USC Roski School of Fine Arts

While the Roski School is very committed to faculty-to-faculty, faculty-to-student and student-to-student (ie peer) mentoring, issues of scale have affected the Roski School’s style and scope of mentoring activities. The Roski School is the second to smallest school on campus, which means we have developed a close-knit community of both faculty and students, resulting in a built-in capacity for helpfulness and cooperation. While larger units must work hard to replicate this kind of interaction, it is intrinsic to our situation due to our scale.

I. Faculty-to-Faculty Mentoring

The Roski School of Fine Arts has both a formal mentoring program and an informal mentoring tradition. The formal process begins with the hiring of tenure-track faculty. All tenure-track faculty are assigned a senior tenured faculty member to advise them on School and University issues and procedures, and to assist them in compiling their dossiers for Third-Year Reviews and Promotion/Tenure reviews.

Informally, the School has a history and emphasis on faculty mentoring or assisting each other given the relatively small number of faculty. As a result of this, junior faculty members, particularly new full-time and part-time non-tenure track faculty, often have informal mentoring relationships with several colleagues.

II. Faculty-to-Student Mentoring

The Roski School has two ways in which Faculty members mentor students:

A. FA 418 Independent Studies in Studio Arts (for undergraduate students)

The nature of independent study classes is student-motivated, with students taking the initiative to propose an area of focus or project with a full-time faculty member. (Permission can be granted for students to work with part-time faculty on a case-by-case evaluation.) The students are to initiate their own projects, determine what research needs to be done, and carry out the projects independently. Fine Arts full-time faculty supervise and give feedback, but do not teach as they do in regular structured classes. The independent nature of FA 418 is very valuable to art students; however, because it requires self-discipline, self-motivation, and a firm basis of knowledge, it is not appropriate for every student.

B. Undergraduate Student Exhibitions in Lindhurst Gallery (including the Neeley Macomber Travel Prize and Handtmann Photography Prize)

Each semester all undergraduate students are given the opportunity to propose an exhibition in the Roski School’s Lindhurst Gallery. Juniors can also apply for the Neeley Macomber and Handtmann Prizes, in which students produce new work to be shown in the Lindhurst Gallery. As part of their proposals, students must have a faculty mentor who guides them through the process of developing a new body of work and exhibiting it. Full-time faculty members are eligible to be mentors, and this is considered as part of their service work; special permission can be granted for part-time faculty members to be student mentors on a case-by-case basis.
III. Student-to-Student (Peer) Mentoring

A. Roski Student Connection (RSC)

Began in 2009 (Officially recognized in Fall 2010)
Student Members: approximately 30
Student Leadership: Cindy Lee and Alexis Markavage, co-Chairs
Staff Advisor: Antonio N. Bartolome, Jr.
Email: roskisc@usc.edu
Twitter: @roskistudents <http://twitter.com/#!/roskistudents>

The Roski Student Connection is a group of highly motivated and energetic art majors whose goal is to support and foster connections and community between new and continuing Fine Art majors. They also serve as student representatives of the Roski School of Fine Arts in various activities and events such as admissions, recruitment, and orientation. General meetings are held monthly.

B. Mentor Meet Ups

As a new initiative, all Incoming 2011 Roski freshmen and transfer students were paired up with continuing Roski students, and encouraged to meet up to talk about their transition to the Roski School on an individual basis. The Roski School purchased $5 Yogurtland gift cards for each pair of students so that the Roski mentors and mentees can have a snack together. Mentor meet ups were happening between the 2nd - 5th week of Fall 2011 semester, and will continue Spring 2012 for new spring admits. This was very successful, and the Roski School plans to continue to build this program into the future.