



UNIVERSITY  
OF WYOMING  
**EXTENSION**

# Mentoring Guide

December 2011

**UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING EXTENSION  
MENTORING PROGRAM**

Table of Contents

**Contents**

OVERVIEW: .....	2
MENTEE GUIDELINES: .....	3
MENTOR GUIDELINES: .....	3
COUNTY COORDINATOR CHECKLIST FOR NEW EMPLOYEES .....	5
MENTORING TEAM CHECKLIST FOR NEW EMPLOYEES .....	7
MENTORING NEW EMPLOYEES CHECKLIST FOR ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS .....	10
MENTOR CHECKLIST FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT .....	12
MENTORING EXTENSION SPECIALISTS CHECKLIST .....	15
EARLY CAREER MENTORING PROGRAM (1 <sup>st</sup> year) EVALUATION .....	18
CAREER DEVELOPMENT MENTORING PROGRAM (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year) EVALUATION .....	19

# UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING EXTENSION MENTORING PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW:

The University of Wyoming Extension provides a mentoring program for new employees early in their career and for those who wish to extend the experience into career development. With ever changing work environments and communities, new leadership structures and an emphasis on results and impacts, UW Extension believes that mentoring fosters excellence by building capacity, productivity and leadership in newer employees.

Mentoring can form a powerful alliance between the mentee and mentors by creating an internal safety net for new employees. Both the mentee and mentor(s) are accountable for the success of the mentoring experience. Successful mentoring means sharing the responsibility for learning. Ultimately, the intent of the mentoring program is to keep newer employees energized and mobilized by providing a peer support system. This is accomplished through the development of strong, trusting relationships with others in the Extension system.

The hope is that new employees find mentoring to be a beneficial experience resulting in greater satisfaction with the work, improved effectiveness and a reduction in the feelings of frustration and isolation that may occur during early Extension work. The program is goal oriented and designed around the individual needs of the mentee. It uses an encompassing approach and is supported by the supervisors and organization.

Please review the guidelines for the mentee and mentor for more information about the experience. Checklists are available for mentors to serve as reminders of helpful and appropriate information for sharing. Mentoring is evaluated for its effectiveness at the conclusion.

## Acknowledgements:

The mentoring working group included:

- Susan James
- Warren Crawford
- Jeff Edwards
- Vicki Hayman
- Julie Daniels
- Dawn Sanchez
- Dallas Mount

Special thanks is extended to the following county and area educators and specialist who provided excellent guidance and information on what should be included in a mentoring program:

- Jessica Gladson
- Jerrica Lind
- Rachel Mealor
- Rachel Vardiman
- Barton Stam
- Kentz Willis
- Whit Stewart

Appreciation is expressed to Rhonda Shipp, Extension Educator, Emeritus, author of the guide.

## MENTEE GUIDELINES:

Mentees can expect a mentoring program designed to foster success in University of Wyoming Extension. Deliberate and intentional learning is the foundation of this program and is emphasized to build capacity in areas of need. Throughout the experience, mentees will engage in direct and personal conversations with others and begin to develop working relationships with local colleagues while receiving collegial support early in their career. For employees in their first year, general information is shared and the experience is guided more by the mentoring team. It is an opportunity for mentees to observe, question and explore. For employees in career development, the focus is on their interests with specific learning objectives and goals defined by the mentee. Career development mentoring is optional and available to those wanting to continue in a mentoring experience.

Early career (1<sup>st</sup> year) mentoring:

- A mentoring team and chair are appointed by the Associate Director. This team may include a county coordinator, an educator in the same initiative and another educator in close proximity. Years of experience or expertise could be varied.
- Team meets with mentee early. Sessions may be as a group, with individual team members or with county/state staff included using a variety of communication modes, i.e., face-to-face, phone, electronic meetings, etc.
- Team covers items that are considered routine and day-to-day in nature. They help reinforce and fill in gaps in information received during New Employee Training.

