

## University shares lessons learned from 23 years of faculty mentoring

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Mentoring pediatrics faculty can reduce burnout, improve tenure rates and help universities retain valuable employees, according to experts at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS).

After two decades of fine-tuning their program, they are sharing lessons they've learned about successful mentoring and encouraging others to adopt similar programs.

“Institutional investment in mentoring and career development translates directly to increased academic productivity, which in turn generates increased research funding, clinical revenue, high-quality educational programs, and importantly, enhances retention of highly qualified individuals for service in leadership positions,” authors wrote in “An Adaptable Pediatrics Faculty Mentoring Model” (Cranmer JM, et al. *Pediatrics*. April 18, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-3202>).

Under the UAMS program started in 1994, all junior faculty are mentored regardless of work hours or whether they are seeking tenure. Each is part of a mentoring committee that typically consists of three advanced rank volunteer faculty mentors with varying levels of experience, allowing new mentors to learn from the others.

The committees have access to online handbooks, workshops and seminars. Twice a year, they meet to discuss their junior faculty member's progress in areas like clinical service, teaching and research as well as issues like work-life balance and planning for promotion. Each meeting is documented using a standardized template to help assess the mentee's progress.

Ultimately, the committee and department leadership will recommend the junior faculty member be reviewed by the department's promotion and tenure committee as an opportunity for feedback one or two years before consideration by the institution's promotion and tenure committee.

When junior faculty members are promoted to associate professors, they can become mentors.

“In our ‘pay it forward’ culture, 100% of the graduates of the program accept the invitation,” authors wrote.

In 23 years, more than 250 faculty members have been mentored, and the program boasts a 95% success rate for promotions. Mentoring program leaders conduct annual surveys to assess the program and have found faculty members feel supported and valued.

The UAMS team said its program can be adapted by small or large departments and provide additional advice, rationale and templates to help departments create their own programs.

“The traditional hierarchical ‘sink or swim’ approach has been increasingly abandoned as leaders in academic medicine recognize the importance of nurturing their investment and preventing the substantial cost of losing productive faculty members,” authors wrote. “Career development, academic success, and professional fulfillment are more likely to be achieved with positive mentorship that supports the individual and collective academic advancement of its participants and fosters strong collegial and social relationships within the entire academic medicine community.”

### **Resources**

- [AAP Mentorship Program](#)

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