

Mentoring Program for New Faculty

When new instructors begin teaching, they need to think about the aims and purposes of education and how they will accomplish them. But those lofty and noble ideals must not separate new teachers from the instructional realities of the teaching-learning situation. Those of us who have been teaching for a number of years face a problem: we forget what it's like to be a student. When you're new to the teaching role, maybe still young, it's easier to see things from the student's perspective. It's easier, but still not simple. You will be amazed at how different the world looks from the front of the classroom. If you're like most of us, for the first time in your life you'll enjoy finals. To give is better than to receive! The euphoria wears off as you grade them, but it still feels pretty good.

The point, though, is that you never want to forget what it feels like to take a final exam. You must never forget the frustration that comes when you try with all your might to understand something, but find you can't. You must never forget how hard it is to stay awake in a warm classroom at the end of a long week when only the professor finds the topic interesting.

Students today are not easy to teach. One of the most serious mistakes teachers make is to assume that the students in their classes are the same kind of students they once were. If you're teaching a college course, in all probability you were an excellent student, and even if you didn't do all that well in college, it was not because you lacked the academic preparation. Many of the students you will have in class are not like you. You must be prepared for this difference and as you, like the rest of us, become astounded at their passivity, inadequate preparation, and lack of respect for learning, you will wonder about their irresponsibility. Unfortunately, part of the responsibility for the way they are belongs to us, which does mean that we have the power to make changes. We can model the behavior and professionalism we expect from our students.

Despite their weaknesses, students today are still the wonderful creatures they have always been. They are still profoundly influenced by their experiences in college courses, particularly by their teachers. Research and our collective experience confirm this observation. Today's students still glow with pride when they accomplish the unexpected, and sometimes they return to tell us that we made a difference. Our success in dealing with them is inextricably linked to a clear understanding of their rights and our responsibilities. Their attitudes and abilities and those of the institutions that admit them make the boundaries between these distinctions fuzzy. It helps if new teachers are clear from the beginning as to who is responsible for what. Teaching does have important ethical dimensions.

And so, Monterey Peninsula College is recommending that you begin your teaching here by thinking about these larger issues. Yes, the nuts and bolts demand more immediate attention, but the quality of life in your classroom depends in no small degree on your careful consideration of the concerns addressed above.

-- Mary Nelson,
MPC Instructor

Purpose of the Mentoring Program

Monterey Peninsula College has designed a mentoring program to provide new faculty members with experienced, well-respected mentors to guide and assist them in the early years of teaching in a college new to them. Everyone in the institution benefits from this program.

- New faculty members receive individual recognition and encouragement, insights into the informal and formal culture of Monterey Peninsula College, advice about the teaching/learning process in a community college setting, and information regarding the “rules” for success.
- Mentors have the satisfaction of assisting in the development of their colleagues and joining a select network of faculty who have participated in the mentoring process. Mentors are recognized by their divisions and departments for their important contributions.
- Students have the advantage of informed new faculty who are provided an extended support system. New faculty who are assigned mentors are better prepared to assist students in solving problems that arise during their college career.
- The Divisions benefit from the increased commitment, productivity, and satisfaction of new faculty, reduction of attrition of new faculty, and esprit de corps demonstrated by those involved in the mentoring program.

Role of the Mentor

Mentors have been selected based on their commitment to excellence in teaching and their availability to support new faculty in their department or division. These individuals give freely of their time and expertise because of their devotion to students.

The mentor attends a portion of the new faculty orientation just prior to the opening of the semester. At that time an informal agreement is made as to when and how often the mentor and mentee will meet during the semester, and the mentor makes sure that the mentee is aware of any pertinent meetings or activities at which his/her presence is required.

The mentor is available at any time to discuss and review procedures, expectations, and/or concerns about students or any aspect of the instructional program. Mentors are available to discuss a wide range of professional questions that the mentee may raise. In some areas, the mentor refers the mentee to other campus resources.

The mentor typically visits the mentee’s classroom at least once during the semester to provide encouragement and feedback. This visit is not a part of the required evaluation process for tenure-track faculty, but it provides an ideal opportunity for some coaching to occur.