Career development (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years) mentoring:

- During the first year of employment after the new employee comes to know his/her peers, they begin to consider who they want as a mentor(s) for further career development. The Associate Director helps with this decision and agrees on the selection.
- The potential mentor(s) is contacted by the supervisor and asked if they will serve in the mentor role.
- Early in this phase, the mentor and mentee agree on goals for the mentorship and career development goals for the mentee. Possible goals may focus on productivity, effectiveness or advancement.
- The relationship continues until the mentee receives extended term and/or both parties agree that the goals of the mentorship have been met.

## MENTOR GUIDELINES:

Mentoring is the art of creating capable, confident employees. In this role, mentors are not only transmitting Extension's guiding values but also helping mentees build their knowledge and skill-sets. It is a transformational time for the mentee – moving from limited knowledge about Extension work to a fully functioning Extension professional. Mentors help others develop their capacity for productivity by creating a safe learning space for the mentee and focusing on the strengths of the individual and the system. Mentees want a mentor who is excited about education and teaching, has a positive and enthusiastic attitude about Extension, is approachable and will share what works as well as anticipated bumps in the road.

The focus of the mentoring experience is on increasing employee capacity to do the work in areas such as communication, healthy working relationships, and program development including assessments and evaluations, planning and management, engagement and outreach, group dynamics, conflict management or the advancement of one's career in the system. The expectations or demands of the mentee may be greater than the organization's capacity. It is important to clearly define the mentoring program from the beginning.

Good mentors have a genuine desire to help and stimulate individual growth in others. It helps if mentors have had successful, positive work experiences and a good reputation for developing others. Mentors should devote time and energy to the mentee and go into the relationship with a learning attitude. They must be perceived as trustworthy and capable of keeping confidences. Mentors assist through advice, guidance, and support. They demonstrate, explain and model. They share stories, personal scenarios, anecdotes, insights and case examples as well as knowledge. They avoid being a know-it-all. There is an adage that says: *"If you provide the answer, you steal the learning."* There are times when instead of answering questions directly, the mentor helps the mentee discover the answers on their own. This encourages the development of reflective thinking process which in turn develops more self-confidence in their decision-making skills. Take time to ask: *"What does the mentee need most right now?"*

The early career mentoring program that is provided for the mentee should help them develop strong networks and working relationships. The benefit of a team of mentors early in an Extension career is the multiple perspectives and views available with different sets of expertise, i.e., county coordinator knowledge of local government officials, county policies and procedures. If chosen as the individual mentor during the second phase (career development), it is important to recognize the mentor role as coach and guide and recognize one's strengths and limitations. One mentor may not have all of the answers and must be willing to help the mentee find other resources. The proper matching of mentor and mentee is crucial. A mentor must have the success of the mentee in mind for the relationship to be effective. A mismatch between the mentor and mentee can cause a failure in the experience. This may occur when one or the other feels uneasy and is not able to achieve the level of working relationship necessary for meaningful communication. If a mentor determines a mismatch, the Associate Director is notified immediately before hard feelings develop.

There are three parts of the mentoring relationship –preparation for beginning the experience, sustaining the experience and bringing closure to the experience. Ultimately, mentors are coaching for results by focusing on the outcomes of the mentoring relationship but not at the expense of the process. It is more than going through the mechanics of a checklist. It is a matter of seeking a balance between what mentees need and want to know and how you can best help them. Checklists are available to assist mentors with serving in their roles.

# **COUNTY COORDINATOR CHECKLIST FOR NEW EMPLOYEES**

## **Prior to First Day**

- Equip office i.e., computer, phone, voice mail system, desk supplies, file space, storage, etc. If \$2,500 technology fund is available when employee arrives, allow them to choose equipment to help them do their job. (This is one time funding.)
- E-mail or call to welcome them onboard. Contact information can be obtained from Associate Director.
- Schedule dates for onsite visits during their first two weeks on the job with the Associate Director and Federal Relations/Staff Development Coordinator.
- Get office keys for new person. Facilitate parking permit.

