MENTORING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT – WHAT IS THE FUTURE?

A REPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MENTORING AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR THE APRIL 11, 2012 DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT MEETING

MEMBERS: RENE MEHLBERG (CHAIR); LISA DEVINE-BARRIBEAU; JILL JORGENSON; COLLEEN PULVERMACHER; JULIEANN STAWICKI; CHRIS VIAU

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Mentoring new colleagues is an important function in UW-Extension. Mentors help new colleagues to define their jobs and roles, prioritize, and to be effective. They can also be key in the tenure process. Some UW-Extension departments use mentoring teams with success. The Department of Youth Development would like to look into our mentoring process and consider options for improvement in a process that has already proven to be effective and useful to our colleagues. We will form an ad hoc committee to address a host of challenges that face department mentors and mentees, and allow for improvement of this component of professional and institutional success.

A recent survey of probationary faculty members in the Department of Youth Development indicated that mentors are valuable and yet there is room for improvement in the mentoring process. In order to look into our mentoring process and possible positive changes, the ad hoc committee will be utilized. The committee will consist of probationary and tenured faculty in the Department of Youth Development and will meet as necessary (via WisLine).

The charge of the committee as described by the Department Chair and Vice Chairs is to:

- Examine the current mentoring system in the Department of Youth Development,
- Investigate what is and is not working in mentoring teams in other departments
- Make recommendations regarding changes and improvements in the current mentoring model within the Department of Youth Development.

The committee will conclude their work and make their recommendations by late summer of 2012 to the Department Chair and Vice Chairs.

ACTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee met via teleconference three times from November, 2011 through February, 2012. The members also completed independent work and shared materials through a SharePoint group site.

The work of the committee included:

- a review of research literature for new educators and untenured faculty.
Examination of the data provided by the DYD chair and vice chairs:
- Mentor training manual/website
- Existing mentors, SRP representatives, located within regions
- SRP survey results
- Probationary Faculty Survey results

Collect information about other department mentoring practices
- Format for teams; who makes up that team & their roles; how they are assigned
- What are expectations for mentors? Is this outlined somewhere?

RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION
Orientation, Training, and continued professional development for mentors
- Mentor training
- Mentor manual needs to be updated

Team approach
Possible structures discussed
1. Team of mentors for each mentee (need to determine how mentors/mentees are selected)
2. Team of mentors for a cohort group of mentees (again, need to determine how groups will be selected)

NEXT STEPS
The committee will meet face-to-face in May to finalize report and determine action steps needed to move recommendations forward.