

## PWR Assistant Professor Mentorship Guidelines

Welcome to the Program in Writing and Rhetoric (PWR). We are teachers, scholars, and writers who contribute to and advocate for the rich intellectual and social life of Stony Brook University. We are greatly committed to public education and student access and success, and to communicating with both academic and broad general audiences.

Assistant professors, like all faculty members in the PWR, are expected to participate in program meetings, committee and task force activities, and special program events, which are informal opportunities to orient to the program, make connections with colleagues, gain a better understanding of how the PWR operates, and identify opportunities to contribute. Assistant professors also participate in and/or contribute to the various types of professional development activities the PWR conducts each semester, most notably portfolio norming sessions.

Expectations for program committee and task force contributions are relatively low during at least the first three years, as assistant professors are encouraged to focus on pursuing a research agenda and developing as a teacher.

Our unit has a strong commitment to mentorship and collegiality, and we strive to provide ongoing support to junior faculty as they pursue tenure and promotion. To support the careers of our assistant professors, the PWR has developed the following mentorship guidelines.

**Mentees** will secure primary mentorship from a tenured faculty member to enhance their professional growth and meet the obligations of the tenure and promotion process. According to [the Office of the Provost's Mentoring and Annual Evaluation Guidelines](#), mentees should seek additional support from a second faculty colleague, as well as regularly consult on official matters about promotion and tenure with the PWR director. As suggested by the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), mentees should also seek support from an institutional mentor (i.e., beyond PWR) and external mentor (beyond SBU).

**Mentees** should initiate meetings with mentors at least once a semester to discuss activities and goals, ask questions, and seek support. They should make scheduled meetings with their mentors a priority and be willing to ask for help. Mentees should take the initiative to find new mentors in case of retirement, sabbatical, illness, or other reasons, in consultation with the program director.

**Mentees** should take the lead in their own career planning and goal-setting; take advantage of opportunities and resources within the university and relevant professional organizations in research, writing, and teaching; and make connections with other junior faculty in the PWR and in other units and colleges.

**Mentors** should regard their role as a significant service to the program. Mentors should act as an advocate and sponsor for the mentee within and outside of the PWR; be accessible and make time to be available to the mentee; help establish professional connections with the mentee; help sort out priorities (budgeting time, and balancing research, teaching, and service); and share relevant institutional resources, opportunities, and support. Mentors will help the assistant professor meet high standards in research and writing, and realize their potential as scholars, writers, teachers, and members of the academic community.

**Mentors** should help the mentee find and seek grants including those found on the [CAS funding databases](#) and internal grants like [FAHSS](#), opportunities for professional development, and connections and collaborations that would help the mentee make timely progress toward promotion and tenure. Mentors should offer advice and answer questions on pedagogical and assessment strategies for existing courses and processes for creating and launching new courses, and identify opportunities for service on campus and in relevant professional organizations.

It is important that **mentors** clarify expectations about the extent to which they will offer guidance concerning personal as well as professional issues such as advice about how to balance family and career responsibilities. Mentors should recognize that tenure-track faculty members are diverse in their backgrounds, scholarly agenda and trajectory, and the intersections of who they are and what they aspire to achieve through their tenure/promotion timeline.

**The PWR director** will serve as an additional resource for assistant professors, protecting the assistant professor's research and fostering their professional growth; aiding in their contact with possible collaborators on campus; and sharing opportunities, resources, and policies. The PWR director assigns a tenured faculty member to conduct a classroom observation of the assistant professor in years 2 and five. Observation reports are shared with the assistant professor and become part of their mid-tenure review and promotion and tenure review, respectively. The PWR director should be mindful of challenges of diversity, equity, and inclusion that may uniquely affect the teaching, research, and overall professional growth of each assistant professor.

The following guidelines are suggested for mentees to pursue their tenure-track professional growth along the university’s tenure and promotion timeline, including the 2nd year and 3rd year review. Relevant documents cited below include the [CAS Timeline to Tenure and Promotion for Junior Faculty](#) and [Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure](#); section 8.2 of the [PWR bylaws](#); [CAS Promotion and Tenure Committee Procedures](#); and [Interfolio](#). PWR mentors should provide support in alignment with timeline and documents, but ultimately, the mentee is responsible for decisions they make throughout the timeline toward tenure and promotion.

The tables below suggest ways in which mentees can (be helped to) thrive in the PWR.

