Development, Engagement, and Reinvention: Approaches to Faculty Growth at Small Liberal Arts Colleges

Meredith Goldsmith -- Ursinus College
Jan Thomas -- Kenyon College
Tamara Beauboeuf -- DePauw University

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Mentoring in the First Two years
Kenyon College
WHAT WASN’T WORKING?

- Mentoring was uneven
- There was no training of mentors
- There were few guidelines for mentors
- Expectations for mentors and mentees were not clear
- There was no accountability structure
- Too much responsibility was placed on the new colleague
- There was little flexibility for individual needs of new colleagues
- Mentoring was not recognized or rewarded
MY GOALS – as an administrator

- Create a program that has guidelines for standardization and flexibility to meet individual needs
- Create an accountability structure
- Revise the faculty handbook to reflect the new program, providing flexibility for making changes to the guidelines, and recognize the work of mentoring

- Re-imagine what it means to be a mentor
  - From “guru” to “resource” or “connector” and “coach”
The “solution” – A work in progress

- Create and **TRAIN** a group of post-tenure faculty to serve as **LEAD MENTORS**
- Institutionalize a **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT TEAM**: Director of the Center for Innovative Pedagogy (CIP); an Associate Provost; McCoy-Banc One Distinguished Teaching Chair
- Revise the duties of the McCoy Chair to emphasize role in mentoring new faculty and serve as **LIAISON for Lead Mentors**. The McCoy Chair is a 4 year position and already carries a $2500 stipend and 1 course release.
- **New **MENTORING GUIDELINES** with clear goals for years 1 & 2 and a product at the end of each year
GUIDELINES for Mentoring in the First Two Years

● YEAR 1

○ GOAL: Get to know Kenyon people and practices; learn to manage time and expectations

○ PRODUCT: A document for end of year discussion created by new faculty member

○ ACTIVITIES: mentee observes mentor 1st semester and mentor observes mentee 2nd semester followed by pedagogical discussion; meet at least 1x with each mentor; end of year discussion (agenda created by LM; mentee document)

● YEAR 2

○ GOAL: Prepare for pre-tenure review (dossier due in October of 3rd year)

○ PRODUCT: Revised CV (1st semester); Draft of prospectus for pre-tenure review (2nd semester)

○ ACTIVITIES: mentor observes mentee followed by discussion; meet at least 1x with each mentor; specific conversations about scholarly work and departmental guidelines; review CV; year end meeting to discuss draft of prospectus; LM drafts summary letter (goes only to mentee and committee).
NEW MENTORING PROGRAM:

DIRECTOR, CIP (Pedagogy)

MCCOY CHAIR (Mentoring)

ASSOCIATE PROVOST (Reviews, leadership)

LEAD MENTOR

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NEW FACULTY

DEPARTMENT

3rd MEMBER
How New Program Addresses Identified Problems:

- **LEAD MENTORS** – Provide trained mentoring resource/coaches; accountability; leadership opportunity; stipend recognize importance of work

- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Lead Mentors -> other mentors and new faculty; McCoy Chair-> Lead Mentors; Faculty Development Committee-> McCoy Chair

- **GUIDELINES** - Clarify expectations and responsibilities for mentors and new faculty; specific goals and products for each year

- **CONSISTENCY & FLEXIBILITY** – Guidelines and accountability help standardize and personalize; Guidelines reside outside of the Faculty Handbook
Challenges:

- **Lots of Moving Parts** – mentoring model, McCoy Chair, Handbook (what should be legislated and what kept flexible), guidelines, training, etc.

- **Resistance** – from “gurus,” some departments, and the “disconnected”

- **Issues of Implementation** – stipends, when to hold training, another “committee” that needs members, how to phase in (new faculty in the transition)

- **Institutional Over-reach** – “bureaucratization”, turns McCoy Chair into an “administrator”; continues trend of asking faculty to do more and more
Moving Forward

SPRING 2019
- Call for new McCoy Chair
- Call for Lead Mentor applications
- Plan and train Lead Mentors

FALL 2019
- Launch new mentoring program
Faculty Development as On-going Growth

Rethinking Faculty Development at Ursinus College
Meredith Goldsmith, Associate Dean
What I’ve Noticed: Faculty Development at Ursinus

- No real support for post-tenure faculty
- Many faculty remain at the associate rank for many years
- Lack of clarity about promotion
- “Faculty development” committee: key player or ATM?
- “Rigor” as a fetish; perception of “star” system
- Mismatch between evaluation procedures and developmental goals
My Goals as an Associate Dean

