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RETENTION

Reevaluating Faculty Development to Improve Recruitment, Retention, and Tenurability of Faculty

Katherine Robertson

In my experience with faculty recruitment at two very different academic institutions, I have learned that faculty candidates care a lot about what support they can expect for their professional development; it's one of the most common questions I hear. Institutions typically hire faculty whom they want to keep and, for those that have a tenure system, faculty who will be tenurable. The success of an academic institution depends on high-quality faculty who demonstrate excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, and the new generation of over-tasked millennial faculty (Gardner, 2016) expects more support than before.

Remedial approaches to faculty development are rarely effective

Quick searches using the phrase "faculty development" tell me that what most institutions have in mind when they think of

faculty development is an office, program, or person that will produce a series of workshops that teach faculty how to teach and how to succeed as scholars. Often, faculty development is placed under the umbrella of a center for teaching and learning and focuses predominantly on improving teaching. There may be an additional focus on scholarly productivity, but this frequently amounts to little more than fixing faculty problems, such as less-than-perfect time management or less-than-effective grant writing prose. Workshops, journal articles, and other abundant, well-meaning resources aim to educate faculty on how to become better teachers; successfully balance their scholarship with teaching, other duties, and family life; cultivate collaborations and write more grants; better manage grants; more effectively mentor graduate

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TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Being a Young Chair: Advice I Wish I'd Received

Tywana L. Chenault, PhD

Whoever said “Age ain’t nothing but a number” certainly never served as a division chair. I am equally certain that few division chairs have ever thought, “When I grow up, I plan on being the youngest chair in my division.” Yet after moving up the ranks from adjunct instructor to full-time faculty member to program coordinator, I found myself unenthusiastically assuming the crown jewel of academic management: division chairperson. In light of my youth, I wondered whether some faculty members expected me to use a highchair. My self-doubt and lack of information forced me to honestly assess my credentials, higher education skill set, and leadership abilities. There were lingering questions: Could I be an effective division chair? Was I simply too inexperienced?

What would happen if I failed miserably? How could I address my self-doubt while gaining the confidence of others?

Abraham Lincoln is reputed to have said, “I will prepare and someday my chance will come.” But what happens when your chance comes before you feel sufficiently prepared? Unfortunately, the completion of my self-assessment did not reveal any astute academic prowess or superpower. I would like to think I was asked to be division chair because of my proven leadership experience or my ability to solve complex problems. I could even kid myself and cite superior intellect as some pompous

academicians do. But who was I kidding? I was young, capable, available, and optimistic about the future of my college. Besides, many faculty members in my department simply did not have the time, energy, or disposition to assume the duties and responsibilities of such a demanding position.

After accepting my new reality as the youngest chair in the division, I went from being a member of the faculty to leading the faculty. Instantaneously, I transitioned from faculty to administration and from everyone’s friend to their potential foe.

I realized quickly how some people’s perceptions of positions (and colleagues) can change. For the first time, I felt like a chef in the academic kitchen, stirring a pot of faculty, liaison, and administrator gumbo. This experience provid-

ed a moment of clarity that would lend credence to and shape my future leadership style.

Prior to becoming division chair, I spent 10 years as a faculty member. Like many others, I had the pleasure of serving for some great division chairs. I also suffered under the leadership of some not-so-great others. Which kind of chair would I become? How might my former colleagues perceive me as chair? I did not feel adequately prepared to assume the duties and responsibilities of division chair. After all, I had neither enrolled in nor graduated from division chair school. What would I do?

There were lingering questions: Could I be an effective division chair? Was I simply too inexperienced? What would happen if I failed miserably?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

To address these concerns, I contacted a few recently appointed division chairs at other institutions to inquire about their experiences. Their responses differed dramatically. Some expressed to me that it would be best to rule with an iron fist. Some suggested that I blindly support the academic dean and make his vision my own. Yet others recommended that I befriend faculty and assume a pro-faculty stance. Although their opinions varied, each assured me they had never really felt “ready” to assume the duties and responsibilities of the position. In the end, I decided to adopt an amalgamation of trusted advice and lived faculty experience. I thought about the duties and responsibilities of the job as well as what I desired in a division chair tasked with leading me. In so doing, I identified what I like to call a Young Division Chair’s Wish List. I wish I had been made aware of five simple things:

1. The position of division chair is actually many positions masquerading as one

A chair is multidimensional—leader, facilitator, manager, support system, and chief representative of an entire department. As division chair, I no longer

had someone to “go to” for answers because I became the go-to person. I went from being managed to managing, from needing support to being a conduit for support. I wish someone would have told me there is a tremendous difference between being a representative and being the representative of the division. I wish someone would have shared with me that the ability to compartmentalize is key and how the nomenclature of division chair is truly misleading.

