# Notes from a discussion at department chairs’ training workshop

# “Department Chair as Faculty Mentor” on May 23, 2017

Team suggestions with other participants’ comments/reactions on how to mentor a senior faculty member Wex who has become disengaged and isolated from the Department.

# Team A

* Praise, praise, praise!
  + “Yes, he needs some encouragement.”
  + “Needs to be genuine – do you know where he is ‘today’”
* Would he like to mentor junior faculty?
  + “Good way to reinvigorate teaching. Try new methods jointly with a new faculty member?”
  + “He may not think he is capable/well suited for this.”
* Would he like to mentor first-year students or student organizations?
  + “Love this idea! Would he need support initially?”
  + “Desensitize about generational differences.”
* Who do you want to be? What do you want to be?
  + “Identifying goals is important.”
  + “Yes, back to mentoring conversation.”
* Administrative tasks to test out administrative roles?
* Send to dean’s level. Mentor to think about higher ed. administration?
  + “Why does he want to go to administration?”
  + “What does the department lose if he does go?”
  + “Is it just an ‘out’ or is he really interested?”
* Exposure to new technology
  + “What if he resists?”
  + “How? What if he doesn’t want to?”
* Ask what he enjoys about current position
  + “Teaching? Scholarship? Good to engage him more with his likes.”
  + “And what he doesn’t enjoy/ frustrates him?”
* Explore opportunities that fit what he enjoys
* Identify his strengths and brainstorm ways to utilize them within the department
* Create mentoring roles that match strengths
  + Or that “strengthen weaknesses”
  + “2-way mentoring”
  + “Deans’ level mentor”
* Explore his interest in learning new strategies/technology and help search for internal/external professional development
  + “Goals are important. Professional development is important.”
* Ask about any collegial relationships he may still have
  + “Or that could be developed – new collaborations?”
  + “I like this one.”
  + “Professional as well as within college.”
* Sabbatical to enliven research
  + “Good idea.”
* Reorient from focusing on internal institutional factors to reengaging with research field to enliven and distract
  + “Do sabbaticals sometimes lead to further disconnections?”

# Team B

* How are you doing? (Nonjudgmental invitation to talk)
* “Wex, I’ve noticed you are less excited about your work. Want to talk?”
  + “What if he says no?”
* What do you want to leave as your legacy?
* “I’m meeting with each of the faculty to see what they need.”
  + “This is a better way to phrase it than above!”
* Consider: attending conference to address new teaching approaches
  + “Where will funding come from? Will you make this a priority?”
* Mentoring to reconnect with students
* Independent research/research course with a few highly motivated students
  + “Good idea – looking for a positive spin?”
* Teach more advanced courses
  + “Explore interests related to the field – topics course? Advanced course?”
  + “Any suggestions to motivate him to do this?”
* Team or collaborative teaching
  + “With whom? He seems to be feeling isolated and intimidated – outside department?”
  + “Collaborative teaching is a great idea.”
* Reinvigorate research with summer in research field
* Apply for sabbatical
  + “Sabbaticals can sometimes further isolation?”
* Study abroad – ask questions, listen, facilitate

# Team C

* Help him articulate his goals
* Arrange informal, targeted professional development
  + “Encourage him to connect his life’s passions to teaching and scholarship because now he has the most freedom.”
* Motivational interviewing – what is important and why?
* Make connections/ find ways to work together
  + “Good idea, can you provide more operational options on how to go about this?”
* Set up space to discuss issues as a department (formal) and with other mid-career faculty (informal)
* What is possibly appealing about an administrative role to him?
* Find resources to support professional development travel – make the case for senior faculty
* Engage him as a mentor – he has skills that are needed in the department by others
* Culture of development activities/culture of mentoring
  + “What would this be?”