways: helping understand and navigate through the tenure and promotion process, helping connect with colleagues for research, helping with course development and integrating within the university teaching programs, adjusting to department, college, university, and community cultures, and so on.

I would like to assure all of our incoming colleagues and those still on the tenure track or first extended term that they will receive the kind of mentoring from peers needed to be successful. This year my office will lead an effort to examine faculty mentoring in the college and facilitate actions to continue our best practices and to make necessary improvements. This will involve dialogue with department heads/chairs, open communications with all of the faculty and seeking input from those we wish to mentor.

New faculty and academic professionals: expect to hear from me soon seeking your feedback and suggestions about how the college can provide the best mentoring for you.

Other faculty and colleagues: expect further dialogue for discovering current best practices and new directions we might like to pursue.

Have a productive Fall 2009 semester.

Students: The reason we're here