

# Department of Neuroscience

## Faculty Mentoring Programs

### 2026

#### Overarching Statement on Faculty Mentoring

The Department of Neuroscience is fully committed to mentoring early-stage and established faculty as they develop and maintain independent research programs. The goal of our faculty mentoring program is to facilitate the career aspirations of each faculty in accordance with developing national excellence in one or more of the various functions of academic health institutions, including Education/Teaching, Service/Leadership, and/or Research/Scholarship. Departmental leadership encourages and guides faculty in empowering healthy communities, driving innovation and health care transformation, and reshaping our workforce to align with MUSC's current strategic goals.

#### Departmental Mentoring Programs

The Department of Neuroscience offers four programs for faculty mentoring, and each program is described in more detail below. The four programs include:

- a.** Faculty Mentoring Program
- b.** Grant Mentoring Program
- c.** Rising Stars Program
- d.** Departmental Promotion and Tenure Review Program

##### ***a. Faculty Mentoring Program***

The department has a mandatory Faculty Mentoring Program for all Assistant and Associate Professors. For faculty at these levels, mentees select a mentor who is a full Professor in the department to serve as their official faculty mentor. Mentees are required to meet bi-annually in the spring and fall, or more frequently (when necessary), with their assigned faculty mentor. Mentees should complete the Mentoring Form (see Appendix I) and send the form to their mentor prior to each meeting. At the meeting, all items on the form should be discussed and updated before signing and returning the form to the department's Mentor Champion. Topics on the forms include criteria necessary for assessing progress toward promotion and tenure (Education/Teaching, Service/Leadership, and/or Research/Scholarship), along with general lab business. These forms will be included in the evaluations performed during the annual contract meeting with the department's Chair. Faculty will receive an 'unsatisfactory' evaluation for Professional Development if faculty do not complete both mandatory meetings with their mentor in each contract year.

##### ***b. Grant Mentoring Program***

The purpose of the Grant Mentoring Program (GMP) is to leverage the extensive NIH grant-writing experiences of the department's senior faculty to provide support to early- or mid-career, tenure-track Department of Neuroscience faculty for the purpose of producing highly competitive R01-type grant submissions. All tenure-track faculty are eligible to use the program. However, all tenure-track faculty without a current, active R01 are required to participate in the grant program, unless participation is waived by the Chair. To begin this program, faculty will first work with the Department's Mentor Champion to identify two internal (MUSC faculty) and one external faculty member to assist with improving the grant application and identifying potential weaknesses in the research strategy. The program for faculty will consist of seven 1-hour small group meetings with the faculty participant and senior faculty and external reviewers. The first few sessions will meet weekly before switching to biweekly sessions.

***Proposed meeting timeline for the Grant Mentoring Program with example dates for June submission:***

- Pre-program:*** Provide Specific Aim page and Biosketch to GMP Director for distribution to reviewers by Jan 8<sup>th</sup>; reviews returned on Jan 15<sup>th</sup>
- Session 1:*** Presentation of revised Specific Aims and Biosketches by each participant (Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>)
- Sessions 2-3:*** Presentation and discussion of drafts (March 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>) of importance of the research (Significance, Innovation)
- Sessions 4-5:*** Presentation and discussion (April 4<sup>th</sup>) of Rigor and Feasibility (Approach) and Introduction to Revised Application, if necessary
- Sessions 6-7:*** Presentation (April 11<sup>th</sup>) and discussion (April 18<sup>th</sup>) of Expertise and Resources (Investigator, Environment) and send draft of application to MUSC Scientific Editing Service Program (see the Resources section for link)

***c. Rising Stars Program***

Rising Stars Program meetings are open to all Department of Neuroscience faculty at the level of Assistant Professor. This monthly 1-hour meeting, which is directed by the department Chair, focuses on addressing the unique needs of early-stage faculty as they develop and establish their independent research programs and national/international reputations while balancing the demands of running a lab, managing budgets and personnel, teaching, and submitting grants and manuscripts. These meetings also provide a forum for faculty to present their latest findings to receive feedback from the Chair and their peers, and to share experiences and strategies taken to solve various challenges of establishing an independent research program.

***d. Departmental Promotion and Tenure Review Program***

Annually, Assistant Professors in their 4<sup>th</sup> year as faculty and all Associate Professor are required to complete a full College of Medicine promotion dossier, regardless of whether they are formally applying for promotion or tenure. The dossiers are submitted to the department's Mentoring Champion and will be reviewed by the department's Promotion and Tenure Committee, which comprises all full Professors except for the department's Chair. A summary of the discussion is provided to the department Chair by the Mentor Champion, and the department Chair then composes a letter to each faculty outlining how that faculty member is on-track for promotion and where deficiencies may need to be addressed. In addition, the letter will outline mechanisms for dealing with deficiencies that the mentoring team will help the faculty member enact. Although Assistant Professors within three years of their hire date are not required to submit a packet, they can if they wish to receive feedback from the Promotion and Tenure Committee regarding their progress. Tenure is only considered for faculty requesting promotion to full Professor.

**Promotion and Tenure**

The College of Medicine expects all faculty to be active scholars with vital contributions in research, teaching, curricula, publications, care redesign, or in other areas of innovation and service. Faculty will align with the scholarship mission by demonstrating commitment to improving health in our community as a model for the nation; evolving new models of person-centered, multidisciplinary care that reward value; accelerating innovation and research to improve health; educating leaders who transform health care; and redesigning the academic health environment to better serve society.