## **First Day in the County Office Orientation**

- Be there first to welcome new employee to the office.
- Introduce UW Extension staff and any other personnel who may share office space such as Weed & Pest or fair staff.
- Tour of office: show where office supplies are located, restrooms, storage, etc.
- Share any office protocols, i.e., regular staff meetings, coffee breaks.
- County policies...explain county coordinator responsibilities, go over any applicable county policies such as vouchering county mileage and expenses, use of county vehicles if available, budget allocations, and general fiscal philosophies of county government.
- Talk about working with support staff; appropriate uses, delegation, lead time.
- Share their official title, University Extension Educator, \_\_\_\_\_ Area; or University Extension Educator, 4-H Youth \_\_\_\_\_ County and explain use of letterhead.
- Set up voice mail, if available in the county office. Share standard office answering message – "UW Extension, \_\_\_\_\_ County, this is \_\_\_\_\_. How can I help you?"
- Help acquire e-mail address if county addresses are different than UW. A UW e-mail address will be generated when the hiring paperwork goes through human resources the first week on the job.
- Suggest things to do to get program up and running, such as:
  - Begin visiting with clientele immediately, both individuals and groups.
  - Prepare a one-page introduction to give to people.
  - Consider developing a short survey asking for input on area issues and needs to accompany them on visits to gather information for educational programming.
- Explain UW travel allotment for area work. Provide mileage records and forms for area travel reimbursement.
- Share overall Extension vision, mission and philosophy.
- Explain Extension team concepts – staff team, area team, initiative team, issue team.
- Share UW phone list for reference and area list.
- Let them know that the Administrative Assistant for the Associate Directors will order business cards and a name tag once an e-mail address is established. These supplies are ordered through UW Extension Communications & Technology. Encourage educators to wear their UW name tag as a marketing tool for UW Extension.

- Provide a prepared contact list of 4-H Community Club leaders, 4-H key leaders, and council members.
- Provide a list of county and/or UW holidays when the county office may be closed.

### **First Two Weeks**

- Introduce to:
  - County commissioners and other personnel in nearby offices such as in other county offices, if appropriate.
  - Key stakeholders in extension and in their program area.
- Demonstrate reporting system and help them get started. Staff Development and Federal Relations Coordinator will provide user name and password and will also demonstrate reporting to reinforce learning the software.
- Identify key contacts for subject matter information such as state specialists, program related connections, initiative team chair.
- Describe already existing program efforts done by or with other agencies in the area and encourage them to begin building agency relationships.
- Hold a staff meeting.
- An initial press release will be generated by the Associate Director through UW Extension C&T prior to employee start date. Arrange for local media coverage or interviews with local news reporters.
- Encourage training opportunities.
- Provide training on general office functions that all staff should be able to handle, i.e., water tests, hay/forage/feed tests, etc.
- Share ideas on how to develop a record keeping system of contacts, items that require action etc. Share methods to document conflicts or concerns with clientele.
- Check with State Office to arrange for employee to attend UW benefit orientation on campus or to have benefit packet mailed to employee.

### **Ongoing**

- Check with new employee occasionally to answer further questions and see how they are doing.

### **Monthly**

- Direct, coach and support, and provide positive guidance as needed in a non-threatening environment. Each time, come up with something specific that will help them grow and to know when they are successful.

## **MENTORING TEAM CHECKLIST FOR NEW EMPLOYEES**

### **(Early Career – County and Area Educators)**

Early career mentoring is made up of a team of people appointed by the Associate Director. The team determines how to share the mentoring responsibilities. Team member roles should be appointed prior to or during the new employee's first week on the job.

The first days, weeks and months as a new Extension employee can be overwhelming. It is wise to go slow and find ways to provide information in small doses. Begin by focusing on their program, building clientele relationships, informal education venues and developing teaching skills. Then fill in with need-to-know information that is sometimes less than exciting like reporting requirements.