- Extending mentoring and faculty support after the first year
- To re-invigorate faculty at mid- and later-career phases
- To loosen the straitjacket of frequent (too frequent) faculty evaluation
- To open up categories for work considered for promotion and tenure (Boyer)
What We’re Doing: Mid-Career Coaching Team

- Goals: to work with faculty one-on-one, help them articulate goals, invigorate or pivot a research program, and ultimately develop a timeline for promotion
- Coaching team composed of representatives from:
  - Teaching and Learning Institute
  - College Communications
  - Center for Writing and Speaking
  - Corporate, Foundation, & Grants Relations
  - College Wellness
  - Dean’s Office (Associate Dean and Dean)
  - President’s Office (Special Assistant)
Rethinking Faculty Evaluation

Weaknesses of previous/current model

- Fixed mindset - faculty encouraged to address deficits rather than build on strengths
- Frequent, time-consuming self-evaluation and chairs’ reports
- No clear link to mission

Working Group on faculty review: tweaking the system

- Deleted annual evaluation of post-tenure faculty in favor of existing triennial evaluation
- Eliminated standardized c.v., which many found pedantic and useless
- Encouraged brevity and time-saving in annual self reviews

NOTE: Even though these were mostly minor, non-Handbook changes, they were not without some doubts...
Progress (and Challenges)

PROGRESS:
- Rollout to faculty through informal group lunches and discussion
- Invitation to meet with faculty individually (so far, three early adopters)
- Successful votes on minor HB changes

CHALLENGES:
- Two-tiered culture of “star scholars” v. workaday faculty
- Role of Promotion and Tenure Committee - enforcing status quo or thinking critically about the process?
- Scant evidence of success feeds anxiety about failure (if very few people come up, it’s hard to say what works)

QUESTION: How to get beyond the early adopters?
Realigning Development and Evaluation

Principles of Evaluation
- Trust, collegiality, growth, support
- Nuance, simplicity, reflection, depth

Immediate goals
- Extending mentoring into evaluation: extradepartmental feedback for major reviews, colleague observations replacing self-evaluations for early faculty
- Reducing length of annual, triennial, and chairs’ review docs
- Eliminating five-point evaluation scale (source of confusion, competition, anxiety)

Longer-term goals:
- Eliminating three categories in favor of holistic, integrative self-evaluation
- Rethinking dependence on student evaluations
- Reducing number of external reviews

QUESTION: How do we rethink key elements of our culture? Where should this kind of change effectively come from?
Wednesday Writers as a Faculty Third Space

Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant, Ed.D.
Dean of Faculty and Professor of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
What I’ve noticed:
Faculty culture DePauw University

- Busyness
- Silos of excellence
- Perceived lack of recognition
- No publication requirement for tenure and promotion
My questions:

● Where are the spaces on campus that renew faculty as teachers-scholars?

● How might we reshape scholarship from labor that is invisible, isolated, unrecognized, and done on our own time (after teaching and service) to something that happens in community?

● Might we need a space apart to rework faculty development?
A possible solution: Creating a “third space” (Oldenburg 1999) for faculty writing

- Informal public gathering places (cafes, bookstores, bars, hair salons, street corners)
- A forum for “play” in a society interfused with a stubborn commitment to work and purposiveness” (1982: 282).

  - “Host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work” (Oldenburg 1999: 16)
Wednesday Writers

2016-present

- Broad, open welcome -- coffee, community, accountability as support
- Opening and closing debriefs; 3 writing rounds of 25-30 minutes; 5-10 minute breaks
- Not tied to faculty reviews or institutional rewards
### Third Spaces

- Located on public, leveling, and neutral ground
- Presence of regulars
- Playful, warm, congenial mood
- Evolves to meet participants needs

### Wednesday Writers

- Community Room of Campus Bookstore/town’s Starbucks
- Conveners
- Broad welcome; weekly invitation
- Expansion to Tuesday Writers, Writing Retreats
Third spaces and the striking “low profile” preference
Promising signs of an emergent writing community

- Expansion to Tuesday and Summer groups, and intersession 3-day “boot camps”

- Potlucks, good will, positive energy

- Group’s perceived value to faculty who feel/are vulnerable (minoritized by race, gender, contract status)
Ongoing challenges and questions:

- How to engage many more mid-career faculty?

- Might the ethos of communal faculty writing during the semester benefit from a post-tenure review process -- maybe triennial reports?

- Generational work practices? Might more recent PhDs be more open to working in community?

- On your campus, what spaces do you have for encouraging playful new connections, possibilities, and energies among faculty?
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