Dornsife Faculty Council - Research, Policies, and Documentation Caucus  
May 2018 
Members: Gioia Polidori (co-chair), Amy K. Cannon (co-chair), Geraldine Peters (co-chair), Miranda Barone, William Breland, Vianey Cabrera, Assal Habibi, Joel Hahn, Ralph Haiges, Susan Luczac, Sergio Sanudo-Wilhelmy, Kate Svyates, Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias and An-Min Wu  

Mentoring for RTPC Faculty

Rationale:  
Faculty mentoring encompasses several pivotal themes including orientation of the mentees in their academic role, smooth integration into the academic milieu, exposure to available resources, professional goal setting, and guidance regarding the promotion process. Uniform mentoring on these themes can foster professional development in the areas of research, teaching, clinical work, practice, and service to the University. As such, a successful mentoring program can have a profound impact on the professional development of junior faculty; improve faculty recruitment, retention, and satisfaction; and in turn contribute to USC’s overall excellence.

Dornsife is to be commended for its implementation of a structured mentoring system to support its Tenure-Track faculty, which includes assigning each TT faculty member a departmental mentor and establishing a Director of Faculty Development for each division (Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Sciences/Math) to coordinate mentoring efforts aimed at fostering the professional development and promotion of Tenure-Track faculty.

No similar structure currently exists for Dornsife’s RTPC faculty. Instead, different departments and programs offer highly variable mentorship structures, ranging from well-organized systems with articulated goals and individual assigned mentors, such as the one in the Writing Program and Thematic Option; to systems in which many faculty rely on one central mentoring figure, such as in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese; to departments with minimal or no mentoring in place. The Council appreciates the support Dean Miller and Dean Stott have expressed for improving the consistency and effectiveness of RTPC faculty mentoring in departments across the College. Their commitment echoes the 2016-2017 final report of the joint Provost/Academic Senate Mentoring Committee, which highlighted the importance of addressing the specific mentoring needs of RTPC faculty. And efforts on this front could not be more timely; as Dornsife works to create a signature undergraduate experience for its students, it is crucial that the RTPC faculty who teach and mentor so many of these students be supported in their efforts to provide exceptional educational experiences.

For all these reasons, it is vital that RTPC faculty be offered consistent mentorship and that department chairs and other TT faculty who are involved in overseeing and assessing the professional development of RTPC faculty are supported in their efforts to mentor and guide these faculty. Implementing a new mentoring support structure for Dornsife’s RTPC faculty will promote a culture of mentorship in departments throughout the College; foster faculty professional development, resulting in positive outcomes for our student; and ultimately contribute to a supportive and more inclusive culture at USC.

Proposal:  
We propose the establishment of a structured mentoring system for Dornsife’s RTPC faculty. Specific measures we recommend include the assignment of a departmental mentor for every RTPC faculty
member at the time of hiring, and the establishment of a Dornsife Director of RTPC Faculty Development for each division (Social Sciences, Humanities, and Natural Sciences/Math) to oversee, coordinate, and help assess the mentoring of Teaching- and Practice-track faculty. While all RTPC faculty in Dornsife need and deserve consistent mentoring, Research-track faculty have specific needs that may be better served by different structures. Since the Teaching and Practice tracks tend to be more uniform, we propose to start with a mentoring program for these faculty and then expand it to the Research track at a later stage. Each Faculty Development Director will be a senior faculty member (Associate or Full Professor (RTPC)) and will oversee mentoring efforts for Teaching and Practice faculty in his/her division. The directors will act as a valuable resource, not only for the RTPC faculty within their division, but also for department chairs and other TT faculty who are charged with supporting the careers of RTPC faculty whose profiles, professional needs, and promotion criteria differ significantly from their own.

Each Director of RTPC Faculty Development will:
- Be appointed by the Dean after consultation with the Dornsife Faculty Council
- Have a comprehensive understanding of requirements for advancement for Teaching- and Practice-track faculty within their division
- Act as a liaison between the Dean’s office and departments to oversee RTPC mentoring and facilitate the promotion process
- Develop and implement training events for both mentors and mentees to ensure the establishment of productive mentoring relationships across the College
- Work with current RTPC faculty members who do not have mentors, as well as faculty who feel they are not benefiting from their current mentor relationships, to identify suitable mentors from inside or outside their departments
- Receive a course release or comparable release per semester for their efforts on behalf of the College

### Outreach and Impact of Faculty Directors of Development for RTPC and TT Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Teaching- and Practice-Track Faculty*</th>
<th>Tenure-Track Faculty (pre-tenure)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>Natural Sciences/Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departments</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These numbers do not include Physical Education faculty
**These numbers were current as of Dec. 2017; some TT faculty will have been promoted and received tenure since then, while other pre-tenure hires will have been added
***These numbers count all Biological Sciences subsections as one department

### References