#### First weeks:

- Initial contact. Each team member should call within the first two weeks of the starting date and welcome the new employee. Introduce yourself and provide your background.
- Briefly explain the mentoring program and the role of the team. Use the Overview to help with this explanation. Early career mentoring is focused mainly on foundational, basic and routine information to ease the way into the job. The goal is to build a solid foundation for Extension performance. Remember to be cautious about overwhelming them with too much information too early. Give them time to settle in.
- Learn about the new employee. Ask questions to open a friendly dialogue with them. Suggest they start a list of questions to share with mentors. Recommend that they continue the list during the year.
- Make sure the county staff has helped the new employee with routine tasks like: mailing packages, use of phones, cell phones, equipment usage, county protocols.
- Set up dates/times for future visits with one or all of the mentoring team members. The visits may be onsite, by phone or electronic. Several shorter visits are recommended in the beginning until the new educator begins to feel comfortable with Extension.
- Use the first weeks/months to get to know the new employee, form a working relationship and build trust. Contact them regularly. Just knowing that there are others "out there" who care about their success goes a long way toward helping them get started in Extension. Checking in with them from time to time is very important.
- For 4-H educators, begin working with the county staff to provide a "Calendar of County Events and Meetings" and when to begin work on these. This is critical especially for 4-H educators starting in the spring or summer. Provide ideas for identifying key players/volunteers and how they have been utilized in the past. Share current goals, if any, of the county program and any progress or positive momentum that the program is making so the educator can focus on what is "working" and maintain that momentum instead of starting with what is wrong with the program.
- Encourage other educators in the area to call or send an email to welcome them.
- Make them aware of useful websites to help orient them, e.g., [www.uwyo.edu/4-H/](http://www.uwyo.edu/4-H/) or [www.uwyo.edu/ces/](http://www.uwyo.edu/ces/).
- Contact Office Associate in C&T to have their names added to mailing lists, list-serves, e-mail folders for the initiative team.



## 2-6 months

- Check in with mentee monthly.
- Encourage them to ask questions.
- Share Initiative team information:
  - Explain the overall vision/mission of the initiative team, why the team is important, how the team works and the direction it is going. If necessary, clarify the difference in focus areas among the different initiative teams such as PSAS and SMRR.
  - Provide them with minutes from recent initiative or issue team meetings.
  - Share initiative team major efforts, current events and areas of emphasis and encourage their involvement.
  - Explain the difference between the initiative team and issue teams.
  - Explain the role of initiative team members – their responsibility to the team, the expectations of team members, level of involvement.
  - Share past team goals and accomplishments.
  - Share current team goals. Describe any cross-initiative team efforts.
  - Share county/regional differences – encourage them to adopt and adapt what they can, use their own approaches to target constituent needs and provide what is best for their area/county.
    - Define the purpose and goals of team meetings to encourage the productive use of their time.
- Suggest things to get their program up and running, such as:
  - Begin visiting with clientele immediately, both individuals and groups.
  - Prepare a one-page introduction to give to new acquaintances.
  - Consider developing a short survey asking for input on area issues and needs. They could use this during visits with clientele to gather information for educational programming
- Share ideas on managing interoffice, county and area relationships, respect for seniority balanced with new ideas and enthusiasm, reaching out to other educators in the same initiative.
- Help with questions about on-line reporting. Give them a heads-up on performance appraisals and the appraisal instrument, year-end reports and impact statements. Assist with ideas and feedback on their early attempts.
- Provide ideas for funding of educational programs, i.e., county budgets, grants, registration fees.
- Begin conversations about dealing with challenging personalities, clientele and situations and working through conflict. It is important to help them develop skills in dealing with upset people so it doesn't become personal or negatively affect office relations.
- Make it a point to seek out mentees at meetings, trainings and EPIC to make them feel welcome. Introduce them to others and include them in conversations.
- In the case of 4-H with multiple new county educators, it may be possible for mentors to coordinate a statewide teleconference to answer questions, allow mentees to learn from rotating mentors and get to know others.
- Depending on the time of year, 4-H educators may need immediate advice and guidance on event planning and the details and logistics associated with facilitating 4-H events.
- The Associate Director may call the mentors and mentee periodically to encourage and check on progress.

