

Suggested Discussion Topics

These topics are suggestions to help mentors and mentees identify areas for discussion across the program year.

Mentoring Topic	Discussion Topics	Sample Questions
Transitioning into an Early-Career Faculty Role	• Navigating expectations for research, teaching, and service. • Establishing priorities and managing competing responsibilities. • Building a sustainable professional routine. • Identifying opportunities for professional growth and visibility. • Developing a support network within and beyond the institution.	• What aspects of your faculty role have been most challenging so far? • How are you balancing your major responsibilities? • What support or resources would be most helpful at this stage?
Building a Research Program	• Establishing a research agenda. • Recruiting and mentoring students. • Building research collaborations. • Managing research projects and resources. • Identifying opportunities for interdisciplinary work.	• What are your research priorities over the next one to two years? • Where do you see opportunities for collaboration? • What resources or partnerships could help advance your work?
Proposal Development and Funding Strategy	• Identifying funding opportunities. • Developing competitive proposals. • Building proposal teams. • Responding to reviewer feedback. • Creating a long-term funding strategy.	• What funding opportunities are you currently exploring? • What challenges have you encountered in proposal development? • How can you strengthen your proposal portfolio over time?
NSF ERC EARTH Engagement	• Participating in EARTH activities and initiatives. • Identifying opportunities for collaboration across institutions. • Contributing to ERC goals and workforce development activities. • Building relationships within the EARTH community. • Leveraging ERC resources and networks.	• How would you like to engage with the EARTH community? • What opportunities for collaboration are most relevant to your work? • Are there ERC activities that align with your professional goals?
Industry and External Partnerships	• Developing industry relationships. • Translating research into practice. • Understanding stakeholder needs. • Exploring partnership opportunities. • Expanding professional networks beyond academia.	• What types of external partnerships would benefit your work? • Are there industry connections you would like to develop? • How might partnerships support your research or career goals?
Leadership and Career Development	• Developing leadership skills. • Professional service opportunities. • Building a professional reputation. • Long-term career planning. • Preparing for future advancement opportunities.	• What leadership experiences would you like to gain? • What are your longer-term professional aspirations? • What steps can you take now to support those goals?
Work-Life Integration and Well-Being	• Managing workload and competing priorities. • Setting professional boundaries. • Time management strategies. • Preventing burnout. • Maintaining personal and professional well-being.	• What strategies have been most effective for managing your workload? • Are there areas where you feel overextended? • What changes might improve your overall sustainability and effectiveness?