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ABSTRACT

The "Heeding New Voices" study, a year-long series of structured interviews with new faculty and graduate students aspiring to be faculty members around the country, sought both to give voice to those who are just beginning their academic careers and to provide guidance for the senior faculty, chairs, deans, and others in higher education responsible for shaping the professoriate of the future. This booklet, drawn in part from the study's findings, includes: (1) ten principles of good practice; (2) inventories to prompt department chairs, senior colleagues, and other academic leaders to examine their individual and institutional practices; and (3) examples of concrete and innovative approaches to good practice being tried out now in a variety of institutional settings. The principles reflect the three categories of stated need from the "Heeding New Voices" interviews: improving review and tenure processes (principles 1-4), encouraging positive relations with colleagues and students (principles 5-7), and easing stresses of time and balance (principles 8-10). (Contains 13 references). (EV)

**Principles of Good Practice:
Supporting Early-Career Faculty.
Guidance for Deans, Department Chairs,
and Other Academic Leaders.**

Mary Deane Sorcinelli

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Principles of Good Practice: Supporting Early-Career Faculty

Guidance for Deans,
Department Chairs, and
Other Academic Leaders

BY MARY DEANE SORGINELLI

"To ensure that the academic career remains a strong option for the capable, committed scholars we will need in the years ahead, we must understand and address its key problems: lack of a comprehensible tenure system, lack of community, and lack of an integrated life."

— **Heeding New Voices**

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About This Booklet

These “Principles of Good Practice” are excerpted from *Heeding New Voices: Academic Careers for a New Generation*, by R. Eugene Rice, Mary Deane Sorcinelli, and Ann E. Austin (Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education, 2000), which reports findings from the *Heeding New Voices* study, a year-long series of structured interviews with new faculty and graduate students aspiring to be faculty members around the country. The study’s intent was to both give voice to those who are just beginning their academic careers and provide guidance for the senior faculty, chairs, deans, and others in higher education responsible for shaping the professoriate of the future.

To purchase a copy of the *Heeding New Voices* publication (New Pathways Working Paper #7), visit AAHE’s website at www.aahe.org/catalog.

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Introduction

The *Heeding New Voices* study (Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin, 2000) suggests that intellectual, social, and resource support from senior faculty, chairs, deans, and other campus administrators may be critical to attracting, developing, and retaining faculty. In particular, its findings point to the essential role played by the department. But these suggestions for good practice are not directed only toward the department's chair, as no chair *alone* will ever realize them. Given the high turnover among chairs, and the lasting influence of a department's senior faculty, supporting early-career faculty members clearly is *everyone's* work.

This Principles document includes:

- ◇ ten principles of good practice;
- ◇ inventories to prompt department chairs, senior colleagues, and other academic leaders to examine their individual and institutional practices; and
- ◇ examples of concrete and innovative approaches to good practice being tried out now in a variety of institutional settings.

It evolved from suggestions offered by participants involved in *Heeding New Voices* and other studies and reports; its good practices are anchored in nearly two decades of research on new and early-career faculty (Boice, 1992; Menges, 1999; Sorcinelli and Austin, 1992; Tierney and Bensimon, 1996). The principles reflect the three categories of stated need from the *Heeding New Voices* interviews:

- ◇ improving review and tenure processes (Principles 1-4)
- ◇ encouraging positive relations with colleagues and students (Principles 5-7)
- ◇ easing stresses of time and balance (Principles 8-10)

The core purpose of the principles and their inventories and campus examples is to help academic departments, colleges/divisions, and universities improve the life of faculty on tenure track — *not* to audit or evaluate individual faculty members, departments, or administrators. They will be of most assistance if the principles are used as a basis for diagnosis, rather than for judgment about performance, for evaluation, or for self-justification.

Of course, too, good practices are campus- and context-specific; that is, what works well on one campus might not fit the culture of another. Hence, a wide range of ideas and examples is offered that faculty members, administrators, and their institutions can use to set goals, guide planning, and create environments to better support not just those on the tenure-track, but *all* faculty. From them, select the complement of practices that fits your circumstances best.

1

Good Practice Communicates Expectations for Performance

- ◇ Include in letters of appointment a statement of expectations that is clear and detailed enough so that new faculty hires have a real idea of what is expected; update this statement yearly.
- ◇ Help pre-tenure faculty set challenging but realistic goals that match the particular mission and resources of your unit and that align with the central missions of your college/division and institution.
- ◇ Ask pre-tenure faculty to keep an ongoing log or record of their scholarly activities in teaching and learning, research, and service or outreach.
- ◇ Review with candidates for tenure the steps in that process, who evaluates and on what time schedule, the kinds of information needed for tenure files, and what pieces the candidate is responsible for collecting and submitting (e.g., record of professional activities, names of outside reviewers).
- ◇ Promote the use of more-encompassing criteria for annual reviews and tenure that more fully document, recognize, and reward the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of professional service and outreach.