2. Always think: “Students first”

I wish someone had explained to me that the position is not about pleasing the academic dean or faculty. As I began my tenure as chair, I sought the advice of faculty, administrators, and staff. But I quickly realized that most problems were student problems. As I began to reflect on the advice I had solicited from other chairs, I recognized that they gave one of two options: lead with the academic dean in mind or lead with faculty in mind. Yet as a full-time faculty member, I had always subscribed to a student-centered approach. After my first year as chair, I understood that I didn’t have to choose between two op-

tions. I wish someone had told me that I could best lead with an “AFS triad” (academic dean, faculty, and students). Every higher education institution exists to meet the needs of its students. An effective chair must find a way to balance the directives of the academic dean and meet the needs of faculty while thinking about students first.

3. Get on-the-job training

It is perfectly fine to look at every challenge as on-the-job training. I wish someone had explained to me that the job would present a variety of opportunities to learn and grow. In addition, baptism by fire with on-the-job training would speed up my learning curve and aid in my development as the youngest chair in the division. I wish someone had coached me to believe in my ability to lead and find unconventional answers to everyday questions. I wish someone had informed me that I would not have all the answers and that no one expected me to. I wish I had known how humbling the position could be. It made me aware of how little I knew about the structure and function of many facets of my institution. But my ability to solve problems increased the more I read books and articles about being an effective chair. The more I spoke with proven leaders and mentors, the better I became at providing answers to everyday questions.

4. Build relationships

Relationships with mentors matter. Find a great mentor to talk to regularly. I wish someone had reminded me about the importance of relationship building. As the saying goes, “People don’t care what you know until they know how much you care.” I have learned that building successful relationships is about displaying a genuine concern for the sanctity of people. When I first became chair, I was admonished by a previous supervisor for “showing too much



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Addressing Burnout Takes More Than Faculty Development

Rebecca Pope-Ruark

The past two years have been traumatic due to COVID, social unrest, and widespread uncertainty, and 2022 is shaping up to be not much different. The overwhelming pressure caused by shifting course modalities at the drop of a hat, delaying research activities, dealing with student mental health issues as well as one's own, and trying to function through the general stress of living through a global pandemic is enough to affect anyone's well-being.

Many if not most faculty are, simply put, burned out.

The impacts of burnout stretch far beyond the pandemic and are only compounded in its wake. Faculty burnout was at high levels pre-pandemic because the culture of higher education is one of expectation escalation and competition, and the external attacks to higher ed coming from neoliberal government entities add additional stressors. Among faculty whose reputations and mobility depend on their scholarly reputations or teaching evaluations, burnout can feel like a shameful personal secret to be hidden so as not to damage their careers and lives. And suppressing burnout only makes it worse.

I should know. As a tenured faculty member, I experienced a burnout episode that was so severe I had to take medical leave and, ultimately, leave teaching and my institution. I was depressed, anxious, and ashamed that I couldn't hack it any longer after years of pushing myself over my limits, semester in and semester out. I found myself agonizing over small decisions like what to eat for lunch, became totally detached from my students, and couldn't string two words together to write anything—particularly

difficult since being a writer and writing professor was core to my identity. When I could barely get out of bed in the morning and fantasied about canceling every class and never setting foot on campus again, I knew I couldn't put off getting help any longer. But getting that help was a painful process, personally and professionally, because I didn't know what was happening to me or how to find help in a way that felt safe.

So, what exactly is burnout, and what should academic leaders be on the lookout for? The World Health Organization defines burnout as a "syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed" (Fraga, 2019). The WHO does not consider burnout to be a mental illness but a syndrome that can exacerbate other issues like depression and anxiety and cause physical health issues as well. Burnout is a workplace phenomenon—not some sort of personal failing on the part of the faculty member but a reality created by the culture of the institution and higher ed more broadly. And burnout is caused by overwhelming stress that continues to compound and cannot be effectively managed without support, support those who suffer from burnout, like me, often don't know how to find.

