

# Best Practices in Faculty Retention

Retention efforts, when applied equitably to all faculty, can improve the general climate for everyone and can lead to better productivity and greater satisfaction for everyone in the department. Faculty replacement costs tend to be much higher than retention costs. The suggestions below can help all faculty and are particularly important to women and underutilized minorities. More details on best practices for faculty recruitment can be found in the **UW Retention Toolkit**:

<http://www.engr.washington.edu/advance/resources/Retention/Toolkit.doc>

## ★ **Monitoring the Health and Welfare of Departments**

Ensure all faculty, and in particular women and under-represented groups, are appropriately afforded the same benefits and resources as others. Systematic, carefully reviewed decision-making processes can effectively counter unintentional and potentially institutionalized bias. Be attentive to colleagues and make it comfortable for them to share information with you.

## ★ **Transparency in Operations Including Open Promotion and Tenure Guidelines**

A department chair should be honest and fair and provide concrete, constructive feedback. Sharing relevant information and maintaining open communication help create a sense of trust. The more information people are given, the greater the likelihood that they will perceive the environment as open and the chair as someone they can trust.

## ★ **Creating a Welcoming Department Climate**

Professional isolation is a frequently cited reason for leaving an institution. Creating a sense of community may help reduce isolation, lead to productive collaboration, and increase willingness to buy into the decision-making processes. Additionally, efforts should be made to help connect the new faculty to the academic community with as soon as they arrive on campus. Most often, faculty are not eager to leave a reasonable department.

## ★ **Mentoring**

Well-mentored faculty will be outstanding contributors to the department and have higher levels of satisfaction. A formal mentoring program can aid career development at all faculty levels, but is particularly important for pre-tenure faculty. Mentors connect mentees to their community, provide feedback and help them help navigate the organizational structure and politics.

## ★ **Valuing Diversity in the Department**

Departments should acknowledge that excellence can be reflected in different arenas. By using more encompassing criteria for excellence that more fully document, recognize, and reward the scholarship of teaching, professional service, outreach, and non-traditional approaches to research, departments can take a more active stance on valuing diversity.

## ★ **Faculty Development Programs, Benefits and Resources**

The University of Washington has formal university-wide faculty development programs; and individual colleges, such as the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Engineering, offer their own orientation and faculty development programs. Help connect new faculty to their university community by referring them to these programs which may also renew and invigorate faculty of any level.

## ★ **Flexible and Accommodating Policies and Practices**

Younger faculty members have increasingly higher expectations regarding family-friendly accommodations in academia. The UW has developed several policies and practices which department chairs will find useful for faculty productivity and retention. For example, being responsive to the needs of a dual career couple, and establishing well-known policies on family leave and tenure clock extension can make a difference in retaining faculty. Department chairs should seek to offer supportive solutions to help faculty find balance between their personal and professional lives. Please see Section 9 of the [UW Retention Toolkit](#) for more information.