Examples

The University of Arizona provides a website with detailed instructions for preparation of tenure dossiers, which departments can supplement with checklists and other materials.

The dean of one college at the University of Pittsburgh offers a tenure-preparation workshop for faculty in years one and two and another for faculty in years four and five; department chairs are invited. At the University of Nebraska-Omaha, the faculty-development center supplies new faculty with a set of questions about the tenure process (e.g., How does one compile material? document work? seek support?) to ask in career-oriented discussions with senior faculty, chairs, or deans. Portland State University has developed a model for engaging faculty in both the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of community-based learning; its vice provost/assistant to the president, among others, works with Portland's faculty to document these new forms of scholarship in their promotion and tenure portfolios.

2

Good Practice Gives Feedback on Progress

- ◆ In an annual review, provide clear, honest, and constructive feedback to early-career faculty on their progress toward tenure.
- ◆ Highlight what is going well, clarify what merits attention, and offer concrete suggestions for improvement through discussions and written comments.
- ◆ During the faculty member's first year in particular, structure the annual review so that it is oriented to development rather than to evaluation.
- ◆ Rely on more than just student ratings in the evaluation of teaching; other vehicles might include peer review, self-assessment, and teaching portfolios.
- ◆ Regularly solicit feedback from pre-tenure faculty about their perceptions of and experiences with the tenure process.

Examples

In one division at Indiana University-South Bend (IUSB), junior faculty submit a "working dossier" each year for reappointment decisions. This gives pre-tenure faculty a chance to work incrementally on their dossier over time. The review committee provides formal feedback on the faculty member's progress toward tenure as well as formative feedback on dossier substance and style. Also, the IUSB faculty senate's promotion and tenure committee offers voluntary third-year reviews to all pre-tenure faculty so they can receive confidential, formative feedback; nothing from that process ever goes on the record.

One college dean at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point annually brings pre-tenure faculty together in focus groups to get information for improving life on the tenure track.

Faculty and departments often can call on their teaching and learning center for information on how to prepare and maintain a teaching portfolio. Centers at the Pennsylvania State University, the Ohio State University, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and University of Washington offer print and online resources, and some provide excerpts from faculty portfolios such as sample teaching philosophy statements and activities to improve teaching.

3

Good Practice Enhances Collegial Review Processes

- ◇ Encourage an ongoing discussion in the department of the tenure process and the values that inform it; use meetings, written guidelines, seminars, and other such venues.
- ◇ Work at the department and college/division levels to create a clear set of guidelines for the tenure review committee regarding expectations, criteria, and the like, to ameliorate the effect of any turnover in committee membership.
- ◇ Sponsor a yearly meeting for all faculty on tenure track in the department, and encourage pre-tenure faculty to attend college/division- or institution-level seminars on preparing for tenure.
- ◇ Allow pre-tenure faculty to meet with department and college/division committees to open up the tenure process and provide more information about it.

Examples

The dean of a college at Drake University sponsors a session each year that brings together pre-tenure faculty and the college's tenure review committee; its members share information on the committee's composition, charge, and review process, followed by an open discussion. At the University of Washington, the department of oceanography invites early-career faculty to attend tenure reviews, which "lifts the shroud of mystery that often veils the tenure process" (Chait, 1999: 4). The Project on Faculty Appointments, at Harvard University, has developed a review called "Tenure by Objectives," wherein early-career faculty negotiate performance contracts; various aspects of proficiency (i.e., research, teaching, service) are established and certified en route to tenure rather than "at the midnight hour" (Chait, 1998: 5).

California State University-Long Beach has worked across department, college/division, and university levels to develop a new retention, tenure, and promotion policy, which emphasizes professional development throughout one's career. A set of guidelines explicitly defines the responsibilities of all participants in the evaluation process, enlarges the dimensions considered in evaluating teaching, and strengthens the peer review of faculty work.

4

Good Practice Creates Flexible Timelines for Tenure

- ◆ Encourage pre-tenure faculty to explore with their department options such as “stopping the clock” or counting previous work for credit to “early tenure,” based on individual circumstances.
- ◆ Provide special career guidance to women faculty and faculty of color as needed. In particular, some women faculty in their child-bearing years (and some men who play active roles in child rearing) may want longer and more-flexible tenure timelines. Faculty of color may need additional time to build viable professional networks in research and teaching and to accommodate time they may be called upon to spend on additional committee assignments.