The WHO further identifies three key features of burnout:

- Feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, whether emotional, physical, or intellectual
- Increased mental distance from one's job or negative feelings towards one's career and the people served
- Reduced professional productivity or decreased feelings of self-efficacy

Taken together, these three symptoms can be important identifiers that faculty and leadership can be watching for in order to care for faculty in or headed for burnout.

When I think about my own burnout experience, I realize I was lucky. After I got up the courage to ask for the help I needed, my department chair, dean, and vice provost were more concerned about my well-being than how to cover the courses I couldn't teach or the program leadership work I could no longer do. They advocated for me even when I was sure I had ruined my career by telling them about my burnout. They believed me when I said I needed medical leave to work through it. And they respected my choice when I said I couldn't return.

In my research for my forthcoming book, *Unraveling Faculty Burnout*, I found that others were not as lucky as I. Some faced disbelief, gaslighting, and outright hostility or retribution. Many wanted, even needed, to tell their stories to someone who could empathize and not think less of them for being burned out. Many felt the shame I did, not understanding that what was happening to them was externally driven. And many of the people I interviewed appear in the book, but the majority chose to be anonymous. You can understand why.

Since coming through my burnout, I have spent a good deal of time talking to faculty at a variety of institutions about burnout, through workshops and one-on-one coaching. Of 15 campuses that invited me to speak last year, two included conversations with leadership. These leaders showed care and concern for their faculty, wanting to understand burnout and how they could help. Both sets of leaders asked me how they could

address it from their positions. But two out of 15 is a dismayingly low number.

But dealing with burnout is tricky. Most of the interventions those advocating for burnout resilience, myself included, recommend are individual or small group—such as therapy, coaching, and the ubiquitous self-care—or support groups like the one I run for women + faculty at my new institution. Coping strategies, really, are all we seem to have, thus throwing a systemic problem back on the individual. The definition of burnout ties it directly to workplace culture and stress. Individual interventions don't address those underlying cultural issues that cause the problem of burnout in the first place.

So, what can you do on your campus to effect change?

Create or enhance campus resources for faculty mental health that go beyond those offered through human resources. Most campuses now have units dedicated to student mental health and well-being. Faculty and staff need these supports as well, and employee assistance programs offered through HR are often difficult to access or unhelpful for mental health situations. A survey of faculty might determine what resources are most needed. Also consider that many faculty do not access available mental health resources for fear of "being found out." Whatever resources developed should have strict anonymity policies and be run by professionals without interference from administration.

Train leaders, department chairs especially, to look for signs of burnout in their colleagues and support those faculty effectively. As part of leadership development training, work with your HR and faculty professional development centers to educate campus leaders on the signs of burnout and how to talk with faculty about their well-being from a place of genuine concern. Working with department chairs should also include additional training about confidentiality and

ways to create a safe space for colleagues to talk without fear of it impacting their career or standing in the department. They should also know how to escalate concerns if needed. Doing so can develop more empathetic leaders and foster a culture of care among faculty.

Hire external coaches or train faculty and staff in centers for professional development to work with faculty on the areas of faculty life most likely to cause burnout. Coaching is a growing sector and one appearing on campus more and more regularly. While some might think of "life coaching" derogatorily, coaching as a profession includes governing bodies, standards of practice, accredited training programs, and professional certifications. Certified coaches can work with faculty on professional challenges that can lead to burnout, such as teaching or writing pressures, overwhelming service or research commitments, and toxic workplace situations. Coaches also function under strict confidentiality standards, offering faculty a safe place to work through challenges.

Actively work with faculty leadership to address culture issues in ways that are driven by faculty, not imposed from the top. This might mean creating an advisory committee or standing committee with power to make recommendations that institutional leadership will take seriously and act on when possible. It might also mean working with faculty leadership to create faculty relief programs that provide faculty with the time or funding (or both) to take care of themselves and focus on the aspect of their work that brings them the most joy. Your faculty leaders can work with you to develop strategies and resources that blend top-down and bottom-up approaches.

