

Frequently Asked Questions from Prospective Mentors

1) Who can serve as a college-wide mentor?

Any full-time tenure track or tenured teaching faculty member with at least three years of full-time teaching experience at MCC can serve as a college-wide mentor to a new faculty member from a different department. Full-time temporary years count toward the three year minimum.

2) Why should I become a mentor?

College-wide mentors help new faculty to acculturate to the college. It's a great way to meet new faculty and to network with other departments. You will also have the opportunity to enhance your listening skills, transmit institutional values and help strengthen the entire college.

3) How much work is involved and what's the nature of the work?

The length of service is from September 1st until June 30th of the following year. The amount of work depends on the level of interaction between the new faculty member and the mentor and this can vary widely from relationship to relationship. Since this program, by design, is unstructured it is difficult to predict how much work is involved.

The two broad categories that fall under faculty mentoring are career development and psycho—social support. The nature of the work is highly interpersonal requiring soft skills as well as institutional knowledge. Much of what happens is one—on—one, unstructured, collegial support of our new faculty. There is no fixed agenda. Confidentiality is the hallmark of this program. Therefore a college—wide mentor holds a position of special trust.

4) Is mentoring effective? How do you know?

Many people have reported that their mentoring experience was very positive. Additionally, the core of current mentors were mentored themselves under the program. Because of the confidential nature of mentoring relationships, we don't formally evaluate the program.

5) What do I do if I can't answer a new faculty member's question?

It is not necessary for you to have all the answers. You may need to refer the new faculty to someone else who can help. Try to find the right person/place to answer the question. Keep in mind that no relationship can fulfill all the needs of the parties involved. If you need any assistance, please contact Mark Sample, the program coordinator.

6) My new faculty member has more teaching experience than I do. Can I still benefit that person as a college—wide mentor?

Absolutely you can! You were chosen because you have specific full-time experience at MCC that a new faculty member may lack. Teaching experience is not the only measure of your value as a mentor. New faculty members need to learn the culture of the college, and as a mentor you can guide them in their first year. Also, even the most experienced new faculty can be encouraged to stretch themselves in new ways.

7) Can I mentor more than one faculty member at the same time?

Usually volunteers mentor only one new faculty member per year. On the rare occasion that a mentor had more than one person to mentor, it was voluntary and their new faculty members were always in separate departments.

8) Can I mentor a new faculty member I already know?

Yes, as long as you meet the mentor qualifications.

9) Can I renew my service as a mentor a second, third and fourth time?

Yes, yes, and yes. In fact, there are mentors who have served much longer than four years in the program. You may mentor one new faculty member per year for any number of years. You may also take a break for a year or more after mentoring a new faculty member. You may then choose to renew your service in succeeding years.

10) I have not been able to reach the new faculty member I agreed to mentor after several attempts. What should I do?

Keep trying to contact the new faculty member; however, if you have not been able to reach them by October 1, please contact the program coordinator.

Keep in mind that many new faculty members sometimes feel overwhelmed by their new responsibilities and may not make mentoring a priority. There are many expectations that new faculty strive to meet. While mentoring is an important part of faculty development, it is understandably not one of the mandatory responsibilities that new faculty feel obligated to meet. Mentors are encouraged to make themselves available for the new faculty whom they mentor, but not intrusively so. Gentle and occasional outreach is the best policy when trying to establish the new relationship.