Announcer ([00:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/eqM2Hr3o-_T6ECzLXAn7Wqy81wMd0dZlIQIoddgPyueqiU4Qf9DSPK5yDIYKjOam8KqywRZ3dT2_vykzVfEnWm6AN8k?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.39)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Sofia Perez ([00:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/3kKUDSTGvkprN4md1R0sOy0LNHztbIqySvfcBZ7BZ8BdlLxrHiYpJtlIpdWYt4v7f441CN-wh4XYkIF02VBy7hDixDs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=10.11)):

The Bear Bridge Mentoring program is designed to foster collaboration between junior and senior faculty and staff at Missouri State University. The program was launched in 2020 under the initiative of Dr. Judith Martínez. Bear Bridge serves to supplement any existing, formal or informal mentoring within each respective college and/or department at Missouri State. I'm Sofia Perez. Today, Judith Martinez, assistant professor in the World Languages and Cultures Department at Missouri State, speaks about the importance and impact of the Bear Bridge mentoring program for new faculty and staff.

Dr. Judith Martínez ([00:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/F0-xi3ltz5L7ayq3FoI5fJHtZpz95_s392k0a5RuGOkYwwp06Z1PO4xL88vg0UumxxT3npItgk8DN5GAroWZWsivUwI?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=39.27)):

Honestly, when I first came to Missouri State, I had good mentors that helped me connect with the community and adjust to my new home and my new job. But I also struggled when I became tenure track. Uh, it wasn't, it was something new. It, it's a very isolating process to go through the tracks to go through higher education is isolating in itself. You know, you work in your area and it seems like you don't, you don't get out of your silos, you know, you just work on your research, work on your classes, work on your stuff, and you just, you know, it, it could be something that you just get in and then go home. And for somebody like me, you know, uh, especially as an international faculty, I crave that sense of community. You know, I crave that collegiality and sense of belonging because I gave up my family to be here. You know, they're all in Mexico.

([01:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/wcIyxxB16xdo7vCH_mCt-Y7N7PR6CrumMWeZ52U6WHnOI0rGAhVc3FW0n-y307wQdc9aE--Xgdxz9cGmvwWnzmp1Dtg?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=88.29)):

Somebody asked me one day, he was a professor that was leaving, "Why have you stayed here for so many years?" At that point, it was 17 years. And I thought one of the reasons that has always gotten me through have been my mentors. So then I thought this would be something that would benefit everybody because it benefited me. It made a difference in my life, in my career, my job satisfaction. And I think if we made a program that was somewhat structured and flexible at the same time, it would help a lot of faculty feel more like home.

Sofia Perez ([02:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/qdf9XhQYbS-CVPCG4gPp29KxKlBzo5sWEI8tn8SJ1I5JS9UUEoSQOiSViX07p5OEcSF14QPVq2d2jxEAksbr3NMbP4s?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=120.3)):

Martinez worked with the chief diversity officer, the provost and the university president, to get the project off the ground.

Dr. Judith Martínez ([02:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/RX7t3MTyWuxGpbeZjJtG_SAqogN4FR164_SLjW9HZKjBte8RnrKs64MGpLCEbDyr9lGn0roSXSC-_e8F42qsJ188uOE?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=126.24)):

I give the provost a list of mentors that I thought would be good mentors. He said, be sure that when you choose a mentor, you choose mentors with good heart. That gave me a lot of hope because he wasn't asking for people that was an exemplary publisher or writer. He asked for something that you don't see in your CV, and that's, I think what makes really a difference in the program. The president and the provost said, whoever wants to be a mentor and be a part of this new program, please contact Judith. And I just got emails, you know, from people that just said, how can I help? I wanna help. That's the continuous line that I kept reading. It is because of them that the program has been going on for three years now. So this was a program that was first piloted with the new faculty that came in 2020, and we also made it available on people that wanted to be a part of it if they had been here the prior year.

Sofia Perez ([02:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/CfDbkBZY5gxO9fhp43B3V8uulOyfnxLAWss0l6VrgH23zUu1YDk0D7juXnt7DcNnd7eMRLv4X-yjjAg5P-WkkVnw1Es?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=179.92)):

Bear Bridge started with about 30 members in 2020. It has grown to over 100 members between mentees and mentors. Martinez explains the program's structure.

Dr. Judith Martínez ([03:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/7LrQw6VzNN3AQgh9rN_3YepNl1rWFNgSiOoPZ4kfc93AbsFS3W4NUXN8uWrK6xAGg-SDmkaCfhoFcT0cETYcmy9SE5c?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=189.4)):

I have a system where people apply for the mentoring program. They apply for a mentor, and I usually know based on their answers, who to match them with. And they have usually two or three mentors. So people don't only have one person to go to for everything. They go to one person for research, but they also have somebody else that might be from the same country or speaks the same language that can connect them with the community. And they might have somebody else that they have an affinity with, you know, that they can play tennis with. We also meet once a month, and then I have mentors who present information that will be useful for promotion. So, you know, people talking about how they have overcome some challenges, how they're thriving in higher education, how they are building their dossier to go up for tenure, things that everybody wants to know.

Sofia Perez ([03:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/5RMg8wW7jXHcKW4m3egfdCGRAaPzpXGIQFuWen-UeACMwIid5_J1ubdDibrO6O3g0sBDcssKAs1QB9K6dDf-s2pcQ6w?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=236.6)):

Martinez describes Bear Bridge as a safe space for members to ask questions and share their experiences. They also have community and social events.

Dr. Judith Martínez ([04:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/VmXkeT-hCLhjCs7blX8Zj7kHi2H0OZfeVcC0p6ppIvo6z4XZ1ScOCRK7GYpRHANR_nSqoQMnKHX8QluWvj3wTzhpiSc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=244.48)):

The Bear Bridge program is a program designed for anybody who wants to join, everybody who wants to give something to somebody else. Everybody who wants to be a mentor because they feel that they want to give back, is welcome. And anybody who wants to join as a mentee because they want to learn, because they wanna be a part of the community, because they want a group of friends, because they just wanna have that sense of belonging, they're welcome to join. There's no requirements except being a new faculty member or a new staff member. And for mentors to be a senior faculty, one of the important things about mentoring is that it's a reciprocal relationship. It's not just a mentoring given, but it's also learning from your mentee. You also learn from somebody that might have a different perspective, that might have a different background, that might have a different experience. The Bear Bridge Mentoring program is something that was designed so that people can see themselves here in a long term. I want them to see what I see in Missouri State. Missouri State is my home, so this is a program just to help each other. This is a program to create a sense of community. This is a program to create a sense of belonging in Missouri State and to be ambassadors of what the Ozarks looks like.

Announcer ([05:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/shared/uY5CtPZUeuSSJoNoHaeCV_nBmiu9AFfiHUYeizoTypNvV6puOm95oFrymfkKgcL291BMx7jYXaSeyn4G7CAkY_wOPBY?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=314.74)):

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