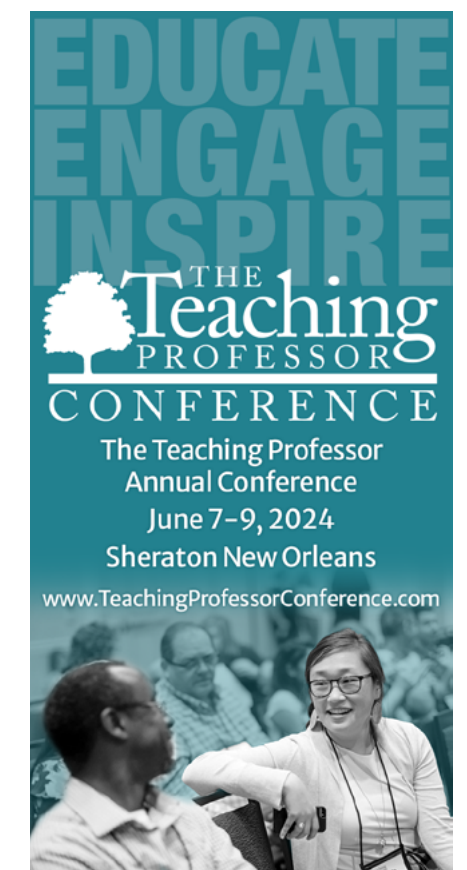
Burnout is not just something faculty feel at the end of a long semester. It has deep roots in the culture of our institutions that breed overwhelming strain and mental distress. Working together with faculty now, you can make an impact on your culture and create

conditions for faculty to foster well-being that will spread to every area of the institution, including how we fulfill our institutional missions through teaching our students and developing valuable research insights.

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and undergraduate students; ensure they are compliant with university policies; and so on. The general motivation for many faculty development programs seems to be largely remedial (Phelps, 2018) or to elevate institutional teaching and scholarship standards without committing the institution to providing better support for faculty advancement. In other words, these programs encourage faculty to be creative enough to keep doing more with less. Good faculty development may be many things, but what it's not is just a series of workshops.

Remedial approaches to faculty development do little to further the professional advancement of faculty, and they often arise from mixed motivations. For example, if excellence in teaching were as important to faculty success as the investment in teaching and learning centers suggests, then scholarship of teaching and learning would be valued more for tenure and promotion. This is rarely the case, particularly at R1 universities (Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). While faculty appreciate help with their teaching and students benefit from excellent teaching, the institutional motivation to improve teaching seems to have more to do with appeasing accrediting bodies and retaining students than it does with the advancement of faculty. Institutions would better serve their faculty if they honestly assessed how much teaching is really valued and reevaluated how it's appraised for tenure and promotion.

Similarly, if predominantly teaching colleges really believed that scholarship informs teaching, an argument often used as a justification for ever-increasing scholarship expectations, then those colleges would make more of a commitment to supporting scholarship than they do (Baker et al., 2016; Kelsky, 2019). If an institution claims to have high standards of scholarship for tenure and promotion, it's reasonable from a faculty perspective to expect a comparable increase in sup-

port to accompany the ever-increasing scholarship expectation.

Faculty development begins with successful recruitment

Successful faculty development must begin with effective faculty recruitment to ensure the hiring of a diverse faculty whose aspirations align with those of the institution. Major causes of dissatisfaction and burnout are misalignment of values between faculty and the institution (Gabriel, 2017) and unclear institutional expectations (June, 2010). The institution should have a clearly articulated mission as well as goals that meet the changing needs of society and are reflected in its tenure and promotion expectations. The institution also can endeavor to have clear hiring policies that embrace diversity, communicate its goals transparently to candidates, and foster careful selection of a faculty with a shared vision.

Faculty development requires ongoing strategic support

Faculty advancement post-hiring needs to be an ongoing process and is only successful in institutions that make a top-down commitment to continuous support for faculty excellence. If the institution values faculty excellence, it should have a transparent, robust strategic plan that upholds that value. This might include regular review of existing policies and development of new policies that effectively support faculty advancement. Examples include but are not limited to those that

- disclose expectations and procedures for tenure and promotion;
- uphold inclusivity and promote diversity;
- produce fair and effective ways to evaluate and reward good teaching;
- provide for sabbaticals and pre-tenure leaves;
- seek funding to support faculty research and compensate faculty for summer work;

- include an office of research support and an office of diversity (not just for students) as well as a center for teaching and learning; and
- ensure reasonable and equitable teaching loads and reduce burdensome service and administrative tasks for faculty.

