NINE MONTHS: ADVANCING ENGAGEMENT, RETENTION & TENURE

University of Florida is committed to hiring and retaining diverse and talented faculty. Deans and Department Chairs must be dedicated to removing barriers to retention and inclusiveness. Leading causes for dissatisfaction and requests for leave include: racial and social isolation, lack of mentoring, occupational stress, devaluation of “minority” research, the “token” hire misconception of underrepresented faculty, and biases in tenure and promotion evaluations.” Gasman, Kim, and Nguyen (2011)

**Best Practices Categories for Deans and Chairs to Promote:**

**Organizational Health and Culture Checklist**

* Meet with faculty regularly to provide and RECEIVE feedback
* Conduct surveys to measure their satisfaction and expectations
  + Do faculty feel “heard?”
  + What practices or policies are associated with high levels of faculty engagement?
* Conduct “state of the department” reviews biannually and share findings
  + Evaluate faculty performance
  + Recognize good work
  + Review salaries and benefits
* Examine data for faculty appointments, promotions, and resignations for any gaps
  + Take proactive steps by conducting exit interviews
* Review decision-making processes, check for biases and assumptions
  + Ensure there is transparency in the way decisions for tenure and promotions are made
  + Wherever possible, involve faculty in the decision-making process and governance
* Behaviors and norms creating a barrier to healthy cultures. Ask yourself these questions:
  + Would my faculty consider me a true ally?
  + Am I prepared to deal with uncivil and disrespectful behaviors?
  + Am I prepared to manage micro aggressions?
  + Are there structures in place to support newly recruited faculty?

**Welcoming Climate**

* Inclusive, warm, and supportive environments impact faculty retention
* Though schools/departments share the responsibility of creating welcoming climates, department leaders can establish policies and practices that facilitate the desired culture
* Transparency in decision-making and governance is especially important to junior and new faculty
* There must be follow-through on grievances and concerns that are surfaced
* Establish mentoring structures that help connect faculty to the community and support navigating the institutional culture

**Professional and Leadership Development**

* Hold regular feedback meetings
* Provide them with the tools and skills they need to succeed at a new institution
* Leadership opportunities should be available to all faculty
* Provide opportunities for participation in campus governance, national conferences, leadership programs, and research team management

**Faculty Career Stages and Opportunities**

***Junior Faculty***

* Hold annual tenure and promotion process trainings/info sessions so that faculty understands the steps built into the T&P process that are intended to protect them from biases
* Communicate the following resources for new faculty throughout the year in different ways and at different times to allow junior faculty to feel connected through mentoring, networking, and the ability to acclimate to new environments:
  + [Experience UF](https://welcome.hr.ufl.edu/getting-started/orientation/experience-uf/)
  + [Enroll in the New Faculty Orientation Canvas or Zoom course](https://welcome.hr.ufl.edu/getting-started/orientation/new-faculty-orientation/)
  + CTE (Certificates: Great Teaching for New Faculty and Fundamentals of IDEA)
  + Some colleges run their own new faculty onboarding series that helps connect new faculty to each other and help them acclimate.
* Hold regular meeting opportunities (social and professional) for college or unit-wide new faculty cohorts. Bring two years' of new faculty cohorts together to discuss challenges and triumphs as well as present new opportunities for [volunteerism](http://gatorsvolunteer.ufl.edu/) or interesting projects.
* Encourage the critical nature of mentorship structures as ways to empower and support their new journey here at UF. Contact the [Provost’s office](http://aa.ufl.edu/) for additional mentorship resources. Review the Office of the [Chief Diversity Officer’s website](https://cdo.ufl.edu/initiatives/mentoring/) for mentoring opportunities at UF.

***Midcareer faculty***

* Be sure to have thorough conversations with your faculty to make sure they are meeting research checkpoints to meet tenure requirements. At this point, many have made it at least to the first level of promotion. To avoid a lack of progression, it will be critical to continue offering support.
* Develop high-level tenure and promotion process trainings/info sessions so that faculty continues to progress toward completion of the T&P process.
* Discuss the importance of considering mentorship of junior faculty as a way to increase career fulfillment and an even greater contribution to the university.

***Senior faculty***

* Engage your senior faculty in ways that give them ample opportunity to expand their research.
* Connect new faculty with senior faculty on a regular basis around research and teaching interests (socially and professionally).
* Communicate on a consistent, repeated basis, that you, as leadership, strongly value the new ideas "junior" faculty are bringing into the institution. We want a culture where senior faculty look to junior faculty for the new ideas. Collaboration between the wisdom of experience and the innovation of inexperience will drive research and culture into exciting new directions. Encourage mentorship as both service and added career fulfillment.