

Introduction

New faculty members at COC, or at any college, face many challenges; they are eager to do well, to "make a mark" in their departments; they want to improve upon the already-considerable skills which got them hired; and no matter how experienced they may already be, they face an almost overwhelming array of procedures and requirements in their new assignments.

COC offers, through New Faculty Orientation, Tenure Committees, the Teaching Consultation Program, many ways for new faculty members to become acclimated to their new surroundings.

How does the Mentor Program fit in?

A mentor would not replace, or work in opposition to, the programs mentioned above. A mentor would be a "friend in the business." By listening, or questioning the mentoree, a mentor is in a position to offer advice, to model or demonstrate, to guide the mentoree.

In the *Odyssey*, Homer tells us that Odysseus appointed Mentor to be the guide and teacher for his son--to help the young man learn the ways of the world. Since then, the pairing of newcomer with more experienced guide has resulted in increased effectiveness for both. COC has always been a warm, welcoming place, and the Mentor Program is a way to keep that spirit alive.

Mentors

Qualifications:

- Fulltime faculty members
- Will complete the 2-hour Mentor Training Session
- Shall have a minimum of one-and-one-half years experience in their departments
- Will serve for two semesters (one academic year)

Flex Credit:

Mentors will earn twelve hours of flex credit for the year. The time requirements for mentors are as follows:

- Attend a two-hour Mentor Training Session in the first month of the first semester of the year (2 hours).
- Attend a one hour meeting each succeeding month to discuss problems and progress with other mentors, and with the Mentor Facilitator (4 hours total per semester).
- During Flex week of the second semester of the mentor year, assist, when applicable, in presenting the Mentor Program to new potential mentors. (1 hour)
- Meet informally through each semester with Mentor Facilitator to discuss ideas, etc.
- Meet regularly with mentorees.

Please note that the time spent in contact with the mentorees is the heart of this program. The twelve flex hours you earn may not necessarily reflect the actual time spent with mentorees.

Mentors' Responsibilities:

- Contact assigned mentoree(s) not later than two weeks after being assigned to him/her.
- Assist, if appropriate, in advising mentoree about department's instructional practices and course content.
- Provide information about college services and procedures.
- Inform mentoree of the methods and procedures on campus.
- By listening and offering advice, when asked, help the mentoree improve as a teacher.
- Assist and advise mentoree in networking on campus.
- Most of all, be available to the mentoree for psychological support and encouragement.

- Attend a monthly one-hour meeting with other mentors to discuss successes and ways to improve the mentoring process.
- Submit a short, informal, written evaluation of the mentoring experience to the Mentor Program Facilitator at the end of each semester of the mentor year.
- Help the mentoree develop his/her professionalism as a COC faculty member.

Procedure for creating Mentor/Mentoree pairs:

At present, mentoring will, be offered to incoming new faculty members each semester.

- During New Faculty Orientation, a list of potential mentorees will be generated, along with their teaching disciplines. At present, Mentoring for new faculty members is not a contract requirement; Mentorship is offered to them.
- A list of potential mentors will be generated, also during flex week.
- If possible, mentors will be matched with mentorees from the same teaching discipline, unless the potential mentor is in an evaluative position vis a vis the mentoree: tenure committee member, department chair, etc. In such cases, the mentor could be from a different academic discipline than the mentoree.
- Division Deans may request /recommend mentoring for new faculty members.

The Overall Goal of COC's Faculty Mentoring Program

- 1) *Entry Level "Survival"* issues. Mentors are a source of information about COC's services; they help new faculty integrate into the scholarly community at COC.
- 2) Professional Advancement Mentors help new faculty understand the peer review criteria and the evaluation processes at COC.
- 3) Sociological/psychological issues. Mentors act as guides and models to help new faculty deal with less-than-agreeable relationships and situations; mentors can also help new faculty be included in their departments, and become respected as colleagues.

Some Basics:

- 1) You and your mentee will enjoy a year-long relationship, during which you guide your mentee in his/her first steps on the road to a fulfilling career at COC. Try to keep the yearlong perspective through the see tester break.
- 2) Paperwork will be kept to a minimum. We will meet once a month to share ideas, and a semester-end written feedback from each of you will ensure that we are serving the mentees well. The mentees will also fill out an evaluation of the process at the end of each semester. Concerning our monthly meetings: Confidentiality is of utmost importance, yet common problems, which do not betray the mentee's confidentiality, should be brought up and discussed.
- 3) Mentorship is non-evaluative, non-supervisory relationship. Most new faculty members face the problems connected with teaching a full academic schedule, learning college policies and procedures, and becoming participating members of the college. As a mentor, you are the "friend in the business" who is a positive guide through that first year.
- 4) Maintain and enjoy a positive, healthy relationship with your mentee. Think of Virgil offering guidance and comfort to Dante, although the first year of tenure-track only seems like hell.

Mentor Guidelines

This section provides guidelines and suggestions for your role as mentor. These suggestions are by no means prescriptive; feel free to incorporate what you wish in your mentorship.

Mentorship Considerations: Subjects within each of the following areas could form the basis of your mentorship; you and your mentee could devise a year-long informal plan to cover the areas you deem important.