A survey involving 500 faculty developers, administrators, and faculty identified the number one challenge to faculty success as expanding faculty roles amid increasing pressure to sustain their scholarship, update their pedagogies, and achieve a work-life balance (reviewed in Sorcinelli, 2007). Increased teaching loads and administrative over-tasking are major contributors to faculty burnout (June, 2010; Kelsky, 2019). The gold standard for teaching loads at R1 institutions is 2-2 (Kelsky, 2019). While it might be difficult for some colleges to achieve this standard, they can still take steps to continuously revise and improve teaching load policies and implement procedures that assess faculty workload to ensure utility and equity. Gender inequity in service still exists despite female faculty often being advised to “just say no” (Pyke, 2011) and women frequently take on more low-promotability tasks than men, contributing to their slower advancement and disadvantaging them at the time of promotion (Babcock et al., 2017; Pyke, 2011). A good faculty developer can help to address these and similar issues. Faculty-friendly institutions may also take steps to reduce pressure on faculty by offering generous maternity, paternity, and pre-tenure leaves, and tenure clock extensions when needed.

Pre-tenure leaves and sabbaticals may seem like a luxury. At my own institution, however, I recently carried out a feasibility study that revealed that the net cost of offering pre-tenure sabbatical leaves was surprisingly less than we had previously thought, which made it much easier for us to convince our chief financial officer to build them into the

budget. The net cost (adjunct stipends and benefits) of one half-year sabbatical at full pay was about 30 percent of an assistant professor's annual salary plus benefits, while the net cost of one full-year sabbatical at half pay was about 13 percent of an assistant professor's annual salary plus benefits. This calculation is based on a 2-2 teaching load and assumes that an adjunct will cover every course. Pre-tenure sabbaticals are being offered by more colleges and universities now than even 10 years ago, and from a faculty perspective, they are critical for building a research program that is productive and sustainable beyond tenure.

Faculty development is tightly linked to tenure and promotion procedures

A survey conducted in the United States in 1999 revealed that the tenure rate (percentage of successful reviews) at private institutions was about 74 percent. Public institutions did a little better at about 84 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). But the data didn't include faculty who were not recommended for tenure review following a third-year or reappointment review or who left the institution before their tenure review. Achieving tenure is a primary goal for most junior faculty, and unsuccessful tenure reviews force the institution into either expensive faculty searches or hiring less experienced, temporary replacements. Faculty development personnel at many institutions are not connected much to reappointment and tenure review procedures, which a different department, such as a provost's office, often handles. I would encourage institutions to reevaluate this organizational structure. Faculty development and reappointment and tenure review are tightly connected. In my current position, I have been actively involved in both. I have no influence on reappointment and tenure decisions, which allows me to be an impartial advisor to faculty candidates. Nonetheless, I have access to

the reports produced by our reappointment and tenure review committees, and I am present at tenure deliberations. This gives me a unique insight into what the committees look for, allowing me to offer accurate advice to faculty candidates. I also assist in appointing and providing guidance to new committee members regarding procedure and expectations. My participation in these reviews has been invaluable to my faculty development efforts, and it contributes to ensuring that the process is fair and equitable.

Adequate research support is essential

Adequate research support, beyond just giving out money, is essential not only for faculty advancement but for raising the profile of the institution. With external funding becoming harder to obtain and publication standards becoming higher, getting funded and published while balancing teaching and administrative tasks is now much more challenging for faculty. An institution that values scholarship might at least have a research support office (RSO) or its equivalent. Moreover, a good RSO should be able to contribute to faculty development rather than merely oversee fund management. For example, RSO

staff can offer strategic research development support that assists investigators with developing research plans that align with funding agencies' visions. They can also assist faculty with producing proposal development plans with timelines and checklists. Finally, they can facilitate internal reviews and offer support for writing and editing proposals. Smaller colleges that don't have an RSO or equivalent office may utilize the services of a grant writing agency. Such agencies, although expensive, offer great services that range from grant writing workshops to actual grant writers. This may seem like a luxury, but the payoff may be worth the cost. A previous institution I worked at contracted an expensive external grant writer but recovered about twice the expenditure in external funding within the first six months. Since faculty are more likely to receive new funding if they have been funded previously, the benefits continued after the contract expired. Institutions that are committed to faculty advancement should be at least willing to conduct feasibility studies for these types of “luxuries.”

