

Successful Strategies for Postdoctoral Fellow Mentoring

The postdoctoral experience should be viewed as a continuation of the education and training of a young scholar. While the aim is for the postdoctoral fellow (PDF) to develop into a strong, independent researcher with her/his own research program and agenda, mentoring and advice will enable the PDF to more constructively navigate this transition. In an effort to encourage quality mentoring of PDFs, the DNP Education Committee has assembled the following examples of successful strategies for mentoring postdoctoral fellows. This is a working document and suggestions are welcome. Please send any suggestions to the chair of the DNP Education committee (Yennello@comp.tamu.edu).

1. Regular communication between supervisor and postdoctoral fellow:
 - a. A formal meeting between the supervisor and PDF at the beginning of the appointment to discuss expectations for the position which could include
 - i. Roles and responsibilities of all group members, including the PDF, along with the expectation of maintaining an appropriate and collegial work environment
 - ii. Project(s) the PDF might be expected to lead and to play a role in
 - iii. Expectations as to mentoring and supervision of graduate and undergraduate students
 - iv. Possibility or expectation of any teaching duties or opportunities
 - v. Policy for attending conferences, collaboration meetings, experiments, etc.
 - vi. Mechanism used to insure fair allocation of credit for all work performed by group members.
 - vii. Hours of work
 - viii. If appropriate, the budgetary situation as relevant to her/his research and travel expectations
 - b. A regular meeting time (at least twice annually) between the supervisor and the PDF to discuss the PDF's progress and any work related or personal issues. This meeting should be independent of any regular meetings between the supervisor and PDF to discuss physics.
2. Professional Development
 - a. Submission of abstracts by the PDF to the regular fall and spring APS meetings and to other meetings as appropriate.
 - b. Securing invited talks for the PDF at national and international meetings as appropriate to the progress of the PDF.
 - c. Participate in outreach, training and teaching activities of the group/department to prepare them for a variety of careers including but not limited to potential future faculty positions.
 - d. When appropriate, participation in grant writing activities. Such participation should never be allowed to become burdensome, but should be designed to build knowledge in this aspect of professional development.
 - e. Participation in new initiatives in the group, including new proposals for equipment or computer purchases. Involvement here might include making recommendations, contacting the vendors etc.