Mutual Mentoring Communities for New Faculty

Definition of a Mutual Mentoring Community

Your orientation as a new faculty member lasts for your first year:

- Orientation I – August 2011
- Orientation II – January 2012
- Orientation III – August 2012

In addition we offer you continual support, particularly through our mutual mentoring program. You are invited to join a Mutual Mentoring Community (MMC). These are small, collaborative groups of approximately 10 faculty members who meet on a regular schedule, usually monthly, to share experiences, to express concern and questions, and to explore teaching tips and tricks.

There is no requirement for enrollment in a Mutual Mentoring Community. However, you are highly encouraged to join one. It allows you to begin your career at NOVA in a highly proactive and intentional way. Participation in an MMC results in an experience of collegiality and community that builds a network of support particularly for early career faculty.

Community is formed early on in an MMC, and it functions as a safety net of concerned and interested individuals committed to helping on another achieve success for both the short and long term. It will result in substantial and lasting professional relationships that will serve you throughout your career.

No Implications for Evaluation

Participation in a Mutual Mentoring Community has NO implications for evaluation of your work performance at NOVA. Evaluation is a function of your academic dean or director and is NEVER a function of CETL or any CETL activity. Your dean may not refer you to the Mutual Mentoring Community nor receive any information about you from your community. An MMC is your place for confidential expression of your questions and concerns about what happens here at NOVA and it provides a confidential way to expand your teaching repertoire or to seek solutions to problems you may encounter. It is also one place to share your successes and mentor your peers.

On the other hand, you are encouraged to include your participation in a Mutual Mentoring Community on your ‘brag’ sheet. This is a list of your activities that you submit to your academic dean once a year.

Time Requirements

Mutual Mentoring Communities usually meet for approximately two hours once or twice a month. However, your particular community is free to set up a mutually convenient meeting plan. Some communities meet in person while others may prefer to meet online using the college’s electronic meeting software. CETL Faculty Advocates will offer you options for meeting. It’s up your MMC to decide how much time you want to devote to one another.
Facilitation

A Mutual Mentoring Community is mutually facilitated by the members in it. Each community will include at least one CETL Faculty Advocate. This is an experienced member of the NOVA teaching or professional faculty who is a faculty leader and who strongly believes in excellence in teaching and learning. CETL Faculty Advocates hold the belief that the best in others is strongly facilitated by taking care of one another in a mutually supportive setting. The role of the CETL Faculty Advocate in the group is not to lead it, but rather to bring experience with NOVA to the group. The members of the group become mentoring partners.

What do MMCs Do?

What you actually do in a Mutual Mentoring Community is up to the community itself. You will likely find it structured, but flexible with intent of getting things done while building community. In general you will be asked to share your knowledge, to listen actively and non-judgmentally, to ask open and supportive questions and to give thoughtful, candid and constructive feedback as you participate in content based discussion based on the Mutual Mentoring Community you choose to join.

Each campus and most academic divisions have mentoring programs that will help you with specifics of your department and your division. MMCs do not take the place of that relationship, but instead build a different kind of nurturing relationship that will scaffold your success.

Join a Mutual Mentoring Community

Joining a Mutual Mentoring Community is done electronically. Sign up at http://tinyurl.com/newfacultymmc

You will be able to select from among these topic choices. The schedule and the meeting modality – face to face, on line, or a combination of these -- will be decided on by the community itself.

- Balancing work and life
- Chickering and Gamson’s Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (AAHE, 1987)
- Classroom management
- Course design for tired courses
- For new teachers only (Professionals who are converting to professors – this one’s for you!)
- How students learn
- Innovative pedagogy for engaging students
- Ken Bain’s What the Best College Teachers Do (Harvard University Press, 2004)
- Marrying good pedagogy with technology
- OK, I have a year behind me – what will I do now? (for 2nd year folks)
- Summative and formative assessment strategies
- Teaching collaboratively
- Writing great exams.