

ACM Affinity Group Guiding Questions

1. Research

- a. How can you best identify, connect with, and sustain collaborations in other units? In other institutions? In your own unit?
- b. Brainstorm ways to address expectations for competitive external funding/grants.
- c. What specific experiences and needs do you have in applying to a particular federal agency (i.e., NSF, NIH, NIFA, etc) and are there resources to help you address them?
- d. What are strategies for developing an international professional profile? For developing more interdisciplinary projects?

2. Publishing and Scholarship

- a. What help exists to review manuscripts prior to submission?
- b. What are good strategies to identify journals? To manage distribution of manuscripts to journals for a promotable portfolio?
- c. What are single manuscript strategies to project level (multiple manuscripts) to career level strategies to maximize citations/visibility?
- d. What are good strategies to mentor students to viable manuscripts? How can you recognize when a manuscript is ready to submit?
- e. What are the most effective ways to do public-facing scholarship?
- f. What communication strategies are available for making research more visible (UMC, etc.)?
- g. What strategies do you use to make your service, teaching, and leadership loads count towards your research and scholarship production?

3. Researchers

- a. What is the best way to recruit/screen/vet students or postdocs?
- b. What are effective ways to communicate clear milestones and assess progress?
- c. What are steps and strategies to get students back on track or discontinue poor performing students?
- d. What are the advantages/disadvantages and best practice strategies for including undergraduates in research? How might you best engage them?
- e. What are some strategies for presenting non-traditional paths to TPR committees as valuable to the university?

4. Teaching

- a. What resources and strategies for class management are most effective? For active learning? What support is available for teacher creativity and autonomy?
- b. How do I get help for a class that is small but still requires a TA or more time to grade/evaluate?
- c. What are the applications and techniques for setting up online assignments, quizzes, and rubrics to minimize grading time and effort?
- d. How can I obtain feedback from students throughout the semester to make it a valuable experience for all concerned? What are the best strategies for interpreting student feedback to continue to improve for next semester?
- e. What creative practices are available for handling student-related issues in class? (e.g., regular absence, assignments not turned in, attitude that raises concern)
- f. Where can I direct students to opportunities for scholarships and fellowships on and off-campus?

5. Work/Life Blending & University Culture

- a. How do I maintain strategies/boundaries to ensure healthy and happy balance?
- b. What childcare/dependent/parental care and leave options exist?
- c. What dual career/partner engagement resources are available (Shannon Vairo ssvairo@mtu.edu)?
- d. What are opportunities to meet other faculty to discuss professional and personal development in an informal setting?
- e. How can I best deal with seasonal changes, particularly work/life balance throughout the year?
- f. When is the right time to take a sabbatical? How do you design a persuasive sabbatical proposal? What is expected on a sabbatical report?
- g. What are some mid-career issues that arise when balancing work and family? How have you handled some of the situations you've encountered?
- h. How do you avoid being unhappy as an associate professor? See this [article](#) to aid discussion.

6. Service

- a. What should be considered when making choices among opportunities for national and international service (reputation, networking)?
- b. What are recommendations on local community service?
- c. How much time should I dedicate to service to be a good campus citizen?

- d. Service loads have varying limits in different units on campus. For example, College of Engineering says 20% max while Humanities doesn't have a set limit. How do you negotiate/manage your service loads as a result of this?

7. Networking

- a. What is the value of traveling to meet with program officers?
- b. What are good strategies to get invited to chair sessions at conferences?
- c. How can I best network beyond traveling?

8. Leadership

- a. Why do you want to be a leader? What does it mean to you to be a leader?
- b. What personal skills do you bring to a leadership role? What personal skills do you need to cultivate? To change or temper?
- c. How do your personal skills fit with your aspirations? With particular leadership positions or opportunities?
- d. How might you make choices about prioritizing your various roles?
- e. What does work-life balance mean to you in terms of potentially extensive leadership demands? How willing are you to accept imbalances and for how long?
- f. What are some campus leadership opportunities a mid-career faculty member might take on?
- g. What are some campus leadership opportunities a mid-career faculty member might want to avoid for various reasons (e.g., political pitfalls)?
- h. What are some typical leadership "missteps" to avoid?
- i. What leadership opportunities are typically found within national disciplinary professional groups (e.g., ASEE)? How can these be "converted" to experience that helps obtain leadership opportunities on campus?
- j. How can leadership activities be used to "count" (e.g., for research/teaching/service) when it comes to yearly evaluations and going up for promotion to full?
- k. Where can one obtain training/mentoring for leadership development (on-campus and off-campus)?
- l. What are some of the joys and the frustrations of being an academic leader?

9. Rethinking Annual Review Conversations

- a. Reflect and Situate

- i. Reflecting on the past year, what are your proudest accomplishments? Why are these important to you?
 - ii. What goals/projects would you like to set in motion/advance professionally?
- b. Inquire & Co-Identify Possibilities
 - i. What initial steps could you take to attract the resources to achieve the goals/projects in (a-ii)?
 - ii. What partnerships/leveraging of resources will help make this a win/win?
- c. Prioritize, Commit, and Implement
 - i. What is most important to you and why?
 - ii. Zoom in, Zoom out discussions to benefit both individual and collective unit.