Role of the Friend

In addition to a mentor from the new faculty member’s department or division, a friend from another area of the college assists the new faculty member in becoming familiar with the campus and its many activities and functions. Friends are introduced during new faculty orientation prior to the start of the semester.

The friend is available to observe a class, take the new faculty to observe a shared governance function, attend an event featuring students or programs on campus, and help new faculty learn about resources and activities in the local community. A critical role of the friend is to introduce the new faculty to other areas of campus and to other faculty and staff. It is vitally important to be aware of all that MPC has to offer in order to be of greater assistance to students and to be an ambassador for the college.

Expectations of the Mentee

Although the amount of prior teaching experience among new faculty may vary considerably, the environment and culture of an institution new to incoming instructors are unique. Thus, it is advantageous for new faculty members to keep in touch with their mentors and friends as the school year progresses and as various deadlines are announced.

It is expected that new faculty members will extend their mentors and friends an invitation to attend a class session of their choice and to meet with them afterward to review their observations. Mentees should feel free to contact their mentors and/or friends whenever they have questions.

Mentees are expected to attend any meetings or functions organized for their benefit. An activities chart with a timeline for completion is included in the orientation packet. When the activities are completed, or no later than the last week of spring semester, each mentee should submit the chart to the appropriate Dean of Instruction along with the Flex Days Activities Contract.

Mentee	Mentor	Friend
Meet with mentor and friend during orientation as scheduled.	Attend scheduled session to get acquainted with mentee.	Attend scheduled orientation session to get acquainted with new faculty.
Make arrangements for other meetings during the year as needed.	Accompany mentee to department/division meetings and explain in advance their usual format.	Invite new faculty to attend committee meeting or other shared governance function with you.
Invite mentor and/or friend to visit a class session (not as part of your formal evaluation but to obtain informal feedback).	Visit mentee's classroom to provide informal suggestions and hints (not part of official evaluation).	Offer to visit classroom and provide feedback or suggestions.
Visit classroom of mentor and/or friend to observe teaching style and techniques.	Discuss matters of concern such as developing curriculum, grading, creating assignments, completing forms, using the campus e-mail system, and applying learning theory and innovations.	Attend an event such as an MPC play, music or dance performance or athletic event with new faculty.
Attend any meetings scheduled for the benefit of new faculty.	Attend any meetings scheduled for new faculty (such as how to complete roll sheets, etc.).	Invite new faculty to an off-campus community activity or event.
Schedule a meeting with the Vice President for Academic Affairs to discuss curriculum in your area of teaching.		

Monterey Peninsula College would like to thank Lake Tahoe Community College for the contents of the mentoring program.

Chart of Activities

Objective	Activity	Time Line	Completion Date
1. Gain an overview of faculty expectations and of resources available at Monterey Peninsula College.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend orientation for new faculty. 	August 19 and 20	
2. Observe MPC's shared governance process and review the institutional goals and objectives for 2004-2005.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend flex day activities. ● Attend your choice of the following: College Council meeting Board of Trustees meeting Academic Senate meeting 	August 21 and 22 1 st & 3 rd Tuesday afternoons, 2:30 p.m. 4 th Tuesday at 3 p.m. 2 nd & 4 th Thursdays, 2:30 p. m.	
3. Develop a working relationship with other faculty and staff in your department and division.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend department and division meetings. ● Become well acquainted with Division Office Manager (DOM). 	Check with mentor as soon as possible.	
4. Become familiar with the curriculum in your area and student expectations/ learning outcomes anticipated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with mentor to review existing course outlines and syllabi. ● Observe the teaching/counseling of your mentor during a class session. ● Take the English and/or Math assessment if applicable. 	September 12 or earlier By November 14 Check with assessment technician.	
5. Develop personal and professional goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Place personal and professional goals in writing (also required to complete evaluation process early in fall). ● Invite mentor and/or friend to observe class session (also required for evaluation). 	September 12 or earlier By November 14	
6. Become familiar with the Office of Academic Affairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schedule a meeting with the Vice President for Academic Affairs to discuss curriculum in your area or any items of concerns. 	By November 30	