### 7-11 months

- Check in with employee monthly to make sure the mentee is progressing as expected.
- Help them find their passion and direction. Encourage a deliberate approach to focusing on programs to identify the big, important ideas that result in investments in the future. Caution them about jumping into everything too fast which can result in being busy but not effective.
- Help 4-H educators understand that when working with volunteers, they become part of the volunteer's "social" time and volunteers/clients often like to visit.
- Share ideas on professionalism such as being available to clientele during working hours. Such things as having a business cell phone can be very helpful.
- While it is important to be positive and enthusiastic, don't hesitate to provide an early warning system. Share challenges, potential bumps in the road, what doesn't work and barriers that they may encounter.
- Talk about managing change and transitioning through the change process with constituents. Encourage an attitude of: "*This is a change for our county/area. How can we make it work?*" and support other educators through the change process.
- Share a variety of leadership styles and the appropriateness of each in various situations.
- Share professional development opportunities: national meetings, EPIC, subject matter trainings, National Extension Conference on Volunteerism, etc.

### At 12 months

- Encourage mentee to continue with career development mentoring if deemed helpful.
- Ask mentee to complete the Early Career Mentoring Evaluation and submit it to their supervisor.

# **MENTORING NEW EMPLOYEES CHECKLIST FOR ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS**

## First Days

- Call and welcome them to Extension.
- Appoint team to serve as mentors for the new employee prior to or during their first week.
- Discuss \$2500 equipment monies available and appropriate purchases.

## First Months

- Meet with them in person on their jobsite or on campus. Go over the following:
  - Talk about the job as an Extension area or county educator, the vision, mission and guiding values of Extension and the reason for Extension work. Explain that the nature of the job is serving people with education.
  - Expectations of job performance, i.e., teaching, area work, meeting clientele.
  - Importance of goal setting. Provide examples, especially appropriate first year goals.
- Share the team structure in general – why so many teams and the differences between the teams (initiative teams, issue teams, area teams, county teams). Explain the role and purpose of each team. UW Extension is structured with an area program delivery concept for initiatives, with the exception of 4-H which is county based. Employees with an area assignment are encouraged to adopt the area concept. It is a vital component of Extended Term and Promotion and annual performance reviews.
- Share the professional scheduling time policy to achieve a balance between work and private lives.
- Share UW holidays vs. county holidays philosophy. Explain winter closure.
- Explain advisory councils or other ways of assessing clientele needs to guide programming.
- Discuss dollar amount available for area travel and acceptable uses of those monies.
- Reinforce teamwork concepts and expectations on various teams at county, area, and state levels.
- Encourage training opportunities and discuss possibilities to consider.
- Describe ongoing communication expectations with the associate director, county staff, and area team.
- Mentoring opportunities available.
- If appropriate, mentors might consider a meeting with the mentee, mentors and county/state personnel to talk about job descriptions, chain-of-command, how positions are funded, who supervises whom and the county coordinator role so these messages are consistent.
- Set up dates so mentee spends time with another educator to observe their teaching techniques, styles of communication, management of educational programs, etc. If teaching a program is intimidating, suggest team teaching or bringing in other educators to teach a class.
- Begin explaining ET & P and show them packet examples so they get a picture of the expectations.

- Explain how they will be evaluated and share the evaluation instrument.

### Six Months

- Follow up on goal setting to assist with establishing first-year goals.
- Talk about career advancement.
- For area educators, spend time describing the Extension Tenure and Promotion system. Explain the process including the ET&P packet committee that provides the first review and feedback of packets. Encourage the mentee to begin extended term and packet development. Stress that the packet must communicate their career thus far. Even if the supervisor knows about the mentees work, the packet is the primary method for communicating the work to others. Show them a good example of a 1-3 year packet.
- Describe the protocols of balancing 4-H county events/activities and 4-H state activities as this can be confusing to new 4-H employees.
- For county 4-H educators, explain the career development pathway. Point out that some parts of the packet don't necessarily apply such as research, grants and administration/leadership.  
Explain that as a program coordinator, utilizing the expertise of volunteers and other professionals is appropriate and encouraged for teaching certain subject matters because it is part of volunteer development.