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Establishing and Supporting a Faculty Mentoring Program

Mary C. Clement

For many new hires, tenure-track or not, there isn't a road map for navigating that challenging first year of teaching. A faculty mentor program can help ensure every new hire has a guide, friend, confidante, and role model. The end result of such a program should be a more confident and effective colleague who is successfully retained by the institution and who provides effective teaching to students.

Philosophy and organization

It's not uncommon for new hires find a friendly colleague down the hall and start asking questions. However, leaving the mentor process up to chance may not have the desired results. Depending on the size of the institution, an effective faculty mentoring program can start at the campus, college, or department level. This first step to determine needs and define the guiding philosophy.

- Questions to start the process include:
1. Is the mentor program to be non-evaluative, with confidentiality between the mentor and new hire?
 2. Who will mentor new hires and how will they be selected, trained, and paired with new hires?
 3. Is the work of the mentors a service, or a duty with compensation?
 4. How long should a mentor pairing be in place? First year or beyond?
 5. What if a pairing doesn't work out? Which administrator serves as the "escape valve" for a change of mentor?
 6. How will the program be assessed for its value?
 7. How much accountability, if any, does the mentor have with regard to the retention of the new hire?

Mentor selection

Who makes a good mentor? The skill set for teaching in higher education and the skills for guiding someone else's success are two separate sets. An effective mentor needs to build trust with the new hire/mentee to establish a working relationship. Strong interpersonal communication skills are needed to lead productive conversations. The mentor needs to know campus policies and procedures about re-employment, tenure, and promotion. A strong mentor should also know effective teaching strategies and be willing to have the new hire observe in his/her classroom.

To identify possible mentors, the program director extends an invitation for volunteers, or contacts individuals in a small departmental setting. Consider a few questions to accompany the invitation or conversation.

Questions might include:

1. Why are you interested in mentoring a new hire?
2. What is one piece of advice you would give a new hire if paired as a mentor?
3. Who helped you the most as a new hire and how were you helped?
4. What do you think you will gain from the mentoring experience?

A brief introduction about the training and scope of the program will assist experienced faculty members with the decision to mentor. What will be the perks for mentoring? There may be some additional professional development offered or an honoraria. At least offer some lunches and coffee! An explanation of the time involved is often a first question asked by prospective mentors before they volunteer, so outlining time frames

in the initial information or conversation is important.

Mentor orientation and training

Once mentors are identified, they do need training or orientation. An orientation session should include the roles and responsibilities of the mentors, clarification of the philosophy of the program, where to turn if there is an issue, and some discussions or role-plays about possible scenarios.

For example:

1. The new hire arrives late to class or skips office hours. What should the mentor do?
2. The new hire is doing fantastic work. The concern is that he/she is doing too much and may burn out quickly. How should the mentor advise?
3. The new hire's teaching is going very well, but he/she has not started a research agenda or participated in any committee work. How should the mentor intervene?

Because observing another person's teaching can be valuable for providing feedback for improvement, orientation also should include training on how to be a collegial and effective observer. When new hires invite their mentors to observe a class, there should be a conversation about the instructor's goals for the class and what he/she wants the mentor to watch (number of questions asked, clarity of a presentation, etc.). The mentor attends the class, taking verbatim notes or videotaping the class session. At a later date, in private, the two discuss the class. A good starting question from the mentor is, "How do you think the class went?" or "Was today

typical for this group?" Then, the two can look at the notes or video together. This type of observation is intended to be non-threatening throughout the three steps of a pre-conference, an observation, and a post-conference.

Mentor roles and responsibilities

Regardless of the size of the department or institution, a mentor has a variety of roles and responsibilities. From sharing where to find people, offices, and resources on campus to recommending professional readings and conferences, a mentor serves a valuable guide for acclimating new hires to campus life. However, a mentor shouldn't overshare, engage in office politics, or gossip about colleagues or administrators.

Above all, a mentor can guide the new hire to develop effective teaching strategies. If a new hire arrives on campus from the business world, the mentor may need to share the basics of lesson planning, course objectives, syllabus preparation, and assessments. A newly minted PhD who served as a researcher throughout their studies may need the same help, although they'll likely have some familiarity with how things work in higher education. A key for the success of the mentor pairing is for the experienced faculty member to find out the teaching strengths of the new colleague and to capitalize on them. As with any relationship, it is always best to look at the new person's strengths and not deficits.