Details of Promotion and Tenure requirements for faculty on Academic Investigator and Academic Investigator/Educator tracks are fully described on MUSC faculty webpage: <https://medicine.musc.edu/faculty/apt-musc-faculty>. If faculty are requesting promotion or promotion with tenure, the department's Promotion and Tenure Committee will review and vote on the faculty's dossier. A majority vote is required to send the dossier forward to the department Chair. The Chair will then request up to 10 outside letters and based on the letters and overall evaluation by the Promotion and Tenure

Committee, the Chair will decide whether to forward the dossier to the College of Medicine (CoM) Appointment, Promotion & Tenure (APT) Committee for consideration of promotion or promotion with tenure.

**Example timeline:**

September: submit full CoM packet to the department's Mentoring Champion  
September/October: Departmental committee review of promotion packets  
October/November: Feedback from departmental review will be provided to faculty  
December: Departmental approved promotion/tenure packets due in the CoM Dean's office  
February: CoM APT committee meeting to review promotion/tenure packets  
April: Board of Trustees meeting to review promotion/tenure packets  
June: Chair's office notified of approved promotion/tenure  
July: Effective date of promotion or promotion with tenure

## Benchmarks of Success

The departmental mentoring plan is monitored by success in Education/Teaching, Service/Leadership, and Research/Scholarship. Ultimately, this is reflected in rates of promotion. Additionally, in the annual contract interview, the Chair will engage the faculty members in a discussion of how they believe mentoring is progressing and develop plans for improvement, as deemed necessary. Specific metrics for benchmarks of success are outlined below:

- a. Departmental measures:
  1. Surveys of faculty on their satisfaction with the plan and their job overall
  2. Attrition of faculty within the department
  3. Percentage of eligible faculty promoted within a 5-year period.
  4. Total funding from all mentored activities
  5. Total number of publications overseen by mentors
- b. Individual measures:

Short-term measures:

  1. Understanding the Promotion and Tenure requirements policies and procedures
  2. Established relationship with a mentor in areas of education, research, and service
  3. Documentation of short- and long-term career goals
  4. Maintenance of a comprehensive curriculum vitae

Long-term measures:

  1. Competitive funding
  2. Excellence in education, research, and service
  3. Time frame for promotion
- c. Research-related metrics for determining the effectiveness of mentoring
  1. Number of grants submitted and funded
  2. Number of original publications
  3. Importance of original publications (e.g., journal quality, impact factor, editorial written on paper)
  4. Career development progress of mentee (e.g., presentation of research at national / international meetings, invited presentations at meetings or other universities, election to study sections or specialty societies, promotion of mentee)
  5. Research awards of mentee
- d. Teaching-related metrics for determining the effectiveness of mentoring
  1. Teaching accomplishments of mentee (e.g., formal courses taught, course materials developed, innovative teaching methods developed)
  2. Number of educational publications
  3. Importance of educational publications (e.g., journal quality, impact factor, editorial written on paper)

4. Number of educational grants submitted and funded by mentee
5. Career development progress of mentee (e.g., presentations at national / international meetings, invited presentations at meetings or other universities, membership on education committees in or outside of the institution, promotion of mentee)
6. Honors and awards for teaching to mentee

## Faculty resources

College of Medicine Resources:

<https://medicine.musc.edu/faculty/researcher-resources>

MUSC Research Resources:

<https://research.musc.edu/>

Writing Services:

<https://education.musc.edu/student-life/student-resources/center-academic-excellence-writing-center/writing-services>

Funding Opportunities & Office of Research Development:

<https://research.musc.edu/about/research-development>

Learning Initiative for Faculty in Training Academy:

<https://research.musc.edu/about/research-development/faculty-development/learning-initiative-faculty-training-academy>

MUSC Faculty Resources:

<https://medicine.musc.edu/faculty>

Scientific editing service at MUSC:

[Scientific Editing Service Program \(musc.edu\)](https://www.musc.edu/scientific-editing-service)

South Carolina Clinical & Translational Research Institute:

<https://research.musc.edu/about/sc-clinical-translational-research-institute>

Community Science:

<https://communityscience.com/>

ARROW External Research Grant Review Program:

<https://education.musc.edu/arrow/resources-services/research-grant-review>

Research Cores at MUSC:

<https://research.musc.edu/doing-research/cores>

MUSC Faculty Council:

<https://medicine.musc.edu/faculty/faculty-council>

Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER)

<https://cimerproject.org/>

# Faculty Mentor Meeting Form

## Department of Neuroscience

*After completing, sign and return to Patrick Mulholland (mulholl@musc.edu)*

Mentee: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_ (mentee)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (mentor)

### **Semi-annual mentoring review:**

#### **1. Lab Business**

Current # lab members (techs, students, postdocs, Jr. faculty):

Lab budgeting (method of tracking, future projections, frequency of review):

Plans for future lab size increases or decreases (next 6 months):

*Goals for next meeting (to be filled out at in-person meeting):*

#### **2. Grants**

Current funding:

Submitted/Pending:

Planned (+target submission dates):

Are you participating in the department's grant mentoring program:

*Goals for next meeting (to be filled out at in-person meeting):*

#### **3. Publications**

Published/in press (last 6 months):

Submitted/in revision:

Planned/in preparation (+target submission dates):

*Goals for next meeting (to be filled out at in-person meeting):*

#### **4. Administrative/Teaching/Service**

# of lectures (last 6 months):

# of lectures (next 6 months):

Current administrative duties:

*Goals for next meeting (to be filled out at in-person meeting):*

**General Comments:**