A. Administrative policies/requirements at COC:

- Contracts
- Roll sheets, grade reports o Grading systems
- Faculty evaluations
- Faculty absence procedures Payroll procedures
- Student withdrawals
- Use of guest lecturers; field trips; other student activities

B. Instructional Resources at COC:

- Library
- TLC
- Student Services
- HITE/Honors
- Service Learning

C. Professionalism:

- o Be a source of guidance for new faculty
- o Model professional behavior
- o Professionalism is not limited to the classroom
- o Participation in the life of the college

The methods you and your mentee employ to meet the guidelines above will vary, but some suggestions are:

- Visit the mentee's class to observe, not to evaluate
- Invite the mentee to your class
- periodic telephone/email correspondence
- periodic personal visits

Mentorship should not be burdensome and unduly time-consuming. The key for successful mentoring lies in regular contact. One phone call per semester is not enough. Class visits are optional, and do not conflict with the mentee's Tenure Committee's observations.

If you and your mentee agree that classroom visits would be helpful, use them for non-directive dialogue about teaching, time-management, etc. In the mentor role, you would be in a position to direct your mentee to sources of help/advice. Be non-directive; be positive. If you and your mentee feel that observing you would be helpful, use that opportunity to discuss teaching practices, relationships with students, and other teaching considerations for being an effective teacher. Modeling professional behavior is worth a thousand words. Mentorship should not become a matter of bureaucratic procedures; it should be a positive experience for both you and your mentee. Any and all suggestions contained in these pages are just that--suggestions. They may provide a springboard for ideas for your own approach.

Things to Discuss with your Mentee

- COC Philosophy of education and service to the community
- How a community college differs from a four-year institution
- Working with academically disabled students
- Meeting administrative deadlines--impact on student transfers, financial aid, etc.
- Sources of information--catalog, handbook, curriculum guides
- COC Professional Development: Flex, mentoring, workshops.
- How to get things done: Reprographics, A/V, who's in charge of what

Things Not to Discuss with your Mentee

- Opinions about personalities of students, faculty, and staff
- Dogma about teaching (as opposed to suggestions)
- Personal animosities, failures which may not be constructive to the mentoring process - (It is presumptuous to assume that professionals need this sort of advice, but it is better to use an ounce of prevention)
- *As a mentor, you are contributing to the success of a new faculty member, who may go on to do the same for a future mentee. The potential for a positive benefit to COC is obvious. Thank you for your help and your support.*

Helpful Hints

- contact your Mentee early
- share useful, practical information
- have a general plan for mentoring
- help your mentee understand the organizational structure of COC
- discuss teaching as a profession; offer suggestions' not evaluations
- be available to the mentee
- be non-directive; non-evaluative
- maintain confidentiality

Suggested Semester Plan

- weeks 1-4:* **contact mentee*
**arrange first meeting*
**exchange schedules, office locations, email address, etc.*
**discuss/ develop a plan for the year*
**provide any needed information; answer immediate questions*
- weeks 5-8:* **Visit mentee's class, if requested, or invite mentee to visit your class*
**keep mentee informed of campus activities, meetings *assist mentee with time management*
**discuss peer observation, forms and procedures connected therewith*
**discuss student evaluations, as above*
- weeks 9-16:* **discuss semester-end deadlines, procedures *review and assess the first semester mentorship relationship*

College of the Canyons

Mentoring Agreement

1. Goals: Choose and list the specific areas of professional advancement to be addressed this semester.

2. Strategies: Describe the methods by which the goal listed in #1 above may be met. Link to other activities already in place, where applicable.

3. Time Commitment: Agree on the amount of time per month to be devoted to the mentoring relationship.

note: Conversations between mentor and mentee are considered confidential. The mentor relationship is designed to assist new faculty members in their professional development, and to foster a sense of community between new and more experienced faculty members. Mentoring does not guarantee contract renewal or the granting of tenure.

Case study

Tom is your mentee.

Tom was hired on the strength of his outstanding academic record, and his work as a TA and an adjunct instructor at a four-year university. He knows his subject well, and seems to love it, too. He has an outgoing personality, and makes a fine impression. He exudes confidence and enthusiasm.

In your meetings with Tom, he expresses "no problem" with knowing how to get things done. He understands his department's policies and procedures. One day, Tom asks for your advice. He can't understand why his students seem to dislike him. They say he is "harsh" and overbearing. Tom thinks the difficulty of his course, and high standards are what the students are responding to. In another meeting with you, Tom reports that his tenure committee seems to agree with the students. They advise Tom to try not to come off as arrogant, with students as well as with peers. High standards are fine, they say, but Tom's arrogance and harshness are turning students away from learning in his classes. Tom thinks the students, and those peers *who* find him arrogant and should "grow up."

Since Tom has come to you with this problem, what advice would you give him? How can you help Tom retain his brilliance, but be less abrasive?

Case Study #2

Judy is your mentee.

Judy has had many years of experience in teaching. She taught high school for many years before moving on to college teaching. For the past seven years, she has taught at a community college--five years as an adjunct instructor, and two years as a full-time instructor. Her decision to relocate to this area because of her husband's job has brought her to COC. She is a fine teacher, but in your meetings with her, she is constantly comparing how COC does things with the way they were done at her former school. At first, her comparisons seem a way for her to get comfortable with her new situation, but more and more, her comparisons indicate that her former school "did things better." Also, she has noted that the students here are not as smart, cooperative, and motivated as they were at dear old _____. You feel as her mentor that she would be more productive and happy if she could shake her old school ties, and become a COC teacher. You do not wish to present COC as having no room for improvement, but you feel comparisons accomplish nothing.

How do you mentor Judy?

Comments from Mentors

"Mentoring works across traditional boundaries--across discipline, gender, ethnicity, levels of seniority."

"Mentorship in the first year is essential to successful faculty careers."

"At its very heart, mentoring is a relationship between people."

"Mentoring is not giving answers to [a] new instructor's problems: it is engaging in dialogue and sharing."

"The Faculty Mentors System allows a highly individualized approach to professional development, one that is flexible enough to address unique individual and changing careers."