Assessment and grading merit discussion with the new hire as well. So many end-of-semester conflicts can be avoided by proactive planning of fair grading practices. People hired to teach in higher education have generally been successful, and possibly wildly successful at being college students. When given a schedule that includes general education courses at the freshman level, a new PhD may not realize that many students don't have the academic background for

college work or the interest in the discipline. Without some coaching about students' academic levels and effective teaching strategies, a new hire may resort to teaching as he/she was taught, and while the new professor learned that way, today's students may not.

Stress seems inevitable for those working in higher education, and doubly so for the new hires. A mentor can share time- and stress-management techniques. Going for a walk or inviting the mentee to join a casual faculty sports team can model positive stress relief. Know the mentee well before deciding if lunch out or a cocktail hour is the best approach for releasing stress and building camaraderie.

Program assessment

A successful faculty mentoring program has a director who coordinates all steps of the mentoring process, from mentor selection to program assessment. How does the director know the efforts of mentoring are successful? How do the mentor and new hire feel success? Obtaining feedback is the key to assessing the work of all involved. Short surveys can provide insight into the mentoring process while still keeping confidentiality.

Consider asking mentors:

1. During this semester, I estimate that I have worked with my mentee _____ hours per week/per month.
2. The most productive things that my new colleague and I have done were: (please list)
3. I felt prepared to mentor after orientation because... (Or, I didn't feel prepared to mentor because...)
4. My recommendations for the next team of mentors is...

New hires also should be asked for their feedback.

Questions include:


1. My mentor was most helpful when...
2. My mentor and I worked together on the following:

3. My suggestion for next year's new hires and mentors would be...
4. All new hires here need more support regarding the topics of ...

Some quantitative data on the retention of new hires after the implementation of a faculty mentor program can provide support for its continuation. Over a longer period of time, data on the tenure and promotion of mentored faculty can be garnered.

Final thoughts

Just how long does mentoring need to take place? The first year? Until tenure is earned? Throughout all stages of a career? (One might argue that we need a mentor to help us decide when and how to retire!) Each institution can formulate its parameters for the formal mentoring pair to work together (a year or two), and then the new hire should be able to find his/her way.

All of us should be collegial, supporting new hires and guiding them to success, but as much as new hires learn from mentors, those who serve as mentors learn plenty in return. The experience may lead the mentor to an administrative position, providing them with insights for smoothing a transition to department chair or dean. Establishing and supporting a faculty mentor program has many benefits. A new hire who feels supported can have a better sense of calm and well-being, leading to stronger job performance. Of course, the primary reason to provide support to all faculty is so that they may provide excellent teaching and support to their students. 

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REEVALUATING FROM PAGE 7

Fostering connections with other universities

An RSO or faculty development office, particularly at smaller or geographically isolated colleges, might consider fostering formal connections with other universities. Such relationships prevent faculty from becoming intellectually isolated and facilitate collaborative scholarship and joint grant proposals. The ability to organize cheap, online meetings, or symposia with other universities has become very possible. The “online age” has afforded opportunities for my own university to connect our faculty with colleagues in a number of institutions in the US, the UK, China, and Singapore, and we have occasionally engaged some of those senior colleagues to serve as mentors. Finding senior mentors who have disciplinary expertise and can offer a different perspective is of huge benefit, particularly to faculty at smaller institutions.

Conclusion

The quality of the faculty is the most vital determinant of the quality of an in-

stitution. If colleges and universities are to compete and survive in the future, faculty development will need to be much more than a series of workshops.

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YOUNG CHAIR FROM PAGE 3

care and concern” for people. It was suggested that I would never become an effective leader if I did so. Through experience, however, I have found the opposite to be true, and I am truly grateful. I have established great relationships with people in every office on campus. I speak with the physical plant staff in the same manner I do the faculty, cafeteria staff, library staff, coaching staff, or the academic dean and students. This simple gesture has proved invaluable. When I am in need, these people assist me in unimaginable ways and do so with a smile. Much can be said about one’s leadership style when people are willing to do things for a leader because they want to rather than have to.

