NEW FACULTY

MENTORING
MENTORING PROGRAM FOR NEW FACULTY
2014-2015

BridgeValley Community and Technical College recognizes the importance of providing professional development opportunities for new faculty hired by the College. The College believes that an effective mentoring program is an important part of professional development, and the mentoring program is an integral part of the College’s strategic plan.

The College recognizes that new faculty come from a variety of backgrounds: some with teaching experience at other colleges, some from the ranks of our adjuncts, and some with other work experiences. The College is a complex institution, and it can be challenging to learn how to maneuver in the College and be an effective faculty member. The following provides an overview of the Faculty Mentoring Program provided for new full-time faculty.

Research has shown that mentoring can improve teaching and learning in the classroom, enhance creative classroom activity, increase self-confidence and satisfaction in one’s career, and foster collegiality and collaboration. The Faculty Mentoring Program matches a new faculty member with an experienced faculty member for the duration of one academic year. The pair meet on a regular basis agreed to by both to address such matters as College policies and procedures, the mission and values of the College, ideas about teaching and learning, instructional methods and resources available, and how to successfully manage one’s career within a complex institution. In addition to College-wide issues, the mentor will assist the mentee with learning how to address campus-specific issues and services.

Goals

The goals of new faculty mentoring are to:
- Accelerate the new faculty member’s understanding of the College and adaptation to a new position;
- Promote diversity;
- Connect employees with one another (formal/informal professional and social networking);
- Encourage commitment to the College’s mission and values;
- Open the lines of communication;
- Safeguard the College’s new hire investment; and,
- Enable employees to feel welcome and to understand career paths.
Informal Program

What little research exists related to community College mentoring does support the idea that informal mentoring programs are more successful than formal programs. Informal mentoring programs are not rigidly structured. Informal mentoring programs tend to be more successful for the following reasons:

- Informal mentoring relationships last longer than formal relationships
- Mentor/mentee relationship is not subject to evaluation
- Different types of networking occur, both professional and social
- No time limits are given as to when specific activities within a mentoring relationship must occur
- More commitment to the relationship exists, which can lead to more coaching
- One-on-one interactions across the College occur
- More friendships are built from a natural mentor/mentee match as opposed to a forced match

There is no one format that will work for every mentoring relationship; there are too many variables and personalities. Therefore, it is critical that at the beginning of the relationship the mentor and mentee establish specific goals and needs of the mentee. Each mentoring team should establish at least three goals that the two will commit to accomplish for the remainder of the academic year and which can be reviewed at the end of the academic year. For example, if the mentee is interested in continuing her/his career at the College and wants to advance in rank, then a professional development plan based on College guidelines and policies could be developed and implemented. If the new faculty member is interested in teaching an online course, then the mentor can assist the mentee with contacting the appropriate College staff to provide the necessary training for online instruction. If the two are agreeable, the mentee may want to attend some classes taught by the mentor or invite the mentor to visit the mentee’s classes and provide confidential observations. These are simply a few suggestions—there are many others that may be pursued through the goals for the academic year. Both the mentee and mentor should strive to keep the goals attainable and measureable while recognizing that there is a limited amount of time to accomplish the goals.
Roles and Responsibilities

Both mentors and mentees are responsible for establishing a relationship built on trust and confidence and interacting with each other in a collegial manner. Both are to remember that the intent of the mentoring program is to provide information and services to the new faculty member that will enhance student success and thus promote the mission of the College.

Mentors are responsible for the following:
1. Making initial contact with the mentee within one month of the beginning of classes to develop mutually agreed upon goals and staying in touch with the mentee throughout the academic year (the best method of communication to be determined jointly by mentor and mentee).
2. Providing appropriate guidance to the mentee’s questions, needs, or concerns, and developing measureable goals for the mentee.
3. Maintaining the confidentiality of shared information.
4. Committing the necessary time to the relationship and being available at the mutually agreed upon times.
5. Sharing knowledge and experience with the mentee in a way that benefits the mentee in her/his career at the College.
6. Completing an evaluation form at the end of the academic year about the mentorship program and submitting it to the Office of Human Resources.

Mentees are responsible for the following:
1. Committing the necessary time to the relationship and being available at the mutually agreed upon times.
2. Exchanging ideas and experiences with the mentor in a collegial manner and developing measureable goals for the academic year.
3. Taking advantage of the experiences and opportunities provided by the mentor.
4. Maintaining the confidentiality of shared information.
5. Keeping the mentor informed about any problems, concerns, or progress made during the academic year.
6. Completing an evaluation form about the mentorship program and submitting it to the Office of Human Resources.
Mentor Selection Process

The academic deans/chairs submit nominees to serve as mentors to the Chief Human Resources Officer. Faculty members are encouraged to let their dean/chair know if they are interested in becoming a mentor. Each nominee will complete an application to serve as a mentor for a new faculty member. The decision to serve as a mentor rests solely with the full-time faculty member since it would be counter-productive to “require” someone to be a mentor who did not want to serve in that role. Being a mentor is simply one way that a faculty member may choose to serve the College. Human Resources will assign the mentor to the new faculty member and will provide training to the mentors. Mentoring relationships will be established with cross-division communication as a priority.

The following are the required qualifications for being nominated:
1. Either serves on or has served on a College committee at some time during the last two years.
2. Has successfully completed and can document completion of a professional development activity within the past two years.
3. Received a majority of excellent ratings in the annual faculty evaluations from the supervising dean/chair over the past two years.
4. Has demonstrated computer technology skills (i.e., can use Blackboard, MS Office, and Outlook email).
5. Understands the College’s mission and core values
6. Has an endorsement from the mentor’s supervising academic dean or chair indicating support for the person to serve as a mentor.

If either the mentor or the mentee is not experiencing a positive relationship, both have the option of selecting another partner and are to contact Human Resources.

Measuring Success

At the end of the academic year, the mentor and mentee will complete an evaluation form that will be submitted to the Office of Human Resources to help evaluate the effectiveness of the mentoring program and make appropriate changes as needed. These forms will be kept confidential in nature and will not be shared with the supervising academic dean/chair of either the mentee or mentor unless the mentor or mentee requests in writing that it be shared with her/his dean/chair. However, the supervising dean/chair will be notified that one of her/his faculty members is being mentored or is serving as a mentor, and this may be used as part of the faculty member’s evaluation to document service to the institution.
Coordinating Program

The Mentoring Program will be coordinated through the collaborative relationship between the Faculty Senate and Human Resources. HR will work with the appropriate Faculty Senate committee to make recommendations for refinement and improvement of the program. Communication of the Mentoring Program will occur as follows:

- Current faculty will be informed of the program via the College’s various communication venues.
- A web page devoted to the New Faculty Mentoring Program will be created and maintained by HR. The site will be a central location for resources related to mentoring, including various forms.
- New faculty members will be made aware of the Mentoring Program by a representative from HR during the initial orientation session.