### Occasionally

- Call or schedule visits onsite with them to direct, coach and support, and provide positive guidance in a non-threatening environment. Each time, come up with something specific that will help them grow and to know when they are successful.
- Call the mentors and mentee periodically to encourage and check on progress.

## MENTOR CHECKLIST FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT (Career Development – County and Area Educators)

In the career development phase of mentoring, the focus is targeted towards the needs of the mentee. During this time, it is important to build their confidence, develop skills and challenge them. Mentors can help the mentee with creating a personal vision that aligns with the organization vision so there is a sense of purpose, direction and meaning to their work. Begin to help them think strategically, enhance their working relationships and decision-making skills and find effective management tools to increase their leadership capacity. *“Truthful but not brutal”* is a good guide. It is important to level with mentees but do so in a kind and tactful manner.

- Contact the mentee. In the beginning, the mentor and mentee get to know each other better, build trust and create a mentoring relationship that works for both.
- Explain about career development mentoring. Information from the Overview may help.
- Share your background and your hopes for the mentoring experience. Learn about their hopes and desires for the mentoring experience. Talk about confidentiality.
- Jointly design the mentoring experience. Determine the goals and outcomes desired by both the mentee and mentor. Possible goal areas may include: program development, needs assessment, evaluations and impacts, career advancement and ET&P process, grants, maintaining healthy working relationships with others (see specific information below). At first, establish initial goals. More will develop as the experience evolves. To develop goals, ask questions such as:
  - What areas would you like to explore in more depth?
  - What accomplishments would you find most satisfying during the early development of your career?
  - How do you see your role in your office, county, area and initiative team? Are there any goals you would like to pursue in these areas?
- Set up a schedule for future meetings via phone or in person. Regular communication is important to effectively maintain the relationship.
- Work towards completing the goals established – reflecting, coaching, assisting, questioning, answering.
- Once the goals have been met, decide if to establish more goals or conclude the mentoring relationship. Ask the mentee to complete the Career Development Mentoring Evaluation and return it to their Associate Director at the conclusion.
- The Associate Director may call the mentor and mentee periodically to encourage and check on progress.

Specific Information for Goal Development:

The following ideas may be helpful in creating a customized mentoring program based on the needs of the mentee. Needs will vary depending on their past experiences, expertise, county versus area position and desires. It is important to identify clearly defined learning objectives.

Program Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating educational programs</li> <li>Learning a variety of teaching tools</li> <li>Designing visuals</li> <li>Understanding learning styles</li> <li>Engaging audiences in presentations</li> <li>Evaluating programs for impact</li> </ul>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framing concepts and mindsets so individuals/groups better understand</li> <li>Asking questions</li> <li>Listening</li> <li>Engaging in dialogue</li> <li>Nurturing meaningful conversation</li> <li>Managing conflict</li> <li>Providing feedback</li> </ul>
Networking and relationship building skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting with others in the office, county, area and initiative teams</li> <li>Understanding the roles of county coordinator, team chairs, specialists, county and area educators, CNP educators and county staff</li> <li>Maintaining healthy, sustainable working relationships</li> <li>Modeling collaborative approaches at work</li> <li>Understanding group interactions</li> <li>Supporting team building</li> <li>Increasing cultural competency, i.e., community culture, state culture</li> </ul>
Planning and management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying tasks</li> <li>Differentiating between "Am I busy" or "Am I effective?"</li> <li>Developing clear timelines</li> <li>Designing meetings</li> <li>Understanding planning processes</li> </ul>
Conflict management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Navigating through conflict</li> <li>Reframing issues</li> <li>Engaging in dialogue to constructively manage conflict</li> <li>Working through challenging situations</li> <li>Managing change</li> </ul>
Assessment and evaluation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing reflective practices</li> <li>Using strength-based approaches such as asset mapping</li> <li>Sharing the variety of assessment tools available: formal and informal surveys, feedback forms, advisory meetings and how these affect educational programs</li> <li>Utilizing evaluation tools to measure short-, medium- and long-term impacts</li> </ul>
Career Advancement (County Educators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considering a master's program in order to enter the Extended Term and Promotion track</li> <li>Completing reports</li> <li>Writing impact statements</li> <li>Establishing routines for accountability</li> </ul>

