

## **SOUTH GEORGIA COLLEGE**

### **The SGC “Faculty Academy and Mentoring Experience” (FAME) 2009-2010\***

*Mentor* is a tutor in Homer’s *Odyssey*. He obviously made such an impact on the educated world that his name has become the title we attach to someone who is “a wise and trusted counselor or teacher” (*American Heritage Dictionary*). The faculty at South Georgia College are before all else teachers. To become a “wise and trusted” teacher is something to which we all aspire, and because we need help along the way, particularly when first embarking on the teaching trek or when assuming a position at a new institution, it is good for us to share what we have learned, to inquire about what we do not know, and to avoid the odyssey that is wandering about searching for a home. Consequently, a mentoring program for new faculty is a good idea.

A mentoring program is undoubtedly most crucial during a new faculty member’s first two or three years, and one could easily make a case for such a program’s continuation through the promotion and tenure process. A formal mentoring program can facilitate an important relationship among the new faculty member, a peer group of new faculty, senior faculty, and the academic division chairperson.

The success of the SGC “Faculty Academy and Mentoring Experience” (FAME) depends upon the voluntary efforts of senior faculty who are interested in promoting collegiality, helping others become familiar with new surroundings, sharing teaching methods, and minimizing confusion about SGC and USG policies, procedures, and practices. Success is equally dependent upon the willingness of new faculty to welcome the opportunity to learn from their senior colleagues, to learn from each other, and to share their own experiences so that everyone benefits. Therefore, the SGC faculty mentoring program is a two-fold experience: (1) It pairs new faculty with senior faculty, and (2) it provides for the formation of a peer group or academy of new faculty.

#### **Program Assumptions**

- Experienced and newer faculty have much to learn from each other.
- A mentoring program that connects faculty at different career stages can strengthen and help equip the instructional community.
- Shared knowledge can facilitate communication related to both organizational culture and pedagogy.

#### **Program Objectives**

- To develop mutually supportive relationships among participants, thereby contributing to new faculty morale, motivation, and sense of community

- To share collective expertise and knowledge of
  - ✓ The College, its mission, values, and goals
  - ✓ Key resources and people, both at SGC and in the University System
  - ✓ Teaching and learning, including syllabi, teaching techniques, classroom activities, use of instructional technology, grading and assessment, dealing with student problems, and record keeping
  - ✓ College structures and governance
  - ✓ Student academic advising
  - ✓ Available College technology
- To encourage participants to investigate professional development activities that augment sound instructional practice
- To encourage pursuit of scholarly activities
- To provide opportunities for professional inspiration and renewal

### **Mentor Qualifications**

- A mentor has professional stature and success, and ideally has commonalities with the new faculty member's expertise and professional goals.
- A mentor is selected from among full and associate professors.
- Ordinarily, a mentor comes from the academic discipline or division of the new faculty member; however, such does not have to be the case (except in the Division of Nursing).
- A mentor is willing to establish and continue the mentoring relationship.

### **The Individual Mentoring Process**

The academic division chairperson of each new faculty member consults with the new faculty and with senior faculty in the division to recommend a mentor or mentors, depending upon the range of the new faculty member's responsibilities (*e.g.* a new faculty member assigned to teach both credit and Learning Support courses) and the availability of senior faculty. When multiple mentors collaborate, good communication and planning are needed between the mentors and the division chairperson. If a mentor comes from a division other than that of the faculty member to be mentored, consultation between division chairpersons and mentors will be necessary. Division chairs will make the recommendations for pairings to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Mentoring pairs invent the mentoring relationship and the manner of meeting that works best for them, but the relationship should include any or all of the following:

- Informal discussions over lunch, coffee, in offices, and the like
- Formal meetings at least monthly

- Classroom observation exchanges
- Telephone or email conversations
- Attendance together at faculty development training sessions

**Conversations between mentoring pairs should be considered confidential; however, the mentoring process is subject to assessment.**

### **The Peer Mentoring Process (The Academy)**

The Office of Academic Affairs, in consultation with division chairpersons, will coordinate the peer-to-peer mentoring program, whereby new faculty will interact with each other, a coordinating mentor, and various other faculty, staff, and trainers. The goal is to provide opportunities for new faculty to meet and network with peers and SGC personnel, as well as to engage in professional development activities.

### **Mentoring Program Calendar**

**August.** On Wednesday, August 12, at 5:00 p.m., all faculty members who are beginning their first or second year will meet with the VPAA in the Thrash Hall Conference Room for a mentoring orientation session. By Friday, August 21, division chairpersons will have forwarded mentor recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs after consultation with new faculty members and prospective mentors. During the week of August 24, The VPAA and division chairpersons will conduct a training session for mentors, and the division chairpersons will schedule meetings with each mentor and new faculty member to clarify expectations. Even though the designated mentor assumes a particular collegial role with the new faculty member, the chair will continue to have primary responsibility for the new faculty member's progress, professional development, and annual evaluation.

**September to December.** During the new faculty member's first semester, the mentor and the new faculty member should meet at least monthly in formally scheduled meetings and as frequently as needed in mutually agreed upon formats to acclimate the new faculty member. The Academy will be formed in September and will meet for formal sessions at least monthly.

**January to May.** During spring semester, monthly meetings between new faculty and mentors should continue, and the Academy will again meet for formal sessions at least monthly. New faculty members will meet with their respective division chairs toward the end of the semester for the annual evaluation conversation that takes place between division chairs and all faculty. During the division chair's annual review of the new faculty member, the chair should receive a candid oral assessment of the effectiveness of the mentoring in order to begin planning for the next year's mentoring.

New faculty will continue to be mentored and to participate in the Academy for the first two years of employment and may participate for a third year.

### **Learning Outcomes of the Academy**

A committee consisting of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the division chairpersons, and faculty mentors will establish the curriculum and determine the learning outcomes for the Academy by September 10.

### **Assessment of the Faculty Academy and Mentoring Experience**

The Faculty Academy and Mentoring Experience will be assessed each semester through the completion of confidential surveys, one for the new faculty and one for mentors. The results of assessment will be used to improve the experience and to improve the achievement of outcomes.

\*Resources:

Iowa State University Faculty Mentoring Program. (material used by permission)

[www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/newfaculty/MentoringBrochureWeb.doc](http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/newfaculty/MentoringBrochureWeb.doc)

Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. New and Junior Faculty Peer Consulting and Mentoring Program. [www.siu.edu/facultydevelopment/peerconsultant.shtml](http://www.siu.edu/facultydevelopment/peerconsultant.shtml)

Douglas College Faculty Peer Mentoring.

[www.douglascollege.ca/cafd/faculty-development/groups-mentoring/faculty-peer.html](http://www.douglascollege.ca/cafd/faculty-development/groups-mentoring/faculty-peer.html)

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