Examples

Some campuses offer structured opportunities for scholarly leave before tenure review. A dean at Davidson College encourages his assistant professors to take advantage of an offered sabbatical leave for research that immediately precedes the tenure year. Other campuses allow some flexibility in the timing of the tenure review. At Marquette University, an early-career faculty member who becomes a parent during the probationary period can “stop the clock” for one year. A department chair at the University of Missouri-Columbia has developed a model program for mentoring tenure-track faculty; for example, he works one-on-one with women whose probationary periods include pregnancy and childbirth to design tenure-track timetables based on their needs. Chairs at a range of institutions — Northwestern University, St. Louis University, College of Charleston, Saint Olaf College — can work within the institutional framework to award newcomers up to three years of credit for prior college teaching experience.

The teaching center at Eastern Michigan University has started an orientation for new faculty of color in which their tenured counterparts give them advice and answer questions, especially about the tenure process; this orientation program is for faculty only, it’s about “talking turkey.”

The committee on the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities at the University of California-Berkeley has published a separate tenure guide for women and minority faculty. Aimed at “friendly guidance vs. the official word,” the guide outlines university policies, such as a one-year stoppage for child rearing, and programs to facilitate mentoring relationships for faculty of color. To read the guide yourself, visit http://amber.berkeley.edu:4205/resources/links/tenure_guide.html.

For “the official word” on a wide range of institutional policies related to pre-tenure and tenure, see *Policies on Faculty Appointment* (Trower, 2000).

5

Good Practice Encourages Mentoring by Senior Faculty

- ◆ Ask a representative group of faculty within the department to explore different mentoring programs and recommend workable models (e.g., an assigned mentor, a mentoring committee, emeritus faculty mentors).
- ◆ Encourage senior faculty to initiate contact with newcomers; e.g., by inviting them to lunch, offering to read papers, or even visiting classes.
- ◆ Build responsibility for nurturing new colleagues into the evaluations of senior faculty.
- ◆ Seek ways to recognize and reward senior faculty members for the time they spend working with their junior colleagues.
- ◆ Ask senior colleagues to be purposefully welcoming to nonmajority faculty newcomers, who report the greatest need for advice and coaching.
- ◆ Create opportunities for early-career and senior faculty to formally collaborate, such as team-teaching, coauthoring a paper or grant, or reshaping department curricula.
- ◆ Encourage new faculty to be proactive about asking questions, seeking feedback, and making connections with senior colleagues.

Examples

The professional-development center at Kean University offers new faculty a one-course reduction in teaching load during their first semester to participate in a mentoring program that features a year of support from senior colleagues; the mentors are named Presidential Teaching Scholars for a three-year term. As a supplement to practices inside individual departments, the teaching center at Colorado College assigns each new tenure-track faculty member to a senior or retired faculty member who is outside the new hire's own department; pairs get together over lunch or dinner once each month to discuss career-development issues.

One college at Temple University offers every tenure-track faculty member a senior mentoring service, which links the newcomer with a recently retired faculty member noted for his or her teaching effectiveness as well as broad knowledge of the campus culture. Brigham Young University structures its new-faculty orientation into a year-long program that includes seven luncheon sessions in the fall; meeting with self-nominated mentors who are chosen with the advice of department chairs; and an intensive two-week learning experience in which new faculty work individually, with one another, and with experienced faculty members and administrators to produce their own faculty-development plan.

6 Good Practice Extends Mentoring and Feedback to Graduate Students Who Aspire To Be Faculty Members

- ◆ Duplicate for graduate students many of the supportive activities provided for new faculty; e.g., provide orientations for first-year graduate students, assign them a faculty advisor, encourage study groups for comprehensive exams, invite them to informal departmental gatherings and to formal colloquia, seminars, or teaching workshops, etc.
- ◆ Ask faculty advisors as well as supervisors of teaching/research assistants to build in regular occasions to discuss with them the students' strengths and weaknesses, appropriate options for professional growth, and career goals.
- ◆ Work with colleagues to inform graduate students about the academic labor market across the variety of institutional types, as well as about other career options within their fields, to ensure that graduate students have been carefully prepared for seeking their first jobs.
- ◆ Link students to career-planning resources at the college/division or institution level that can help them in creating resumes, preparing for job interviews, and searching for positions.