	Finding a balance between leadership roles in the county, area and state and traditional, non-traditional and volunteer development programs
Career Advancement (ET&P – Extended Term Track Educators)	Developing a packet Viewing examples of packets resulting in successful promotion Completing reports Writing impact statements Establishing routines for accountability Finding a balance between leadership roles in the county, area and state
Grant Writing	Locating potential sources of money Learning about effective grant writing procedures Understanding grant administration after receiving the dollars Knowing accountability requirements for grants
Leadership Development	Developing skills in visioning, relating, sense-making and inventing Learning the roles of team chairs and other leadership positions in Extension Learning ways to balance leadership roles in the county, area and state

Below are a variety of questions that mentors can ask during the mentoring experience:

- What would you like to work on?
- What do you want to explore in more depth?
- What's new/the latest/an update?
- What are the opportunities in your county/area?
- What are the challenges?
- What is an example? For instance? Like what?
- If you could do it over again, what would you do the same? Differently?
- What is your action plan? What kind of plan do you need to create?
- What are your next steps? By what date or time will you complete these steps?
- What will you take away from this learning experience?
- If you had free choice in the matter, what would you do? What is the right thing to do?
- What are other possibilities?
- What is your desired outcome?
- What is your conclusion?
- How would you summarize the effort so far?
- What will you think about this in five years?
- What resources are available you?
- What resources do you need to help you decide?

## MENTORING EXTENSION SPECIALISTS CHECKLIST

(Leadership will be provided by UW Extension Director)

### Early Career

The mentoring needs of new Extension specialists are similar to the needs of new Extension county/area educators. Begin by focusing on the development of their Extension program and building relationships with faculty and staff in the department and area/county educators. Then fill in with need-to-know information that is sometimes less than exciting like reporting requirements.

#### First weeks:

- Initial contact. Introduce yourself and your background.
- Briefly explain the mentoring program. Use the Overview to help with this explanation. Early career mentoring is focused mainly on foundational, basic and routine information to ease the way into the job. The goal is to build a solid foundation for Extension performance. Remember to be cautious about overwhelming them with too much information too early. Give them time to settle in.
- Learn about the new employee. Ask questions to open a friendly dialogue with them. Suggest they start a list of questions. Recommend that they continue the list during the year.
- Help them set up dates/times for visits with others in the department, especially other Extension specialists.
- Share with them who to contact in Department to help them learn basics such as: mailing packages, use of phones, cell phones, equipment usage, and protocols.
- Use the first weeks/months to get to know the new employee, form a working relationship and build trust. Contact them regularly. Just knowing that there are others “out there” who care about their success goes a long way toward helping them get started in Extension. Checking in with them from time to time is very important.

#### 2-6 months

- Check in with mentee monthly.
- Encourage them to ask questions.
- Talk about the job as an Extension specialist, the vision, mission and guiding values of Extension and the reason for Extension work.
- Share the team structures in Extension and the purpose of teams.
- Suggest things to get their program up and running, such as:
  - Begin visiting with area educators and clientele immediately
  - Prepare a one-page introduction to give to new acquaintances.
  - Consider developing a short survey asking for input on area issues and needs. They could use this during visits with clientele to gather information for educational programming
- Share Initiative team information: (May be appropriate to ask Initiative Team Chair to cover this section)
  - Explain the vision/mission of the initiative team, why the team is important and how the team works. If necessary, clarify the difference in focus areas among the different initiative teams such as PSAS and SMRR.



