Junior Faculty Engagement at iSchools: Personal Experience during the First Several Years

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Many of the major challenges facing junior faculty at research institutions are issues of 'engagement': establishing personal and professional connections at the new institution and in the surrounding community; supervising and mentoring graduate and undergraduate students; and coping with increased responsibilities for research, teaching, and service. There are numerous published compilations of advice about making the transition from being a doctoral student to an expanded role as a faculty member (e.g., Boice, 2000; Wisker, 2004; Nyquist and Wulff, 1996). However, within the iSchool community, it is not entirely clear the unique variety of inter-/trans-disciplinary structures and practices that support the development of junior faculty as maturing scholars.

This roundtable discussion will explore how junior faculty at iSchools have been able to embed their research, teaching, and service activities within their schools, the larger institutions, and broader communities. The session will also focus on the ways in which junior faculty have received guidance in their roles--from the job search through the first several years in a tenure-track position. Roundtable leaders represent a variety of institutions and experiences--as faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign [WJM], the University of Maryland [SP], the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [PME], and the University of Texas at Austin [MW], and with doctoral-level preparation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [WJM, MW], the University of Toronto [SP], and the University of Washington [PME]. While the annual junior faculty mentoring event at the iConference specifically targets junior faculty as participants, this roundtable session offers a more inclusive environment for the discussion of this topic, specifically engaging doctoral students and senior faculty as well as their junior colleagues.

Several questions will be used to facilitate the discussion during this session: What kinds of opportunities exist for junior faculty at iSchools to become embedded and engaged in the school, the larger institution, and the surrounding community? How can senior faculty at iSchools systematically approach the mentoring of junior faculty for transitions into their new roles? What challenges could doctoral students expect to encounter as faculty members at an iSchool?

By the conclusion of this session, participants will have generated a list of mentoring practices that have contributed to the successes of junior faculty members at iSchools. Senior faculty participants may wish to reflect upon the presence or absence of similar efforts at their home institutions, and doctoral students may use these strategies as criteria for evaluating strengths and weaknesses among their various career options.

References:

Boice, Robert. *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus* , 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Wisker, Gina. *The Good Supervisor: Supervising Postgraduate and Undergraduate Research for Doctoral Theses and Dissertations* . London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Nyquist, Jody D., & Donald H. Wulff. *Working Effectively with Graduate Assistants* . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996.