

Propelling Rise of Faculty (PRoF)

Mentor Guidance

Purpose: The long-term goal of PRoF is to propel the advancement in faculty rank of early career faculty. Faculty promotion requires meeting specific criteria, but knowing how to navigate the academic system to meet these criteria is not always clear.

Academic promotion relies heavily on productive scholarship, which involves knowing how to: 1) formulate a scholarly project, 2) establish collaborations, 3) gain sponsorship by senior faculty, and 4) manage work-life balance.

To gain insights and guidance into these factors, PRoF facilitates the matching of an early career faculty Mentee with a senior faculty Mentor. PRoF matches Mentors and Mentees based on responses to surveys on goals and preferences. Prior Mentees said they felt that they could be more open with a Mentor outside of their department; thus, every Mentee is matched with a Mentor from outside of the Mentee's department.

A core focus of PRoF is community building. PRoF will also facilitate regular community gatherings between early career and senior faculty, as well as among peer groups.

Role/Responsibilities of Mentor: PRoF Mentors are expected to guide Mentees by asking questions, providing knowledge (e.g., BU infrastructure), and giving support.

- ***Mentors are requested to commit to 1 year and meet with Mentees at least 4 times.***
- Additional meetings are welcome and should be mutually agreed upon by both parties.
- Mentorship can continue beyond the 1-year PRoF program as long as there is mutual interest.

Characteristics of a Successful Mentor:

- Shares time with Mentee
- Openly communicates with the Mentee how the Mentor can, and cannot, help
- Shares openly but also listens attentively
- Helps problem solve—but is not expected to solve the problem (e.g., identify research projects, find collaborators)

Mentee Expectations: Mentees are expected to be proactive and initiate contact. The “PRoF Mentoring Roadmap Worksheet” is intended to be a self-directed guide for Mentees to fill out, to start the conversation between Mentors and Mentees.

Potential Mentee Reactions: The range of Mentees' reactions can vary and have been all positive. A Mentee may be outwardly appreciative, but more often, a Mentee may feel intimidated about encroaching on your time as a Mentor. Although Mentees may appear indifferent, exit interviews with past PRoF Mentees have shown that they are incredibly grateful and are often occupied with following through on advice you had given.

If it feels like your Mentee may not be communicative, be curious! Instead of asking “do you need help?”, try asking questions with more specifics from your conversations. Examples:

- Last time, we discussed you reaching out to Dr. X as a potential collaborator. How did the conversation go?
- You were deciding between two journals to submit your manuscript. Have you looked into the “Instructions for Authors” or reached out to editors of either journal?