- Facilitate contacting C&T to add their names added to mailing lists, list-serves, e-mail folders for the initiative team.
- Ask the Initiative Chair to provide them with minutes from recent initiative or issue team meetings.
- Share initiative team major efforts, current events and areas of emphasis and encourage their involvement.
- Explain the difference between the initiative team and issue teams.
- Explain the role of specialists in the initiative team – their responsibility to the team, expectations of other team members, level of involvement.
- Share past team goals and accomplishments.
- Share current team goals. Describe any cross-initiative team efforts.
- Identify other people's strengths in the system so if the mentee is working on a similar project, they know who they might go to for advice.
- Set up dates so mentee spends time with other Extension specialists to observe their teaching techniques, styles of communication, management of educational programs, etc. If teaching a program is intimidating, suggest observing another specialist in action.
- Share the professional scheduling time policy to achieve a balance between work and private lives.
- Refer to Staff Development Coordinator for help with questions about on-line reporting. Give them a heads-up on performance appraisals and the appraisal instrument, year-end reports and impact statements. Assist with ideas and feedback on their early attempts.
- Share UW Extension funding provided for specialist. Advise discussion with Department Head on budget availability and program expenditure procedures (Department Accountant).
- Encourage them to get to know their department head and the department's expectations of Extension specialists.

#### 7-11 months

- Check in with employee monthly to make sure the mentee is progressing as expected.
- Help them find their passion and direction. Encourage a deliberate approach to focusing on programs to identify the big, important ideas that result in investments in the future. Caution them about jumping into everything too fast which can result in being busy but not effective.
- Talk about career advancement.
- Spend time describing the Faculty Tenure and Promotion system or Extended Term and Promotion if academic professional appointment. Explain the process and encourage the mentee to begin extended term and packet development. Stress that the packet must communicate their career thus far. Even if the department knows about the mentee's work, the packet is the primary method for communicating the work to others. Suggest a specialist who might share a good example of a 1-3 year packet.
- While it is important to be positive and enthusiastic, don't hesitate to provide an early warning system. Share challenges, potential bumps in the road, what doesn't work and barriers that they may encounter.
- Share a variety of leadership styles and the appropriateness of each in various situations.
- Share professional development opportunities: professional conferences, national meetings, EPIC, subject matter trainings, etc.

### At 12 months

- Encourage mentee to continue with career development mentoring if deemed helpful.
- Ask mentee to complete the Early Career Mentoring Evaluation and submit it to their supervisor.

### **Career Development**

In the career development phase of mentoring, the focus is targeted towards the needs of the specialist. During this time, it is important to build their confidence, develop skills and challenge them. Mentors can help the mentee with creating a personal vision that aligns with the organization vision so there is a sense of purpose, direction and meaning to their work. Begin to help them think strategically, enhance their working relationships and decision-making skills and find effective management tools to increase their leadership capacity. *"Truthful but not brutal"* is a good guide. It is important to level with mentees but do so in a kind and tactful manner.

Please see the Mentor Checklists for County and Area Educators for guidance on Career Development mentoring. The information can be easily adapted to meet a specialist's needs.

## EARLY CAREER MENTORING PROGRAM (1<sup>st</sup> year) EVALUATION

1. How much did you gain from the mentoring experience? Please rate the following and circle your response. (1=absolutely nothing to 5=great deal)

Increased understanding of the overall organization      1      2      3      4      5

Increased confidence and capacity to do the job      1      2      3      4      5

Began building positive working relationships      1      2      3      4      5

Resulted in positive attitudes about Extension      1      2      3      4      5

2. What else should have been covered during the first year mentoring experience?

3. What advice would you give to future mentors to create a positive learning experience for new employees?

4. Additional comments about the early career mentoring experience:

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT MENTORING PROGRAM (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3rd year) EVALUATION

1. How would you characterize the overall mentoring experience to assist you with the development of your career:

1	2	3	4	5
Very negative		Okay		Very positive

2. How much progress did you make as a result of career development mentoring experience? Please rate the following and circle your response. (1=absolutely none to 5=great deal)

Increased understanding of job expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Increased capacity to meet the expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Increased leadership skills in the program	1	2	3	4	5
Built positive working relationships with others	1	2	3	4	5
Successful achievement of extended term	1	2	3	4	5

3. What advice would you give to future mentors to create positive learning experiences for new employees?

4. Additional comments about the early career mentoring experience: