COMMON NEW FACULTY ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Some of the most common issues new faculty members face are described here, along with suggestions to address or avoid these issues.

Course assignments
Issue(s):
• Because the tenure probationary period is short, courses that require a good deal of preparation have an unduly negative impact for new, untenured faculty.

Solution(s):
• Consider assigning courses to new faculty that are within their current area of expertise and they feel well-equipped to teach. This will require you to collaborate with the new faculty in making initial assignments.
• Minimize the total number of different courses a new faculty member teaches in the first few years, to reduce the total number of course preps.
• Avoid pressure from current faculty to assign the preparation-intensive courses to the “new guy/gal”.

Promoting Teaching Excellence
Issue(s):
• New faculty may not always fully understand the need to address teaching issues as early as possible. Because new faculty often have little-to-no teaching experience, they may lack the wherewithal to address issues of classroom management or respond effectively to poor teaching evaluations.

Solution(s):
• Review course evaluations with new faculty every quarter/semester, focusing on ideas they have for improvement. Use the review as a time to remind new faculty about the many resources to assist faculty with course design and teaching practices (TWC Teaching & Learning Services, for example).

Work environment
• Issue(s): New faculty may feel isolated and they may be overwhelmed with navigating the cultural norms of the department.

Solution(s):
• Identify specific people for the new faculty member to meet with in her/his first few months. Also ensure the new faculty member’s mentor initiates contact.
• Find ways to proactively describe “how things are done around here”.
Time Management

Issues(s):

- New faculty may not have effective strategies for balancing the time they devote to teaching, research and scholarship, and service.

Solutions(s):

- Meet with new faculty regularly to ensure they are making incremental progress in areas like research from day 1.
- Help new faculty create realistic plans of work.
- Protect new faculty from pressures to serve on committees and projects.