Examples

Perhaps the most innovative work being done in research universities is that sponsored by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) and the Council of Graduate Schools. Their "Preparing Future Faculty" project has developed a number of model programs to better prepare graduate students interested in academic careers (Gaff et al., 2000). For example, Howard University awards a "Certificate in College and University Faculty Preparation" to those who satisfactorily compile a two-year, faculty-supervised preparatory program consisting of higher education topics and trends, a three-credit course on preparing for the professoriate, a week-long training in distance learning techniques, and periodic lectures and symposia on current and future issues impacting higher education and the professoriate.

At the University of Minnesota, four courses form the core of its Preparing Future Faculty program, including teaching in higher education, practicum for instructors in higher education, professional communication skills, and distance learning in higher education.

7

Good Practice Recognizes the Department Chair as a Career Sponsor

- ◇ Help manage the new faculty member's transition to campus by ensuring that adequate resources such as office space and equipment are in place.
- ◇ Encourage a collegial culture in the department. This could include orientation information such as departmental expectations; policies for promotion and tenure; and a list of the department's other faculty members, describing their areas of research, teaching, and service.
- ◇ Assign senior faculty members to mentor newcomers as teachers and scholars; then oversee and monitor that mentoring.
- ◇ Be especially mindful when assigning committee work and student advising not to overburden nonmajority faculty.
- ◇ Encourage pre-tenure faculty to look outside the department in seeking collaborative and interdisciplinary opportunities for scholarship and teaching development; such resources might include teaching and learning centers, offices of research support, networks of faculty of color, and the like.
- ◇ Urge new faculty to attend college/division- and institution-wide orientations; accompany them, if invited.
- ◇ Encourage expanded orientation programs. In contrast to a one-shot program, they offer opportunities to build relationships between new and established faculty, as well as provide information about teaching, scholarship, and key campus resources.
- ◇ Support faculty beyond their first year, particularly by demystifying and providing advice for promotion and tenure.

Examples

Michigan State University offers a MULTI Leadership Workshop Series for department chairs to meet and discuss issues of mutual interest or concern pertaining to their roles as well as institutional priorities and directions. Particularly well received has been a three-part series on guiding early-career, mid-career, and senior faculty. Colorado State University's faculty-development office has written a *Chairperson's and Department Head's Manual* that is distributed to all new chairs. Topics include such areas as mentoring, encouraging faculty research and teaching, and diversity and retention of students and faculty.

The University of Massachusetts-Amherst sponsors an annual chairs and deans conference. Its goal is to provide an interdisciplinary forum for exploring the challenges and opportunities faced in the rapidly changing nature of the University. Over the years, department chairs have facilitated sessions and shared strategies for developing new and early-career faculty and for rethinking faculty roles and rewards in ways that strengthen and renew departments.

8 Good Practice Supports Teaching, Particularly at the Undergraduate Level

- ◆ Create opportunities for new faculty to get a good start in teaching; e.g., by sharing course syllabi, inviting them to visit the classes of senior colleagues, or providing guidebooks for new teachers. Two such guidebooks are Davis's *Tools for Teaching* (Jossey-Bass, 1993) and McKeachie's *Teaching Tips* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1999).
- ◆ Assign new faculty to courses that fit their interests and priorities; offer them fewer courses, or at the very least fewer preparations, during their first year or two.
- ◆ Provide new faculty with information about teaching, such as a profile of students, sample syllabi, names of faculty who previously have taught the courses, and expected number of office hours.
- ◆ Provide departmental funds (and seek campus funds) that early-career faculty can access for course materials and equipment, faculty-development workshops, classroom research projects, and the like.
- ◆ Encourage new faculty to connect with teaching and learning centers, in particular to access processes that provide early, formative feedback on their teaching; an example of such a process might be confidential midterm feedback from students.
- ◆ Provide early, supportive feedback on teaching; e.g., reviews of student and colleague evaluations, grading distributions, or teaching portfolios.
- ◆ Create mechanisms for informal support, such as sponsoring discussions between early-career and senior colleagues in the department around issues of teaching and learning.
- ◆ Advise early-career faculty to seek formal support through structured programs at the campus and national levels (e.g., Lilly Teaching Fellows programs, Carnegie Scholars).

Examples

A department chair at the University of Notre Dame asks the director of the teaching center to meet with all “new” (one to three years on campus) faculty. The chair schedules a group meeting, which is less intimidating than individual appointments would be. The meeting allows newcomers to become aware of the center’s resources and to bond with one another. It also signals that the chair believes that teaching development is important.

On campuses such as Miami University, Michigan State University, the University of Georgia, and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, department chairs nominate junior faculty for a competitive, year-long teaching fellows program. Chairs support the nomination and fellowship year for the faculty members with the understanding that when they return to their home departments, the fellows bring with them new teaching skills and innovations.