5. Prioritize by saying no

Finally, I wish someone had told me about the importance of learning to say no. It is often said, “Your yes means nothing unless you can say no.” This last lesson is a tough one for me. I am still learning the art of saying no. The demands of the position mean I cannot be all things to all people. There are many items, which I simply cannot say no, however much I would like to. There are many worthwhile endeavors I would like to say yes to that I simply cannot. I am still attempting to devise an effective strategy to help me prioritize the nos, but for now, yes is still winning the battle. My no is gaining traction, however, and I sense I am moving in the right direction. I plan to keep working on my no for I am sure it will end up being my saving grace. Until I am proficient at saying no, I will continue to reflect on the other lessons I have learned. They have already helped to ease my transition from faculty member to chair.

Serving as the youngest division chair has been a rewarding challenge. Youth has taught me lessons that only she can teach. Perhaps there is a benefit to being young. This position has

afforded me the time to grow and learn from my mistakes. My youth has provided me with the flexibility and resiliency needed to weather the academic storms. Thus far, I am still here and learning one of the most valuable lessons of all. The lesson of how youth gives birth to hope. I no longer think of myself as the youngest chair in the division. Instead, I think of myself as the most hopeful yet humble chair in the division. [iii](#)

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Seven Things I Wish My Department Chair Would Say

Maryellen Weimer

What can department chairs say about teaching that faculty would love to hear? To be meaningful, the list should reflect actual policies and practices that would improve teaching and promote learning, plus make faculty happy. A more supportive environment for teaching often involves big changes and new approaches that break with old traditions, which means angst for those who lead and reluctance among some who follow. However, some of what supports better teaching could be accomplished without a lot of brouhaha. This list includes both. Let's imagine a department head who works at an institution where budgets are tight, everyone works hard at recruitment, and there's a commitment to retention and student success. Teaching is an important part of the institution's mission. We also must be realistic about what academic leaders at the departmental level can do, given the constraints and responsibilities of the position. Like teaching, leadership is not an easy job.

- “We need more **substantive conversations about teaching and learning** in our department meetings. We talk about course content, schedules, and future offerings but rarely about our teaching and its impact on student learning. What do you think about circulating a short article or a study with instructional implications before some of our meetings and then talking about it? Could you recommend some topics or materials for discussion?”
- “I'm concerned about **how we are introducing new faculty to teaching** in this department. Are they teaching the courses they should be teaching? Could we improve the way we men-

tor them? How? What if we didn't put student ratings from their first year of teaching in their dossier? I would love to hear your recommendations, and your thoughts on the 'ideal' first year teaching experience.”

- “I've been trying to **think more creatively about teaching awards**. The university-wide awards are scant, and I question the processes used to select the winners. Some of the best teachers in the department consistently focus on student learning, but they do so with quiet, unassuming teaching styles that are not usually recognized. Then there's good work on big committee assignments like revising our curricula, always participating in those prospective student events, and advising above and beyond the call of duty. Shouldn't that work be recognized in a more public way? Let's devise a departmental award or recognition for different kinds of work that supports teaching and learning. Please share any thoughts or ideas. Is a monetary award the only option?”
- “I think we're doing **too much summative and not enough formative evaluation of teaching**. The research on student evaluations is clear. For midcareer faculty teaching the same courses, ratings do not vary all that much from one semester to the next (which says something about the power of summative assessments to improve instruction). I'd like to institute a semester-off policy. A tenured faculty member (one not up for promotion) will not be required to do the end of course ratings. Instead, they will select and undertake a series of formative assessments. They will not be expected to report results,

only to document that the activities have been completed. Would there be support in the department for a policy like this?”

- “I'm teaching a course this semester, and I'd **welcome some feedback**. I haven't taught this course for a while and am trying some new approaches and assignments. I've posted my syllabus on the course website and would appreciate your comments and suggestions. I'm also wondering if a few of you who use in-class group work are willing to come and observe when I try this out.”
- “Teaching well is hard work, and I **don't say thank you as often as I should**. Good teaching demands focus, emotional energy, and extraordinary time management skills. Teaching loads are not light in this department, and classes are larger than they used to be. You have reasons to complain, and you do, but you're still there for students, and for that I am deeply grateful. Please join me for lunch on Friday. I'd like to say thank you personally and hear more about your instructional concerns, challenges, and successes.”
- “And, oh, one final thing: if you'd be willing to devote some time and energy to one or several of these areas, let's talk. You'd be **excused from other departmental committee responsibilities for the coming year in exchange for work on these projects.**” [III](#)

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