### Orientation/Onboarding (First Year)

<p><b>Mentee responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● attend Program meetings, get to know Program faculty</li> <li>● review <a href="#">PWR bylaws</a></li> <li>● consult the <a href="#">CAS Timeline to Tenure and Promotion for Junior Faculty</a> and <a href="#">Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">consult the CAS Promotion and Tenure Committee Procedures</a></li> <li>● seek out and meet with a primary mentor (plus a secondary mentor if desired)</li> <li>● seek out additional institutional mentor and external mentor</li> <li>● develop and submit their mentoring group to the director</li> <li>● consult mentors while developing a research agenda and publication and professional development plan that includes teaching and service</li> <li>● seek out potential collaborators in the university and beyond</li> <li>● meet with the PWR director with any questions about the tenure/promotion timeline/milestones and requirements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mentors support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● attune to ways to support mentee’s research and teaching</li> <li>● exchange CVs with mentee to stimulate discussion about career paths and possibilities</li> <li>● explore ways to advocate for and sponsor mentee</li> <li>● introduce them to campus resources</li> <li>● orient mentee to PWR curricular, pedagogical, and assessment culture and norms</li> <li>● help mentee understand CAS expectations and take advantage of its support and meetings</li> <li>● help mentee <a href="#">transition into an independent scholar, researcher, and teacher</a> with a unique research agenda and professional identity</li> <li>● inform/share about professional development opportunities and resources in the PWR, university, and relevant professional organizations</li> <li>● consider observing each other’s classes to exchange feedback</li> <li>● support mentee on issues of academia and work-life balance; be mindful of what they choose to share</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● meet with administrative staff to orient to program nuts &amp; bolts and Q&amp;A</li> <li>● inquire about informal teaching observation</li> <li>● inquire and develop a plan for <a href="#">junior research leave</a></li> </ul>	
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## Second Year Review

<p><b>Mentee responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● review the process for mid-tenure review, stated in Section 8.2 of the <a href="#">PWR bylaws</a>, with mentors</li> <li>● consult the <a href="#">CAS Timeline to Tenure and Promotion for Junior Faculty</a> and <a href="#">Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion</a></li> <li>● meet with primary mentor (plus secondary mentor if desired)</li> <li>● review publication number and type needed to meet the tenure/promotion requirements</li> <li>● meet with PWR director to discuss progress and needs</li> <li>● meet with institutional mentor for support in institutional and professional matters</li> <li>● meet with external mentor for support with meeting expectations of the external tenure/promotion review by members of the relevant field/specialization</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mentor support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● provide mentees with resources and/or models for compiling mid-tenure review</li> <li>● provide mentees with support for meeting the timeline</li> <li>● discuss and support the potential development and teaching of new course(s)</li> <li>● consider observing each other's classes to exchange feedback (if you haven't yet done so)</li> <li>● provide teaching support if requested by mentee</li> <li>● take into consideration the unique professional profile that mentee might be trying to build</li> </ul>
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## Third Year (Mid-Tenure) Review

<p><b>Mentee responsibilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● review the process for mid-tenure review, stated in Section 8.2 of the <a href="#">PWR bylaws</a>, with mentors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mentor support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● assist mentee in the preparation of the content of mid-tenure review</li> <li>● provide mentee with support for meeting the timeline/deadline</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● consult the <a href="#">CAS Timeline to Tenure and Promotion for Junior Faculty</a> and <a href="#">Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion</a></li> <li>● meet with primary mentor (plus secondary mentor if desired)</li> <li>● review publication number and type needed to meet the tenure/promotion requirements</li> <li>● meet with the PWR director to discuss progress and needs</li> <li>● meet with institutional mentor for support in institutional and professional matters</li> <li>● meet with external mentor for support with meeting expectations of the external tenure/promotion review by members of the relevant field/specialization</li> <li>● understands and accepts that mentors serve to support and advise. Any decision made by the mentee regarding their Biographic File is their own and sole responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● review the Biographic File and offer constructive suggestions before submission</li> <li>● provide teaching support if requested by mentee</li> <li>● take into consideration how your mentee can present a uniquely strong portfolio for the mid-term review</li> </ul>
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## Tenure/Promotion Review

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● review the process for promotion and tenure, stated in Section 8.2 of the <a href="#">PWR bylaws</a>, with mentors</li> <li>● consult the <a href="#">CAS Timeline to Tenure and Promotion for Junior Faculty</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">consult the CAS Promotion and Tenure Committee Procedures</a></li> <li>● meet with primary mentor (plus secondary mentor if desired)</li> <li>● review publication number and type needed to meet the tenure/promotion requirements</li> <li>● meet with the PWR director to discuss progress and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● review with mentee the results of the mid-tenure evaluation, and, if applicable, provide support and resources to address any areas of criticism</li> <li>● guide and assist the tenure-track faculty member in the preparation of the content of promotion or tenure file [see <a href="#">Interfolio</a>]</li> <li>● continue to advocate for and sponsor mentee throughout the tenure and promotion process</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● meet with institutional mentor for support in institutional and professional matters</li><li>● meet with external mentor for support with meeting expectations of the external tenure/promotion review by members of the relevant field/specialization</li><li>● understands and accepts that mentors serve to support and advise. Any decision made by the mentee regarding their Biographic File is their own and sole responsibility</li></ul>	
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### **Program Review & Revision**

Every three years, the PWR director will consult the advisory committee on whether these mentoring guidelines require revision/updates. Requests to consider such a review can also be made by faculty members involved in the mentoring program. The PWR will review and publish the updated document on the PWR website.

### **Document Revision History**

*Adopted by the PWR Mentoring Working Group: August 2023*  
*Reviewed & Adopted by PWR Director: August 2023*