In a national collaboration, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Association for Higher Education are working with individual faculty and academic leaders to elevate regard for teaching through the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The Academy sponsors a Pew National Fellowship Program for Carnegie Scholars and a Campus Program (see *The Carnegie Academy*, n.d.).

9

Good Practice Supports Scholarly Development

- ◇ Review the departmental policies for assigning resources to ensure that pre-tenure faculty receive equitable support.
- ◇ Help secure basic resources (e.g., adequate office, lab, studio space, a computer) and staff support (e.g., research assistants, clerical personnel, technicians) to ensure that faculty newcomers receive timely assistance.
- ◇ Earmark travel funds for pre-tenure faculty, who are least able to afford the financial burden of traveling to professional meetings but most need to attend, present papers, and establish reputations.
- ◇ Encourage departmental networks to support early-career researchers; such mechanisms might include informal discussions about writing projects, colloquia for “ideas in progress,” mechanisms for sharing papers, and collaborative grant writing or research projects.
- ◇ Help new faculty identify and make use of institutional resources such as sessions on “professors as writers,” grant writing, and “getting started in teaching,” as well as information on summer grants for research or teaching.
- ◇ Work with campus administrators to support flexible leave programs, so pre-tenure faculty can complete their scholarly projects before their tenure reviews.
- ◇ Encourage a more-integrated view of “scholarly” work to encompass both a scholarship of teaching and a scholarship that responds to community needs and demands for applied research and public service.

Examples

Western Michigan University provides early-career faculty with a series of activities designed to advance their research plans, through its Research Development Award. RDA faculty have been recommended by their college dean, are selected by the vice president, and receive a collaboratively funded research account of \$3,500 to support expenses of grant seeking and research. They complete three on-campus workshops, develop a mentoring relationship with a faculty member at another institution, conduct an agency visitation, and submit two proposals for external support.

At the University of California-Davis, all first-year tenure-track faculty are encouraged to apply for up to \$3,000 from its New Faculty Research Grant Program; funds can be used for computers, software, travel, equipment, duplicating, etc. The University of Florida provides matching grants of up to \$10,000 to help its early-career faculty establish their research programs; in this cooperative venture, the applicant's department and/or college provides the matching cash support. Indiana University-Bloomington recognizes the achievements of its pre-tenure faculty who show promise of reaching distinction as scholars and artists through its Outstanding Junior Faculty Award; the award provides a \$6,500 summer fellowship, \$4,000 release time or grant-in-aid, and a \$2,000 grant-in-aid.

10

Good Practice Fosters a Balance Between Professional and Personal Life

- ◆ Counsel pre-tenure faculty on how to manage and prioritize their time among teaching, advising, research, and service.
- ◆ Connect women faculty and faculty of color to special resources or networks on campus that might be of relevance and support to them.
- ◆ Link faculty newcomers to information and services available for dual-career couples and to flexible employee benefits such as parental leaves, flexible time limits for tenure, part-time status during child rearing, and child care.
- ◆ Welcome new faculty with information about the local community, such as housing, schools, child-care options, and cultural, entertainment, and sporting events, both on and off campus.

Examples

At Purdue University, a relocation specialist works with department chairs and search committees to provide faculty candidates with information about the University and local community; once hired, new faculty members can have a relocation specialist work for up to a year on their spouse's job search. Medical schools are in the forefront of modifying traditional tenure systems to accommodate the personal and professional needs of their faculties; their strategies include lengthening or removing fixed probationary periods, providing perquisites for part-time faculty, and developing multiple career tracks with equivalent salaries and benefits regardless of tenure status (Gappa and MacDermid, 1997).

The *College and University Reference Guide to Work-Family Programs* (Friedman, Rimsky, and Johnson, 1996) and AAHE's own *Work, Family, and the Faculty Career* (Gappa and MacDermid, 1997) are both excellent resources for departments or campus administrators seeking information about innovative work-family policies and practices.

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Principles of Good Practice: Supporting Early-Career Faculty

Improving Tenure Processes

1. Good practice communicates expectations for performance
2. Good practice gives feedback on progress
3. Good practice enhances collegial review processes
4. Good practice creates flexible timelines for tenure

Encouraging Collegial Relations

5. Good practice encourages mentoring by senior faculty
6. Good practice extends mentoring and feedback to graduate students who aspire to be faculty members
7. Good practice recognizes the department chair as a career sponsor

Easing Stresses of Time and Balance

8. Good practice supports teaching, particularly at the undergraduate level
9. Good practice supports scholarly development
10. Good practice fosters a balance between professional and personal life



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